

VALIDATION

20 WAYS TO TEST YOUR BUSINESS IDEAS

free tools in PDF

20 experiments with real cases you can copy



Board of
Innovation



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VALIDATION

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BUSINESS IDEAS

with free tools in PDF and
20 real cases you can copy

Some of the clients with whom we are proud to work

PHILIPS

ING

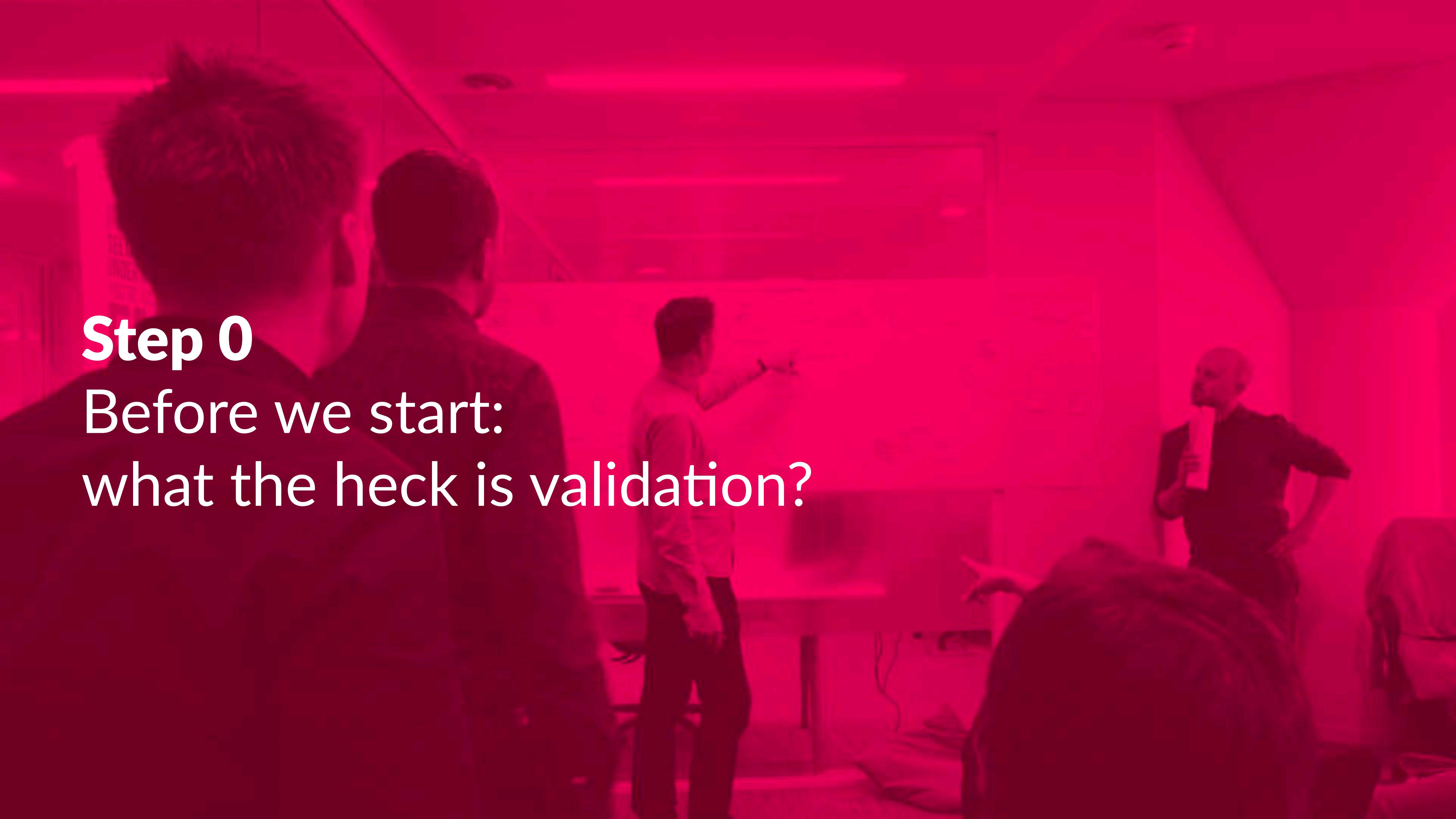


Nestlé



P&G

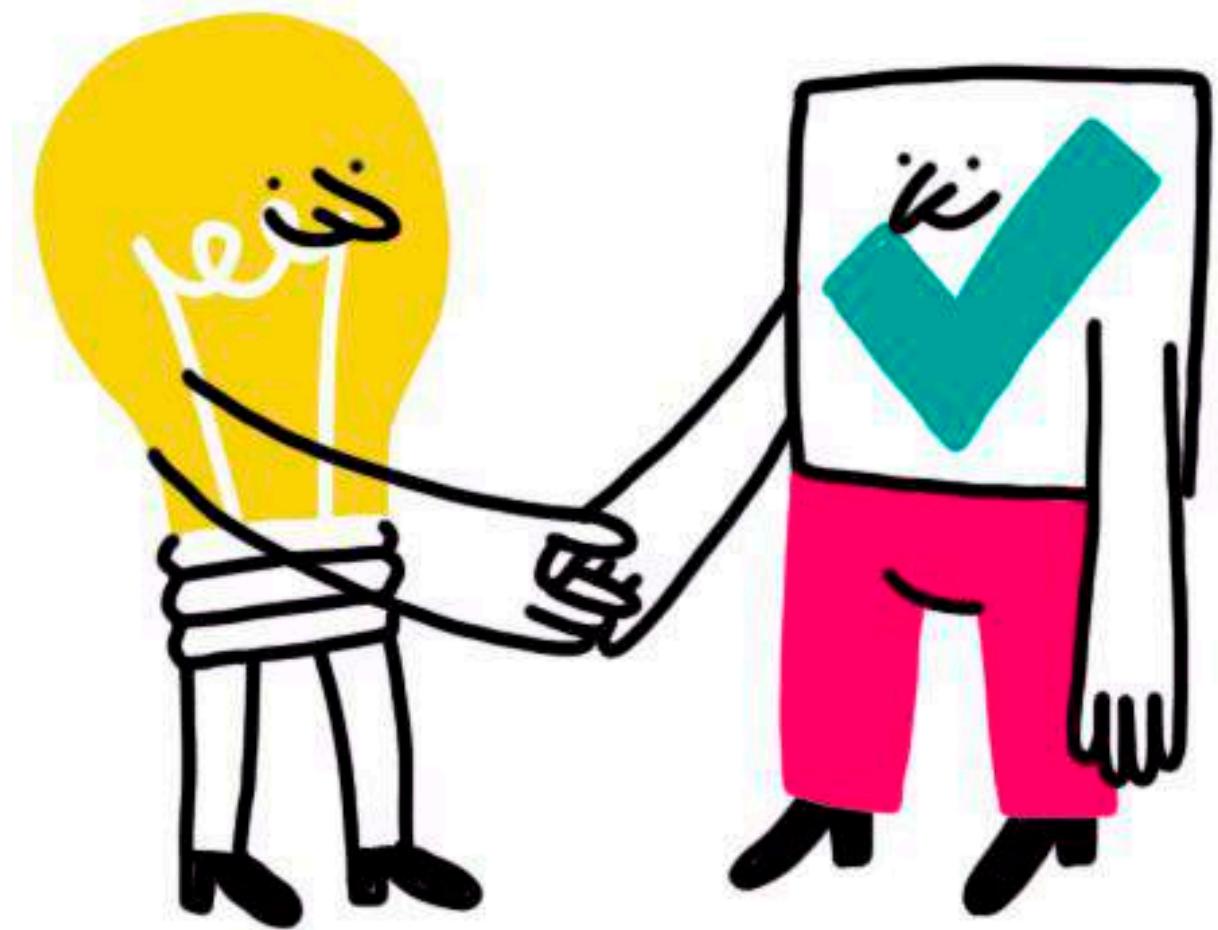


A photograph of a group of people in a room. In the foreground, a person is holding a whiteboard and pointing at it with their other hand. Behind them, several other people are standing or sitting, some looking towards the whiteboard. The room appears to be a workshop or a meeting space.

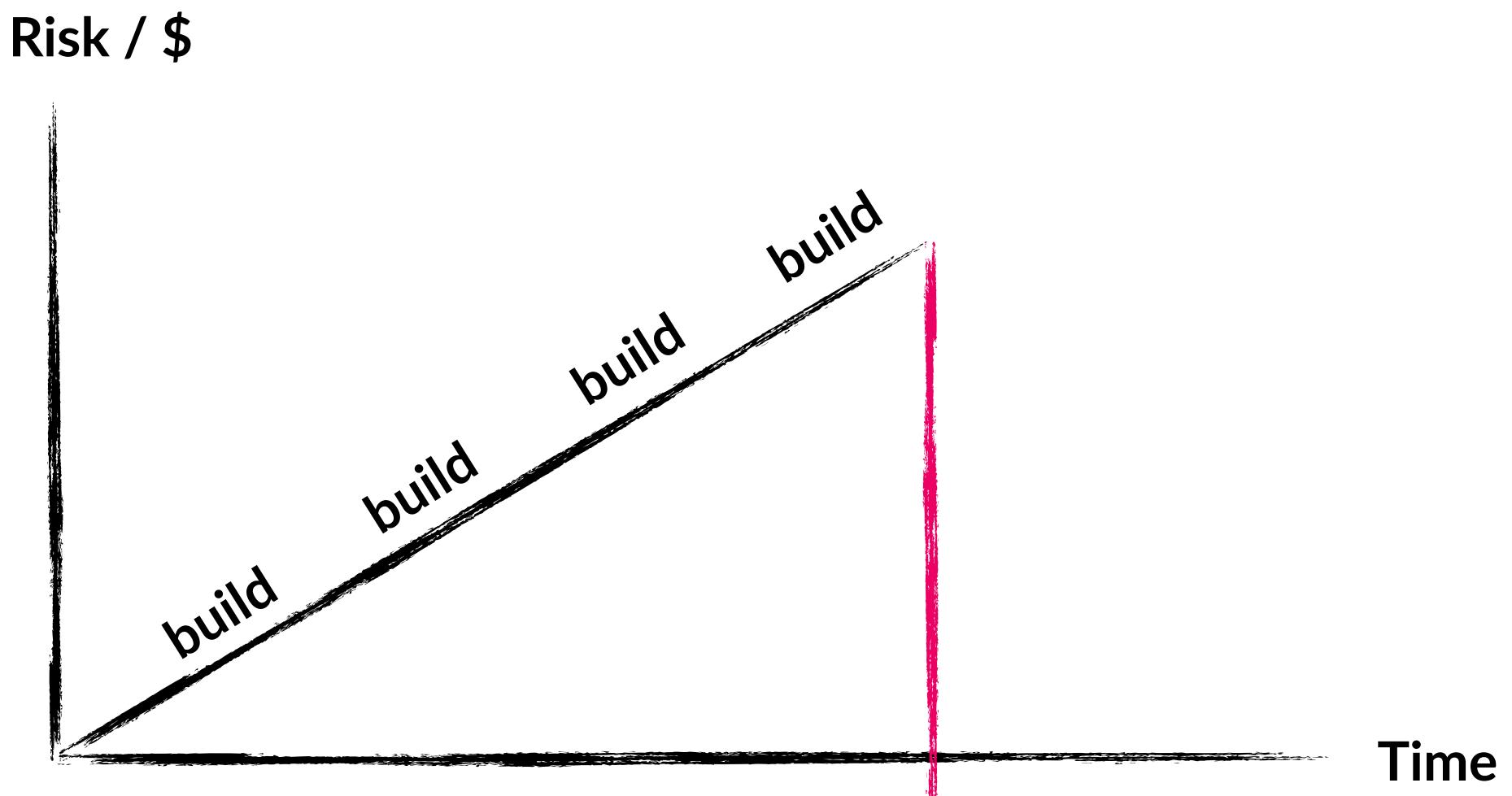
Step 0

Before we start:
what the heck is validation?

What is validation?



validation • *n*, the process of gathering evidence and learnings around business ideas through experimentation and user testing, in order to make faster, informed, de-risked decisions.



Waterfall approach

High risk

Validation of the business proposition at release

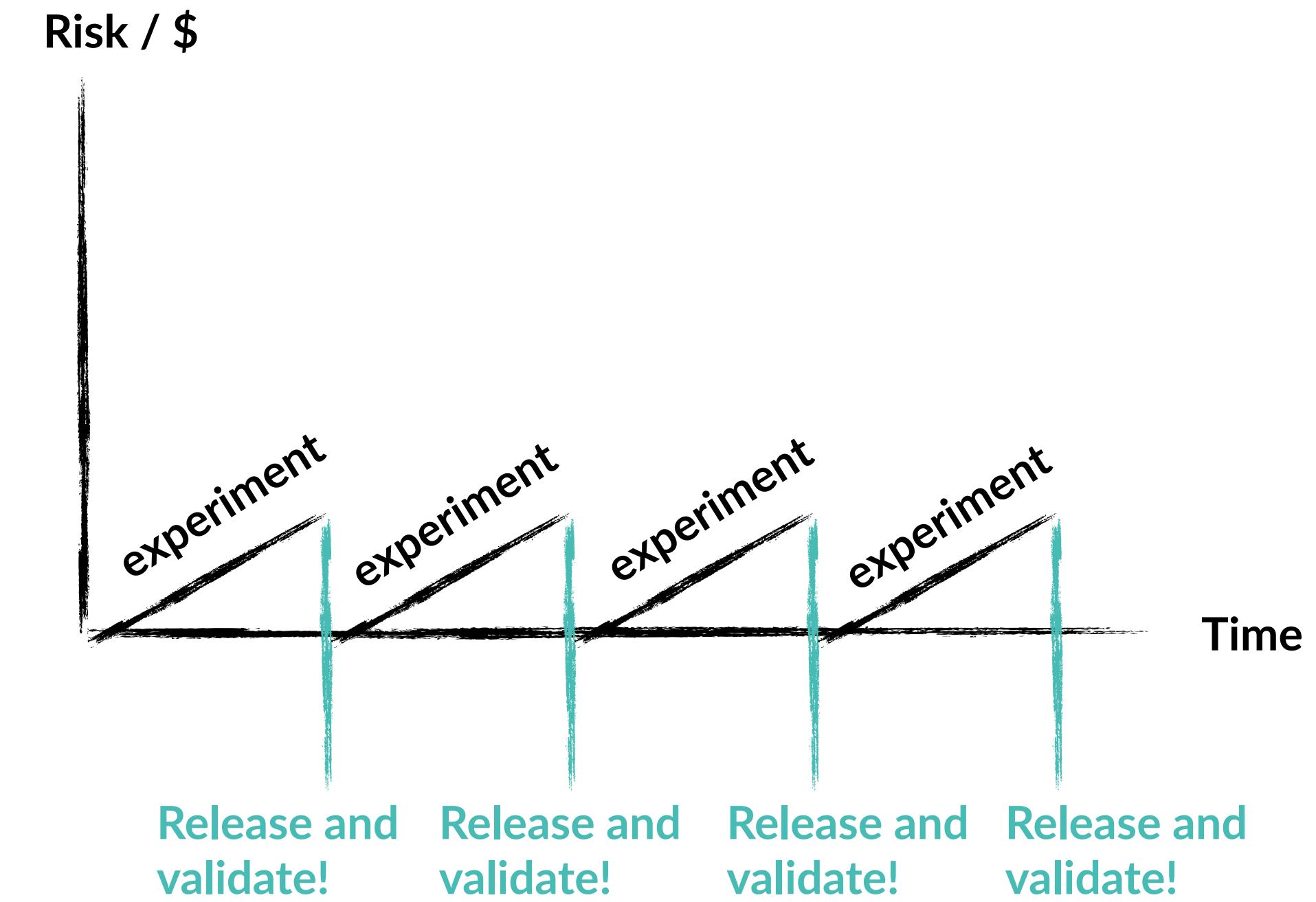
Limited iterations

Budget-consuming

Validation of the whole concept at final release

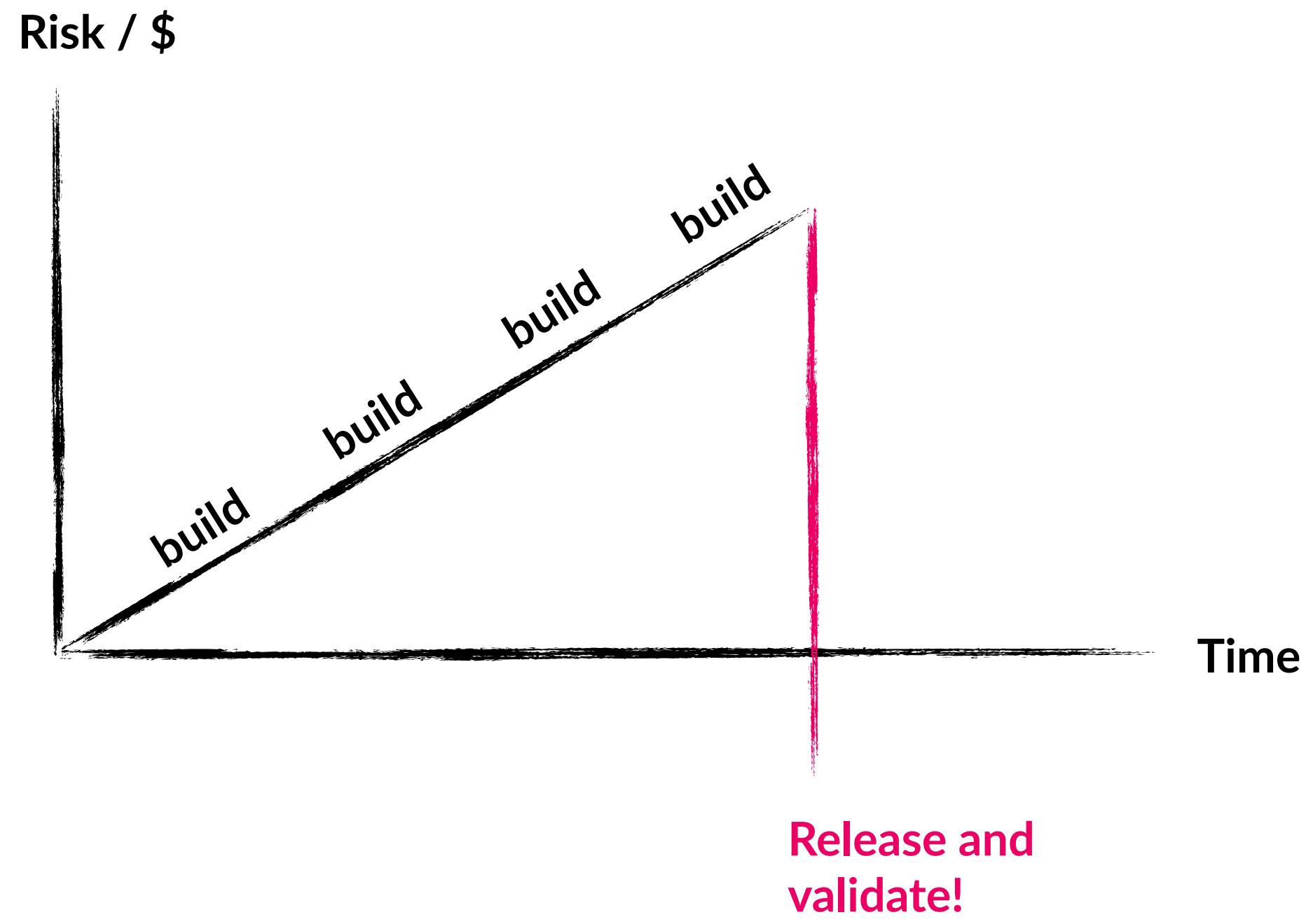
Through experimentation and validation, you move away from the standard innovation approach used in corporates (read: build the car, launch it on the market)...

... towards a lean, resource optimised approach, where evidence from user-testing de-risks decision making.



Lean approach

Low risk
Multiple checkpoints for validation
Multiple iterations
Budget is progressively increased once hypothesis are validated
Validation of individual hypothesis through multiple experiments



Waterfall approach

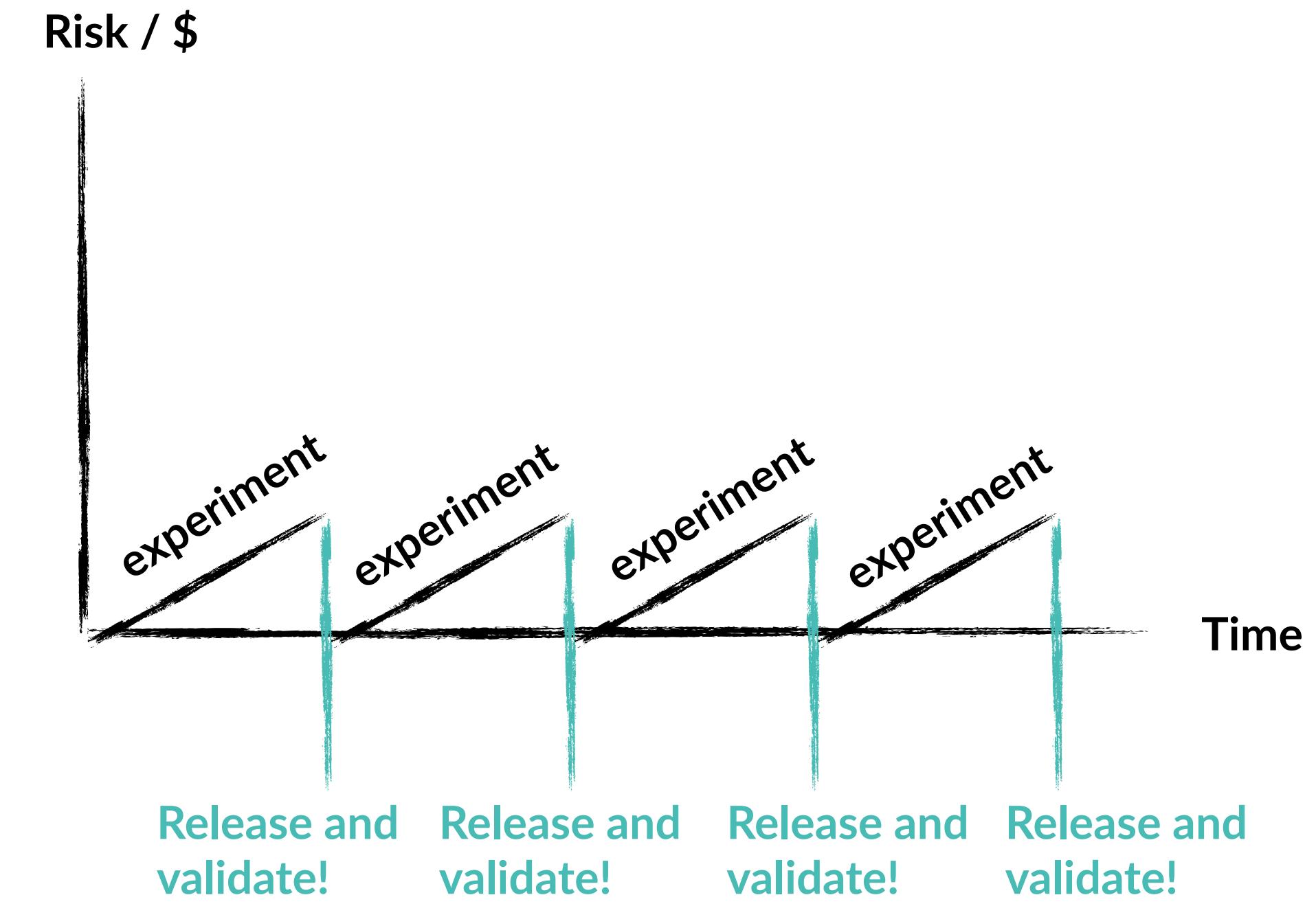
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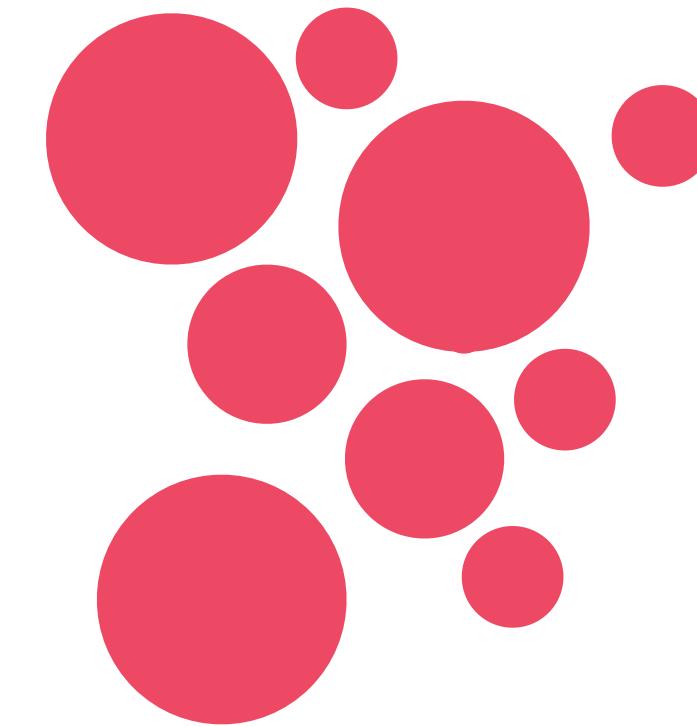
Validation step by step:



Step 1

Define your focus: what do you seek to validate?

Cleary define your challenge, and at what stage of the innovation funnel you're in, in order to select relevant experiment types to validate various aspects of your business proposition.



Step 2

Map out your assumptions, prioritize the most critical ones and convert them into hypothesis ready to be tested

Regardless the stage you're in (problem space, solution space, business or pricing models), you can now map out the assumptions.

Tool: [Assumption Mapper](#)



Step 3

Choose and design the relevant experiments to test your hypotheses

Once you have ranked your assumptions and defined key hypotheses you want to test, you can select the most suitable experiment(s) to test and validate (or reject) your hypotheses.

