

Customer Interview Prompts That Actually Work

I spent two hours building an AI chatbot. Then 27 customer interviews teaching me I built the wrong thing.

These are the prompts I used to figure out what I missed. Not generic interview questions. AI prompts to analyze what customers actually said versus what I heard.

Take them. Use them. Modify them for your product.

What's in here:

- Prompts to extract real pain (not polite nodding)
- Prompts to spot buyers versus tire-kickers
- Prompts to validate features with evidence
- Prompts to catch when you're running bad interviews
- Workflows for pre-launch, post-launch, and ongoing discovery

Two ways to use this:

1. **Deep method:** Maximum rigor for investor decks or critical decisions (Sections A-C)
2. **Fast method:** Rapid analysis when you need answers this week (Sections D-F)

Pick your method based on what you need, not what feels thorough.

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Part 3: Making It Work

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PART 1: DEEP SYNTHESIS METHOD

Use this when you need investor-ready analysis or you're making critical strategic decisions. Takes longer but gives you bulletproof evidence.

SECTION A: PER-INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Run these against each individual interview transcript. They create structured data you'll synthesize later.

Prompt A1: Extract the Real Problem

What this does: Gets to the actual job they're hiring you to do, not the feature they asked for.

When to use: First pass on every transcript.

Prompt:

Analyze the following interview transcript. Assume the role of a behavioral economist.

1. **Core Job to Be Done (JTBD):** Formulate the customer's motivation using the standard JTBD template: 'When I [SITUATION], I want to [MOTIVATION], so I can [EXPECTED OUTCOME].'

2. **Current Workflow/Process:** Detail the exact **step-by-step process** the customer currently uses to solve the focus problem (or avoid the pain). List the specific tools and workarounds involved.

3. **Quantified Cost of Pain:** Extract the most concrete, measurable cost associated with the problem. Look for:

- Time costs: "I spend X hours per week on..."
- Monetary costs: "We pay \$X for...", "We lose \$X per month due to..."

- Opportunity costs: "We can't do X because we're stuck doing Y"
- Team/headcount costs: "It takes X people to..."
- Risk/compliance costs: "We've been fined", "We're at risk of..."

4. ****Specific Pain Quotes:**** Extract 2-3 direct quotes that best capture the customer's frustration, urgency, or economic pain. Use the customer's exact words.

****Interview Transcript:****

[PASTE TRANSCRIPT HERE]

****Output Format:****

- JTBD: [one sentence]
- Current Process: [numbered list of steps]
- Quantified Cost: [specific measurable cost with units]
- Pain Quotes: [3 direct quotes with context]

Why this works: Forces you to find hard economic data, not soft "pain points." You can't bullshit with specific dollar amounts and time costs.

Prompt A2: Feature Validation With Evidence

What this does: Separates polite nodding from genuine excitement.

When to use: When you demoed features or discussed solutions.

Prompt:

Analyze this interview for feature validation signals. Assume the role of a product manager evaluating market fit.

For each feature or solution component discussed:

1. ****Feature Name:**** [Name the feature]
2. ****Validation Signal:**** Rate as Strong Positive / Positive / Neutral / Negative / Strong Negative
3. ****Evidence:**** Provide the exact quote(s) that support your rating
4. ****Urgency Indicator:**** Did they indicate this is:
 - Critical (can't live without)
 - Important (significant value)
 - Nice-to-have (marginal value)
 - Not needed (no clear use case)
5. ****Willingness to Pay Signal:**** Did they indicate this feature would justify paying for the product? Quote evidence.

6. **Competitive Context:** Did they mention how competitors handle this feature? If yes, what did they say?

Prioritization Inference:

Based on the evidence above, classify each feature as:

- **P0 (Must Have):** Critical to initial purchase decision
- **P1 (High Value):** Significant differentiator or value driver
- **P2 (Nice to Have):** Marginal improvement over status quo

Interview Transcript:

[PASTE TRANSCRIPT HERE]

Output Format: Table with columns: Feature Name | Signal | Evidence | Urgency | Priority Classification

Why this works: Makes you cite evidence for every claim. "They seemed excited" doesn't cut it. Show me the quote.

Prompt A3: Spot Real Buyers

What this does: Identifies who will actually pay versus who just likes talking to you.

