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Guidance for LPAs:

Kicking off your project

2023

What's in this?

1. What is a project kick off
2. Understanding the project objectives
3. Get to know your team
4. Hopes and fears
5. Agreeing rhythms
6. Agree tools
7. Stakeholder mapping
8. Managing risks

This guidance is not prescriptive and may ultimately be adopted with variations in your LPA.

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Owner: Delivery Lead

The project kick-off

The Kick off is the first meeting that happens in the project Life Cycle - here the team meet for the first time, discuss the project brief and agree how they want to work together. This session is facilitated by the Delivery Lead, with input from the wider team.

Objective

- Align on the high level brief for the project
- Define ways of working for the project team, and rhythms and cadence going forward
- Agree key objectives / outcomes for project

Outputs

- Project objectives
- Project roles
- User manuals
- Agreed cadence of meetings
- Stakeholder Map
- Initial Risk Register

Format

- 2 hour session using a collaborative tool at the start of the project

Next steps

- DM schedules a project planning session
- DM & Strategy Lead write up outputs into Team Charter that is shared with the group

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Potential agenda items

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10 mins

The Ice-breaker

What is it?

A quick interactive activity at the start of the session. Here the goal is to get conversation growing and to get a collaborative feel going for the session. The siller these are often, the better. Some examples are screenshotted here to the right.

How to facilitate?

Each icebreaker is facilitated differently depending on the activity. However normally it will involve asking someone to say their name, their role and something interesting about themselves - this can range from ‘what Spice Girl are you feeling like today’ to ‘Tell an interesting story about your name’

15 mins

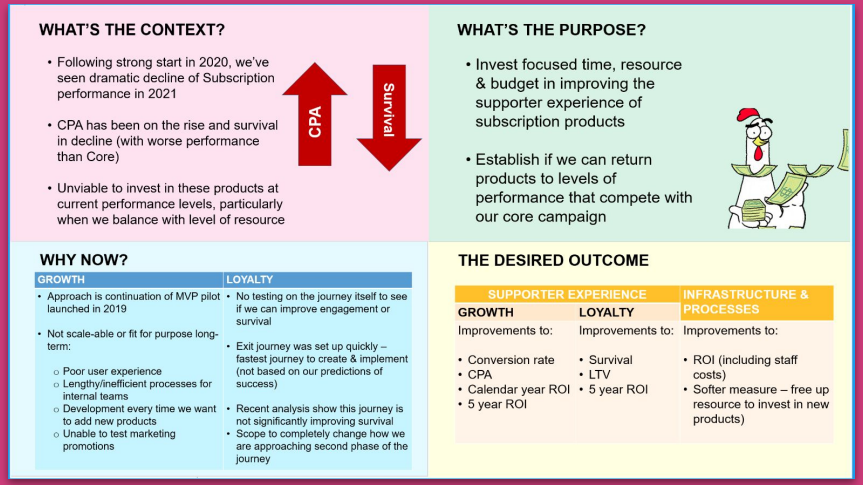
Understand the project objectives

What is it?

This project should have been given a brief and will have an Engagement Oversight Group assigned. The Strategy Lead or member of the Engagement Oversight Group will talk through a summary of the brief so the group is aligned on what the project is about.

How to facilitate?

This is presenting time. The Strategy Lead will most likely present a summary view of the brief, calling out the key points such as objectives and outcomes they should achieve. The team will be given space to ask questions. Any questions that cannot be answered in the session can be escalated to



Example from previous project

20 mins

Get to know your team - The User Manual

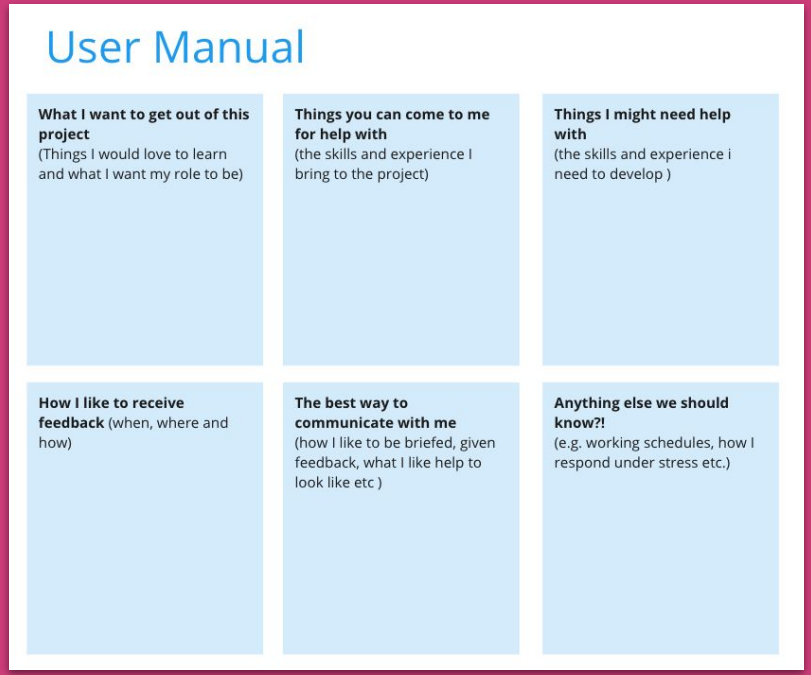
What is it?

Users Manuals are sheets that each team member fills in, describing their preferred ways of working. Ideally these act as a contract between team members, helping each to respect one another's preferred working patterns.

How to facilitate?

Introduce 'User Manuals' as a concept. These are guides that outline how people want to work. (2 minutes)

The group is given 10 minutes to fill out their User Manual. Each person then talks through their User Manual one at a time.



