



WHITE PAPER

The Jobs-to-be-Done Needs Framework

Jobs Theory provides a framework for categorizing, defining, capturing and organizing the inputs that are required to make innovation predictable.

By TONY ULWICK



Imagine if all the developers, marketers, strategists and R&D managers in your company shared a common understanding of what a need is and which customer needs are unmet. Such alignment and focus changes everything. So how can this be achieved?

Harvard Business School marketing professor Theodore Levitt said, "People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill. They want a quarter-inch hole!" Clayton Christensen says, "People buy products and services to get a job done."

These are the basic constructs of Jobs-to-be-Done Theory, but they are only the tip of the iceberg. The theory has a game-changing implication:

Jobs-to-be-Done Theory provides a framework for defining, categorizing, capturing, and organizing all your customers' needs.

Moreover, when using this framework, a complete set of need statements can be captured in days—rather than months—and the statements themselves are valid for years—rather than quickly becoming obsolete. Needless to say, if you are not using Jobs Theory as the foundation for a needs framework, you are arguably missing out on the biggest benefit of the theory's application.

Historically, the primary cause of failed products and services is a misalignment with customer needs. This is not surprising given that 95% of product teams do not agree on what a customer "need" even is. Using this needs framework, product teams can deeply understand the jobs its customers are trying to get done and the metrics they use to measure success.

Armed with knowledge of all the customers' needs, a company can:

- Determine which needs are unmet
- Discover segments of customers with unique sets of unmet needs
- Systematically conceptualize breakthrough products
- Predict which new concepts and offerings will win in the marketplace
- Align the actions of marketing, development, and R&D to orchestrate the systematic creation of customer value

The **Jobs-to-be-Done Needs Framework**, described in detail below, reveals the 3 types of external customers that companies serve, the 5 types of jobs they are trying to get done, and what types of inputs are required to bring predictability to the innovation process. These are the key inputs into the Outcome-Driven Innovation process.

Who are your customers?

Before a company can define all its customers' needs, it must first define all its customers. While a B2C company may find this to be a simple exercise, many B2B companies struggle. Through our consulting work we have conducted exhaustive research; we have concluded that the types of customers a company serves are best grouped into three categories:

1. The job executor: this is the person using the product to get the core functional job done.
2. The product lifecycle support team: this consists of the varying groups of people who support the product throughout its lifecycle. This includes people who install, transport, repair, maintain, upgrade or dispose of the product. They execute consumption chain jobs.
3. The buyer: this is the person responsible for making the financial purchase decision.

A toothbrush manufacturer will discover that the consumer typically plays all three roles; the consumer is the product user, the supporter of the product throughout its lifecycle, and the buyer. This situation is common in B2C markets.

Conversely, if your company manufactures surgical medical instruments, then the surgeon is the job executor. The product lifecycle support team may consist of nurses, bio-meds and others and the buyer is typically a buying group in hospital administration. This type of complexity is common in B2B companies.



FIGURE 1: CUSTOMER TYPES

While many possibilities exist, the customer types fall nicely into these 3 categories, as can be seen in Figure 1. They form the basis for the Jobs-to-be-Done Needs Framework. **This categorization is meaningful as each customer type has a different set of needs.**

What types of jobs are they getting done?

The Jobs-to-be-Done Needs Framework reveals the 5 types of jobs that the job executor, the product lifecycle support team and the buyer are trying to get done.

The job executor is trying to get 3 distinct jobs done:

The core functional job: This is defined as the underlying process the job executor is trying to get done in a given situation. It is the focal point around which a market is defined and the reason a market exists. "Repairing a rotator cuff," "passing on life lessons to children," and "protecting against a cyber attack" are all examples of core functional jobs-to-be-done. The goal of any product is to help get a core functional job done better and more cheaply than competing solutions.

Related jobs: These are additional functional jobs the job executor is trying to get done either before, during or following the execution of the core job. With an understanding of these related jobs, and which, if any, are underserved, a company can devise solutions that help its customers get multiple jobs done, making its product more valuable.

Emotional jobs: These are statements that describe the way the job executor wants to be perceived or feel when executing the core functional job. Social jobs are included in this categorization. These inputs are valuable when it comes to creating a value proposition that incorporates both functional and emotional components, which strongly connect with customers.