When to use: After every interview to assess sales potential.

Prompt:

Analyze this interview to determine the strength of buying signals. Assume the role of a B2B sales analyst.

Buying Signal Checklist:

1. **Economic Authority:**

- Does this person control budget? (Yes/No/Unsure)
- Evidence: [quote or inference]

2. **Current Budget Allocation:**

- Do they currently spend money solving this problem? (Yes/No)
- If yes, how much? [extract specific \$ amounts or ranges]
- Evidence: [quote]

3. **Timeline Urgency:**

- When do they need a solution? (This quarter / This year / Someday / Never mentioned)

- Evidence: [quote]
4. **Pain Severity:**
- Rate pain level: Critical / Serious / Moderate / Minor / None
 - Evidence: [quote showing consequences of not solving]
5. **Comparison Shopping:**
- Did they mention evaluating other solutions? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, which ones? [list]
 - Evidence: [quote]
6. **Next Steps Commitment:**
- Did they propose or agree to concrete next steps? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, what specifically? [list action items]
 - Evidence: [quote]

****BUYER QUALITY SCORE:****

Rate this prospect on a scale of 0-10, where:

- 0-3: Tire kicker (no real intent)
- 4-6: Interested but not urgent
- 7-8: Strong prospect (real need + timeline)
- 9-10: Ready to buy (budget + authority + urgency)

Score: [X/10]

Justification: [2-3 sentences explaining the score based on the evidence above]

****RECOMMENDED ACTION:****

Based on this score, recommend one of the following:

- **Pursue aggressively:** Schedule demo, send proposal, get commitment
- **Nurture relationship:** Stay in touch, provide value, wait for timing
- **Deprioritize:** Polite, but no active follow-up unless they reach out

****Interview Transcript:****

[PASTE TRANSCRIPT HERE]

Why this works: Stops you from wasting time on people who will never buy. I learned this the hard way chasing "interested" prospects who were just being nice.

Prompt A4: Competitive Intelligence

What this does: Extracts what they think about competitors and where the white space actually is.

When to use: When they mentioned competitors or current solutions.

Prompt:

Analyze this interview for competitive intelligence. Assume the role of a competitive analyst.

****1. Current Solution Analysis:****

What are they using today to solve this problem?

- Tool/Product Name: [name]
- What they like: [quote evidence]
- What frustrates them: [quote evidence]
- Switching cost perceived: [High/Medium/Low with evidence]

****2. Competitive Products Mentioned:****

For each competitor mentioned:

- Name: [competitor]
- Customer's perception: [positive/neutral/negative]
- Specific strengths noted: [quotes]
- Specific weaknesses noted: [quotes]
- Likelihood of switching FROM competitor: [High/Medium/Low with reasoning]

****3. Feature Gaps in Market:****

What did they say is missing from ALL current solutions?

- Gap #1: [description with quote]
- Gap #2: [description with quote]
- Gap #3: [description with quote]

****4. Differentiation Opportunity:****

Based on this interview, what is the clearest way to position against competitors?

- Positioning angle: [one sentence]
- Supporting evidence: [quotes from interview]
- Competitive moat potential: [assessment of defensibility]

****Interview Transcript:****

[PASTE TRANSCRIPT HERE]

****Output Format:****

- Current Solution: [summary]
- Competitors Mentioned: [bulleted list with assessments]
- Feature Gaps: [numbered list]
- Differentiation Strategy: [paragraph with quotes]

Why this works: Identifies real competitive threats based on what customers actually care about, not what you think they care about.

Prompt A5: Catch Bad Interviews

What this does: Detects if you ran a good interview or just had a polite conversation.

When to use: After every interview as a quality check.

Prompt:

You are Rob Fitzpatrick, author of The Mom Test. Analyze this interview transcript to determine if it followed best practices for customer discovery interviews.

