# Analysis of Dodem's Customer Segments vs. Startup Best Practices

## Lean Startup Best Practice: Separate Users and Paying Customers

In Lean Startup (and Lean Canvas) methodology, it is **essential to distinguish between end users and paying customers** if they are not the same person[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments). In other words, *users* are the ones who actually use the product, while *customers* are the ones who pay for it[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments). This distinction is crucial for multi-sided or B2B2C businesses because each group may have different needs, motivations, and value propositions. Best practices recommend explicitly identifying each segment and understanding their specific problems and motivations, rather than lumping them together. By doing so, a startup can tailor its product features, marketing messages, and channels to each segment effectively. It also ensures you don’t confuse the **buyer’s needs** with the **end-user’s needs**, which is a common mistake to avoid. In a Lean Canvas, you would list both categories of customers under the Customer Segments block (and even highlight which are payers vs. users) to keep this clarity[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments).

**Why this matters:** If the person who decides to purchase is different from the person who uses the product, their pain points and criteria for success will differ. A startup must satisfy **both** for the business model to work. For example, a parent might pay for a tutoring app, but the child is the end user; the parent cares about outcomes and safety, while the child cares about ease of use and fun. In Dodem’s case, the family member cares about saving time and ensuring the senior’s safety, whereas the senior cares about getting immediate, easy guidance without fear. Lean startup best practice is to document each segment’s profile separately and validate their problems and needs individually.

## Identified Customer Segments in the Dodem Case

From the provided description, Dodem has identified **three key customer segments** (with some sub-segmentation within them):

* **Seniors 60+ (End Users):** Older adults who struggle with complex digital interfaces and need hands-on guidance.
* **Families Aged 20–50 (Paying Customers):** Adult children or relatives of seniors, effectively the “informal tech support” for their family, who would be the decision-makers and purchasers of Dodem.
* **Local Institutions (Partners/Channels):** Organizations like Universities of the Third Age (UTW), community centers, NGOs, banks, etc., which provide digital skills training to seniors and could adopt Dodem as a tool to scale and improve their programs.

Each of these segments is defined based on their role (user vs. buyer), their **pain points**, and what they seek from a solution. This approach of segmenting by role and need is consistent with best practices, ensuring that **the paying customer is not mixed up with the end user** in the analysis. Below is a closer look at each segment and whether it’s defined correctly according to startup best practice:

### Segment 1: Seniors 60+ (Primary End Users)

This segment is clearly identified as the **end users** of Dodem. They are people around retirement age or older who **want to handle online tasks independently** (e.g. online banking, government portals, email and messaging) but face barriers due to low digital skills and unfriendly interfaces. The description provides solid detail on their problem: complex UIs, fear of making mistakes, lack of real-time guidance, leading to frustration or giving up. It also quantifies the scale of the problem – for instance, noting that in Poland ~7.2 million people aged 55–74 lack basic digital skills, and globally the 60+ population is over 1 billion. Indeed, data confirms that **digital exclusion is very high among seniors** (only about 28% of EU residents aged 65–74 have at least basic digital skills, meaning roughly 72% do not; in Poland, as few as ~15% of seniors 60–74 have basic digital skills[[2]](https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/en/defaultaktualnosci/3618/1/6/1/the_situation_of_older_people_in_poland_in_2023.pdf#:~:text=was%2015.4,People%20aged%2060%E2%80%9374)). This enormous gap supports the idea that many seniors could benefit from a tool like Dodem.

From a **startup best practice perspective**, the segment of “seniors 60+ with low digital proficiency” is well-defined because it is anchored in a specific **problem to solve** (digital independence) rather than just a demographic. Dodem’s description even breaks this user group into functional sub-segments by behavior and needs: e.g. *“Beginners and anxious users”* who need very micro step-by-step help, vs. *“moderately independent users”* who only get stuck on a specific step, vs. *“users with impairments”* who need accessibility features. This sub-segmentation is excellent – it shows the startup recognizes diversity within the senior user group and plans to accommodate different needs (high contrast text, larger fonts, text-to-speech, etc. for those with impairments, which aligns with WCAG guidelines).