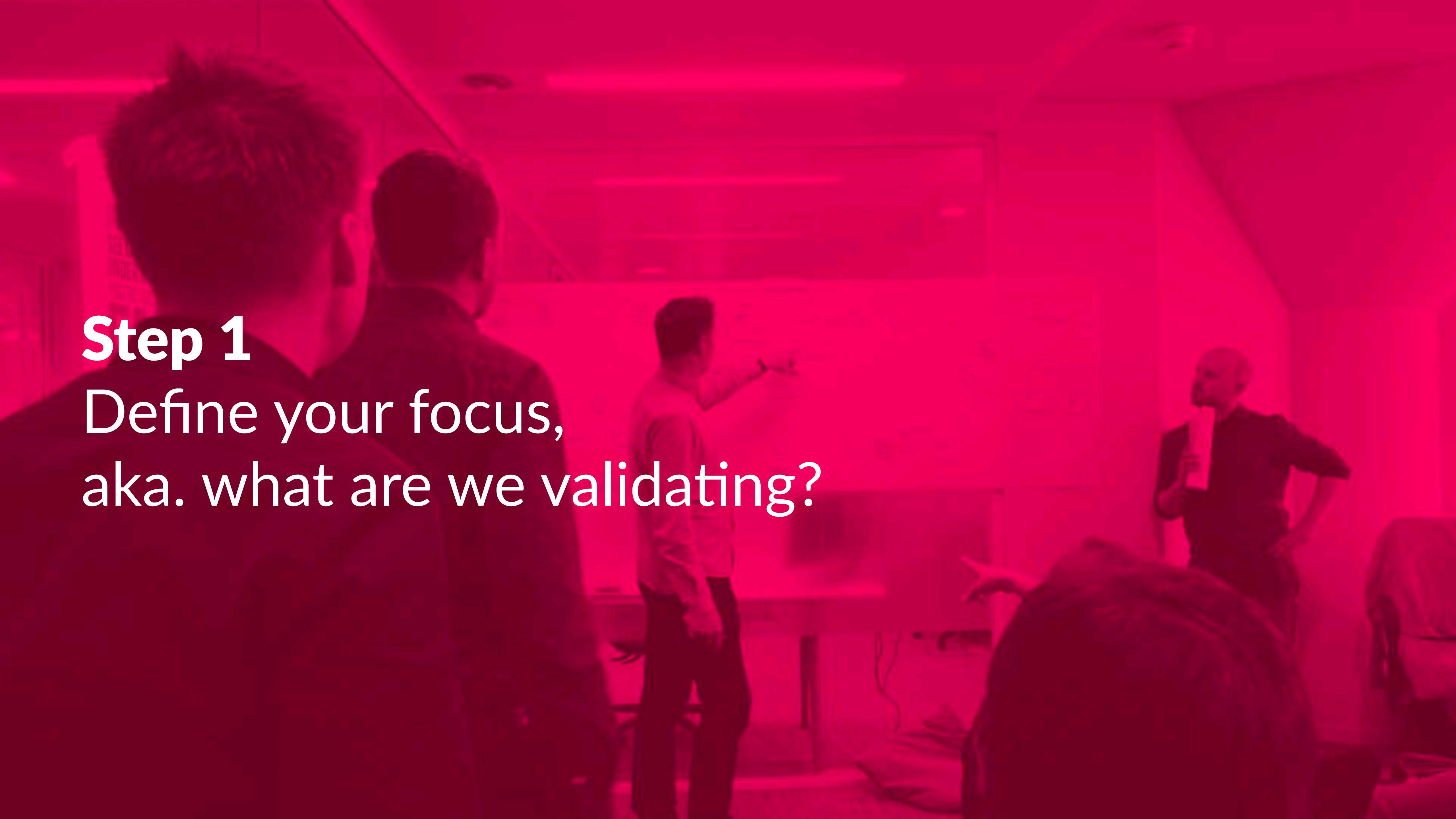
Tool: [Experiment Execution Card](#)

Hire our team of validators

We help innovation teams in corporates to validate new business propositions, to prototype, and to launch services that customers

Validation as a Service



A photograph of a workshop or laboratory environment. Several individuals are visible, some wearing white lab coats and others in casual clothing. One person in the foreground is holding a long metal rod or tool. The background shows shelves with various items and equipment, suggesting a technical or scientific setting.

Step 1

Define your focus,
aka. what are we validating?

What are you aiming to validate?



Experimentation is used primarily to learn faster by testing with real customers in order to understand how they will engage with your business idea. It is therefore crucial to **define the goal of what you are trying to learn** before launching an experiment.

In which stage are you?

Depending on the stage of the innovation funnel you're in, **you'll need to validate different elements** of your business proposition, so that you can pick different kinds of experiments.

⌚ **Problems:** at the very beginning of your innovation path, you'll need to test whether a problem you identified is a problem worth solving for your customer.

Example: do people really need button-free lighting systems for their homes?

⌚ **Solutions:** Does your offer solve this need

and is the customer willing to pay?

Example: is a lamp with movement detector what people are looking for?

⌚ **Features:** test core features that are crucial for adding value to your solution.

Example: should the lamp be this bright?

⌚ **Business Model:** test the viability of the solution you designed.

Example: would energy providers be interested in partnering in selling these energy-saving lamps?

⌚ **Pricing:** test the pricing model of your product or service.

Example: should you pay for the lamp (299€) or for the energy package that includes lamps and energy?

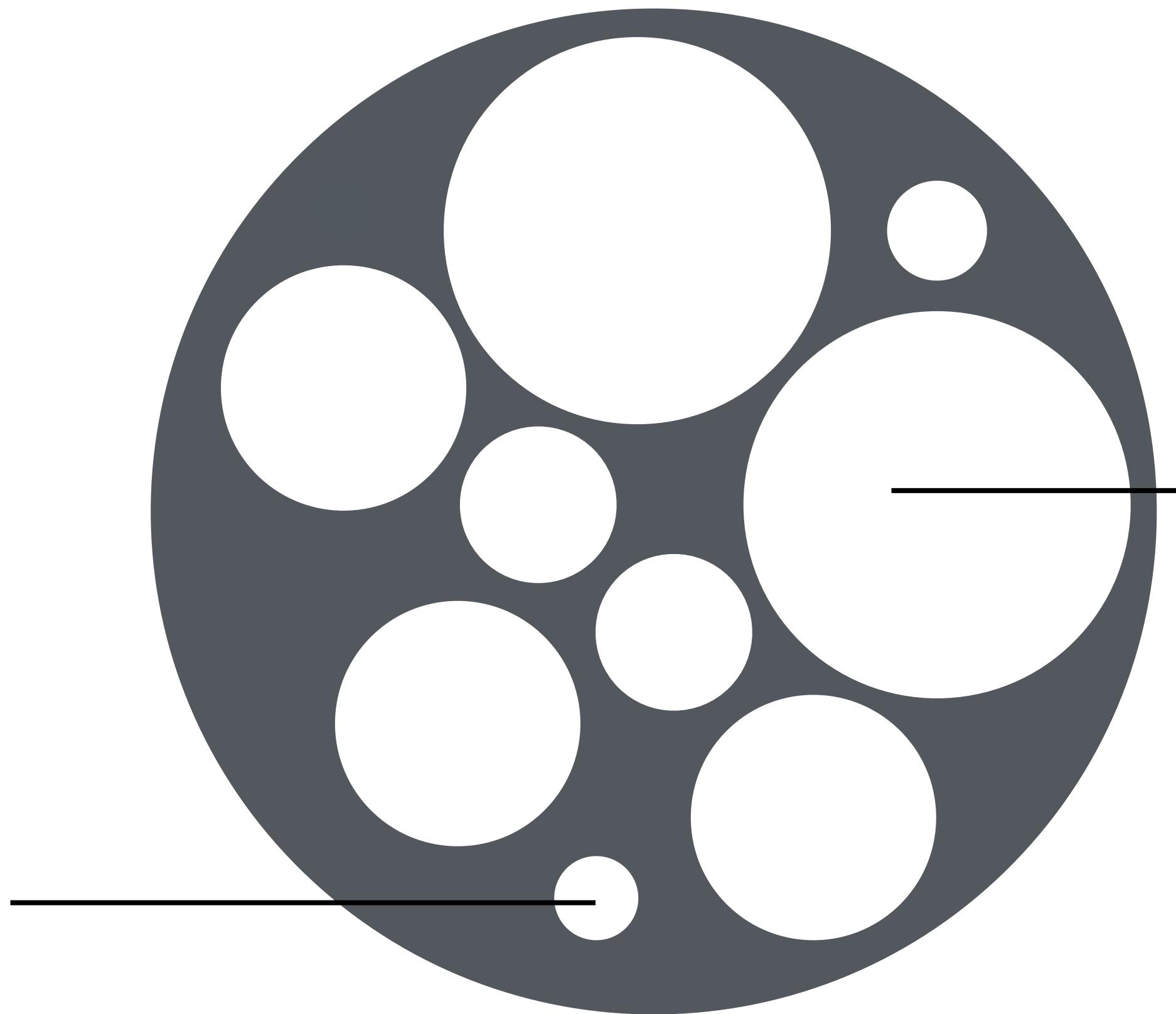
Step 2

Map out your assumptions,
prioritize the most critical ones
and convert them into
hypothesis ready to be tested

Mapping out the assumptions

Regardless the stage you're in (problem space, solution space, business or pricing models), you can now map out the assumptions

Some are easy
to validate

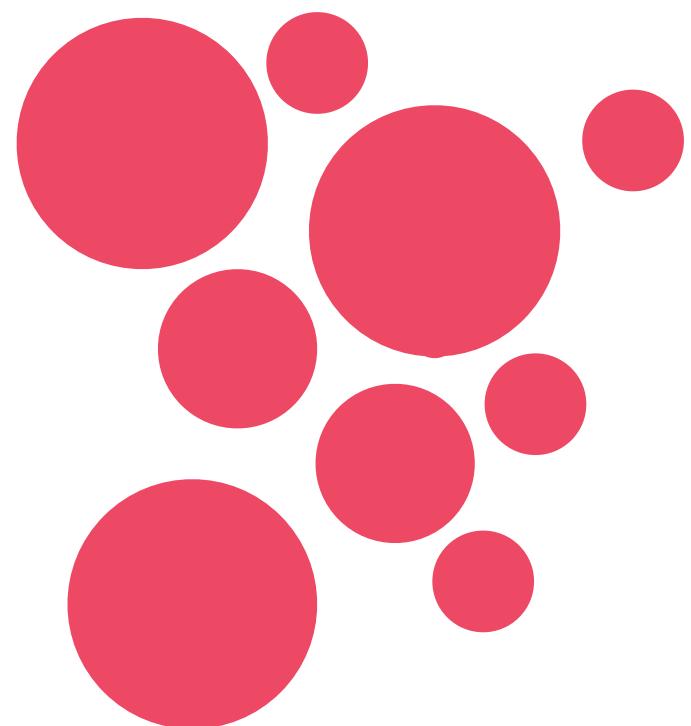


Some are
hard to validate

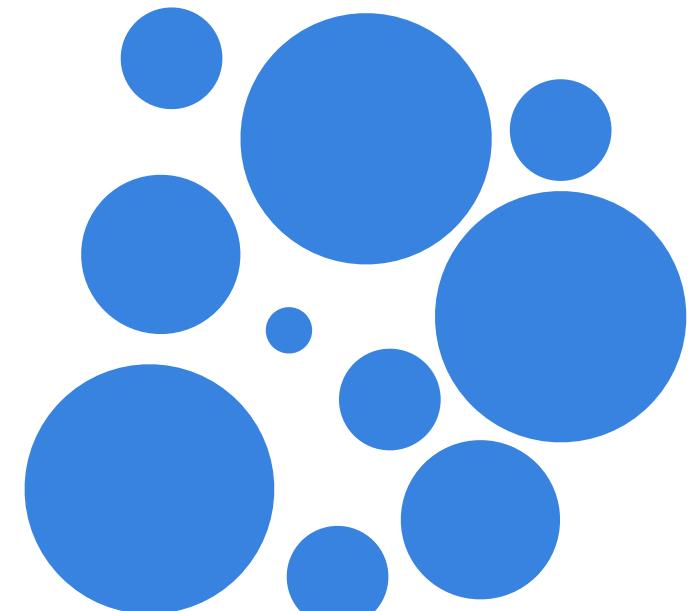
All your assumptions

Mapping out the assumptions

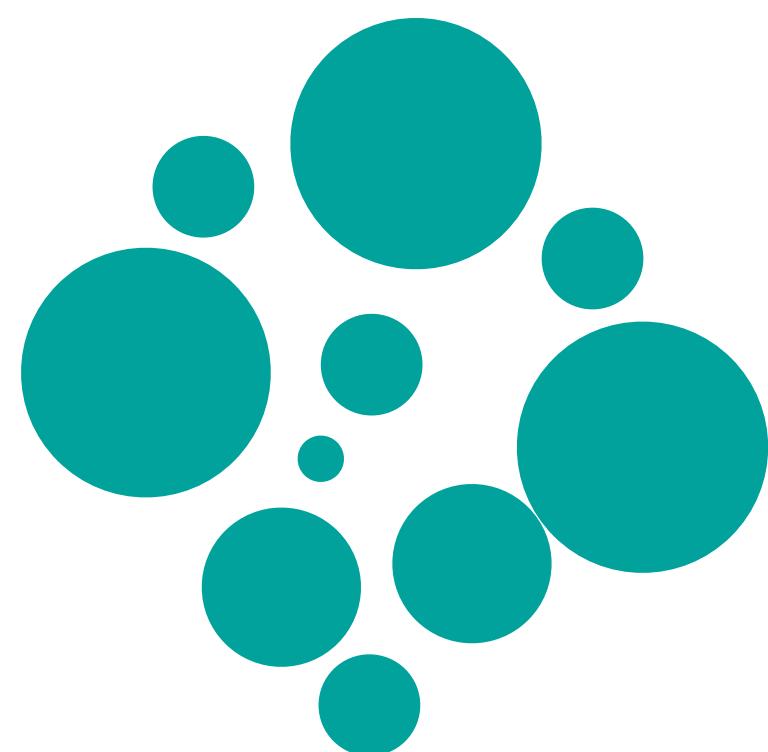
Divide the assumptions into categories - it will help you focus on the assumptions that really matter



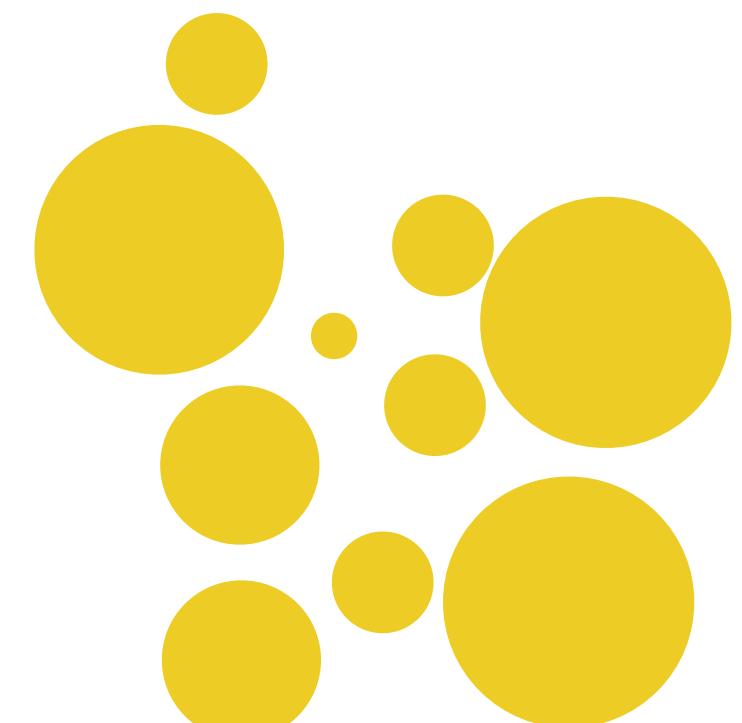
Desirability
Client/user focus



Viability
Business Model



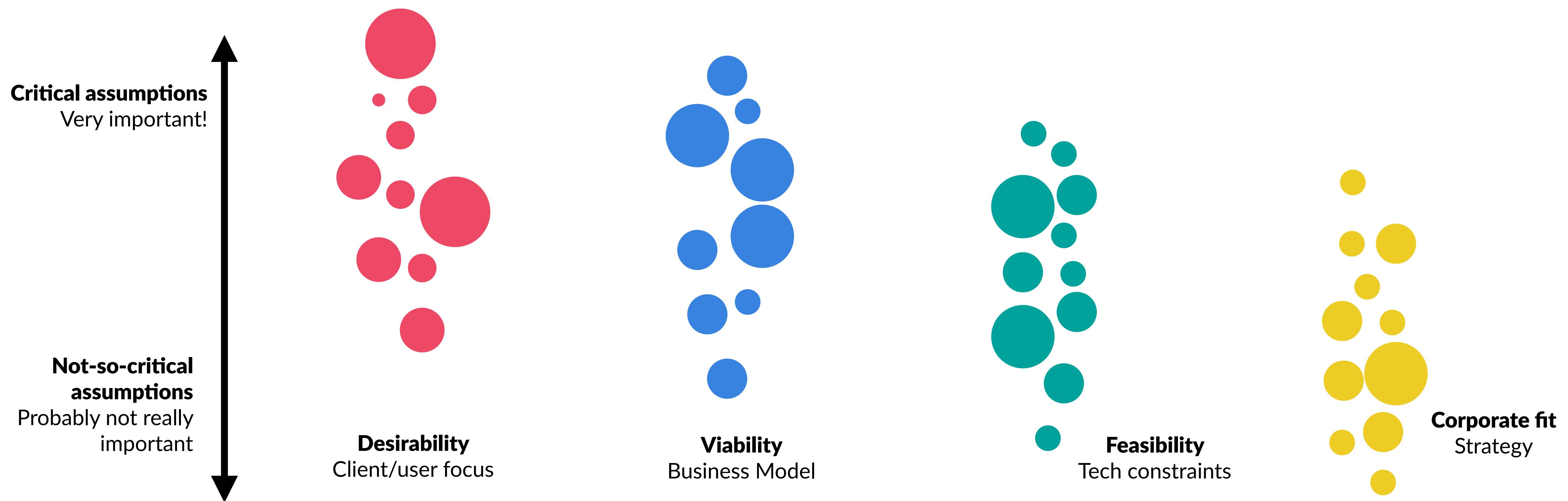
Feasibility
Tech constraints



Corporate fit
Strategy

Mapping out the assumptions

Then, prioritize the validation of assumptions around user needs (**desirability**)



Mapping out the assumptions

To help you in the process of mapping out the assumptions around your new business concept, we designed the "Assumption Mapper". It helps you to:

- Ⓐ **Categorize the assumptions of your business idea.** Are your assumptions related to desirability, viability, feasibility or corporate fit?
- Ⓐ **Prioritize the assumptions of your business idea.** Focus your energies on what really matters! Validate first the important assumptions which are easy to answer. Then, move to the important assumptions which are difficult to test. Leave the not-important assumptions for later.



download the PDF

Mapping out the assumptions

Step 1

Download this PDF and print it on an A2 sheet of paper. You can also draw the graph on a flipchart if you can't print.

Step 2

Write down on post-its the assumptions of the business proposition you have in mind. Examples of assumptions for Airbnb in its early days could have been: guests are not afraid of sleeping in the house of strangers, hosts are not afraid of damages in their properties, and so on.

Step 3

Use 3 voting dots per person to vote the most critical assumptions. Then, select the ones which received the most votes. Are these allocated mainly in the upper section of the graph?

Step 4

Having prioritized the most critical assumptions, you can now start validating the most relevant ones (aka. the ones that relate to desirability and viability, and which are easy to answer) - leaving the least important ones for later (life it too short to waste time in irrelevant activities).



download the PDF

Converting assumptions into hypotheses

Once you've mapped out the assumptions around the problem at hand (or solution, or business model, ...), convert the assumptions into hypotheses.

Assumption

Anything accepted as true without evidence to back it up. An assumption is a statement that we believe to be true.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis, in contrast, is a simple, educated guess for what you expect to happen in a given experiment. Hypotheses should include a cause and effect "if... then..." statement plus a numeric, measurable target. It is important to clearly define your hypotheses with metrics that are able to guide actions.



Step 3

Choose and design the relevant experiments to test your hypotheses

A one-page overview of your experiment

Your turn! Once you have mapped out assumptions and hypotheses, you can select the most suitable experiment(s) to test and validate (or reject) your hypotheses.

The “Experiment Execution Card” helps you frame your experiments and focus on what really matters (for instance: it’s crucial to define the definition of “success”, so that you can decide whether or not to repeat, pivot or proceed).



[download the PDF](#)

A one-page overview of your experiment

Step 1

Download this PDF and print it on an A4.

Step 2

Write down the assumption you want to test with this experiment.

Step 3

Write down the type of experiment you think is most suitable to test the assumption at hand.

Step 4

Describe the experiment: what needs to be tested and how will you do it?

Step 5

Describe the target audience of the experiment.

Step 6

Outline the goal of your experiment. Describe under which conditions the experiment will be considered successful.

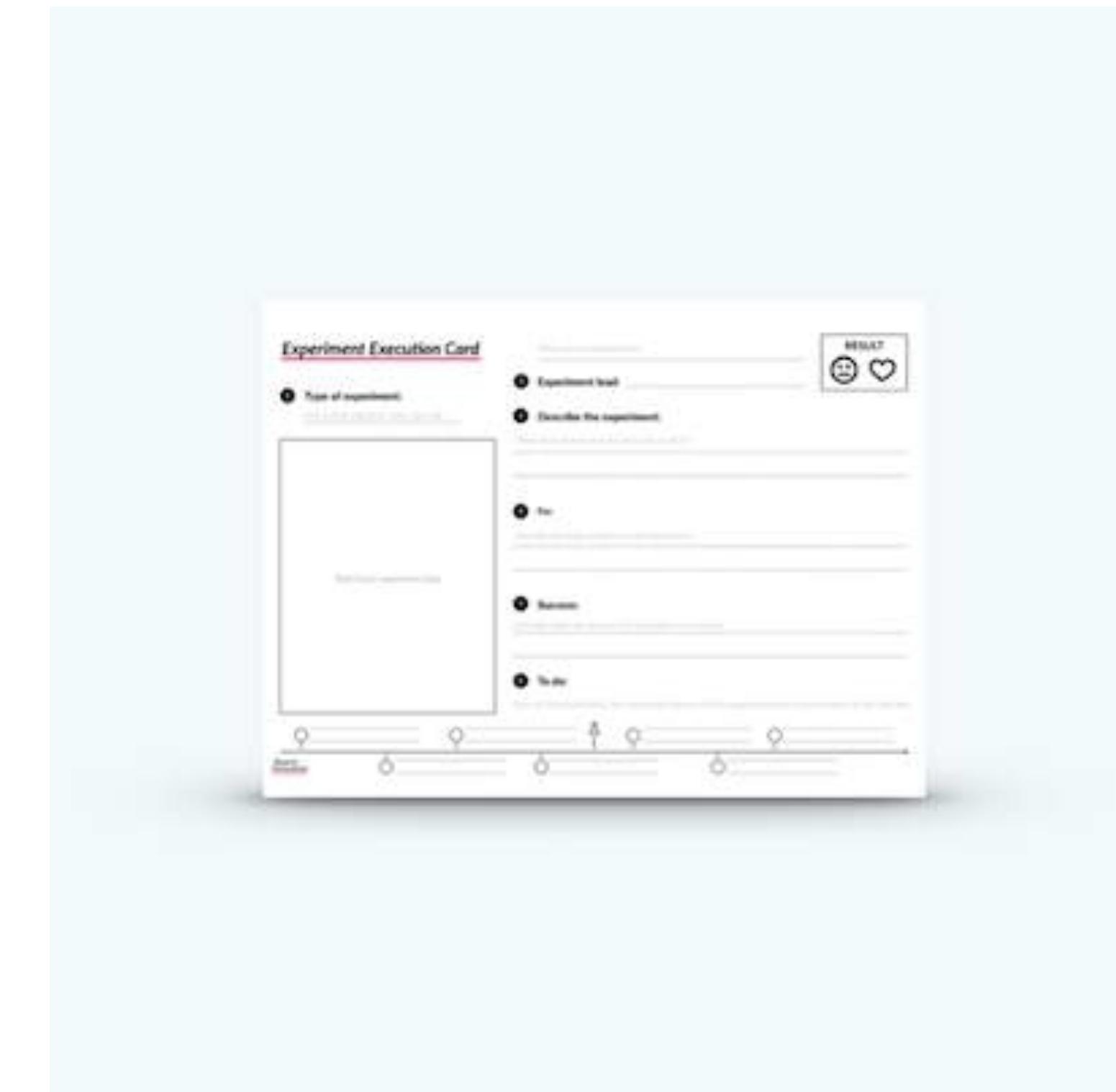
Step 7

Sum up the practicalities that need to be done to do the experiment and structure them on the timeline.

Pro-Tip Don't forget to sketch your experiment setup!

Step 8

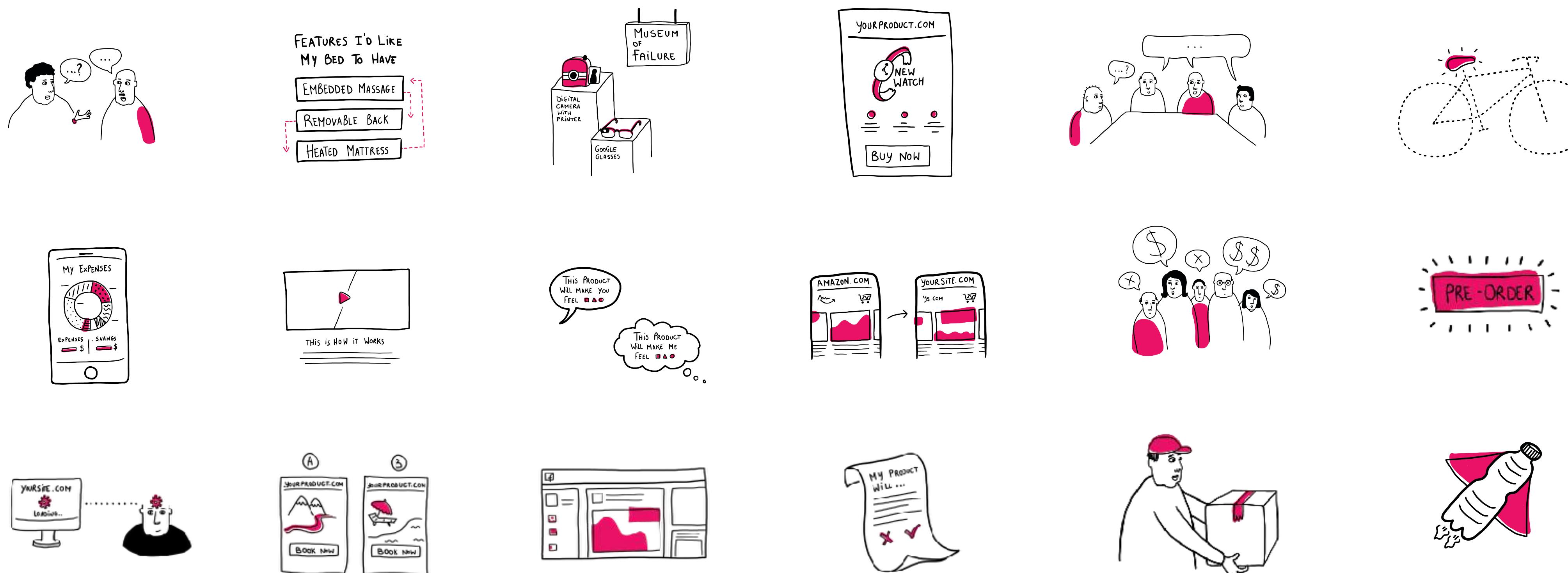
Lastly, after running the experiment, use the result box to indicate whether you confirmed/rejected your assumption. If confirmed, you can move on. If rejected, let the evidence guide you in making the decision whether to run another experiment, to pivot and review or to proceed with caution (it could give you new learnings - it doesn't necessarily mean you have to review your concept and solve something straight away)



[download the PDF](#)

Ready to go, but no idea where to start?

