

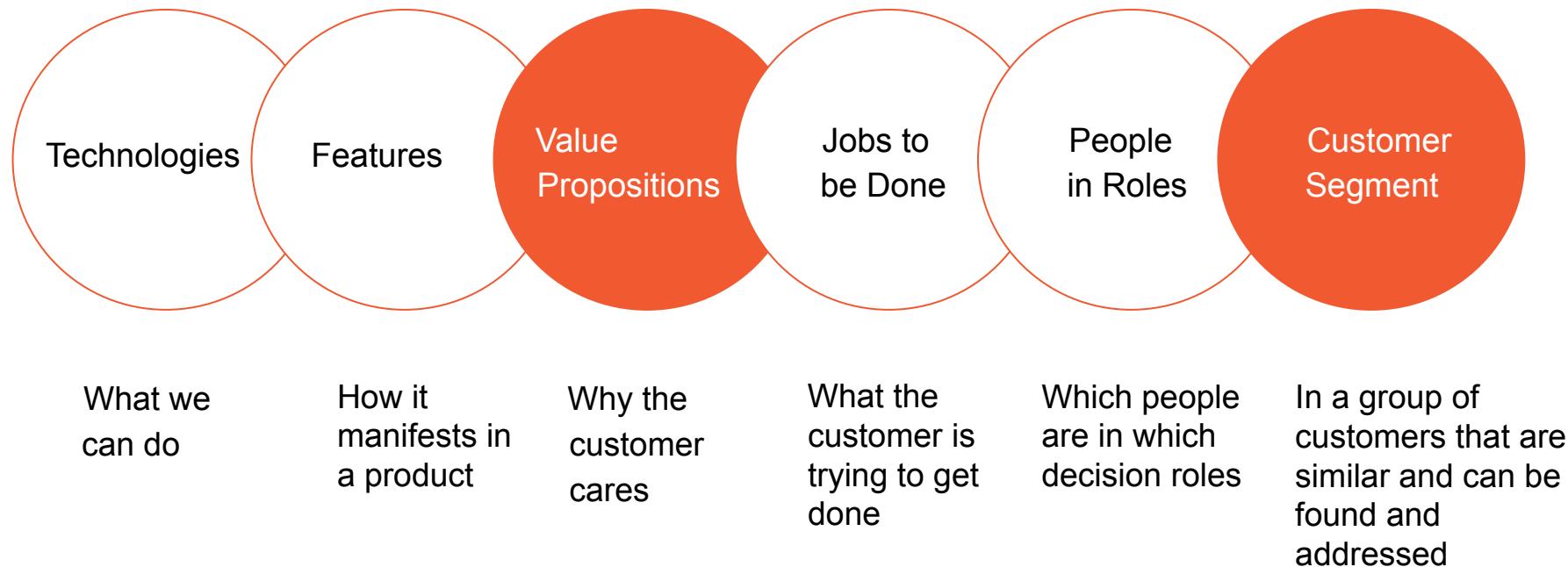
# **Customer Discovery**



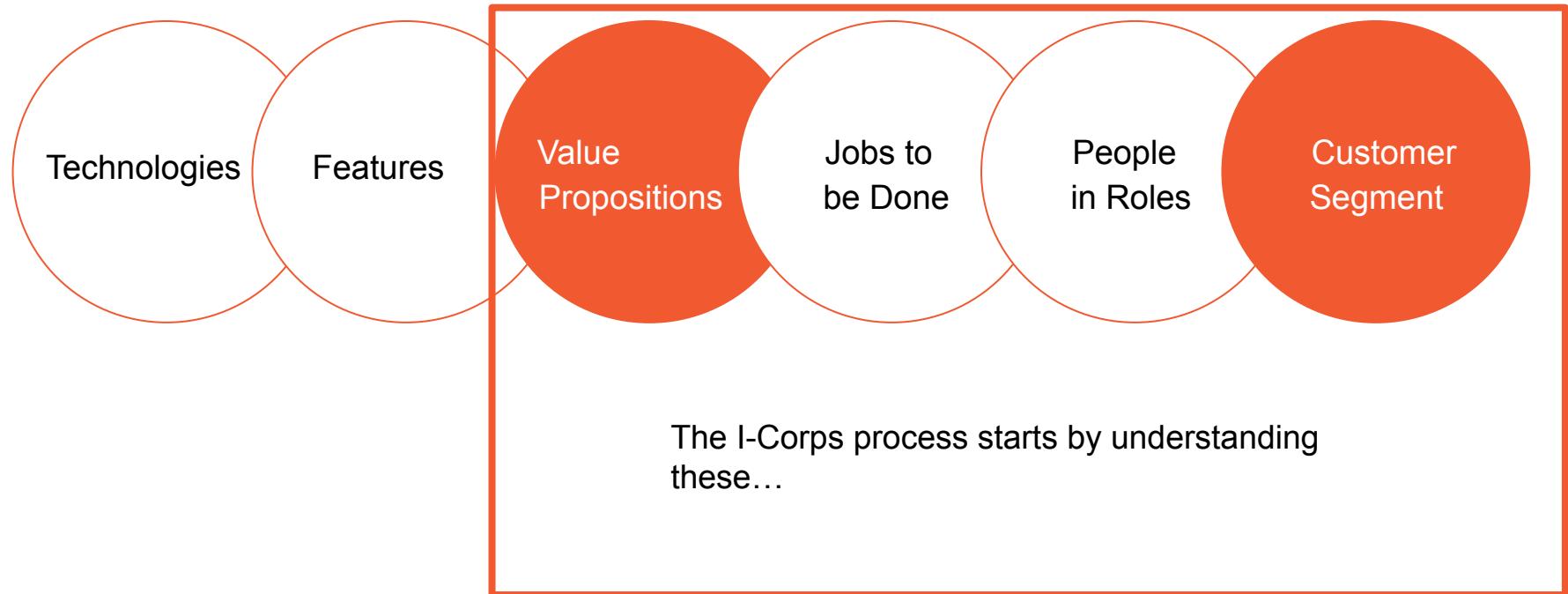
NSF I-Corps Hub  
**Desert and Pacific Region**

