Project Poster

Figuring out the right way to tackle a problem or opportunity can be messy – and that's ok! Use the project poster to iterate through the clutter, get your team on the same page, and build confidence in your approach before jumping to execution mode.

USE THIS PLAY TO...

Understand what problem you're solving and why you're solving it.

Guide your thinking, share ideas, and define what success looks like.

If you're struggling with shared understanding on your Health Monitor, running this play might help.

PEOPLE
4 - 8

DIFFICULTY
Moderate

PREP TIME
1 hr

TIME
1 hr

RUNNING THE PLAY

Unlike project charters, your project poster is a living document. Update it as you explore your problem space, challenge assumptions, validate solutions, gather feedback, and course-correct before you move forward.

PREP

Project posters get filled out over the course of several sessions with your team, so don't worry about doing it all in one go. In the first session, focus on defining the problem space. Then share it with your stakeholders as early as possible to get their feedback, which you'll incorporate in future sessions as your project develops.

The poster is split into 3 parts to support this evolution:

Problem space – Explain why are we doing this and what would success look like?

Validate assumptions – What do you know and what do you need to find out?

Get ready to execute – Describe what we are doing, visualize the solution, and estimate the size of the project.

How to run each session

Schedule 60 minutes with your team. Collect and share any data that may help inform the discussion in advance (e.g., notes from user testing, analytics, customer feedback, market research, etc.).

Start the first session by sharing the project poster template with instructions. In future sessions, you can start by (briefly!) reviewing what's changed on the poster.

Lead your team through the questions, making sure you're basically agreed on each one before moving on to the next. If you reach a stalemate or team members have wildly different ideas, take the time to talk through them and try to reach a consensus. If you can't, someone from the team should take on a follow-up task to gather more information and share it out. And ultimately, the project's full-time owner or executive sponsor may have to resolve differences of opinion by simply making a call on which direction to go.

As you work through the questions, link off to other project artifacts that come out of other plays you might run: DACI, Experience Canvas, Trade-off Sliders, etc.

PROBLEM SPACE

The "Problem space" section captures the project's reason for existence. This section should include just enough detail that someone outside your team can understand why you're considering the project and what it will achieve.

You'll probably revisit your problem space several times before you're ready to execute. As feedback from users and stakeholders comes in, teams often find they haven't been asking the right questions or haven't met the customer's needs. You might also find that your assumptions weren't exactly spot-on.

Don't stress. This is normal. Come back to this section of the project poster and work through the questions again. (And again, and again, if that's what it takes.)

VALIDATION

Defining the problem space will force you to make assumptions that need to be validated so your team and stakeholders are confident in your solution. Initially, this section of the poster amounts to a to-do list. As the project moves along and you record your findings here, it provides overview of the validation effort undertaken, and the evidence you've gathered.

It's up to your team to work on a plan of attack to validate your assumptions. The research should confirm the concept and it's relative priority before you go any further. If you can't do this, you may need to revisit the problem space, brainstorm more solutions or consider stopping the project.

For massive projects, validation can take weeks, or even months, to work through. As your research progresses, update this section with summaries of what you've found and links to any supporting documentation.

READY TO GO

This section will be empty when you first create the project poster, but you'll fill it in as you reach conclusions around which solution to pursue, an idealized vision of what you'll deliver, and what it'll take to deliver it.

Involving multiple team members with diverse skills sets in the "ready to go" phase helps ensure you capture all aspects of what you'll deliver and develop that all important shared understanding.

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