No problem - we listed here 20 experiments you can use, plus real examples of how successful startups or corporates used them for validation purposes



How to pick the right experiment

Using card sorting to find patterns help to understand user priorities.

Feature sorting cards are an easy and reliable way to get valuable insights about how your features should be organized to meet the expectations of your target group. Start by defining a list of priorities and then creating cards with clear descriptions. Use the cards to provide insight into users mental models and find out what matters most to your customers by having them sort topics into groups that makes sense to them. The key here is to make the most out of interpreting the results by categorizing and identifying patterns. Tip: keep the cards below 40 to avoid overwhelming your participants.

Pros and Cons
Advantages and limitations of each experiment.

Tools
Some ready-to-use services you will find helpful to get your experimentation started

Pros
+ simplicity
+ structure
+ focus - patterns

Cons
+ hosting a test session
+ won't necessarily correspond to real life behavior

Tools
OptimalSort (unlimited version starting 166\$/month) and Usabilitest (free trial) let you create cards and test them online with instant result analysis

Currency
Satisfaction
Engagement
Time

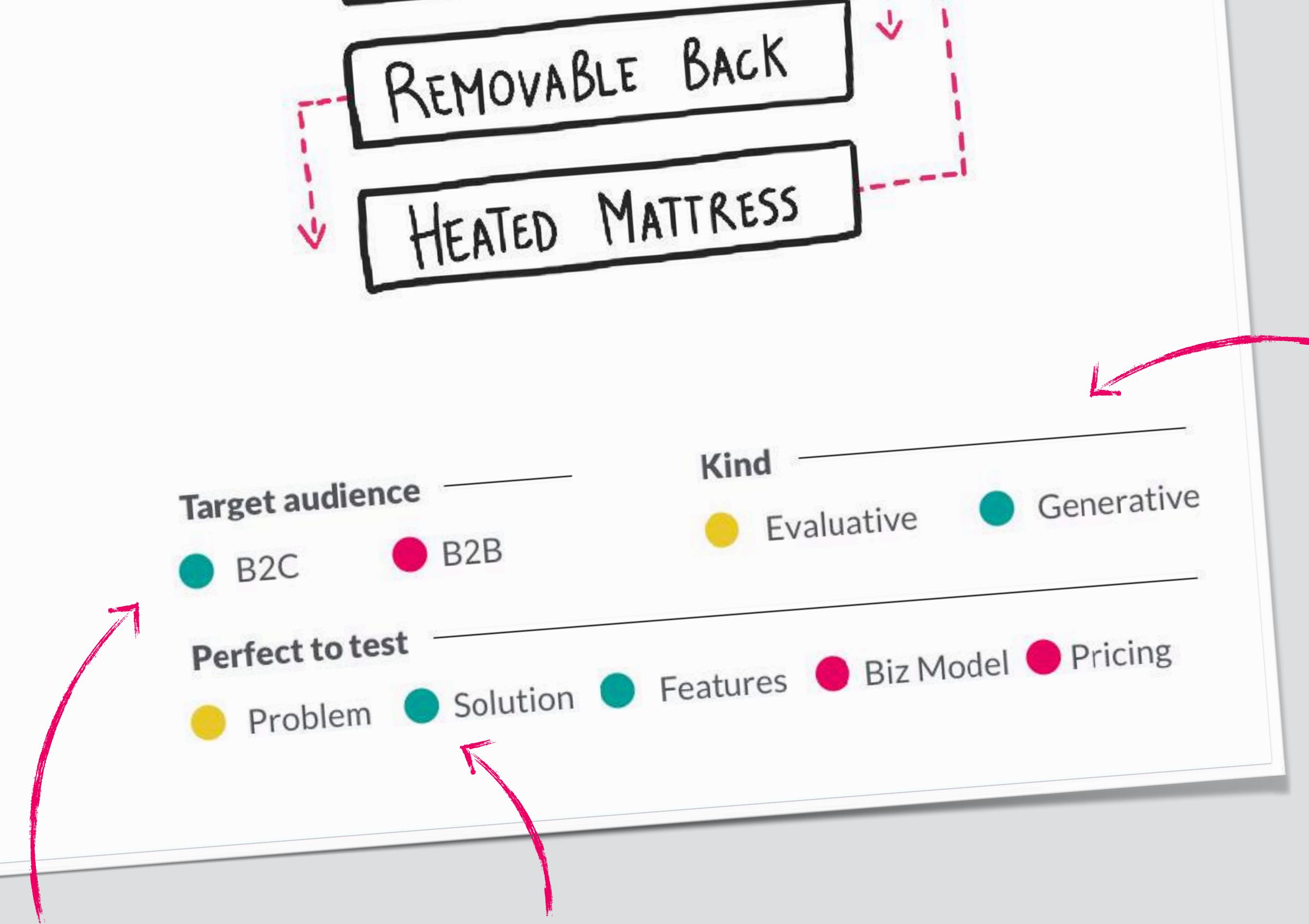
Currency

These are the metrics you'll need to measure in order to validate (or reject) your hypothesis.

These results will reflect the interest/commitment of your addressed market.

to get valuable insights
meet the expectations of
users and then creating cards
insight into users mental
customers by having them
The key here is to make the
and identifying patterns.
ing your participants.

Currency
Satisfaction
Engagement
Time



Target audience

While most of the experiments can be used in any industry, some can be only (or more easily) applied to a B2C context.

Perfect to test...

Different hypotheses require different experiments. For each experiment, we specify whether it is good or not to test:

Problems: test whether the problem you identified is considered important by your target audience.

Solution: test the desirability of the solution you designed.

Features: test specific features of your solution.

Business Model: test the viability of the solution you designed.

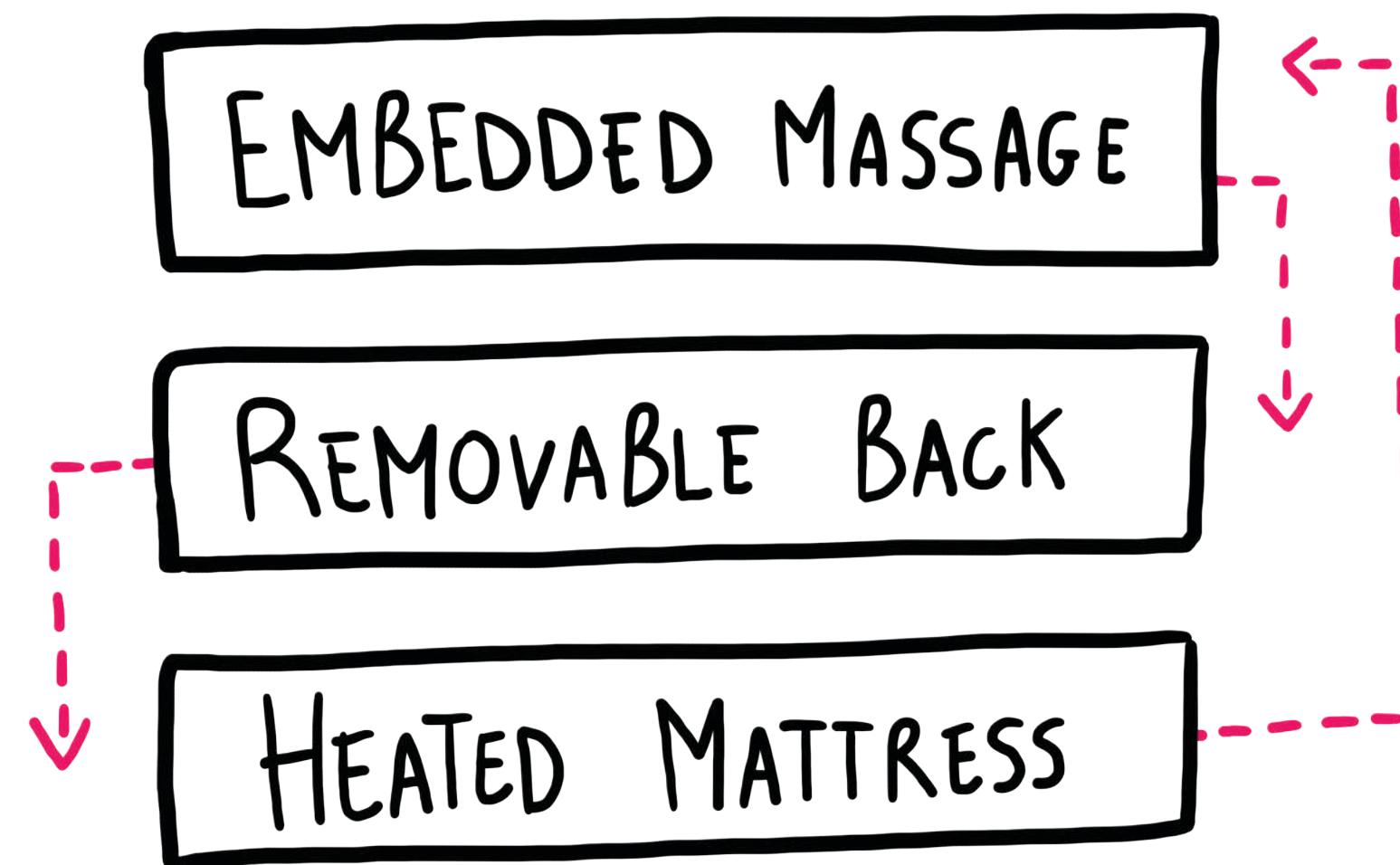
Pricing: test the pricing model of your product or service.

Kind of experiment

Evaluative: the experiment helps you evaluate a measurable hypothesis

Generative: the experiment helps you gather additional insights and signals

FEATURES I'D LIKE MY BED TO HAVE



1

Feature sorting cards

Use sorting cards to find patterns that help to understand user priorities.

Feature sorting cards

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Pros

- + simplicity
- + structure
- + focus - patterns

Cons

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Currency

Satisfaction
Engagement
Time

FEATURES I'D LIKE
MY BED TO HAVE

EMBEDDED MASSAGE

REMOVABLE BACK

HEATED MATTRESS

Target audience

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

Problem

Solution

Features

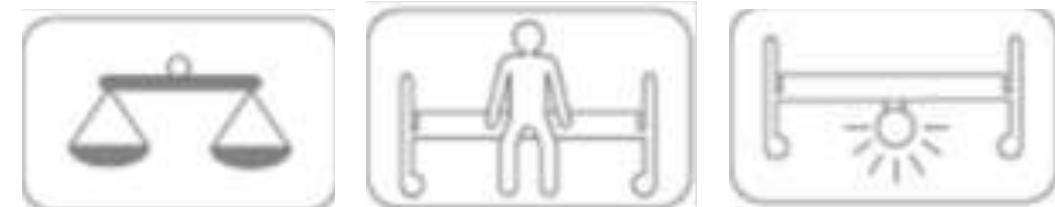
Biz Model

Pricing

Feature sorting cards Example

Hypothesis: which sensors should a smart-bed have?

Haelvoet has been an authority in the production of hospital and nursing home furniture for more than 80 years. Due to ageing population, Haelvoet wants to get a clear view on the essentials sensors needed in a smart-bed. They used card sorting to prioritize the essential sensors in in-depth interviews with nurses, care providers and purchasing managers.



Test carried out by
Haelvoet, producers of hospital and nursing home furniture.

Metric
The ranking of desired features

Results
The exercise of sorting cards during the in-depth interviews indicated that the following three sensors are perceived as being the most desired: out-of-bed detection, scales and automatic under-bed light.

Not only Validation.

At www.boardofinnovation.com/tools
you'll find a world of free tools, guides
and other resources for the innovators.



Idea Generator

The idea generator is designed to generate new ideas for your industry.

Try Online

The Innovation Matrix

A tool to define the innovation strategy that fits your organization best.

Download PDF



Opposite Thinking Tool

Everything, and its opposite. One of the most famous ideation techniques to generate awesome ideas through opposite thinking.

Download PDF

Brainstorm Cards

A collection of 52 cards to help you brainstorm and come up with new ideas.

Download PDF

Printed

The How-Now-Wow Matrix

The How-Now-Wow Matrix helps you categorize innovative ideas according to level of disruption and ease of implementation.

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15 Innovation Posters

Time to remove the corporate dust from your office. Print this set to spice up your desk.

Download PDF

explore our tools



200+ Inspiring Predictions

How will our world evolve in the decades ahead of us? Use these triggers in your own brainstorm.

Download PDF

Revenue Decision Tree

Use this flowchart to pick the most promising revenue model for your B2C/B2B business.

Download PDF (B2C)

Business Model Kit

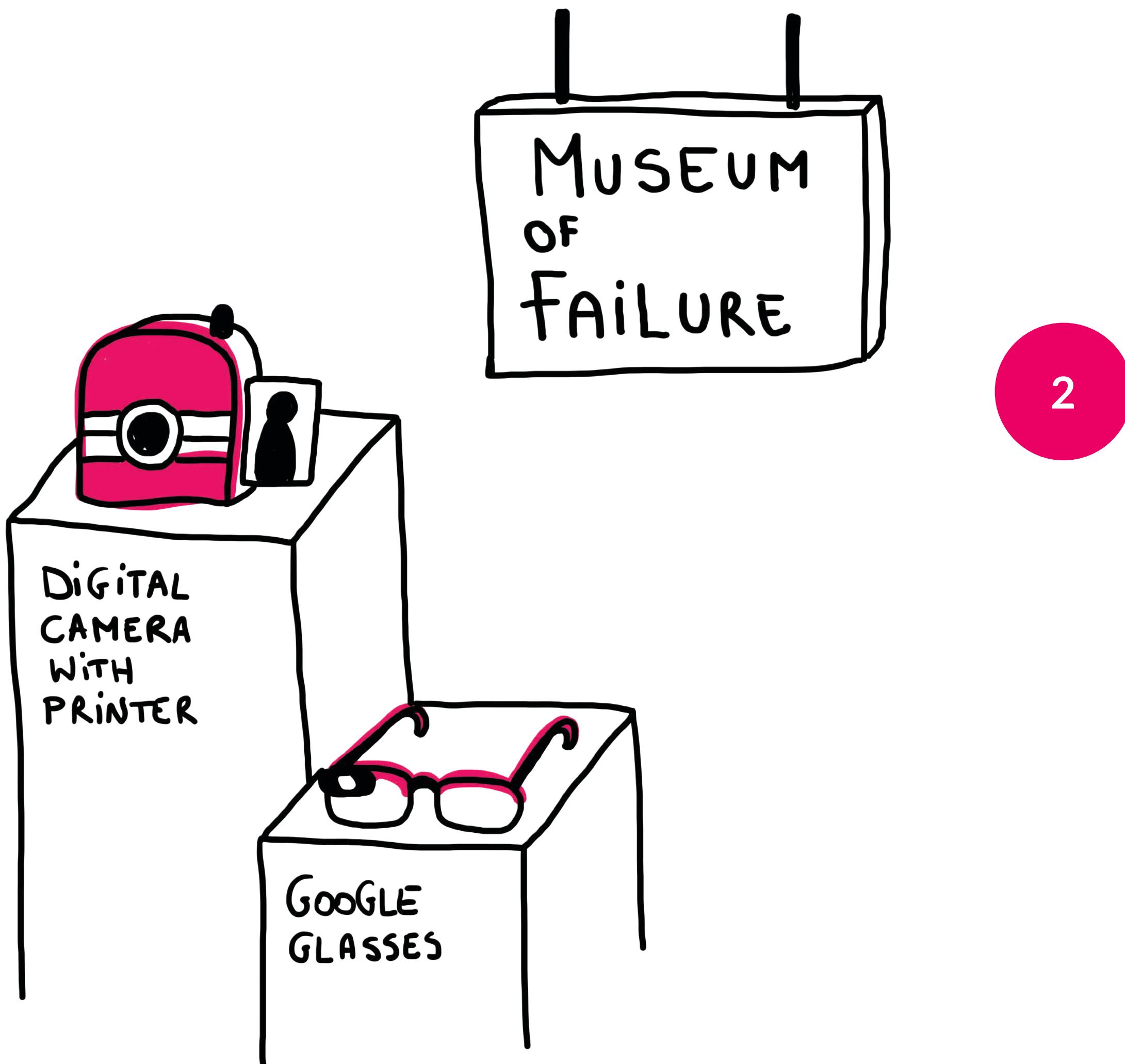
Perfect for offline individual and team brainstorms about new business ideas.

Download PDF

The Concept Card

An easy-to-use tool to summarise your concept by answering some critical questions.

Download PDF



Picnic in the graveyard

Investigate the biggest failures in your industry and understand the reasons behind it. What to learn from the Google Glasses?

Picnic in the graveyard

Investigate the biggest failures in your industry and understand the reasons behind them. What to learn from the Google Glasses?

This method is not about testing a hypothesis, instead it is about generating ideas. Use the “picnic in the graveyard” approach to gather information to inform your thinking and unanswered questions on what has been tried and failed - and why. It involves contacting the people behind unsuccessful ideas that have been tried before in order to get the true story and learnings from them.

**Pros**

- + simplicity
- + learn from others

Tools

Explore old products and old webpages of corporates with Archive, the time machine of the web.

Cons

- + unstructured research

Currency

Engagement
Past sales

Target audience

- B2C

- B2B

Kind

- Evaluative

- Generative

Perfect to test

- Problem

- Solution

- Features

- Biz Model

- Pricing

Picnic in the graveyard Example

Hypothesis: how can we resurrect the promise of the Google Glasses?

Vuzix, an American multinational technology firm headquartered in Rochester, New York, has been trying to resurrect the promise of the Google Glasses for years. Vuzix is a supplier of wearable display technology, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality.



Test carried out by

Vuzix, a New York-based provider of AR solutions.

Metric

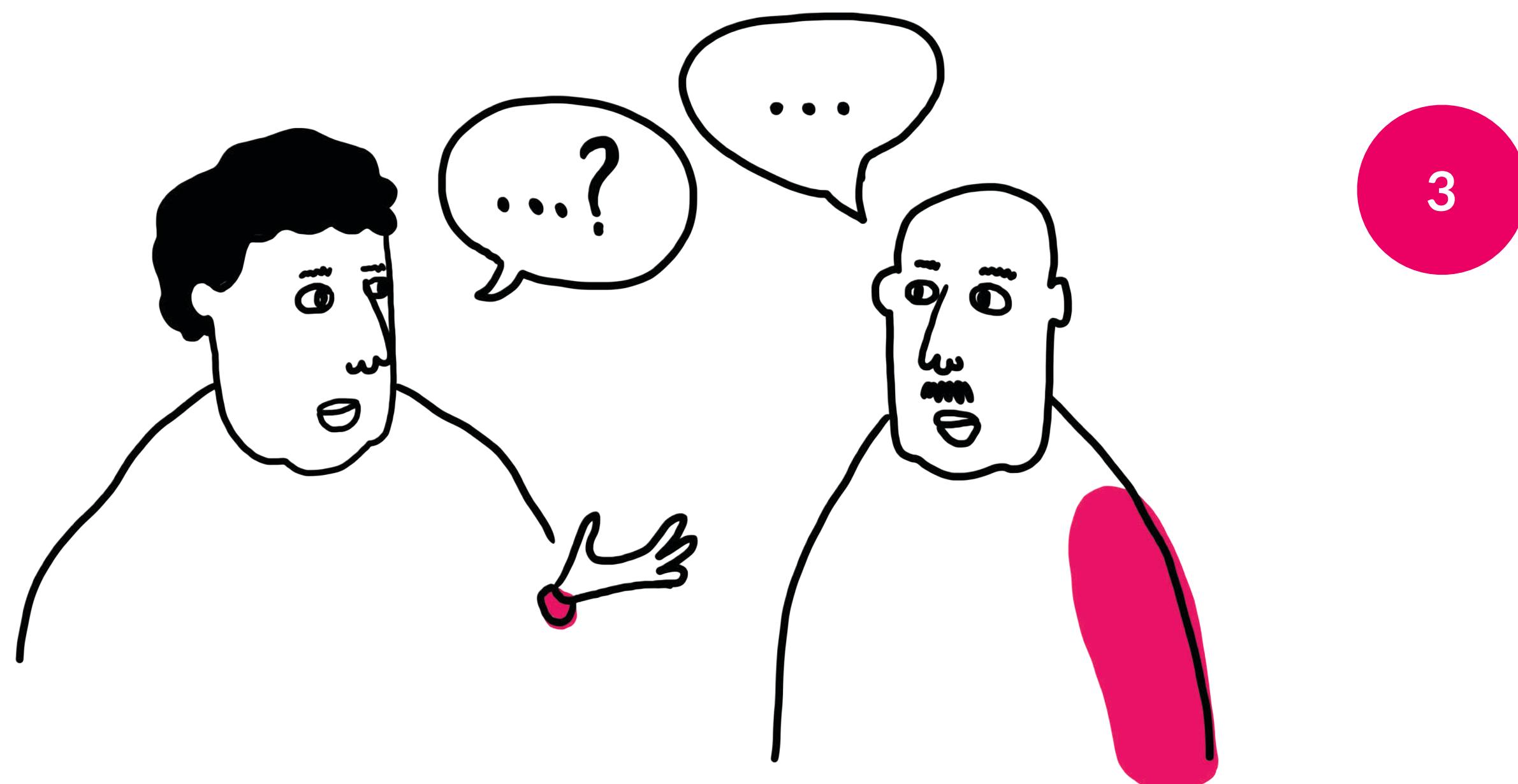
Tackling the points of pain Google Glasses faced.

Results

Vuzix, similarly to other players in the same AR arena, is overcoming the flaws of Google Glasses by offering a different design and larger display. Other competitors are specialising into specific use cases (cycling glasses, sport glasses, game platforms, ...).

Key Takeaway

Keep in mind the principle “either it already exists, or someone tried already and failed”. Before launching your whole self into the development of a new product or service, look at your neighbors first, to prevent yourself from making the same mistakes.



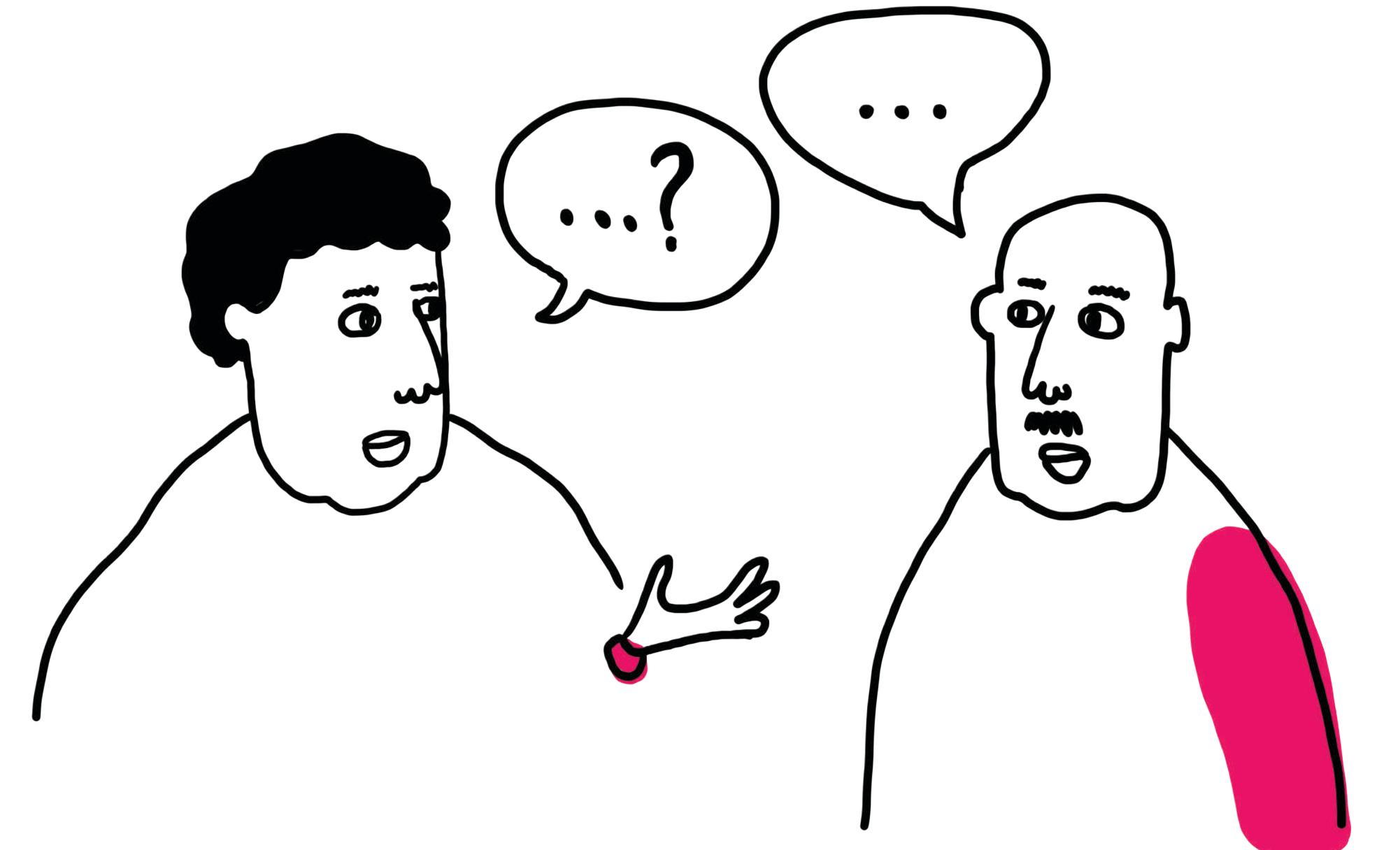
Customer interview

Get out of the building to actively learn through real and in-person customer interactions.

Customer interview

Get out of the building to actively learn through real and in-person customer interactions.

Interviews are good for problem or solution fit phases and give qualitative customer insights. Use customer interviews to find out if you are addressing a real need and solving a real problem. Alternatively, use these one-on-one interactions to gain insights into if your solution actually resonates with your customers. The key is developing your interview scripts in a way that elicits customer stories.

**Pros**

- + depth insights/feedback
- + speed of set up

Cons

- + recruiting participants
- + measurability

Tools

Trello (free) lets you track and analyze your customer interviews as

well as communicate research results.

Currency

Satisfaction
Engagement
Time

Target audience

B2C B2B

Kind

Evaluative Generative

Perfect to test

Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing

Customer interview Example

Hypothesis: can Niko play upon the smart-home trend?

