TOOL | Planning Prototypes and Testing

TIME REQUIRED: 30-60 MINUTES

If you are interested in creating a prototype of a service you are working on, but aren't sure where to start, this tool is for you! It will help you think through some of the key considerations to help you decide what your focus for prototyping should be.

> USING THIS TOOL WILL HELP YOU:
> - Hone in on the core questions your prototype test needs to explore
> - Connect your core questions to key features that your prototype or test must have

OVERVIEW

Prototyping and testing can help you build excitement and buy-in for a new service, get feedback to help you iterate and refine your service, or challenge some of your core assumptions about your service to make sure it will have the impact you hope for. Making this a regular practice will help you get to greater impact, faster.

But, how can you figure out what to make and how to test it? Is it enough to sketch a few mockups and talk about them with community members? Or do you need to create a fully functioning service before we have the confidence to invest further? The answer depends on your community context and the type of change that you are making. In early stages of a change process a prototype that is fast and loosely defined can help you quickly hone in on what works and what doesn't, while in the latter stages of a change process a well-defined and functional prototype can help iron out the details.

Regardless of where you are in your process, this tool will help you think about what sort of prototype is appropriate for your situation.

THE TOOL

Step 1: What is your main purpose for prototyping? (e.g., building excitement and buy-in for a new service, getting feedback to iterate and refine the service, or ensuring that your service will have the impact you hope for)

Step 2: What questions do you have, that if answered, would help you move forward on your initiative with confidence? Use the prompts below to help you hone in on your core questions.

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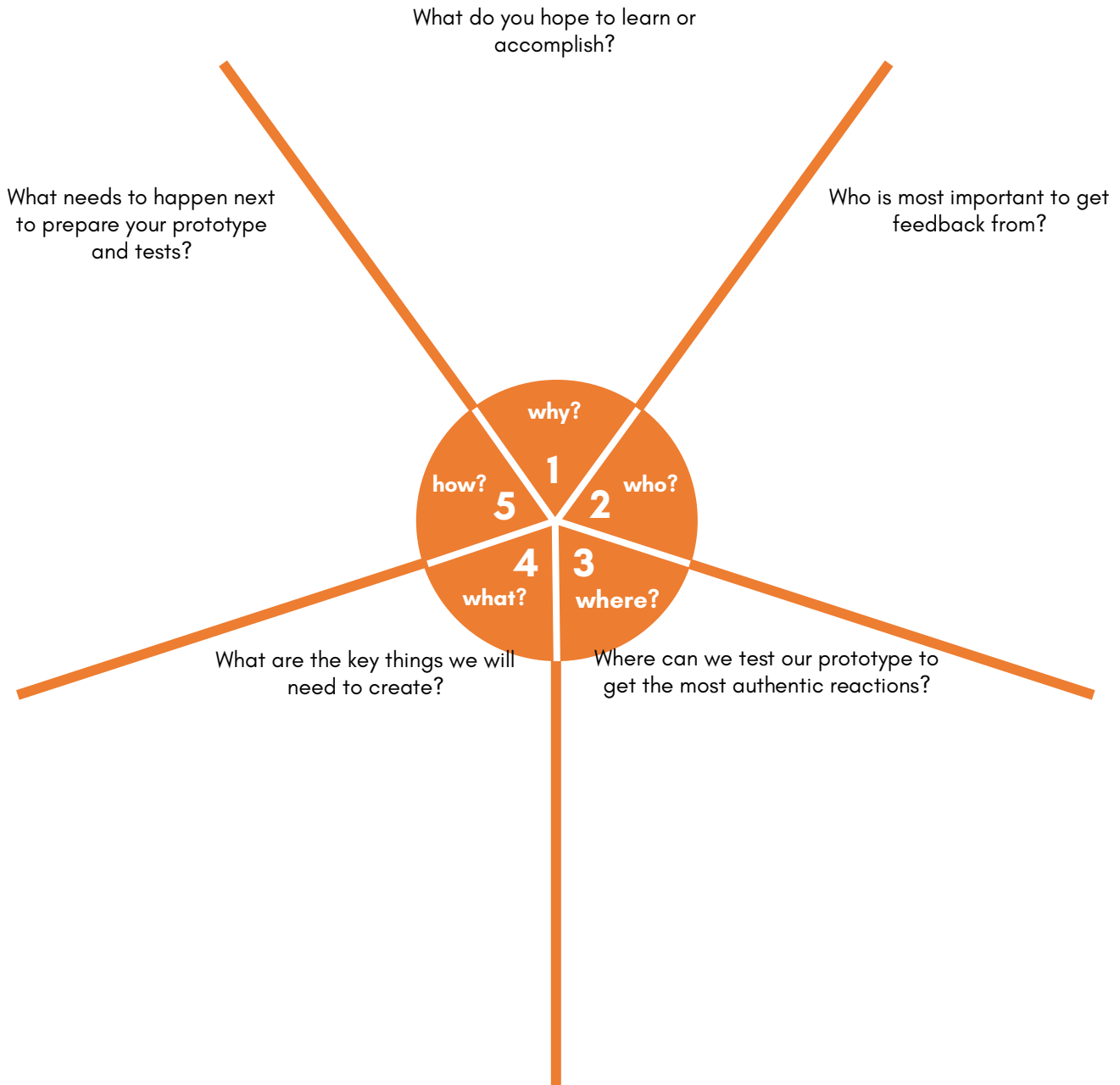Which questions need to be answered first, and why?