****EVALUATION CRITERIA:****

1. ****Questions About Behavior (Good) vs. Hypotheticals (Bad)****

- Count of past-behavior questions: [number]
- Count of hypothetical/future questions: [number]
- Examples of good questions: [list 2-3]
- Examples of bad questions: [list 2-3]

2. ****Compliment Seeking (Bad)****

- Did the interviewer pitch their idea/solution? (Yes/No)
- Did they ask "would you use this?" or similar validation-seeking questions? (Yes/No)
- Evidence: [quotes]

3. ****Specificity of Pain (Good) vs. Generic Complaints (Bad)****

- Did the customer provide specific examples of past problems? (Yes/No)
- Did they quantify costs (time/money)? (Yes/No)
- Evidence: [quotes showing specificity or lack thereof]

4. ****Open-Ended Exploration (Good) vs. Leading Questions (Bad)****

- Examples of good open-ended questions: [list]
- Examples of leading questions: [list]

5. ****Talk Ratio****

- Approximate % of talking done by interviewer: [X%]
- Approximate % of talking done by customer: [Y%]
- Assessment: [Too much interviewer talk / Good balance / Too little customer talk]

****OVERALL INTERVIEW QUALITY SCORE:****

Rate this interview from 0-10:

- 0-3: Poor quality (mostly pitching/hypotheticals)
- 4-6: Mediocre (some good questions, but missed opportunities)
- 7-8: Good (followed best practices mostly)

- 9-10: Excellent (textbook Mom Test interview)

Score: [X/10]

****RED FLAGS DETECTED:****

List any major problems with this interview:

- [Flag 1]
- [Flag 2]
- [Flag 3]

****WHAT TO FIX IN NEXT INTERVIEW:****

Provide 3 specific improvements for the interviewer:

1. [Specific actionable improvement]
2. [Specific actionable improvement]
3. [Specific actionable improvement]

****Interview Transcript:****

[PASTE TRANSCRIPT HERE]

Why this works: You can't fix what you don't measure. This catches when you're asking leading questions or fishing for validation instead of learning.

SECTION B: CROSS-INTERVIEW SYNTHESIS

After running Section A prompts on individual transcripts, use these to find patterns across all your interviews.

Prompt B1: Pattern Recognition

What this does: Identifies themes that show up across multiple interviews.

When to use: After analyzing 5+ individual interviews.

Prompt:

You are a qualitative researcher analyzing customer discovery data. I will provide you with structured output from multiple interview analyses (from Prompt A1).

****Your task:**** Identify patterns, segments, and strategic insights.

****DATA:****

[PASTE OUTPUT FROM MULTIPLE A1 ANALYSES]

****ANALYSIS REQUIRED:****

1. ****Common JTBD Patterns:****

- How many distinct jobs are being hired for?
- What are the 2-3 most common jobs?
- Are there segments with different jobs?

2. ****Workflow Patterns:****

- What tools appear in multiple workflows?
- What steps are universally painful?
- Where are the common workarounds?

3. ****Cost Distribution:****

- Range of quantified costs (min to max)
- Median cost of pain
- Highest ROI opportunity (where cost is highest)

4. ****Segmentation Opportunity:****

- Can customers be grouped by job, workflow, or pain level?
- What are the segment characteristics?
- Which segment should we target first? (Explain reasoning)

5. ****Quote Synthesis:****

- 5 most powerful quotes that capture the problem
- Group by theme if multiple themes emerge

****Output Format:****

- Pattern Summary: [3-5 key findings]
- Recommended Target Segment: [description with reasoning]
- Top 5 Quotes: [with context]

Why this works: Forces you to find real patterns instead of cherry-picking quotes that support what you want to build.

Prompt B2: Feature Priority Across All Interviews

What this does: Aggregates feature validation signals to create evidence-based prioritization.

When to use: After running Prompt A2 on multiple interviews.

Prompt:

You are a product strategist synthesizing feature validation data. I will provide structured output from multiple feature validation analyses (from Prompt A2).

****Your task:**** Create a prioritized feature list with confidence scores.

****DATA:****

[PASTE OUTPUT FROM MULTIPLE A2 ANALYSES]

****ANALYSIS REQUIRED:****

1. ****Feature Priority Matrix:****

Create a table with these columns:

- Feature Name
- Mentions (how many interviews mentioned it)
- Strong Positive Signals (count)
- Negative Signals (count)
- Average Urgency (Critical/Important/Nice-to-have)
- Recommended Priority (P0/P1/P2)

2. ****Confidence Assessment:****

For each P0/P1 feature:

- Confidence level: High / Medium / Low
- Evidence strength: [describe quality of supporting quotes]
- Risk factors: [what could invalidate this priority?]

