

IDEATION ON CUSTOMER CARE REGISTRY

Ideation 1: Mine the creative equity

Don't just focus on 'as is' analytical equity: look to use social communities, research and engagement to collect ideas for continuous improvement from your suppliers, employees, customers, noncustomers (inside and out- side your industry) and experts. You need to 'mine' your creative equity!

To do this build cross-silo innovation platforms, develop an innovation culture and critically a proper governance structure to turn ideas into action (a skunkworks). One company that does this well is LVE. Here ideas generation is considered part of daily work and culture, taken seriously and invested in. Likewise, use social media for ideation; look at how Starbucks and Giff Gaff mine their creative equity. In a word, co-create.

Ideation 2: Look

The best way to understand customer needs is by studying your audience. Start by collecting data and observations around customers' journeys by placing yourself in their shoes. By considering the perspectives of those you design for, you can understand their pain points and categorize them as explicit or latent.

- Explicit: These are easily identifiable pain points. Customers are aware of their challenges and can clearly define them.
- Latent: These frustrations are harder to pinpoint or recognize. Most customers may not even be aware they exist.

It's important to note: This framework is especially effective when identifying latent needs. Since this method requires careful, unbiased observation, it produces solutions that focus on how real customers connect with a product or service. Making assumptions can lead to less effective user research and, in turn, solutions.

Ideation 3: Ask

Consider asking your audience more open-ended questions to uncover new ideas and perspectives. Instead of critical questions, have your audience share insightful observations about your product or service. Questions like "What did you like best about your experience?" or "How did you find out about us?" help get inside customers' minds.

Don't confine research to your customers. Involve stakeholders in the conversation and develop innovations around your mutual goal: customer needs. For example, consider brainstorming sessions focused on a particular survey question and examine how team members apply market knowledge to behavioral questions.

If you want to research users more thoroughly, conduct interviews. This method requires more structure than broad queries, but questions should never guide customers to a specific answer. Observations gleaned from leading questions are less likely to yield successful results because the data is shaped by bias. Avoid this by demonstrating patience and a positive attitude.

Ideation 4: Try

The best way to understand the user experience is by going into the field and participating in the same process customers do. Innovation can occur during brainstorming sessions and interviews, but putting yourself in customers' shoes can help you develop empathy for them.

For example, a hospital staff who wants to improve customer experiences in the emergency room should interact with patients at different stages. Interviews may reveal frustrations with the front desk, but this only illustrates a pain point—not a customer need. Sitting in waiting rooms is an excellent way to observe interactions with the front desk and understand what could be improved.

It isn't always possible to make observations in the field. If you encounter barriers, use props or other physical approximations to mimic reality. This method may not be as insightful as real-world experience, but working through scenarios is crucial to moving past customers' pain points to their needs.

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