**Why it’s correct:** The seniors are **not** assumed to be the direct paying customers here, but they are absolutely a critical customer segment because without their adoption and usage, the product has no value. Best practices say to include such end-user segments in your canvas and planning (especially in multi-actor models) so you can craft a strong value proposition for them[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments). Dodem’s materials clearly articulate the seniors’ fears (e.g. scams, making errors) and needs (“Guide me now, on my screen, step by step”). This shows a deep understanding of the end user’s **Job-to-be-Done** – the senior *“wants to complete the task on my own without asking family for help”*. This focus on the user’s perspective is exactly what a good **Problem Statement** should capture in a Lean Canvas (identify who has the problem and what is the **real** pain point). The text explicitly states the real problem: *“A senior does not need another video or general chatbot; they need immediate, contextual, on-screen guidance at the moment of struggle.”* This clarity is a strong sign that the segment is defined around a genuine need, which is best practice.

One thing to watch: *“Seniors 60+”* is a broad category globally. The startup will likely need to focus further (perhaps starting with a subset like seniors in Poland who are already attempting online banking, etc.). The good news is the document does mention **early adopters** implicitly – for example, those seniors who *want* to try digital services (like Anna, 72, who is motivated to view photos and manage banking online) would be the first users to target, as opposed to those who are completely offline and uninterested. Lean methodology encourages identifying such early adopters within a segment. Dodem’s persona “Anna” is a great representation of an early adopter senior: independent in daily life and motivated to use the internet if given the right help. This persona and her quote (“When I get stuck, I want an immediate hint on my screen… so I don’t break anything and can finish the task on my own”) align perfectly with the product’s value proposition.

**Verdict for Segment 1:** **Correctly defined.** The startup clearly understands this end-user segment’s demographics (older adults), psychographics (desire for independence vs. fear of technology), and specific needs (simplified, in-situ guidance). They have not conflated this group with the buyers; they treat them as beneficiaries whose successful outcomes (e.g. *“more tasks completed without help, fewer errors”*) will drive the product’s value. This is in line with best practices: treat the end user as a distinct customer segment with its own problems and success metrics, even if someone else is paying[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments).

### Segment 2: Families Aged 20–50 (Buyer/Decision-Maker)

The second segment identified is the **family members (typically adult children or caregivers)** of those seniors. This group is explicitly described as **the “real decision-makers” and informal tech support** for the senior. In startup terms, this is the **economic buyer** in the B2C model – the person who actually **pays for the solution** (via subscription) to benefit someone else (their elderly parent). Dodem’s description gives a clear picture: for example, *Marek, 45, the son who gets 2–4 calls a week from his mom for help, sometimes has to remote into her computer.* They quantify this pain point beautifully: families spend **3–5 hours per month** supporting a senior with tech issues, which nationwide in Poland is ~86 million hours/year (worth nearly PLN 2 billion in opportunity cost!). This quantification is a great practice because it turns a vague annoyance into a concrete economic problem that a solution can address. It answers “why would a customer pay for this?” — because *time is money*, and Dodem could save each household roughly PLN 540–1,680 per year in time value (as they estimated). Highlighting the **opportunity cost** and emotional stress on families (time, nerves, worry about scams) shows a deep understanding of this segment’s motivation.

From a best practice standpoint, defining this segment separately is absolutely **correct**. They are **the paying customer** in the B2C scenario, and as such they have distinct needs from the end user. Lean Canvas guidelines explicitly say to list those who pay separate from those who use the product. Dodem does this by creating a separate persona “Marek” for the family member, with motivations like *“my mom’s safety, saving my time, peace of mind.”* These are quite different from Anna’s motivations, and they drive the purchasing decision. The material also identifies the **decision criteria** for this segment: e.g. privacy assurances (so the son knows the tool won’t expose passwords or data), ease of setup (so he can onboard his mom in 10 minutes), and effectiveness (“will it actually help Mom use her bank without calling me?”). This aligns with best practices of B2C customer segmentation, where you must know the **jobs-to-be-done of the buyer**: in this case, *reduce my support burden and protect my senior family member*.

It’s also good that they’ve thought about **objection handling** for this segment (e.g. *“Won’t it be too difficult for her?”* or *“Will it work with her bank app?”*). This shows they’ve really stepped into the shoes of the family member, which is exactly what you want when defining a segment – it’s not just about age range, but about the specific pain points and questions that segment has. The provided text addresses these, meaning the segment definition is **actionable** (the startup can craft marketing messages and features to directly answer these concerns).

