# MVP/Alpha
Build a Prototype

Value Propositions to Prototype

The Minimum Viable Product (MVP) is an object or experience that enables a startup team to test its assumptions (and research) on its customer segment. An MVP inevitably goes through development cycles until a production model emerges from the market testing loop.

Lean Startup Cycle
Build - Measure - Learn
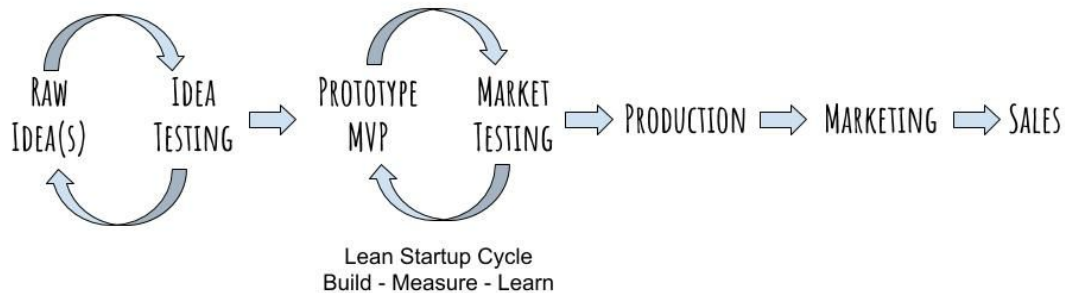
The Lean Startup method calls this the Build - Measure - Learn cycle. Starting with the leanest of prototypes, the team produces a testable 'product,' enough to elicit meaningful feedback from potential end users. In reality, the first prototype may be nothing more than a list of features, a drawing, an elevator pitch, vaporware or cardboard taped up with string.

Lean Methodology
As used by startups, this approach emphasizes spending as little money and time as possible to build a testable product, a minimum viable product. If end users like the MVP, then the team improves and develops it further.

A prototype represents a start. A team still needs a plan how to turn it into a functioning MVP (emphasis on *viable*): something intended end users can *try out or use* that produces feedback on its use.

This deliverable may require more than one session to complete.

What You'll Be Doing

Make a prototype that can be used to test your value propositions.

MVP Basics (Workshop)

Participate in a *lean methods* workshop led by a Facilitator.

Lean methods help startups keep costs down and conserve time. Getting new products to market requires speed, otherwise a startup will lose out to those that are faster. There are exceptions to going lean and fast (e.g., due to health and safety regulations).

This is the process your team will use in turning your idea into a prototype. Each team will develop its own set of problems/tasks to solve.

Team Meeting: Value Propositions to Prototype

Starting with your value propositions, begin mapping each to features that help answer these questions:

- What features or product characteristics are needed to communicate our unique value to our end users?

Write the first value proposition in a circle in the middle of a poster or white board. Add other propositions in separate circles near the center of the chart. When you have several—or all you can think of—ask:

- Which of these are our greatest priority? (Without these we have no competitive advantage.

Start to define each of the most important features, asking discovery questions such as:

- What are the feature's attributes?
- What is this feature made from?
- How does this feature work? Or, what makes it work?
- How is this feature used or experienced?
- How does this feature convey the intended value?

Make cards or sticky notes that specify steps that must be taken to visualize these features in the form that is most appropriate for your product: a sketch, a mock-up, wireframes or an explanatory video.

Don't overlook content development, if needed. This should be included as one or more task cards or sticky notes.

Create a Kanban chart and place these task cards or stickies in the BACKLOG column.

As a team, decide which tasks to move to the TO DO column. They may not all need to go there. Some tasks may take more time or need to be completed first. Don't put time-consuming MVP tasks in the TO DO list at this time.

Then decide which cards to move from TO DO to IN PROGRESS. Talk about who is responsible for what and set a deadline for completion.

Share your chart with a Facilitator.

Performance Review

All teams meet at the end of the day to share their progress.

Prototype Production

Once your team has an approved 'blueprint' for creating its first prototype, you have work to do. This may take more than one session, although you are discouraged from investing too much time in a prototype--remember, it doesn't need functioning code or parts. Teams should meet regularly to share progress, questions, problems and discoveries. Information about prototypes may be researched online.

Here are some suggested starting points, depending on what team members know and need to know:

Sketches, Mockups, Wireframes

- [The What, Why, and How of Mockups](#)
- [Sketches, Wireframes, Prototypes. Levels of fidelity and what to expect from each](#)
- [What Sketches (and Prototypes) Are and Are Not](#)
- [The art of UX sketching and paper prototyping](#)
- [What Is the Difference Between Wireframe, Mockup and Prototype?](#)

Explanatory Videos

- [Best explainer videos](#)
- [10 Awesome Software To Make Explainer Videos](#)

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT SESSION

Team members continue to work on their selected IN PROGRESS tasks. Be thinking about what end users you want to provide feedback on your prototype.

For the tasks you've been assigned, think about what do know and still need to know. If the task involves skills you haven't developed or are not sure what to do or how to proceed, make a note of these and talk to your team or a leader during the next session.

Looking ahead, jot down ideas how you want end users to interact with your MVP. This means, at a minimum, testers have to picture themselves using it in order to give you feedback. The product doesn't actually have to work.

Team members collaborate on a plan for MVP testing. A plan should include:

1. A list of places where the customer segment is found.
2. Methods of 'talking' with them (may include face-to-face interviews, phone calls, emails, online surveys, etc.).

3. Questions to ask them-to get their feedback. This is the most important part of the research. What do you hope to learn from them?