Module: MVP Backlog

Key concepts and terms

MVP (Minimum Viable Product): Similar to a prototype, a minimum viable product is the simplest version of an idea that allows you to validate and evaluate your solution. While a prototype is the first draft of the idea and cannot be used as a complete solution to your social problem (for example, you cannot sit on a clay chair), the MVP is a more complete solution that can be used by your target users as is. It may not have all the functionalities that you would like (for example, the chair may not have wheels), but it still addresses the issue at hand (for example, you can sit on the chair). An important reminder- MVPs can also be sent out as the final product. MVPs can exist to be the most pared-down but feasible idea.

Iterative Development: Iterative development emphasizes the need to break your final product, service, or campaign into discrete bite-sized pieces. Particularly relevant for technology products, iteration--or the idea of continuous building, feedback, and modification—is a cornerstone of human-centered design. When envisioning an advocacy workshop series that includes training on topics A to Z, iterative development would recommend building resources for trainings A and B, gathering feedback on them and improving them accordingly. The feedback would also help you decide whether training C and D are necessary or if training F needs to be done first. Iterative development allows you to sustainably grow your solution in the most impactful and cost-effective manner.

Backlog: A user experience (UX) or design backlog is a great way to 'stack' or list features. Think of it as an ordered list- what do you want, what do you need, and who should work on what? Does one feature need to be created to make other features?

User stories: User stories illustrate how a user will use, interact with and respond to your product, campaign, or service. A user story can help you walk through and see how someone would interact with what you are making, and where it would fit in their life.

When to use this module

This is a module about idea prioritization. Due to resource, time, or other constraints, not all ideas can be acted on for the first iteration of your product, service or campaign. This module will help you determine the most important ones to focus on initially, while creating a guide for future development. By now, through the Co/Act framework, you have:

- Thought about the social issue you wish to address and how it manifests in your community
- Identified your target audience, understood your users' intersecting identities, and developed user personas that strongly reflect your users needs, wants, and pain-points
- Brainstormed a number of creative ideas that you tested with users to select your top one

Don't be afraid to reference the work you've already done in previous modules! This module will help you move your selected prototype to a minimum viable product that can be used by your target audience to affect social change.

How to use it

- Time: ~ 2 hours
- Materials: See accompanying Co/Act Backlog spreadsheet

Using the feedback you gathered on your prototype, work as a group to brainstorm the different components your product, service, or campaign needs to have in order to address the social problem you identified and incorporate the user feedback you have received so far. This list of items is called your backlog and will serve as a roadmap for your solution. The goal here is to start to focus and prioritize your ideas.

1. First, add all of the components you have identified to column C under the "feature, user story, idea, or research need" heading. Be comprehensive — no idea is too small to be included. Also, remember to make sure that each component is as specific as possible. Include any additional details in the "notes" section.
2. For each component, note its priority. How critical is this component to you addressing the social issue you have identified? How critical is this component to the overall success of your solution? Thinking back to intersectionality, how critical is this component to ensure that users of all kinds can participate and benefit? Note the criticality as 1 for most critical and 3 for least in column B.
3. For each component, note the level of effort required to achieve that component. Is it an easy thing to achieve (for example, print worksheets) or does it require more time, resources, or money (for example, develop a course curriculum). Note the level of effort in column E.
   a. For more technical tasks for software development, work with a developer to estimate the level of effort.
4. Based on the priority, level of effort, financial constraints, and timing constraints, decide as a team which components will be a part of the MVP. But remember to save the 'discarded' or less priority ideas- you may need them for future campaigns or products.

This spreadsheet documents your product, service, or campaign strategy. As you go through multiple iterations of your solution, use this spreadsheet to track your progress. With the spreadsheet as a guide, begin development of the components that are a part of your MVP. Remember to work closely with any subject matter experts or technical resources you need.

As you go through different versions of your product, remember to always be gathering user feedback! Go back to the "Fast Usability Testing" exercise in the "Rapid Prototyping & Usability Testing" module for

I'm stuck...

While this may seem extremely design focused, it's important to think about what the 'spirit' of these exercises are for. When planning a campaign, you may have a lot of ideas and points you want to get across. What's your big picture? What are the nuances of your idea? How do they fit together? Using these exercises can help organize and then focus your ideas to create a cohesive campaign.

If you're stuck, try taking some of the ideas, and saying them aloud or acting them out. Do they make sense? Does something feel missing? The goal here is to be succinct but see how the ideas fit together.

Don't forget!

Inclusion Tip: As you move into the implementation phase of your product, service, or campaign, think about how you will continue to engage marginalized communities in actually developing your idea. How will they co-create future iterations of your idea?

Creating a list of ideas in terms of importance and feasibility is important, as well as how usable your idea or product is. Does it resonate with your audiences? Will it work? What will it look like? These are all important questions to answer.

What's next?

Human-centered design is a continuous cycle of learning and iteration. As you continue to advance your product, service, or campaign, refer back to these modules to keep learning about your users and their new needs and wants and brainstorming unique solutions.

If you're ready to begin planning the next version of your product, service, or campaign:
• Head to the "Identifying a Target Audience" module to expand your user base or
• Head to the "User Persona" module to update your user personas