

# Using Jobs to be Done to Become a Customer- Centered Organization

A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Make it Work

*By Stephen Wunker and Jessica Wattman*

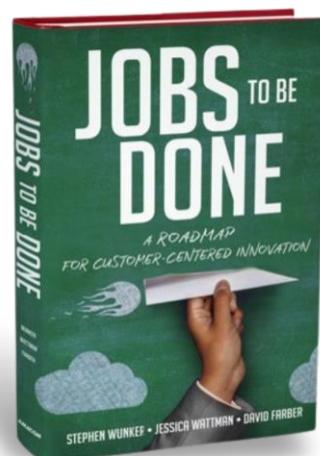
# What is the “Jobs to be Done” Approach?

Jobs to be Done is a way to understand why customers behave the way they do. It lays the groundwork for on-target innovation by digging deep to uncover what people are really seeking in a purchase occasion and what vectors exist for new ways to perform. Done right, this approach is both expansive and precise, uncovering a landscape of opportunity and exactly what must be done to meet customer needs. It is used across many fields – B2B, B2C, and the public sector – to invigorate product pipelines and customer experiences.

For many firms, innovation is guided either by company-centric thinking that focuses on products to sell, or by asking customers what they want. Both approaches are incomplete. Customers often have quite different perspectives than companies; as the great management thinker Peter Drucker once wrote, “The customer rarely buys what the company thinks it is selling.” And, most customers are incapable of envisioning what a new product should be. They are usually not engineers or experience specialists. They know what they would like to get done, not the best way to do it.

It is no wonder, then, that new products often fail. More than half of newly launched products end up falling short of company projections. The real game changers are even rarer. Only about 1 in 300 new products significantly impacts purchase behavior, the product category, or a company’s growth trajectory.

Jobs to be Done takes a distinct approach. It deep-dives into understanding the range of needs potentially satisfied by a product, service, or even an internal process, and the contexts in which those needs are addressed. Jobs is the premier way to deploy the most effective tool an innovator has: listening. This paper is a very short form of our bestselling book on the topic that distills our 18 years of experience, starting with the concept’s originator, Harvard Business School Prof. Clayton Christensen.



## Who should use Jobs to be Done?

**Teams:** Jobs can be used in almost any function. Beyond dedicated innovation teams, it is regularly used by those with responsibility for product development, customer insights, and marketing.

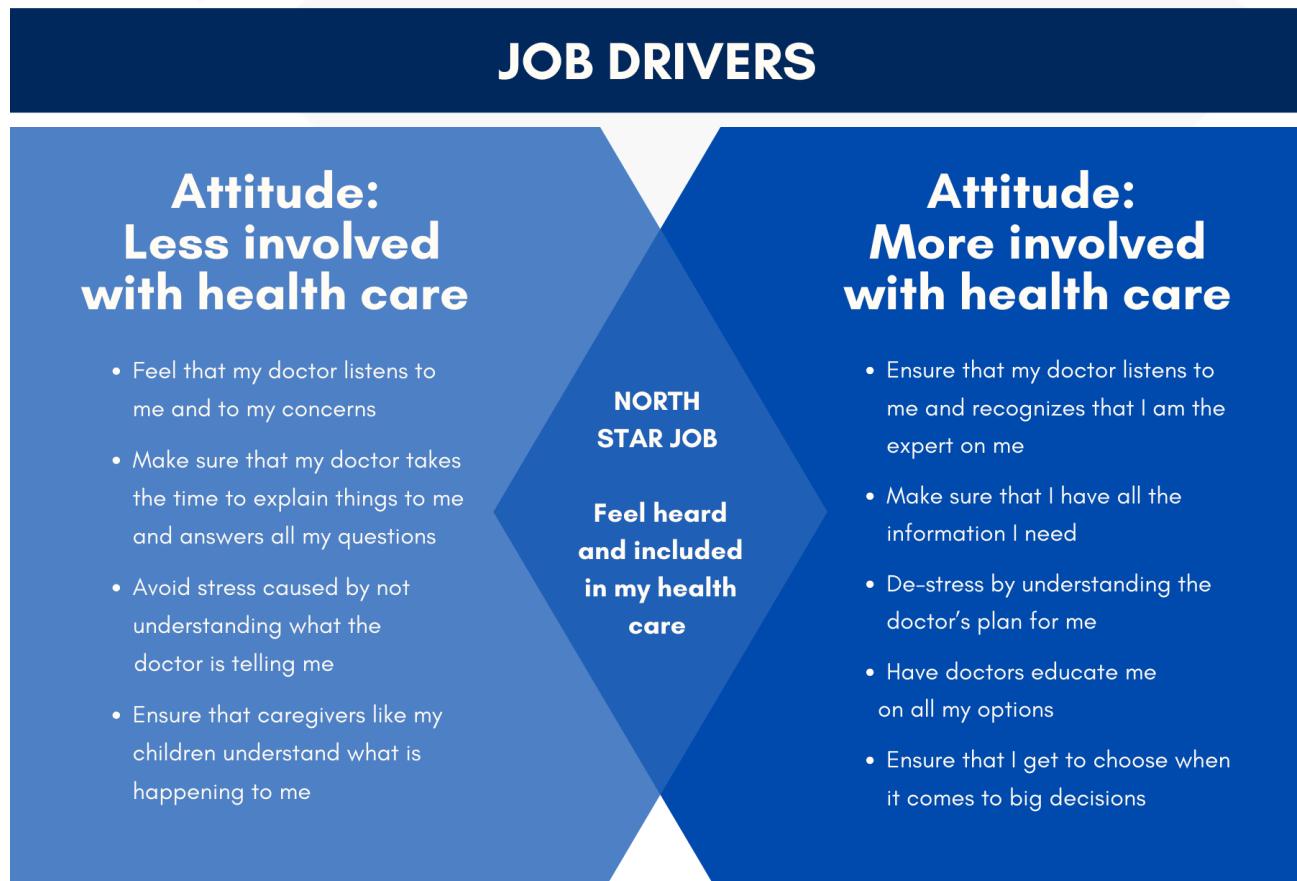
**Context:** Jobs has been successfully deployed across industries, including healthcare, financial services, consumer goods, IT, and education. It can premiumize products, strip out unnecessary features, enhance Go to Market approaches, or improve internal processes.