# Customer Discovery

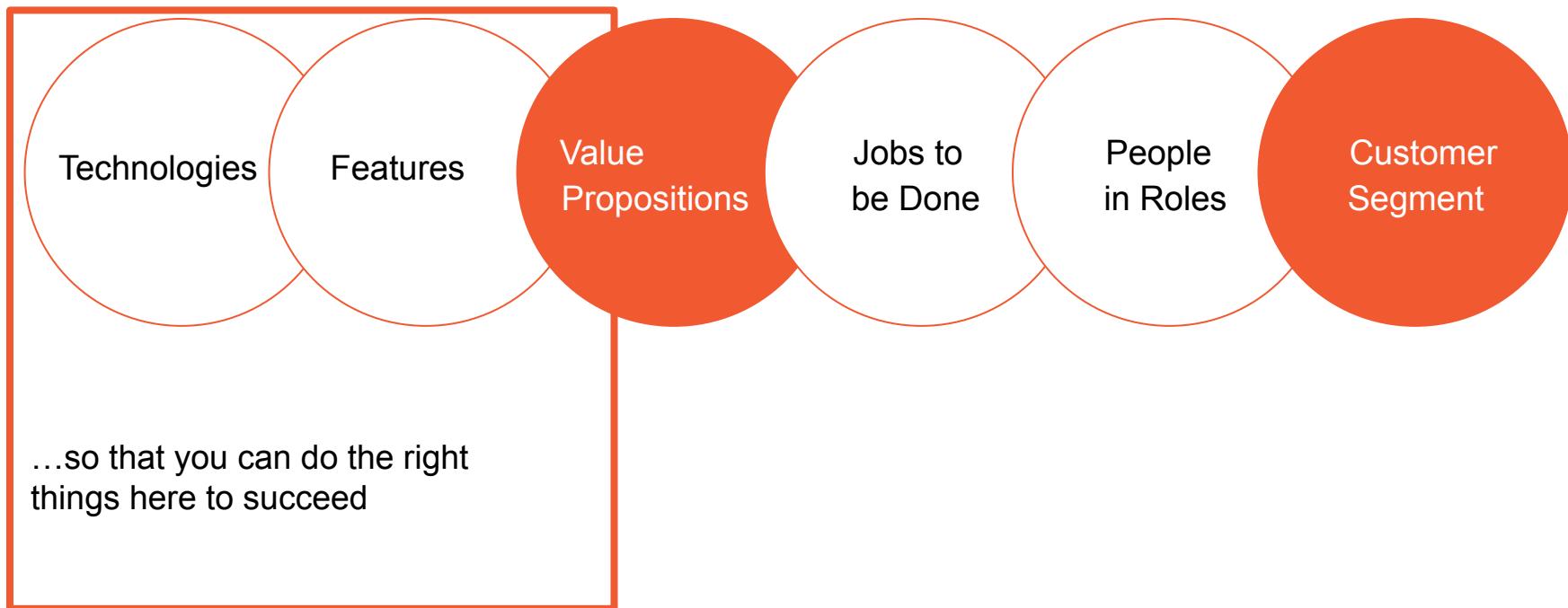
# Connecting your customer to your capabilities



# Connecting your customer to your capabilities

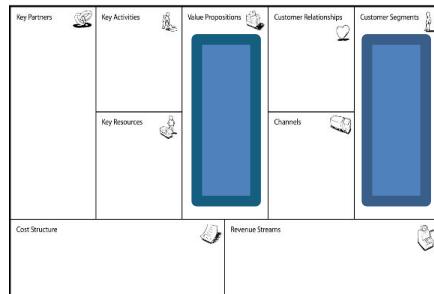


# Connecting your customer to your capabilities



## Problem-Solution Fit

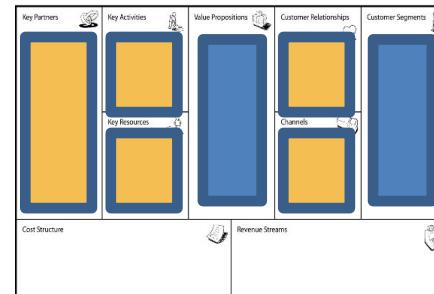
Can you identify a problem or need in the market that enough people care about?



1

## Product-Market Fit

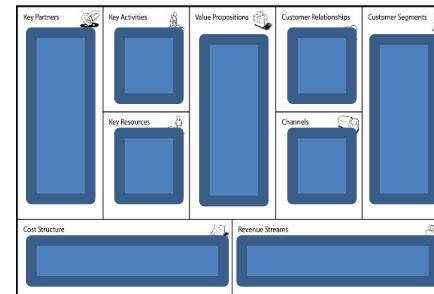
Can you build and deliver a product/service that satisfies the customer problem or need?



2

## Business-Model Fit

Can I create, deliver, and capture value to realize a scalable, repeatable business that is worth doing?



3

Key Partnerships



Key Activities



Value Propositions



Customer Relationships



Customer Segments



**Customer Segment**  
People involved in the use and  
adoption of the solution  
with common key factors (needs,  
problems decision roles, purchasing)