Additionally, by defining the family as the buyer, Dodem acknowledges a key fact: many seniors on their own **may not seek out or pay for a tech solution**, either due to lack of awareness or income concerns. It’s often their children or younger relatives who will **take initiative** to find and install such a tool for them. This two-sided nature (senior as user, child as customer) is very common in eldercare technology, and ignoring it is a mistake some startups make. Dodem is *not* making that mistake – they explicitly treat it as a complementary pair of segments. This is in line with multi-sided business model logic, where “you only get to capture value after you create value for your users” but you might monetize via a different group[[3]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=In%20a%20multi,actor%20model). The family segment sees value in the senior’s independence (fewer panicked phone calls, less worry), and the senior sees value in the actual guidance; **Dodem must deliver to both**.

**Verdict for Segment 2:** **Correctly defined.** The family/children segment is articulated in terms of their unique needs (time saving, assurance of safety) and willingness to pay for those benefits. They are not conflated with the seniors; instead, the relationship between the two segments is clearly explained (the family buys for the senior’s benefit). This separation follows startup best practices, ensuring that the product’s value proposition and marketing can be targeted appropriately to the buyer persona (e.g. emphasizing trust, security, and ease to the family) while a great user experience is targeted to the senior. It might be useful going forward to further pinpoint **early adopters within this family segment** – for example, tech-savvy adults who are already inclined to try new apps or who live far from their parents (and thus *really* need a remote solution). But overall, the segment definition is strong and backed by evidence that the problem is significant.

### Segment 3: Local Institutions (B2B2C Partners)

The third segment mentioned is a B2B(2C) segment – local institutions such as Universities of the Third Age, senior community centers, libraries, NGOs, as well as banks or clinics that have initiatives for senior customers. These are organizations that **work with seniors regularly**, often running digital literacy classes or outreach, but *“lack a tool that scales”* individualized support for those seniors once they go home. This is essentially a **channel/distribution segment** combined with a customer segment, because Dodem can sell licenses or subscriptions to these institutions (who would either pay on behalf of their seniors or include it as part of their service offering). The description outlines their needs well: they want to **extend learning beyond the classroom**, provide a *safe practice environment* for seniors, and measure outcomes (since they mention pilot reports and effect metrics). The institutions also have constraints like data protection (GDPR compliance) and no integration on the IT side – Dodem addresses these by being an overlay solution that doesn’t require backend integration, and by design for privacy.

From a best practice viewpoint, including this segment shows that Dodem recognizes a **multi-channel strategy** and a potentially faster route to reach many seniors (through trusted institutions). Importantly, these institutional partners are **a different customer type** than individual families – they will have a different sales cycle (likely needing demos, pilot programs, and proof of effectiveness), and they derive value in slightly different terms (impact and **inclusion outcomes** rather than just time saved). Dodem’s text reflects this: institutions care about *“image of a helping institution, measurable progress indicators, loyalty of seniors and families”*. This is a distinct value proposition: for example, a bank could license Dodem to help its senior clients navigate e-banking, thereby reducing support calls and building goodwill/trust with older customers. That value story is not the same as Marek’s story (which is about one household), so it’s right that the plan treats **institutions as a separate segment** with tailored messaging.

In a Business Model Canvas, this scenario can be considered a **multi-sided market or a B2B2C model**. Best practices often suggest you may need to create separate canvases or at least clearly mark which value propositions and revenue streams correspond to which segment when you have two very different segments. Dodem’s approach in the document is to list both B2C and B2B2C models under distribution and revenue, which is fine as long as they remain clearly distinguished. The question specifically was about not mixing paying client and end user – and here, the **paying client is the institution**, while the **end users remain the seniors** (the same seniors 60+). However, note that the institution segment isn’t exactly the *same* as the family segment, so this is actually a third type of customer. The startup correctly identifies that and does not try to mash the institution’s needs in with the consumer segments. They even enumerate *cooperation criteria* (quick pilot, ready scenarios, etc.), which shows a good grasp of this segment’s practical requirements.