Consumption chain jobs: The product lifecycle support team is trying to execute a number of jobs throughout the product lifecycle. These jobs include product installation, set up, and storing, transporting, maintaining, repairing, cleaning, upgrading, and disposing of the product—all impacting the customer experience. These consumption chain jobs are shown in black in Figure 2. The types of consumption chain jobs that must be considered in a market vary depending on the type of offering under consideration; we have created separate frameworks for hardware, software, service and consumable offerings.

The purchase decision job: This is the job that the purchase decision maker executes using a financial lens to try to decide which product or service to acquire. Here we want to know what financial and/or performance metrics are used to make the purchase decision. These metrics are what we call financial desired outcomes.

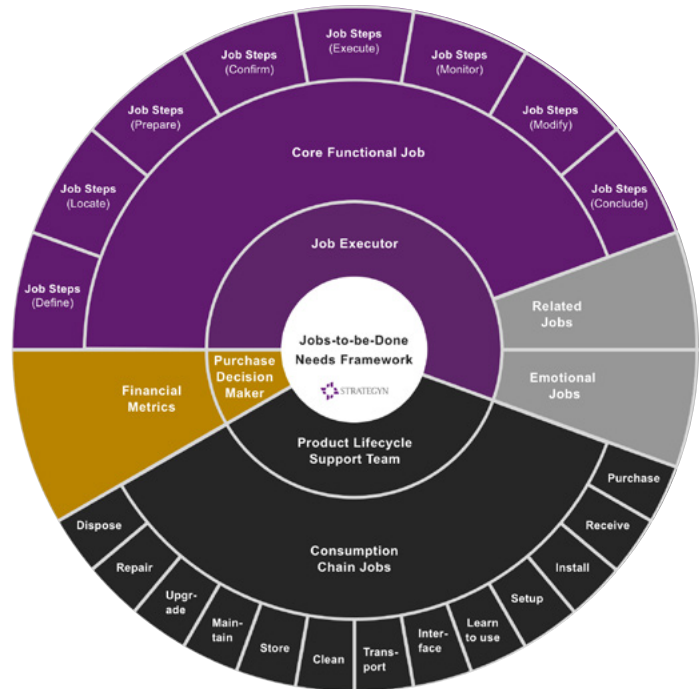


FIGURE 2: JOB TYPES

The customer's desired outcomes

The power of Jobs Theory is that the customer's job-to-be-done is the anchor point for "where" to create value. That anchor point, while useful, does not contain enough information to indicate "how" to be successful in a market. For example, knowing that people struggle to "manage their monthly spending," does not inform us precisely where in the job they are struggling.

To gain a deep understanding of the customer's job-to-be-done, a company must be able to discover the customer's "needs" associated with getting that job done.

When looking at a market through a jobs-to-be-done lens, customer needs can be discovered by studying the customer's core functional job as a process. Tactically, the core functional job can be broken down into steps using what we call a job map as described in the 2008 Harvard Business Review article, The Customer-Centered Innovation Map. With the job map in place, companies can then seek to discover the metrics customers use to measure success as they try to get each step in the job done. These metrics, which we call "desired outcomes," bring predictability to innovation.

A desired outcome statement is a specially constructed need statement that has a unique set of characteristics: desired outcomes are devoid of solutions, stable over time, measureable, controllable, structured for reliable prioritization in a quantitative customer survey, and are tied to the underlying process (or job) the customer is trying to get done.

There are typically 50 – 150 outcomes that people use to measure the success of a core functional job and 10 – 30 outcomes per relevant consumption chain job. These are the ingredients that come together to bring predictability to innovation. How all the pieces fit together can be seen in the complete Jobs-to-be-Done Needs Framework, shown in Figure 3.

