

WHAT IS IDEA VALIDATION?

IS MY IDEA ANY GOOD?

You wouldn't believe how many people come to us at the Entrepreneurship Institute asking this same question, and we always come back with the same answer: "have you asked your customers?"

It doesn't matter if it's a business idea, a proposal for a research project, or whether or not you should buy those new, expensive headphones. Speaking to other people is the first step of validating your assumptions, and one of the most important entrepreneurial skills.

Consider the headphones. Would you buy them without talking to any of your friends who already own them? Would you buy them without reading reviews (or at least watching an unboxing video on Youtube)? Meanwhile, loads of ads are telling you that they're going to change your life, but they might just be a little bit biased, don't you think?

The same validation process applies to your ideas. At the beginning, you may think it's an amazing idea that's going to solve all your customer's problems but in reality, your idea is also based on your own biases, assumptions and preconceptions.

VALIDATE

To prove that an idea is viable and gain traction; the eradication of bias and assumption

- Understand that the most valuable intellectual property comes from understanding the problem and the customer and therefore seek to gain as much insight into these as possible
- Design objective questioning and testing that will eradicate bias and assumptions and replace them with evidence of need
- Develop and evolve ideas based on the testing, capturing levels of interest as a guide for being on the right track

LOW FIDELITY VALIDATION TECHNIQUES

Simple and low-tech concepts

- Testing that is done to get an understanding of the problem. Is the problem right? Is the solution right?
- Customer interviews
- Early-stage social media
- Presenting yourself as an expert in your field
- Landing pages
- Mock ups
- Fake door ‘Coming soon...’
- Validating ideas – Direct insights from your customer base through Mom test approved questions!

HIGH FIDELITY VALIDATION TECHNIQUES

Functional and interactive

- Technicalities to the business model i.e. price point, iterations etc
- Digital prototypes with one piece of functionality
- Wizard of Oz MVP – Appears automated, backend manual
- Concierge MVP – Manual MVP to test flow and process
- Piece meal MVP – Pulling together existing technology
- Crowdfunding

THINK AGAIN IF YOU'VE SAID....

- 'I have talked my idea with a friend and they like it/said they would buy it...'
- 'I feel like there is a need for my product...'
- 'I am truly at the very earliest stage of creating this new commercial product however I do not have an NDA in place and therefore cannot discuss or validate my idea...'
- 'I've done desktop research to prove a need and started approaching investors to fund it...'
- 'I have secured 10 email addresses that are interested in the product...'
- 'I'll start validation after my first round of investment...'
- 'We have an understanding from online reports...'

THINK AGAIN IF YOU'VE SAID....

Your friend will want to make you feel good and tell you what you want to hear (also speaking to one person is not customer research)

- 'I have talked my idea with a friend and they like it/said they would buy it...'
- 'I feel like there is a need for my product...' **Your feeling ≠ customer research**
- 'I am truly at the very earliest stage of creating this new commercial product however I do not have an NDA in place and therefore cannot discuss or validate my idea...' **No one will sign an NDA to hear an idea**
- 'I've done desktop research to prove a need and started approaching investors to fund it...' **Do NOT approach investors without validation**
- 'I have secured 10 email addresses that are interested in the product...' **Great start! Keep going!**
- 'I'll start validation after my first round of investment...' **WE REPEAT: Do NOT approach investors without validation**
- 'We have an understanding from online reports...' **Secondary data sources (i.e. reports) are not as important as first hand customer research**

THIS IS WHAT EARLY VALIDATION LOOKS LIKE

- I have surveyed 50 SME owners and currently have 10 SME's who have expressed interest in our pilot.
- I have set up social media channels, and seen an immediate traction with 500 followers in a week...
- We've set up a landing page and got 73 email addresses on our mailing list in 5 days...
- MVP has been developed, validation tests will be split into two groups business owners and recently appointed employees.

Don't stop here. Speak to as many people as possible – and keep speaking to them. Validation doesn't end once your product/service is launched, it's the beginning of a successful strategy that will ensure that you are meeting your end-users needs throughout.

GREAT VALIDATION LOOKS LIKE

- National prize nomination for Royal College of Surgeons Innovation and NHS England Clinical Entrepreneurs Programme, 300 active users of neurological examination videos, 2 pilots secured with KCL and GST
- We've created a clickable prototype on Marvel, with 170 tests via Zoom. 78% of our feedback was positive however from feedback, we still need to redefine X.Y.Z...
- Market research with over 300+ people, 120 registered on mailing list, 20 paying customers signed up for pilot
- We have 25,000 profiles on candidates, 6000 active users and 90 listed positions.
- Raise of 150K in donations, secured 2 pilots in rural villages and have an existing database of 20,000 women and have secured 12 doctors to work at the hub
- 531 site visits , 227 unique visitors, 179 mailing list signups. Wizard Of Oz/Concierge test with 20 people, where our users experienced features, but with us doing the searches and other features manually

VALIDATION RESOURCE LIST

- [How to learn from customers when everyone is lying to you](#)
- [Stakeholder interviews: asking the right questions](#)
- [Netflix's Co-Founder Has 5 Pieces of Advice For Aspiring Entrepreneurs](#)
- [How to Get and Test Startup Ideas](#)
- [Validate Your Startup Idea by Doing the Things That Don't Scale](#)
- [18 Types Of Minimum Viable Product \(MVP\) That Won't Break The Bank](#)
- [How Startups Build Products That Customers Will Pay For](#)
- [How OLIO Gained 2.4M Users By Proving Its Concept on WhatsApp](#)
- [Know Your Customers' "Jobs to Be Done"](#)
- [How to Validate Any Business Idea With the "Stand-Up" Technique](#)



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