# Deploying Jobs to be Done

Jobs can be functional or emotional in nature. It is always critical to look for both the functional and emotional sides of the coin.

Jobs also exist in distinct contexts, which we call Job Drivers. These contexts are composed of ABC: distinct Attitudes, Backgrounds (longer-term contexts) and Circumstances (short-term occasions or use cases).

Higher-level Jobs – what we call North Star Jobs – cascade into more granular sub-Jobs in light of these Jobs Drivers. In the simplified chart below about how people choose a doctor, we look at one of a patient's North Star Jobs and two attitudinal Job Drivers that impact a range of sub-Jobs.



Note that the Jobs are expressed in the way real people would state them, not in an artificially constructed manner. Maintaining fidelity to the way people actually talk – whether in a B2C, B2B, or public sector setting – is critical to conveying the Job in the way people see it and not as your organization does. These Jobs are also framed to be solution-free. Rather, they focus on the problem and key objectives.

As explained in the next section of this paper, you can then use the Jobs Atlas to cascade sub-Jobs into the Current Approaches and Pain Points associated with them, the very specific Success Criteria that measure whether they have been accomplished, and the Obstacles that hinder getting them done well.

# Putting Jobs to Be Done to Work through the Jobs Roadmap

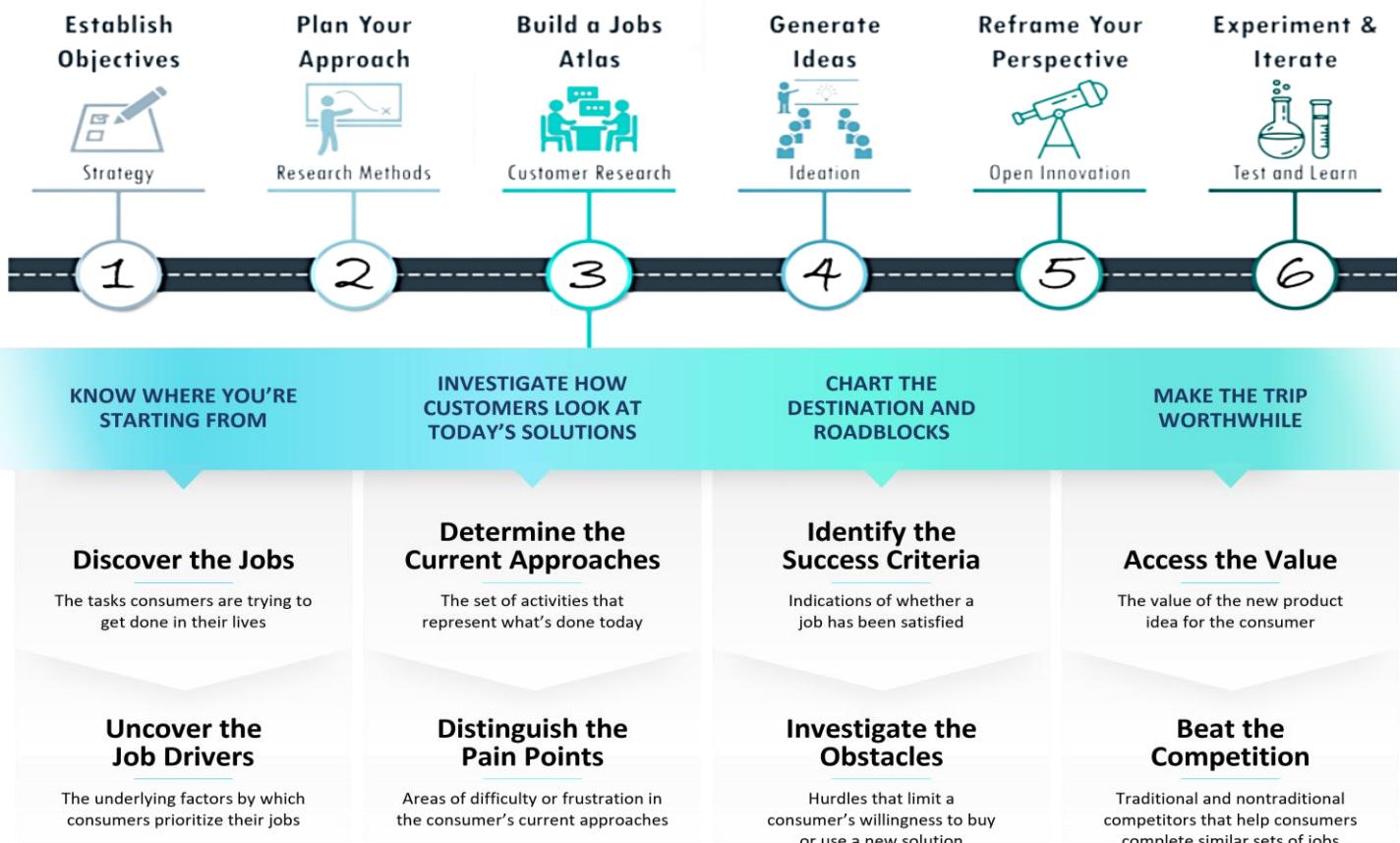
To develop a well-rounded view of customers, the Jobs approach should not exist in isolation. Over the past two decades, the New Markets Advisors team has developed a unique way to turn the insights gathered through the Jobs to be Done approach into winning innovations, product strategies, and actionable business plans. We call this process the **Jobs Roadmap**.

If the Jobs to be Done framework points you in the right direction, then the **Jobs Roadmap** helps to get you where we want to go. Every company's journey is different and needs to be linked to strategic priorities and goals.

Innovation also requires granular direction, and it has to circumvent obstacles that block adoption of new offerings. The Jobs Roadmap is a multi-step process that takes the unique insights from Jobs to be Done and develops them into a landscape for innovation and method for achieving it.

The first 2 steps of the Jobs Roadmap customize the Jobs approach to your particular company -- tying the process back to the company's strategic priorities and defining the specific questions that need to be answered. Next, Step 3 is the **Jobs Atlas**, which is the heart of Jobs Roadmap.