3. ****Polarizing Features:****

- List features with both strong positive AND negative signals
- Explain the split: [why do some love it, some hate it?]
- Recommendation: [build/test/skip with reasoning]

4. ****Willingness to Pay Indicators:****

- Which features drove WTP signals most strongly?
- Quote evidence for top 3 features

5. ****MVP Scope Recommendation:****

Based on all data, what's the minimum feature set that:

- Solves the core problem
- Drives purchase decisions
- Can be built in [X weeks/months]

****Output Format:****

- Priority Matrix: [table]

- MVP Feature Set: [bulleted list with brief rationale]
- Next Tier Features: [features for v2]
- Low Priority / Skip: [features with weak signals]

Why this works: Gives you a defensible feature roadmap backed by actual customer evidence, not opinions or HiPPO (Highest Paid Person's Opinion).

Prompt B3: Market Segmentation

What this does: Identifies if you have multiple distinct customer segments with different needs.

When to use: When your interviews seem to show conflicting signals or different use cases.

Prompt:

You are a market segmentation analyst. I will provide structured data from multiple interviews. Your task is to identify if segments exist and recommend targeting strategy.

****DATA:****

[PASTE RELEVANT DATA FROM PROMPTS A1-A4]

****ANALYSIS REQUIRED:****

1. **Segment Identification:**

- Do clear segments emerge based on:
- Different JTBDs?
 - Different workflows?
 - Different pain levels?
 - Different feature priorities?
 - Different competitive contexts?
 - Different buying patterns?

For each potential segment identified:

- Segment Name: [descriptive name]
- Defining Characteristics: [what makes this segment distinct]
- Size in Sample: [X out of Y interviews]
- Example Customers: [anonymized examples]

2. **Segment Comparison Matrix:**

Create table comparing segments:

- Core JTBD
- Must-have features

- Deal-breakers
- Buying authority
- Budget level
- Timeline urgency

3. **Targeting Recommendation:**

- Primary target segment: [name]
- Rationale: [why this segment first]
- Go-to-market implications: [how to reach them]
- Product implications: [what to build for them]

4. **Secondary Opportunities:**

- Which other segments can we serve with same core product?
- Which segments require different products?
- Which segments should we ignore?

****Output Format:****

- Segment Definition: [clear descriptions]
- Targeting Strategy: [which segment, why, how]
- Product Implications: [feature priorities by segment]

Why this works: Prevents the "build for everyone" trap. Forces you to choose a target segment with reasoning.

Prompt B4: Competitive Positioning

What this does: Synthesizes competitive intelligence into a positioning strategy.

When to use: After analyzing 5+ interviews with Prompt A4.

Prompt:

You are a positioning strategist. Synthesize competitive intelligence from multiple interviews to recommend market positioning.

****DATA:****

[PASTE OUTPUT FROM MULTIPLE A4 ANALYSES]

****ANALYSIS REQUIRED:****

1. **Competitive Landscape Map:**

- Current solutions customers use (ranked by frequency)

- Strengths of each (from customer perspective)
- Weaknesses of each (from customer perspective)
- Switching barriers (what keeps customers locked in)

2. **White Space Analysis:**

- Features missing from ALL competitors
- Jobs competitors don't solve well
- Customer frustrations no one addresses
- Opportunities competitors are missing

3. **Positioning Strategy:**

Based on analysis above, recommend:

- **Head-to-head positioning:** Which competitor should we position against directly? Why?
- **Differentiation angle:** What's our unique value? (Must be supported by customer quotes)
- **Target displaced:** Which current solution are we replacing? For which segment?

4. **Messaging Framework:**

- **For [target segment]**
- **Who struggle with [specific problem from quotes]**
- **Our product is [category]**
- **That [key benefit backed by evidence]**
- **Unlike [competitor we're positioned against]**
- **We [unique differentiation supported by customer quotes]**

5. **Moat Assessment:**

- How defensible is this positioning?
- What could competitors copy easily?
- What's hard to replicate?
- Time window before positioning becomes commoditized?

