

Customer Development Strategy

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Bob De Wilde



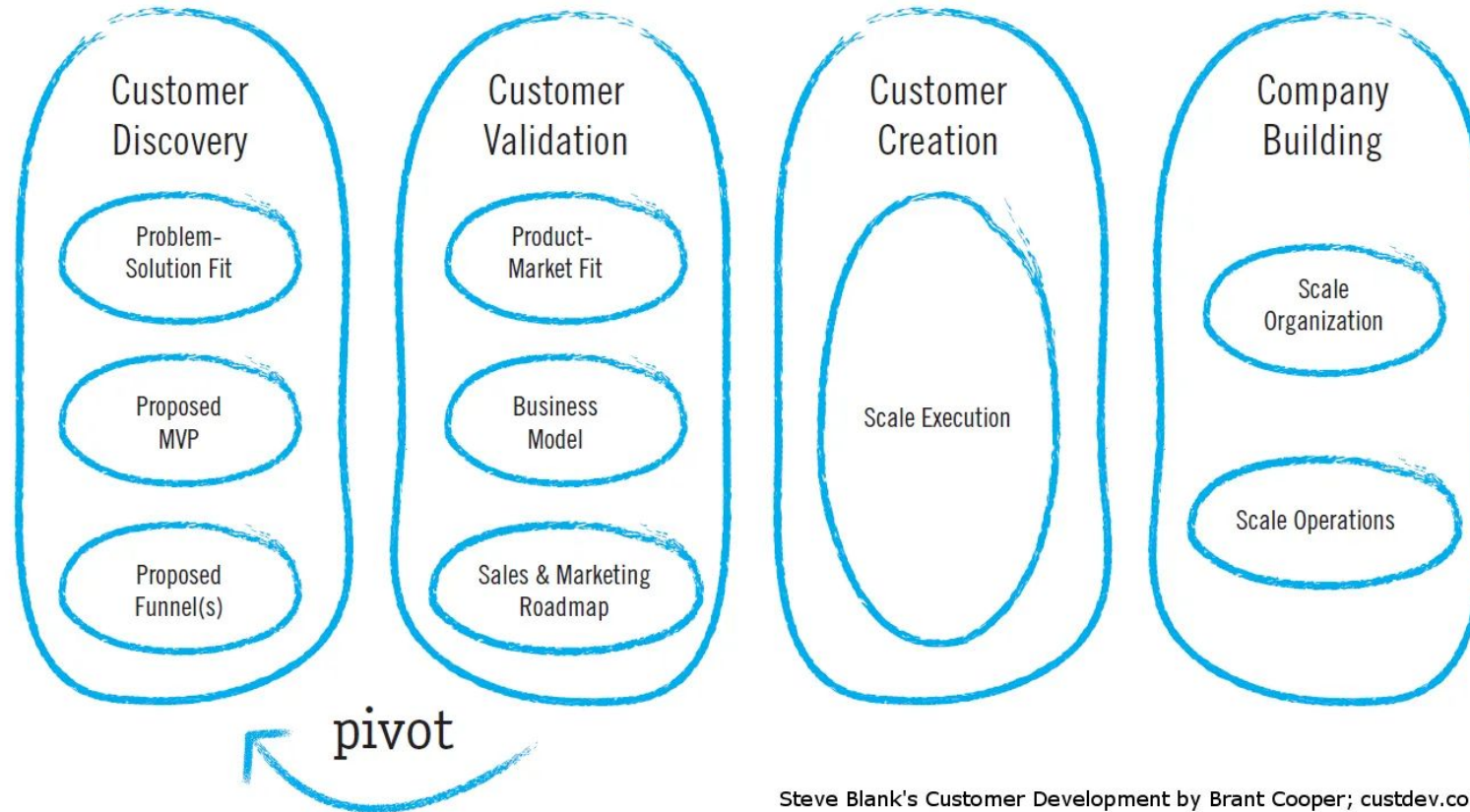
Cofinançat per
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Origins: The Four Steps to the Epiphany (Steve Blank)

Customer Development



Steve Blank's Customer Development by Brant Cooper; custdev.com

WHY companies need Customer Development

BASED ON ANALYSIS OF 101 STARTUP POSTMORTEMS Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail



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BASED ON ANALYSIS OF 101 STARTUP POSTMORTEMS Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail

NOT ENOUGH

~~NO~~ MARKET NEED



42%

RAN OUT OF CASH



29%

NOT THE RIGHT TEAM



23%

GET OUTCOMPETED



19%

PRICING / COST ISSUES



18%

Reasons for Not Enough Market Need

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 - They are not aware of their problem, or that it can be solved.
 - They don't understand why they need your solution.