One subtlety: In some frameworks, one might categorize these institutions as **Key Partners or Channels** rather than customer segments, because the end beneficiaries are still the seniors. However, since Dodem plans to **generate revenue directly from these institutions (SaaS license fees)**, they do indeed function as customers too. It’s valid to treat them as a customer segment in the business model, which Dodem does. The critical point is that the value proposition for an institution (e.g. *“improve your program’s effectiveness by 50% and prove impact with data”*) differs from the value proposition to a family or a senior. The provided text acknowledges this difference (focusing on effectiveness of training programs, ease of deployment, GDPR compliance for institutions). That alignment of product offering to each segment’s needs is exactly what a good segmentation should achieve.

**Verdict for Segment 3:** **Well defined** as a separate B2B segment. It shows the startup is thinking about a scalable way to reach more end users by leveraging existing organizations. This segment is **complementary** to the direct consumer segments, and the plan delineates it clearly (even including what a pilot entails and success metrics for institutions). According to best practices, when you have a multi-sided model, you should articulate each side’s needs clearly and not assume they are the same[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments). Dodem is doing that by listing these partners separately. The only caution is that serving both consumers and institutions early on can be resource-intensive – many startups choose one primary beachhead market first. The document does hint that they know this (they have TAM/SAM/SOM where SOM focuses on Poland/EU and likely early adopters through certain channels). If needed, they could initially focus on, say, partnerships with a few local UTWs to gain traction (that might double as a user acquisition strategy), or alternatively focus on families via online marketing first. In any case, identifying the segment is the first step, and they’ve done that correctly. The next step (beyond this analysis) would be prioritizing and testing assumptions for each segment sequentially[[4]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=We%20can%2C%20for%20instance%2C%20be,audience%E2%80%9D%20in%20the%20first%20place) – but that goes into strategy beyond definition.

## Alignment with Lean Canvas and Best Practices

Overall, the customer segments defined for Dodem are **in line with startup best practices**. They have **explicitly separated the end user (seniors)** from the two types of customers who will pay (family members in B2C, and institutions in B2B2C), exactly as Lean Canvas guidelines advise. This ensures that in their business model hypotheses, they can map each segment to: specific **Problems**, tailored **Value Propositions**, appropriate **Channels**, and distinct **Revenue streams**. For example:

* The **Senior segment** connects to the problem of *digital exclusion and fear*, and the value proposition of *“a mentor on your screen guiding you step-by-step”*. The channel to reach them is indirectly through family or institutions, and success is measured in tasks completed independently.
* The **Family segment** connects to the problem of *time drain and worry*, and the value prop of *“peace of mind and time saved – your senior is safely self-sufficient online”*. Channels include digital marketing (Instagram/LinkedIn as mentioned) targeting the caregivers, and perhaps referrals. Revenue is subscription fees paid by this segment.
* The **Institution segment** connects to the problem of *lack of scalable training impact*, with a value prop of *“extend your digital inclusion efforts beyond the classroom with real-time guidance at home”*. Channels are B2B sales or partnerships (pilots, workshops), and revenue comes from license fees and training packages.

Crucially, **each segment is described in terms of its needs and pains**, not just a demographic label. This is good practice because effective segmentation is about grouping customers by common needs/behaviors. For instance, not all people over 60 are the same – Dodem focuses on those over 60 who *want* to use digital services but can’t easily. That’s a need-based segment. Similarly, not all adult children will be target customers – Dodem is interested in those who are actively helping their parents and feeling the pain of it (they even mentioned Marek will see an ad “after another call from his mom,” implying the marketing targets moments of frustration). This shows a nuanced understanding of **customer personas and journeys**, which is exactly what we encourage in early-stage startup planning.

The question asked if the client segments are **“correctly defined according to startup best practice”** and expressed a concern about mixing paying clients with end users. Based on the analysis:

* **They have correctly separated the paying customer from the end user.** Seniors (end users) are not assumed to be the ones opening their wallets; the proposition to them is usage-focused (independence, guidance), whereas the proposition to the paying customers (families or institutions) is outcome-focused (time saved, safer transactions, program effectiveness). This clear split follows best practice and avoids the pitfall of a vague “our customer is everyone” statement. Instead, each segment is defined with a clear role in the ecosystem.
* Each segment definition is backed by **data or interview insights**, which strengthens their validity. For example, interviews with 10 senior course instructors validated that *lack of a safe practice environment* is a bigger issue than lack of content – this insight supports the need of the senior segment. Quantifying hours and money lost supports the family segment’s definition. Citing Eurostat data on digital skills gap supports the overall market need. This evidence-based approach is very much in line with Lean Startup’s emphasis on validating assumptions with facts.
* They’ve also implicitly considered the **interdependence** of the segments. The success of the product requires both the senior to use it and the family to see value in paying. Dodem’s narrative recognizes this: e.g., the Customer Journey describes how Marek (family) buys and onboards Anna (senior), and then Anna succeeds and Marek’s pain is relieved. This systems thinking is important in multi-actor models, and they’ve communicated it well.