Output Format:

- Competitive Map: [visual or structured list]
- White Space: [bulleted opportunities]
- Positioning Statement: [one paragraph]
- Messaging Framework: [structured format above]
- Defensibility Score: [High/Medium/Low with reasoning]

Why this works: Positioning based on actual customer perspective of the competitive landscape, not your assumptions.

Prompt B5: Buyer Qualification Matrix

What this does: Creates a scoring system for future prospects based on patterns in your best buyer interviews.

When to use: After running Prompt A3 on 10+ interviews with mix of good and bad prospects.

Prompt:

You are a sales operations analyst. Analyze buyer signal data from multiple interviews to create a lead scoring model.

****DATA:****

[PASTE OUTPUT FROM MULTIPLE A3 ANALYSES]

****ANALYSIS REQUIRED:****

1. ****Pattern Analysis:****

- What characteristics do 9-10 scored prospects share?
- What characteristics do 0-3 scored prospects share?
- Which signals were most predictive of buying intent?

2. ****Weighted Scoring Model:****

Create a lead scoring formula based on patterns:

Example format:

- Budget Authority: [X points if yes]
- Current Spend: [Y points if \$Z+/month]
- Timeline: [points by urgency level]
- Pain Severity: [points by severity]
- Competitor Evaluation: [points if actively comparing]
- Next Steps: [points if concrete commitment]

3. ****Qualification Questions:****

Based on patterns, what are the 5 questions that best predict buyer quality?

- Question 1: [question text]
- Question 2: [question text]
- etc.

4. ****Disqualification Criteria:****

What signals should cause immediate disqualification?

- Red flag 1: [description with reasoning]
- Red flag 2: [description with reasoning]
- etc.

5. ****Sales Process Recommendations:****

- What buyer score threshold warrants aggressive pursuit?

- What score warrants nurturing?
- What score warrants deprioritization?
- Average time from first contact to close for high-score prospects?

****Output Format:****

- Scoring Model: [formula with point values]
- Qualification Questions: [numbered list]
- Disqualification Criteria: [bulleted list]
- Process Recommendations: [paragraph with thresholds]

Why this works: Stops you from wasting time on low-quality prospects. Based on patterns from your actual interview data, not generic sales theory.

SECTION C: COMPLETE ANALYSIS PACKAGES

These prompts generate investor-ready outputs by combining all previous analysis.

Prompt C1: Investment Committee Memo

What this does: Creates the analysis investors or executives actually want to see.

When to use: When you need to make a go/no-go decision or secure funding/resources.

Prompt:

You are preparing an investment committee memo based on customer discovery research. Synthesize all previous analysis into a decision-ready document.

****DATA:****

[PASTE OUTPUTS FROM PROMPTS B1-B5]

****REQUIRED SECTIONS:****

****1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1 paragraph)****

Bottom line: What's the opportunity? What's the ask? What's the confidence level?

****2. MARKET VALIDATION****

- Problem size: [quantified with customer evidence]
- Target segment: [defined with characteristics]
- Market size: [estimated based on customer data]
- Urgency: [evidence from interviews]

****3. SOLUTION VALIDATION****

- Must-have features: [P0 list with evidence]
- MVP scope: [what's enough to drive purchase]
- Differentiation: [unique value from competitive analysis]
- Willingness to pay: [signals and specific quotes]

****4. GO-TO-MARKET FEASIBILITY****

- Target customer profile: [from segmentation]
- Buyer personas: [from buyer signal analysis]
- Competitive positioning: [from positioning strategy]
- Sales motion: [inbound/outbound, cycle length evidence]

****5. RISKS & UNCERTAINTIES****

- What we know with high confidence: [list]
- What we know with medium confidence: [list]
- What we still need to validate: [list]
- Biggest risks: [ranked]

****6. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS****

- MVP development estimate: [time/cost]
- Go-to-market investment: [estimate]
- Target metrics: [acquisition, conversion, retention]
- Break-even timeline: [estimate with assumptions]

****7. RECOMMENDATION****

- Go / No-Go / Pivot (with clear reasoning)
- If Go: Next steps and success criteria
- If No-Go: Why not, what would change your mind
- If Pivot: What specifically needs to change

****8. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE****

- Sample size: [X interviews with Y distinct companies]
- Top 10 quotes: [most powerful evidence]
- Interview quality scores: [from Prompt A5 if available]

****Output Format:**** Professional memo suitable for investment committee or board presentation

Why this works: Investors don't want to read 50 pages of interview notes. They want the strategic synthesis with enough evidence to believe you.

