

# Impact Mapping

Trace a measurable business goal through the actors whose behaviour affects it, the behaviour changes you want, and the deliverables that might cause them -- so the team can tell strategic work from busywork.

## DURATION

# 90

min

## GROUP SIZE

# 4-6

people

## WHAT YOU BRING

One measurable, time-bound business goal written on a card before the session (e.g. "grow weekly actives from 200 to 500 by Q3").

## WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

- A four-column map from goal to actors to impacts to deliverables
- A prioritised path: one actor, one impact, one cheap deliverable
- An explicit 'not this quarter' list of deferred work
- Backlog items that carry the actor and impact as their rationale

## WHO TO INVITE

- **Facilitator.** Holds the four-column shape, stops people skipping columns, catches deliverables smuggled into other columns.
- **Product owner / business stakeholder.** Mandatory. Owns the goal and will defend, refine, or abandon it when the map exposes problems.
- **Developers.** Bring cost reality -- turn the deliverables column from wishful thinking into a triaged list of options.
- **Designers.** Natural framers of actor behaviour; sharpen the hardest column -- impacts -- into concrete behaviour changes.
- **People who talk to actors.** Sales, support, ops, SRE. Contradict optimistic assumptions with the least-filtered view of real behaviour.

## USE WHEN

- Starting a quarter or initiative and deciding what to build
- The team has a feature list but no shared story of why
- You need to say no to work with a defensible reason
- The org measures an outcome the team can't connect to

## AVOID WHEN

- × You already share a clear goal-to-work connection
- × You're at sprint-planning level -- this is strategic
- × Nobody can state a measurable business goal yet
- × The goal is imposed from above without buy-in

## How the session runs

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- **Phase 1 -- Orient on the goal (10 minutes)**

Place the pre-agreed goal card on the far left, read it aloud, and clarify its terms until everyone interprets it the same way. Don't debate whether the goal is right -- map from it, or stop if it can't survive scrutiny.

- **Phase 2 -- Actors (15 minutes)**

Ask whose behaviour, if changed, would affect the goal. Capture specific roles on yellow notes -- external, internal, and automated -- and push past 'users' to named slices the team could identify in the database.

- **Phase 3 -- Impacts (25 minutes)**

For each actor, name the behaviour changes that would help the goal, then the ones that would hurt it. Intercept every 'we could build X' and convert it back into 'what behaviour would X cause?'

- **Phase 4 -- Deliverables (20 minutes)**

For each impact, list multiple options -- features, content, processes, experiments, tweaks -- roughly ordered cheapest to most ambitious. Park any deliverable that can't name the actor and impact it serves.

- **Phase 5 -- Prioritise (10 minutes)**

Step back and pick the first path by asking which actor has most influence, which impact is highest-leverage for them, and which deliverable is the cheapest way to test whether the impact is real. Mark it on the map.

- **Phase 6 -- Wrap-up (10 minutes)**

Agree who owns the prioritised path, the deferred list, and the follow-up conversations with absent stakeholders. Capture photographs and a one-page summary so the map survives beyond the room.