

Contextual Analysis of the Jobs-to-be-Done Framework

Part 1: The Jobs-to-be-Done Framework

1.1 Overview

The Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD) framework views consumers as 'hiring' a product or service to complete a 'job' (Christensen et al., 2005). Christensen et al. (2005) quote Theodore Levitt, a Harvard marketing professor, as saying, "people don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill. They want a quarter-inch hole." This aphorism embodies the principal idea of the framework: that people hire a product or service not for its features, but to complete a task or solve a problem in their lives. This encourages a shift in the way products or services should be designed and developed, from focusing on the product itself, to focusing on what job the consumer is hiring the product to achieve. By determining and analysing a core 'job', businesses can gain a much deeper understanding of *why* consumers hire their product or service and thereby create more impactful improvements.

Christensen et al. (2005) provide the example of a fast-food restaurant seeking to improve milkshake sales. Despite numerous improvements to the product itself, they saw no increase in sales performance. A researcher decided to shift the focus away from the product and instead focus on what job the customers were hiring the product to complete. Through interviews, they determined that most customers purchased a milkshake because they needed something substantial that they could cleanly consume while driving, that would make their morning commute more interesting. Consumers were not purchasing this business' milkshake because it was the best milkshake on the market; they were purchasing it as the most convenient option to complete this job. With this knowledge, the business was able to make much more meaningful improvements to their product, focusing on convenience rather than the product itself.

Jobs are never purely functional, and it is important to consider the emotional and social dimensions of a job (Christensen et al., 2016). This is best described by an example. Consider a couple who are buying a car seat for their newborn. The functional dimension of the job is clear: to keep their child safe whilst travelling in a car. However, understanding the emotional and social dimensions of this job can create a better picture of how the product should be designed. Emotionally, the consumer wants to feel that their baby is safe, and that they are being good parents. Socially, they want peers to *perceive* them as good parents that care about the safety of their child. Therefore, focus should be on branding the product as premium and dependable, and making it clearly distinguishable from competitors.

1.2 History

The Jobs-to-be-Done concept was originally formed in 1991 by Anthony Ulwick under the name Outcome-Driven Development (Ulwick, 2016), but has traces back to the 1960s, with Christensen citing Theodore Levitt as inspiration for the idea (Christensen et al., 2005). Ulwick introduced Outcome-Driven Innovation (ODI) to Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen in 1999, who developed it into the Jobs-to-be-Done theory and popularised it in his 2003 book *The Innovator's Solution* (Ulwick, 2016). Since then, the framework has been adopted across the world.

1.3 Significance for Current and Future Innovations

Approximately 75% of consumer goods and retail products fail financially (Schneider & Hall, 2011), often because they do not solve a clear job to be done (Christensen et al., 2020). The impact of the Jobs-to-be-Done framework is significant, as it offers a new approach to market segmentation that directly addresses this issue. Traditional demographic or product-based schemes fail to accurately identify *why* a certain consumer hires a product or service, instead focusing on superficial traits such as age, sex, or location. The Jobs-to-be-Done framework segments the market by consumer motivation. As Christensen et al. (2020) emphasise, "what causes a consumer to make a purchase is having a job to do." Therefore, Jobs-to-be-Done asserts that "the *job*, and not the customer or the product, should be the fundamental unit of market segmentation and analysis" (Christensen et al., 2020).

This makes the Jobs-to-be-Done framework crucial in guiding customer-centric product development. Businesses using the framework can more accurately identify market gaps, and develop more effective solutions tailored to actual consumer demands (Ulwick, 2017). They are more agile and can adapt quickly to emerging technologies without losing sight of core consumer needs (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Risk of failure is dramatically reduced as products are designed to solve *real* problems instead of assumed ones. For these reasons, Jobs-to-be-Done will have significant impact on current and future innovations.

Part 2: Real-World Example – Hot Coffee

2.1 Customer Characteristics

There are numerous types of customers that may hire a coffee to address various jobs, so it is easiest to break these down by category.

2.1.1 Commuters

People purchasing a coffee on their commute, typically in the morning. They hire the product for its caffeine fix, warmth, and to improve their morning routine. They value speed, convenience and consistency – a bad coffee may have a negative emotional impact on their day, and a long wait may make them late.

2.1.2 Social/Leisure Consumers

People hiring a coffee as a social or relaxation aid, to consume leisurely with company or alone. They likely wish to consume the product at the point of purchase, so a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere is critical. Presentation of the product (e.g. latte art, mug) is important and matters more than speed or convenience.

2.1.3 Workers and Students

These customers are hiring the product for its caffeine fix, and to invoke feelings of comfort and pleasure from the familiarity and taste. **Students** are a subcategory of worker that require the same jobs to be done, but with higher sensitivity to pricing and branding.

2.1.4 Enthusiasts

Consistency, quality and presentation are critical, where factors like speed, convenience, and pricing are unimportant. The frequency of such customers is largely dictated by location and culture demographics.

2.2 Determining the Jobs to be Done and Mapping them to Design Features

2.2.1 Functional

Job: *When I am feeling tired in the morning, I want to consume caffeine, so I can gain energy and improve my mental focus.*

Design feature: strong caffeine content.

Job: *When it is cold out, I want to hold and consume something hot, so I can warm up quickly.*

Design feature: ensure product is served at an optimal temperature. Design container to keep product hot over time, whilst also releasing enough heat to warm the holder's hands.

2.1.2 Emotional

The rich and familiar taste of coffee, along with the positive effects of its caffeine, can cause many people to form an emotional bond with it. Consumers may hire a coffee to exploit this emotional bond.