**Areas for potential improvement (minor):** The segments as defined are quite comprehensive. If anything, the startup should ensure it doesn’t try to tackle all segments with equal force at once. Lean best practice would suggest identifying a **primary beachhead** – perhaps starting in a local market with a specific channel. For instance, an early focus could be “Families in Poland who are already somewhat digitally active and have 65+ parents struggling with online banking” – these could be the early adopters for the B2C side. Or an initial B2B2C pilot with a couple of Third Age Universities to get case studies. The provided SOM (Serviceable Obtainable Market) of ~60,600 users in 36 months indicates they have a realistic phased approach, targeting Poland and select markets first, which is good. Just as Ash Maurya suggests, if needed they could even sketch two Lean Canvases – one for the consumer model and one for the institutional model – to ensure each side’s assumptions are tested without confusion. But as far as **defining** the segments, they have done it correctly by clearly labeling who is the user vs. who is the customer, and addressing each separately.

## Conclusion

Dodem’s client segments appear to be **well-defined and aligned with startup best practices**. The founders have correctly identified that the **end user (the senior)** and the **paying customer (the family, and also institutions in another stream)** are different groups, and they have treated them as such in their analysis. This separation is explicitly recommended in Lean Canvas methodology to avoid mixing motivations. Each segment is described in detail: the senior’s problem of digital exclusion, the family’s problem of time and worry, and the institution’s problem of unscalable training. By articulating these needs clearly and backing them with data and personas, the startup is following a customer-centric approach. They are not simply defining segments by age or category, but by **the problem each segment faces and the solution they seek**, which is the essence of good segmentation in a startup context.

In summary, **yes – the client segments are correctly defined**. Seniors 60+ are the end users with a distinct set of needs, and are not assumed to be the direct source of revenue. The families (20–50 age decision-makers) are identified as the purchasers, with their own motivation for buying – this adheres to the principle “customers (those who pay) vs. users (those who use)”. Additionally, the inclusion of local institutions as a separate segment/channel is logical for this product and is handled in a way that doesn’t muddle the core value propositions. Each segment can be mapped to corresponding value propositions and metrics (e.g., **seniors gain independence, families gain time/safety, institutions gain effectiveness**), which indicates the segments are not only well-defined but also strategically useful.

Going forward, the key will be to focus on one or both of these segments in a lean experimentation process – but the groundwork of defining **who has the problem and who would pay** is clearly done right. Dodem’s approach exemplifies strong alignment with Lean Startup and Business Model Canvas practices in the realm of customer segmentation, and they have successfully avoided the pitfall of mixing the paying customer with the end user in their planning.

**Sources:** Lean Canvas guidelines on customer segmentation[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments); Eurostat and Polish Statistics on digital skill gaps in seniors[[2]](https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/en/defaultaktualnosci/3618/1/6/1/the_situation_of_older_people_in_poland_in_2023.pdf#:~:text=was%2015.4,People%20aged%2060%E2%80%9374) which underline the need in the senior segment.

[[1]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20direct%20business%20model,and%20customers%20are%20distinct%20segments) [[3]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=In%20a%20multi,actor%20model) [[4]](https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39#:~:text=We%20can%2C%20for%20instance%2C%20be,audience%E2%80%9D%20in%20the%20first%20place) Facebook Lean Canvas: How to Model a Multi-sided Business | by Ash Maurya | Love the Problem | Medium

<https://medium.com/lean-stack/how-to-model-a-multi-sided-business-60f2d7613e39>

[[2]](https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/en/defaultaktualnosci/3618/1/6/1/the_situation_of_older_people_in_poland_in_2023.pdf#:~:text=was%2015.4,People%20aged%2060%E2%80%9374) stat.gov.pl

<https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/en/defaultaktualnosci/3618/1/6/1/the_situation_of_older_people_in_poland_in_2023.pdf>