

Introduction to Working Backwards

AMAZON'S APPROACH TO INNOVATION



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Agenda

- Introduction
- Amazon & Customer Obsession
- Working Backwards Process & Example
- Final project & constructing a PR-FAQ doc

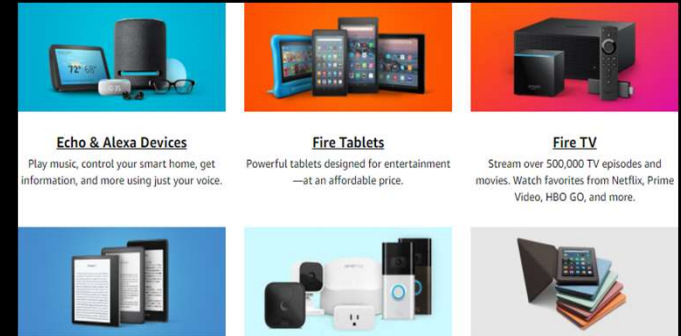
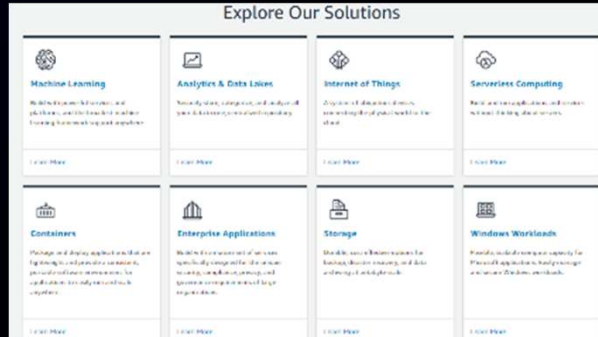
About Me

- Brooklyn College '17, B.S Computer Science
- Intern to Sr. Software Engineer at JPMorgan (2016 – 2022)
- Joined AWS as a Solutions Architect in 2022
 - M&E and Education Technology focused
 - AWS Skills to Jobs Technologist – Working with CSI and Hunter College
- Board of Directors for Chase Alumni Association





E-commerce



Devices



Streaming content



Consumables



Physical retail



Amazon's mission:
**to be Earth's most
customer-centric company**



Where innovation begins:
start with the customer
and work backwards





Customer obsession

Leaders start with the customer and work backwards.
*They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust.
Although leaders pay attention to competitors,
they obsess over customers.*

“ There are many advantages to a customer-centric approach, but here’s the big one: **Customers are always beautifully, wonderfully dissatisfied**, even when they report being happy and business is great. Even when they don’t yet know it, customers want something better, and your desire to delight customers will drive you to invent on their behalf. ”

Jeff Bezos

Founder and Executive Chair, Amazon.com, Inc.

2016 letter to shareholders





Who are your
customers?



ML1



Who is the customer?