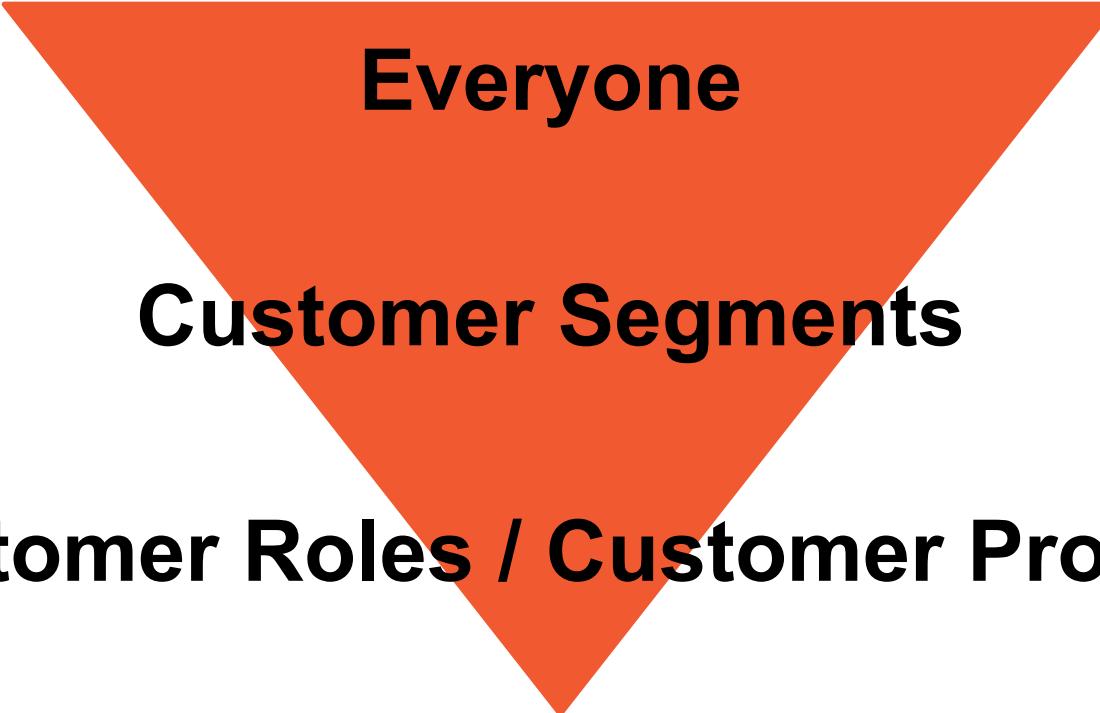


Cost Structure



Revenue Streams





**Everyone**

**Customer Segments**

**Customer Roles / Customer Profiles**

Key Partnerships



Key Activities



Value Propositions



Customer Relationships



Customer Segments



**Does the customer  
have a compelling  
reason to buy?**

Key Resources



Channels



Cost Structure



Revenue Streams

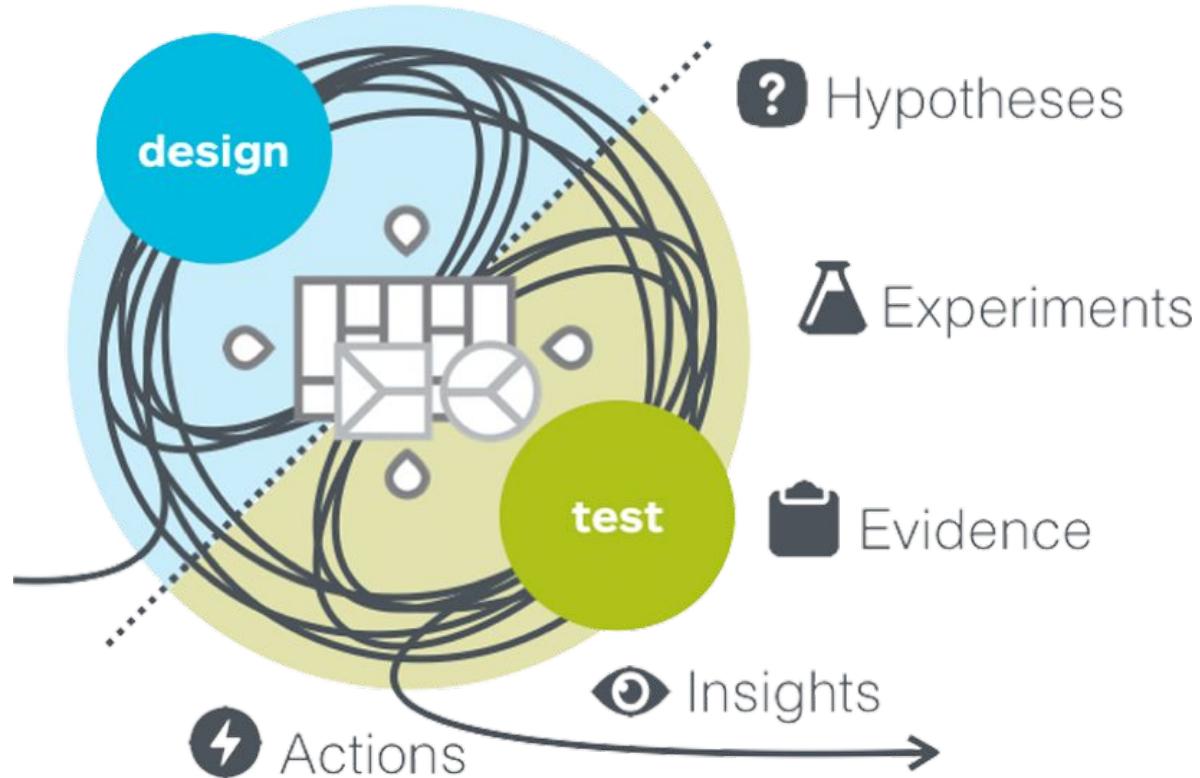


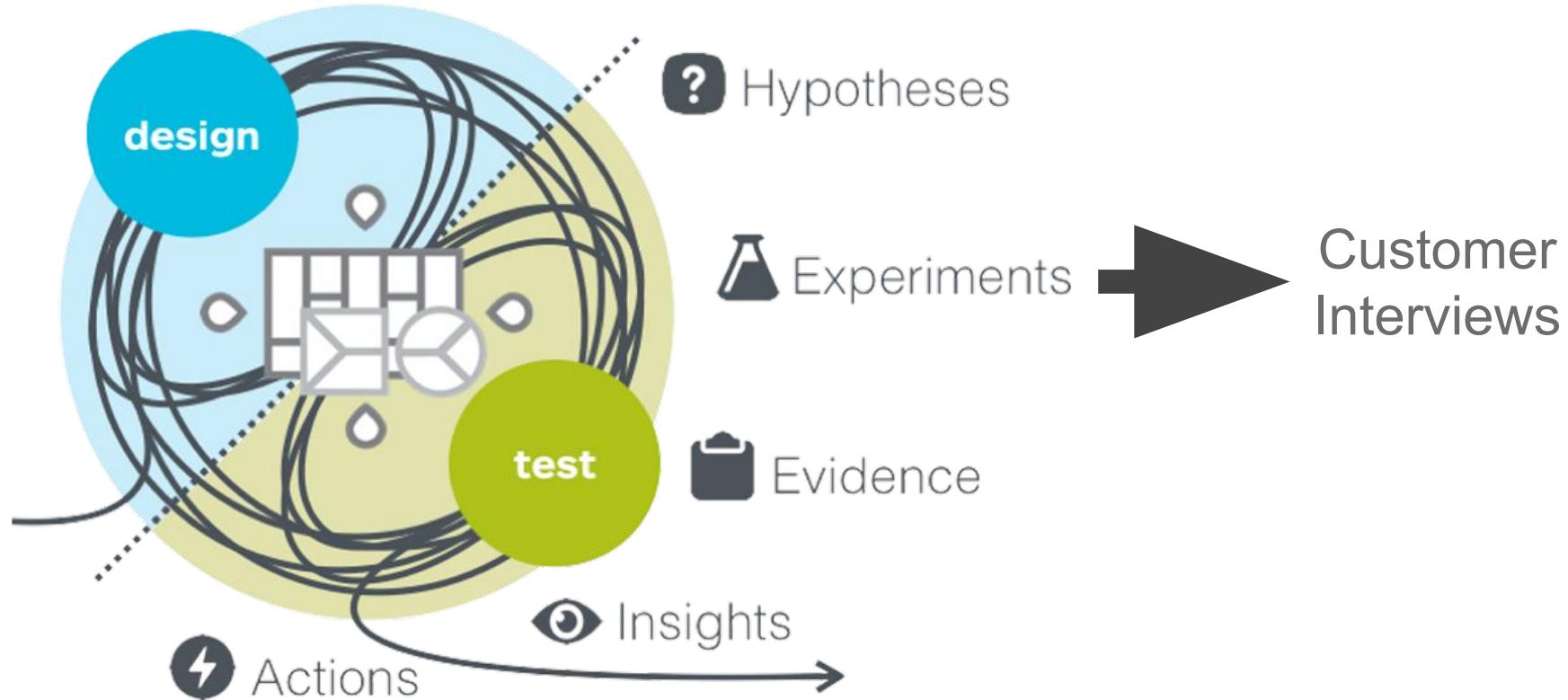
Who is the Customer?

What is their Problem?

How are they solving it now?

Are they satisfied with the current solution?





