

Phase 1: Validate the Problem (Weeks 1-3)

Goal: Ensure a real, urgent customer pain exists before building anything.

- **Outcome:** You will know whether your business idea solves a high-priority problem for a real audience.
- Key Deliverables: Validated Problem Statement, Customer Interview Insights, Competitor Research

* Step 1: Identify a Big Customer Pain That is Urgent and Costly

- What You Need to Do:
 - Clearly define the problem you think exists.
 - Rank its **severity** (annoying vs. mission-critical).
 - Identify who suffers from this problem the most.
- ***** Exercises & Action Items:
- Write down the problem in **one sentence**. Example:
 - X Bad: "Businesses struggle with marketing."
 - Good: "Small business owners waste 10+ hours a week on marketing but struggle to see measurable results."
- Ask: Is this a must-solve problem?
 - Would customers pay to solve it?
 - Does this problem cause financial loss, inefficiency, frustration, or missed opportunities?
 - Are people already searching for solutions?
- Rank your problem: Mission-Critical (10) → Nice-to-Have (1)
 - If it's below **7/10**, consider pivoting or refining the problem.
- **Deliverable:** Write your **Problem Hypothesis Statement** in the provided Lean Canvas Template.

★ Step 2: Define Your Value Proposition



- What You Need to Do:
 - Articulate why your solution is better than what exists today.
 - Identify the **primary benefit** your solution provides.
- **Exercises & Action Items:**
- Complete this sentence:
 - "We help [customer segment] solve [problem] by [solution] so they can [key benefit]."
- Check the Clarity of Your Value Proposition:
 - Does it describe a clear outcome?
 - Would your ideal customer understand it in 5 seconds?
- Deliverable: Finalize your Value Proposition Statement inside the Lean Canvas Template.
- 📌 Step 3: Identify Customer Segments & Ideal Early Adopters
- What You Need to Do:
 - Define who your ideal customers are (age, job, behavior, spending habits).
 - Focus on early adopters who feel the pain the most and are actively searching for a solution.
- **X** Exercises & Action Items:
- List at least 3 customer types affected by this problem.
- Rank them by urgency & willingness to pay (1-10 scale).
- Find at least 5 online communities where these customers discuss their pain (Facebook groups, LinkedIn, Reddit, Quora).
- Deliverable: Document your Customer Personas in the provided Customer Interview Guide.
- 🖈 Step 4: List Key Assumptions About the Customer's Problem
- What You Need to Do:
 - Identify the risky assumptions in your idea that could prove false.
 - Test assumptions before building anything.



- **X** Exercises & Action Items:
- Write down at least 5 assumptions about your customers:
 - "Customers will be willing to pay at least \$X for this solution."
 - "The biggest frustration customers have is [X]."
 - "Competitors don't solve this problem effectively because [X]."
- Identify which assumption is most risky → Test this first in interviews.
- Deliverable: Log your key business assumptions in the Lean Canvas Template.
- * Step 5: Research Competitors & Existing Solutions
- What You Need to Do:
 - Investigate how customers currently solve this problem.
 - Determine if existing competitors fully or partially solve the issue.
- **Exercises & Action Items:**
- Google Search Test: Look up "[your problem] solution" and list the first 5 businesses.
- Check competitor reviews on G2, Trustpilot, Amazon.
- Document pricing models of competitors.
- Find gaps: What do customers complain about in reviews?
- **Deliverable:** Complete the Competitor Research Framework.
- Step 6: Conduct at Least 10-20 Customer Interviews
- What You Need to Do:
 - Talk to real potential customers to verify your assumptions.
 - Identify pain points, existing solutions, willingness to pay.
- **Exercises & Action Items:**
- Schedule at least 10 interviews. (Use Calendly to make scheduling easy.)
- ✓ **Follow this script:** (See full script in the Customer Interview Guide)
 - 1. Introduction "Tell me about your role and daily challenges."
 - 2. Pain Exploration "What's the most frustrating part of [this problem]?"



- 3. Existing Solutions "What do you currently use to fix this issue?"
- 4. **Pricing** "How much do you spend per year on solving this?"
- 5. Closing "If this existed today, would you try it?"
- **Deliverable:** Log interview notes in the Customer Interview Guide.

🖈 Step 7: Analyze Responses & Identify Patterns

- What You Need to Do:
 - Find recurring themes in interview feedback.
 - Identify which pain points were most commonly mentioned.
- **X** Exercises & Action Items:
- Look for patterns: Are the same frustrations mentioned repeatedly?
- Sort responses into categories: Urgent pain, nice-to-have, willingness to pay.
- If no clear problem emerges, refine your customer segment and redo interviews.
- **Deliverable:** Summarize your key findings in the Customer Interview Guide.
- 📌 Step 8: Test Customers' Willingness to Pay
- What You Need to Do:
 - Ask customers directly about pricing expectations.
 - See if people are willing to **pre-commit** before the product exists.
- * Exercises & Action Items:
- Ask, "If I built this today, would you pay \$X for it?"
- Offer a discount for pre-orders or beta signups.
- Track **conversion rates** to see if people actually commit.
- **Deliverable:** Log responses in the Pricing Experiment Tracker.
- 🖈 Step 9: Decide—Pivot, Iterate, or Proceed
- What You Need to Do:
 - Based on interview results, determine if the problem is worth solving.



X Decision	Criteria	:
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- If at least 50% of interviewees express strong pain, proceed to Phase 2.
- If feedback is weak or scattered, refine or pivot before proceeding.
- Final Deliverable: Complete Problem Validation Summary in the Lean Canvas Template.