Be specific about
context and needs

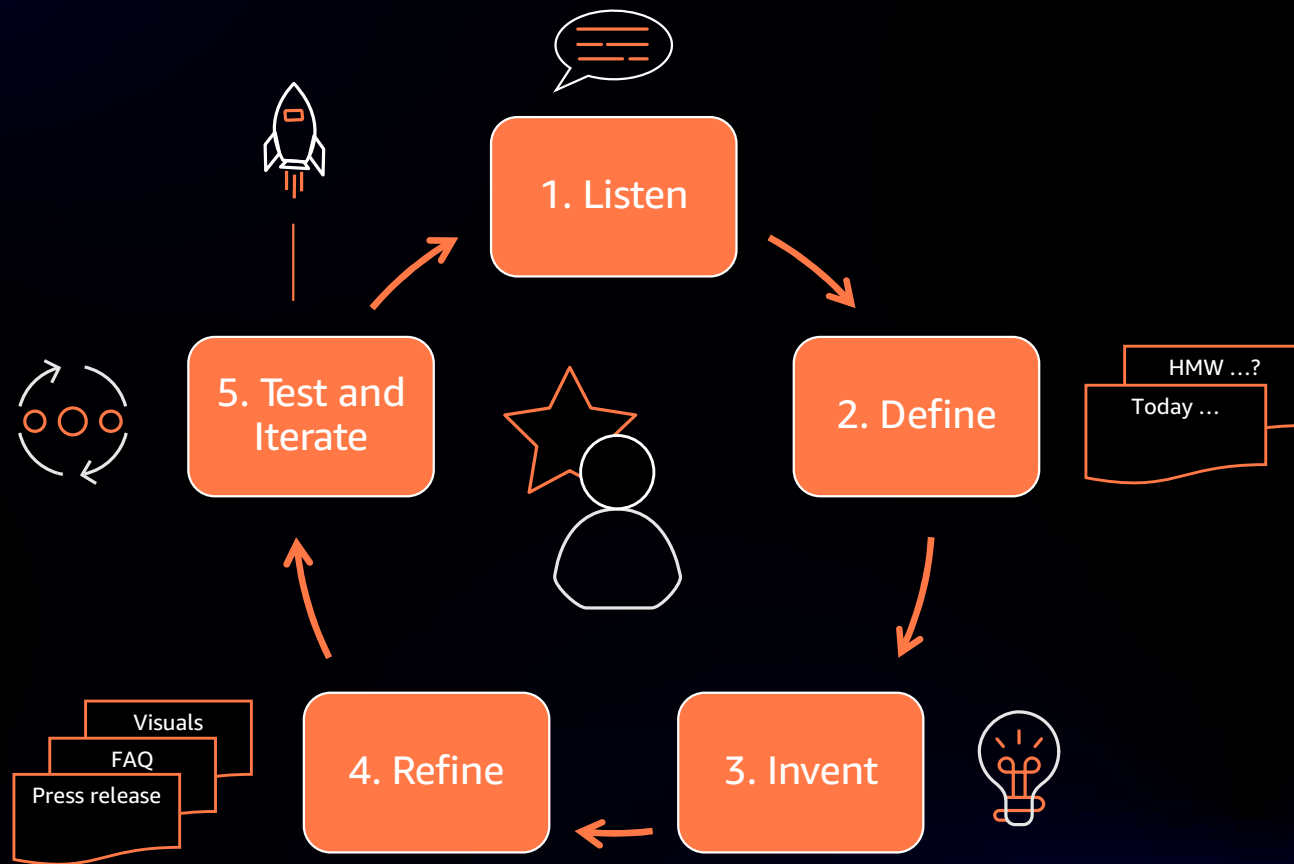
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ML1

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Miske, Laura, 11/19/2021

Working Backwards



Working Backwards: Customer questions

1. Who is the customer?
2. What is the customer problem or opportunity?
3. What is the most important customer benefit?
4. How do you know what customers need or want?
5. What does the customer experience look like?



Who is the customer?

EXAMPLE: busy, on-the-go, tech-savvy urban dwellers

What is the customer problem or opportunity?

Today [customer type]

have to [describe problem or opportunity]

when [context/situation]

What is the customer problem or opportunity?

Today busy, on-the-go, tech-savvy urban dwellers

have to fight crowds and wait in long lines



when they want to grab only a few things at the corner convenience store while on the go during a busy day

What is the most important customer benefit?

How might we...?

Improve their retail experience? (too broad)

Use tap-to-pay credit card checkout? (too narrow)

Use automated checkout stations? (not thinking big enough)

Eliminate the checkout process altogether? (YES!)



The most important customer benefit



Working Backwards: Customer questions

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Final Project: *Working Backwards* & *PR-FAQ*



**A press release is a conversation
starter to achieve **clarity** and
customer focus**

**We read, discuss, debate,
and ask questions**



**We revise and
make the idea better
with each iteration**

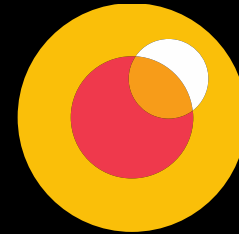
Working Backwards: PR-FAQ Document



Press release



FAQ



Visuals

PR-FAQ activities

Part 1: Who is the customer? What are their needs?

