

Biography



GRM-ID-00

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Introduction

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Insight development | 1. Design thinking research principles 2. B2B startup user-centered research |
| Experience and imagination | 3. Empathy and customer discovery 4. Design thinking toolbox |
| Prototyping and modelling | 5. Research questions 6. Research insights |
| Value creation | 7. Research analysis 8. Putting it all together |
| Leadership and negotiation | 9. Workshop 10. Reflection |

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Workshop| Guerilla research methods

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Learning outcomes



By the end of this workshop you will be able to:

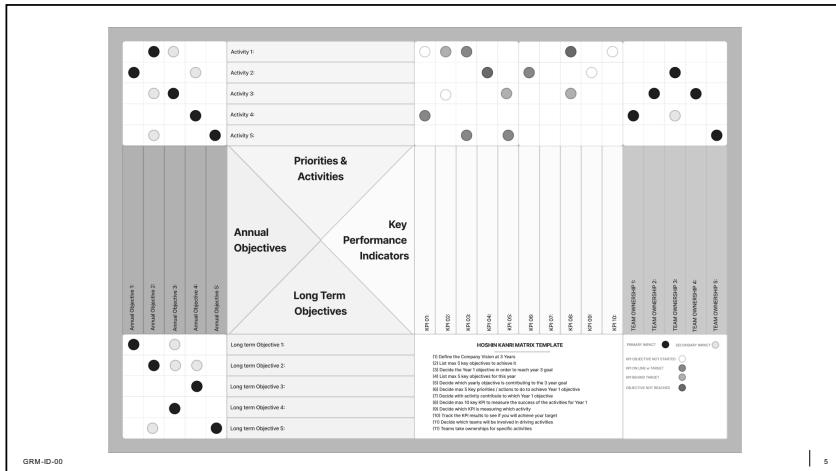
1. Explain key guerrilla research methods and their application in a B2B context;
2. apply iterative design thinking tools to solve complex business problems and conduct user-centered research in your own organisation; and
3. evaluate research findings and critically assess how well insights align with business goals, making decisions to iterate or pivot based on real-world data.

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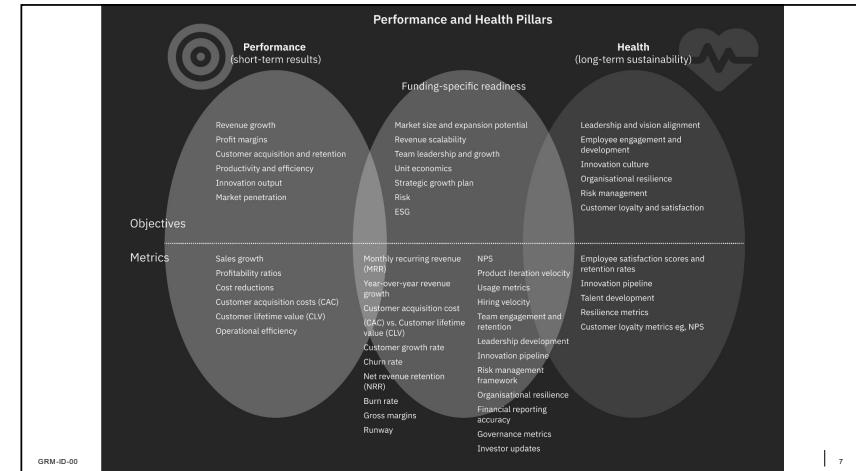
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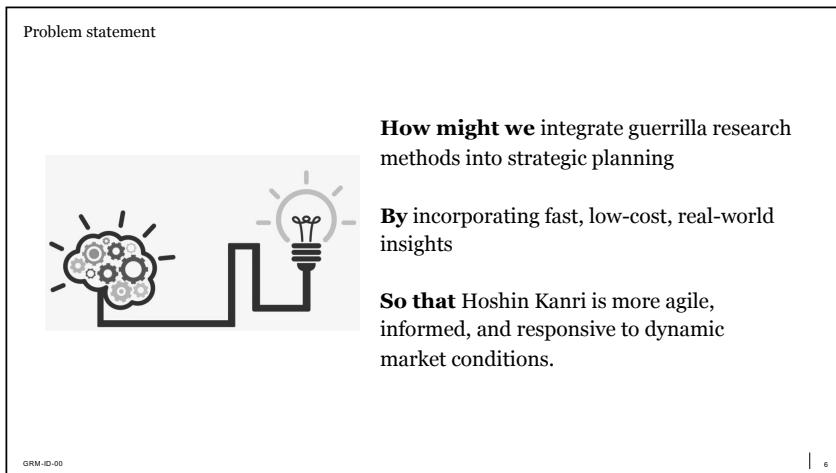
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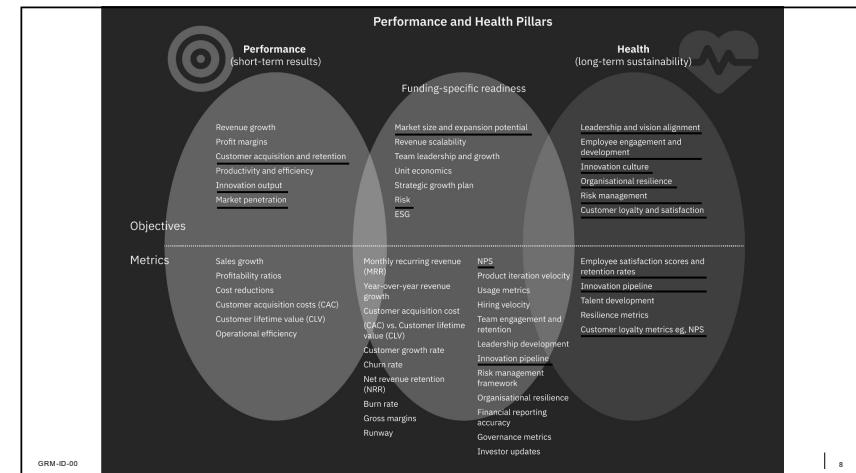
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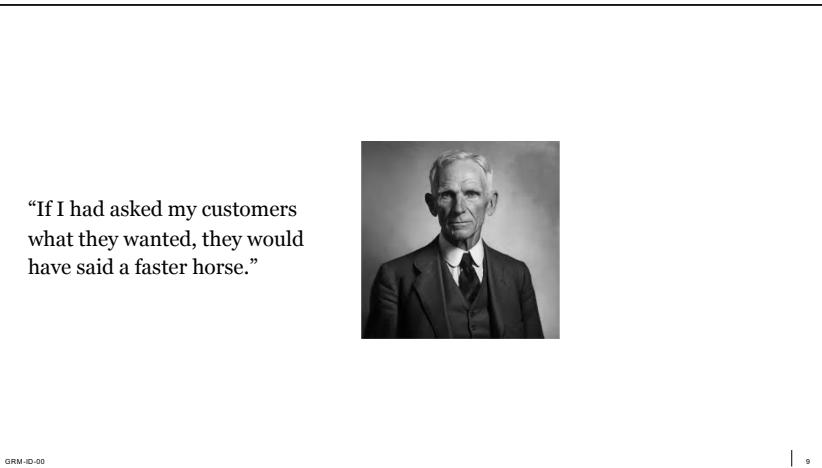
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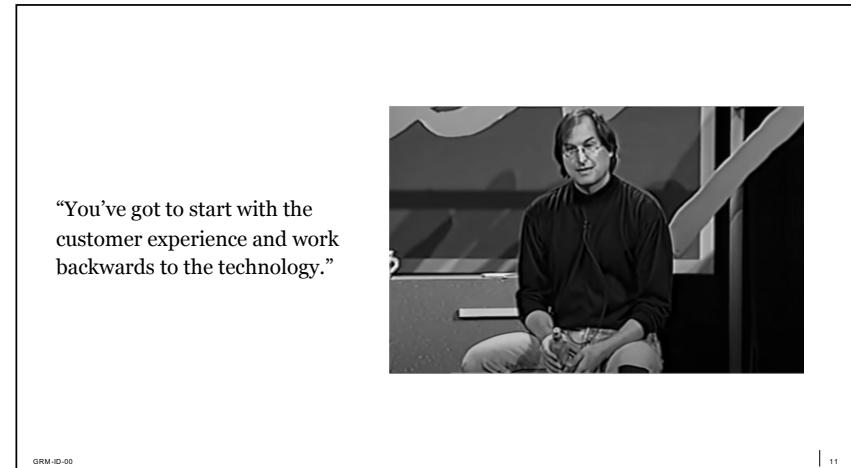
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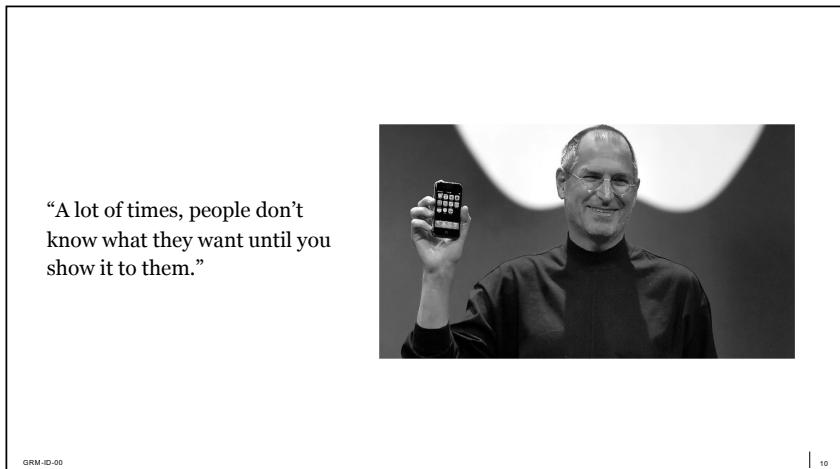
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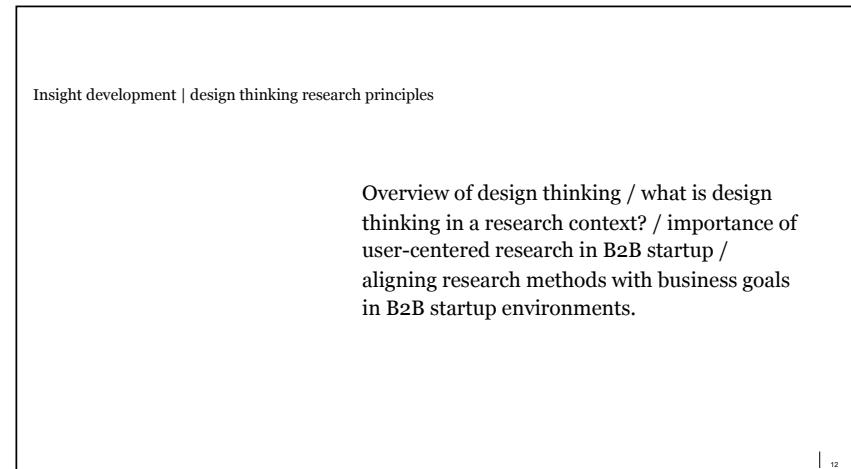
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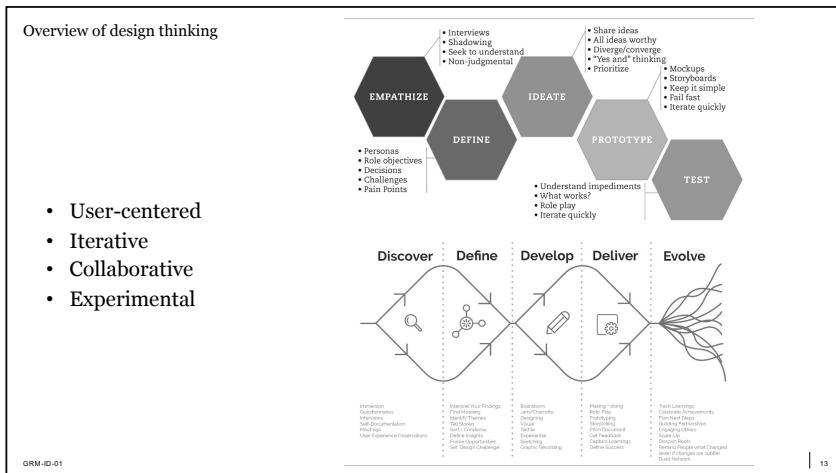


