How to Land Your First Customer

Case Study: Aspira
Low Cost Journey to Product Market Fit

Problem Overview: Aspira Kenya

Hire Purchase is a market that exists globally, but was not prevalent in the Kenyan market since the early 2000s for a few reasons:

	PROBLEM	CHANGE IN MARKET CONDITIONS
01	Difficult to access Kenyan customers quickly and easily	Increase in mobile phone penetration and advent of Mpesa
02	Difficult to credit assess customers	Rise of early fintech players helped to build credit bureau data
03	Difficult to find distribution	Development of several retail chains with multiple branches

Hypothesis Validation

Assessing Market Demand on a Lean Budget

- Register the Business
- Create a Basic Customer Onboarding Experience
- Conduct Testing and Pilot the Offering

Initial Budget: $2,000

NGAZI
YOUR BEST LIFE, TODAY
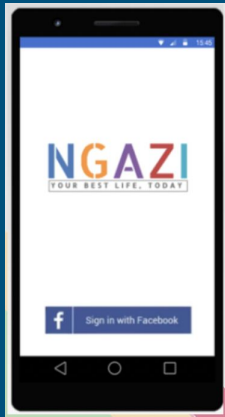
What is Ngazi? (?)	How it works (!)
Ngazi is a consumer credit product helps individuals and families achieve their lifestyle **aspirations** and **ambitions**.	◆ **Locate** a Ngazi sales agent in-store to kick off the process
We achieve this by providing our customers with **transparent** and **affordable** access to a **wide selection** of premium household goods and electronics at top retailers across Nairobi.	◆ **Receive** a decision on the amount you are approved for
	◆ **Inform** the sales agent of the product you want to purchase
With Ngazi, you can easily afford all the quality products you need to provide you and your loved ones with a **productive** and **comfortable** life, making sure you live **your best life, today.**	◆ **Review and Sign** the contract detailing interest rate and repayment period
	◆ **Pay the Deposit** and the product is all yours to take home and enjoy!

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Pilot 1

Overview
- Executed by core team which handled all aspects:
- Rented space in the middle of a mall for a weekend

Execution
- DIY approach to minimize costs
- Direct interaction with potential customers
- Attempt to create visibility and credibility through physical presence

Results
- Encountered significant skepticism from potential customers
- Many people suspected it might be a scam
- Outcome: 0 sales

Key Lessons
- Importance of building trust and credibility
- Need for a more targeted approach to reach early adopters
- Value of understanding customer concerns and objections

Pilot 2

Overview
- Maintained DIY approach to keep costs low
- Strategic location change: Moved to a mall in a higher-income neighborhood
- Hired a small local sales team that spoke Swahili

Execution
- Set up in new mall location
- Utilized local sales team for customer interactions
- Continued hands-on approach from core team

Results
- Significant improvement from first pilot
- Secured 3 customers
- Demonstrated proof of concept and market potential

Key Takeaways
- Importance of location and target market selection
- Value of local language skills and cultural understanding
- Iterative approach leading to tangible results

Securing our First Customer + Sales Team

Post Pilot Scale-up

- Focus groups and Consumer interviews
  - *Result*: Customer Personas and Target Segments
- Budget to build out app and full-time team
  - *Result*: Streamlined processing of loans down to 1 hour
- Expand retail network
  - *Result*: Distribution and reach across country

Further Customer Acquisition Strategies

- Partner with retailers - brand credibility plus reach
- Networking - Joined retail association and golf club
- Early Adopters - commission on referrals, reduced interest rates on repeat purchases
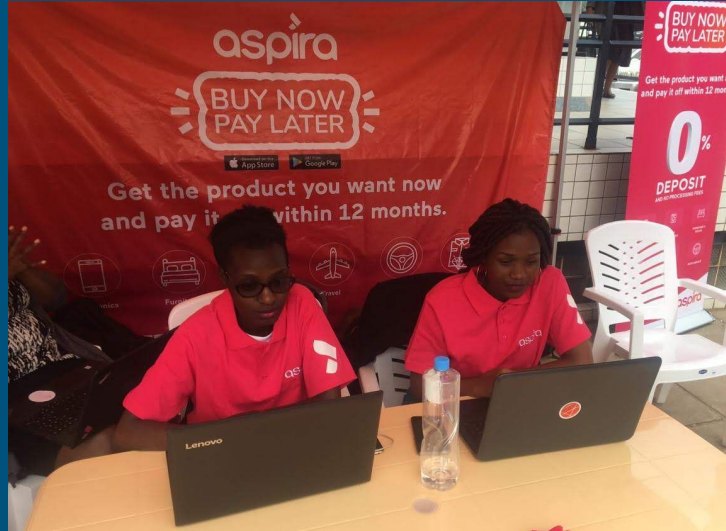
Key Takeaways

1. Embrace Founder Mode
- Be on the ground with customers
- Direct involvement leads to invaluable insights

2. Iterate Constantly
- Implemented monthly sprints after each pilot
- Continuous improvement based on real-world feedback

3. Listen to Customers
- Identified gap: Banks weren't listening to customer needs
- Competitive advantage: Giving customers what they want

4. Operate Lean
- Don't assume you need significant capital to validate your hypothesis
- Resourcefulness and agility over large budgets

5. Validate Hypotheses Quickly
- Use minimal resources to test market assumptions
- Learn and adapt based on real customer interactions

Founder mode

← Co-Founder & CEO of Airbnb Brian Chesky