Part 2: Ideation exercise

Part 3: What is the most important customer benefit?

Part 4: Jump-start your press release

Part 5: Review with the team

PR-FAQ activities

Part 1: Who is the customer? What are their needs?

Part 2: Ideation exercise

Part 3: What is the most important customer benefit?

Part 4: Jump-start your press release

Part 5: Review a press release





Who is your customer and
what are their needs?

Who is the customer? What are their needs?

Write down a description of your customer and their needs. Discuss your customer needs with your group.

Does the statement describe the needs or does it feel like a solution?

PR-FAQ activities

Part 1: Who is the customer? What are their needs?

Part 2: Ideation exercise

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Part 5: Review a press release



8 ideas in 8 minutes

Generate 8 ideas to address your customer's problem or opportunity. The first few are easy, but to think of 8 different ones should push you.

Don't spend too much time thinking about "is this possible?"

PR-FAQ activities

Part 1: Who is the customer? What are their needs?

Part 2: Ideation exercise

Part 3: What is the most important customer benefit?

Part 4: Jump-start your press release

Part 5: Review a press release



What is the most important customer benefit?

Share your top ideas for your customers with your group.

Respectfully challenge each other and edit your descriptions as necessary

*Agree on **1** idea.*

Clearly articulate the idea and the benefit – write it down



PR-FAQ activities

Part 1: Who is the customer? What are their needs?

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Press release overview

- Focus on the customer need
- The *customer quote* is critical
- Leap into the future: think big
- Say it simply and clearly



Amazon Campus

Amazon.com confidential

Amazon Campus Launches First Multi-Channel Student Store at the University of California Berkeley
www.amazon.com/Campus&berkeley.amazon.com

SEATTLE (BUSINESS WIRE)— August 31st, 2014 — Since returning to school for the fall semester, Berkeley students have experienced a fresh take on the college bookstore as the new Berkeley Student Store opened at our online address: berkeley.amazon.com.

The Amazon online Student Store brings Amazon's broad selection, low prices, and convenient shipping options to the heart of Berkeley's campus and offers a number of additional student-focused features. With the launch of the Student Store, Berkeley students can now do for any purchase on Amazon with their CalCards, buy course materials in any format via links in Berkeley's Learning Management System or directly on Amazon.com, pick up orders at convenient local on-campus pickup points, and receive FREE One-Day Shipping on textbooks sent to the campus area. Amazon Student members at Berkeley can also get FREE One-Day Shipping to campus on millions of additional products plus FREE Two-Day shipping on millions more.

"The time an Amazon Student member has to save," explained Senior Audrey Robinson, "Getting the items from one day shipping was huge. The book ordering everything from Amazon's not get back to school. I was never had to have someone pick."

Students can access three campus-specific payment methods and shipping benefits, along with the full selection of custom textbooks - typically available only through the university-owned bookstore - by activating the Berkeley on-campus *Amazon* experience when they visit berkeley.amazon.com, sign up for Amazon Student and select "Berkeley" as their school, or click on links to Amazon with in the Berkeley Learning Management System.

In place of a traditional campus bookstore, Amazon has explored the new campus and built the first Amazon Student lounge, a space that features a package pick-up dock, technology showrooms, and lounge area for students to study, meet, read or relax in between classes. "Getting my textbooks was way easier this year. Instead of making the trip to the store to pick out my books and wait in line, I simply went to berkeley.amazon.com, and for my books with my Cal Card, and came down to the Student lounge to pick them up the next day," said Chella M. Chapman. "I spent less than 20 minutes on the entire process." Inside the Student Lounge, Amazon offers students free access to Prime Instant Video and Prime Music streaming. "It's my new favorite spot to crash in between classes," said John White, Junior. "I didn't even know Amazon had so much streaming video until I logged on to the Wi-Fi network in the lounge, and I definitely didn't know you got it for free with Amazon Student. I just needed my Netflix subscription."