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4. **Wrong Business Model**
 - Solution is not financially viable (small market, not scalable, weak moat, too dependent on other factors, ...)

1. Reasons for wrong Customer–Problem Fit

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- **Solution Bias:**

- The root cause of all Customer Development mistakes.
- Once we have in a solution in mind, we lose the focus on the problem.

- **Falling in love with our idea:**

- Love is blind: we unconsciously avoid contrary market signs, user feedback or even Google searches.
- The fear of hearing “your baby is ugly”.
- "Fall in love with the problem, not the product"

=> We can't help it.

=> Best we can do is be aware of it.

1. Reasons for wrong Customer-Problem Fit

- **How to avoid Solution Bias:**

- Keep your interviews *problem*-centered.
- Don't mention your solution. *Solution*-testing interviews come later.

=> No risk of being told your baby is ugly, and you will learn a lot more

=> Learning to talk about the customer's problem rather than your product is also great for sales.

- "The Mom Test":
 - Basically the Bible for user interviews
 - Two main rules:
 - Don't mention your product to avoid biasing the interviewee
 - Interview their memory, not their imagination: Don't ask them to imagine anything ("would you..." questions), only ask about their experience.

"Dunce for ounce, there's no better way to learn what customers want and will buy than this wonderful little book. If you want your new product or new business to succeed, start here."

— John Mullins
Author of *The New Business Road Test*



Rob Fitzpatrick

THE MOM TEST

How to talk to customers and learn
if your business is a good idea
when everyone is lying to you