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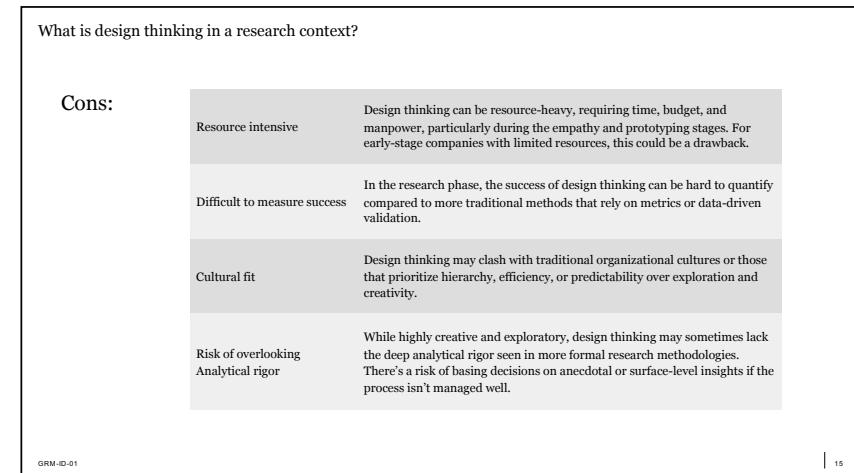


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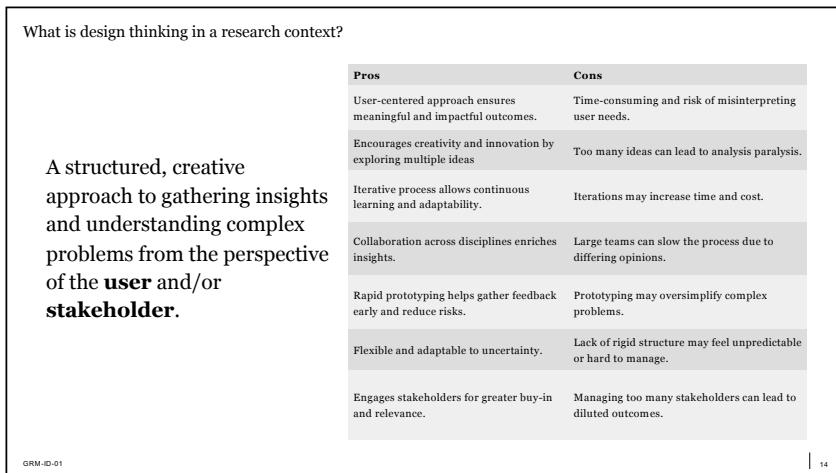




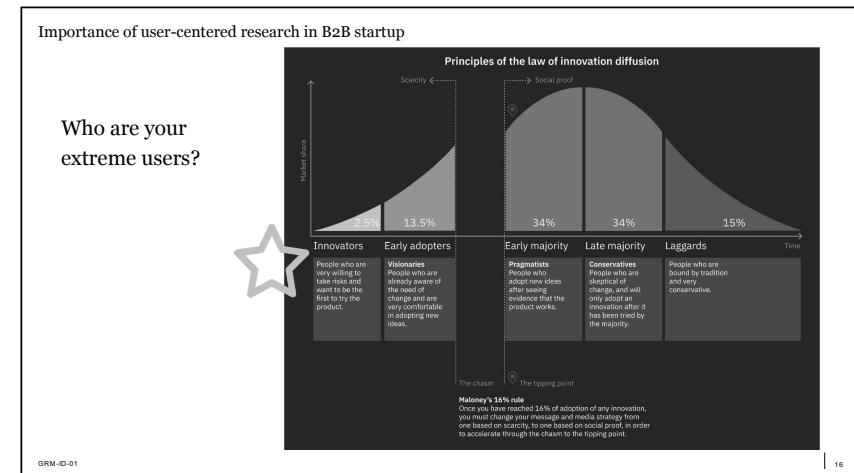
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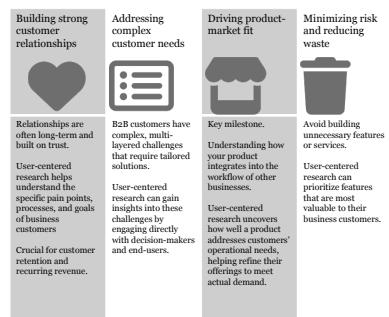
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Importance of user-centered research in B2B startup

Bias towards action

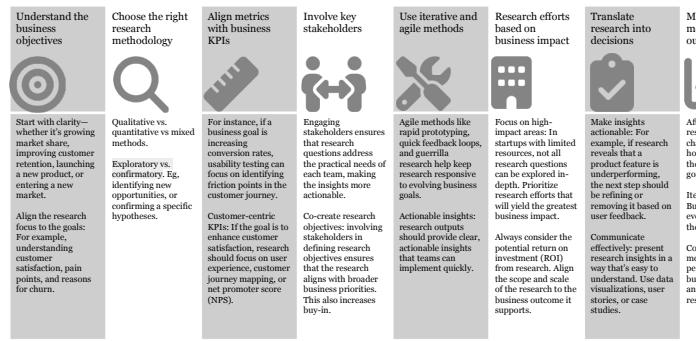


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Aligning research methods with business goals

Bias towards goals



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Aligning research methods with business goals

Example: for a B2B startup aiming to improve customer onboarding, the business goal is to **reduce customer churn**. The research method could include:

The image shows three research methods with numbered steps:

- INTERVIEW FOR EMPATHY** (Step 1): A form for conducting user interviews, including sections for interview map, participant details, persona, and notes.
- CUSTOMER JOURNEY** (Step 2): A form for mapping customer journeys, including sections for personas, touchpoints, and feedback.
- STRUCTURED USABILITY TESTING** (Step 3): A form for structured usability testing, including sections for planning, test phases, and results.