Kelsey Price, Director of the ASUC Advisory & Student Union says, Amazon brings a combination of great prices, great service, and innovation that is unique in the college bookstore industry. "When we found our RFP, we specifically asked for innovative ideas that combined the best of online and physical world. Amazon's combination of online shopping, integration with our Learning Management System, free next-day shipping, and ability to offer in person pick-up was a game changer. Plus, they are the only partner that can offer a unique physical and digital solution, and that is important in an increasingly go-digital. But what mattered most was value for our students - Amazon textbook prices are 35% lower on average than in physical bookstores and none of the traditional book competitors could match that. Amazon's model aligns perfectly with Berkeley's strategic priorities of affordability and cutting-edge services."

The opening of the Student Store marks the launch of Amazon Campus, a new service aimed at providing universities with a low-cost alternative, or supplement, to the traditional bookstore while simultaneously making shopping for textbooks and other college materials more convenient and affordable for their students. The Amazon Campus service provides universities with a combined shopping experience, an on-campus delivery operation, and the Amazon Student lounge, which includes a pick-up dock, technology showrooms, and reading study space. For more information on Amazon Campus, visit www.amazon.com/campus.

We will optimize the customer experience to enable enhanced accuracy in Buy-Box pricing to facilitate increased rapidity and elevated confidence in purchase decisioning by cross-border retail customers.

Amazon makes it easier for international shoppers to decide what to purchase by showing them the total landed cost of an item. Total landed cost includes all taxes, duties, and shipping costs.

Say it simply!

Structure of a press release

1. Headline and subheading
2. Date and summary
3. Problem or opportunity
4. Solution
5. Leader quote
6. Customer experience
7. Customer testimonial
8. Call to action
9. Footer



Structure of a press release

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What is an idea summary?

An **idea summary** is an elevator pitch

Describe your idea in 2–3 sentences

Example from Amazon Campus:

SEATTLE – (BUSINESS WIRE) – August 31, 2014 – Since returning to school for the fall semester, University of California Berkeley students have experienced a fresh take on the college bookstore as the new Berkeley student store opened at an online address: berkeley.amazon.com.

Idea summary

Write the elevator pitch for your idea

You can imagine this is the first sentence of your press release or a short, concise description of the solution

What is a customer testimonial?

A **customer testimonial** is a fictitious quote from a future customer illustrating their impressions of your product or service. Although the quote is fabricated, it should be specific, believable, and sound like a real quote. Use the testimonial to reinforce why the customer cares about your solution.

"Getting my textbooks was way easier this year. Instead of making the trip to the store to pick out my books and wait in line, I simply went to berkeley.amazon.com, paid for my books with my Cal1 Card, and came down to the Student Lounge to pick them up the next day," said Saanvi Sarker^{ML2}, sophomore. "I spent less than 10 minutes on the entire process."

Slide 41

ML2

Consider selecting a name from the AWS-approved fictitious name list, such as Martha Rivera, Nikki Wolf, or Saanvi Sarkar.

Miske, Laura, 11/20/2021

Customer quote or testimonial

Think about how a customer might feel after using your product

Write a speculative quote coming from a happy customer who has just used your product

What makes a good headline?

A **headline** is a succinct one-liner a newspaper would use or a short compelling description of your idea

Example from Amazon Campus:

Amazon Campus Launches First Multi-Channel Student Store at the University of California Berkeley



Headline

Write the headline that introduces your solution to the world

Aim to provide enough information while leaving the reader wanting to learn more

PR-FAQ activities

Part 1: Who is the customer? What are their needs?

Part 2: Ideation exercise

Part 3: What is the most important customer benefit?

Part 4: Jump-start your press release

Part 5: Write your press release and FAQ



Write the PR-FAQ

Review your groups headline, summary, and quotation. Then start constructing the document.

