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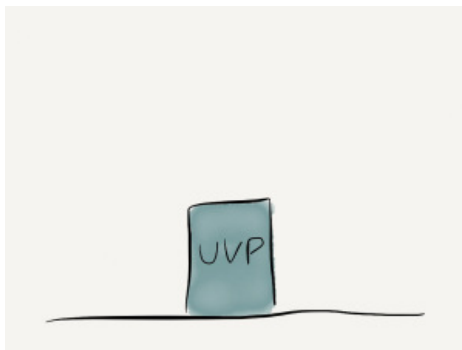
Explaining MVPs, MVFs, MMFs via the Lean/Agile Requirements Dinosaur

by [YUVAL YERET](#) on DECEMBER 30, 2012 · [3 COMMENTS](#)

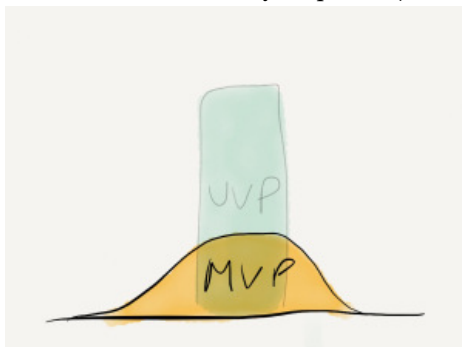
In the last few weeks I've been using a new visualization that people find useful for understanding the relationship between the various Lean/Agile requirement containers. Some people call the full model a dinosaur. Others are reminded of the [snake who ate an elephant](#) from "The Little Prince". (I'm sure there is a good connection to [elephant carpaccio](#) somewhere in here ...)

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The first step is to understand that for a new product there is a unique value proposition hypothesis. This is the area where your product/service will be unique.



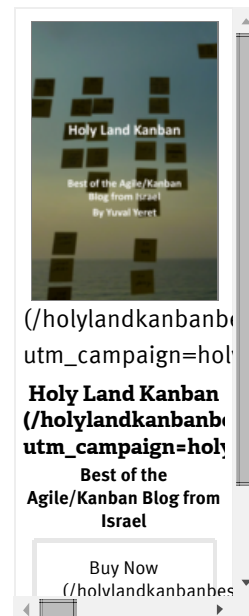
The next step is creating a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to test your hypothesis. This is focused on your unique value proposition but typically also provides a little bit of "Tablestakes" features just to make sure it is "Viable" as a product.

ABOUT ME



I'm Yuval Yeret. I'm leading the Kanban practice at [AgileSparks](#). This blog focuses on my experiences using Lean and Agile approaches to help organizations and people become more effective.

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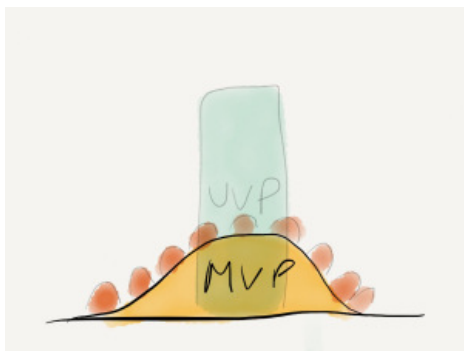
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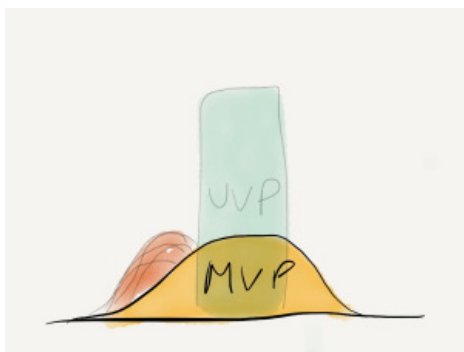
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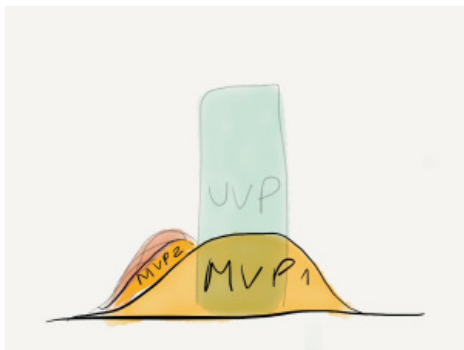
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Your MVP is also an hypothesis. It might be good enough to find Product Market Fit or not. The case where each potential customer you engage tells you “This is great but in order for me to use it I need X” and X is different for each customer/user is shown below. This shows you are not in a Product Market Fit yet.