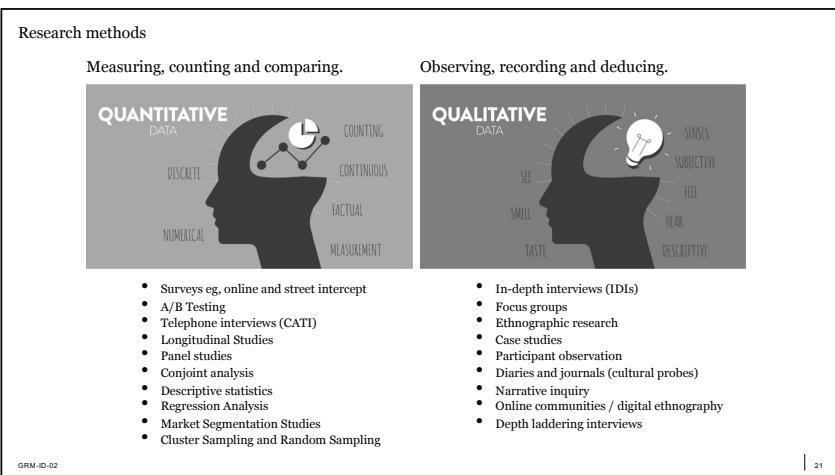
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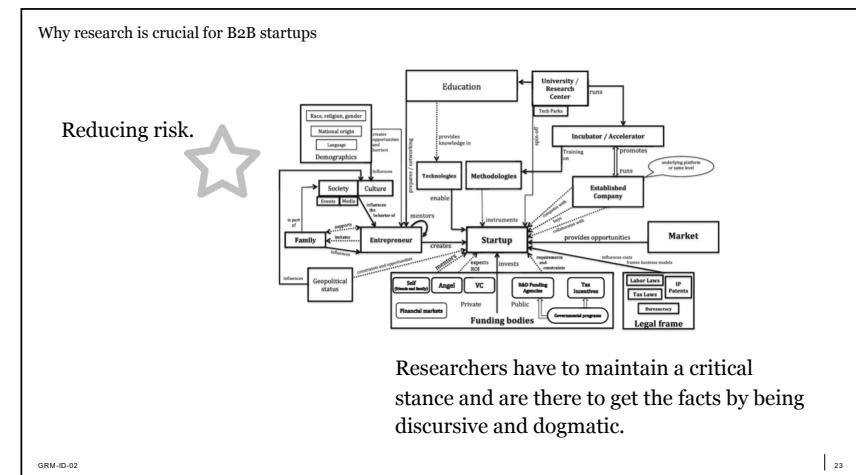
Insight development | B2B startup user-centered research

Differences between B2B and B2C research / why research is crucial for B2B startups, especially post-angel investment / case studies of successful B2B startup companies using design thinking research methods.

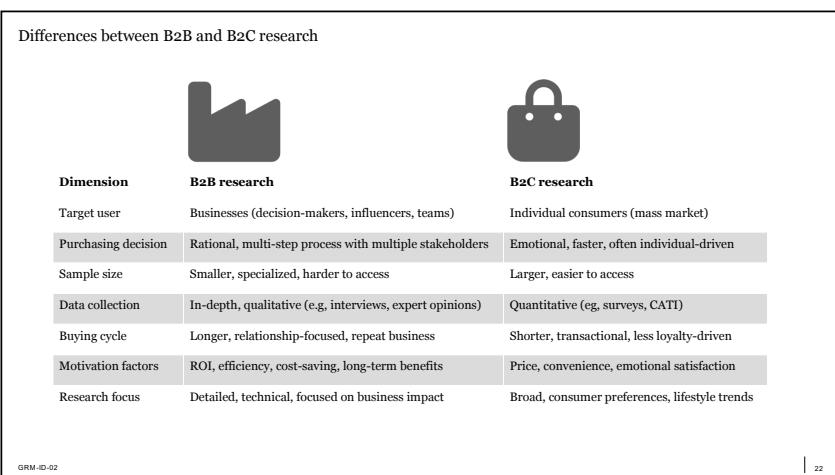
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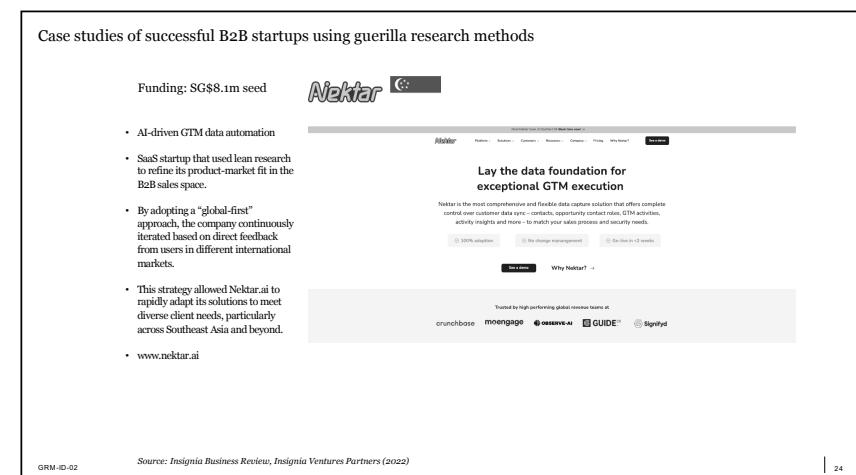
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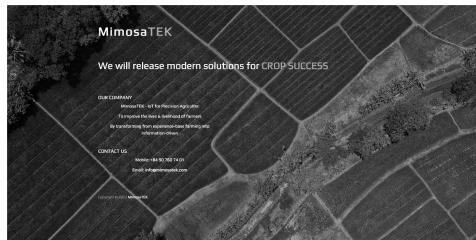
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Case studies of successful B2B startups using guerilla research methods

Funding: US\$1m, three rounds



- Agriculture technology
- Successfully implemented lean research by piloting its IoT-based solutions with small-scale farmers. Through constant experimentation and feedback collection.
- Adjusted its product to better suit local farming practices. This iterative approach helped the company enhance productivity for farmers, enabling it to grow and gain traction in the agri-tech sector.
- www.mimosatek.com



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Source: *Entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific: Case Studies*. Springer, (2020)

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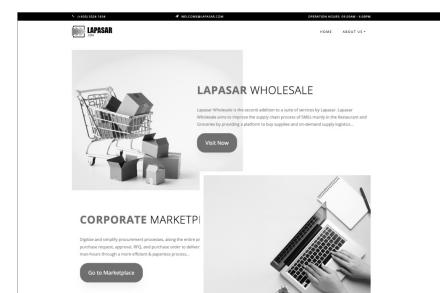
Case studies of successful B2B startups using guerilla research methods

Funding: RM7.5 million, fourth round



Supported by NEXEA, a Malaysian venture capital firm. The company has also previously raised RM400,000 in earlier stages, which helped it scale its revenue from RM50,000 to RM1 million per month within a year.

- Online wholesale platform
- LAPASAR used lean, customer-focused research methods and strategic partnerships with major corporates such as TNB and PwC.
- Facilitated by NEXEA's accelerator program. This approach allowed the startup to grow rapidly, scaling its revenue.



GRM-ID-02

Source: *mystartupperaccelerator.org/case-studies*

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Case studies of successful B2B startups using guerilla research methods

Undisclosed amount.

Series A including Trender and Samsung Venture Investment



privé:

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- Financial services platform
- One of the fastest growing companies in Asia Pacific.
- leveraged lean research methods to fine-tune its fintech solutions. Through continuous engagement with early adopters, driving rapid customer acquisition and international growth.
- Focus on lean experimentation helped them quickly pivot and improve based on user feedback
- www.privetechnologies.com



GRM-ID-02

Source: *Brew Interactive, 12 of the Best B2B Digital Marketing Case Studies from Asia* (2022)

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Experience and imagination | empathy and customer discovery

- Identifying key stakeholders in B2B (decision-makers, influencers, users) / building empathy maps / conducting effective customer interviews.

