STEM-HER
Empowering Women in STEM

Customer discovery & validation

03 / From assumptions to evidence

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Eight sessions, one *route*

[01]

Startup thinking

[02]

Design thinking

[03]

Customer discovery

[WE ARE HERE]

[04]

Team

[05]

Prototyping

[06]

Comms

[07]

Pitching

[08]

Networking & funding

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What from 02 is still a *hypothesis*

[VALUE MAP]

Products & Services

ASSUMPTION

Gain Creators

ASSUMPTION

Pain Relievers

ASSUMPTION

[CUSTOMER PROFILE]

Gains

ASSUMPTION

Jobs

ASSUMPTION

Pains

ASSUMPTION

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Who do we need to talk to to check the most important thing?

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Discovery turns hypotheses into *evidence*

[01]

ICP

who to start with

[02]

Journey

how they do it now

[03]

Interview

one real episode

[04]

Evidence

facts and exact words

[05]

Updated hypothesis

ICP, journey, value

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ICP: where to *start*

A group whose problem is relevant enough right now, and a good place for the first checks.

A starting hypothesis about who to learn from first.

Who counts as a *segment*

[01]

B2C

a person in a specific situation

[02]

B2B

an organisation type or use case, plus the person who really faces the problem

Four questions for every *segment*

[01]

How often and how noticeably does the problem occur?

[02]

What do people already do to solve it?

[03]

Is there a reason to act now?

[04]

Can we reach these people to talk?

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Characteristics that *help*

Role	**Context**	**Behaviour**
Current workaround	**Motivation**	**Constraints**

Age, city and hobbies only if they affect the problem.

Candidate *segments*

SEGMENT	PROBLEM FREQUENCY	CONSEQUENCE	CURRENT WORKAROUND	ACCESS
Greenhouses	regular manual control	late signal has visible effects	manual checks	people who are responsible for water
Aquaculture	[to check]	[to check]	[to check]	[to check]
Laboratories	[to check]	[to check]	[to check]	[to check]



[SELECTED ICP]

Small greenhouses

PHOTO: KEN LUND · CC BY-SA 2.0 · WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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B2B: three questions about *people*

[END USER]

Who has the problem?

[CHAMPION]

Who uses it?

[DECISION MAKER]

Who approves or pays?



EVENT PHOTO · THE NEXT WEB

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How a person currently gets to a goal or deals with a problem.

[WE MAP THE WORLD WITHOUT OUR PRODUCT]

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[PEOPLE DO NOT WAKE UP WANTING TO ENTER A FUNNEL]

They start at different *points*

[MARKETING FUNNEL]

Awareness → **Consideration** → **Purchase**

[CUSTOMER JOURNEY]



[THE GOAL APPEARS]

[THE FUNNEL STARTS HERE]

Four layers of a first *map*

[01]	**Action**	what the person does
[02]	**Touchpoint or tool**	what they interact with
[03]	**Friction**	where time is lost or risk appears
[04]	**Question or assumption**	what we do not know yet

[OPTIONAL · THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS]

A journey without our *product*

[ACTION]	Remember or plan the check	Take a water sample	Measure the values	Record or pass on the result	Decide if action is needed	Take the action
[FRICTION]	?	?	?	?	?	?
[ASSUMPTION]	How often does it happen?	Who does it?	How hard is it?	Who receives it?	Who decides?	How late is too late?

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Walk through one real *episode*

[01]

Situation

what was happening

→

[02]

Trigger

what made them act

→

[03]

Alternatives

what they considered

[04]

Choice

what they picked

→

[05]

Why not the rest

why other options
were dropped

→

[06]

Result

what they got

From assumption to *question*

[ASSUMPTION]

Checks are often postponed

→

[QUESTION]

Tell me about the last time you checked the water. What happened?

[ASSUMPTION]

It is unclear who is responsible

→

[QUESTION]

Last time something looked wrong, who noticed first? What did they do?

Keep discovery and concept feedback *separate*

[PAST]

Discovery

behaviour, context, current solutions and their consequences

[IDEA]

Concept feedback

how the person understands the idea, what they expect, where confusion appears

5

Five interviews are a starting point for learning.

Talk to people who match the ICP and recently lived the situation.

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Strong and weak *signals*

[STRONGER]

- repeated behaviour
- an existing workaround
- time or money already spent
- earlier attempts to find a solution
- a consequence they try to avoid
- several independent people describing a similar pattern

[WEAKER]

- a compliment about the idea
- “this is a problem for many”
- “I would probably use it”
- advice on which feature to build
- one vivid comment, never repeated

[EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION ABOUT YOUR FEATURES. FEW HAVE A WORKAROUND]

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After interviews, update three *things*

[01]

ICP

who to continue with

[02]

Customer Journey

which steps and friction turned out different

[03]

Value Proposition

which jobs, pains and gains held or changed

Normal *outcomes*

[01]

Part of the hypothesis held

[02]

The segment narrowed or changed

[03]

The problem turned out weaker than expected

Before, evidence, *after*

[BEFORE]

Greenhouse workers check the water by hand and notice changes late.