What must be true for this to concept to be successful in implementation?

Whose buy-in do you need and what are their needs?

What impact do you hope to achieve?

What is your current sense of how this program could work?

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Step 3: Complete the prototype plan template below:

What do you hope to learn or accomplish?

What needs to happen next to prepare your prototype and tests?

Who is most important to get feedback from?

why?

1

how?

5

who?

2

4

3

what?

where?

What are the key things we will need to create?

Where can we test our prototype to get the most authentic reactions?

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PRINCIPLES FOR USING THIS TOOL

- Keep your answers short and sweet – don't dwell too much on optimizing your prototype of your plan, instead use this as a guide to help collect your high-level thoughts
- Remember to gut-check your ideal prototype and test with what is possible given the time and resources that you have. Prototypes are never perfect, but each act of creation teaches us something new.
- If you're not sure how to prototype, there are many great examples of different types of prototyping that you can find online (links to these resources are included at the end of this document)
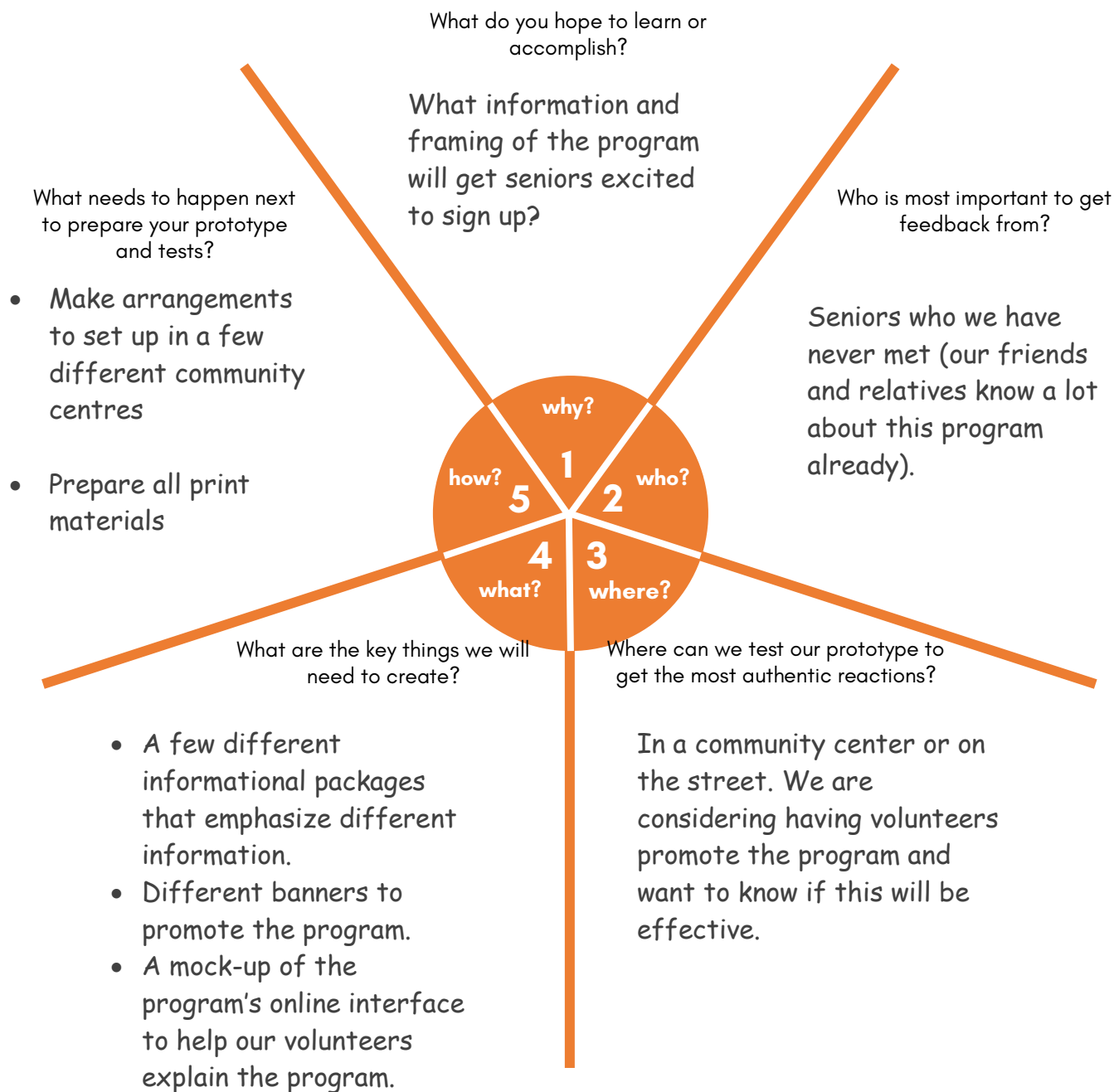
THE TOOL IN PRACTICE

Step 1: What is your main purpose for prototyping? (e.g., building excitement and buy-in for a new service, getting feedback to iterate and refine the service, or ensuring that your service will have the impact you hope for)

> Determine the best process and tools to encourage seniors to sign up for a community healthy living program that we are developing.

Step 2: What questions do you have, that if answered, would help you move forward on your initiative with confidence? Use the prompts below to help you hone in on your core questions.

> - What is the best way to 'pitch' the program to seniors?
>
> - What information is most important to seniors?
>
> - Where is the most effective place for seniors to hear about the program? Online? In-person?

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What do you hope to learn or accomplish?

What information and framing of the program will get seniors excited to sign up?

What needs to happen next to prepare your prototype and tests?

- Make arrangements to set up in a few different community centres

- Prepare all print materials

Who is most important to get feedback from?

Seniors who we have never met (our friends and relatives know a lot about this program already).

why?

1

how? 5

2 who?

4

3

what?

where?

What are the key things we will need to create?

- A few different informational packages that emphasize different information.
- Different banners to promote the program.
- A mock-up of the program's online interface to help our volunteers explain the program.

Where can we test our prototype to get the most authentic reactions?

In a community center or on the street. We are considering having volunteers promote the program and want to know if this will be effective.

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DIVING DEEPER

- Learn about different approaches for prototyping services at servicedesigntools.org
- Get tips from renowned design and innovation firm IDEO on how to prototype a service
- [3]Read more about the Power of Prototyping, in this article by Tamarack's Director of Community Innovation, Galen MacLusky

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