



Validation Guide

Background

The goal of this exercise is to validate the need for your product. This is done by identifying the group of people your product is serving (the target market) and verifying that they have experienced a similar problem.

A few things to keep in mind:

- They don't have to all have experienced the problem, as long as enough of them have that we can build a sustainable business.
- Experiencing the problem is not enough on its own, the problem must also be painful enough that they will pay someone to solve it.
- Being more descriptive about our target market early on is better, because it allows us to identify the people we are best able to help. It's better to have a small group of people who are passionate about what you're doing, than a large group of people who don't really care.

Sample Target Market:

Bicycle commuters

Questions for defining our market:

- Are we selling to businesses or consumers?
- Where are they? Where do they spend their time? This can be a physical location, online community, etc.
- What kind of language do they use?
- If business, what size business is our ideal customer? 5 people? 50 people? 500 people? Who are the decision makers at the business?

Sample Problem:

What problem are you trying to solve? Keep it to 140 characters or less.

Bicycle helmets are butt ugly.

Questions for defining our problem:

- What about this problem is hard?
- How often does this problem come up?
- How painful is this problem?
- How is this problem being solved now?
- Why is or isn't that working?

Interview

Goal:

- Verify that a large enough portion of our market has our same problem.
- If we can find 10 people who are saying similar things about our problem, and who have experienced it recently or will experience it again in the near future, then we have validated our problem for our market.
- Ideally we can find someone who has paid for a lesser solution to our problem in the past.
- Side goal: collect more information about our target market to help us market to them later.

Tips:

- This is NOT a pitch. Our goal is learning, not sales. Trying to sell or pitch the people we talk to will diminish our learning.
- Keep it light and conversational, this is a chance to begin building relationships.
- Record the interview, that way you can refer back to it later, and you will capture the language that your target market uses so that you can then use that language in your marketing.
- Aim for 5-10 really solid interviews.

Sample Questions:

Do you commute on your bike or just ride for fun?

Why do you commute? How long is your ride each day?

Where did you get your bike?

Do you have a lot of friends who bike?

Do you wear a helmet when you ride? Why or why not?

Do you like your helmet? How much did you spend on it?

Tell me about some of the other problems you deal with biking on a day to day basis.

How do you solve those problems right now?

If and only if they said they had the same problem you're trying to fix and seem like they would be a good fit:

I'm working on trying to create a bicycle helmet that doesn't look like a baboon's behind, I'd love to get your feedback on it, mind if I reach out again sometime?