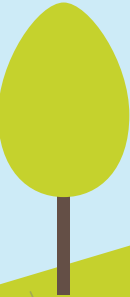


# 2.3

## Understanding Customers



# Six Techniques to Gain Customer Insights

Understanding the customer's perspective is crucial to designing great value propositions. Here are six techniques that will get you started. Make sure you use a good mix of these techniques to understand your customers deeply.



## The Data Detective

Build on existing work with (desk) research. Secondary research reports and customer data you might already have provide a great foundation for getting started. Look also at data outside your industry and study analogs, opposites, or adjacencies.

*Difficulty level:* ★

*Strength:* great foundation for further research

*Weakness:* static data from a different context

➔ p. 108 for more



## The Journalist

Talk to (potential) customers as an easy way to gain customer insights. It's a well-established practice. However, customers might tell you one thing in an interview but behave differently in the real world.

*Difficulty level:* ★★

*Strength:* quick and cheap to get started with first learnings and insights

*Weakness:* customers don't always know what they want and actual behavior differs from interview answers

➔ p. 110 for more



## The Anthropologist

Observe (potential) customers in the real world to get good insights into how they really behave. Study which jobs they focus on and how they get them done. Note which pains upset them and which gains they aim to achieve.

*Difficulty level:* ★★★

*Strength:* data provide unbiased view and allow discovering real-world behavior

*Weakness:* difficult to gain customer insights related to new ideas

➔ p. 114 for more



### The Impersonator

“Be your customer” and actively use products and services. Spend a day or more in your customer’s shoes. Draw from your experience as an (unsatisfied) customer.

*Difficulty level:* ★★

*Strength:* firsthand experience of jobs, pains, and gains

*Weakness:* not always representative of your real customer or possible to apply



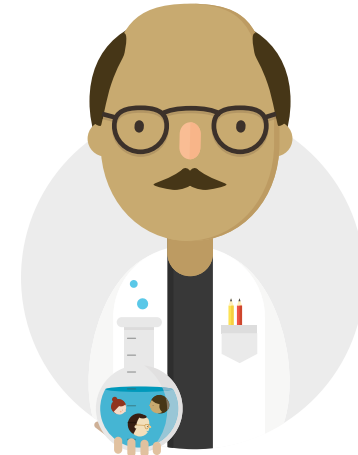
### The Cocreator

Integrate customers into the process of value creation to learn with them. Work with customers to explore and develop new ideas.

*Difficulty level:* ★★★★★

*Strength:* the proximity with customers can help you gain deep insights

*Weakness:* may not be generalized to all customers and segments



### The Scientist

Get customers to participate (knowingly or unknowingly) in an experiment. Learn from the outcome.

*Difficulty level:* ★★★★★

*Strength:* provides fact-based insights on real-world behavior; works particularly well for new ideas

*Weakness:* can be hard to apply in existing organizations because of strict (customer) policies and guidelines

👉 p. 216 for more

# The Journalist: Interview Your Customers

## OBJECTIVE

Gain a better customer understanding

## OUTCOME

First lightly validated customer profile(s)

Talk to customers to gain insights relevant to your context. Use the Value Proposition Canvas to prepare interviews and organize the chaotic mass of information that will be coming at you during the interview process.



# 1

### Create a customer profile.

Sketch out the jobs, pains, and gains you believe characterize the customer you are targeting. Rank jobs, pains, and gains in order of importance.

# 2

### Create an interview outline.

Ask yourself what you want to learn. Derive the interview questions from your customer profile. Ask about the most important jobs, pains, and gains.