15 mins

Hopes and fears

What is it?

This exercise is used to identify the teams hopes for the projects, as well as any ‘fears’ or risks that can be mitigated straight of the bat.

How to facilitate?

Give the team 6 minutes to write down their main ‘hopes and ‘fears’ for the project. Once done the facilitator should review, look for key themes and ask if anyone would like to talk through some of their hopes. Repeat this for the fears. Hopes can be taken forward as project objectives, fears should be considered risks that we need to mitigate against.

15 mins

Agreeing Rhythms

What is it?

Rhythms are the cadence of alignment meetings that the team will operate. This activity will help you agree and align on the types, frequency, cadence and length for each of these meetings.

How to facilitate?

Read through the proposed list of meetings - open question to the team if there are any other meetings they think should happen - or if there are any meetings that need to be taken away. Go through each rhythm and define how frequently it should happen, and when works to deliver it. General expectations would be:

- Planning - weekly (30 mins)
- Stand up - more than once a week (15 mins)
- Sprint retros - weekly / every second week (30 mins)
- Show & tell - every two weeks (30 - 45 mins)

Top tip: It's helpful to check diaries before and go in with suggested times and frequencies that the team can agree with or challenge

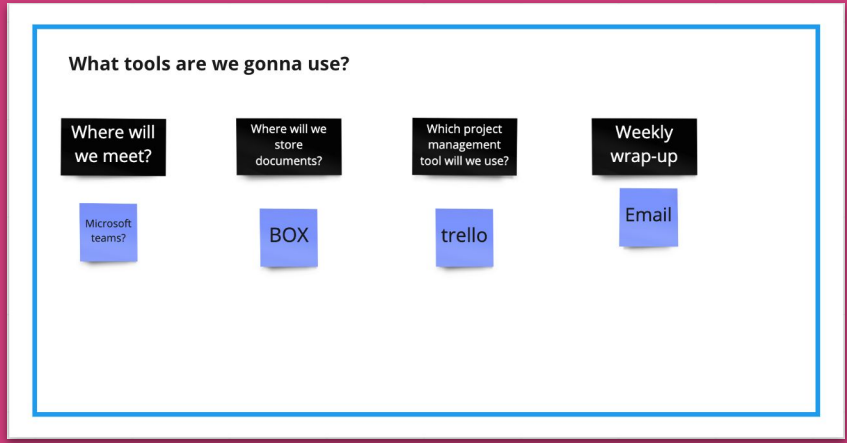
5 mins

Agreeing tools

What is it?

Agree the common tools that the team will use to facilitate the project including:

- Where we communicate
- Where we store
- Where we collaborate
- Where we update
- Where we plan



How to facilitate?

This should be fairly quick, and may not need to happen if tools are standard. Come with suggestions for each of the above questions, ask if anyone has any other tools they like to work with that aren't listed, if so discuss if the group would like to test this tool.

15 mins

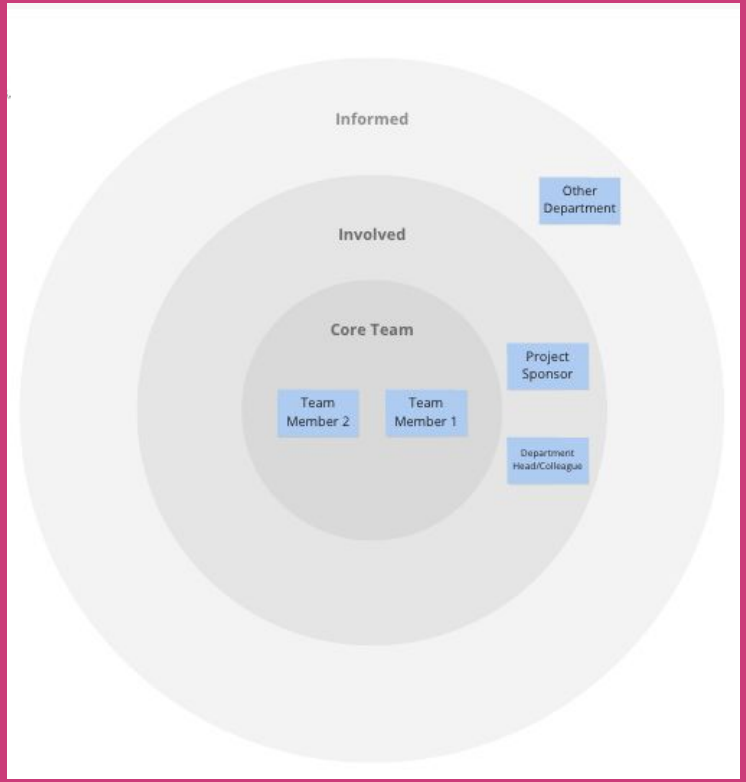
Stakeholder mapping

What is it?

Here we take some time to think about the various stakeholders that are involved in this project - who is on the core team, who is involved, and who is informed.

How to facilitate?

Give the group 5 minutes to write post-its of the stakeholders they think should be engaged as part of this process. Each person then goes through the post-its they put down and explains why they think they are stakeholders. The group should discuss when and how this group should be engaged / input into the project.



15 mins

Managing Risks

What is it?

Here we take some time to think about potential risks to the project, and how we will manage risks and issues going forward.

How to facilitate?

Give the group 5 minutes to write post-its of the risks they can see to the project currently. stakeholders they think should be engaged as part of this process. Each person then goes through the post-its they put down and explain why they see these as risks.. The group should then discuss how the plan to manage risks on the project- how will they be raised, tracked and resolved.

Top tip: you can conduct a SWOT analysis or other methods such as PESTLE to help you identify potential risks to the project