**GOAL:** Identify a single BEACHHEAD  
Customer Segment for further discovery

# **Before the beach find the BEACHHEAD**

**Definition:** A small market with specific characteristics that make it an ideal target to sell a new product or service.





Source: [worldbusinesschicago.com](http://worldbusinesschicago.com)



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# Who to Interview

## How to Find Them

## How to Get an Interview

## How to Do an Interview

## How to Analyze



# End Users

People who will put their hands  
on your technology.



# Support Staff

People who are part of the setup, disposal, or other operations.



# Decision Makers

People who are part of the process to purchase and implement your product.



# Do NOT Interview

Researchers in your field who  
are not users, adopters, etc.

Investors ... Not yet, please.

Friends and family



# What is Your Interview Strategy?

# Broad Scan or Deep Dive?

Customer Segment

Customer Segment

Customer Segment

End User

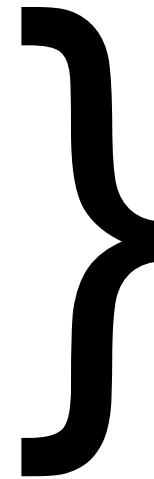
Decision Maker

Recommender

Influencer

Buyer

# Scanning Strategy



15-20 interviews  
over multiple  
segments.

Goal: Identify  
segment to  
explore further

# Deep Dive Strategy

Customer Segment

Customer Segment

Customer Segment

End User

Decision Maker

Recommender

Influencer

Buyer

15-20 interviews  
focused on 1  
market segment.

Goal: Evaluate  
the opportunity

Who to Interview  
**How to Find Them**  
How to Get an Interview  
How to Do an Interview  
How to Analyze





**WARM  
INTRODUCTION**



**COLD CALL**



# LinkedIn Sales Navigator

It's a customer discovery expense

Sign up for Medium and get an extra one



Sandeep Jain



Jan 12, 2018 · 13 min read · Listen



**Customer Discovery — How I used LinkedIn to talk to 100+ people who I didn't know earlier. You can too.**



Credit: [http://www.flyhighchild.com/wp-content/files/2014/01/people\\_in\\_a\\_circle\\_20x20px.jpg](http://www.flyhighchild.com/wp-content/files/2014/01/people_in_a_circle_20x20px.jpg)

If you are trying to start a new venture, especially in an area that is new to you, talking to customers and people associated in that ecosystem is actually a must. Also known as *customer discovery* or *market research*.

Even though the need for it should be ~~incredible~~, most folks — especially engineers like I am (or truthfully was) — usually has trouble getting started. If you



# Secondary Research

## MEDICAL DEVICE MARKET MAP

### GENERAL SURGERY



### CARDIOVASCULAR



### OPHTHALMOLOGY



### ORTHOPEDICS



### DIAGNOSTICS



### IMAGING



### NEUROLOGY



### ONCOLOGY



### PATIENT MONITORING



Source: [www.cbinsights.com/research/brain-scans-pacemakers-72-medical-device-startups-market-map-2016/](http://www.cbinsights.com/research/brain-scans-pacemakers-72-medical-device-startups-market-map-2016/)

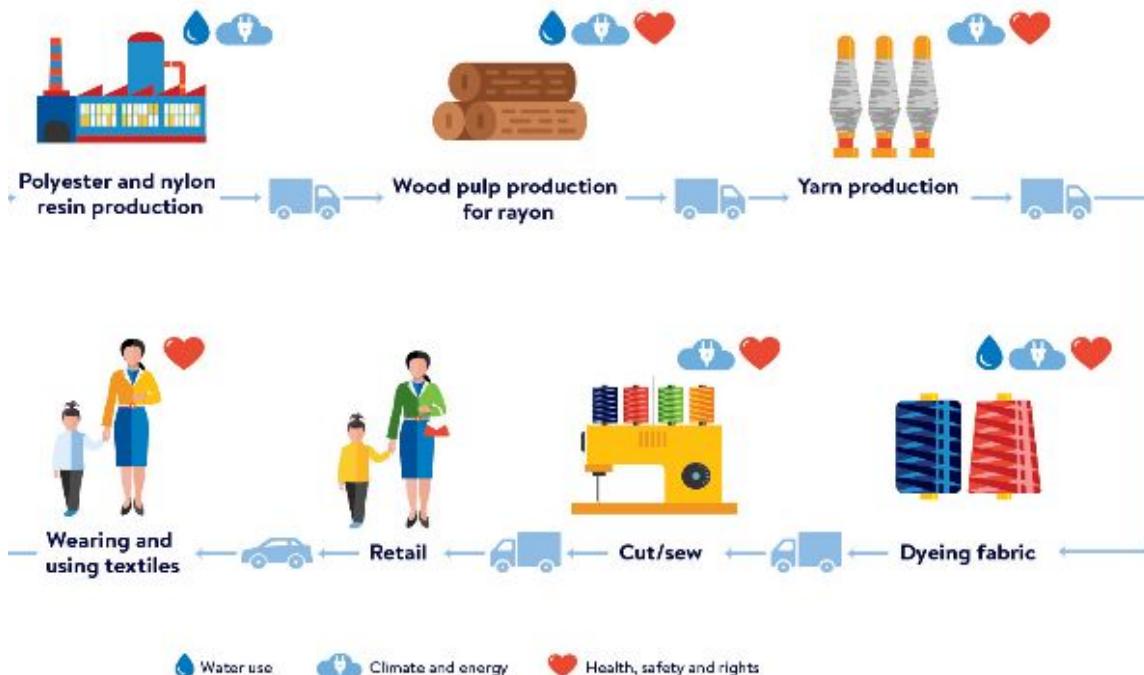


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Desert and Pacific Region

# Industry Value Chain

Who are the key players?  
Where do you fit?



Arizona State University and University of Arkansas

[About Us](#)[Capabilities](#)[Industries](#)[Clients](#)[Quality Assurance](#)[News](#)

2019 BY CUTTING DYNAMICS INC.

## 18 Aerospace and Aviation Industry Blogs and Publications You Need to Be Reading

If you're in the aerospace or industries, or just love them, and are looking for some new blogs to publications to follow? Check out this list of 18 of the top magazines, blogs, and e trade publications you should follow!



# Industry News

### ace Manufacturing

With news stories to videos to events and much more, this aerospace publication is a great resource for those looking to get a lot out of a magazine and online news source.

**Learn More**

If you'd like to learn more about how Cutting Dynamics can provide solutions to your company's needs, contact us below:

Name: \*

Email: \*

Phone: \*

City: \*

Company/Division: \*



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# Conferences & Trade Shows

Schedule at least  
ONE....probably 2...