Niko is the market leader in Belgium in terms of switchgear. To keep their leading position, they used customer interviews to generate insights around the interest of consumers into smart-home solutions.



Test carried out by

Niko, the European reference in electro-technical solutions and services.

Metric

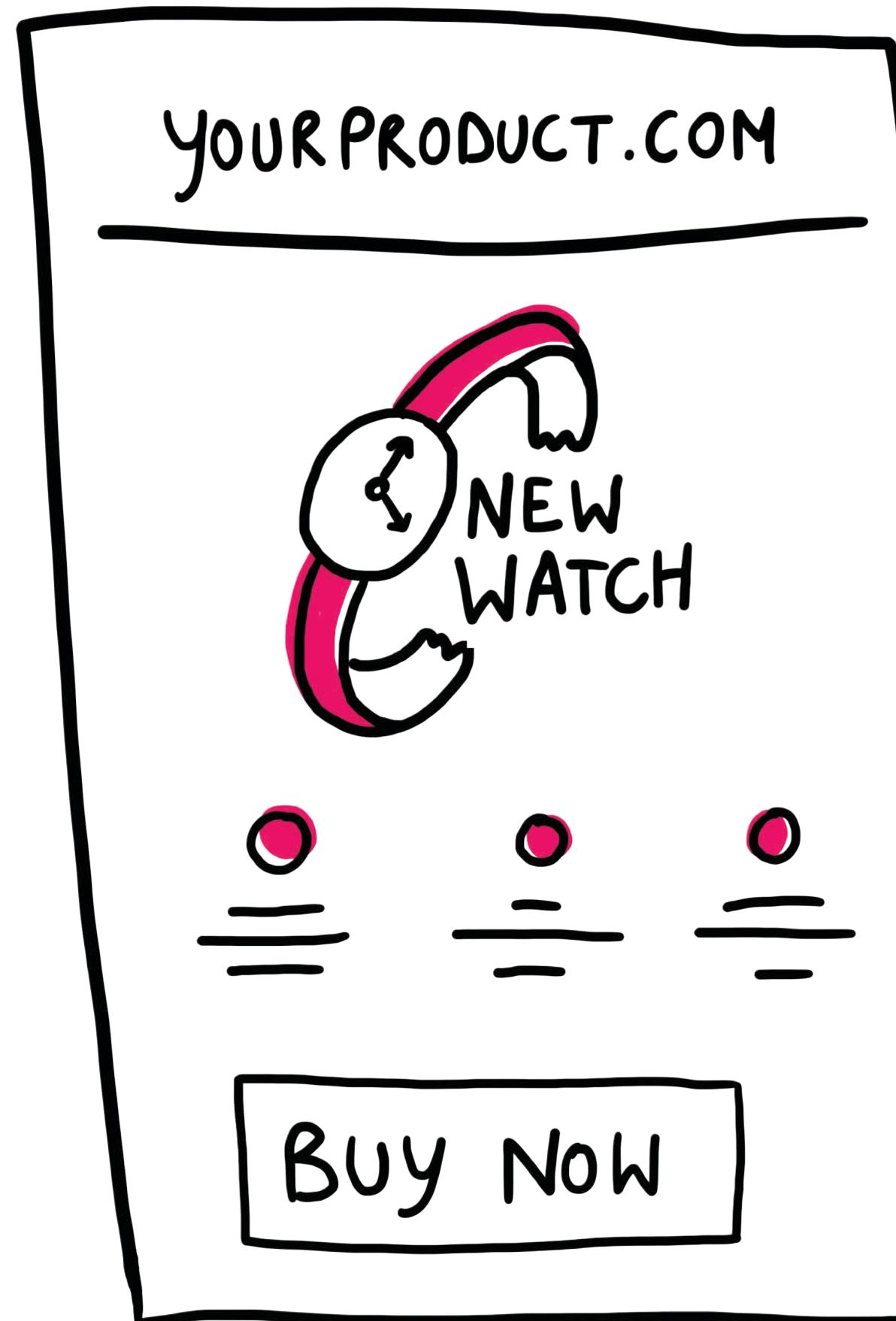
The attitudes, motivations or experiences that are highlighted by the interviewee.

Results

The interviews gave a better overview of the relevant groups to target with smart-home technology, their daily life and the specific reasons for certain actions.

Key Takeaway

Conduct interviews to grasp meaning and gain a deep understanding of the social/living environment of the customers.



4

Smoke test

Test the resonance of your elevator pitch quantitatively by capturing customer demand.

Smoke Test

Test the resonance of your elevator pitch quantitatively by capturing customer demand.

Smoke testing allows you to quantitatively gauge whether or not there is any serious demand for our value proposition. This can be done with emails or a landing page that states your value proposition, along with a call to action that asks the user to commit some form of value to sign up. Based on the % of users who offer the value, you get a rough signal from the market if the value proposition is in sufficient demand to build a minimal solution or if a pivot is needed.

Pros

- + simplicity
- + speed

Cons

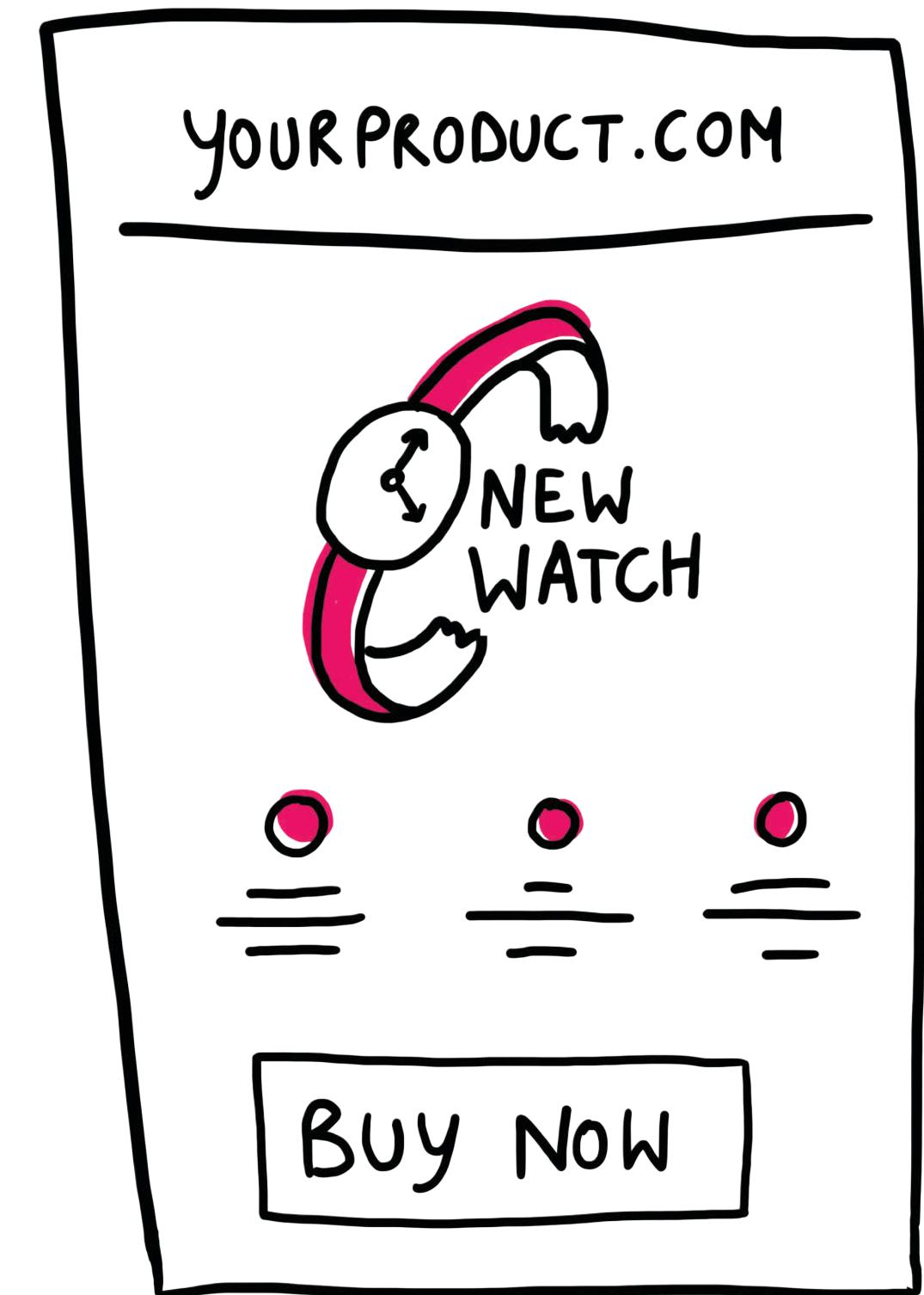
- + requires high amount of users
- + doesn't explain 'why'

Tools

[Instapage](#) (starting 29\$/month) lets you design newsletters and landing pages. [Five Second Test](#) helps you gather first impressions of your landing page, logo, etc.

Currency

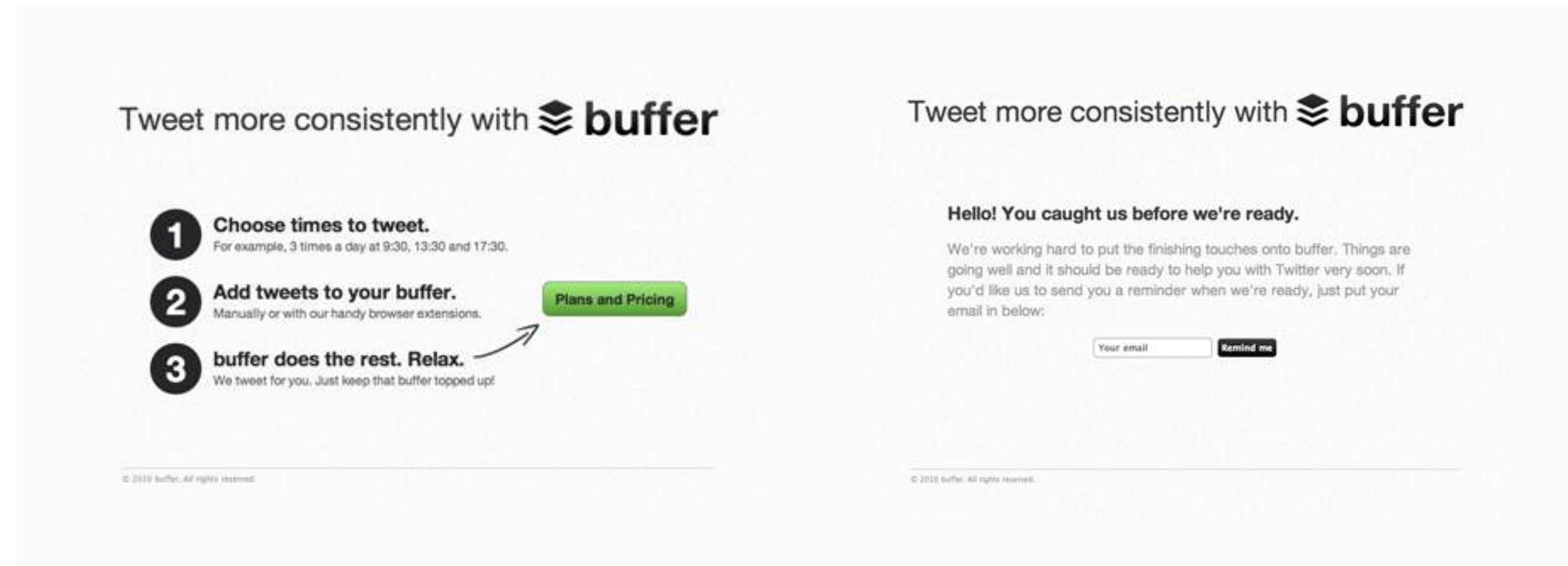
clicks
sign-ups
payment

Target audience B2C B2B**Kind** Evaluative Generative**Perfect to test** Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing

Smoke Test Example

Hypothesis: is there a demand for social-media-management solutions?

Buffer is an intuitive Social Media management platform which is today trusted by brands, businesses, agencies and individuals to help manage Social Media. Before developing the actual service, and writing any line of code, the Buffer founders wondered if people would have actually desired the product. To test it, they created a simple landing page, pitched their product and measured interest - as simple as that.



The image contains two side-by-side screenshots of the Buffer landing page. The left screenshot shows a three-step process: 1. Choose times to tweet. (For example, 3 times a day at 9:30, 13:30 and 17:30.) 2. Add tweets to your buffer. (Manually or with our handy browser extensions.) 3. buffer does the rest. Relax. (We tweet for you. Just keep that buffer topped up!) A green 'Plans and Pricing' button is visible. The right screenshot shows a message: 'Hello! You caught us before we're ready.' followed by a paragraph: 'We're working hard to put the finishing touches onto buffer. Things are going well and it should be ready to help you with Twitter very soon. If you'd like us to send you a reminder when we're ready, just put your email in below:' Below this is a form with a 'Your email' input field and a 'Remind me' button.

Test carried out by
Buffer, a Social Media management tool.

Metric
The clicks on the product page and pricing page gave the founders an indication of the actual interest in the product and in the different pricing models.

Results
The volume of traffic on the landing page gave the founders validation for the solution they had in mind. Additionally, they captured a list of contacts of high-value potential clients.

Key Takeaway
If you have an idea, don't immediately start building it but try to investigate the market interest using a prototype, a MVP or a landing page for the product, AS IF it already existed.



Generative session

Use generative research as a qualitative approach to look for clearer signals about the customer.

Generative session

Use generative research as a qualitative approach to look for clearer signals about the customer.

Generative sessions don't necessarily start with a hypothesis, but are used to learn more about your user and their problems, habits and in what context they operate. For these sessions, it is key to be in the same room with the participant and focus on open questions that dig deeper into the motivational drivers of the audience, while also observing the contextual environment. For this approach, start by stating your research goals clearly and then actively listen to the customer's responses. Following the session, the analysis and synthesis of the research is just as important - make sure to book time for that.

Pros

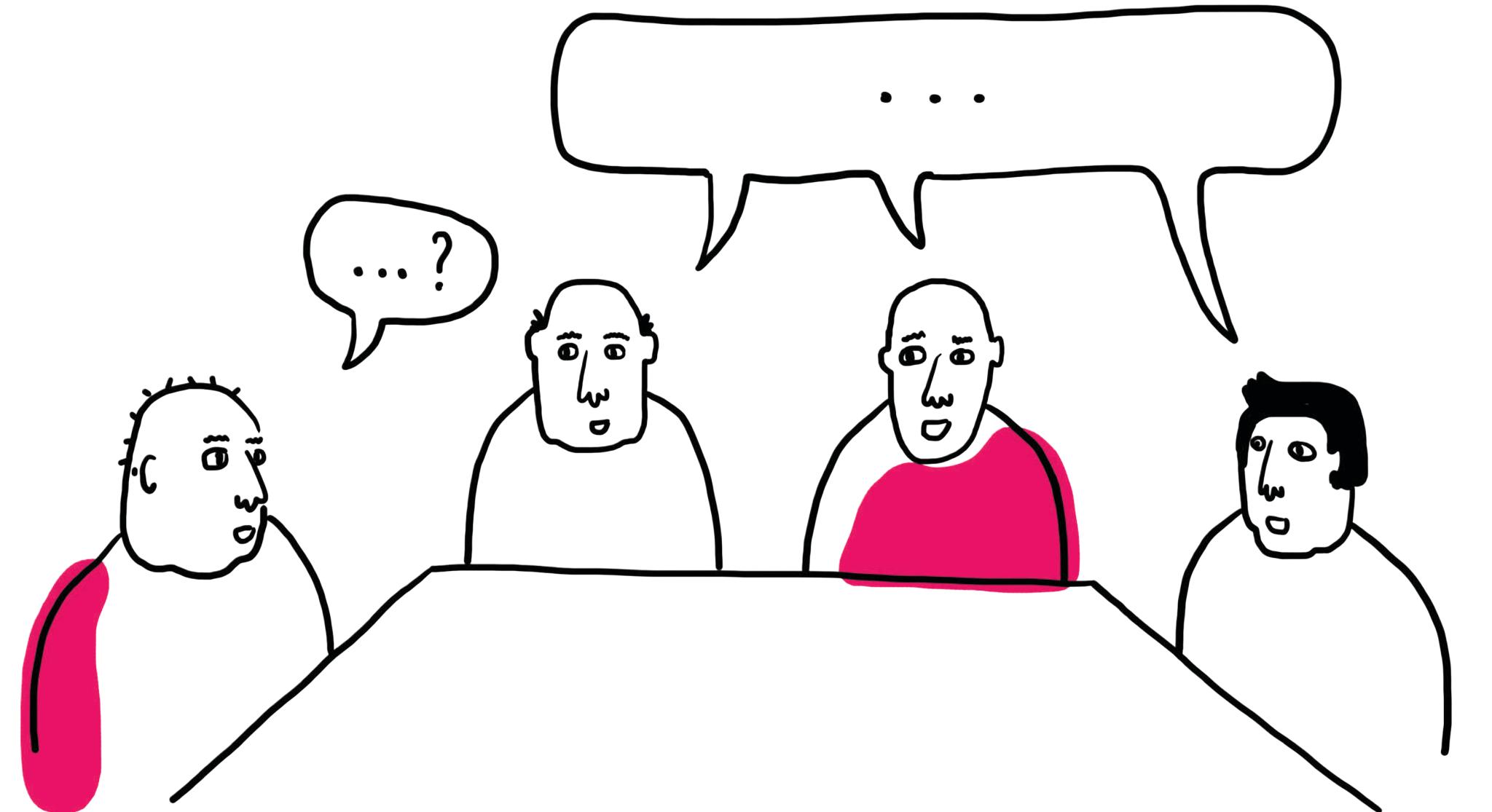
- + informative insights
 - + medium setup time
- Cons**
- + recruitment
 - + effort required for analysis
 - + not-focused evidence

Tools

Trello (free) lets you track and analyze your customer interviews as well as communicate research results.

Currency

Engagement
Time

**Target audience**

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

Problem

Solution

Features

Biz Model

Pricing

Generative session Example

Hypothesis: what factors play a role in the process of choosing an educational program?

The University of Applied Sciences in Utrecht planned to redesign their website. Relevant user insights were needed in order to make the website play a role in the process of choosing an educational program.



Test carried out by

The University of Applied Sciences in Utrecht.

Metric

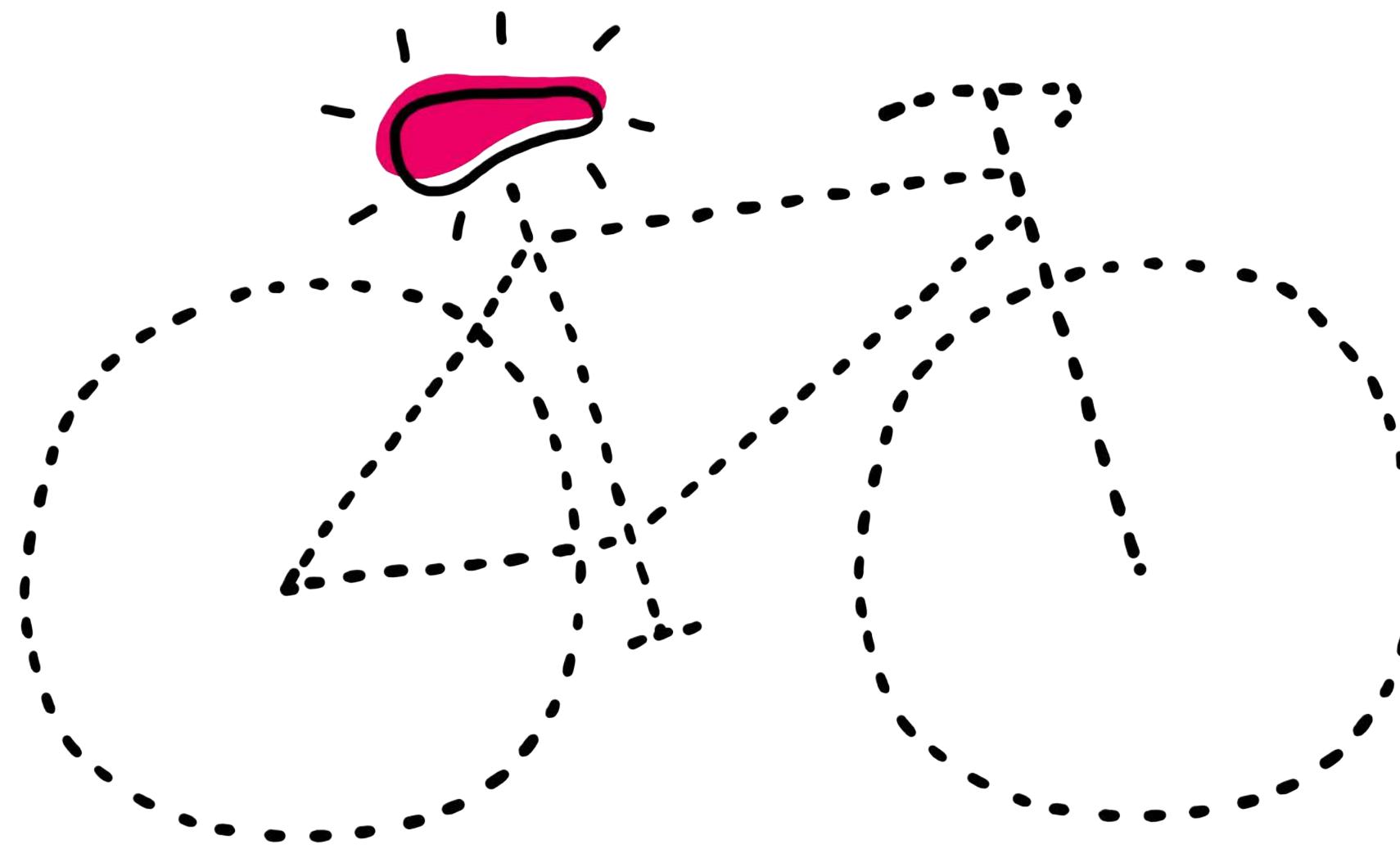
Map all kinds of latent needs and desires of the people who are planning to participate in an educational program in the near future.

Results

By proving the participants with a set of hands-on exercises, they were able to get insight into their decision making process. Insights that would later serve as the foundation for the redesign.

Key Takeaway

Look beyond first impressions and get a deep understanding of what your users know, feel and dream.



6

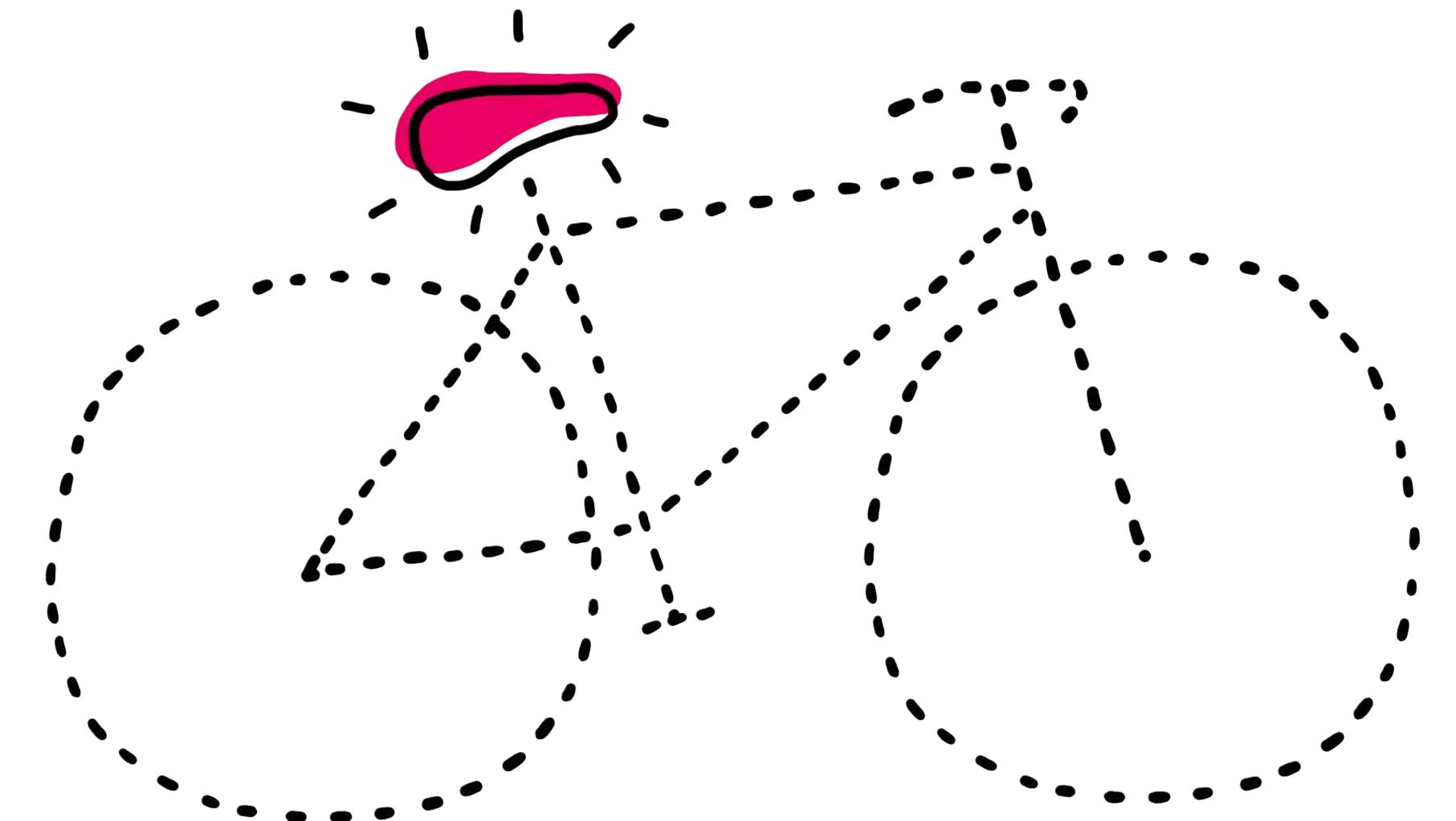
Single-feature MVP

Test your most crucial assumptions with a single feature MVP.

Single-feature MVP

Test your most crucial assumptions with a single feature MVP.

Avoid mega-concepts and unclear conclusions by testing a single-feature Minimum Viable Product (MVP). Some of the most successful concepts started out with a single, simple feature - think at Google or Dropbox. A single feature MVP focuses on one aspect of a larger concept. Why doing so? To have the statistical guarantee that it's that specific feature being validated (and not other ancillary components of the offering).