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Empathy

The ability to deeply understand and connect with the emotions, needs, and challenges of users, allowing us to create solutions that truly resonate with and address those users' real experiences.



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Identifying key stakeholders in B2B

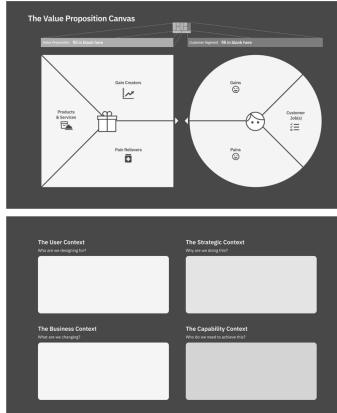
| Map the buying process | Engage with multiple business units | Use customer journey mapping | Conduct stakeholder interviews | Leverage CRM data | Prioritize based on impact |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | |
| Identify decision-makers, influencers, and end-users involved at each stage of the B2B purchasing process. | Consider stakeholders from departments like procurement, finance, IT, and operations who influence buying decisions. | Visualize all the touchpoints where stakeholders interact with the product or service to pinpoint key influencers. | Engage directly with various stakeholders to understand their needs, pain points, and decision-making power. | Analyse existing customer relationship management (CRM) data to identify influential roles in previous sales. | Rank stakeholders by their level of influence on the decision-making process and their ability to affect business outcomes. |

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What is customer discovery?

The process of engaging with users to uncover their core needs, behaviours, and pain points, which informs the creation of innovative solutions that are aligned with real-world problems.

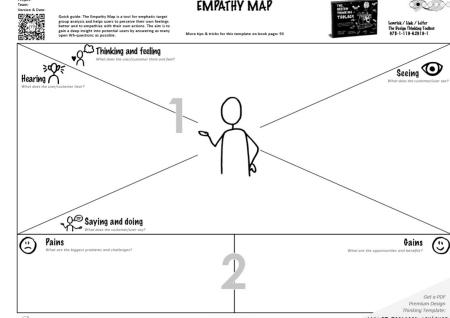


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Building empathy maps

A simple tool used in design thinking to visually represent what a user thinks, feels, says, and does in relation to a product, service, or experience



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Conducting effective customer interviews

Prompt the visceral narrative



1. “Tell me about...” – encourages storytelling and personal experiences.
2. “What do you think about...” – prompts opinions and reflections.
3. “Can you describe...” – elicits detailed, descriptive responses.
4. “How do you feel when...” – focuses on emotional reactions.
5. “What challenges have you faced with...” – identifies pain points and frustrations.
6. “Why do you prefer...” – helps uncover motivations and decision-making factors.
7. “Can you walk me through...” – asks for step-by-step insights into processes or behaviours.
8. “What would you change about...” – highlights areas for improvement.
9. “How do you typically...” – gathers information on habits or routines.
10. “What surprised you about...” – uncovers unexpected insights or reactions.

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Conducting effective customer interviews

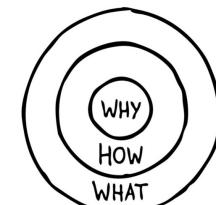
“Like” and “nice” are a red flag.



“Why?”

“Why?”

“Why?”



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Conducting effective customer interviews

Validate the visceral response

1. **Frustrated** – indicates pain points or dissatisfaction.
2. **Excited** – shows enthusiasm or anticipation.
3. **Confused** – highlights areas of uncertainty or complexity.
4. **Anxious** – reveals fear or discomfort.
5. **Relieved** – expresses comfort after a challenge.
6. **Overwhelmed** – suggests something is too much to handle.
7. **Delighted** – reflects positive surprise or joy.
8. **Angry** – indicates strong discontent or anger.
9. **Curious** – shows interest or desire for more information.
10. **Empowered** – reflects feelings of control or confidence.
11. **Embarrassed** – reveals social discomfort or insecurity.
12. **Disappointed** – expresses unmet expectations.
13. **Inspired** – shows a sense of motivation or drive.
14. **Sad** – reflects feelings of loss or emotional hurt.
15. **Grateful** – suggests appreciation or thankfulness.

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Conducting effective customer interviews

Emotional response cards

A qualitative tool for empathetic target group analysis.

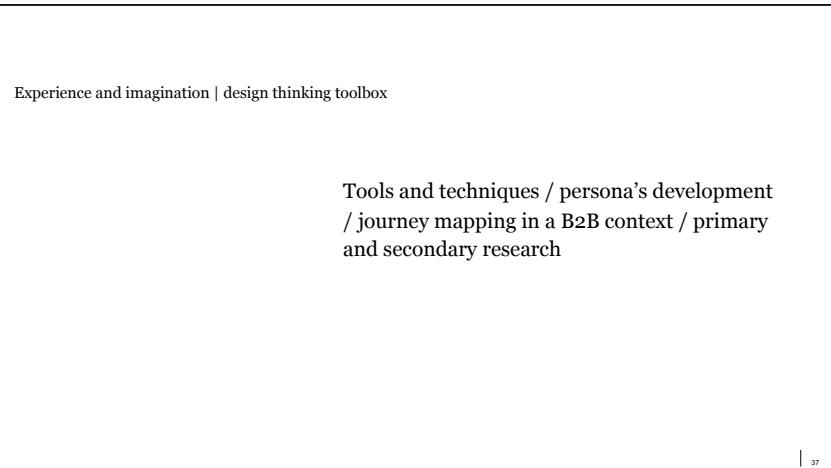
| old | stimulant | appealing | demanding | appealing | is fun | modern | laborious | new | not relevant |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|
| thrilling | exceptional | impressive | satisfactorily | cheap | beneficial | personal | professional | relevant | unruffled |
| unambiguous | simple | easy to use | intimidating | anticipated | swift | difficult to apply | difficult | sure | useful |
| impressive | flexible | kind | frustrating | ordinary | solid | stressful | comprehensive | unattractive | unwanted |
| helpful | inconsistent | innovative | intuitive | comfortable | unconventionally | unprofessional | vital | trustworthy | intimate |
| complex | creatively | not valuable | slow | boring ¹ | disheveling | predictable | valuable | time-consuming | time-s ² |

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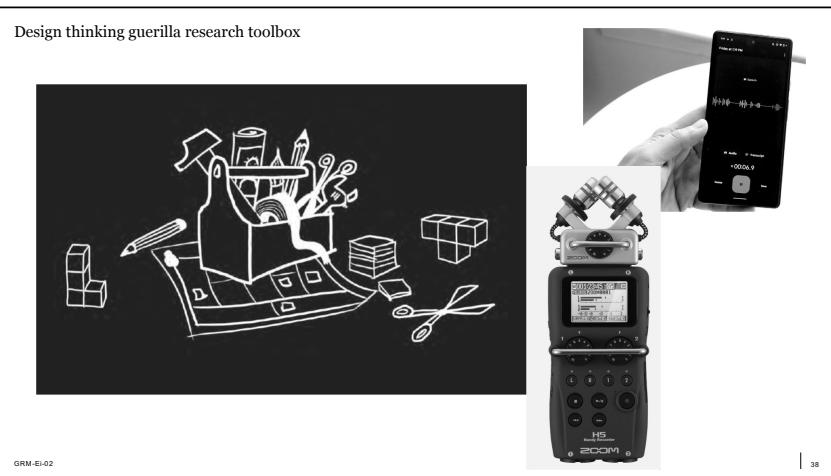


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| Qualitative tools and techniques | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Interviews | Focus groups | Observation | Surveys and open-ended questions | Field notes and journaling | Case studies | Document and content analysis | Ethnography |
| In-depth Interviews (IDIs): one-on-one conversations to explore personal experiences, motivations, and attitudes. | Facilitated discussions with small groups to gather insights on collective experiences, attitudes, or perceptions. | Participant observation: researcher actively engages in the environment to observe behaviours and interactions. Eg. NVivo "Can you tell us why you chose this...?" | Use of open-ended questions in surveys to gather subjective data and personal stories. Eg. NVivo "Can you tell us why you chose this...?" | Recording observations, reflections, and insights during research activities for later analysis. | In-depth analysis of individuals, groups, or situations to understand complex issues within real-world contexts. | Reviewing existing documents, media, or online content to extract patterns, themes, and meaning. | Extended immersion in the research setting to gain deep understanding of cultures, environments, or communities. |
| Semi-structured interviews: flexible framework with pre-defined questions but room for probing deeper. | | Non-participant observation: Researcher observes without direct interaction to avoid influencing the environment. | | | | | |

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Indicative discussion guide for a semi-structured interview