1. Reasons for wrong Customer-Problem Fit

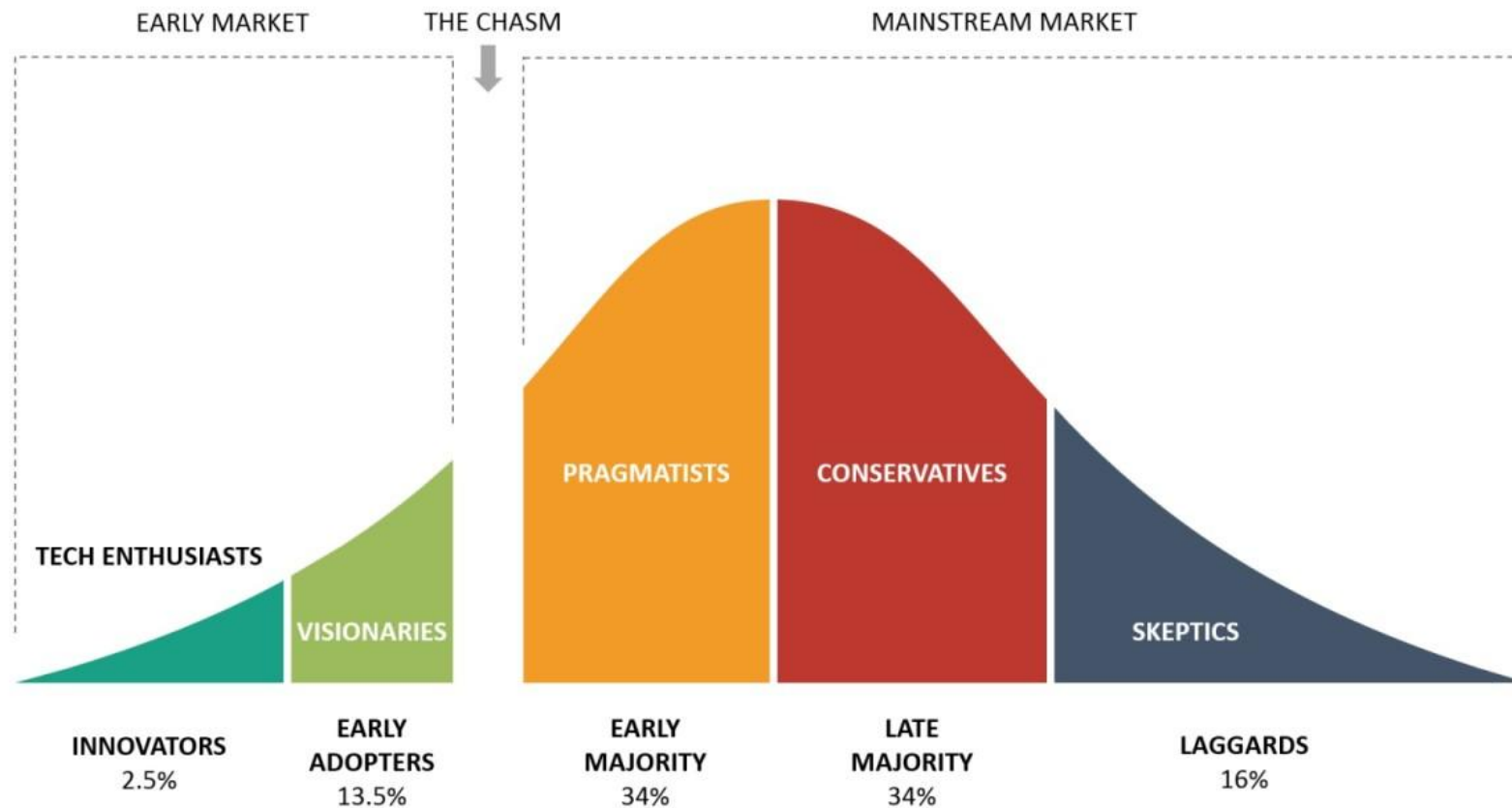
- **Ignoring the needs of other Stakeholders:**

- Other Stakeholders are people who are not the Customer or the User, but who are also involved/affected by the Use Case, and who have an influence on it.
- Needs of Customer \neq User \neq Other Stakeholders.
- Though your solution aims to solve problems, it might inadvertently also create problems for some Stakeholders, which might create barriers for the adoption of your solution.

=> Identify all the Stakeholders involved in your Use Case, and consider how they will be affected by your solution.

1. Reasons for wrong Customer-Problem Fit

- Not understanding the difference between Tech Enthusiasts, Early Adopters, and the Mainstream Market



1. Reasons for wrong Customer-Problem Fit

- **Not understanding the difference between Tech Enthusiasts, Early Adopters, and the Mainstream Market:**
 - **Tech Enthusiasts**
 - The only ones who care about the product. Everyone else cares about having their problem solved.
 - Their feedback is valuable for resolving product issues, but it's not indicative of the needs of the rest of the market.
 - **Early Adopters**
 - Urgent pain and desperate need for a solution
 - Will accept an inferior product and will be willing to make more effort to adopt it than the Mainstream Market.

2. Reasons for wrong Solution Fit

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- **Misunderstanding Lean Methodology:**

- It's not about building and launching a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) asap.
- The moment you start building a solution, you've picked a direction.
- Instead, find your direction by testing value propositions first, with the help of

Language-Market Fit techniques:

- A/B Testing of "Now you can..." taglines
- Brochure Testing

=> Proof of Demand

Brochure Test

UVP Tagline

Benefits

- ...
- ...
- ...

Feature description 1

...

Feature description 2

...

Feature description 3

...

UVP Tagline

Benefits

- ...
- ...
- ...

Feature description 1

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Language-Market Fit techniques:

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=> Proof of Demand

- Instead of building a Minimum Viable *Product*, build a **Minimum Viable Solution**
 - What is the simplest and fastest way you can deliver some value to your target audience? (E.g. valuable content in social media posts)

=> Proof of Value

2. Reasons for wrong Solution Fit

- **Presenting only your one solution when testing on users:**

- When testing your solution with users, make sure to always present it:
 - Together with other solutions so the user can tell you how they compare
 - On **equal-footing** with the other solutions, so the test user doesn't know which of the presented options is yours.

