# Working Backwards Document Template

**About this template:** It’s designed for you to create an effective Working Backwards document.

**Instructions:** This is your template to create your Working Backwards document – *just start typing.* Each section has instructions, tips and a quick start guide for the three components of the Working Backwards process (Press Release, FAQs and Visuals).

**Question, Comments, Success Stories**: Tell us at [cxbr-mailbox@amazon.com](mailto:cxbr-mailbox@amazon.com)

## Kick-Start: Answer the 5 Customer Questions

Before you begin, answer these five questions. Having clear answers to these questions will help you get started and clarify your thinking. Want to dive deep? Answer the 5 customer questions using [Working Backwards Online](https://workingbackwards.corp.amazon.com/elective-training/answering-5-customer-questions/) and download your answers as a word doc.

1. Who is the customer?
2. What is the customer problem or opportunity?
3. What is the most important customer benefit?
4. How do you know what customers need or want?
5. What does the customer experience look like?

**Press Release**

With the press release, you leap into the future and imagine how you want a customer to feel and what you want them to say when they experience the product, feature or service you want to build. When you write your press release, imagine that your customer is going to read it. It’s a one-page narrative explaining your vision using customer-centric language. Learn more about Press Releaseson the [wiki](https://w.amazon.com/index.php/Press_Release) or use the [Drafting the Press Release](https://workingbackwards.corp.amazon.com/elective-training/drafting-press-release/) toolkit on Working Backwards Online.

**Tips for creating a Press Release**

* First, answer the 5 Working Backwards Questions (see above).
* Imagine that your customer is going to read the press release. Use as few words as possible and choose words that your customer understands.
* Instead of naming your product of service, describe what the new experience is.
* Avoid Marketing Buzz Words (e.g. simple, easy, fast). Let the reader decide if it's “easy” to use.
* Put the most important info first. Imagine no one reads past the first paragraph (don’t bury the lead).
* Only include metrics and data that matters to your customer (e.g. their time, their money).
* Tell a compelling story.
* Write your headline last - make it succinct and compelling.

**Quick Start Guide: A suggested Press Release outline**

1. **Heading**

* **Headline:** Short, compelling description (write the headline last).
* **One-Sentence Summary** (*the gist*): Describe what you’re launching and the most important benefit the customer will receive. (Tip: This is your elevator pitch. Keep it simple.)
* **Date:** Your future launch date (e.g. June 1, 2018). This informs the reader that it hasn’t yet launched and sets the expectation when it will launch.

1. **Summary** of what it is. The first paragraph should assume the person will not read the entire press release, so make it count! Don’t bury the lead.
   * **Start with the Customer:** The first sentence of the body states precisely who the customer is and the benefit you will provide. For example, *‘Amazon Prime customers now receive 30-minute early access to Lightning Deals providing additional savings on popular products.’*

* **Describe What You’re Launching:**  Use words your customer will understand. Before naming your product or service, explain what the product or service is. If you must name your product or service put the name in [brackets].

1. **The Opportunity or The Problem** needs to be customer-focused. Clearly explain the opportunity or the problem that needs to be solved. Don’t falsely amplify the problem or opportunity. Be factual, but compelling. Avoid using exaggeration.
2. **The Approach or The Solution:** Clearly explain your vision for how to make the most of an opportunity that will benefit the customer or how you will solve the customer’s problem.
3. **Quote an Amazon Leader:** Don’t make this up. Get a real quote from an Amazon Leader. Having this shows that you have support for your idea. The leader quote should capture the value that will be provided to the customer. (Tip: To get a quote, share an early version of the press release with a leader).
4. **Describe the Customer Experience:** Describe how customers will discover and use what you propose and the value they will gain. Your goal with this paragraph is to motivate the reader to want to try it out.
5. **A Customer Testimonial** is made up, but should be specific, believable, and sound like a human said it. Use the testimonial to reinforce why the customer cares about what you're launching.
6. **Call to Action:** Direct the reader to where they can go to get started (e.g. a link).
7. **Footer:** Include “Amazon Confidential” at the bottom.