Discussion Guide

| | |
|--|--|
| Introduction (5 mins) | Initial questions |
| <p>Hi, my name is [REDACTED] and I am a researcher from [REDACTED]. I am here to conduct a semi-structured interview with you about your [REDACTED]. We will be talking about your [REDACTED] and how it has changed over time. I will ask you some questions and you can answer them in any way you like. If you have any questions, feel free to ask them at any time.</p> | <p>Please sit back and relax. I will be asking you some questions about your [REDACTED]. I will ask you some questions about your [REDACTED]. Please try to answer them as honestly as possible.</p> |
| Initial questions (5 mins) | Initial questions |
| <p>Firstly, could you tell me a bit about your [REDACTED]. What does it do? Who uses it? How often do you use it? Why do you use it?</p> | <p>Now, I'm going to ask you some additional questions about your [REDACTED].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's the last time you used your [REDACTED]? What was the last time you used your [REDACTED]? What was the last time you used your [REDACTED]? What was the last time you used your [REDACTED]? |
| Follow-up questions (5 mins) | Follow-up questions |
| <p>Finally, I would like to ask you some follow-up questions about your [REDACTED].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's the last time you used your [REDACTED]? What was the last time you used your [REDACTED]? What was the last time you used your [REDACTED]? What was the last time you used your [REDACTED]? | <p>Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. Thank you for your time.</p> |
| Conclusion (5 mins) | Conclusion |
| <p>Thank you for your time today. I hope you found the interview useful.</p> | <p>That's all for now. If you have any further questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me.</p> |

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Persona's development

Vivid persona sample

Low-fidelity persona profile

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Journey mapping in a B2B context

High-fidelity customer experience map

Low-fidelity customer journey

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Persona's development

If you want to understand the animals, get out into the jungle.

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Pros and cons of primary vs. secondary research

| Research type | Pros | Cons |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Primary research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides specific, tailored insights. Directly addresses your research question. Offers current, real-time data. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-consuming and potentially expensive to conduct. Requires more resources and expertise. Can be influenced by researcher bias. |
| Secondary research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick and cost-effective. Readily available from various sources. Useful for background information and trends. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be outdated or not fully relevant. Lacks customisation to your specific needs. May not address all aspects of the research question. Limited ability to verify accuracy. |
| | | Data quality varies based on source. |

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Primary and secondary research



What is the question I am trying to answer?

1. What's happening around the edges of my questions?
2. Structured and semi-structured interviews.
3. How to document qualitative methods?
4. Take a separate position than that of the world view.
5. We don't have to work in a linear fashion.

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Prototyping and modelling | research questions

Asking appropriate questions to the relevant individuals / removing bias / ethical considerations.

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Asking appropriate questions to the relevant individuals

| Understanding the research objective | Identifying key stakeholders | Design open-ended questions | Aligning questions to the participant's expertise | Probing for deeper insights | Ethical considerations |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| Goal: Align questions with the purpose of your research. | Tip: Pinpoint the relevant individuals who can provide the most valuable insights. | Goal: Encourage detailed responses by using open-ended rather than closed questions. | Tip: Customize questions based on the role and knowledge of the interviewee. | Tip: Use follow-up questions to clarify responses and explore underlying reasons or emotions. | Tip: Ensure your questions are respectful, unbiased, and sensitive to personal or cultural differences. |
| Visual aid: Start by clarifying what insights you need to gain. For example, are you exploring experiences, motivations, or decision-making processes? | Tip: Use stakeholder mapping or a persona framework to identify diverse perspectives, ensuring coverage across roles, experiences, and influence within the organisation. | Visual aid: Stakeholder map highlighting different roles (e.g. users, decision-makers, influencers). | Tip: Begin questions with "How", "What", or "Why" to elicit thoughtful answers from technical respondents or oversimplified questions to experts. | Tip: Avoid asking overly technical questions to non-technical respondents or oversimplified questions to experts. | Tip: Be mindful of language and tone, avoiding leading questions that might skew results. |

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Removing bias

Recognising common biases

| Confirmation bias | Leading question bias | Interviewer bias | Sampling bias |
|--|---|---|--|
| The tendency to seek information that confirms pre-existing beliefs. | Asking questions that suggest a preferred answer. | Allowing personal opinions or reactions to influence responses. | Selecting participants who are not representative of the broader group. |
| Bias example: "Most people said they found the new process more efficient. Do you agree with that?" | Bias example: "You'd agree that the new system has made things much easier, wouldn't you?" | Bias example: (Interviewer's body language shows excitement) "That sounds like a really great improvement! How much do you like the new tool?" | Bias example: Interviewing only senior executives about a change that affects the entire company and then concluding that the entire workforce is satisfied. |
| Neutral example: "How has the new process affected your work?" | Neutral example: "What has been your experience with the new system?" | Neutral example: (Neutral tone and body language) "Can you describe your experience using the new tool?" | Neutral example: Ensuring a diverse sample by interviewing employees from different departments, levels, and backgrounds to get a comprehensive view of the impact. |

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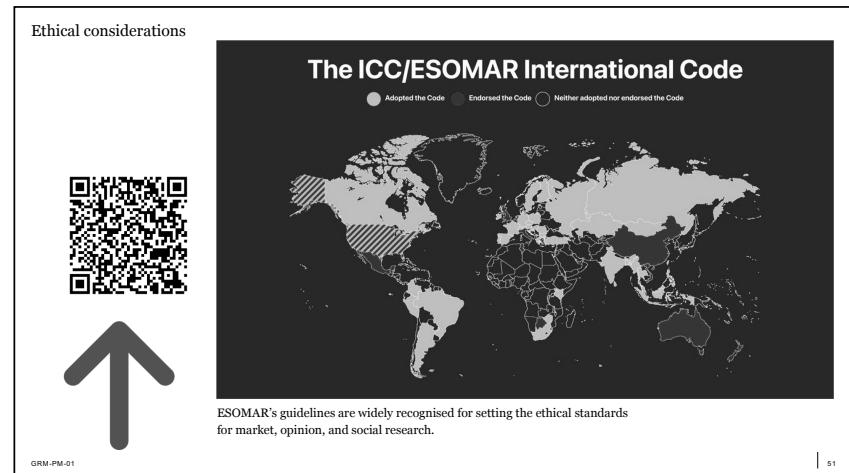
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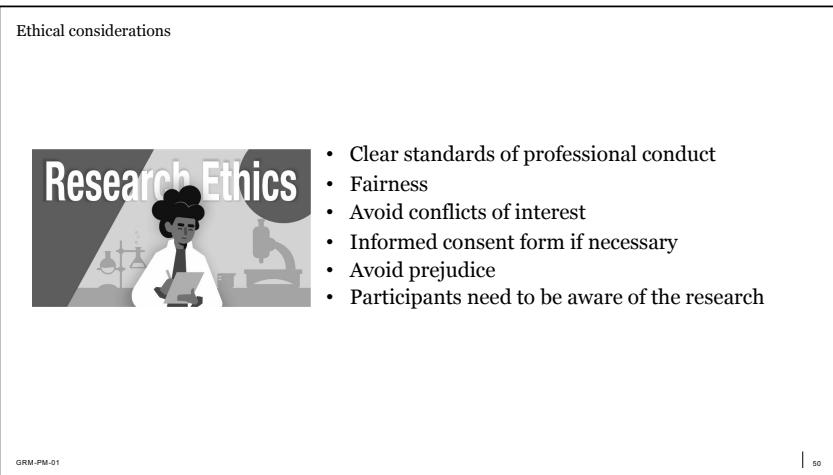
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| Removing bias | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| | Natural language in question design | Avoiding assumptions | Balancing participant representation | Minimising interviewer influence | Using triangulation to validate findings | Blind or double-blind techniques |
| Goal: | Craft questions that do not lead or suggest answers. | Approach each interview with an open mind, without making assumptions about the participant's experience. | Ensure diversity in the participant pool to avoid skewed perspectives. | Reduce the impact of the interviewer's own behaviour and body language. | Cross-check data from multiple sources or methods to ensure findings are unbiased. | Implement techniques to minimize bias during interviews. |
| Tip: | Avoid emotionally charged or loaded language. | Frame questions to explore experiences and opinions, rather than confirming assumptions. | Use quota sampling or purposeful sampling to ensure a balanced representation of key groups (e.g. different departments, age groups, backgrounds). | Maintain a neutral tone and demeanor; avoid leading body language or facial expressions that may hint approval or disapproval. | Use a combination of interviews, observations, and documents to corroborate results. | Consider using blind or double-blind interviews whenever the interviewer and both parties are unaware of certain contextual details that might influence responses. |

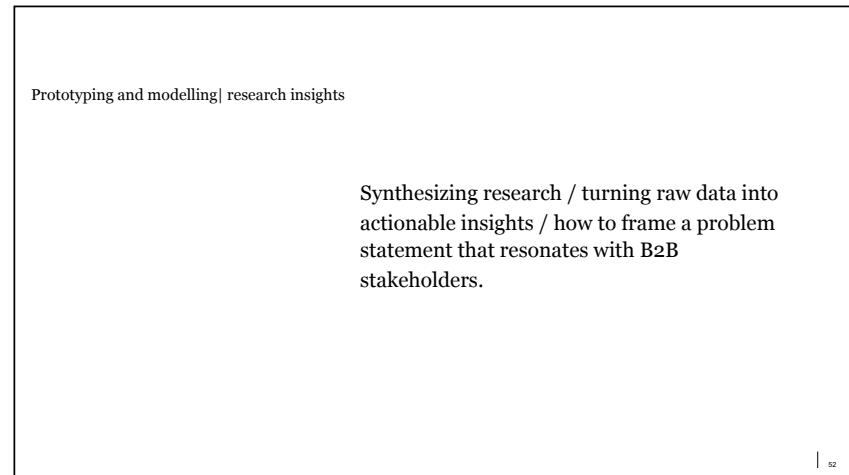
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Synthesizing research

Familiarisation with the data

- Review all transcripts, notes, and materials.
- Take time to deeply immerse yourself in the data.
- Note initial impressions or recurring themes.