Prompt C2: Product Requirements Document (PRD)

What this does: Converts customer insights into actionable product requirements.

When to use: When you're ready to build and need to align engineering/design.

Prompt:

You are a product manager writing a PRD based on customer discovery research. Use the analysis to create actionable requirements.

DATA:

[PASTE RELEVANT OUTPUTS FROM SECTIONS A & B]

PRD STRUCTURE:

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Customer segment: [who]
- Job to be done: [what they're trying to accomplish]
- Current solution: [how they solve it today]
- Pain points: [specific frustrations with quantified costs]
- Evidence: [top quotes from customers]

2. SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Business metrics: [what we're optimizing for]
- User metrics: [how we'll measure user success]
- Validation criteria: [how we'll know if we solved the problem]

3. USER STORIES

Based on interview evidence, write user stories:

- As a [persona], I want to [action], so that [outcome]
- Include evidence: [which interviews support this]

4. FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

For each P0 feature:

- Feature name
- User value: [what problem it solves]
- Evidence: [customer quotes showing need]
- Acceptance criteria: [what done looks like]
- Priority: [P0/P1/P2]

5. NON-FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Based on customer context:

- Performance: [requirements based on workflow]
- Scale: [based on target segment size]

- Security: [based on customer environment]
- Integrations: [based on tools they use]

****6. OUT OF SCOPE (V1)****

- What we're explicitly not building in MVP
- Rationale based on interview data
- When/if we'll revisit

****7. OPEN QUESTIONS****

- What we still need to validate
- Assumptions that need testing
- Risks to monitor

****Output Format:**** Standard PRD format used by your eng team

Why this works: Engineering gets requirements grounded in actual customer evidence, not product manager opinions.

Prompt C3: Sales Enablement Package

What this does: Arms your sales team with customer insights for better conversations.

When to use: When you're ready to start selling or need to improve conversion.

Prompt:

You are a sales enablement manager. Create materials that help sales reps have better customer conversations based on discovery research.

****DATA:****

[PASTE RELEVANT OUTPUTS FROM SECTIONS A & B]

****DELIVERABLES:****

****1. IDEAL CUSTOMER PROFILE (ICP)****

- Company characteristics: [size, industry, etc. from interviews]
- Role/title: [who we sold to successfully]
- Pain indicators: [signals this company has the problem]
- Disqualification criteria: [signals to walk away]

****2. BUYER PERSONAS****

For each key persona:

- Role and responsibilities
- Goals and success metrics
- Pain points (with quotes)
- Objections (from interviews)
- Messaging that resonates (with evidence)

****3. DISCOVERY CALL SCRIPT****

Based on patterns in successful interviews:

- Opening: [how to start conversation]
- Qualification questions: [5-7 questions that reveal fit]
- Pain questions: [how to uncover economic impact]
- Next steps: [how to advance the deal]

****4. DEMO SCRIPT****

- Lead with pain: [start with their problem]
- Feature priority: [P0 features to show first]
- Proof points: [quote customer evidence]
- Objection handling: [from competitive analysis]

****5. CASE STUDY TEMPLATE****

Based on best interviews:

- Customer: [anonymized example]
- Challenge: [their problem with quantified cost]
- Solution: [how we solved it]
- Results: [outcomes they'd expect]

****6. COMPETITIVE BATTLECARDS****

For each major competitor:

- When they come up: [customer context]
- Their strengths: [acknowledge them]
- Their weaknesses: [from customer quotes]
- Our differentiation: [why we're better for target segment]

****7. FAQ FROM CUSTOMERS****

Based on interview questions:

- Top 10 questions prospects ask
- Answers backed by customer evidence
- Objections and how to handle them

****Output Format:**** Sales playbook with scripts, battlecards, and customer evidence

Why this works: Sales team sells based on actual customer conversations, not marketing fluff.

PART 2: RAPID ANALYSIS METHOD

Use this when you need answers fast. Less rigorous but much faster. Good for ongoing discovery or when you're iterating quickly.

SECTION D: RAPID INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Run this on each interview. Combines multiple analysis types from Part 1 into single prompts.

