# Min Specs

## Idea In Short

Min Specs (Minimum Specifications) is a Liberating Structure designed to help groups quickly define the essential elements or minimum specifications needed for a successful solution, project, or initiative. It focuses on identifying the must-have features rather than getting bogged down in details. Min Specs clarifies essential requirements for success.

This structure provides a simple yet effective way to focus a group's attention on what truly matters. It helps to avoid getting lost in the weeds of details and instead prioritize the core elements that are essential for achieving the desired outcome. Min Specs helps groups quickly agree on the minimum necessary conditions for success. It encourages clear and concise thinking about core needs.

## The Process

The process involves several key steps. First, the group clearly defines the objective or goal they are trying to achieve. This provides a focus for the exercise and ensures that everyone is working towards the same outcome. The objective should be stated in a clear and concise way that everyone can understand.

Next, the group brainstorms a list of all the possible elements or features that could be included in the solution, project, or initiative. This brainstorming phase should be open and inclusive, encouraging everyone to contribute their ideas. The goal is to generate a comprehensive list of possibilities.

Once a comprehensive list has been generated, the group begins the process of identifying the minimum specifications. This involves asking the question:

> What are the absolute minimum elements we need to include to achieve our objective?

This question prompts the group to focus on the essential features and eliminate any non-essential details.

The group then discusses each element on the list, determining whether it is a "must-have" or a "nice-to-have." This discussion should be focused and efficient, aiming to reach a consensus on the minimum specifications as quickly as possible. The focus is on what is absolutely necessary, not what would be ideal.

The result of this process is a concise list of minimum specifications. This list serves as a clear guide for moving forward, ensuring that everyone is aligned on the essential elements. It also helps to prevent scope creep and keep the project or initiative focused on its core objectives.

Min Specs is particularly useful in the early stages of a project or initiative when it is important to quickly define the scope and priorities. It can also be used when resources are limited or when time is of the essence.

The structure can be adapted to suit different contexts and group sizes. The time allocated to each phase can be adjusted depending on the complexity of the topic and the size of the group.

## Case Study - Developing a New Website

Imagine a small business wants to develop a new website. They have a limited budget and a tight deadline. They decide to use Min Specs to define the essential features of the website.

### Define the Objective

The business defines its objective as: "To create a simple and effective website that generates leads for our business." This provides a clear focus for the exercise.

### Brainstorm Possible Elements

The team brainstorms a list of possible website features, including a homepage, an about us page, a contact page, a blog, a portfolio, online ordering, customer testimonials, and social media integration. This generates a comprehensive list of potential features.

### Identify Minimum Specifications

The team then asks:

> What are the absolute minimum elements we need to include to achieve our objective of generating leads?

After discussion, they agree on the following minimum specifications:

- A homepage with clear information about the business and its services
- A contact page with a contact form and contact information
- A clear call to action on the homepage, encouraging visitors to contact the business

They decide that the other features, such as a blog, portfolio, online ordering, customer testimonials, and social media integration, are "nice-to-haves" that can be added later if resources allow.

This example illustrates how Min Specs helps to focus on essential elements. The business was able to quickly define the core features of their website and avoid getting bogged down in less important details.

## Advantages and Potential Limitations

Min Specs offers several advantages. It is a simple and easy-to-learn method that requires minimal preparation or resources. It is also a highly effective way to quickly define essential requirements and avoid scope creep.

This structure encourages focused and efficient discussions. It helps groups to quickly reach consensus on key priorities. It also promotes clear communication and alignment within a group.

Min Specs is particularly useful in situations where resources are limited or when time is of the essence. It helps to prioritize the most important elements and avoid wasting time and resources on non-essential details.

It can be used in a variety of settings and contexts, from project planning and product development to strategic planning and organizational change initiatives.

However, there are also some potential limitations to consider. The effectiveness of the method depends on the willingness of participants to focus on the essential elements and avoid getting attached to non-essential details.

It is important to ensure that the objective is clearly defined before starting the exercise. A poorly defined objective can lead to confusion and disagreement about the minimum specifications.

The method is primarily focused on defining the minimum requirements. It does not provide detailed guidance on how to implement or execute the solution, project, or initiative.

It is also important to revisit the minimum specifications periodically to ensure that they are still relevant and appropriate as the project or initiative progresses.

## Summary

Min Specs is a valuable Liberating Structure for quickly defining the essential elements needed for success. It helps groups focus on what truly matters and avoid getting lost in details. Min Specs clarifies essential requirements for success.