# 5

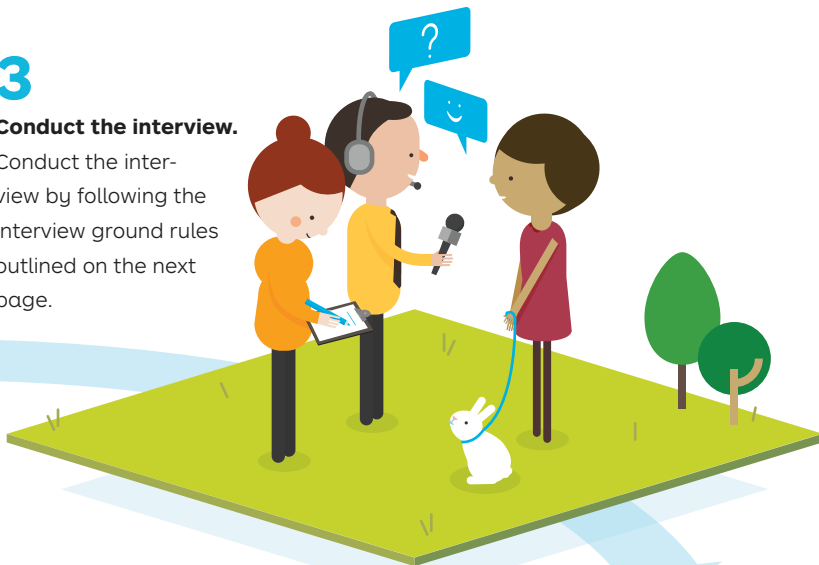
### Review the interview.

Assess if you need to review the interview questions based on what you learned.

## 3

**Conduct the interview.**

Conduct the interview by following the interview ground rules outlined on the next page.

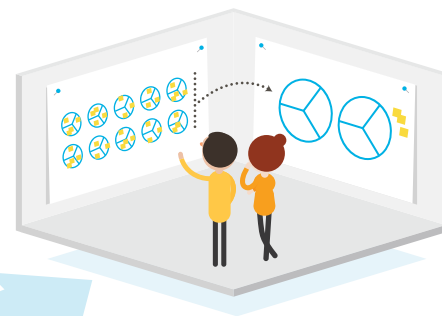


## 4

**Capture.**

Map out the jobs, pains, and gains you learned about in the interview on an empty customer profile.

Make sure you also capture business model learnings. Write down your most important insights.



## 6

**Search for patterns.**

Can you discover similar jobs, pains, and gains? What stands out? What is similar or different among interviewees?

Why are they similar or different? Can you detect specific (recurring) contexts that influence jobs, pains, and gains?

**Tip**

Capture your biggest insights from all the interviews.

## 7

**Synthesize.**

Make a separate synthesized customer profile for every customer segment that emerges from all your interviews. Write down your most important insights on sticky notes.

# Ground Rules for Interviewing



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It is an art to conduct good interviews that provide relevant insights for value proposition design. Make sure you focus on unearthing what matters to (potential) customers rather than trying to pitch them solutions. Follow the rules on this spread to conduct great interviews.

 Get “Ground Rules for Interviewing” poster



## Rule 1

### **Adopt a beginner’s mind.**

Listen with a “fresh pair of ears” and avoid interpretation. Explore unexpected jobs, pains, and gains in particular.

## Rule 2

### **Listen more than you talk.**

Your goal is to listen and learn, not to inform, impress, or convince your customer of anything. Avoid wasting time talking about your own beliefs, because it’s at the expense of learning about your customer.

## Rule 3

### **Get facts, not opinions.**

Don’t ask, “Would you...?”

Ask, “When is the last time you have...?”

## Rule 4

### **Ask “why” to get real motivations.**

Ask, “Why do you need to do...?”

Ask, “Why is \_\_\_ important to you?”

Ask, “Why is \_\_\_ such a pain?”

## Rule 5

**The goal of customer insight interviews is not selling (even if a sale is involved); it's about learning.**

Don't ask, "Would you buy our solution?" Ask "what are your decision criteria when you make a purchase of...?"

## Rule 6

**Don't mention solutions (i.e., your prototype value proposition) too early.**

Don't explain, "Our solution does..."

Ask, "What are the most important things you are struggling with?"

## Rule 7

**Follow up.**

Get permission to keep your interviewee's contact information to come back for more questions and answers or testing prototypes.

## Rule 8

**Always open doors at the end.**

Ask, "Who else should I talk to?"

### Tips

- Interviews are an excellent starting point to learn from customers, but typically they don't provide enough or sufficiently reliable insights for making critical decisions. Complement your interviews with other research, just like a good journalist does further research to find the real story behind what people tell. Add real-world observations of customers and experiments that produce hard data to your research mix.
- Conduct interviews in teams of two people. Decide in advance who will lead the interview and who will take notes. Use a recording device (photo, video, or other) if possible, but be aware that interviewees might not answer the same way with a recording device on the table.