Prompt D1: Fast Interview Summary

What this does: Gets you 80% of the value in one prompt.

When to use: Every interview when you need quick insights.

Prompt:

Analyze this customer interview transcript quickly. Extract the most important information for product decisions.

****EXTRACT:****

1. **Core Problem** (2-3 sentences)
 - What job are they trying to do?
 - How do they solve it today?
 - What frustrates them most?
2. **Quantified Pain** (specific numbers)
 - Time cost: [hours/week]
 - Money cost: [\$/month or \$/year]
 - Opportunity cost: [what they can't do]
3. **Feature Signals** (table format)
Feature | Reaction | Quote Evidence | Priority
4. **Buying Signals** (Yes/No/Maybe with evidence)
 - Has budget authority?
 - Currently spending money on solution?
 - Has timeline?
 - Expressed strong pain?
5. **Top 3 Quotes**
 - Most powerful evidence of pain

- Strongest feature validation
- Best competitive insight

6. **Red Flags** (if any)
 - Signs this was a bad interview
 - Signs they won't buy
 - Signs of feature request vs. real need

7. **Action Items**
 - Follow-up questions for next interview
 - Features to validate further
 - People to talk to next

Interview Transcript:

[PASTE TRANSCRIPT HERE]

Output Format: Structured summary (not essay format)

Why this works: One prompt gets you enough to make decisions. Not perfect but fast.

SECTION E: BATCH PROCESSING

After running Prompt D1 on multiple interviews, use these to synthesize.

Prompt E1: Fast Pattern Recognition

What this does: Finds patterns across interviews quickly.

When to use: After 5+ rapid interview summaries.

Prompt:

Synthesize patterns from multiple customer interview summaries.

DATA:

[PASTE 5-10 OUTPUTS FROM PROMPT D1]

FIND:

1. **Common Problems** (what shows up repeatedly)
2. **Cost Range** (min to max quantified pain)

3. **Feature Consensus** (which features validated across multiple interviews)
4. **Buyer Patterns** (characteristics of high-quality prospects)
5. **Red Flags** (what signals low-quality prospects)

****RECOMMEND:****

1. **What to build next** (3 features with evidence)
2. **Who to target** (segment characteristics)
3. **What to validate** (biggest unknowns remaining)

****Keep it short:**** Bullet points, not essays.

Prompt E2: Feature Priority

What this does: Quick prioritization based on interview signals.

When to use: When you need to decide what to build this sprint/quarter.

Prompt:

Create a prioritized feature list from interview data.

****DATA:****

[PASTE FEATURE SIGNALS FROM MULTIPLE D1 OUTPUTS]

****CREATE:****

Priority Matrix:

Feature	Mentions	Strong Signals	Priority	Build?

Rationale:

- Why these features first
- What we're punting to later
- What we're not building (and why)

****Keep it actionable:**** What does engineering build this quarter?

SECTION F: EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Prompt F1: One-Page Update

What this does: Creates the summary your boss actually wants to read.

When to use: Weekly or monthly stakeholder updates.

Prompt:

Create a one-page customer discovery update.

****DATA:****

[PASTE RELEVANT ANALYSIS FROM THIS WEEK/MONTH]

****FORMAT:****

****What We Learned:****

- 3 biggest insights this period
- Supporting evidence (quotes)

****What Changed:****

- Updates to roadmap/strategy based on learning
- What we're killing/deprioritizing

****What We're Validating:****

- Biggest questions for next period
- How we'll answer them

****Customer Stats:****

- [X] interviews conducted
- [Y] qualified buyers identified
- [Z] key patterns confirmed

****Next Steps:****

- [Action item 1]
- [Action item 2]
- [Action item 3]

****Keep it to 1 page.**** Your boss won't read more.

PART 3: MAKING IT WORK

Choosing Your Method

Use Deep Method (Part 1) when:

- Raising funding (investors want rigor)
- Making major strategic decisions (pivot, new market)
- Building foundational positioning/messaging
- You have time for thorough analysis
- Stakes are high if you're wrong

Use Rapid Method (Part 2) when:

- Iterating on existing product
- Continuous discovery during development
- Need decisions this week
- Lower stakes (can adjust quickly)
- Limited analysis time

Mix methods:

- Use Deep for quarterly strategic reviews
- Use Rapid for weekly ongoing discovery
- Deep for big decisions, Rapid for small ones

Don't overthink it. Pick the method that matches your timeline and stakes.

