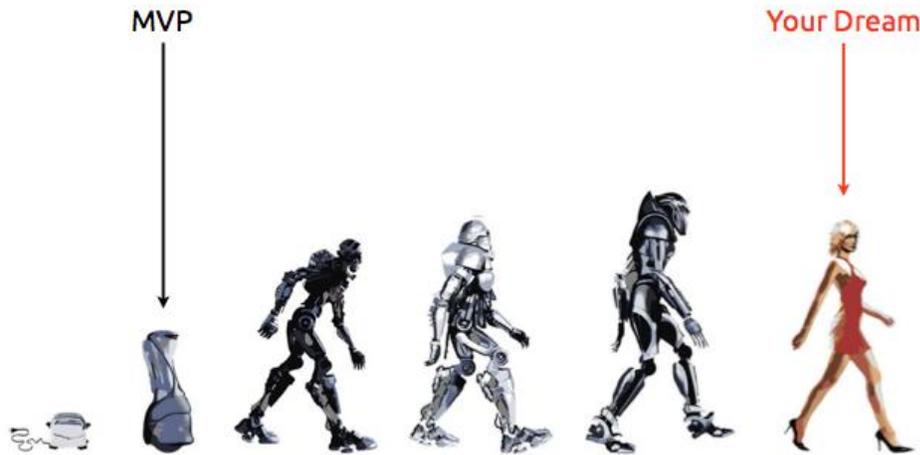


How to Use the Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

by [Matt H. Evans, CPA, CMA, CFM](#)

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Over the last few years, successful entrepreneurs have pointed to the Minimum Viable Product or MVP as a roadmap for creating long-term success. MVP is about creating a product or service with just enough value to make it attractive to a small group of customers. In some cases, the product or service is released on a test basis. This allows you to move incrementally without committing huge resources. A strong development team will be needed to capture feedback and turn out new releases. If you are releasing something very unique, you should validate the offering with a private or internal group well in advance of going to a larger test market.

According to Eric Ries, author of [The Lean Startup](#), most ideas for a new product or service will be wrong. Ries advocates taking your proposed offering, cut it in half and do this two more times. This may sound drastic, but most features and functions are dead weight. Additionally, most people think their ideas are good when in fact they are not. Therefore, the MVP process will require a lot of touch points.

The best way to find touch points is to find early adopters of the product. Early adopters are invaluable, providing validation of your ideas and helping you get the design right. Remember the goal is to get it right before going mass market; otherwise you are setting yourself up for a major disappointment.

One way to communicate your MVP to early adopters is to have a landing page or some visualization that allows quick review and feedback. In some cases, you may need to conduct interviews to pull out the right ideas. Knowing how to work through an orderly process is important. This can involve things like user stories and wireframe diagrams.

“Don’t mistake speed for precocity: the world doesn’t need wrong answers in record time.” – Cennydd Bowles

The best products or services aim to solve a problem that no-one else seems to solve for the early adopter. Many entrepreneurs start here, trying to solve a problem and eliminate the fluff so they can dovetail into their MVP. Trying to solve the biggest problem first is usually a good starting point. You have to create enough of a product to solve the problem. Then ask yourself: *What do you think the user will not care about?*

Will Dayble of TeamLearnable works with startups by having them fill in three blanks:

1. As a _____
2. I need _____
3. So I can _____

For example, as a fly fisherman, I need something that will allow my fly to float in the water for more than four hours. This puts definition to your user story and helps get you on your way to UX (User Experience) Design. Will’s YouTube video describing how to do an MVP is linked below:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/jHyU54GhfGs>

Because most ideas for startups are wrong, it is important to start with something minimal and enlist feedback. Great ideas take a long time to build and the failure of a single idea should not lead to the failure of a startup. This is why MVP has gained a lot of traction for new startups. It helps companies get it right through a rigorous journey and once you have a “remarkable” product, you introduce it to the world. It’s not unlike how Steve Jobs took years to get to the point where Apple introduced iPads and iPhones. The alternative to MVP is to take your single best shot and in today’s highly competitive and customer driven world, this can be extremely risky.

“Every feature we include in the MVP will ultimately delay validated learning, and the longer we build in a tunnel of assumptions, the more likely it is we’re building the wrong thing.” – Eric Bieller