Coding the data

- Use thematic coding to organize the data.
- Label key ideas, phrases, and insights with codes.
- Group similar codes into broader categories.

Identifying patterns and themes

- Look for relationships, similarities, or differences within the codes.
- Identify major themes that answer your research questions.
- Prioritize themes based on frequency, impact, and relevance.

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Synthesizing research

Coding the data

Traditional

The hack

GTM (Grounded Theory Methodology)

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Speech to text
(Natural Language Processing)

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Synthesizing research

Techniques

Concept Mapping

- Visualize connections between themes.
- Create diagrams or flowcharts that show relationships.

Framework matrices

- Use a matrix to compare themes across different data sources or participants.

Data triangulation

- Compare data from different methods (interviews, focus groups, observations) to validate findings.
- Helps structure and organize complex data.

Ensure objectivity

- Regularly revisit the data to check for bias.
- Collaborate with colleagues or co-researchers for multiple perspectives.
- Use data triangulation to strengthen findings.

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Turning raw data into actionable insights

Identify the core findings

- Start with the major themes and patterns from the synthesis process.
- Prioritize findings that directly align with your research objectives or business needs.

Contextualize the Data

- Place the synthesized themes within the broader business or research context.
- Consider how the findings address real-world challenges or opportunities.

Ask "so what?"

- For each theme or pattern, ask what it means for the stakeholders.
- How can this insight drive a decision, solve a problem, or influence a strategy?

Translate insights into recommendations

- Develop clear, targeted recommendations based on the key insights.
- Ensure recommendations are specific, relevant, and feasible.

Prioritize actionable steps

- Rank recommendations by importance and impact.
- Highlight quick wins versus long-term strategic changes.

Align with business or research objectives

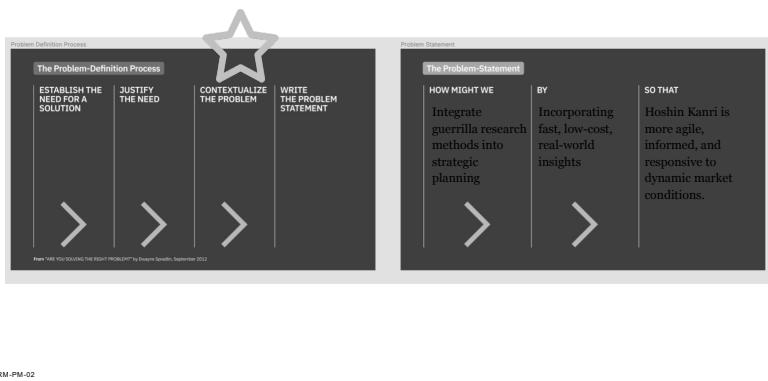
- Tie each actionable insight to an organizational or research goal.
- Demonstrate how applying the insight will achieve desired outcomes.

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How to frame a problem statement



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Lean validation techniques

Lean validation involves quickly testing assumptions with minimal resources to confirm or invalidate key insights before committing more resources.



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Value creation | research analysis

Lean validation techniques / conducting surveys / A/B testing / pilot programs / the role of qualitative and quantitative data in B2B validation.

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Lean validation techniques

| | Customer interviews | Usability testing (prototype testing) | Problem interviews | MVP (Minimum Viable Product) |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| Purpose: | Validate assumptions by talking directly to users. | Test the effectiveness of a low-fidelity prototype. | Validate whether the problem identified through synthesis resonates with users. | Manually provide a simplified version of your solution. |
| Method: | Conduct brief, structured interviews to gather feedback on key insights. | Observe user interaction with a simple prototype to evaluate pain points. | Focus interviews on discussing the problem rather than offering solutions. | Deliver the service yourself to test user demand. |
| Validation: | Are the themes or problems you identified real and relevant to the customer? | Does the solution based on your insights solve the users' needs? | Is this problem truly significant in the users' experience? | Is there interest or demand for the solution derived from your insights? |

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Conducting surveys

Key steps in analysing survey data eg, NPS



Data cleaning

- Remove incomplete responses: exclude incomplete or nonsensical responses to ensure data quality.
- Normalize responses: ensure consistency in formats (eg, numbers, dates).
- Check for outliers: identify and assess any extreme values that could skew results.

Descriptive statistics

- Summarize the data: calculate means, medians, and percentages to get an overview.
- Frequency distributions: visualize how often each response appears to see common trends.
- Cross-tabulation: compare different variables to find relationships (eg, age vs. satisfaction level).

Categorizing qualitative responses

- Thematic coding: group open-ended responses into categories or themes.
- Identify patterns: look for common phrases or sentiments that appear across responses.
- Sentiment analysis: gauge whether feedback is positive, negative, or neutral to provide context.

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Quantitative visual vocabulary

Change over Time

Give emphasis to changing trends. These can be short (single-day) movements or extended series traversing decades or more. Choosing the correct time period is important to provide suitable context for the data.

Example FT uses

Stock price movements, economic time series, sectoral changes in a market

Line

The standard way to show a changing time series. If data are noisy, consider markers to represent data points.

Column

Columns work well for showing change over time with only one series of data at a time.

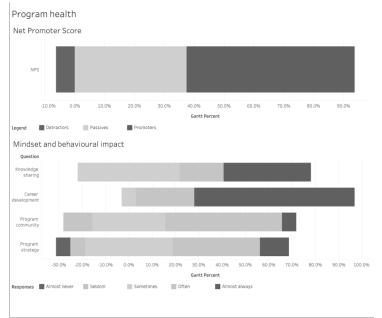
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ft.com/vocabulary | 63

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Conducting surveys

Key steps in presenting and visualising survey data



Use charts and graphs for visual vocabulary

- Bar charts and pie charts: show distributions or proportions of survey responses.
- Heatmaps: display correlations between variables visually.
- Word clouds: represent the frequency of keywords in qualitative responses.

Simplify Complex Data

- Focus on clear and easy-to-understand visuals that highlight the most important insights.
- Avoid overwhelming the audience with too many complex visuals at once.

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Conducting surveys

Correlation

Measures the relationship between two numeric variables.

Regression

Measures how two numeric variables affect each other.

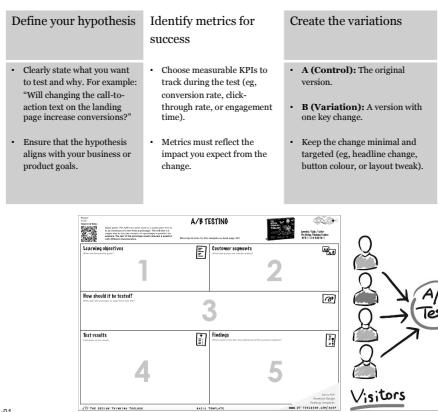
| | Correlation | Regression |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Purpose: | Measure the strength of the relationship between two variables. | Predict outcomes or determine the impact of certain variables. |
| Method: | Use correlation coefficients (eg, Pearson's r) to identify how closely variables are linked. | Run a regression model to explore how different factors influence your dependent variable (eg, customer satisfaction). |

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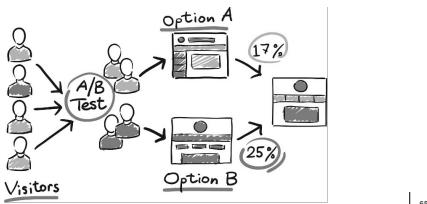
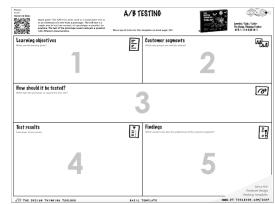
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A/B testing



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The role of qualitative and quantitative data validation



A **claim** is a statement or assertion that presents an argument or position.