Pros
+ simplicity
+ gives focus
+ easy to explain
+ speed

Cons
+ multiple tests
+ adjust assumptions
+ not always a signal of product-market fit

Target audience _____

B2C

B2B

Kind _____

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test _____

Problem

Solution

Features

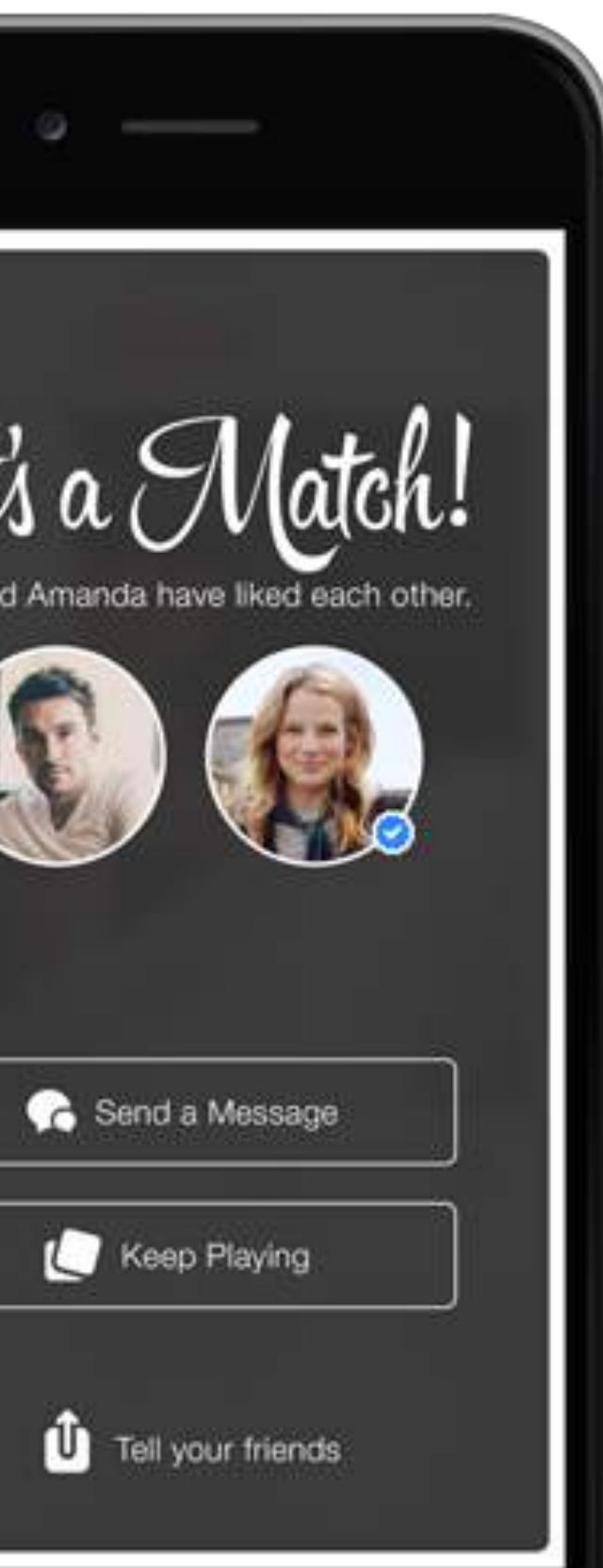
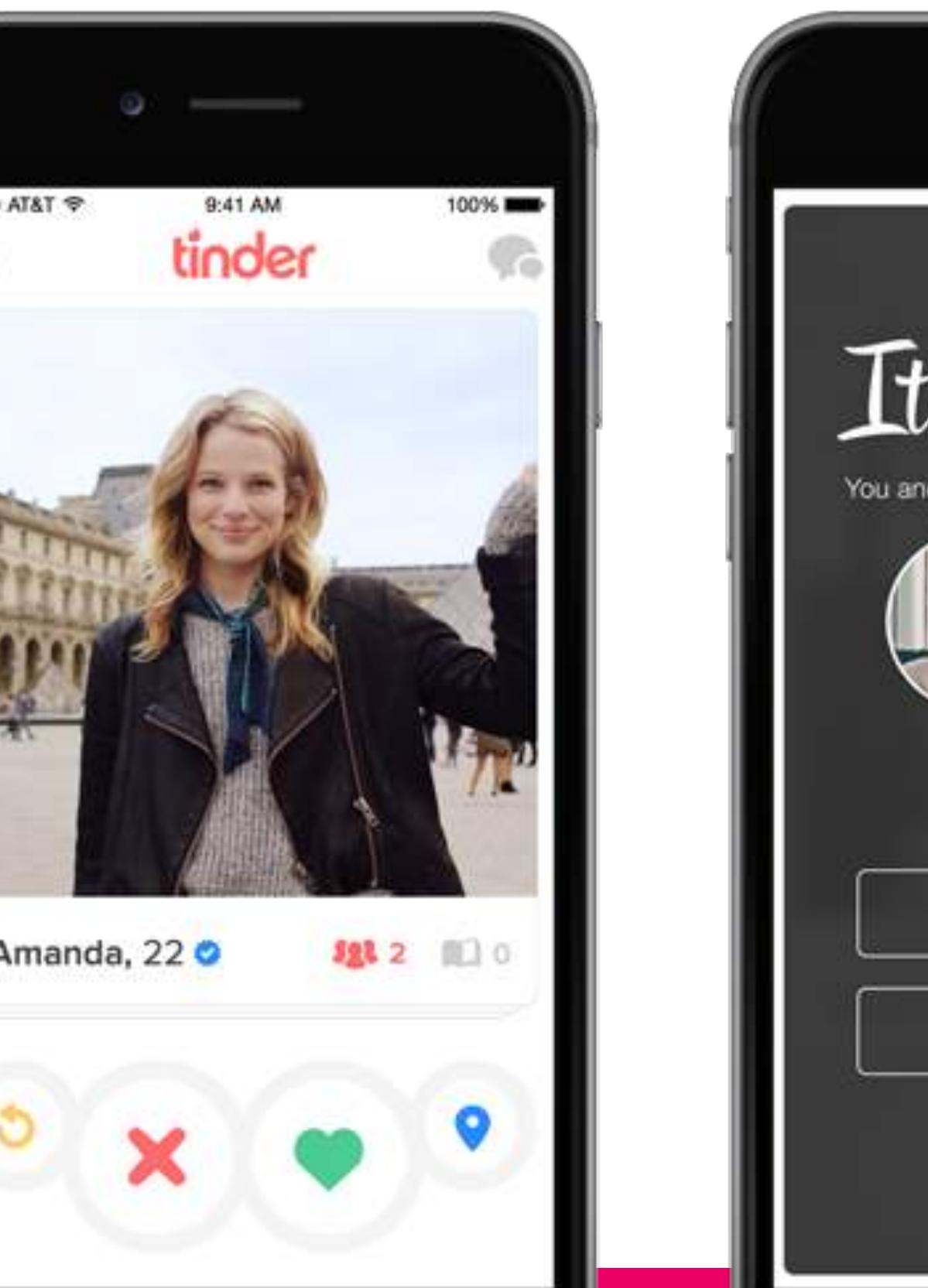
Biz Model

Pricing

Single-feature MVP Example

Swiping left/right is a feature that Tinder brought into an overly crowded chat/dating online market.

Tinder, with its 20 billion matches to date (!), is the world's most popular app for meeting new people. It's no mystery its popular UI design feature of swiping right (like) or left (dislike), and the fact - still rather new back then - that only people who mutually liked each other could match.



Test carried out by

Your most dependable wingman Tinder.

Metric

You can only like (swipe right) or dislike (swipe left) another person.

Key Takeaway

If you have one crucial hypothesis to test, try limit your MVP to the essential.



7

Physical prototype

Test and evaluate your possible solution by building a low fidelity physical prototype for customers to interact with.

Physical prototype

Test and evaluate your possible solution by building a low fidelity physical prototype for customers to interact with.

Once you have identified a problem worth solving, turn your collected insights into a tangible prototype or mockup that can be used to present your potential solution to a customer. You may think at car manufacturers, that intensely use various forms of prototyping when designing a cars, or at Dyson, that notoriously went through 5,127 prototypes for its best-seller cyclonic vacuum cleaner. But what we're referring to, here, is the use of prototyping at much earlier stages: for example, you could prototype a self-service pharmacy by using paper boxes, and by placing an actor inside the box to "perform" the expected actions.

Pros

- + simplicity
- + speed
- + de-risk

Cons

- + potential for biased responses

Tools

Make use of recycled materials, paper etc. to build a physical representation of your solution. Or simply sketch it out using markers and templates.

Currency

Engagement
Time

Target audience

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

Problem

Solution

Features

Biz Model

Pricing





8

Wireframe

Test the usability of your digital products with digital wireframes.

Wireframe

Test the usability of your digital products with digital wireframes.

Digital wireframe prototypes act as a limited simulation of your solution idea for the user to interact with. The schematic ‘blueprint’ acts as a static visual guide that can help you identify potential problems that you may have not perceived and reveal elements that are not intuitive to your users.

**Pros**

- + simplicity
- + cost effectiveness

Cons

- + weaker evidence

Tools

Sketch (starting 99\$/year) and Balsamiq (starting 90\$/year) are great for wireframes and Invision (freemium) let you design and test your digital prototypes.

Currency

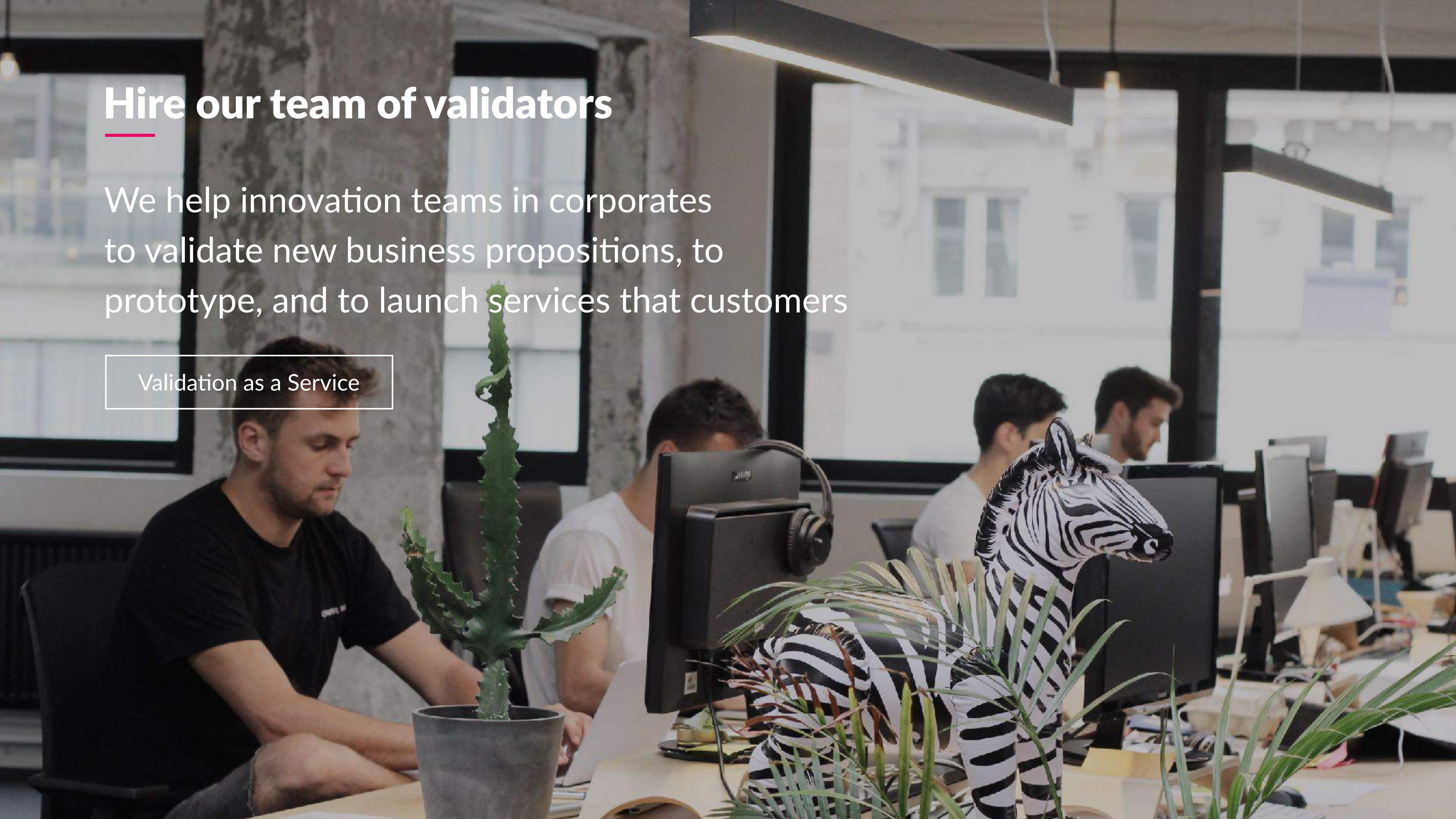
Engagement
Time
Attention

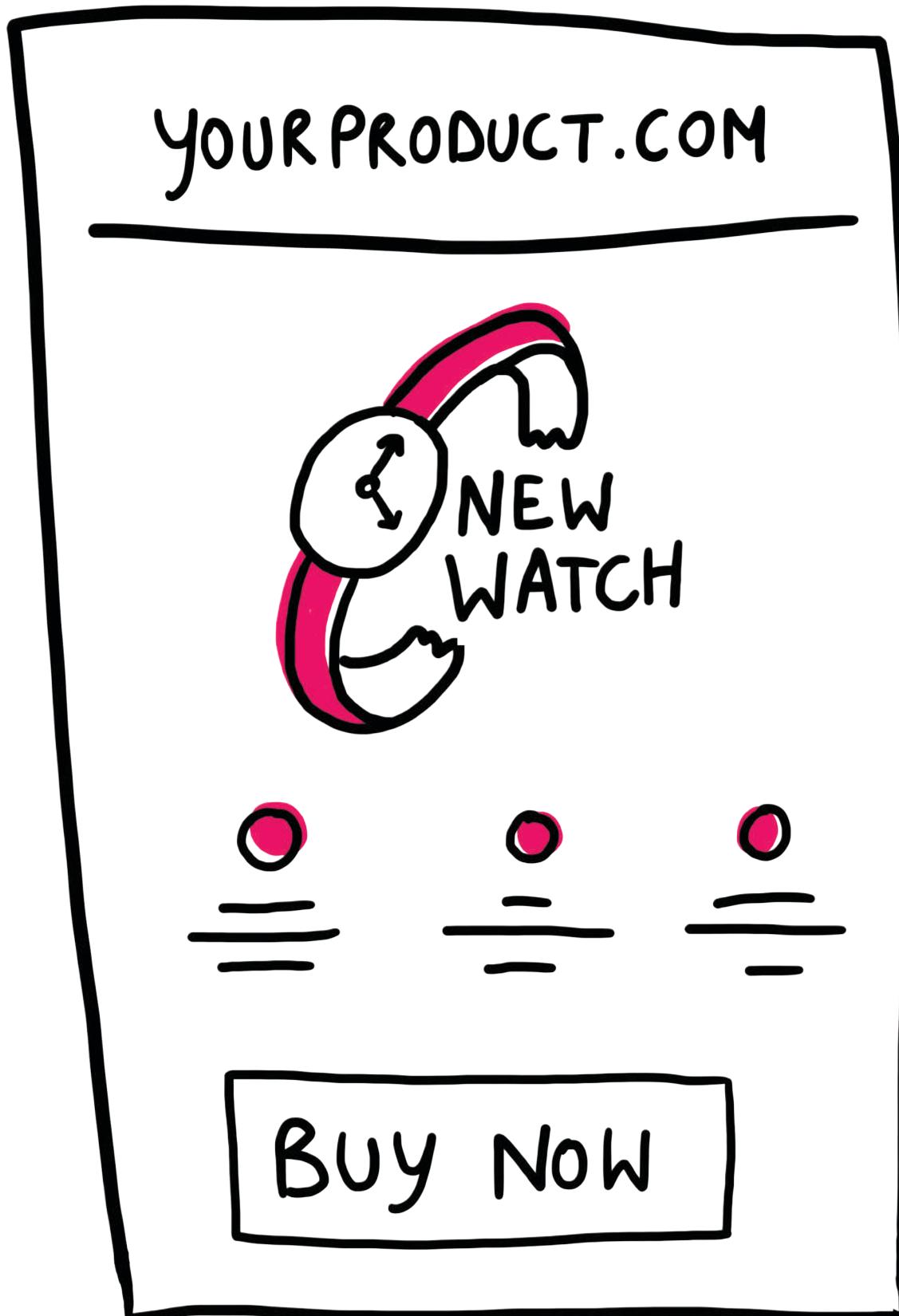
Target audience B2C B2B**Kind** Evaluative Generative**Perfect to test** Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing

Hire our team of validators

We help innovation teams in corporates to validate new business propositions, to prototype, and to launch services that customers

Validation as a Service





9

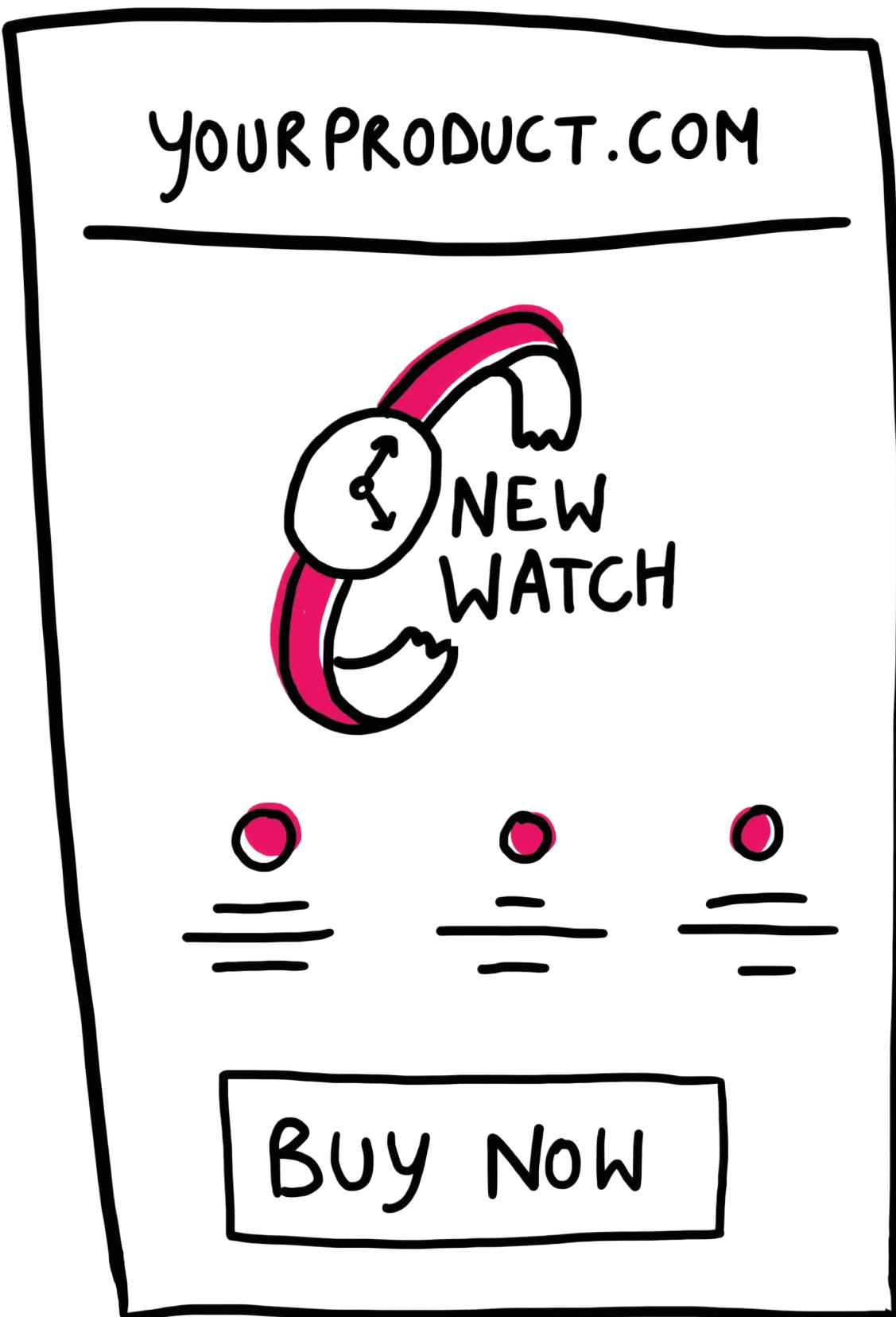
Landing page

Get out of the building (virtually) by using landing pages to test your hypotheses against user expectations and interest.

Landing page

Get out of the building (virtually) by using landing pages to test your hypotheses against user expectations and interest.

After making sure that users understand your value proposition with a comprehension test, landing pages can be used as stand-alone single pages where you display your value proposition and aim to convert to a sign up via email or a sale. Start from a hypothesis, clarify your key metric and use your call to action to test user interest in your value proposition.

**Pros**

- + focus
- + speed and simplicity

Cons

- + cost
- + weak evidence
- + dependent on hypothesis

Tools

Instapage (starting 29\$/month) and Unbounce (starting 79\$/month) lets you design landing pages fast and analyze conversion insights.

Currency

- Conversion rate (%)
- Sign-ups
- Payments
- Clicks

Target audience

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

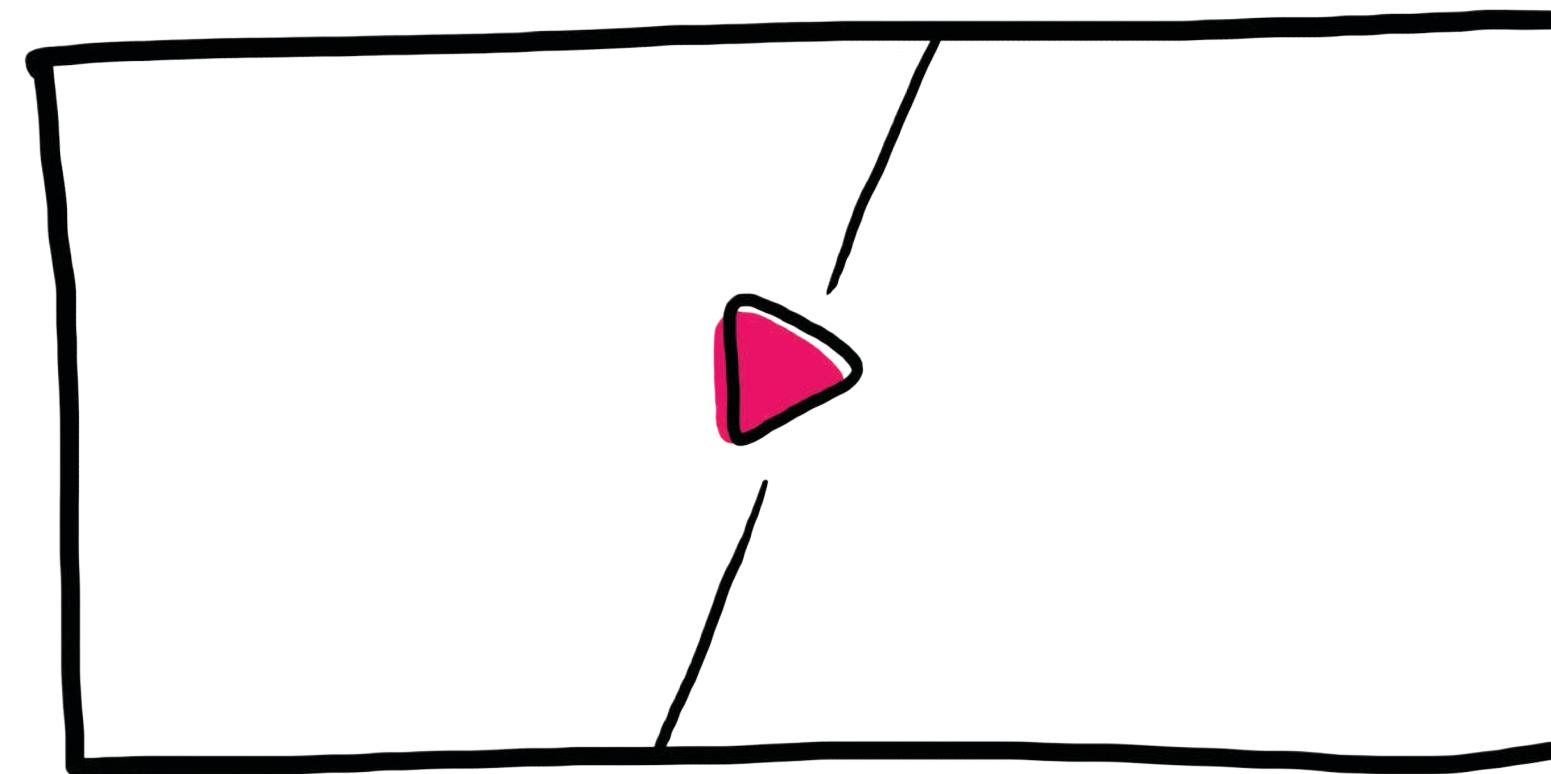
Problem

Solution

Features

Biz Model

Pricing



THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

10

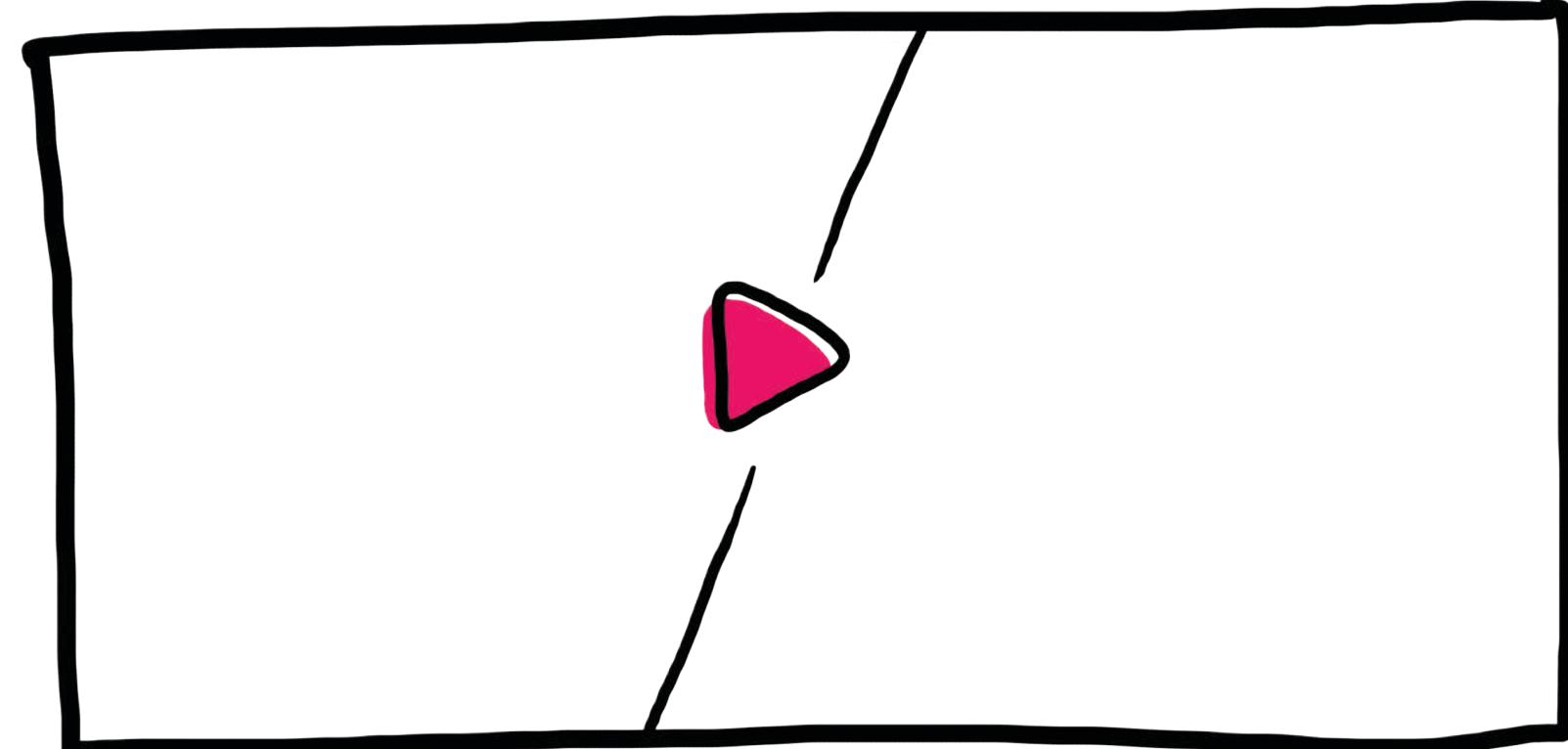
Explainer videos

Use explainer videos to show how a service would work.