If on the other hand you are seeing more and more answers pointing to the SAME X then it makes sense to revise your Customer/Problem/Solution Hypothesis.



You essentially are executing a Pivot. You are building MVP2 focused on the new hypothesis based on recent Customer Development learning generated by the previous MVP.

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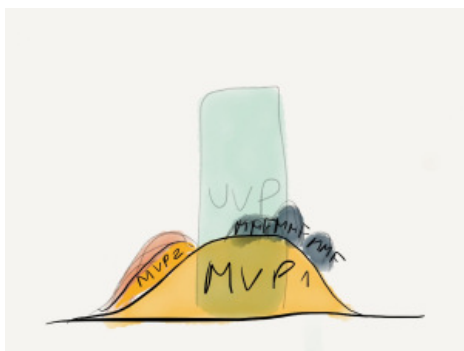
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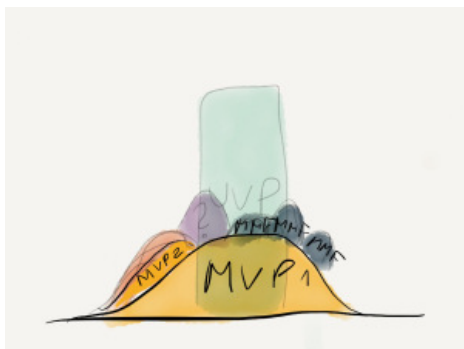
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Let's say MVP2 is successful and you are seeing real traction of early adopters. You want to increase growth and are looking for deeper penetration of your early adopters as well as bringing on new clients some of them beyond the early adopters crowd. Based on feedback you've been collecting and your product management research you have a couple of areas that can potentially bring this growth. Some of them by the way extend your unique value proposition and some of them make your current product more robust.



In the case of areas with strong indication of value you might go straight for Minimally Marketable Features (MMF). Finding the minimum piece that can start bringing in growth. The aim of the MMF is to bring in value. It assumes high certainty that there is value in this area and that we know what the product needs to be to provide this value. The reason to break a big feature into smaller MMFs is mainly time to market and the ability to bring in value in many areas, always keeping your option to move to another area and provide value in it rather than focusing for too long on a single direction. An indication that you are working on MMFs is that when one is being shipped you feel comfortable working on the next MMF in that area. If on the other hand you want to wait and see if your first MMF sticks...



...then you are back in hypothesis land. But now your hypothesis is centered on a feature rather than your product. You have an area with high potential but also high uncertainty. The way to deal with it is to build a “pioneering” feature – the Minimum Viable Feature. The minimum feature that can still be viable for real use and learning

from real customers.



If you learn that the MVP has hit gold you can develop more MMFs in that area to take advantage (if that makes sense). If not, you can pivot to another approach towards that feature area, or at some point look for alternative growth path. Essentially the MVP is a mini-me version of the MVP.



There you have it. The full model. Essentially my point is that you grow a product in uncertain markets by attempting various MVPs. Then once you achieve Product Market Fit you mix MMFs and MVFs depending on the level of Business/Requirements uncertainty in the areas you are focusing on.

While MVPs/MMFs/MVPs are atomic from a business perspective (you cannot deploy and learn from something smaller) they might be quite big from an implementation perspective.

The dinosaur carpaccio now comes in as slicing each of those pieces here to smaller slices aimed at reducing execution/technology risk. (typically these are called User Stories) Those smaller slices might have tangible business value but on the other hand some might not. It is more important for them to provide early implementation decision feedback along the way.

Feel free to use this model. Let me know what you think about it and how I can improve it!

Me gusta A 2 personas les gusta esto.

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chadholdorf • 2 years ago

Love it! Well done. I'll call it Lean-Rex.

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David Lowe • 6 months ago

Great stuff. We're discussing MVPs, etc, next week at the London Agile Discussion Group - I'll be sure to refer to this.

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