

Solution Design Template

The objective of the Solution Design process is to test your original value proposition and validate the product or service that you plan to bring to market. You will also need to conduct research on your target market and competition. Once complete, you will present your findings in a 30-min presentation.

1. **VALUE PROPOSITION:**
 - a. I solve problem X: Define the activity or problem
 - b. For people who are Y: Describe your prospective target customers
 - c. By providing: This is your solution, product, or service
 - d. Unlike other solutions: How is your offering significantly better than alternatives?
2. **TARGET CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS:** Validate the assumptions you made in your Value Proposition by testing them in the real world through experiments. Be sure that you gain an understanding of both the problem customers are facing and their honest opinion of the proposed solution.
 - a. Define target group: Who is your customer? Determine the criteria that define your expected customer /user (age, location, interests, income, etc.)
 - b. Find at least 10 people who belong to that target group
 - c. Conduct interviews and ask two sets of questions. One about the problem you claim to solve. The other about your product/service as a solution to this problem (See appendix)
3. **SOLUTION DESIGN / USER EXPERIENCE:** Now combine your original hypothesis and customer feedback to create a new modified solution that meets your customer's needs.
 - a. What have you learned about the problem your target customers are facing?
 - b. What have you learned about the customers' view of your solution?
 - c. Provide a detailed description of your product or service and the user's experience
 - i. How and where will people first discover your product/service?
 - ii. Is there an on boarding or purchasing process? Please describe.
 - iii. How does the product work? Provide a set by step description of the most common use case.
 - iv. What ongoing service will you provide for customers once they are on board?
 - v. How is this product better than the alternatives?
4. **MARKET RESEARCH:** Now that you have an initial solution design you will need to understand how your product/service is different from what already exists in the market. You will also need to gather details on what it will take to build and service the product. You should be researching three main categories:

Target Market	a. What market segment are you going after? b. What is the annual revenue of the segment? c. What is the growth rate of the segment?
Competitive Positioning	a. Who are your competitors? b. What is your competitive advantage? c. How do you add value that others do not?
The Ecosystem	a. What does it take to build your product? b. Who will be your suppliers/partners/buyers? c. Who will be using your product?

d. What does the distribution channel look like?
--

NEXT STEPS: SOLUTION DESIGN PITCH

In order to pass from the READY to the SET Stage you will need to complete a Solution Design pitch. Please schedule a time to meet with a coach during office hours to review your work. They will help you prepare a short slide deck to present your work and schedule a time to pitch with the with the IDEA Staff. Following the pitch, you will either A) pass into the Set Stage or B) be given detailed feedback and questions to answer in order to pass after an additional Solution Design pitch.

Your presentation should cover the following:

- a. Your original Value Proposition
- b. A detailed account of your Target Customer Interviews
- c. Your Solution Design including user's experience and most common use case
- d. Market Research including: Target Market, Competition, Ecosystem

APPENDIX

Target Customer Interview Guide

The target customer interviews should help you understand how your customer thinks about the problem and how they perceive your proposed solution.

1. **FIRST ASK ABOUT THE PROBLEM:** How does the customer define the activity or problem? Note: DO NOT describe your solution. Focus on the customers view of the problem with questions like:
 - Do you have problem X?
 - How do you currently solve it?
 - What do you use in terms of products or services in this activity right now?
 - Where or from whom do you buy products or services? What is good about this channel? What is not good?
 - How satisfied are you with your current products or services for this activity?
 - What is your greatest dissatisfaction with your current products or services?
 - Who is responsible for the buying decision? Is it you or someone else?
 - What are the criteria that are used for evaluating alternatives?
 - How much do you spend each month or year on these types of products or services?
 - Would you accept an alternative solution? Why or why not?
 - What would be the ideal solution for you and how would you measure its value to you?
2. **PRESENT SOLUTION AND COLLECT FEEDBACK:**
 - At this point you can describe your solution. Be sure to share the full details of the user experience and validate each step of the process i.e. onboarding, set up, any and all user input that is required, how ongoing service will be delivered etc.
 - Ask specific questions such as:
 - Would you...?
 - Use my product/service? Why or why not?
 - How much and when?

- Would you pay for it? How much
- o What fears would you have in trying this solution?
- o Who would be the ideal supplier? / Where would you want to buy it?