Evidence includes the data, facts, statistics, examples, quotes, and other information that support the claim.

Reasoning explains how the evidence supports the claim. It connects the dots for the reader and illustrates the logic behind the argument.

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Pilot programs

A pilot program is a small-scale, preliminary study conducted before a full-scale research project or implementation. It tests the feasibility, processes, and potential outcomes of the main research.

Key benefits

| Test feasibility |
|---|
| Pilots allow you to discover any logistical, methodological, or participant-related challenges before scaling up. |

| Refine research method |
|---|
| Assess whether your data collection techniques (e.g., interview questions, observation methods) work in practice. |

| Early insights |
|--|
| Even small samples can provide initial qualitative data that guide the direction of future research. |

| Risk mitigation |
|---|
| By testing on a smaller scale, you reduce the risk of investing heavily in a flawed approach. |

| Quick iterations and learning |
|--|
| A pilot fits perfectly with the lean research principle of rapid experimentation, where you can iterate based on real feedback before committing to larger-scale research. |

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Value creation | putting it all together

Go, no go / responding to research insights / alignment with customer demand / feasibility, desirability and viability / iterate or pivot?

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Go, no go—using research to inform business decisions

| Dimension | Explanation | Exemplar / key criteria |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Define: | A decision point where a project/initiative either moves forward or stops based on research insights. | Deciding whether to launch a new product feature after testing with customers. |
| Research role: | Research validates assumptions, mitigates risk, and optimises resources. | Lean research methods such as interviews, A/B testing, and pilots provide real-world evidence. |
| Alignment with Hoshin Plan: | Ensures research supports long-term strategic goals outlined in the Hoshin Plan. | The initiative must align with the company's strategic objectives (eg, customer satisfaction improvement). |
| Key decision criteria: | Alignment with goals - Evidence-based confidence - Risk vs. reward. | Does the research support moving forward? Is the risk acceptable compared to potential rewards? |
| Benefits: | Agility, strategic focus, and increased success rate for initiatives. | Projects filtered through a research-driven "go or no go" process have a higher chance of success. |
| Example: | Pilot research reveals a feature isn't improving user experience, leading to a "no go" decision. | Reallocate resources to a different feature based on research feedback. |

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Responding to research insights

Balancing emotion and logic in response.



Stay objective

- Use research insights as a grounding tool, regardless of emotional response.
- Recognise that bad news can prevent costly mistakes, while good news isn't an automatic green light for unchecked expansion.

Take a step back

- Take time to process emotionally charged insights before making key decisions.
- Seek advice from co-founders, mentors, or trusted team members to gain perspective.

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Responding to research insights. Or, *the emotional rollercoaster*.



Good news



Bad news

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Emotional response: excitement, relief, validation of vision. | • Emotional response: disappointment, frustration, anxiety. |
| • Impact on decision-making: confidence to scale or move forward. | • Impact on decision-making: reconsideration of strategy, need for a pivot. |
| • Potential pitfall: overconfidence can lead to prematurely scaling or missing subtle issues in the data. | • Potential pitfall: reacting emotionally without a clear plan or losing focus due to doubt. |

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Responding to research insights

Handling good news.



Celebrate, but stay cautious

- Celebrate research insights that support growth or new opportunities, but always validate through further testing.
- **Example:** a customer interview reveals excitement about a new product feature; before scaling, consider running additional validation.

Use momentum for motivation

- Good news can fuel momentum—use it to push the team forward while keeping research-backed goals in mind.

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Responding to research insights

Handling bad news.



Pivot, don't panic

- If insights suggest a feature or strategy isn't working, pivot rather than scrapping the idea entirely.
- Example:** a pilot program fails to meet expectations; instead of abandoning the idea, adapt based on feedback and iterate.

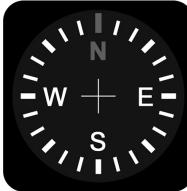
Embrace the learning opportunity

- Use bad news as a chance to learn. Often, insights that contradict your expectations help refine your product or strategy.
- Stay resilient—founders face numerous setbacks, but those who adapt based on solid insights tend to succeed.

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Alignment with customer demand



Effective research not only seeks to understand the customer but ensures that every insight is directed toward fulfilling their needs, creating a mutually beneficial relationship between the business and its customers.

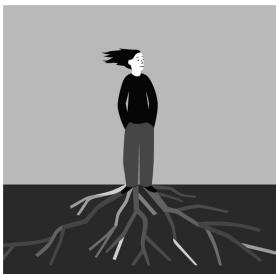
| Customer demand is a strategic compass | Data-driven insights | Continuous adaptation | Risk mitigation | Customer loyalty and satisfaction |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Research ensures business decisions are aligned with customer needs, leading to better product-market fit. | Research, when aligned with customer demand, provides actionable insights that improve product development and marketing strategies. | Regular research helps businesses stay ahead of shifting customer preferences, allowing for constant iteration and improvement. | Aligning research with customer demand reduces the likelihood of developing products or services that fail to meet market expectations. | Responding directly to customer needs builds loyalty and fosters long-term customer relationships. |

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Responding to research insights

The importance of founder resilience.



Emotional resilience

- Founders must navigate both high and low moments; it's not just about reacting to the research, but leading through it.
- Emotional intelligence helps balance excitement and frustration, allowing better, more thoughtful decision-making.

Strategic resilience

- Build a culture that values data-driven insights, even when they bring bad news, ensuring your business can adapt without losing momentum.

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Desirability, feasibility, and viability



Desirability: aligning research with what customers want

Ensures the product meets customer needs.

Research's role: by generating research around consumers' needs, businesses can ensure that their offerings meet consumer needs and desires, which increases the likelihood of market adoption.

How it works:

- Interviews and surveys reveal customer pain points, aspirations, and motivations.
- Research insights guide product development, ensuring it aligns with consumer needs.

Example: a new feature is desirable because customer research shows it addresses a key frustration (e.g., ease of use or personalization).

Feasibility: can we deliver on customer demand?

Ensures the organisation can realistically deliver the solution.

Research's role: Helps determine whether the proposed solution can be realistically implemented within the organisation's current framework.

How it works:

- Research identifies available resources, team skills, technology, and other factors required for delivering on the customer demand.
- Research also uncovers potential challenges that need to be addressed before full-scale implementation.

Example: a feature may be desirable, but technical challenges (e.g., lack of resources) or regulatory hurdles may limit the ability to execute it, leading to adjustments or alternative solutions.

Viability: ensuring long-term business sustainability

Ensures the solution contributes to the business's long-term financial and strategic goals.

Research's role: research helps determine whether the proposed solution can be realistically implemented within the organisation's current framework.

How it works:

- Customer feedback is used to project adoption rates and pricing models.
- Market analysis and scenario planning evaluate whether the product or service can generate sustainable revenue while meeting customer expectations.

Example: a product may be both desirable and feasible, but if research shows that customers are unwilling to pay the price needed for profitability, the initiative may lack viability.

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Iterate or pivot?

Understanding the difference.

| Iteration | Pivot |
|---|--|
| Making incremental improvements to refine the current product, service, or strategy based on customer feedback. | A fundamental change in the business model, product, or target market based on evidence that the current strategy won't succeed. |
| When to iterate: The core value proposition is strong, but small adjustments are needed to improve performance or user experience. | When to pivot: The product is not meeting customer needs, or the market opportunity is not as strong as initially believed. |

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Iterate or pivot?

When to iterate.

| Strong core product/market fit | Small changes with big impact | Early positive signals |
|---|---|---|
| If customers find value in your product, but feedback points to specific areas for improvement. | Minor tweaks to the product (e.g., adding a feature, improving UI) can significantly enhance the user experience or drive growth. | If early adopters show enthusiasm but request refinements, iteration allows you to optimize and expand. |

When to pivot.

| Consistent negative feedback | Poor market fit | Draining resources with minimal results |
|--|--|--|
| If your target audience consistently expresses dissatisfaction or disengagement, and iterations haven't made a significant difference, a pivot may be necessary. | If research shows that the market demand for your product isn't as strong as anticipated, or if the market dynamics have changed dramatically (e.g., new regulations or technologies). | If resources are being invested heavily without measurable success (e.g., customer acquisition costs remain too high), a pivot may be the best option to salvage the business. |

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Iterate or pivot?