=> Proof of (Preferred) Solution

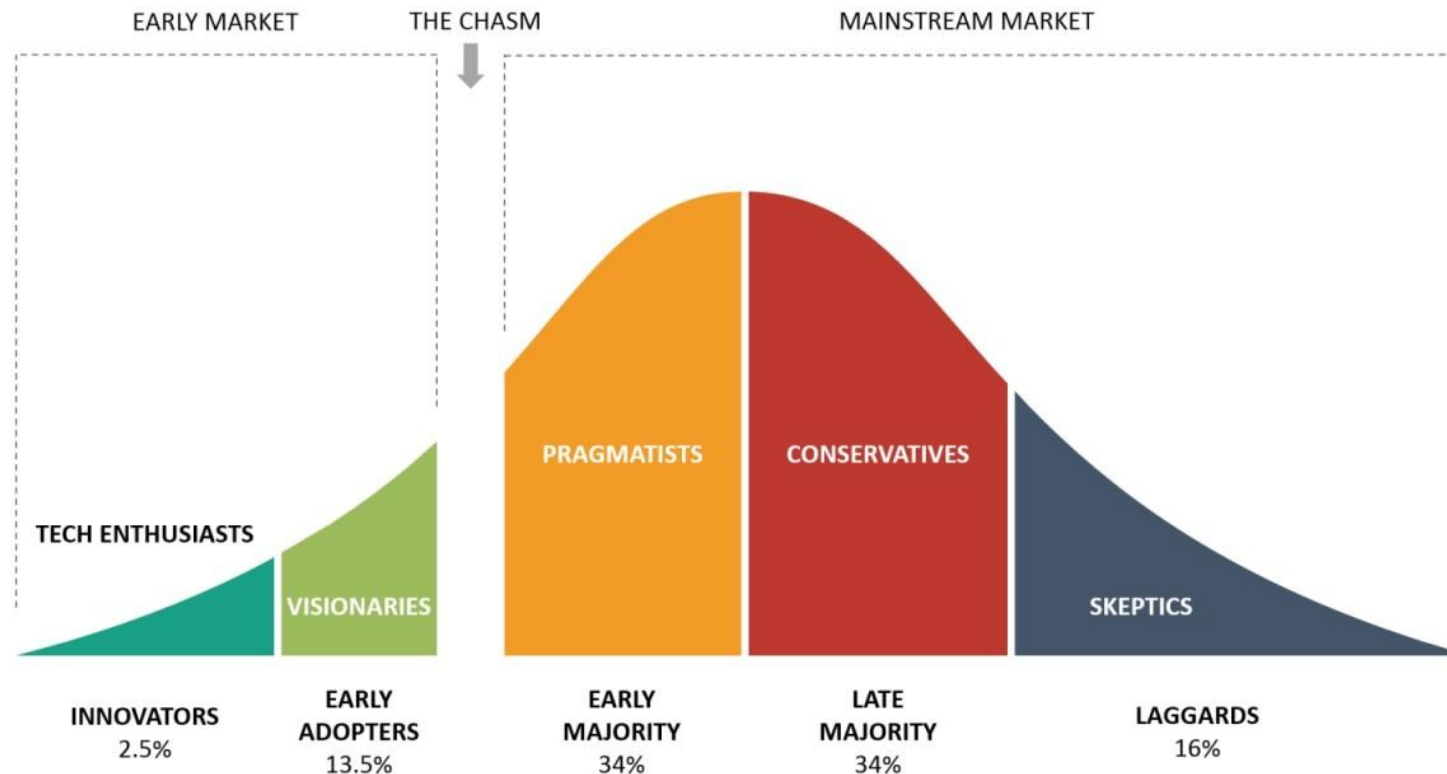
- **Not understanding who your real competition is**

- Your real competition is whichever solution your customers are currently using to solve their problem.
- E.g. for a high-tech door mat, a major competitor is the practice of taking off the shoes when entering a home.