Explainer videos

Use explainer videos to show how a service would work.

Create the illusion that your product is real and developed by recording and editing a 'real life' scenario involving the use of your product. This video can be displayed on your landing page to explain your offering to customers and influence them to buy or use it. Focus on your script and storyboard the key message that you want to convey. Use visuals, motion and audio to convey and strengthen the message by informing and entertaining the user with the who + what + why of your offer.



THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Pros

- + clarifying
- + visual
- + focused

Cons

- + requires time

Tools

Moovly (starting 25\$/month) let you create explainer videos with audio clips, whiteboard animation and your own pictures.

Currency

Clicks
Attention

Target audience

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

Problem

Solution

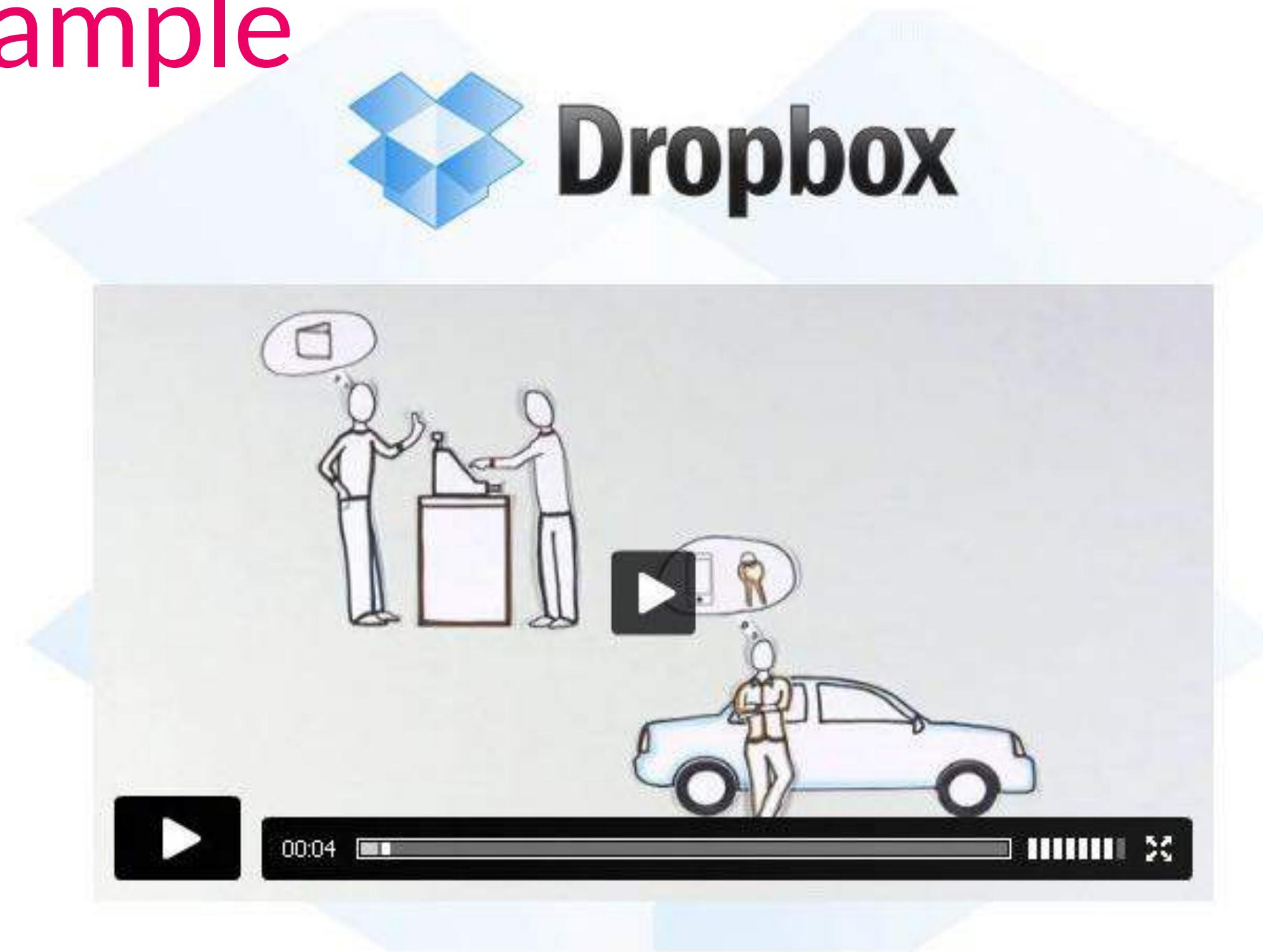
Features

Biz Model Pricing

Explainer videos Example

Hypothesis: is there demand for Dropbox?

In 2009, a relatively unknown startup called Dropbox launched this explainer video. Shortly after the video was launched, this two-minute explainer was placed on the dropbox.com homepage, where it was viewed about 30,000 times per day.



Test carried out by

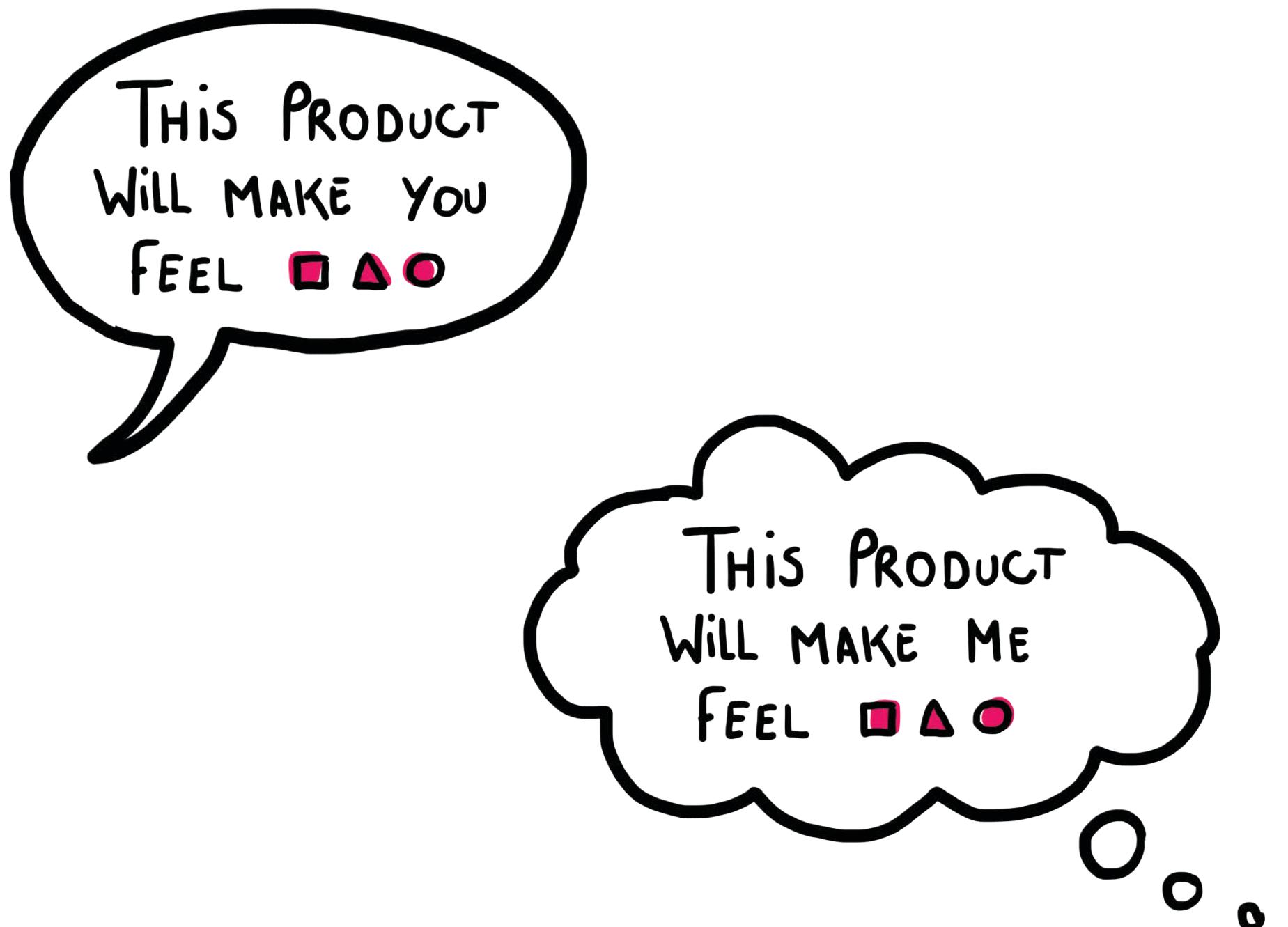
Dropbox

Results

With this video, Dropbox managed to illustrate the mechanics of the service and to spark the interest of millions of potential users.

Key Takeaway

Use explainer videos to introduce the world to your service. Make use of a unique visual style, create a compelling narrative with strong metaphors, and keep it short.



11

Comprehension test

Does your customer understand the message? Eliminate false negative biases before testing commitment, by evaluating comprehension.

Comprehension test

Does your customer understand the message? Eliminate false negative biases before testing commitment, by evaluating comprehension.

Comprehension tests are simple to run and can usually take less than an hour. The aim is to test if at least 80% of your customers display a positive conversion in understanding your message. Sample sizes of your test should generally be around 20 people and don't need to be target customers: you are testing the understanding

Pros

- + simplicity
- + speed
- + both qualitative and quantitative

Tools

Kromatic designed a simple card to track comprehension test activities.

Currency

Attention
Comprehension
Engagement

Cons

- + not on target customer



Target audience

B2C B2B

Kind

Evaluative Generative

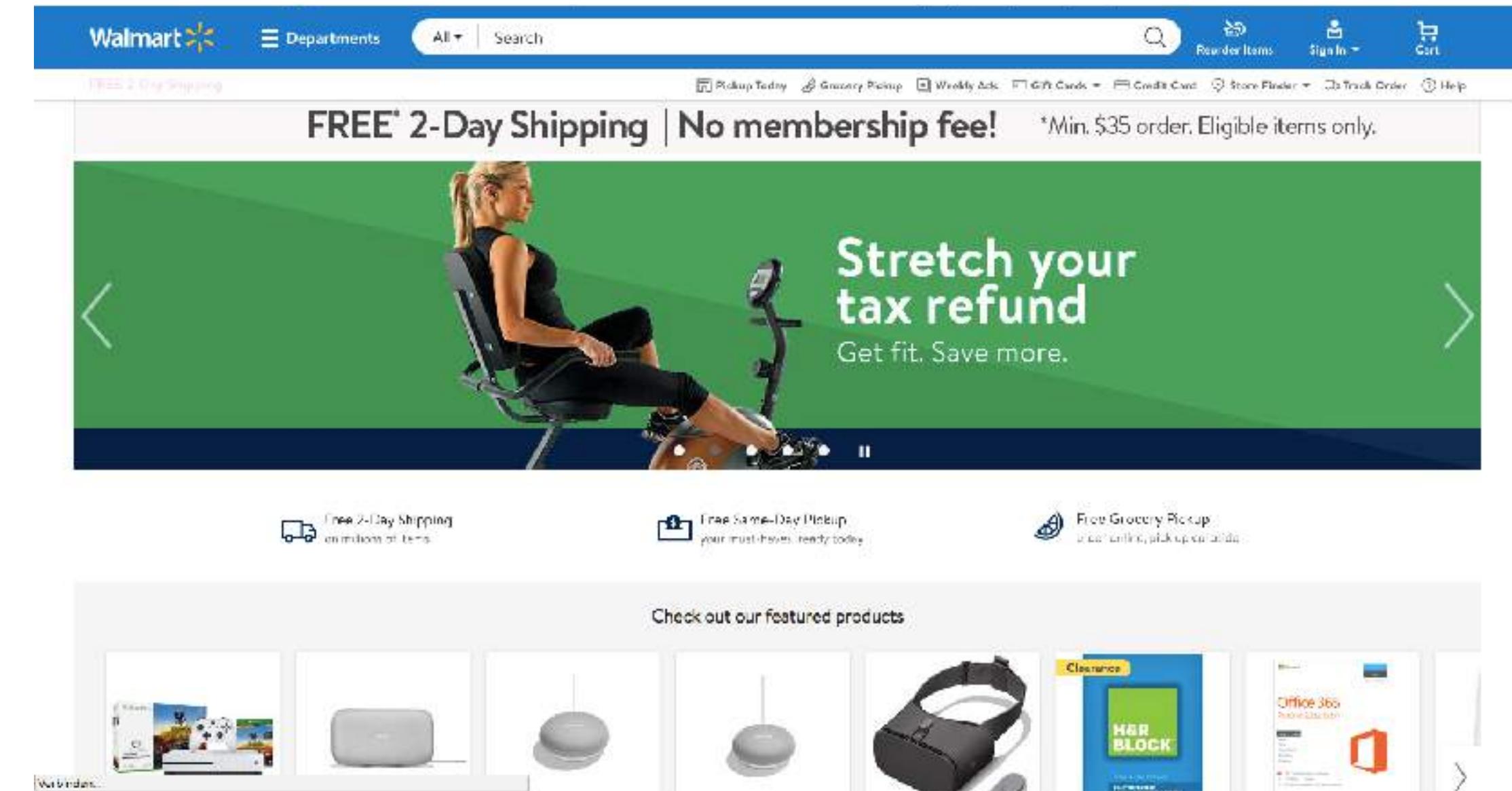
Perfect to test

Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing

Comprehension test Example

Hypothesis: do customers understand our value proposition?

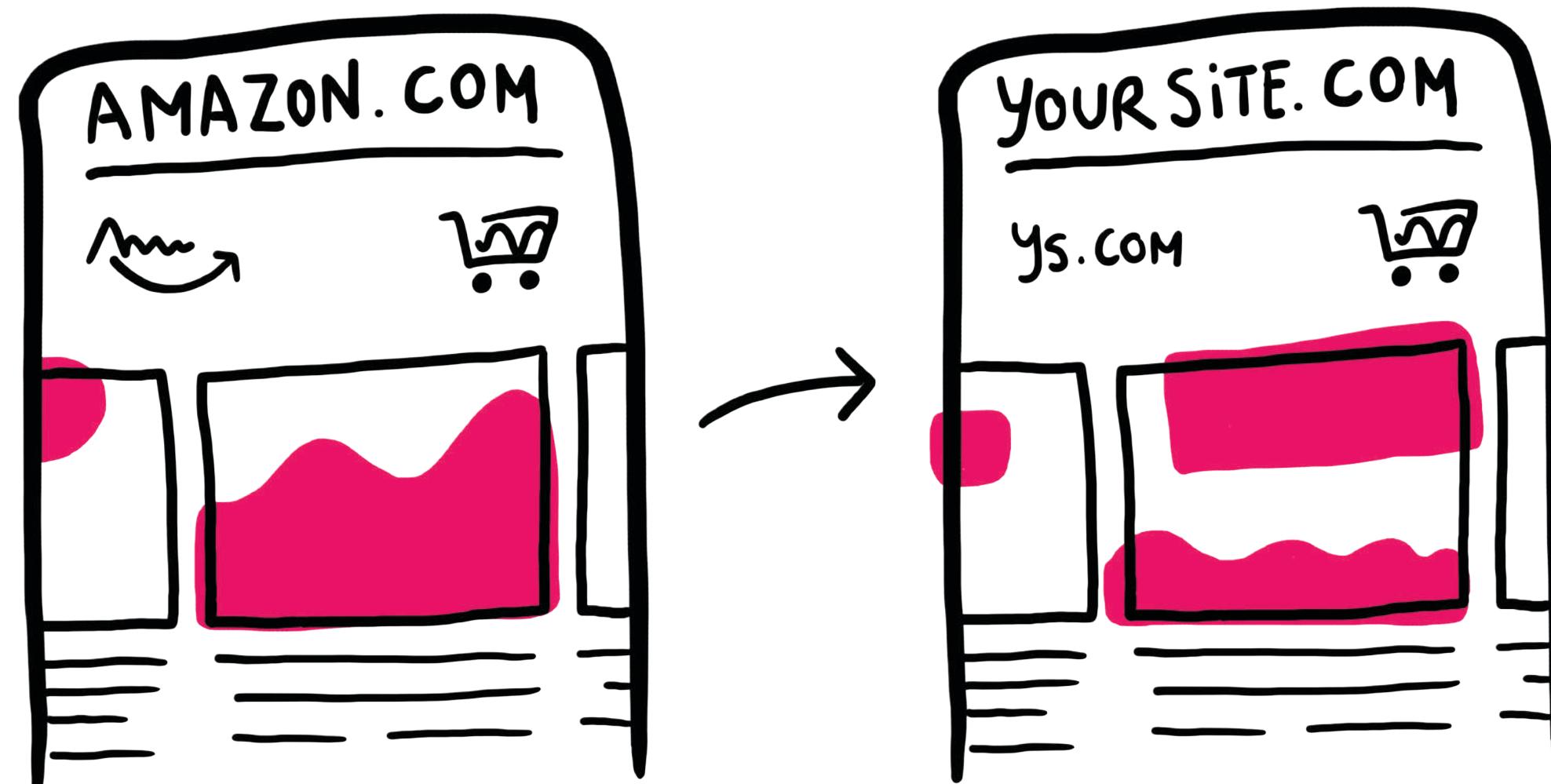
Walmart, the American retail giant, is known for its powerful value proposition “Save Money. Live Better”. In order to come to this value proposition, they tested it by writing down their value proposition in 1-3 sentences, showing this to participants for a few moments (just enough to read it) and then taking it away and asking the participants to explain it in their own words.



Test carried out by
America's giant retail player
Walmart.

Metric
If the participant explanation is roughly comparable to the one Walmart postulated, they counted it as a positive result. If not, it was negative.

Results
By repeatedly performing this test, Walmart narrowed down their value proposition to the existing one.



12

Imposter Judo

Use a related website/product as if it were your own. Repackage an existing product.

Imposter Judo

Use a related website/product as if it were your own. Repackage an existing product.

Why build something if it already exists? If a similar idea already exists, you can use it as a quick and simple way to gather feedback. With Imposter Judo we leverage the 'fake it till you make it' rule. This could mean creating static screenshots or mockups of websites and removing the competitor branding or asking customers to sign-up and give you feedback on a competitors website. This method is particularly effective when selling physical products

Pros

- + simplicity
- + speed

Tools

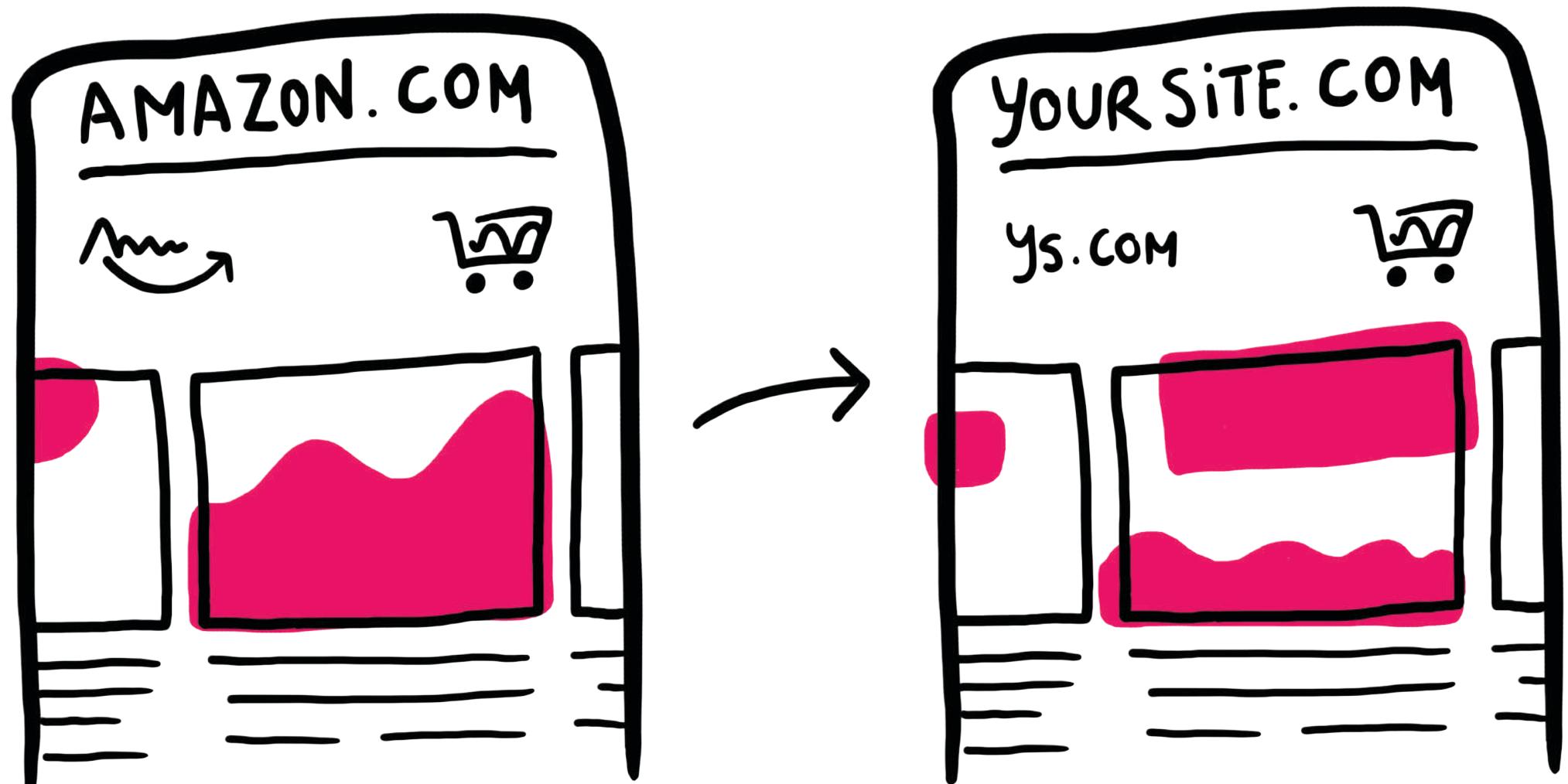
- Use snippets of existing web pages.

Cons

- + high risk for corporates

Currency

- clicks
- engagement
- conversion

**Target audience**

- B2C

- B2B

Kind

- Evaluative

- Generative

Perfect to test

- Problem

- Solution

- Features

- Biz Model
- Pricing

Imposter Judo Example

Hypothesis: will people buy shoes online?

In the early days of Zappos, founder Tony Shieh made pictures of shoes sold in local shoe stores and presented them in a web shop to validate whether people would have bought shoes online - and would have been satisfied about the experience. This trick allowed him to have no inventory at these early stages of development. If anyone bought shoes from them, they would have gone to the store, bought the shoes and mailed them to the customer. This allowed Zappos to test their idea quickly and cheaply, before investing in their own inventory, customer-service, logistics and other operations.

Test carried out by

The popular online shoe and clothing retailer Zappos.

Metric

Number of shoes sold in their webshop. Customer reviews of their online shopping experience.