Key factors to consider from research insights

| | Customer feedback | Market signals | Competitive landscape | Financial metrics |
|-----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Iterate: | If feedback highlights minor issues (e.g., usability problems, feature tweaks), this suggests that the core product or service is solid but needs fine-tuning. | Positive market signals, such as interest from potential customers, good engagement metrics, and growing demand, suggest you should keep building on what's working. | If competitors are performing well with a similar product, iteration may allow you to differentiate and improve your offering. | If revenue is growing but profitability is lagging due to inefficiencies, iteration to improve cost structures or customer acquisition strategies may be the best route. |
| Pivot: | If feedback consistently shows that customers don't find value in the core offering, or you've misjudged the market need, it may be time to consider a pivot. | Poor market fit or shrinking demand could indicate that the current strategy isn't sustainable, signalling the need for a more fundamental change. | If competitors have already captured the majority of the market or if the landscape has shifted dramatically, a pivot might be needed to explore new opportunities. | If financial performance is consistently underperforming and unsustainable despite several iterations, it might be time to reconsider the core business model. |

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Iterate or pivot?

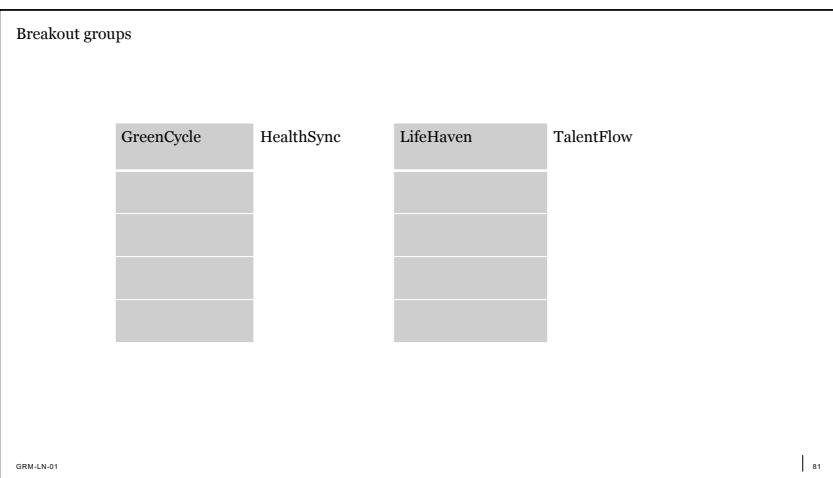
Framework for making the decision.

| Evaluate research data | Test and experiment | Involve key stakeholders |
|---|---|--|
| Focus on the evidence from customer feedback, market trends, and financial data. Does the data suggest improvement potential or a fundamental misalignment? | Before making a drastic decision, run small tests or pilots to validate whether iteration will solve the issues or if a pivot is necessary. | Discuss findings with co-founders, advisors, and key team members to gain diverse perspectives on the best course of action. |

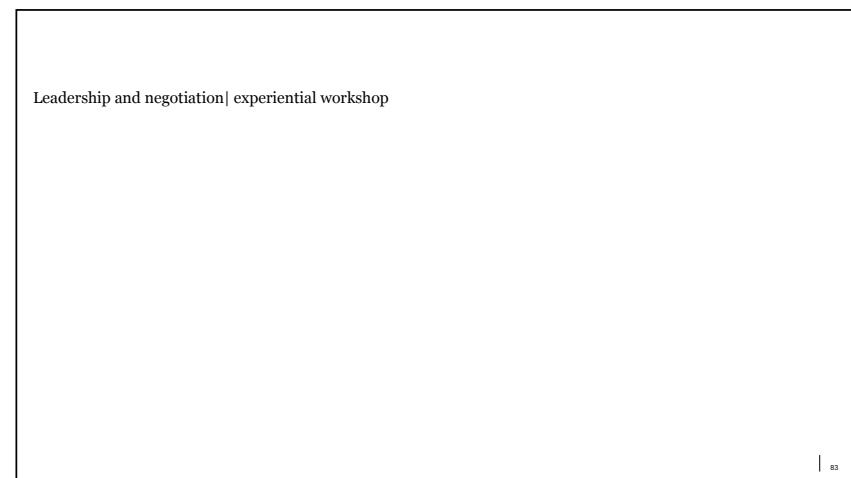
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Leadership and negotiation| reflection

Iteration and continuous learning / the importance of feedback loops / adapting to investor expectations / further reading / key take away.

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Reflection

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Insight development | 1. Design thinking research principles ✓ |
| | 2. B2B startup user-centered research ✓ |
| Experience and imagination | 3. Empathy and customer discovery ✓ |
| | 4. Design thinking toolbox ✓ |
| Prototyping and modelling | 5. Research questions ✓ |
| | 6. Research insights ✓ |
| Value creation | 7. Research analysis ✓ |
| | 8. Putting it all together ✓ |
| Leadership and negotiation | 9. Workshop ✓ |
| | 10. Reflection |

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The importance of feedback loops

- Feedback from users and stakeholders is crucial to evolving strategy.
- Reflect on the feedback you received. How did it affect your decisions.
- Were there any 'aha!' moments that feedback triggered?
- How can you improve your approach based on feedback received?

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Iteration and continuous learning

Learning is an ongoing process.

- Be curious.
- Low-cost, fast iterations lead to actionable insights.
- Reflect on how you applied research iteratively—what were your key takeaways?
- What did you learn from making quick adjustments based on insights?

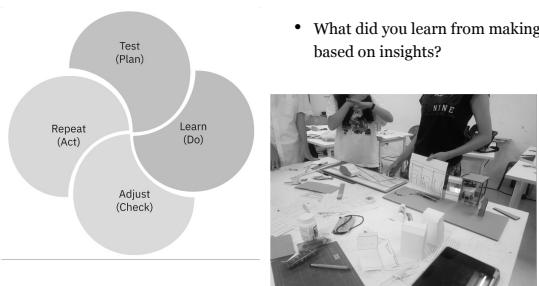
Test (Plan)

Repeat (Act)

Learn (Do)

Adjust (Check)

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Adapting to investor expectations

- How did market signals and investor feedback influence your research direction?
- What adaptations were necessary to align with stakeholder or investor demands?
- Reflect on how you navigated conflicting feedback.
- Consider: What would you do differently to better anticipate investor concerns?

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Further reading



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Key take away



Checklist

1. Define clear business goals
2. Establish research objectives
3. Identify key stakeholders
4. Select the appropriate research methods
5. Recruit the right participants
6. Design the research process
7. Conduct a pilot study
8. Collect the data
9. Analyse the data
10. Align research insights to the business goals
11. Provide actionable recommendations
12. Monitor and iterate

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Further reading

Screenshot of a GitHub repository showing a list of commits related to 'hacking-karen-guest-reading'.

- praharmanas Update hacking-karen-guest-reading 8d43221 1 minute ago 14 Commits
 - LICENSE Initial commit last year
 - README.md Update README.md last year
 - academic Update and rename academic books to academic last year
 - automotive-writing Update automotive-writing last year
 - behavioral-science Update behavioral-science last year
 - design-theory Rename innovation design to design-practice last year
 - design-practice Update design theory last year
 - hacking-karen-guest-reading Update hacking-karen-guest-reading 1 minute ago
 - innovation Rename innovation general to innovation last year
 - leadership Update leadership last year
 - manufacturing Create manufacturing last year
 - marketing Update marketing last year
 - neuroscience Create neuroscience last year
 - strategy Create strategy last year
 - workshops Create workshops last year



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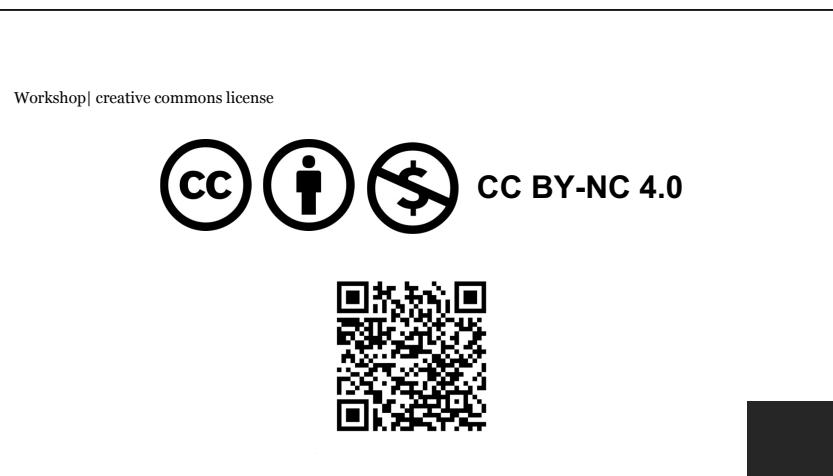
Key take away



1. What is the concern and context of the question we are trying to answer?
2. What are the claims, evidence and reasoning to substantiate the findings?
3. Don't let analysis paralysis destroy risk taking and intuition.

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