2. Reasons for wrong Solution Fit

- **Underestimating the power of habit**

- Most of your clients will already have a solution.
- Habit is one of the greatest competitive advantages, and can be a great barrier for adoption.



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=> Understand the habits and workflows of your customers, so you can make your solution frictionless to integrate.

3. Reasons for wrong Communication

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- **The danger of the One-Stop Shop:**
 - Coffee bar vs Café (% solution match with need)
 - “Pleasing everybody means pleasing no one”
=> Not necessarily true, but *saying* you please everybody, will please no one.
- **Expecting customers to know which solution they need**
 - Levels of problem awareness:
 - Aware of needed solution
 - Aware of problem, but not of needed solution
 - Aware of symptoms, but not of problem
 - Showing customers you understand their problem can have a bigger impact than showing them your features.

4. Reasons for wrong Business Model

4. Reasons for wrong Business Model

- **Conflating Use Cases**

- If you can help different target audiences with different needs, don't combine them in your Business Model Canvas!

=> Use one canvas per Use Case to evaluate if that Use Case is supported by a strong Business Case and is worth pursuing.

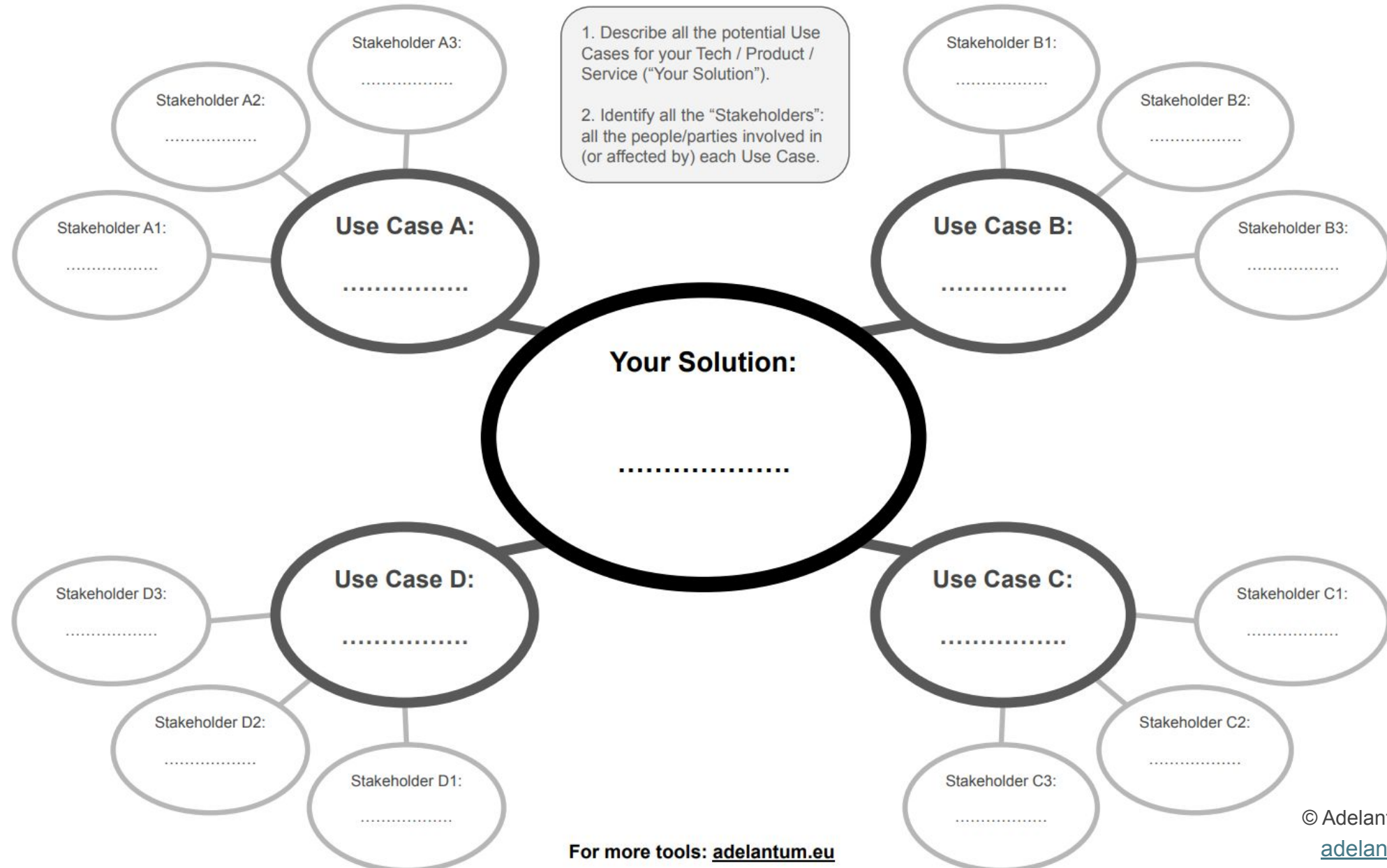
=> Helps you find your ideal Use Case and choose your Niche/Beachhead.

