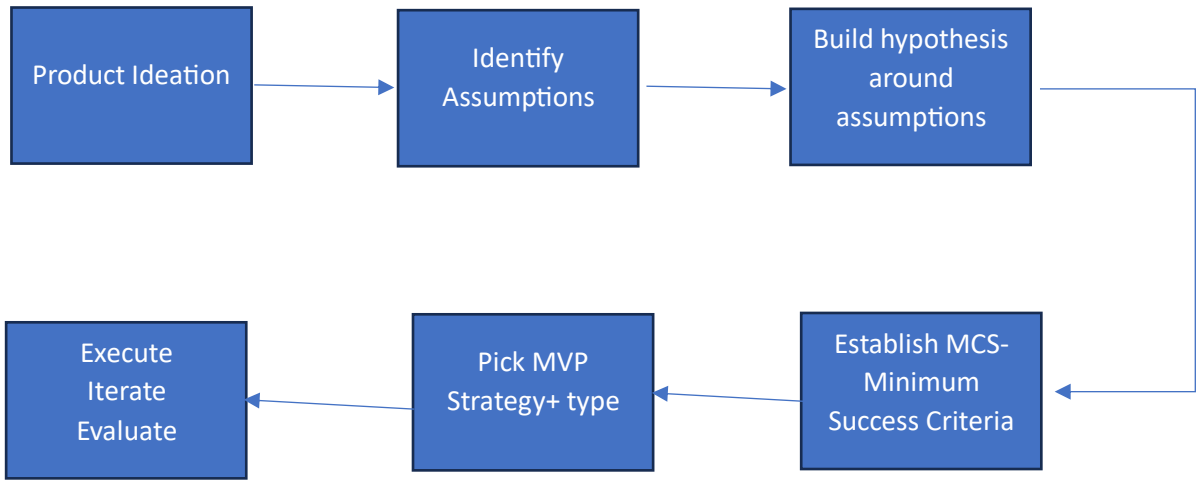
MVP/Risk Mitigation Strategy

Six Steps that I use when running an MVP experiment



1. Idea:

   At this Stage, the Idea is pretty much clear to PMs. Over here, we are trying to build a **collaborative itinerary page** in Google Travel.

   The features of the page include:

   1. Itinerary generation feature based on start and end destinations
   2. Real-time collaboration
   3. Drag and Drop features
   4. AI-driven itinerary generation.

2. Assumptions:

   - People actively use Google Travel to plan and organize trips.
   - Planning an itinerary is time-consuming and fragmented, leading to frustration.
   - Travelers prefer online tools over manual methods (e.g., spreadsheets, notes).
   - Users switch between multiple apps (flights, hotels, maps, messaging) to finalize a trip.
   - Group travel is common, and coordinating plans with others is a challenge.
   - AI-generated itineraries are useful and trustworthy for trip planning.
   - People prefer collaborative trip planning over individual itinerary creation.
   - Travelers want a shared, editable itinerary rather than sending static PDFs or messages.

- Groups struggle with coordinating schedules, preferences, and budgets across multiple members
- People want flexibility to modify plans without redoing the entire itinerary
- Users want an easy way to share trip details with both travellers and non-travellers (e.g., family, friends).
- Users are aware of AI tools (like Gemini) and comfortable using them.
- Travelers typically have a basic idea about their destination, guiding their planning.
- Users would engage with AI recommendations if integrated seamlessly into their workflow.
- Real-time collaboration on itineraries would reduce friction in group travel planning.

Take the riskiest assumptions:

The riskiest assumptions are the ones, if proven false, would fundamentally break the need for the feature.

So, the riskiest assumption here would be:

- People actively use Google Travel to plan and organize trips.
- People prefer collaborative trip planning over individual itinerary creation.
- Users switch between multiple apps (flights, hotels, maps, messaging) to finalize a trip.
- Users are aware of AI tools (like Gemini) and comfortable using them.
- People want an easy way to share trip details with both travellers
- Drag-and-drop AI recommendations into itineraries

Next, I will be building Risk vs Difficulty square where we will be arranging the above assumptions

Priority will be first given to High Risk and low difficulty quadrant followed by high risk and high difficulty.

