OLF project design assessment

A methodology for enacting open leadership

Background

[Open leadership](#) is a set of principles, practices, and skills people can use to mobilize their communities to solve shared problems and achieve shared goals.

Open leaders design, build, and empower projects and communities for understanding, sharing, and participation and inclusion.

This project design assessment is meant to help you discover how well your design enacts the principles, practices, and skills of open leadership. By evaluating the openness of your project before you begin, you can identify areas in need of improvement and make strategic decisions about how to open up parts of your project that might seem closed, exclusive, or unfriendly to potential contributors and users.

Completing this assessment will help you make sure that your decision-making, information sharing, and content sharing practices align with your community members' needs and provide them with value that equals what they give back to your project.

Story

Mimi, the non-profit deputy director

Before

Mimi is a deputy director for community engagement at a non-profit dedicated to improving Internet access for the urban poor. Mimi wants to help her non-profit grow by attracting new audiences and communities to the issue of Internet access and by expanding the number of ways people from those new audiences and communities can contribute to the work. She finds the Open Leadership Framework paper through a social-media feed she follows. She attends the online office-hours for the framework, shares a few stories of challenges and successes she has had, and asks questions about how to design and build community interactions that might empower her colleagues and communities to spread their work.

Use-case

Mimi takes the ideas she got during the office hours call and begins working on a project to identify shared values between her organization and contributors who have helped in the past. She uses this

project design assessment to see how well her plans align with the principles, practices, and skills of the Open Leadership Framework. She discovers that while she has a clear idea of the project's value to her organization, she hasn't ever thought through or documented the project's value to its contributors and users.

After

To find support for her project, Mimi applies for the next round of online Open Leadership mentoring with a project focused on enhancing the value exchange for community members and contributors who set up Internet access co-ops. She recruits new contributors to the project through the next Global Sprint and proposes a session demonstrating the creation and exchange of value amongst project stakeholders at the next MozFest.

How to use this assessment

This survey is meant to help you identify parts of your current project design that could be more open - parts of your project that you could improve to drive better understanding, sharing, and participation and inclusion in your project.

You shouldn't feel like you need to do all of these things all of the time. We're all at different places in our open leadership journeys. This tool should help you find a few things to work on as next steps in improving your current project design. Its purpose isn't to overwhelm you or judge your project as "open" or "closed."

Instead, it exists to help you better understand how and where to enact the principles, practices, and skills of open leadership to improve your project.

Directions

1. Read each survey item below.
2. Check off each item that's accounted for in your current project design.
3. List any evidence - like links or filenames - that show how you're accounting for that item.

   For example, in the section called "Empower," for the statement, "In this project I act to protect community members' emotional, mental, and physical safety," you might provide evidence like a link to your participation guidelines (or code of conduct) and also list yourself as a safety officer for the project if that's one of your roles.

4. Go on to the "Next Steps" section after you complete the survey.

Design

In this project:

- ❏ I include storytelling in the vision document for this project.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I share and tell stories that illustrate multiple ways to contribute to this project and use it.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I share and tell stories that foster group identify among contributors and users.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I share governance with contributors and make decisions publicly as appropriate.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I include feedback loops that let me learn and account for contributors and users' needs.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I share information on channels that are familiar to contributors and users.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____

Build

In this project:

- ❏ I advertise roles and responsibilities for delegation to contributors in this project.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I hold time and space for mentoring contributors or finding them mentorship.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____

- ❏ I publish and follow participation guidelines that build a friendly project community.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I work with contributors in ways that maximize access, transparency, and accountability.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I license and publish this project in ways that let others freely use, share, adapt, and study it.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____

Empower

In this project:

- ❏ I maintain a clear vision and sense of purpose that guides our shared work.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I model self-care by keeping track of my needs and addressing them.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I act to protect community members' emotional, mental, and physical safety.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I define and regularly review community interactions and value exchanges to ensure equity.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I acknowledge and celebrate contributions and empower others to be leaders.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
- ❏ I embrace failure as an opportunity to learn through use.
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____
    - ❏ Evidence: _____

Next steps

Review your responses to this survey. Are there specific items you need to address immediately? Is there a particular practice - design, build, or empower - that needs more of your attention than another?

If your role in project leadership is limited to one area of practice or to a particular set of responsibilities, do you feel confident that your current project design will help you do your job(s)?

Pick an item or a small set of 2-3 related items that you need to develop further for your project. Begin work on the systems and documentation you'd need in your project to mark off that item (or those items) as present and complete. Ask other project leads and contributors for help and look for best practices in the open communities in which you participate, Also, let us know how to help!

If you notice particular strengths in your project, consider mentoring others. For example, you might volunteer as a mentor for Mozilla's Open Leaders program or as a project coach during our Global Sprint.

If you notice specific weaknesses, consider looking for help to improve your practice. For example, you might apply for Mozilla's Open Leaders mentoring program or visit our self-paced, online curriculum modules Open Leadership 101 and the Open Leadership Training Series.

Stay connected

Questions or feedback about how to improve this self-assessment? Email the Open Leadership & Events (OLE) team at leadopen@mozillafoundation.org.

You can also participate in any of these open leadership offerings from Mozilla:

- Fellowships
- Global Sprint
- Internet Health Report
- MozFest
- Open Leaders
- Open Leadership 101
- Open Leadership Training Series

Thank you for your leadership! We look forward to hearing from you.

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