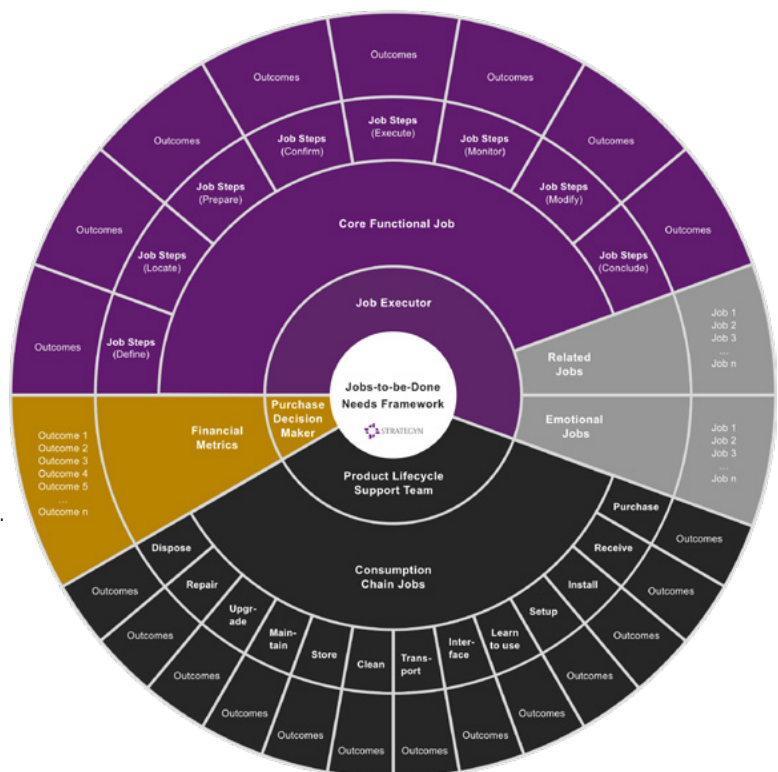


FIGURE 3: THE JOBS-TO-BE-DONE NEEDS FRAMEWORK



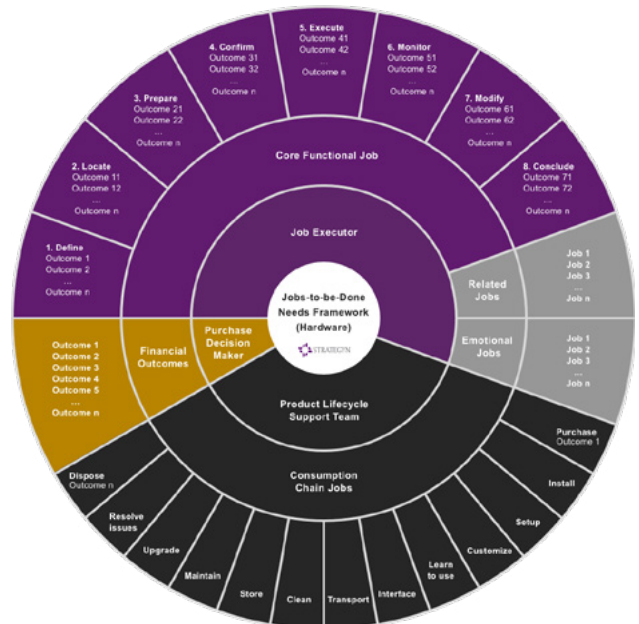
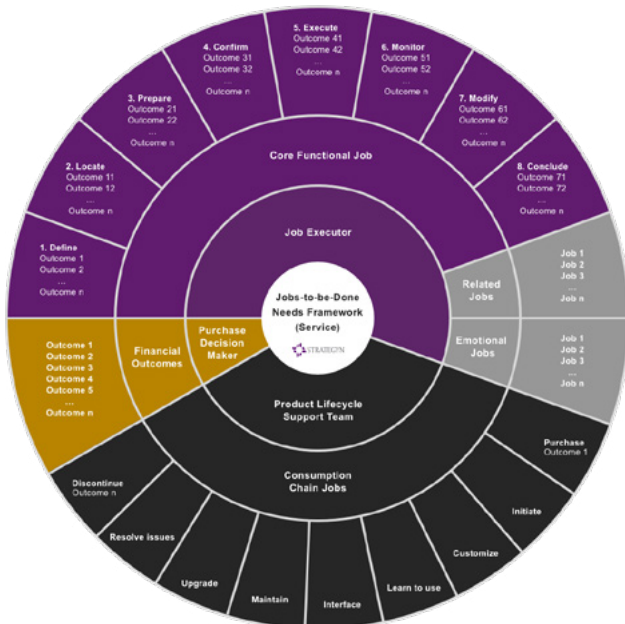
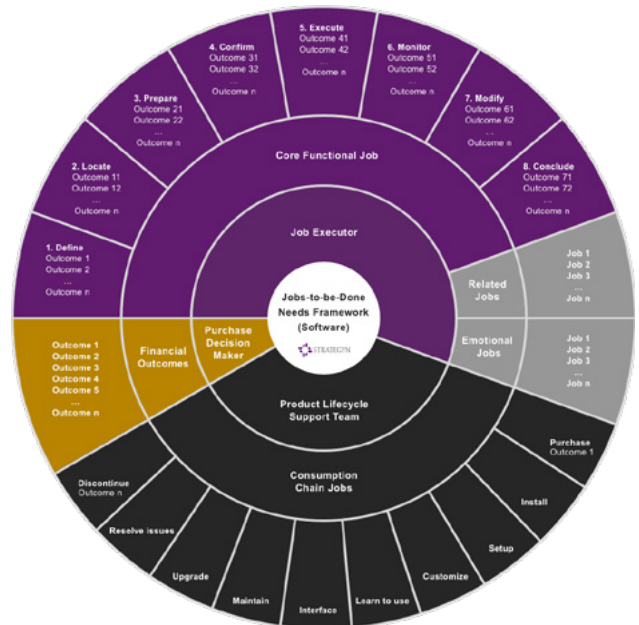
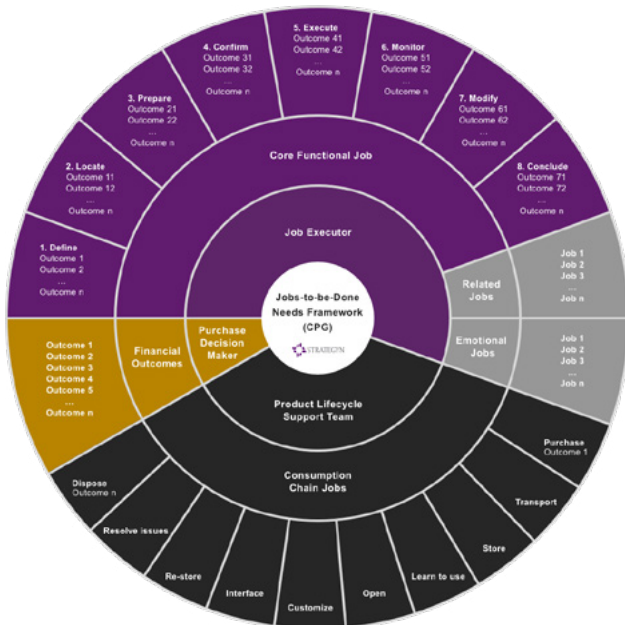
What are the implications?

The Jobs-to-be-Done Needs Framework is a structured guide for navigating the complexity involved in understanding all the needs in a market. Given the avalanche of customer data that companies consider each day, this framework reveals what inputs are needed, how they should be categorized and organized, why they are captured, and how they should be utilized.

Without these essential insights, innovation remains a game of chance and product teams end up guessing on the best path forward. Having the right inputs changes everything. It revolutionizes the way products are conceived, tested, created, marketed and sold.

The Jobs-to-be-Done Framework brings order to a historically unstructured, chaotic practice.

Download our industry-specific frameworks from the Resources page on our website: www.strategyn.com



About the Author



Tony Ulwick

Tony is the pioneer of Jobs-to-be-Done Theory, the inventor of the Outcome-Driven Innovation® (ODI) process, and the founder of Strategyn. Tony has applied the ODI process at many of the world's leading companies to inform breakthrough innovations—achieving a success rate that is 5 times better than the industry average. Philip Kotler calls Tony “the Deming of innovation” and Clayton Christensen credits him with “bringing predictability to innovation.” Published in Harvard Business Review and MIT Sloan Management Review, Tony is also the author of 2 best sellers: What Customers Want and JOBS TO BE DONE: Theory to Practice.

**Ready to embark on your own innovation journey.
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