Working With AI Tools

What works:

- Paste full transcripts (Claude handles 100K+ tokens)
- Run multiple prompts on same transcript
- Iterate on prompts based on your product
- Chain prompts (output from A1 feeds into B1)

What doesn't work:

- Expecting perfection first try
- Using generic prompts without customization
- Not reviewing AI output critically
- Treating AI analysis as truth vs. starting point

My workflow:

1. Record interview (Zoom + Otter.ai)
2. Get transcript

3. Paste into Claude with relevant prompt
4. Review output critically
5. Extract key insights to product doc
6. Repeat across interviews
7. Use synthesis prompts for patterns

Takes 10 minutes per interview. Beats guessing.

Common Mistakes

- 1. Skipping the Mom Test validity check** You think you ran a good interview. You didn't. Run Prompt A5 to find out.
 - 2. Cherry-picking quotes** Using only evidence that supports what you want to build. The synthesis prompts force pattern recognition across all interviews.
 - 3. Confusing "interested" with "will buy"** Prompt A3 catches this. Lots of people are interested. Few will pay.
 - 4. Building for edge cases** One customer asks for something = edge case. Five customers independently describe same pain = pattern. The synthesis prompts show you the difference.
 - 5. Not quantifying pain** "This is annoying" isn't actionable. "I spend 10 hours/week on this" is. Prompt A1 forces quantification.
 - 6. Ignoring competitive context** You think you're differentiated. Customers think you're the same as everyone else. Prompt A4 shows reality.
-

Example Workflow: Pre-Launch Validation

Week 1-2: Run 10-15 interviews

- Target: Different segments, mix of warm and cold prospects
- Use: Standard Mom Test questions (not included here but you know them)
- Record and transcribe all

Week 3: Deep analysis

- Monday: Run Prompts A1-A5 on each transcript
- Tuesday-Wednesday: Run Prompts B1-B5 for synthesis
- Thursday: Run Prompt C1 for investment memo

- Friday: Present findings, make go/no-go decision

Week 4: If go, then...

- Run Prompt C2 for PRD
- Run Prompt C3 for sales enablement
- Start building

Total time:

- ~15 hours interviewing
- ~5 hours analysis (with prompts)
- ~3 hours creating deliverables
- = 23 hours to validate entire product direction

Beats guessing and building for 3 months.

Example Workflow: Post-Launch Learning

Weekly rhythm:

- Interview 1-2 customers who used the product
- Run Prompt D1 for quick summary
- Share insights with team in standup

Monthly rhythm:

- Batch process 4-8 weekly interviews
- Run Prompt E1 for patterns
- Run Prompt F1 for stakeholder update
- Adjust roadmap based on learning

Quarterly rhythm:

- Deep dive with 15-20 interviews
- Full Deep Method analysis
- Strategic review and pivot decisions
- Update positioning/messaging

This builds customer discovery into your DNA instead of treating it like a phase.

Final Thoughts

These prompts won't make you a better interviewer. They'll make you better at learning from the interviews you run.

The hard part is still asking good questions and shutting up long enough to listen.

But once you've done that, these prompts help you:

- Find patterns instead of guessing
- Prioritize with evidence instead of opinions
- Spot buyers instead of wasting time
- Build investor-ready analysis instead of gut feel

I built these because I was tired of running interviews and then trying to remember what people said three weeks later when I was writing the PRD.

Now I run the interview, paste the transcript, get structured insights in minutes, and make decisions based on what customers actually said instead of what I wanted to hear.

Use them. Modify them. Make them yours.

The goal isn't perfect analysis. The goal is confident decisions backed by customer evidence.

Then go build something people actually want.

Questions or improvements? chris@alignvue.com

Want to see how I used these?

<https://www.chrisspagnuolo.info/blog/i-built-the-same-ai-chatbot>

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This library combines Jobs to Be Done (Clayton Christensen), The Mom Test (Rob Fitzpatrick), and 20 years of doing customer discovery wrong before I figured out what actually works.