Job: *When I am feeling overwhelmed or stressed, I want to experience something familiar and pleasurable, so I can calm myself and regain control.*

Job: When my morning routine is bleak and repetitive, I want to integrate something that gives me pleasure, so I can experience a moment of joy before I start my day.

Job: When I feel I deserve a reward, I want to treat myself with something I enjoy, so I can feel good about my efforts.

Design feature: A consistent aroma and taste, strong caffeine, and satisfying packaging aesthetic. Personalisation options such as alternative milk, sweeteners, and syrups to allow the consumer to feel that the product is more unique to them. These features build an emotional connection to the product.

Job: When I am commuting to work or school, I want to hold something satisfying that I can consume slowly, so I can entertain myself during an uninteresting commute.

Design feature: a strong, pleasing taste and aroma that is consistent across visits. Large sizing and good insulation to make the product enjoyable for longer. Packaging that makes the product easy to consume with minimal focus, resistant to spillage, and consumable with one hand.

2.1.3 Social

Job: When I am meeting a friend or date, I want to provide a reason to meet beyond the interaction itself, so I can reduce pressure on the interaction and introduce an alternative focus point.

Job: When I need to meet a friend or conduct business casually, I want to meet in a laid-back, informal environment, so I can build rapport without a formal setting.

Design feature: serve product in a relaxing, comfortable, and laid-back environment. Pleasing presentation of the product, featuring latte art and an aesthetic mug or cup.

Job: When I need to express my personality, I want to carry a personalised product from a brand that aligns with my ideals, so I can signal my preferences to others.

Design feature: packaging and branding to target a specific set of ideals. For example, sustainable materials, premium quality, artisanal branding.

Part 3: Jobs-to-be-Done Framework with EchoPulse

3.1 Customer Characteristics

At its core, EchoPulse replaces the role of an emergency services operator (NHTSA & HRSA, 1996) in the event that emergency services cannot be reached. Therefore, our customers are likely to be people who spend a lot of time in remote areas. Examples include farmers, miners, hikers, mountaineers, researchers, fishermen, cargo ship crew, oil rig workers, and more. People in these roles often have minimal exposure to technology, and due to the extremely time-sensitive and high-pressure nature of the situation in which the app will be used, it is critical that it be incredibly intuitive to use.

3.2 Determining the Jobs to be Done and Mapping them to Design Features

3.2.1 Functional Jobs

Job: *When I am assisting in a remote medical emergency, I want to correctly diagnose the issue and perform the appropriate emergency medical procedure/s without any prior knowledge of how to do so, so I can keep the victim alive until emergency services arrive.*

Design feature: This job is the primary function of EchoPulse. To complete this job, the app will use an on-device conversational AI model trained in providing emergency medical assistance entirely verbally – no reading or typing required.

Job: *When I am assisting in a medical emergency, I want to contact emergency services whilst administering care, so I can receive help without pausing emergency medical procedures.*

Design feature: If possible, the app will send SOS messages to emergency services and verbally relay responses.

3.2.2 Emotional Jobs

Job: *When I am a bystander to a medical emergency, I want to remain calm and responsive, so I can provide the best assistance possible.*

Design feature: The AI will communicate in a calm and authoritative tone, providing rapid and confident guidance so the user feels that the situation is under control.

Job: *When I am providing emergency medical assistance, I want to feel confident that what I am doing is correct, so I can act quickly and calmly.*

Design feature: the AI will provide brief explanations for its reasoning at each stage, and provide more in-depth justification if questioned.

3.2.3 Social Jobs

Job: *When I am in a remote area, I want to others to feel confident that I can assist them in an emergency, so I can help them feel safe.*

Design feature: build brand as reliable and accurate, and easy to use.

3.3 Facilitating the Job in the Current Market

From a **functional** job perspective, EchoPulse improves on existing market options such as *First Aid: American Red Cross* by providing real-time verbal assistance in a medical emergency and allowing for hands-free use. Unlike Red Cross' app, which provides *training* for various emergencies alongside brief written guides (American Red Cross, 2017), our app is designed to assist while an emergency is taking place. Furthermore, EchoPulse is targeted towards people

with no medical experience or training, making it more viable than options intended for medical professionals such as *WikEM* or *palmEM*. Similarly to existing CPR help apps, EchoPulse can provide live training during an emergency, but improves on these competitors by diagnosing the issue and assisting even when CPR is not required.

Many of our customers will own an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) device, which facilitates requests to emergency services from anywhere in the world (Government of South Australia, n.d.). Many of these devices offer additional advanced features such as satellite text messaging and return link service (RLS) for confirmation that the emergency beacon has been received, but none offer live medical support. Therefore, these devices do not pose as a competitor. However, EchoPulse's model could potentially be adapted in future to support running locally on these devices.

Emotionally, EchoPulse is designed with stress-mitigation in mind, ensuring users are able administer care in a calm and rational manner. Unlike competitors who offer a written set of instructions, EchoPulse's conversational AI is designed to build confidence with the user by communicating in a calm, confident tone and justifying the rationale behind its decision-making process at every stage. It also facilitates verbal questioning, allowing the user to request more insight into what EchoPulse suggests.

Finally, from a **social** job standpoint, EchoPulse's branding reflects reliability, accuracy, and simplicity. We want customers to view our product as something that turns an inexperienced peer into a competent caregiver. Knowing that their companion has access to the product should make customers feel safer in remote locations.

Overall, our research shows that EchoPulse is a novel entry to the market that fills a gap segmented by numerous jobs-to-be-done, while facing very little competition.

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