- **Using the Business Model Canvas to convince investors**

- A canvas is a live tool that must be continuously revisited throughout the project.
- It's not a pitch deck for investors. Don't embellish the numbers in your canvas (e.g. TAM/SAM/SOM), you will only fool yourself.

Tools to avoid these mistakes

1. Use Case Map



2. Stakeholder-Problem Map

Though your solution aims to *solve* problems, it might inadvertently also *create* problems for some of the people/parties ("Stakeholders") involved in a Use Case. If it creates a problem for a *User* or *Customer* Stakeholder, that will become a barrier for adoption for them. If it creates a problem for a *Non-User* Stakeholder, they will try to prevent others from adopting it.

NEXT STEP: For each "Problem solved", fill out a **Customer-Problem Fit Evaluation** (adelantum.eu) to further explore the Use Case from that Stakeholder's perspective.

Stakeholder A1:	 Problem solved by your product:	Stakeholder C1:	 Problem solved by your product:
	 Problem created by your product:		 Problem created by your product:
Stakeholder A2:	 Problem solved by your product:	Stakeholder C2:	 Problem solved by your product:
	 Problem created by your product:		 Problem created by your product:
Stakeholder A3:	 Problem solved by your product:	Stakeholder C3:	 Problem solved by your product:
	 Problem created by your product:		 Problem created by your product:
Stakeholder B1:	 Problem solved by your product:	Stakeholder D1:	 Problem solved by your product:
	 Problem created by your product:		 Problem created by your product:
Stakeholder B2:	 Problem solved by your product:	Stakeholder D2:	 Problem solved by your product:
	 Problem created by your product:		 Problem created by your product:
Stakeholder B3:	 Problem solved by your product:	Stakeholder D3:	 Problem solved by your product:
	 Problem created by your product:		 Problem created by your product:

Potential Customer-Problem Fit Evaluation

by adelantum services



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Calculating Consistency:

For each *Input from Interviews*, indicate the highest percentage of interviewees who gave the same answer.

...%

For example, if 60% give an answer A and 20% an answer B, the Consistency for that input is 60%

60%

If the Consistency % of 1 of the 3 bold circles is low, **narrow down** the definition of your Target Customer.

How many interviewed:

Use Case

Customer/User Profile: (For B2C: demographics and psychographics. For B2B: vertical, company size, revenue, image, values...)

Their Problem/Need (in their own words): (What is the situation that is frustrating them?)

My Early Adopters are:

Who I can find here:

Input from Interviews on Problem

To them, this is important because: (What is their "Job To Be Done": their underlying motivation/reason, or goal that is blocked by the problem.)

...%

Others affected by this are: (Who else cares about the outcome? These are the other Stakeholders involved in the problem, whose Use Case must be considered.)

...%

For this they currently use: (How are they solving this problem without your solution?)

...%

How much are they paying?
How much have they paid / invested already? (Money, Time, Effort, Training, Data...)

...%

What do they like about it?

...%

What do they dislike about it?

...%

How do they deal with the parts they don't like? (How do they work around the shortcomings?)

