

Working Backwards Workshop Companion

Working Backwards process and questions

The Working Backwards process is a mechanism designed to help people create innovations that focus on customers, and to support investment decisions based on a vision, evidence, and a thorough discussion. It consists of the Working Backwards questions, a PRFAQ document and review, experiments to validate or disprove assumptions, and quick product builds, launches, and iterations.

Who is the Customer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific. • Identify the customer that represents the biggest problem you want to solve most prominently. The more focused you are, the more unique and delightful the solution will be. <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Swedish resident, who has a family with young children, and manages their family's affairs. • A CIO of a large enterprise in a traditional industry who manages hundreds of business applications. • A university technical degree graduate who has no work experience in the field of expertise they studied.
What is the Customer problem or opportunity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are they frustrated with today? • What is the missed opportunity they don't leverage? <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Family persons] struggle with different, multi-step, login methods to various digital services at banks, public services, healthcare and education providers. • [CIOs] lack up-to-date information about the status of critical application. • [Students] cannot get a chance to build and demonstrate their skills and start their career.
What is the most important customer benefit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider their priorities. • What is the one thing they care about most? • Think in terms of values rather than features + Speed? Quality? Cost? Reliability? Simplicity? Visibility? <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Family persons] Simplicity (would you prioritize speed or security?) • [CIOs] Control • [Students] Access (would you prioritize visibility or exposure?)
How do you know what customers need or want?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which data and observations do we have that indicates the existence of the problem or opportunity? • Are there any noteworthy anecdotes and what do they teach us? • What do we know about the scope and impact of the problem? • What information are we missing and how might we find it out?
What does the customer experience look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of solution/product do we imagine? • How does it deliver the most important customer benefit? • How will the solution make customers feel?

A Today statement captures the essence of the customer problem or opportunity

Today [customers]
Have to [customer problem]
When [situation when the problem occurs]
[Customers] need [most important benefit]

Today Statement – example

Today Swedish residents, who have a family with young children, and manage their family's affairs, have to remember different passwords and go through multi-step verification processes, whenever they need to use digital services at banks, public services, healthcare or education providers. They need a simple way to use digital services which require secure identity verification.

Breakout 1 – Working Backwards questions and a Today statement

- ✓ **Together (5')**: Select one of the business domains from the list.
- ✓ **Pairs (15')**: go through WB questions 1 to 3 and draft a today statement.
- ✓ **Together (5')**: Compare statements and refine into ONE you'll work on together during the 2nd breakout.
- ✓ **Do NOT discuss solutions yet!!!**
- ✓ Send your final today statement to amir@thinkbigleaders.com



PRFAQ Document

The PRFAQ document helps the team articulate the idea for innovation in a clear and customer-centric way and allows effective sharing and discussion with stakeholder. It informs decisions, and later guides the teams who build and implement the solution. It also let the team openly share their assumptions, unknowns and planned experiments, as well as be clear about resources and support that they need.

The document typically consists of 3 components:

Press Release (PR)	The press release (PR) is a one-page document explaining the vision for a business or product. It is a tool focused strictly on customers and not on internal structure or financial goals. We leap into the future imagining how we want customers to feel and experience a product, feature, or service that does not yet exist.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are up to 5 pages that complement the PR and dive into details. There are two types of FAQs, Customer FAQs answer potential customer questions or concerns, and Stakeholder FAQs address internal questions such as business or technical choices and assumptions.
Visuals (optional)	Add visual information to the document, by showing a sketch of key elements the user interface, a storyboard of the customer journey, or a high-level design and architecture of the solution.

Press Release structure

Headline [Short, compelling description, 5-7 words]

Subheading [What is being launched, and the most important customer benefit]

Short summary/ "Elevator pitch": Describe what you're launching and the most important benefit + launch date to set expectations.

Customer problem/opportunity: Clearly explain the opportunity or problem you are solving with your product or service, make sure you focus on the customer problem.

Approach/solution: The vision for how to solve the customer problem. An overall description of the new product or service you are launching.

Leader quote: A quote from an appropriate leader within your company. Reinforces the value that will be provided and articulates the vision of the solution.

Customer experience/journey: Describe how customers typically encounter and use the new product or service.

Customer testimonial: A fictional customer quote reinforcing why the customer cares. It is specific, believable, and uses a language they would use.

Call to action: Where would users go to start using the product or service.

Breakout 2 – Drafting parts of the PRFAQ document

- ✓ **Together** (10'): do "Yes and..." exercise to come up with solution ideas. Vote on and select **ONE** idea.
- ✓ **Groups of 2-3** (25'): write 1). a customer testimonial, and 2). a summary paragraph.
- ✓ **Together** (10'): combine your texts into one draft, add a headline.
- ✓ **Optional:** play with the AWS PartyRock "[PRFAQ Generator](#)" app
- ✓ Send the PRFAQ paragraphs to amir@thinkbigleaders.com