**POWERTEST** CONFERENCE **25**  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

**POWERTEST25**  
March 11, 2025 – March 15, 2025  
🕒 Viewing in Eastern Time Adjust

Rosen Shingle Creek Resort  
9939 Universal Boulevard  
Orlando, FL 32819



NSF I-Cores Hub  
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## Trade Shows ▾

( 2025 - 2,231 | Mar - 374 )

[List Your Events](#)

## Events by Industries

[All \(2231\)](#)

Agriculture (186)

Art, Craft &amp; Collectibles (17)

Business (313)

Construction (76)

Education &amp; Science (178)

Energy (85)

Environment (22)

Fashion &amp; Beauty (82)

Food &amp; Hospitality (82)

Government (88)

Health &amp; Fitness (52)

Home (47)

Manufacturing (128)

Medical &amp; Pharma (396)

Retail &amp; Wholesale (70)

Society &amp; Community (11)

Mar ▾

2025 ▾

Type	City/State	Attendance	Exhibitors	Date	Action
In-person	Boston Massachusetts	estimated	verified	Mar 01	
In-person	San Francisco California	estimated	verified	Mar 01	
In-person	New York City New York	-	-	Mar 01	
In-person	St. Petersburg Florida	estimated	estimated	Mar 01	
In-person	Big Sky Montana	estimated	estimated	Mar 01	
In-person	Monroeville Pennsylvania	estimated	estimated	Mar 01	
In-person	Washington District of Columbia	estimated	verified	Mar 01	
In-person	Maunawili Hawaii	estimated	-	Mar 01	

<https://eventsinamerica.com/events/trade-shows/2025>

Who to Interview  
How to Find Them  
**How to Get an Interview**  
How to Do an Interview  
How to Analyze



# Email or Phone Call Template

- Introduce yourself
- Identify why you picked them to interview
- Compliment a specific skill accomplishment
- Seek Help
- Describe what you are trying to learn specifically; **Do Not Sell**
- Ask for a specific date/time range; 15-20 min max
- Make it easy to say yes

# Example Email

Dear {INSERT NAME},

I am participating in a National Science Foundation program designed to help us understand the business environment that would use/deploy/ adopt {insert technology field}. I am looking to speak with {tailor: people who understand the business use case of such technologies}

You were recommended by {INSERT NAME} as a leader ....

I saw you present at XYZ conference ....

You are a front runner in adopting XYZ tech .....

Would you have 15 minutes to discuss? I have listed several time slots. Please feel free to reply with your best availability.

1/19 Tue: 12-1 pm PT; 1/20 Wed: 8-10am PT, 3-5pm PT; 1/21 Thu: 8am-3pm PT; 1/22 Fri: 12-5pm PT

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

{INSERT YOUR NAME}

# A Casual Approach

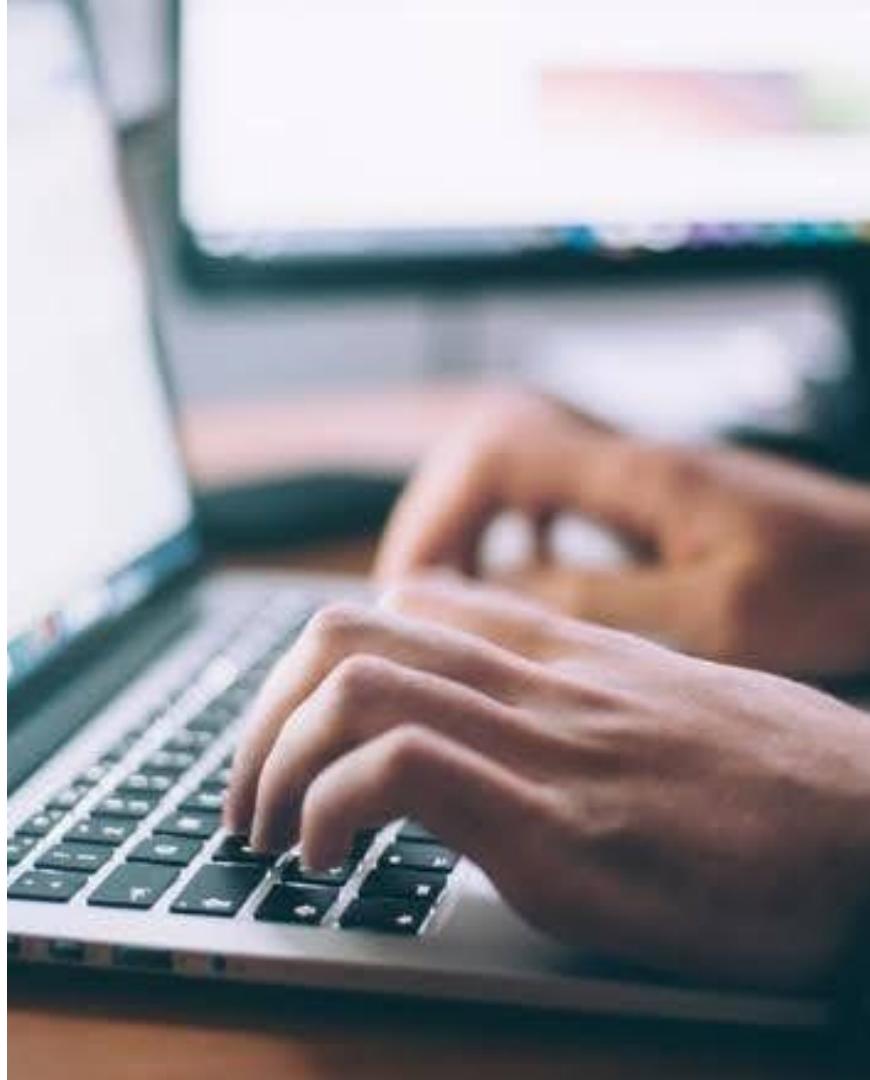
Hey {NAME}! I'm doing research with the NSF about {X}. Given what you do as a {role}, I could learn a lot from you. Got time for a quick interview?  
{INSERT YOUR NAME}

# No Reply? Follow Up

As a reminder...

Looking for 15 minutes...

Greatly appreciate your insight...



