

ACTIVITY: Customer interviews

DESCRIPTION

What it involves (What is it?)

- Identifying and recruiting target customers that represent the desired user segments.
- Defining clear objectives and developing a structured interview guide with relevant questions.
- Engaging in one-on-one conversations with customers, actively listening to their experiences, and probing for deeper insights.
- Collecting detailed notes, audio recordings, and other relevant data during interviews, focusing on understanding customer motivations, pain points, and needs.
- Creating summaries and reports that highlight actionable findings and sharing key findings with the product team and other stakeholders.
- Conducting interviews throughout the product development lifecycle, refining questions and approaches based on previous findings.

Benefits of Implementing it (What is it for?)

- Gaining a firsthand understanding of customer needs, pain points, and motivations.
- Testing product assumptions and hypotheses with real customers.
- Discovering hidden customer needs and opportunities for innovation.
- Creating a user experience that is tailored to customer needs and preferences.
- Building relationships with early adopters and fostering customer loyalty.
- By understanding the customer, the product can be better tailored to the market.

ISPM framework: Product Planning (Customer Insight)

SKILLS NEEDED

- **Active Listening:** This is the cornerstone of effective customer interviews. You need to truly hear and understand what customers are saying, both verbally and non-verbally. This allows you to uncover their underlying needs, pain points, and motivations.
- **Empathy:** Customers are more likely to share honest and valuable feedback when they feel understood and respected. Empathy allows you to connect with customers on a personal level and create a safe and comfortable environment for them to share their experiences.
- **Communication:** You need to ask clear and concise questions, explain complex concepts in a simple way, and use non-verbal cues (e.g., eye contact, body language) to show that you are engaged and interested.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Building rapport with customers is essential for establishing trust and encouraging open communication. Strong interpersonal skills help you create a positive and productive interview experience.
- **Curiosity:** You need to be genuinely curious about the customer's experiences and perspectives. Curiosity drives you to ask follow-up questions and probe for deeper insights.
- **Patience:** Customers may need time to think about their answers or express their thoughts clearly. Patience allows you to create a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere, encouraging customers to provide thoughtful and detailed feedback.
- **Neutrality:** It's important to avoid leading questions or expressing your own opinions during the interview. Maintaining neutrality ensures that you are capturing the customer's unbiased perspective.

TO LEARN MORE

M. Cagan, *Inspired: How to Create Tech Products Customers Love*, 2nd ed. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018.

H-B. Kittlaus, *Software Product Management. The ISPM Compliant Study Guide and Handbook*, Berlin, Springer, 2nd. ed, 2022.