BUILD A BUSINESS · BEGINNER · 13 MIN READ

From idea to MVP

Turn an idea into something real people use: the problem, the smallest version, and how to learn fast.

Pass the check (4 of 5) online to earn the “Idea Shipper” badge:
https://digitalbuilders757.com/university/study/from-idea-to-mvp

Start with a problem, not a feature

The best projects start from a real annoyance someone has today. Write it in one sentence: '[Who] struggles to [do what] because [why].' For example: 'Parents in our league struggle to know which games moved because updates are scattered across three group chats.'

Then talk to five people who have that problem before building much. Ask about the last time it happened and what they did. Don't pitch; listen.

Build the MVP

An MVP (minimum viable product) is the smallest version that solves the core problem well enough for someone to use it. Not every feature you can imagine: the one job, done reliably.

Our Maker Corner in the campus shows the stages: Idea (a sticky note), Prototype (rough, to test whether it works) and Demo (real enough to show someone). Vibe coding makes the jump from idea to prototype take hours instead of months.

- Cut features until it feels a little embarrassing. Then ship.
- Use real tools early: real sign-in, real data, a real web address.
- Decide in advance what result would tell you it's working (for example, 10 people use it twice in a week).

Learn from users

Watch someone use it without helping. Where they hesitate is your next fix. Add a simple way to send feedback. Measure the one number that matters for your goal.

Iterate in small releases, the same loop as vibe coding: change, check, learn.

A landing page tells the story

Before or alongside the MVP, a one-page site explains who it's for, the problem, how it helps and one clear call to action (join the waitlist, book a call, buy). It's also the cheapest way to test whether people care: do they sign up?

Key terms

MVP (minimum viable product)
The smallest version that solves the core problem well enough to use.

Prototype
A rough early version made to test whether an idea works.

User research
Learning from the people who have the problem: interviews and watching them use things.

Landing page
A one-page site that explains an offer and asks for one action.

Call to action (CTA)
The one thing you want a visitor to do next, like 'Join the waitlist'.

Iteration
Improving something in small rounds: try, check, adjust, repeat.

Metric
A number you track to know if something is working.

Try it: One-page project brief

1. Write your problem sentence: who, what, why.
2. List five people you could ask about it this week.
3. Write the one job your MVP will do and three features you're cutting for now.
4. Ask an AI to turn the brief into a landing page outline with one call to action.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

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5 questions. Circle one answer for each; 4 or more correct passes. Answers are at the back.

1. What is an MVP?

A. Most valuable player
B. A finished, polished product with every feature customers might ask for
C. A logo
D. The smallest version that solves the core problem well enough to use

2. What's the best first step before building much?

A. Talk to people who have the problem and listen
B. Buy a domain and build a website for every idea you have
C. Design a logo
D. Write a detailed 50-page business plan and financial forecast

3. Watching a user try your app without helping them shows you:

A. Nothing useful
B. Where they get stuck, which is your next fix
C. Your profit
D. Your code quality

4. A landing page should have:

A. Ten different buttons so visitors have plenty of choices
B. No text
C. One clear call to action
D. Only a video

5. In the Maker Corner stages, what comes between Idea and Demo?

A. Launch party
B. Invoice
C. Retirement
D. Prototype

Official sites

Y Combinator Startup School (free): https://www.startupschool.org
U.S. Small Business Administration: Plan your business: https://www.sba.gov/counseling/plan-your-business

Last reviewed 2026-11-25. AI tools change fast; check each tool's own site for current features, plans and prices.

ANSWER KEY

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1. D: The smallest version that solves the core problem well enough to use
Minimum viable product: the one job, done reliably, so you can learn from real users.

2. A: Talk to people who have the problem and listen
Conversations with real people save weeks of building the wrong thing.

3. B: Where they get stuck, which is your next fix
Hesitation and confusion point straight at what to improve.

4. C: One clear call to action
One clear next step converts better and tells you whether people care.

5. D: Prototype
Idea → Prototype (rough, to test it works) → Demo (real enough to show).