**10%**

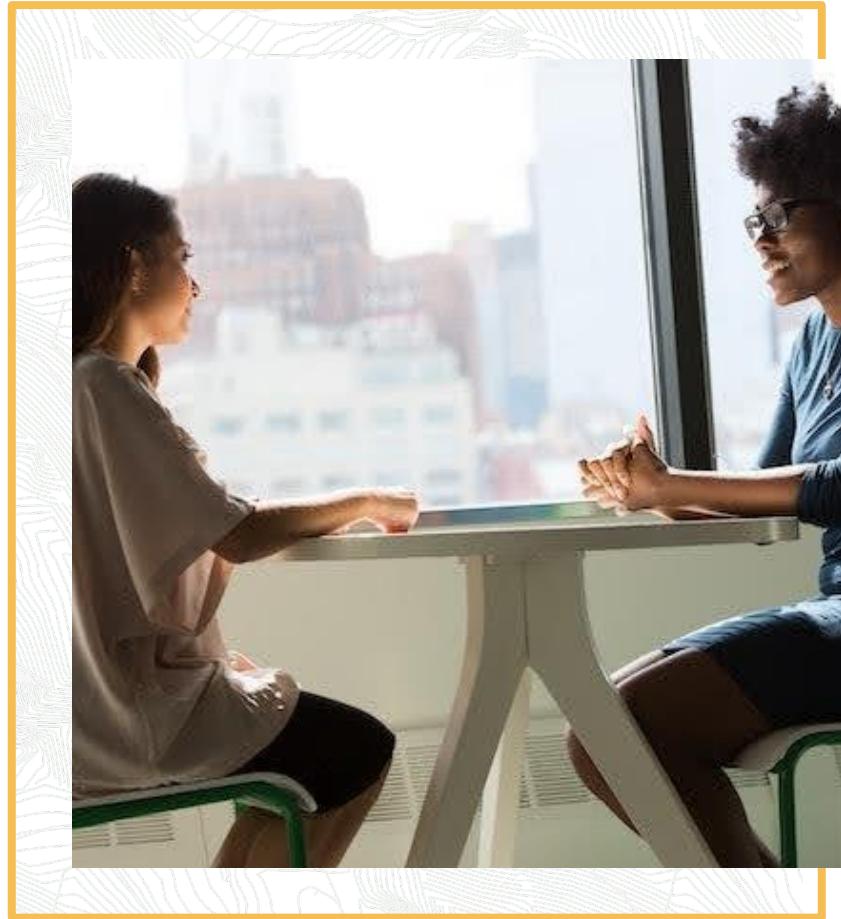
**100 Contacts = < 10 Confirmed Meetings**

Who to Interview  
How to Find Them  
How to Get an Interview  
**How to Do an Interview**  
How to Analyze

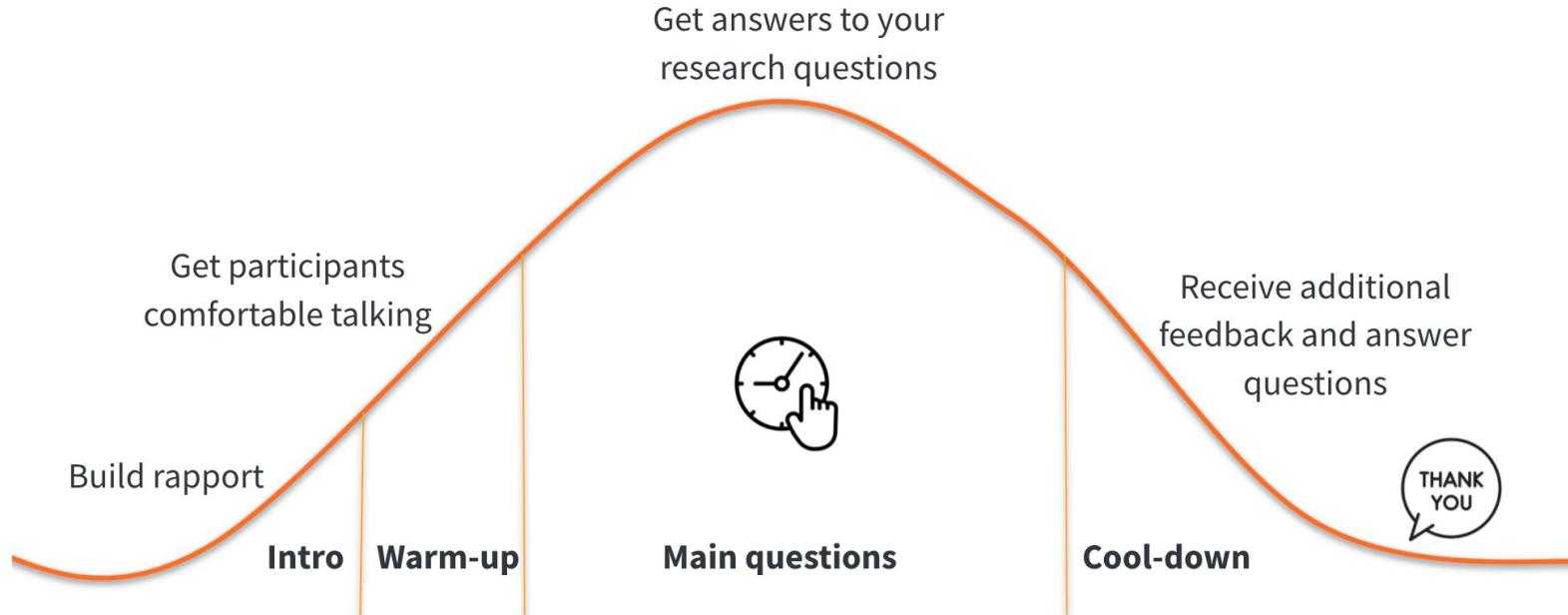


In-Person is always  
best...

Bring more than 1  
person



# Arc of an Interview



**Divergent  
(Broad)**

**Convergent  
(Specific)**

# Divergent (Broad)

## Establish Connection

- Introduction
- Establish credibility

## Divergent Convo

- Jobs and responsibilities
- Reporting structure
- Accountability
- Top of mind responsibilities



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## **Convergent Convo**

- Bring out the “Prompt”
- Current Solutions
- Top “Priority”?

## **Wrap Up**

- Confirm Insights
- Repeat Context
- Referrals

# **Convergent (Specific)**



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# Interview GOALS

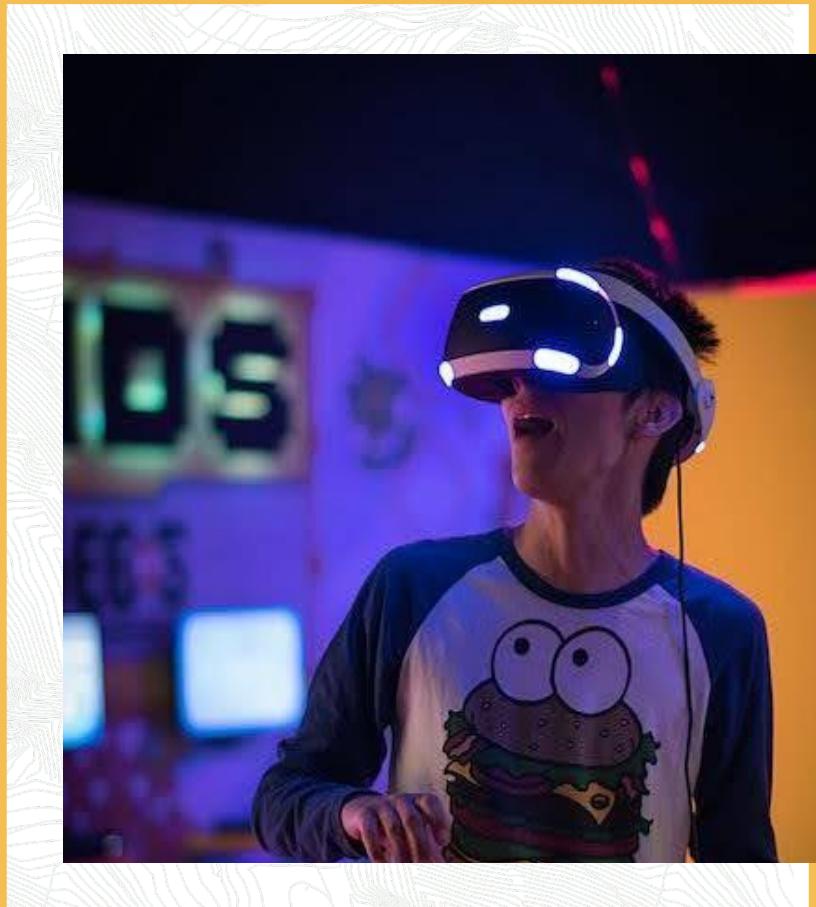
- Understand the **Customer's** priorities
- Test hypotheses
- Understand how **they** define “**better**”

What were the criteria  
they used to purchase  
their current solution?



