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# Experiment

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PROJECT NAME

DATE

**HYPOTHESIS**

We believe that...

**TEST**

We will do/make...

**EVIDENCE**

We will know the hypothesis is valid if...

MEASURABLE OUTCOME

OBSERVABLE OUTCOME

**COST**

TIME

BUDGET

# Assumptions

PROJECT NAME

DATE

**TESTING NOW** Riskiest Assumption

**NEXT UP**

2

3

**LATER**

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# Lean Startup Basics

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## LEAN STARTUP

Lean Startup is an approach for **building companies** that are creating **new products and services** in situations of **extreme uncertainty**.

The approach advocates creation of **rapid prototypes** that test market assumptions, and uses **customer feedback** in an effort to evolve the design faster and **reduce waste**.

The Lean Startup is a trademark of Eric Ries.  
Learn more at: <http://theleanstartup.com>

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## VALIDATED LEARNING

Regularly **gather evidence** about your ideas and design decisions to make sure you're on the right track.

When you prove (or disprove) a **hypothesis**, you can move forward with confidence. In situations of extreme uncertainty, **validated learning** is the best approach for making decisions.

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## CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT

**Customer Development** gives you a clear understanding of what your users want, need, and will pay for.

Customer Development is an ongoing process that helps you craft your product in direct response to your customers. This ensures that people will buy your product.

Customer Development was created by Steve Blank.  
Learn more at: <http://www.steveblank.com>

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## ASSUMPTIONS

When you believe something, but haven't proven it, you have an **assumption**.

Ask yourself "What happens if I'm wrong about this **assumption**?" If the consequences are dire, you need to know whether you're right before you can move forward with confidence.

You can change an **assumption** into a **hypothesis** simply by restating it as a phrase starting with "**I believe...**". You then test it with customer interviews.

# Lean Startup Basics

## PRODUCT STACK

Each step helps you understand the purpose of your product and the role it has in peoples' lives.



## PIVOT

A **Pivot** describes the situation when a startup team makes a significant business decision in response to validated learning, while maintaining the overall company vision.

Pivots support the original vision; they do not change it.

More about pivots at: <http://luxrio.us/Mt1WGI>

## MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP)

A **minimum viable product** is the smallest, fastest thing you can build in order to release a product. The goal of an MVP is to maximize your learnings from how customers use it.

MVP is a term coined by Eric Ries as part of Lean Startup.

# Collaboration

## COLLABORATION PATTERN

Individuals create multiple ideas.



Ideas are posted to the wall and the group discusses the ideas.



The group identifies ideas to pursue.



The best ideas move forward to the next stage of development.



## WORKING AT THE WALL

Working at the wall changes the dynamics of collaboration.

Decision-making gets easier when everyone posts their ideas on paper in a physical place, because the discussion focuses on understanding, rather than persuasion.

When a conversation devolves into “I think” and “You think”, maybe it’s time to make a decision. Whose decision is it?

## QUIET READ

**A collaboration method that helps your team stay focused on asking questions and making decisions, not on pitching ideas.**

- Post all the work in a visible place.
- Without talking, spend 5-10 minutes reading all the material to get familiar with what others have created.
- After the quiet read, people can pose questions or prompt discussion.
- This way of working keeps teams from falling into presentation or persuasion mode.

## RETROSPECTIVES

A **Retrospective** is a meeting held by a project team at the end of a process or release. It’s used to identify and understand what went well, what didn’t, what could be improved and how to incorporate the learnings and improvements into future work.

Retrospectives are common working practice in Agile teams and Lean Startups.

Visit the Retrospectives Wiki for great tools and resources: <http://retrospectivewiki.org>

# Decision Making

## "GO WIDE, THEN DECIDE"

One of our guiding principles is to create many options, and then decide quickly which to pursue.

To make this work, you need to "hold the decision lightly" (which simply means that you might be wrong, and you need to move on easily if that turns out to be true).

## 2X2 DIAGRAM

A 2x2 diagram is a quick technique for sorting many items into useful quadrants.

Each quadrant allows you to make batch decisions about which items to pursue.



## DOT VOTING

Dot voting is a technique that allows groups to quickly see (without discussion) which ideas stand out.

1. Everyone gets a set number of dots (3-4 is usually sufficient for the workshops).
2. Each person places their dots on the items they feel have the most merit. You can put more than one dot on an item.
3. After voting, you can clearly see the items with the most dots. These are the top items to move forward.

The method can be adapted to fit a range of situations & needs. If you don't have dots handy, use colored markers.

## STACK-RANKING

Stack-ranking (also called force-ranking) is a technique to prioritize items in a linear order from most important to least important.

1. Write down the items to be prioritized, one per stickynote.
2. Divide the items into three groups: highly important, moderately important and less important.
3. Starting with the highly important stack, order the items into a vertical list with the most important at the top.



Stack-ranking involves discussion by the team, but the resulting order of items, once decided, has strong support.

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# Collaboration

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## DUMP & SORT

This is an all-purpose way to get information out of your head, so that you can organize it and make decisions. Here's how to do it:

- “Dump” the items by writing one item per stickynote. (If you're doing this as a team, each person makes their own pile of stickies.)
- “Sort” everybody's stickies together, making categories or placing them on a 2x2 diagram.
- Observe patterns in the sorting; stack duplicates.
- Make decisions based on the observed patterns. The group identifies ideas to pursue.

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## WHY SHARPIES MATTER

Why write with a bold marker and post your work at eye level, alongside others' equivalent work? Because then everyone can read it from arm's length.

This allows a group of people to stand, read, understand, and ask questions. Great collaborative behavior for making quick progress.

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## INFORMATION RADIATORS

An Information Radiator is a publicly posted display that shows the team what's going on. Using a visual display as a passive system for sharing information helps a team stay focused.

They are used frequently by Agile software teams, and commonly are low-tech: paper or stickynotes on a wall, so that they are easy to see. They change often with updated information.

Alastair Cockburn defined Information Radiators in 2000. More at: <http://luxrio.us/KKeDmO>

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## USEFUL MATERIALS

The best collaboration materials are simple; things you can get at any office supply store.

### Shopping list:

- White paper
- Sharpie markers (fine-point & pen)
- Highlighter
- Voting dots
- Sticky notes
- Colored masking tape