

WHAT IS A LAB CYCLE?



INTRODUCTION

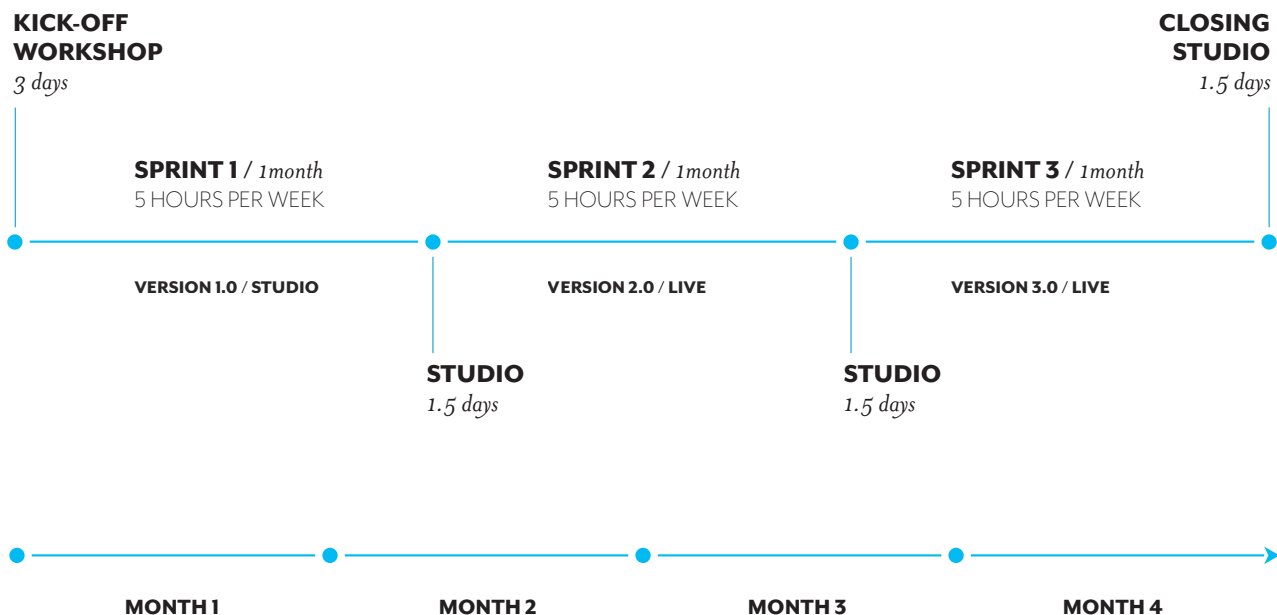
Social labs operate in cycles. Cycles give structure to the lab’s iterative process. A cycle is the minimum amount of time for which demonstrable value can be seen on the ground⁽¹⁾. At the start of any lab 36 diverse stakeholders are brought together to form the Lab Team. At the Kick-off they are divided into 5-6 sub-teams to design and test solutions or prototypes to the challenge they are working on.

A lab cycle lasts between 4-6 months⁽²⁾ depending on the context of the lab. During this period there are several touch points or studios where all 36 Lab Team Members come together to share and iterate their prototypes. In between the studios, the sub-teams, or Prototyping Teams continue to work on their prototypes. This in between period is called a sprint.

AGILE ACTION CYCLE- SPRINT PLANNING PROCESS

The lab uses an agile project management process. Borrowing from complex software development, agile project management is a flexible methodology suited to operating in situations of complexity and emergence.

Agile action cycles or ‘sprints’ are used to help manage the lab cycle. At the end of each studio/start of each sprint, tasks are agreed for each team providing a clear focus for the sprint period. At the end of the sprint, the teams come back together at the studios where they review their progress and learning. They then start the next sprint, repeating the process. The methodology is iterative and allows for emergent tasks — ensuring that teams are able to meet the shifting nature of the challenge they are working on.



1. THIS VALUE CAN BE MEASURED IN THE CREATION OF MULTIPLE FORMS OF CAPITAL DURING A CYCLE. SEVERAL CYCLES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE CHALLENGE.

2. THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR A CYCLE CAN VARY DEPENDING ON WHERE THE WORKSHOPS TAKE PLACE (TRAVEL TIME REQUIRED) HOW MANY WORKSHOPS ARE NEEDED IN EACH CYCLE AND/OR IF MORE TIME BETWEEN WORKSHOPS IS NEEDED FOR TEAMS TO WORK TOGETHER ON THEIR PROTOTYPES.

EXAMPLE OF A SINGLE LAB CYCLE

There are approximately four workshops over the course of a cycle where all of the participants/Lab Team Members come together to share their experiences and learning.

KICK-OFF WORKSHOP

The lab cycle begins with the Kick-off workshop. During the workshop participants organise into prototyping teams to work together on a solution to the challenge of their choosing. Team Members develop a deeper understanding of the challenge, lab practices and protocols, how to work as a team and what is needed during the subsequent sprints and studios.

Followed by sprint cycle 1

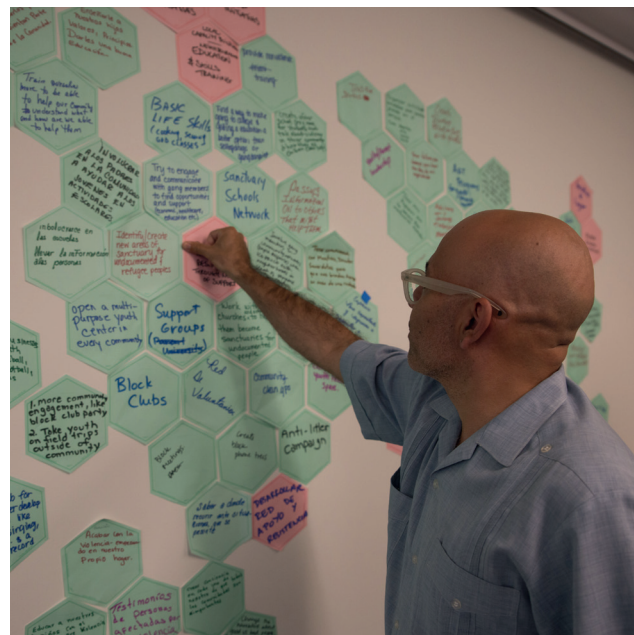
STUDIO 1

At the first Studio, Prototyping Teams come together to present 1.0 of their prototypes. Teams share experiences, learning, resources, address challenges, receive coaching and importantly reflect on and review progress. They decide if they need to pivot, persevere, or stop (radically change) their prototype. The sprint planning involves how to take their prototype “live”/version 2.0.

Followed by sprint cycle 2

STUDIO 2

Following the second Sprint, Teams invite external guests to Studio 2. They come to provide advice, feedback and coaching to the



Prototyping Teams on their Version 2.0/live prototypes. Teams plan Sprint 3 and the next iteration of their prototypes.

Followed by sprint cycle 3

STUDIO 3

At the final Studio Teams present their “final” / Version 3.0 prototypes to an even wider network of external guests, stakeholders and end users. Feedback, coaching and decisions on continuation of the prototypes into the next Lab Cycle are made. Teams complete the Lab Cycle and prepare for the next cycle.

WHO ARE WE?

Roller Strategies is a professional services firm focused on next-generation solutions to the world's most complex challenges.

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