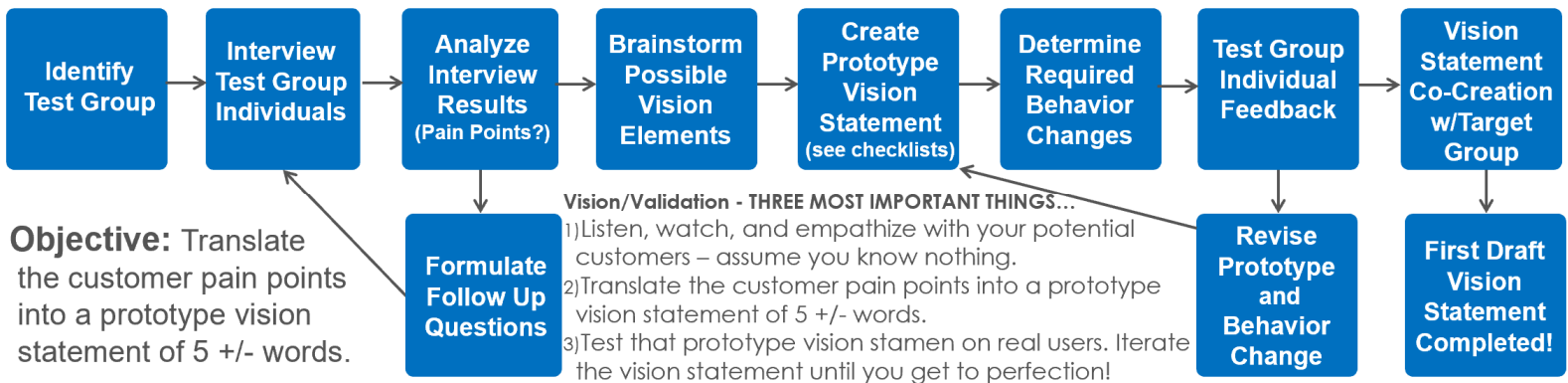


Startup Vision & Validation CheatSheet



Vision & Validation - Tools, Tips, Tactics, Considerations and Strategies

Interviewing potential customers to validate that they have a problem?

- Ask questions. Then listen... Actively.
- Open your eyes. What for what they really mean.
- Learn about their pain and/or passion points. What keeps them awake at night and what inspires them?
- Look for what surprises you. How are they doing this now?
- What might they pay for? How much? How Often?
- Need to understand user's needs better than they do.
- What will help them achieve their articulated and unarticulated goals/objectives?
- **RULE 1: DO NOT ASSUME YOU KNOW ANYTHING.** (There is only 1 rule)

Ideas For Digging Deeper

GOAL: Must Understand Goals/Priorities/Passions/Pain Points

- What did you do today? What are the organization's top five goals/priorities? What are your top five goals/priorities?
- What do you need to achieve in the next 12 months? What are your biggest challenges? What keeps you up at night? What's the one thing you would change?
- How does your organization measure success?
- When was the last time you were proud of your organization?
- What constraints do you work within?
- Who is the organization's real "Customer" and what is important to them? Talk about a time when the organization really clicked.
- Tell me about one of your competitors innovations. What is stopping your organization for reaching its goals right now?
- How might we provide your target audience with a better, more valuable experience?

Techniques to research customer problems

- **Lurk** – Watch people in public places. How they make buying decisions.
- **Listen** – Listen to what people complain about... The loudest.
- **Observe** – Do people use something for a use that it is not intended?
- **Ask** – About their friends and family pain points. What do they observe.
- **Look around corners** – See what's coming and what new pain points may emerge. Look for things that surprise you. Watch what people do. (How they answer)
- **Why?** - Keep asking why? (at least five times)

Identifying a viable customer problem to build a business around

- **Viable** – Definition -> You can build, deliver, and service the solution for less money than you can charge => Profit.
- **Customer problem** – Definition -> a Pain (or Passion) point.
- Money needs to be available for your solution.
- Solution must be usable.
- How might we (provide, help, support, ...) our focus user to (accomplish something important). User focused!

Is the customer problem is large enough to pursue?

- Do the math! How many customers have money available for your solution? How many will buy your solution? (need proof!)
- What are they buying now? What will make them switch to your solution? What are the possible fatal flaws?

Are You Uniquely qualified to pursue the customer's problem?

- Look for competition. Make a comparison sheet.
- Look for the experts. You don't need to be the expert if you can hire the expert. What is your "unfair competitive advantage"?
- What fresh and new innovation are you bringing to the pain/passion point?

Building and Testing Prototypes

- **Visual** - Be visual. Show don't tell. Use pictures/emotional content.
- **Move quick** – Speed and lots of ideas. (good, bad, ugly)
- **NOTE:** Real innovation is about more than fixing problems... It's about inventing something new that does not exist today.
- **Assumption Testing** – Find a way to quickly test your key product/service assumptions. You will be changing a person's behavior in some way. Will they really change? When? How? Why?
- **Stakeholder or customer co-creation** - The process of engaging potential stakeholders/customers in the development of new product/service concepts.
 - To make your vision statement meaningful to those you are trying to create value for, you must invite them into your design process.
 - Put your iterated (evolved) rough prototype in front of stakeholders, observe their reactions, and use the results to further iterate your way to an improved and perfected concept.
 - Innovation is about learning—and stakeholders/customers have the most to teach you. Get something in front of them that they can react to, the faster you'll get to a differentiated value-added solution. And your stakeholders will love being involved.

Post Co-Creation debrief checklist

- **Stimulus:** What you showed users to gauge their response.
- **Observation:** What they did and said (literal transcript).
- **Feelings:** What emotions their response signaled to you.
- **Needs:** Underlying needs may be indicated by those emotions.
- **Implications:** What this means for your vision.

VISION & VALIDATION DELIVERABLES – YOUR VISION PACKAGE

- **THE KEY:** A Vision built with User Centered Design and rapid prototyping! (Try things and keep what works. Throw out what does not connect and delight people.)
- Your concise 5 +/- word vision statement that clearly tells people what you do and delights them. And provides Insight!
- Your 3 circles vision "pitch" deck. (Not your company pitch) Simon Sinek's Three Circles => [Click Here](#) for TED Talk
 1. What you believe
 2. What makes your vision different
 3. What is your vision