**Not a DEMO!**

**Not a PITCH!**



# Interview Script (Starter Set of Questions)

1. What are your main responsibilities and the primary tasks you spend your time on?
2. Whom do you report to, who is on your team, and do you have any direct reports?
  - Do you have P&L or budget responsibility?
3. What tools/software/services do you use in your job?
  - How satisfied are you with them?
4. What are your biggest challenges? What keeps you up at night?
5. Can you tell me about a time you tried to solve [the problem]
  - Did you consider/evaluate/adopt a new technology/product/process?
  - How did you hear about it?
  - Who made the decision?
  - How much did it cost?
  - How did you measure its success?
6. Is there anything else I forgot to ask?
7. Can you refer me to more people to talk to?

# Interview Flow

1. Tell me about the last time you \_\_\_ / Show me how you \_\_\_
2. What was hard about that?
3. Why was it hard?
4. How do you solve it now?
5. Why is your solution not good enough?

## Look for...

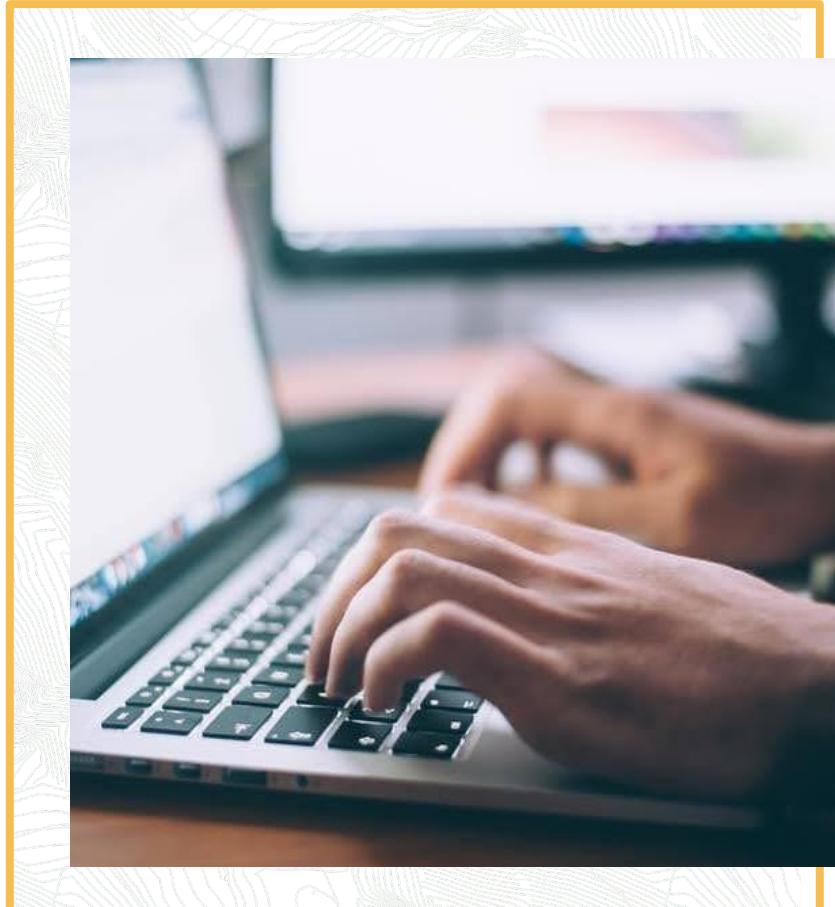
emotions + artifacts + strange terminology + discomfort revealing inadequacies + disconfirmation of your predictions

# Follow up

Thank you

Re-cap

**Referrals (at end of interview  
and again with follow up)**





# 10 Minute Breakout Worksheet 3

**Who to Interview**  
**How to Find Them**  
**How to Get an Interview**  
**How to Do an Interview**  
**How to Analyze**



# Capture data

W

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Desert and... ▾

Leaderboard  
Business Model Canvases  
Interviews

0 Instruct... EL.. Team Members

Ruth Shuman Molly Wasko Jaime Camelio Margo Kinney-Petrucha Jameelah Adas Katie Dzugan M Jackson Erika Mijlin Elana Diaz Soraya Bailey Ji Mi Choi Deric

Team Selection (Instructors Only): 0 Instructor Team

## Interviews

Total Conducted Interviews  
1

New Conducted Interviews  
1

### General Team Comments

Add Engagement

Add Engagement is for Instructors only.

Start a conversation

Ask questions and collaborate with your team - directly in Airtable.

L Leave a comment @

This screenshot shows the 'Interviews' section of the NSF I-Corps platform. On the left, there's a sidebar with navigation links: Leaderboard, Business Model Canvases, and Interviews (which is currently selected). The main area has a header with '0 Instruct...' and 'EL.. Team Members' followed by a list of team members with their names and profile icons. Below this is a dropdown for 'Team Selection (Instructors Only)' set to '0 Instructor Team'. The 'Interviews' section displays two cards: 'Total Conducted Interviews' (1) in a green box and 'New Conducted Interviews' (1) in a purple box. To the right is a 'General Team Comments' section with a 'Add Engagement' button, a note that it's for instructors only, and a 'Start a conversation' area with a placeholder for asking questions and collaborating directly in Airtable. At the bottom is a comment input field with a placeholder 'Leave a comment' and a '@' icon.