...%

What other solutions have they tried/considered before that? How were these solutions? (What didn't they like about it?)

...%

Have they actively searched for a better solution? Where? (Google, Reddit, contacts...)

...%

What event triggered them to start searching? (What was going on that made them start looking?)

...%

What did they find, and how didn't it meet their needs? (What stopped them from buying it?)

...%

Potential Customer Questionnaire

by adelantum services



Use these questions, or variants of them, to fill out the sections of the Customer-Problem Fit Evaluation Form. You don't need to follow these questions strictly. It might be that the interviewee already answered in another question. Most important is to keep the natural flow of the conversation going.

Hi, I'm curious about this [process/activity/job], could you tell me about how you do it?
(This is a general opener to get them talking, but it might provide input for various sections of the Customer-Problem Fit Evaluation Form already.)

Sounds like parts of that can be annoying / hard to do?
(Still asking about their process/activity/job, not about what product they use for it. Pick up on a mention of a pain point and dive in, or ask generally. This provides input for **problem/need**.)

What do you use for this? Can you talk me through it?
(Now you can shift the conversation to products. This provides input for **currently use**.)

Is it expensive?
(Only ask about the price/cost if it's information you cannot look up. If it doesn't feel natural to ask at this point, leave it for later in the conversation. This provides input for **paid**.)

What did you use or try before this?
(Can be natural to ask at this point or leave it for second last. This provides input for **other solutions**.)

What was the moment you decided to change? What was going on in your work/life?
(This provides input for **trigger event**.)

Is what you use now any good?
(This provides input for **like** and **dislike**.)

If there are parts they dislike: **How do you deal with it/work around the shortcomings?**
(This provides input for **deal with**.)

Did you look if there's a better solution to solve those shortcomings?
(This provides input for **actively searched**.)
If they searched: **Where did you look? Did you find anything?** / If they didn't: **Why not?**

Why do you bother with this [process/product] despite the difficulties?
Why is this important to you or those around you?
(This provides input for **important because** and **others affected**.)

Who would you recommend this for? And who not?
(This is a great closer, especially if the interviewee hasn't shared much information. They might feel more comfortable sharing what they imagine others would feel or think, but you know it's really about their own experience.)

Recent Customer Questionnaire

by adelantum services



For customers who have recently purchased your product/service, or that of a competitor. Their answers will help you understand their reasons for purchasing, so you can improve your product, your choice of customer segment, and/or your marketing copy.

Name of the product they purchased:
(This provides input for **currently use**.)

1 What made you think of getting a product like this? What was the occasion, or what were you trying to do? What was going on in your work/life?
(This provides input for **problem/need** and **trigger event**.)

2 What were you using before? What made you want to change?
(This provides input for **other solutions**.)

3 What will it allow you to achieve, and how/why is that important to you?
(This provides input for **important because**.)

4 Did someone else need to agree on making this change/purchase? Will you be using it yourself? Who else cares about this outcome?
(This provides input for **others affected**.)

5 Where did you look for information to help you choose?
(This provides input for **Where did they look**.)

6 Which other options did you consider?
(This provides further input for **other solutions**.)

7 What did you like and dislike about the other options? Why did you end up choosing this one?
(This provides input for **not meet their needs**.)

8 How have you been using this product so far?
(This provides input for **problem/need** and on **deal with**.)

9 Which are the features of this product that you find most important? And that you like best? Why?
(This provides input for **like**.)

10 If there was anything you could change/add to this product, what would it be, and how would this help you? Any shortcomings that you've had to work around?
(This provides input for **dislike** and **deal with**.)

11 Have you recommended this product to anyone? If so, to whom, and why them?
(If they have, they might be your **Earlyvangelists**. If they recommended it to people who have a **different customer profile** and/or **need**, consider exploring that segment too.)