**FAQs**

FAQs are a tool that drives customer focus and clarity for decisions we make on any project at Amazon. Use FAQs to channel your customer and anticipate answers to questions that stakeholders may ask while you are planning and executing your project. While your press release describes the essence of your idea, the FAQs provide details and data.

Include two separate sections in your FAQs: Customer FAQs and Stakeholders FAQs. By asking and answering these questions you anticipate the customer’s needs and the important topics your stakeholders will ask about. [View the wiki to learn more about creating FAQs.](https://w.amazon.com/index.php/FAQ#What_are_Working_Backwards_FAQs)

**Tips for Creating FAQs**

* Ask your leadership team if there are specific FAQs they expect you to include.
* Include two separate sets of FAQs:
  + Customer FAQs
  + Stakeholder FAQs
* Put the most frequently asked questions at the top
* Answer the Customer FAQs as if you were talking to a real customer
* Ask the basic questions (Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?)
* Include the hard questions that are tough to answer

**Quick Start: Favorite Example FAQs from STEAM Working Backwards Best Practice discussion**

1. What decisions and guidance do we need today?
2. What is the idea/vision?
3. What customer problems are we solving?  Why now?
4. Why should customers care? How is this better than what already exists?
5. Why us?  How does this leverage our flywheel?
6. If successful, how big could this be?  Why is it a good business?
7. What are our MLP features?
8. What will customers be most disappointed in?
9. What other options did we consider and reject?
10. What are our hotly debated topics?  Are all hotly debated topics included?
11. How long has the team been working on this doc, and how many levels of review has it gone through to date?
12. How do I find this? How do I get started?
13. How do I *[complete the main task - e.g. Return an item]*?
14. How can I get help if I have a problem?
15. Can I use this on my mobile devices? If yes, how’s the experience?
16. I'm located outside the U.S. – can I use this?
17. *For Prime:* I'm a Prime Member, how does this affect me?

*The short list above should get you started. View the wiki and include additional customer and stakeholder FAQs.*

[**View Customer FAQs on wiki**](https://w.amazon.com/bin/view/WorkingBackwards/FAQ/#HCustomerFAQs)

[**View Stakeholder FAQS on wiki**](https://w.amazon.com/bin/view/WorkingBackwards/FAQ/#HStakeholderFAQs)

**Visuals**

A picture is worth a thousand words. Use visuals to communicate what the customer experience looks like alongside your Press Release and FAQs. Show how customers will discover your idea, and what will they want to be able to do with it.

Visuals can take many forms — it may be a sketch on a whiteboard, a workflow diagram, storyboard, customer journey map, wireframe, prototype, technical architecture document, or any other form that helps communicate the idea. The fidelity of your visuals should match the maturity of the idea. If you start out with high-fidelity visuals first, people will get into “pixel pushing mode” - meaning they’ll talk about how it looks, but not the customer experience.

**Tips for creating Visuals**

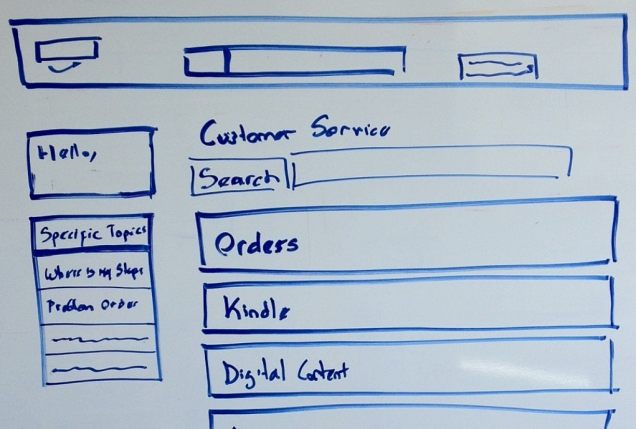
* Start out with hand drawn visuals
* Don't build a prototype if you're still iterating on the idea
* Get design involved early
* Start with the most important scenario (e.g. your best customers)

**Quick Start Guide:**

*Your best tools for creating visuals are a whiteboard, a marker and a smartphone*

1. Draw it on a whiteboard
2. Take a picture with your phone
3. Paste it in your doc

*Example of a hand drawn visual for the redesign of Amazon’s Help Pages*

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