Working Backwards Document Template

About this template: It's designed for you to create an effective Working Backwards document.

Instructions: This is your template to create your Working Backwards document – *just start typing.* Each section has instructions, tips and a quick start guide for the three components of the Working Backwards process (Press Release, FAQs and Visuals).

For Examples: Please email deap@dds.mil or reina@dds.mil

Kick-Start your document: Answer the 5 Working Backwards Questions

Before you begin, answer these five questions. Having clear answers to these questions will help you get started and clarify your thinking.

- ☐ Who is the customer?
- ☐ What is the problem or opportunity for the customer?
- ☐ What is the most important customer benefit?
- ☐ What are customers asking for? (either explicitly or implicitly)
- ☐ What would the customer experience look like?

Press Release

With the press release, you leap into the future and imagine how you want a customer to feel and what you want them to say when they experience the product, feature or service you want to build. When you write your press release, imagine that your customer is going to read it. It's a one-page narrative explaining your vision using customer-centric language.

Tips for creating a Press Release

- First, answer the 5 Working Backwards Questions (see above).
- Imagine that your customer is going to read the press release. Use as few words as possible and choose words that your customer understands.
- Avoid Marketing Buzz Words (e.g. simple, easy, fast). Let the reader decide if it's "easy" to use.
- Put the most important info first. Imagine no one reads past the first paragraph (don't bury the lead).
- Only include metrics and data that matters to your customer (e.g. their time, their money).
- Tell a compelling story.
- Include *USDS* (or your relevant agency team) *Confidential* on the bottom.
- ***Write your headline last - make it succinct and compelling (very important that you follow this).***

Quick Start Guide: A suggested Press Release outline

Every situation is different; use this as guide to help you get started.

- **Headline:** Short, compelling description.
- **One-Sentence Summary** (*the gist*): Describe what you're launching and the most import benefit the customer will receive.
- **Date:** Your future launch date (e.g. June 1, 2017). This informs the reader that it hasn't yet launched and sets the expectation when it will launch.
- **Start With the Customer:** The first sentence states precisely who the customer is and the benefit you will provide. For example, 'United States Military Veterans can now gain access to their health benefits online or on their mobile devices in half the time it used to take.'
- **Describe What You're Launching** using words your customer will understand.
- **The Opportunity or The Problem** needs to be customer-focused. Clearly explain the opportunity or the problem that needs to be solved. Don't falsely amplify the problem or opportunity. Be factual, but compelling.
- **The Approach or The Solution:** Clearly explain your vision for how to make the most of an opportunity that will benefit the customer or how you will solve the customer's problem.
- **Quote a Senior Stakeholder:** Don't make this up. Get a real quote from a Senior Stakeholder. Having this shows that you have support for your idea. The stakeholder quote should capture the value that will be provided to the customer.
- **Describe the Customer Experience:** Explain how customers will discover and use what you propose and the value they will gain. Your goal with this paragraph is to motivate the reader to want to try it out.
- **A Customer Testimonial** is made up, but they should be specific, believable, and sound like a human said them. Use the testimonial to reinforce why the customer cares about what you're launching.
- **Call to Action:** Direct the reader to where they can go to get started (e.g. a link).
- **USDS (or relevant agency team) Confidential i**ncluded in the footer.

Add Keystone Metrics:

Customer FAQs and Stakeholder FAQs

The FAQs get you into the details. It's a tool to unpack assumptions. You need to have two separate sections in your FAQs: Customer FAQs and Stakeholders FAQs. By asking and answering these questions you anticipate the customer's needs and the important topics your stakeholders will ask about.

Tips for Creating FAQs

- Include two separate sets of FAQs:
  - Customer FAQs
  - Stakeholder FAQs
- Put the most frequently asked questions at the top
- Answer the Customer FAQs as if you were talking to an actually customer
- Ask the basic questions (Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?)
- Answer the questions you don't want to answer

Quick Start Guide: Customer FAQs **(to always include)**

1. What's going to excite me about this?
2. What might disappoint me?
3. How will I discover or find this?
4. Can I use this on my mobile devices? If yes, how's the experience?
5. I'm located outside the U.S. – can I use this? (may not be relevant for all of our projects)
6. Do I have to learn or unlearn something?

Quick Start Guide: Stakeholder FAQS **(to always include)**

1. How will this raise the bar for the customer experience?
2. Why is this customer problem/opportunity important right now?
3. What are you measures of success?
4. How does this fit into the overall USG experience (How does it integrate)?
5. What's your plan for rolling this out more widely?
6. What's your plan for mobile?
7. What's provoking the most internal debate?
8. What are the potential trust busters?

Visuals

A picture is worth a thousand words. Use visuals to explore what the customer experience might be. For your first version, create a hand-drawn visual. If you start out with high-fidelity visuals first, people will get into "pixel pushing mode" - meaning they'll talk about how it looks, but not the customer experience.

Tips for creating Visuals

- Start out with hand drawn visuals
- Don't build a prototype if you're still iterating on the idea
- Get design involved early
- Start with the most important scenario (e.g. your best customers)
- If what you are creating involves a process, create a flowchart or a value stream map.

Quick Start Guide:

Your best tools for creating visuals are a whiteboard, a marker and a smartphone

1. Draw it on a whiteboard
2. Take a picture with your phone
3. Paste it in your doc

Example of a hand drawn visual for the redesign of an e-commerce application's Help Pages