High Risk Low Difficulty	**High Risk High Difficulty**
People actively use Google Travel to plan and organize trips Users switch between multiple apps (flights, hotels, maps, messaging) to finalize a trip.	Users are aware of AI tools (like Gemini) and comfortable using them AI integration with personalized recommendations is technically complex
Low Risk Low Difficulty	**Low Risk High Difficulty**
People want an easy way to share trip details with travellers	Drag-and-drop AI recommendations into itineraries

3. Hypothesis

   If we build an integrated itinerary planning feature within Google Travel, we believe active users will utilize this tool to organize their trips because they already trust and rely on Google Travel for travel-related information.

   If we build a real-time collaborative itinerary editing feature, we believe group travellers will choose it over individual planning because it streamlines coordination and minimizes miscommunication among travel companions.

   If we build a unified platform that consolidates flight, hotel, map, and messaging information into a single itinerary view, we believe users will reduce app-switching because having one central source simplifies their planning process.

   If we build an intuitive sharing mechanism for itineraries within the platform, we believe travellers will actively share trip details because it offers a seamless, hassle-free method for both internal group coordination and external communication with family or friends.

   If we build a drag-and-drop interface into itineraries, we believe users will adopt this feature because it provides an intuitive and flexible way to customize their travel plans on the fly.

4. Minimum Success Criteria

A large company like google will not think much of theoretical costs and opportunity costs. The success would be measured at feature level and not at product level. So, for building an MVP, the first and foremost is to try eliminate the **High-Risk Low Difficulty** quadrant while working on the others.

To see if the feature works, we need to have certain measure for clarity and meaning for developing it.

Dividing into two sides – **Cost and Reward ~ percentages here are just by assumptions but Data Analytics report will help in better judging the metrics**

If integrating the new feature costs moderate engineering time and incurs minimal legacy adjustments,	then a 20% increase in daily active users (DAUs) within the Google Travel section and a 15% increase in session duration will validate success.
If enabling real-time collaboration requires additional development and integration efforts incurring higher labour wages,	then a 15% increase in collaborative session duration and a 10% increase in frequency of itinerary edits will confirm its value.
If integrating Gemini AI requires additional engineering and internal training resources,	then achieving a 30% improvement in engagement with AI-generated recommendations (e.g., higher click-through rates) and a 15% boost in feature adoption will validate the assumption.
If developing a simple, intuitive sharing mechanism incurs minimal integration costs and API modifications	then a 20% increase in itinerary shares and a 10% improvement in referral traffic or signups will confirm its effectiveness.
If building an interactive drag-and-drop interface involves moderate UI/UX development and some legacy system adjustments	then a 25% increase in feature usage (drag-and-drop events) and a 15% improvement in user satisfaction scores (via usability surveys) will indicate a successful

5. MVP Strategy

There are number of MVP strategies out there including Email MVP, Shadow button MVP, 404/coming soon MVP, Explainer MVP, Fake landing page, Concierge MVP, Piecemeal, Wizard of Oz and Dogfooding MVP.

While choosing MVP strategy for big companies, one must careful to not affect the brand value. If the users frequently see 404/Coming soon pages, it will tarnish the brand name thinking the website have technical glitches.

So as far as for Google, I believe that following strategy will help us test and iterate the product as fast as possible.

Step 1: **Dogfooding (Internal testing)**– Google has huge employee set across world. So, testing the feature internally to see smooth functioning of technology could help us better refine the solution.

Step 2: **Test the feature for limited set of users**, maybe 5-10% of Google Travel users and gather quick feedback to come to conclusion about the first two assumptions.

Step 3: **Release for selected Market** like Google one subscribers, Travel Bloggers to estimate the engagement metrics and to quickly come to conclusion regarding its usage.

Step 4: Expand or pivot based on feedback.