[EVIDENCE]

[what five conversations showed]

[AFTER]

[updated ICP, journey and value hypothesis]

Worksheet in three *steps*

[01 · 8–10 MIN]

Choose a working ICP and sketch a journey

from your shortlist, 4–6 steps, on a slide or stickies

[02]

Fill in the 03 Customer Discovery sheet

user hypothesis, problem hypothesis, current behaviour, evidence we are looking for

[03]

Prepare for five conversations

turn 2–3 assumptions into questions, go through the interview guide, add 1–2 of your own

The Interview Log is filled in after the session.

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Interview *role-play*

[ROLE]

Founder

takes one assumption and recreates the last similar episode (4–5 min)

[ROLE]

Potential user

answers about a real recent situation



Then 3 minutes of feedback: which facts did we get, and what is still unknown?

Questions to *ask*

“Who should I talk to first?”

“I have several types of users. Who goes into the ICP?”

“What if the user and the buyer are different?”

“How do I know I am hearing a pattern?”



Self-study: five *conversations*

[01] Talk to at least 5 people who match your working ICP

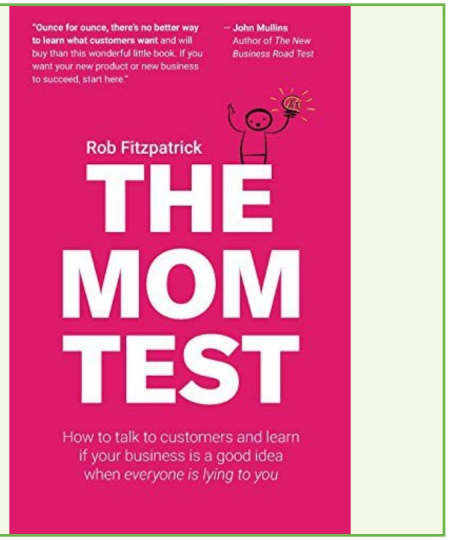
[02] Do not present the solution at the start

[03] Record behaviour, facts, exact words, current alternatives and whatever contradicts your expectations

[04] Update the ICP, current-state journey and hypothesis in the workbook

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Books *worth reading*



The Mom Test

Rob Fitzpatrick

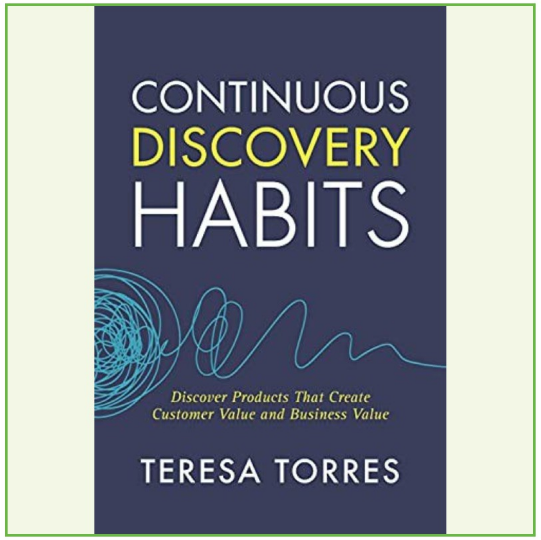
The interview rules we applied today.



Talking to Humans

Giff Constable

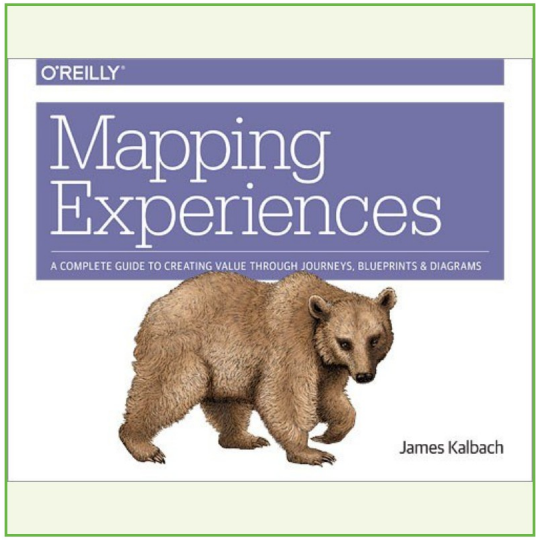
A short practical guide to customer interviews.



Continuous Discovery Habits

Teresa Torres

Interviewing as a weekly habit.



Mapping Experiences

James Kalbach

Journey maps and other experience maps, with many examples.

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Also *worth a look*

[01]

Nielsen Norman Group · Journey Mapping 101

Actor, scenario, phases, actions, mindsets, emotions and opportunities.

[02]

Strategyzer · Value Proposition Canvas

The customer and value hypotheses we update after interviews.

[03]

Oleg Koss, Lanka.CX · check their pages!

JTBD interview flow and questions about past decisions.

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Thank you!

Any questions? You can reach out to

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