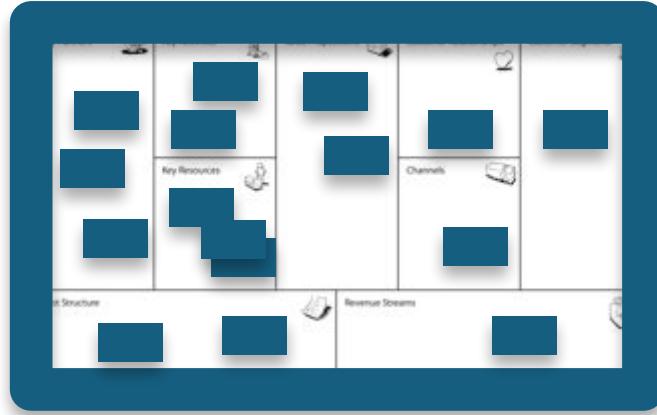


# Look for Patterns

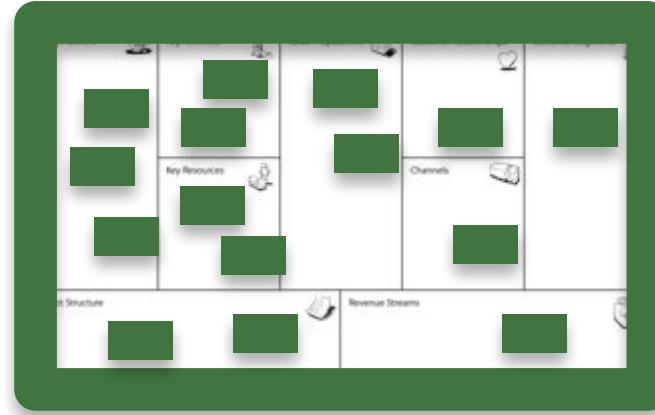


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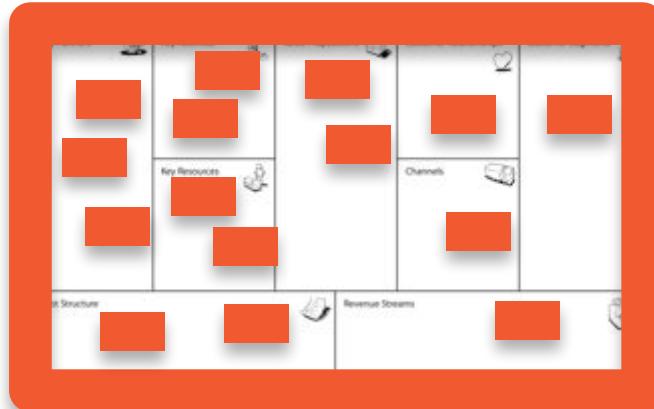
## Customer Segment A



## Customer Segment B

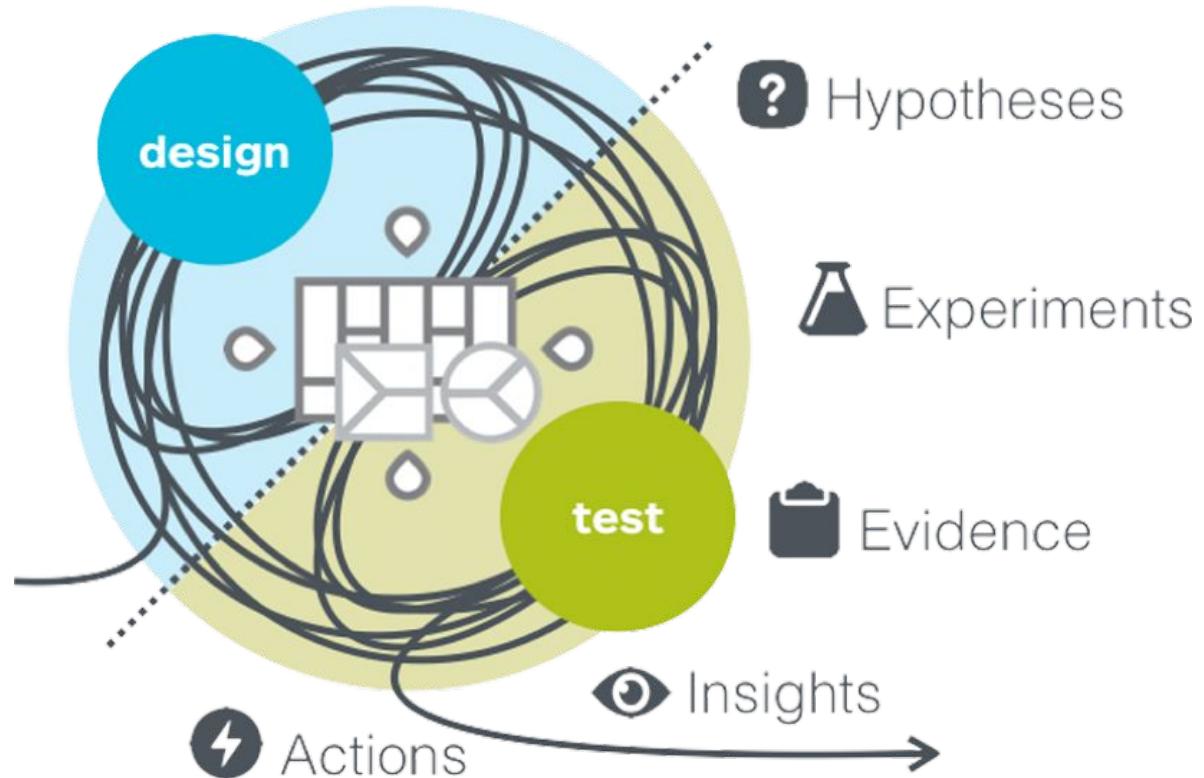


## Customer Segment C



**Update BMC**

# Repeat



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# Reminder-Customer Discovery Process

1. Search
2. Whom do you report to, who is on your team, and do you have any direct reports?
  - Do you have P&L or budget responsibility?
3. What tools/software/services do you use in your job?
  - How satisfied are you with them?
4. What are your biggest challenges? What keeps you up at night?
5. Can you tell me about a time you tried to solve [the problem]
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  - Who made the decision?
  - How much did it cost?
  - How did you measure its success?
6. Is there anything else I forgot to ask?
7. Can you refer me to more people to talk to?



# Customer Discovery Best Practices

	<b>DOs</b>	<b>DON'Ts</b>
1	Go in prepared. Know your goals and questions ahead of time.	Don't have an endless list of questions.
2	Be smart about who you target. Work from your hypotheses on market and early adopters.	Don't take a shotgun approach, talking to anyone with a pulse.
3	Talk to one person at a time. If you bring a note taker, they should remain quiet.	Don't do focus groups.
4	Prepare yourself to hear things you don't want to hear.	Don't let your excitement and optimism bias what you hear.
5	Get stories on past behavior.	Don't ask people to speculate (i.e. "would you pay for X?")
6	Ask for advice.	Don't pitch unless you actually try to close for real money.
7	Listen. 95% of the conversation should be them talking.	Don't talk so much, and don't be afraid of silence. Let them think.
8	Follow your nose and drill down when something of interest comes up.	Don't feel like you have to rigidly stick to a script.
9	At the end of the interview, ask for introductions to more people to speak with.	Don't leave empty handed if you can help it.
10	Look for patterns and use judgement.	Don't take any one conversation literally.

# What to expect tomorrow

- **Tomorrow Class 2:**
  - 10 minute team “presentations” customer insights
  - Deeper Dive: Value Propositions
  - Continued Customer Discovery
  - 7 interviews
  - Evening Office Hours

