Introduction

In entrepreneurship, the **Customer Discovery Process** is the first step in the **Lean Startup Methodology** (Steve Blank, Eric Ries).

- Instead of building something first and hoping people like it, customer discovery means:

  1. Studying your audience and competitors.

  2. Identifying needs, motivations, and gaps.

  3. Testing an opportunity before investing resources.

This assignment applies those ideas to your **media bubble** — the topics, influencers, brands, and content that constantly appear on your social feeds.

You'll analyze the competitive landscape, reverse-engineer persuasion tactics and sales funnels, then propose a **Brand Brief**, **Persona**, and **Customer Journey** that fills a market gap. The final output will be a **PowerPoint deck** that tells the story of your discovery process.

Background Concepts (Key Jargon Explained)
Media Bubble

Your "media bubble" is the set of topics, accounts, and conversations you see regularly online because of your personal interests, algorithms, and network. Examples: fitness reels, crypto influencers, travel vlogs, beauty TikTok, climate activism, gaming Discords.

Brand Archetypes

Based on Carl Jung's psychology, archetypes are universal characters that brands adopt to connect emotionally. Examples:

- **Hero:** inspires achievement (Nike)

- **Explorer:** freedom and discovery (North Face)

- **Caregiver:** nurturing and service (Johnson & Johnson)

- **Rebel:** challenges the system (Harley-Davidson)
  (Full list provided later for quick reference.)

Cialdini's 7 Principles of Persuasion

Dr. Robert Cialdini identified methods brands use to influence behavior:

- **Reciprocity:** give value first (freebies, trials).

- **Scarcity:** limited time or supply.

- **Authority:** credentials, expertise.

- **Consistency:** small commitments → bigger commitments.

- **Liking:** friendly, relatable personality.

- **Social Proof:** reviews, testimonials, followers.

- **Unity:** identity and belonging ("people like us").

Long Tail / Niche

Chris Anderson's "long tail" concept shows that niche products with small but loyal audiences add up to big opportunities online. Instead of competing with mass-market players, you focus on a specific segment or subculture.

Sales Funnel / Customer Journey

The step-by-step path from **awareness → interest → decision → purchase → loyalty/referral**.

- **TOFU (Top of Funnel):** grabbing attention (short videos, memes, ads).

- **MOFU (Middle of Funnel):** nurturing interest (emails, free guides, webinars).

- **BOFU (Bottom of Funnel):** closing the sale (offers, testimonials, urgency).

- **Post-Purchase:** onboarding, community, upsells, referrals.

Persona

A semi-fictional profile of your **typical customer**, based on goals, pains, desires, objections, and buying triggers. Personas help you design content and funnels around real human needs.

Brand Brief

A 1-page strategic document describing:

- Archetype

- Value Proposition

- Positioning

- Key Persuasion Levers

- Content Niche

- Offers & Differentiators

Assignment Instructions

Step 1: Choose Your Topic (Media Bubble)

Pick something you see a lot in your feed (fitness, gaming, skincare, politics, memes, etc.). Provide screenshots/links showing it's part of your personal bubble.

Step 2: Competitive Landscape (3–5 Competitors)

For each competitor, analyze:

- **Archetype** – Which brand archetype do they embody?

- **Persuasion Methods** – Which of Cialdini's principles are used?

- **Content Niche** – What subtopic or audience do they own?

- **Sales Funnel / Customer Journey** – What path do they push audiences through (TOFU → MOFU → BOFU → Post-Purchase)?

📊 Deliverable: **Landscape Table** (one row per competitor).

Step 2.5 (Optional but Recommended): Content Audit / Engagement

Choose 2–3 posts from each competitor. Record:

- Format & style (short/long form, tone).

- Engagement signals (likes, comments, saves).

- Call-to-action (where they send users in the funnel).

This helps you evaluate not just tactics, but effectiveness.

Step 3: Gap Analysis → Opportunity

From your research, identify what's missing:

- Who's underserved?

- What archetype or persuasion lever isn't being used?
- Which funnel stages are weak?

Write a 1-sentence Opportunity Statement:

"For [audience], we will [deliver value] by [approach], unlike [competitors] who [limitation]."

Step 4: Brand Brief

Summarize your new idea. Include:

- Working Name
- Archetype (and why)
- Value Proposition (clear outcome for customer)
- Positioning Statement
- Persuasion Levers you'll emphasize
- Content Niche (topic, format, platform)
- Core Offers (free → entry → flagship → upsell/community)
- Differentiators (3 bullets)
- Success Metrics

Step 5: Persona (Typical Customer)

Build a one-page profile:

- Name & Demographics
- Jobs-To-Be-Done (tasks/outcomes they want)
- Pains/Fears
- Gains/Desired Outcomes
- Objections
- Buying Triggers
- Where They Live Online

- What Proof They Need to Believe

Step 6: Customer Journey / Sales Funnel (for your idea)

Map your funnel end-to-end:

- **TOFU:** Awareness content & hooks
- **MOFU:** Lead magnet & nurturing assets
- **BOFU:** Offer, landing page, testimonials
- **Post-Purchase:** Onboarding, community, upsells, referrals

📊 Deliverable: Diagram or bullet flow.

Final Deliverable: PowerPoint Deck

Slide Outline (10–12 slides):

1. Title & Topic (your media bubble evidence)
2. Competitive Landscape Table (3–5 competitors)
3. Content Audit Highlights (best/worst performing posts)
4. Gap Analysis (bullets)
5. Opportunity Statement
6. Brand Brief (visualized)
7. Persona (profile slide)
8. Customer Journey Map (diagram)
9. Success Metrics & KPIs
10. Closing Takeaway

Grading Rubric (100 pts)

- **Competitive Landscape (30 pts)** – depth of analysis, clarity of archetype/persuasion/funnel

- **Gap Analysis & Opportunity (15 pts)** – originality and defensibility

- **Brand Brief (20 pts)** – clear, concise, strategic

- **Persona (10 pts)** – realistic and actionable

- **Customer Journey / Funnel (15 pts)** – logical, complete, measurable

- **Clarity & Presentation (10 pts)** – well-designed PowerPoint, with evidence screenshots

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Quick Reference Appendices (for Students)

Brand Archetypes: Hero, Explorer, Sage, Creator, Caregiver, Rebel, Magician, Lover, Jester, Everyman, Ruler, Innocent, Outlaw.
Cialdini's Persuasion: Reciprocity, Scarcity, Authority, Consistency, Liking, Social Proof, Unity.
Funnel Stages: TOFU (awareness), MOFU (consideration), BOFU (conversion), Post-Purchase (loyalty).
Long Tail: niche positioning in specific, underserved subtopics.
Persona: semi-fictional, evidence-based customer profile.
Brand Brief: strategic one-pager summarizing value, positioning, and persuasion.