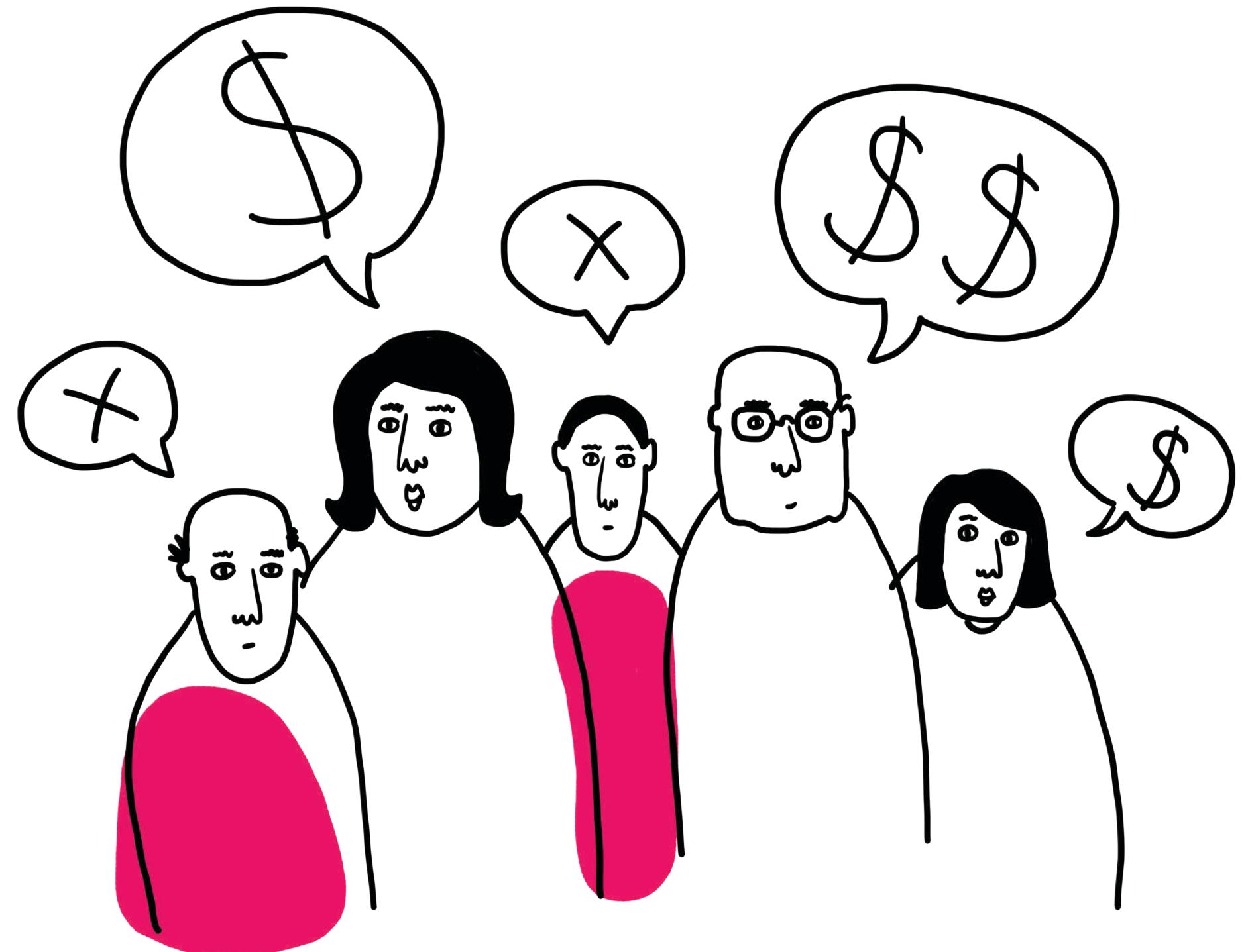
Results

Zappos could validate their hypotheses and move to a more mature stage of development.

Key Takeaway

Testing your idea doesn't need to be big! You don't need to build a call center or distribution center to test your hypotheses: instead, keep it as simple (and low-tech) as possible, as Zappos did with their MVP.





13

Crowdfunding

Use crowdfunding platforms as a way to validate an idea by getting backers to put money into your concept before building it.

Crowdfunding

Use crowdfunding platforms as a way to validate an idea by getting backers to put money into your concept before building it.

Use the pre-order method of crowdfunding platforms to run your MVP test and test your hypothesis about the need for your offering and discover customer preferences. The idea is to gauge interest, secure backers and only build once there is sufficient interest by raising your target amount. The key for these campaigns is to come up with a compelling elevator pitch (usually a video + strong visuals and infographics) that will convince your target audience

Pros

- + simplicity
- + rapid idea validation
- + generates cash

Tools

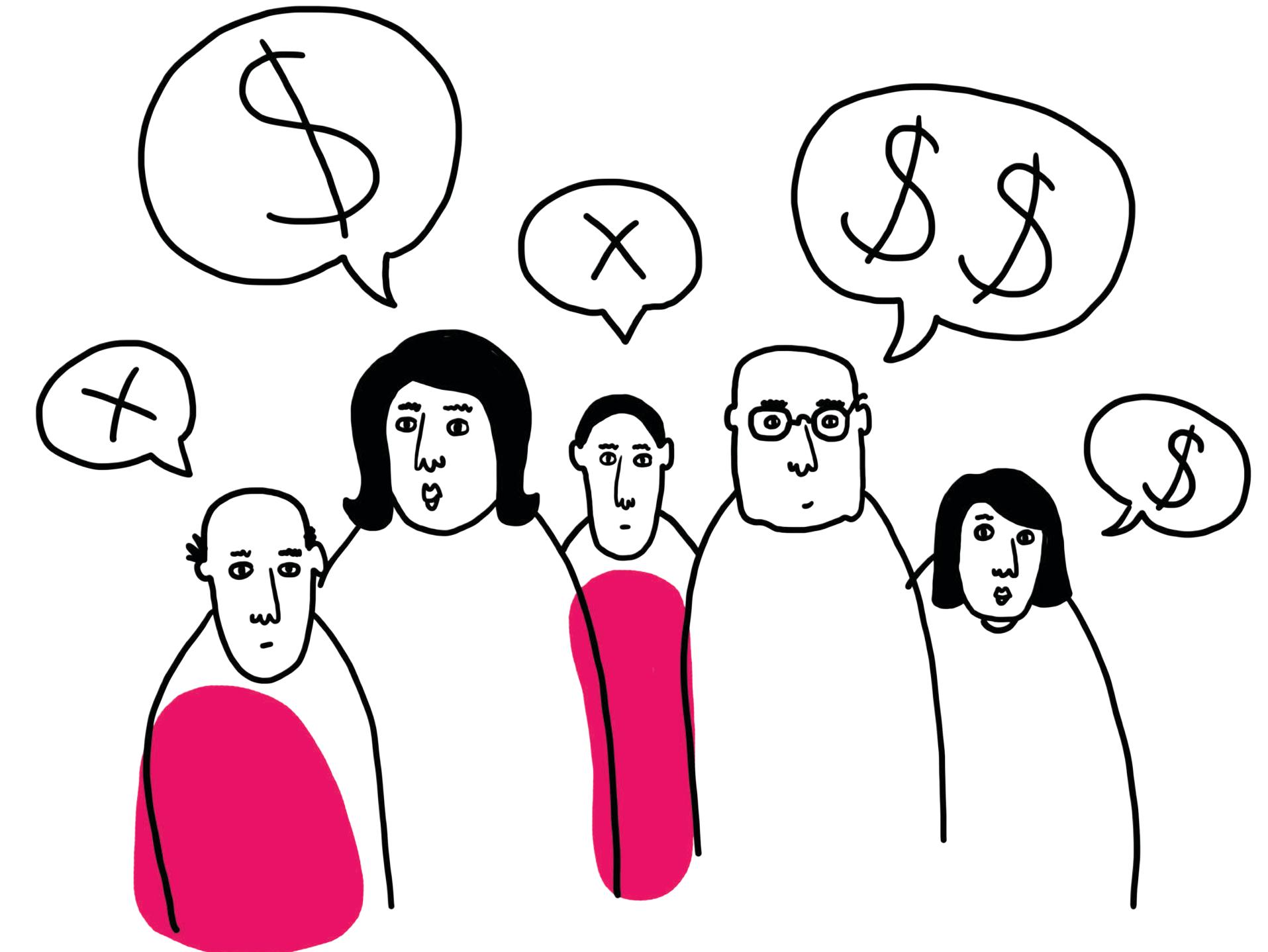
Kickstarter, Indiegogo and other crowdfunding platforms

Currency

Payment
Engagement

Cons

- + not as targeted

**Target audience**

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

Problem

Solution

Features

Biz Model

Pricing

Crowdfunding Example

Pebble Time was the fastest funded Kickstarter project.

Palo Alto-based company Pebble decided to launch its newest watch, the Pebble Time on Kickstarter. Less than 48 hours after launching, Pebble Time, officially topped the company's previous Kickstarter record. Pebble's IP has now been acquired by Fitbit.

Metric

The amount of money raised.



Results

Pebble raised \$20.3 million from over 75.000 backers, breaking records on the Kickstarter site. The first million\$ was raised within 29 minutes!



14

Pre-sales

Talk to your customers and gauge their interest by testing their willingness to pay with pre-orders.

Pre-sales

Talk to your customers and gauge their interest by testing their willingness to pay with pre-orders.

Pre-sales allows you to present your product to potential customers and convince them to pay for it before fully building it. You have two options in front of you: either installing a “pre-order” button on a landing page, or directly talking to customers. This second option, even though less scalable, allows for more qualitative insights by seeing customer reactions first hand - these might come in handy to form user personas at a later stage.

**Pros**

- + direct customer interactions
- + gain understanding

Tools**Cons**

- + Difficult to scale
- + Time consuming

Currency

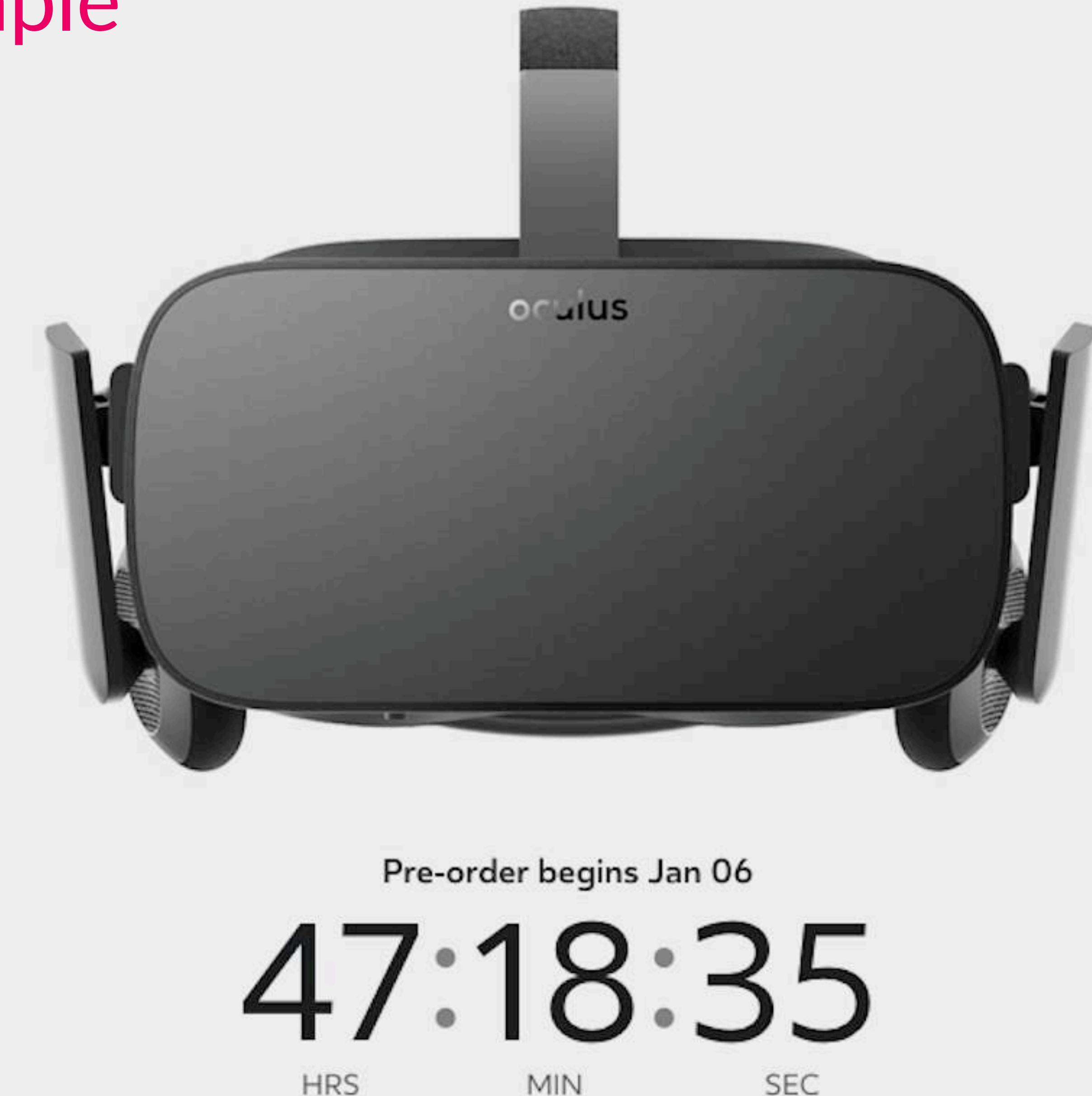
Payment

Target audience B2C B2B**Kind** Evaluative Generative**Perfect to test** Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing

Pre-sales Example

Launch a pre-order page before kicking off production.

Oculus VR, the American VR technology company, often launches pre-order pages for its products before kicking off production. While preordering you exactly know how much the product costs and on which date it will be shipped. They offered pre-orders for Oculus Rift, Oculus Touch, Oculus Go, etc.

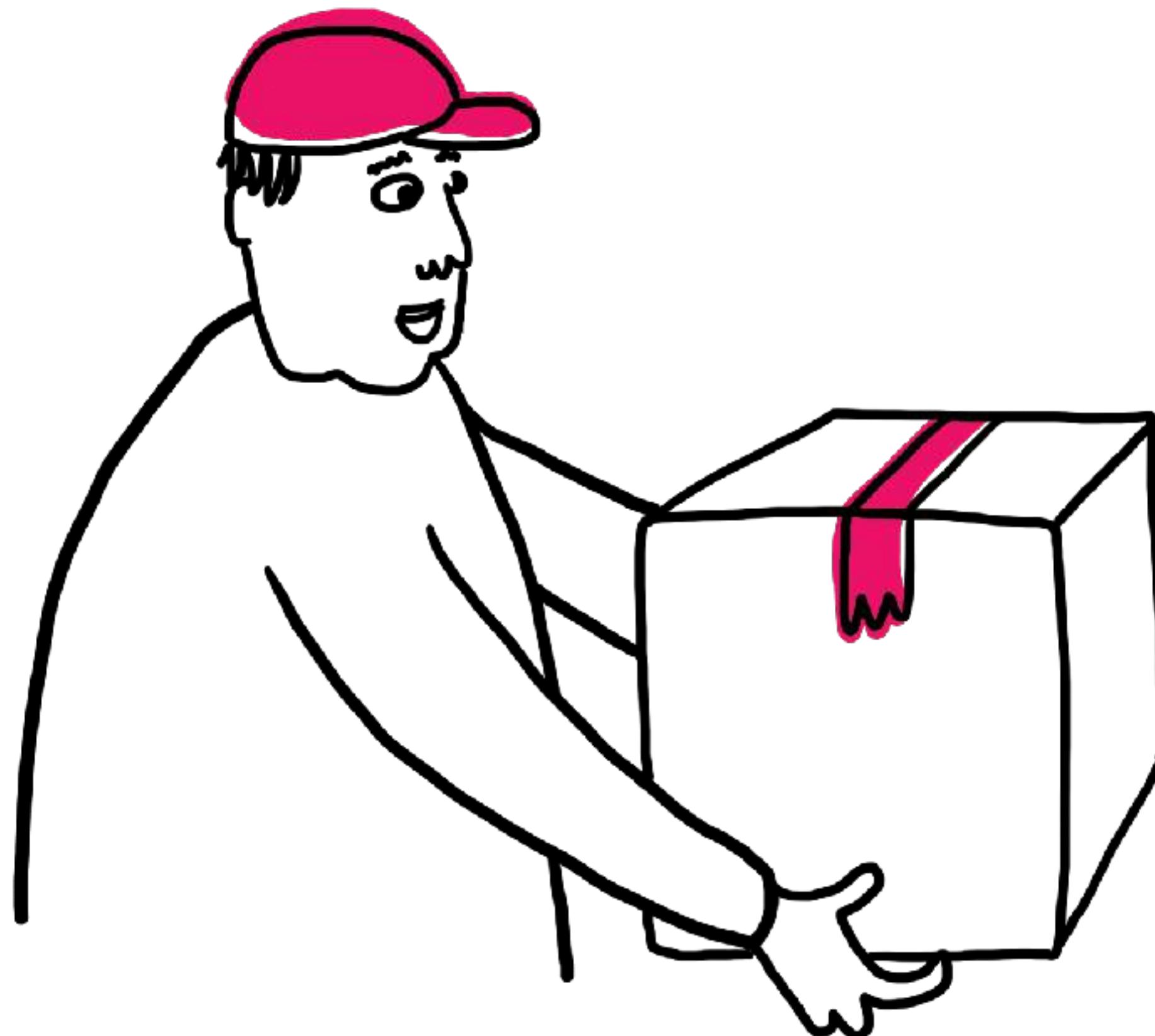


Test carried out by
Oculus VR

Metric
The number of pre-orders registered.

Key Takeaway
Pre-orders allow for:

- ✓ Clearer estimation of real demand
- ✓ Better estimation of production targets
- ✓ Cash-in
- ✓ Marketing advantages - sense of community and exclusivity for the early adopters



15

Concierge

In-person service for customers where they know that a human performs the task.

Concierge

In-person service for customers where they know that a human performs the task.

This method involves manually performing tasks related to delivering the value of your offering to your customers. This MVP approach allows you to move with speed and learn in the process of delivering the intended value of your product or service. Customers are aware that a human is performing the tasks and the intent is for you to eventually derive the learnings needed to automate and optimize this process while avoiding premature and unnecessary tech. Note: this kind of MVP usually delivers a better service than the final one - therefore, a failed concierge MVP *invalidates* an hypothesis, but a successful concierge MVP *doesn't necessarily validate* the hypothesis.

Pros

- + simplicity
- + speed
- + gives focus

Tools

Manual processes

Cons

- + time consuming
- + labour intensive

Currency

- Conversion rate (%)
- Satisfaction
- Engagement
- Usage
- Attention

**Target audience**

B2C

B2B

Kind

Evaluative

Generative

Perfect to test

Problem

Solution

Features

Biz Model

Pricing

Concierge Example

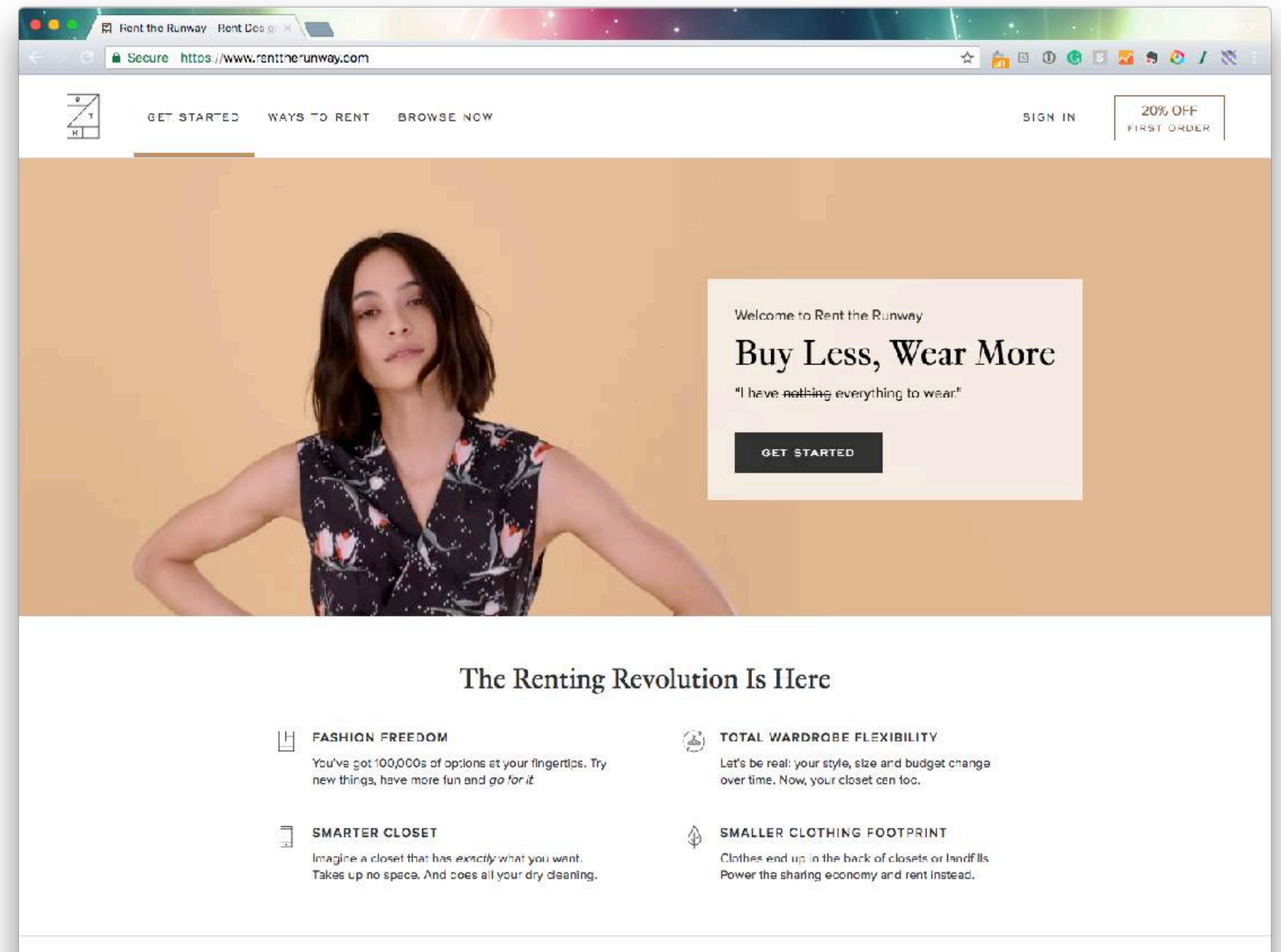
Hypothesis: would women rent a dress online?

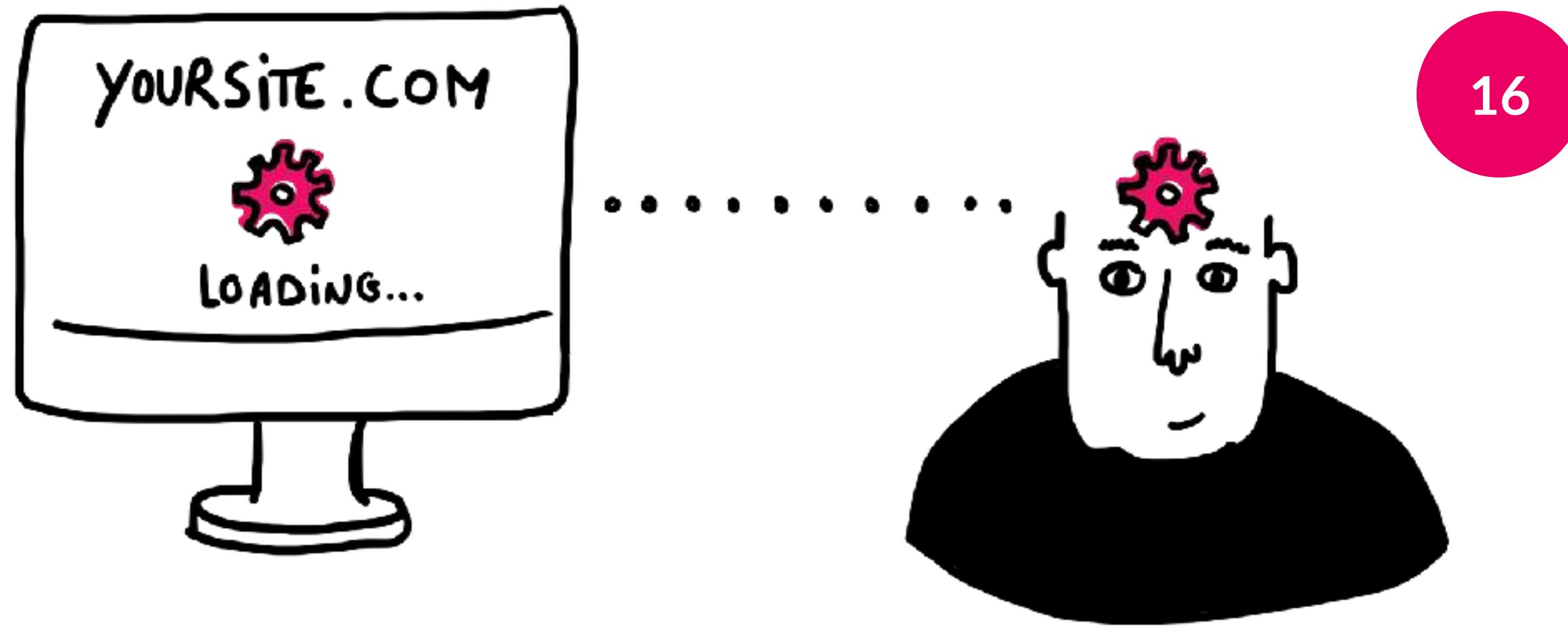
The founders behind “Rent the Runway” wanted to test their online dress rental business model. Before going online, they tested an in-person service to female college students where anyone could try the dress on before renting them - a much better experience than online rental. If this test wasn’t successful, the online rental model would have been rejected too.

Test carried out by
Jennifer Hyman and
Jennifer Fleiss, founders
of Rent the Runway.

Metric
Had no one rented that
night, they would have
known that online rental
was hopeless.

Results
The test results showed
that 34% of women
rented, so they went on
to a validating MVP,
where 5% of 1000
women on their mailing
list rented dresses from
an emailed PDF.





16

Wizard of Oz

Work 'behind the scenes' to deliver the service manually, without huge infrastructures (but make customers believe that the infrastructure is already in place).

Wizard of Oz

Work ‘behind the scenes’ to deliver the service manually, without huge infrastructures (but make customers believe that the infrastructure is already in place).

This method involves manually performing tasks for your customers, while simulating an automated process. Customers are under the impression that they’re using a finished product and are unaware of the manual mechanisms working behind the scenes to deliver value. Much like concierge, this might take much longer than automated processes first, but it allows you to move with speed with minimal development.

Pros

- + strong evidence
- + measurability
- + easy to pivot

Cons

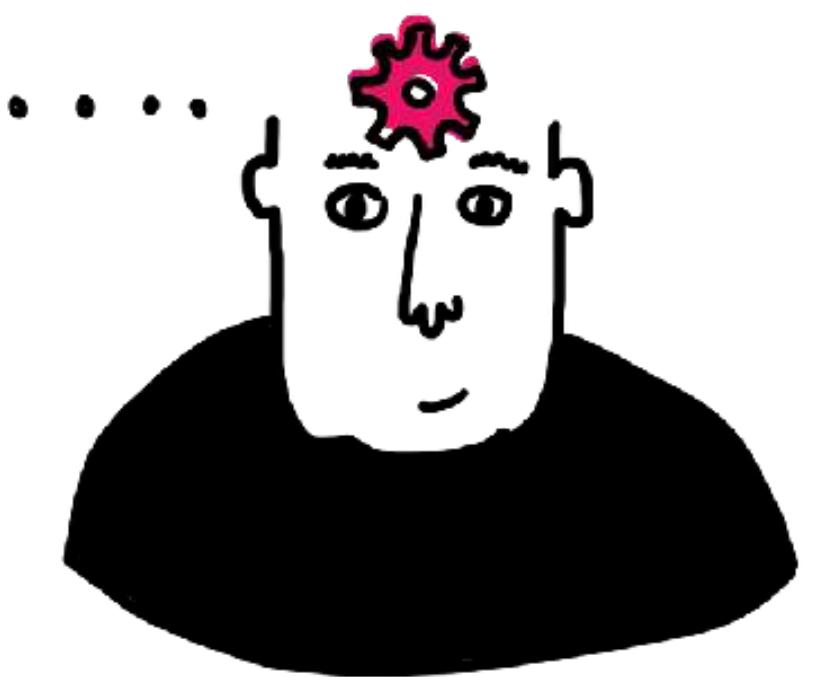
- + time consuming
- + labour intensive

Currency

- Conversion rate (%)
- Satisfaction
- Engagement
- Usage



.....