Guidelines

- 2 pages total: PR doesn't exceed 1 page. FAQ doesn't exceed 1 page.
- Does it think big enough?
- Are the 5 questions clearly answered?
- Does it follow the structure we outlined?

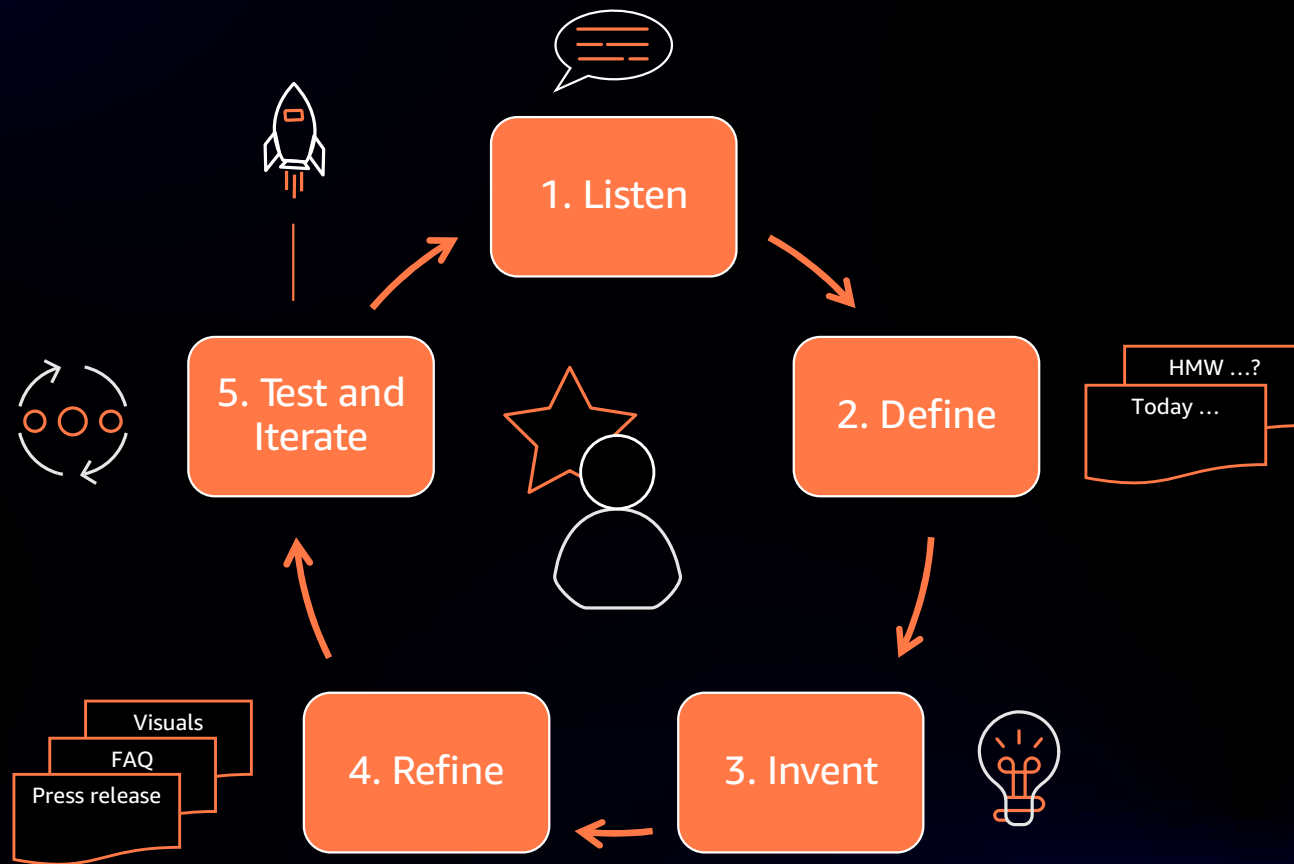
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Working Backwards



Thank you!



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