Activity steps

STEP 1

Generate assumptions

🕐 **60 mins**

OUTCOME

Alignment on why taking action is important for our users, our organisation and our decision makers.

INSTRUCTIONS

Before you start: Add your project objective or problem statement to the board and any potential opportunities you may have discussed.

1	Talk through your problem statement and it's different elements (as well as any opportunities) and make sure everyone is clear on what they mean.
2	Working independently, spend time (10-15 minutes is a good start) writing down the assumptions that success for the project is based on - one assumption per sticky note. Do this by finishing the sentence: *This project will only succeed if...*
3	After time is up (or options are exhausted), have everyone read out their sticky note, grouping similar assumptions as you go. Once they've been read and grouped, pick the best articulation of each, or rewrite the assumption in a way that captures the best parts of the grouped sticky notes.

You know you're done when the group can confidently say "there are no obvious assumptions left."

PROBLEM
& OPPORTUNITIES

THIS WILL PROJECT WILL ONLY SUCCEED IF...

STEP 2

Prioritise assumptions

🕐 **60 mins**

OUTCOME
Alignment on which assumptions are most critical to validate through research.

INSTRUCTIONS

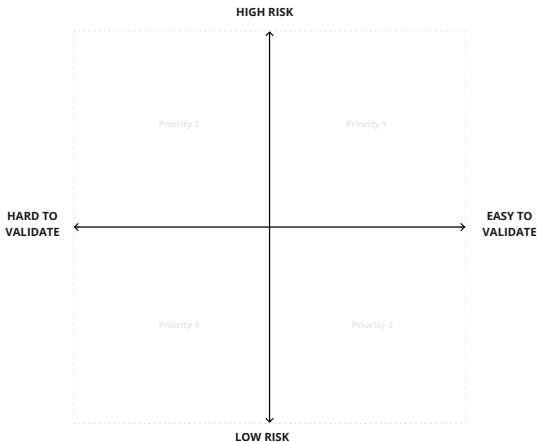|			
1	Take turns at picking up an assumption from the previous step and placing it where you think it sits on the Risk / Validation matrix, based on: • How risky would it be if we didn't validate this assumption? If it turned out to be wrong would it derail the whole project (big risk) or would it go unnoticed (low risk)? • How hard would it be to validate? Will we need to undergo a huge study of the population (hard) or could we just ask an in-house expert (easy).		
2	As each one is put up discuss as a group whether you think the placement is right or wrong, Also consider where each one should sit relative to other assumptions, or whether they can be grouped.		
	When a majority of the group agree on placement, it's the next person's turn to plot the assumption of their choosing		
3	Once all the assumptions are mapped, choose 5-10 of the riskiest assumptions, - the more that are easy to validate, the smoother research will go.		
	You know you're done when the group can explain why each assumption is placed where it is.		

HIGH RISK

Priority 2   Priority 1

HARD TO VALIDATE ← → **EASY TO VALIDATE**

Priority 4   Priority 3

LOW RISK

STEP 3

Turn assumptions into research questions

🕐 **90 mins**

OUTCOME
Questions that will help validate your riskiest assumptions

INSTRUCTIONS

Before you start: Add the riskiest assumptions to the left-hand column

1. Working individually, reflect on the assumptions and spend 20 mins generating questions that will help you validate the assumption with users. Try and generate at least one question per assumption.

2. As a group review the questions for each assumption and decide which one(s) are most likely to help you learn what you need to.

3. Once you've been through all the assumptions and built up your shortlist, it's time to sharpen them up. Ask the group:

   - Are there questions that will give us information about multiple assumptions?
   - How will the questions be answered, and can we improve the question to optimise our chance of getting a quality response?
   - Are we asking this question in a way that makes sense to a human?

   When the group is satisfied the questions are right, add them to the KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS panel in an order that will make sense to the people you're interviewing.

You know you're done when the group feel that asking *these* questions in *this* order will clearly validate (or invalidate) the riskiest assumptions.

🔆 **PRO TIP**

"Repeat this step of the activity for the different groups you intend to interview. We usually do three: one for users, one for stakeholders and another for subject matter experts."

Rich Brophy
Department of Customer Service

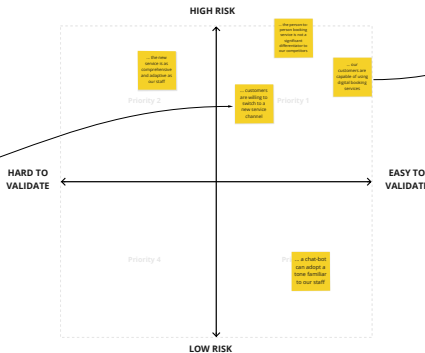| ASSUMPTION	POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Example

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⏱ **60 mins**

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PRO TIP
"I always start the activity by talking through the first few assumptions as a group, and giving a steer on what a good one sounds like. It gives everyone the chance to understand the best way to contribute before going off and doing their independent work."

Rich Brophy
Department of Customer Service

STEP 2
Prioritise assumptions

⏱ **60 mins**

OUTCOME
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PRO TIP
"Want to work efficiently? Steer clear of conversations about specific solutions or what you think the research will tell you. These will draw energy away from the important conversation of what is most critical to learn."

Rich Brophy
Department of Customer Service

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⏱ **90 mins**

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Rich Brophy
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