

Assumption Slam

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(with thanks to Julie Booth)



Agenda

10 mins - Intro and goals

15 mins - List assumptions

45 mins - Cluster assumptions

15 mins - break

45 mins - Map assumptions

10 mins - Roundup

(this is just a suggested starting part - play around with the format to see what works for your team)

Assumptions are...

Things we believe to be true without (much) evidence.

Why do they matter?

They guide our actions, but they are often unspoken and unexamined.

If they turn out to be wrong, they can cause our projects to fail.

Assumption mapping is...

A way to make our assumptions explicit, so we can examine them more closely and identify areas where they should be checked.

Output: a set of prioritized questions to investigate.

Project goal

Mission

Put your summary project mission statement here.

TL;DR

Put your full summary project mission statement here.

Product Manager or champion to provide these

Show project mockups or flows here

This can be just one image, the IA of a website, or whatever it is that helps you to visualize your assumptions.

Before building hypothesis and deciding what to test, it's important to consider all of your project's potential assumptions.

What have you accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof?

List assumptions (15 min)

Thinking about your problem statement, write out all the assumptions you have about needs, users, and potential solutions.

I believe buyers / merchants have a need to _____.

I believe these needs can be solved with _____.

I believe the best outcome for buyers/merchants is _____.

I believe the most important audience is _____.

I believe my biggest product risk is _____.

What other assumptions do we have that, if proven false, will cause our project to fail?

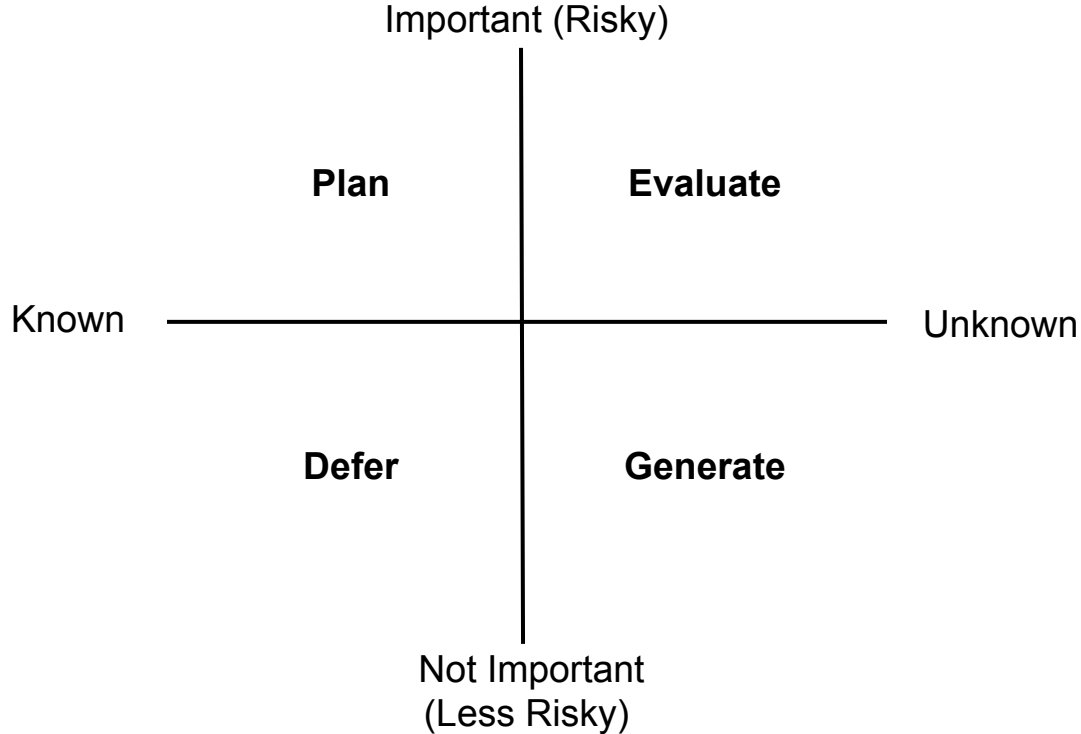
Cluster assumptions (45 minutes)

Group post-its with similar ideas together

Label each group with a statement that summarizes the ideas inside

e.g. “Merchants need more education about the benefits of dynamic checkout”

Map assumptions (45 minutes)



Notes for previous slide...

Assumptions in the top right quadrant (unknown + important) are statements you've made that need to be **evaluated**.

Assumptions in the bottom right quadrant (unknown + unimportant) are tricky in that you've agreed that you don't even know enough about to map them out with confidence. This leads to more **generative** experimentation techniques where you are looking for possible meaningful problems to solve.

Assumptions in the top left quadrant (known + important) are closer to facts than assumptions. This conversation is still valuable, especially since those facts are often unevenly distributed across the team. These are best checked against an existing plan.

Assumptions in the bottom left quadrant (known + unimportant) can be seen as distractions for your team. Defer commitment to these assumptions.

Researchers take the results and make a research plan.

Thank you