Minimum Viable Product

participants

50 min

1. Take a minute to **think about a challenge you're facing at work**.

2. Take five minutes to **write down as many questions as you can about this challenge**. The questions should all start, **"How might we…"** If you're meeting face-to-face, use stickies. If you're meeting remotely, use a shared Google Doc. This exercise is about quantity, not quality, so just write, don't edit. Use the whole five minutes.

3. Take a minute to **cluster your questions**, and **share them with your partner**.

4. **Pick one of your, "How might we…" questions. Brainstorm** as many ideas as you can (one per sticky or, if remote, on a Google Doc) in five minutes that may address your question. Don't overthink it. This is about quantity, not quality.

5. **Pick your most compelling idea**, and take a minute to **specify**:

   - Expected outcomes
   - Assumptions (i.e. What would likely need to be true in order for your idea to work?)
   - A test and metrics for one of your assumptions

6. **Discuss** with your partner.

7. Now take a few minutes to **come up with a simpler test and metrics**, again discussing with your partner. It helps to make the idea more specific.

8. Take another few minutes to **come up with an even simpler test and metrics**, again discussing with your partner.

9. Briefly **discuss with each other what you learned**.

Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

Minimum Viable Product (or MVP for short) is a term from the Lean movement, an innovation framework that encourages you to learn as fast as you can.

In order to do that, you take a challenging problem, and you identify as many assumptions as you can. Then, you come up with the simplest possible ways to test those assumptions.

By starting with these assumptions, you avoid spending a lot of time on complex solutions that may not work.

The discipline of breaking down problems into assumptions and testing these assumptions as quickly as possible is very challenging, but the payoff is huge. Fortunately, as with everything we do, you can get better at doing this through practice.