Customer segment(s) Demographics and psychographics of your target customer. If your customer is not your end user, make the distinction. Their Job To Be Done What are your customers trying to achieve? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Problem What gets in the way of your customers' Job To Be Done? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Unique Value Prop. From your customers' point of view, what is the value that your solution could offer better than any existing solution? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Solution How will you deliver that value proposition? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Resources required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team/skills - Time of development - Technology - Hardware - Infrastructure - Raw materials - Data - Licenses - ... Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Revenue model Subscription, Metered, Fees, Advertising, Direct sales, Razor and blades, Combined... KPIs What are they KPIs to track for this model? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>
TAM: Validated <input type="checkbox"/> SAM: Validated <input type="checkbox"/> SOM: Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Growing market? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Unworkable? Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Unavoidable? Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent? Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Underserved? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Painkiller or Vitamin? Is this value a "Need-to-have" or a "Nice-to-have"? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Gains vs Pains to adopt From your customers' POV, how big are the benefits of the solution compared to the pains of integrating a new solution in the way things are currently done? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Availability / Accessibility Which of these resources do you already have? How easily can you acquire the others? Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Budget required Forecasted budget for the next 6 months? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	In this market, how big is: - transaction value? - margin? - transaction volume? Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Recurring revenue model? Validated <input type="checkbox"/> Changes with scale? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>
Early adopters Who in your target customer segment is most desperate for your UVP, and would find your MVP most useful? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Existing solutions Not just your competitors, but any method your target customers are currently using to deal with the problem. Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Defensibility / Moat What would prevent competitors from taking your market share? IP, Exclusivity/License deals, Long-term contract, Location, Access to data/ resources/ network, Knowhow, Customer loyalty... Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ext. Factors: Barriers and Dependencies Any regulatory obstacles? Is your solution, and the demand for your solution, dependent on 3rd party technology, or vulnerable to developments in: Market/Society (Trends), Technology, Regulations... Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Partnerships Who do you need to partner with to make this happen? What value are your partners getting from partnering with you? Why would they partner with you? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Channels Through what channels can you reach your customers, and funnel leads into sales? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>
Early Traction / Revenue / Recurring cust./ Retention? What traction are you getting from these early adopters? LOI? Some revenue? Are they recurring customers? If not, consider if your Early Adopters might be elsewhere. Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Prevalence of competitors? How ubiquitous / dominant / common are the existing solutions? Early/Late to market? Red/Blue ocean? Dominated by big players? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Strength of competitive advantage? How sustainable is your competitive advantage, short-term and long-term? What are its vulnerabilities? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Risk (Impact x Likelihood)? How likely is it that those factors would change, and what would the consequence of that change be for your business? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Dependency on partners? If a partnership does not work out, how difficult would it be to find an equivalent alternative? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>	Repeatable sales process? Have you found the marketing and sales process through which you can predictably generate leads and turn them into recurring sales? Validated <input type="checkbox"/>

Tasks

For the PDFs of these templates, go to adelantum.eu/resources.

1. Fill out the **Use Case Map**.
2. Fill out the **Stakeholder-Problem Map**.
3. Choose 2 Customer-Problems (that you solve) from the Stakeholder-Problem Map and fill out a **Customer-Problem Fit Evaluation** for each:
 - a. First fill it out based on your assumptions.
 - b. Then validate with **in-person interviews** (2 for each use case, so 4 in total), using questions from the questionnaires for potential customers or recent customers.
4. Choose the most promising use case, and assess its potential as a business case by filling out the **Expanded Canvas**.
5. Formulate **3 taglines** ("Now you can...") for that chosen use case.
6. Test those 3 taglines with a **brochure test** on 2 people.
7. Think of what would be a **Minimum Viable Solution** for your Unique Value Proposition (= the simplest and fastest way you can deliver some value to your target audience)?

=> Send me your answers (in a DOC or XLS file) at least 1 day before our 30 min follow-up meeting.

Thank you!



Generalitat de Catalunya
**Departament d'Empresa
i Treball**



**Cofinançat per
la Unió Europea**

Subvencionat pel Departament d'Empresa (**Programa
Primer**) i amb el cofinançament del Fons
Social Europeu Plus

Find your:

1. Ideal Customer
2. Ideal Value Proposition
3. True Traction

adelantum services



Bob De Wilde ✓

Innovation Advisor specialized in Ideal Customer Discovery and Product-Market Fit.

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