**Target audience**

- B2C

- B2B

Kind

- Evaluative

- Generative

Perfect to test

- Problem
- Solution
- Features
- Biz Model
- Pricing

Wizard of Oz Example

Aardvark used Wizard of Oz prototyping to design their social interfaces.

Aardvark, the social Q&A service recently acquired by Google, used a Wizard of Oz prototype to learn about how their service's concept would have worked without building all the tech before knowing if it was any good. Aardvark proposed an algorithm which would find answers to your questions through social media, but in reality the team was performing the research manually.

Test carried out by

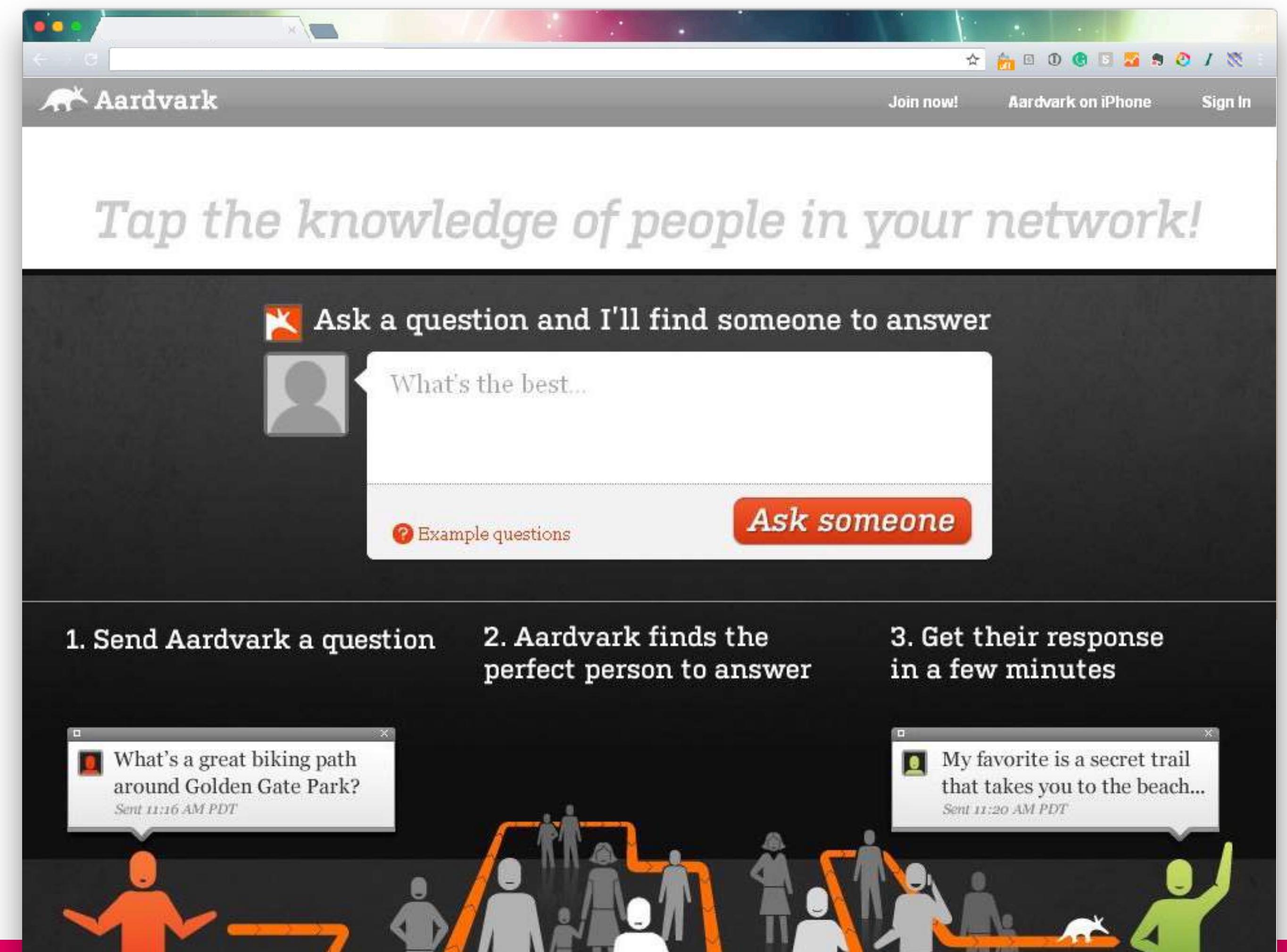
Aardvark, a startup that connects people with questions with people best-qualified to answer via a digital interface over the internet.

Metric

Efficiency and effectiveness of their service concept.

Results

Aardvark used an instant messaging system and a team of people behind the scenes to physically reroute questions and answers to the right people. In this way, they gathered additional insights and developed their concept without writing one line of code.





17

Letter of Intent

Test your hypotheses by asking prospects to sign a non-binding letter of intent to pay for your solution.

Letter of Intent

Test your hypotheses by asking prospects to sign a non-binding letter of intent to pay for your solution.

Letters of Intent can be used to validate your assumptions about your product by asking customers for currency and note explicitly what they are willing to give in return for your value proposition. People who clearly have the pain and currently use work arounds will more likely sign a letter of intent.

**Pros**

- + simplicity
- + speed
- + straight-forward
- + explanatory

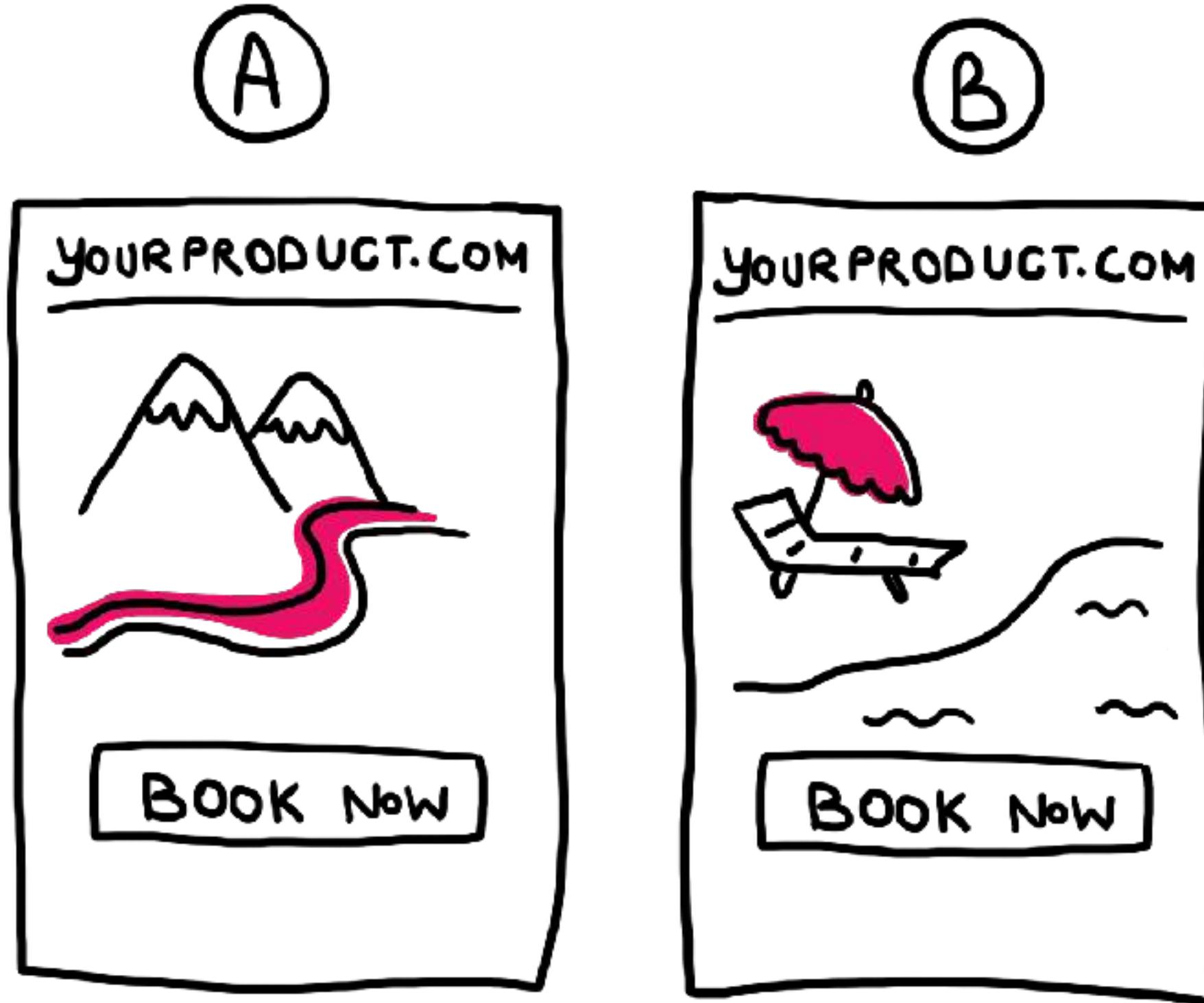
Cons

- + weak validation
- + non-binding

Currency

- Signature
- Time

Target audience B2C B2B**Kind** Evaluative Generative**Perfect to test** Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing



18

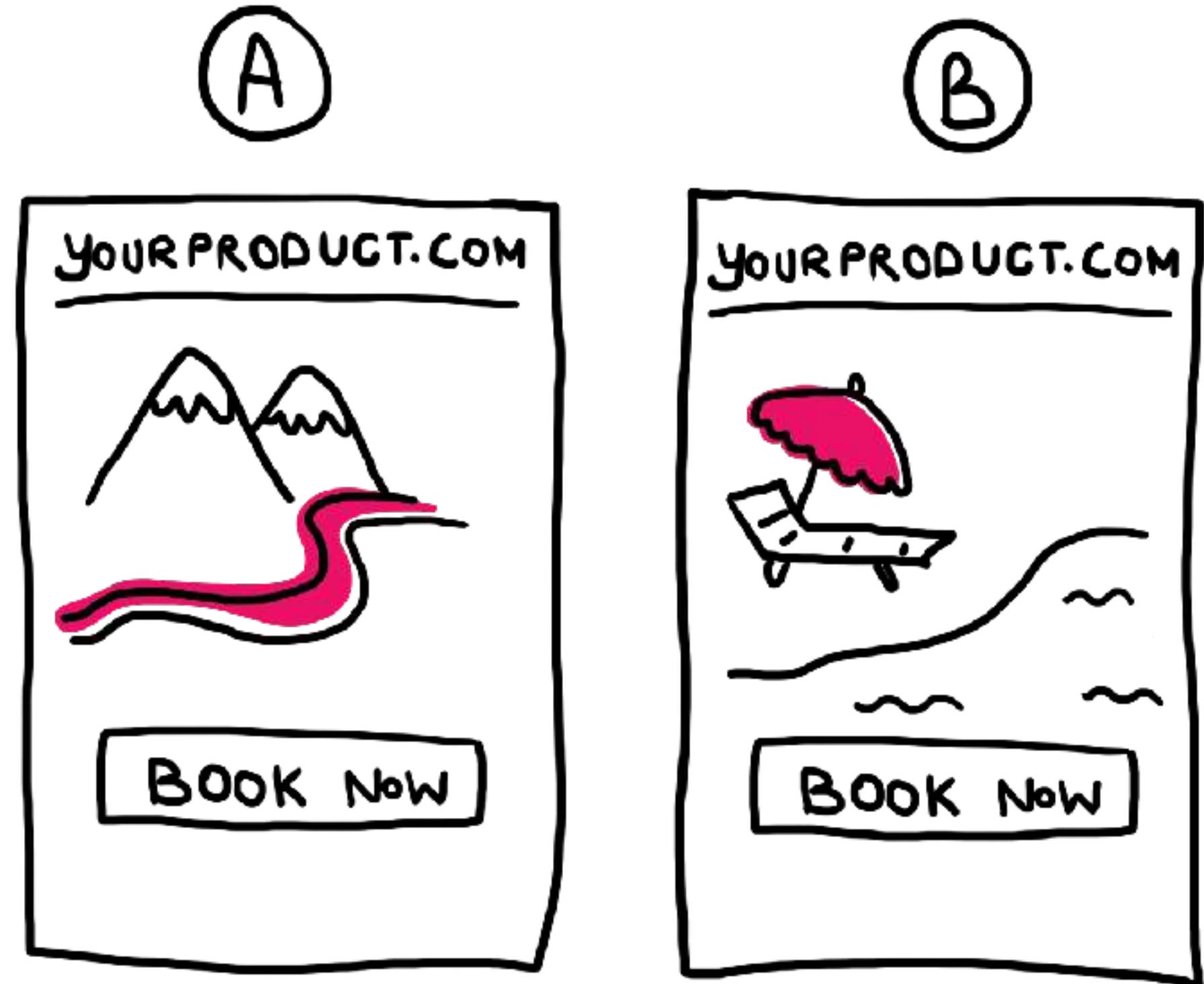
A/B Testing

A or B? Test both with a sample of users, then use the winning version.

A/B Testing

A or B? Test both with a sample of users, then use the winning version.

More than a specific experiment, A/B Testing is a way of working that encourages marketeers to test 2 variants (variant A and variant B) of a certain element, in order to discover which variant performs the best in maximising a desired outcome (e.g. purchase rate on an e-commerce platform). The elements that can be A/B tested are uncountable: 2 different subject lines for a newsletter campaign, 2 versions of an AdWords campaign, 2 pricing schemes for a new service, 2 color schemes for a landing page, and so forth.



Pros
+ simplicity
+ measurability

Cons
+ requires high amount of users

Tools
[Hubspot](#) (starting 200\$/month) and [Instapage](#) (starting 29\$/month) let you design A/B versions of newsletters and landing pages

Currency
Conversion rate (%)

Target audience _____
● B2C ● B2B

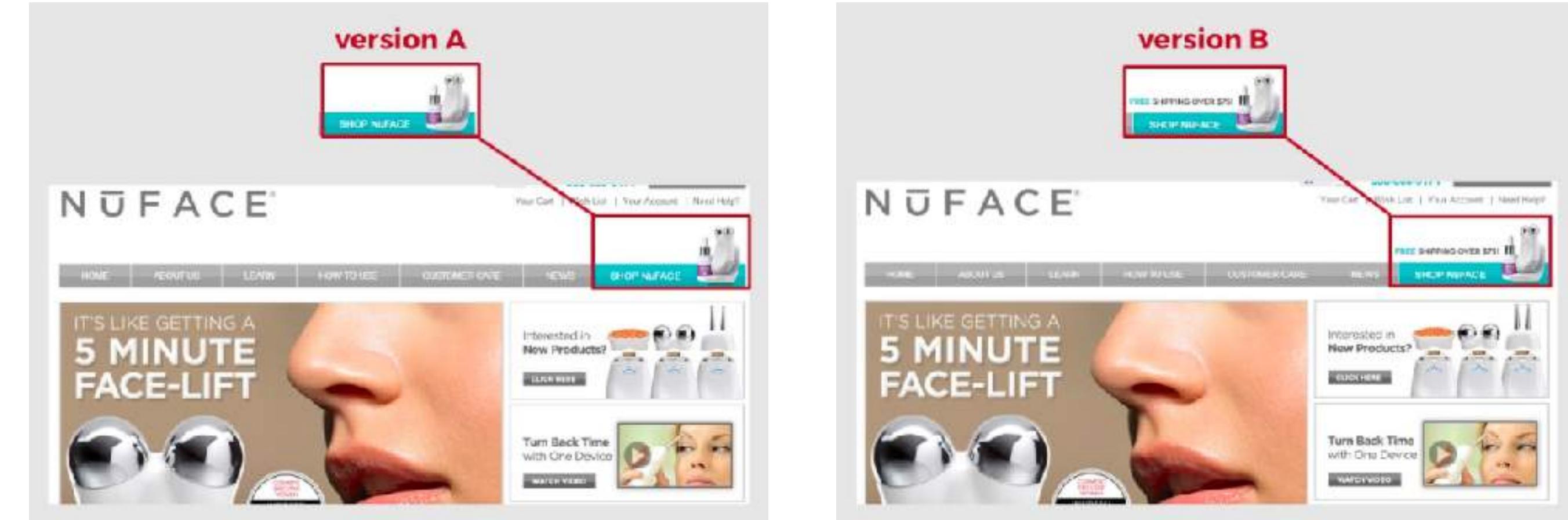
Perfect to test _____
● Problem ● Solution ● Features ● Biz Model ● Pricing

Kind _____
● Evaluative ● Generative

A/B Testing Example

Hypothesis: will 'free shipping' trigger more visitors to buy?

NuFACE is an anti-aging skin care company that wanted to boost online sales. Analytics showed visitors spending a long time on the website, browsing through a variety of products to then be reluctant to purchase. They decided to offer an extra incentive: free shipping for orders above \$75.



Test carried out by
NuFace, an anti-aging skin care company with an active online store.

Metric
Sales from customers with free shipping incentive versus sales from customers without free shipping incentive.

Results
The test results showed that when customers were given the free shipping incentive, orders increased by 90%. In addition to this, the company's Average Order Value (AOV) also rose by 7.32%.



19

App mockup

Create a clickable/“tappable” prototype of an App or a digital service

App mockup

Create a clickable/“tappable” prototype of an App or a digital service

Multiple services today let any designer - or even people with (almost) no design experience - create a prototype of an App, no coding needed. The advantage: iterations and refinements can be tested by users prior to starting development. By presenting an app with only simple home page and sign-up flows, users have the opportunity to experience your ideas and concepts and give valuable feedback on your mobile application. Using these behavioral insights can save you time and money in development.

**Pros**

- + simplicity
- + speed

Tools

- UXPin
- InVision
- proto.io

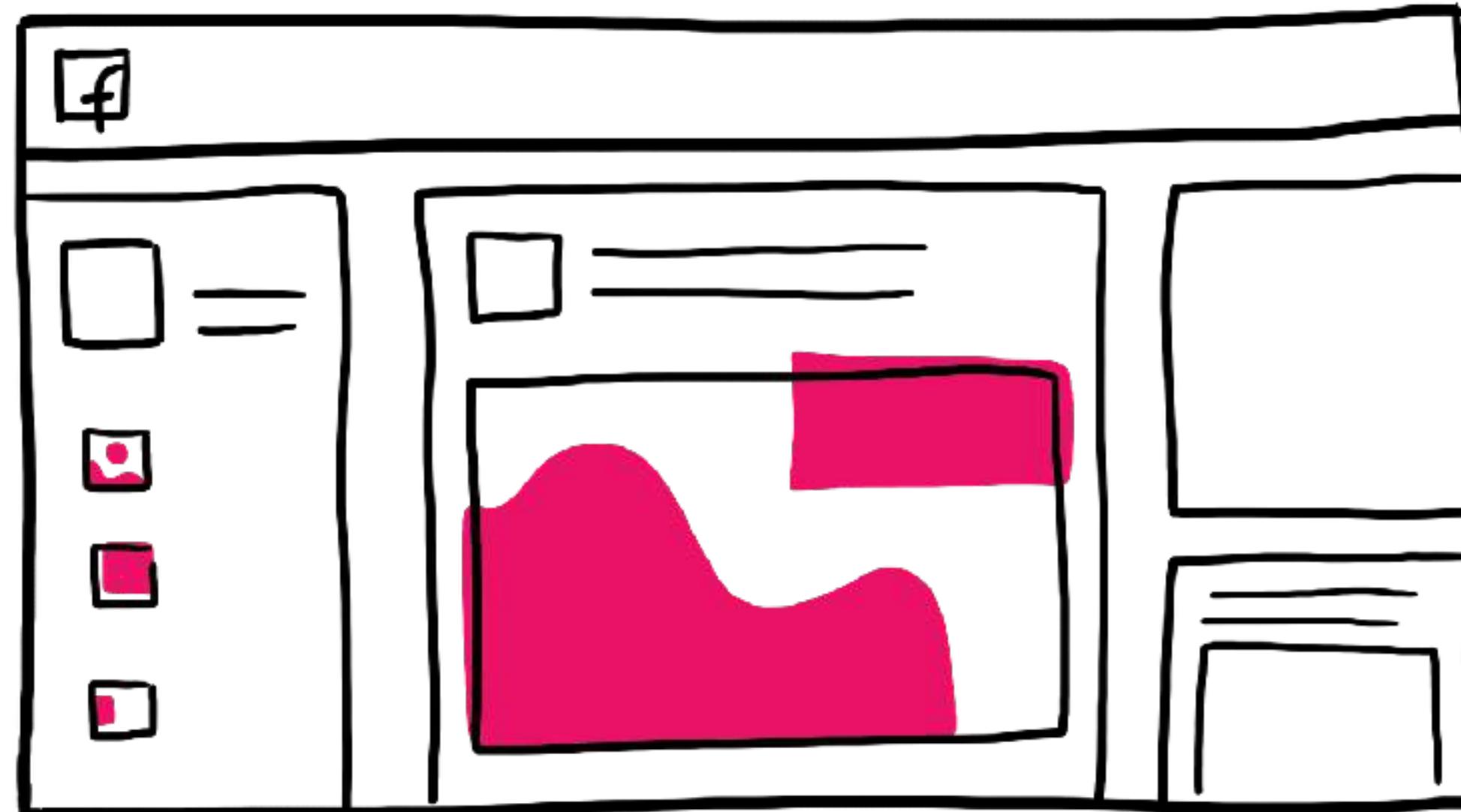
Cons

- + requires high amount of users

Currency

Conversion rate (%)

Target audience B2C B2B**Kind** Evaluative Generative**Perfect to test** Problem Solution Features Biz Model Pricing



Ad campaign (online)

Use Ad campaigns as a way to validate the market.

Ad campaign (online)

Use Ad campaigns as a way to validate the market.

You can use online advertising services such as Facebook, Google and LinkedIn to test your offering with the particular target customers you are trying to reach. With this low-fidelity test, you could gain insights into how much your customers are willing to pay, the market size, the cost of selling. You could also see which features or aspects of your offering is most appealing to your target customers by analysis of click-through-rates and conversions. Additionally, using paid banner ads and keywords can be used to drive traffic from the ads to your landing page. This allows for more information on what is actually compelling to your customer.

Pros

- + speed
- + information quality

Tools

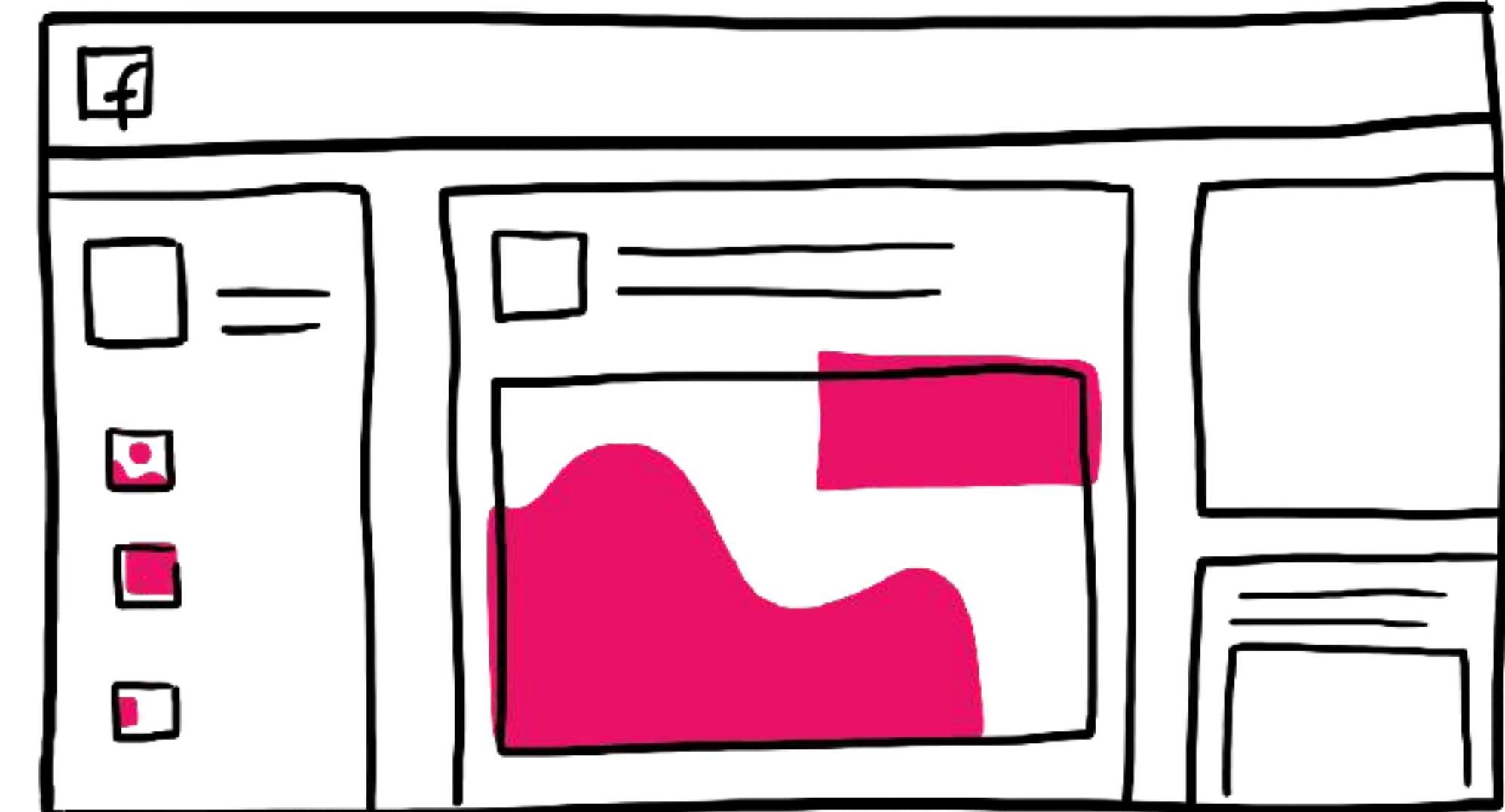
- + [Facebook for Business](#)
- + [Google Adwords](#)
- + [LinkedIn](#)

Cons

- + price

Currency

- Conversion rate (%)
- Clicks

**Target audience**

- B2C

- B2B

Kind

- Evaluative

- Generative

Perfect to test

- Problem

- Solution

- Features

- Biz Model

- Pricing

Experiment, then what?

Our team of innovators help corporates validate new business propositions, to ensure the creation of viable, feasible and desirable services.

Validation as a Service

Did we miss anything? Reach out!

say hi  → hello@boardofinnovation.com



Board of
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