**Activity- Identify the Absolute Minimum Feature Set for a Given Product Idea**

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**Objective**

To help participants identify the **absolute minimum set of features** required to deliver a viable first version of a product — one that provides real value to users while minimizing development time and complexity.

This activity enables participants to understand how to distinguish between *essential*, *important*, and *optional* features, ensuring that product development focuses on the **core user value** and supports early learning and iteration.

**Duration**

60–90 minutes

**Materials Required**

* Whiteboard or chart paper
* Sticky notes in multiple colors
* Markers and pens
* Handouts describing sample product ideas or concepts
* Feature Prioritization Worksheet (provided by facilitator)
* Timer or clock

**Group Size**

4–6 participants per group

**Pre-requisites**

* Basic understanding of product development and user-centered design principles.
* Familiarity with the concept of an **MVP (Minimum Viable Product)**.
* Prior discussion or reading on **feature prioritization frameworks** such as MoSCoW Model.

**Activity Overview**

In this practical activity, participants will work collaboratively to define the **absolute minimum feature set** for a given product idea.

They will begin by understanding the **user problem**, brainstorm potential features, and then prioritize them systematically to isolate only those features essential for a first launch (the MVP).

The goal is to help participants learn how to:

* Focus on what truly matters to the user.
* Avoid feature bloat and scope creep.
* Design lean, testable versions of their product ideas.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

**Step 1: Introduction to the Concept (10 minutes)**

The facilitator introduces key concepts:

* **Minimum Viable Product (MVP):** The simplest version of a product that allows you to deliver value and collect feedback.
* **Core Value Proposition:** The primary benefit or solution your product provides.

Example:

Product Idea: “A mobile app that helps people find and join local running groups.”  
Core Value Proposition: “Connecting runners with others nearby to make running social and motivating.”

The facilitator explains that this exercise helps find the *smallest set of features* required to fulfill this promise.

**Step 2: Group Formation and Product Scenario Distribution (10 minutes)**

* Divide participants into small groups (4–6 people).
* Provide each group with a **product scenario** — either real or fictional.  
  Examples:
  + A budgeting app for students.
  + A platform for booking community events.
  + A tool for managing freelance projects.

Each group will use their assigned product idea for the rest of the activity.

**Step 3: Define the User Problem (10 minutes)**

Each group identifies:

* The **target user** (who the product is for).
* The **primary problem** being solved.
* The **desired outcome** for the user.

Groups should summarize their insights on sticky notes or the worksheet.

**Facilitator Prompts:**

* What is the biggest frustration or need this user faces?
* What change do they want to see in their daily routine?
* What one thing must your product enable the user to do better or faster?

**Step 4: Brainstorm All Possible Features (10–15 minutes)**

Groups brainstorm and list **as many features as possible** that could help address the identified problem.

Encourage creativity — participants should not worry about feasibility yet.

Example for the running app:

* User profiles
* Group search by location
* Chat function
* Event calendar
* GPS route tracking
* Leaderboards
* Push notifications
* Goal tracking

All ideas are written on sticky notes (one per feature).

**Step 5: Prioritize Using the MoSCoW Method (15 minutes)**

Facilitator introduces the **MoSCoW prioritization framework**:

| **Category** | **Meaning** |
| --- | --- |
| **Must Have** | Essential for delivering core value — without these, the product fails. |
| **Should Have** | Important but not critical for MVP launch. |
| **Could Have** | Nice additions that can enhance experience later. |
| **Won’t Have (Yet)** | Out of scope for the first release. |

Groups sort their brainstormed features into these four categories.

Example (Running App):

| **Must Have** | **Should Have** | **Could Have** | **Won’t Have Yet** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location-based group search | Group chat | Leaderboards | AI running coach |
| Join/Leave group | Event calendar | Goal tracker | Sponsorship portal |
| Basic profile | Notifications | GPS route tracking | Merchandise shop |

**Step 6: Identify the Absolute Minimum Feature Set (10 minutes)**

Now, each group focuses **only on the Must-Have column** and asks:

* Does each feature directly support the **core value proposition**?
* Could the product still deliver its purpose without this feature?
* Would users find the product useful if only these features existed?

Remove any “nice-to-have” features that sneak into the Must-Have list.

Example (Final MVP for Running App):

* User registration and login
* Search and join nearby groups
* Basic group page showing meeting time and location

This defines the **absolute minimum feature set**.

**Step 7: Present and Discuss (10–15 minutes)**

Each group presents:

1. Their product idea.
2. The identified user problem.
3. The prioritized feature list (Must, Should, Could, Won’t).
4. The final MVP (absolute minimum feature set).

**Facilitator Discussion Questions:**

* How confident are you that the MVP delivers core value?
* What assumptions are you testing with these features?
* What would you add next after validating the MVP?

**Step 8: Reflection and Wrap-Up (10 minutes)**

Facilitator summarizes key lessons:

* Focus on **outcomes**, not outputs.
* Building less helps you **learn more, faster**.
* An MVP should **solve one key problem** exceptionally well.
* Every additional feature must justify its impact on user value.

Encourage participants to apply this process in real projects and document their decisions for iteration.

**Expected Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

* Identify and articulate the **core user problem** for a product idea.
* Distinguish between essential and non-essential features.
* Apply **feature prioritization frameworks** effectively.
* Define the **absolute minimum feature set (MVP)** for a product concept.
* Align product design decisions with user value and business efficiency.

**Facilitator Tips**

* Remind participants that “**MVP ≠ minimal product**”—it must still deliver real value.
* Encourage teams to validate their feature choices with user reasoning (“Would this feature really solve the problem?”).
* Discourage overcomplication; keep the first version small and focused.
* If groups struggle, provide examples of popular MVPs (e.g., Airbnb’s original website, Dropbox demo video).
* Optionally, have groups vote on the **most focused and impactful MVP** presentation.

**Optional Extension (Advanced Session)**

**Part 2: Build the MVP Roadmap**  
Ask participants to create a **feature rollout plan** showing how they would expand the product after validating the MVP.  
This reinforces the idea of **iterative development** and continuous user feedback.

**Sample Template: “Minimum Feature Set” Worksheet**

| **Section** | **Details / Example** |
| --- | --- |
| **Product Idea:** | “A mobile app that helps people find and join local running groups.” |
| **Target User:** | Amateur runners seeking social motivation. |
| **User Problem:** | Difficulty finding consistent, local running partners. |
| **Core Value Proposition:** | Connect runners nearby for group runs easily. |
| **Feature Brainstorm:** | Profiles, group search, chat, events, GPS tracking, leaderboard. |
| **Prioritization (MoSCoW):** | Must: Group search, join group, basic profile.  Should: Chat, events.  Could: GPS tracking, leaderboard.  Won’t: Merchandise shop. |
| **Absolute Minimum Feature Set (MVP):** | 1. Basic registration  2. Group search by location  3. Join/Leave group function |
| **Next Steps / Future Features:** | Add chat, event scheduling, and goal tracking after MVP validation. |

**Summary**

This activity trains participants to think strategically about **what truly matters** in a product’s first release.

By systematically narrowing focus to the **absolute minimum feature set**, teams can reduce waste, validate ideas faster, and build products that directly address user needs.