## The Jobs Roadmap



The Job Atlas starts with uncovering the range of Jobs to Be Done and embeds them in an in-depth analysis of the factors that affect how consumers make decisions. It's not enough to catalogue people's different jobs. We also have to look at the factors that make some Jobs more or less important for particular types of customers (**Job Drivers**), their **Current Approaches** to meet needs, and the pain points they encounter. Only by drawing the full picture can we identify where there is room for a better experience and how new solutions will fit into customers' lives.

From there, the Job Atlas considers **Success Criteria** for solutions and **Obstacles** to moving forward. Success criteria define the ways in which customers will evaluate a product. As we turn our insights into a detailed product brief, we will need to know precisely how customers define a win. On the other side of the equation, obstacles explain the reasons that a customer might not learn about, purchase, use, and repurchase a new offering. Even the best new products will face hurdles, and it's important to have a realistic understanding of market potential.

Finally, the Jobs Atlas delves into whether customers will transact with the company. We look at the **Value** that customers assign to the Jobs you can solve for and assess that in light of other factors such as pricing benchmarks, costs, and rival offerings. We also examine the potential **Competition** – other solutions, that customers could use to get their Jobs done, and more direct rivals too. By understanding this combination of value and competition, we can begin to see how large and profitable the solution space might be and whether a company can win.

Once the Job Atlas has been completed, the final three steps of the **Jobs Roadmap** focus on turning your insights into an idea, and ultimately transforming the idea into a full offering that gets commercialized. The key is to take a structured approach to solution development by focusing on key under-served Jobs – in specific contexts – for target customers. This latter phase also involves preparing a business case by asking the tough questions, identifying key risks, and designing ways to test major assumptions as you create fit between a product and its market.

**By now, having followed each step of the Jobs Roadmap, you will have a thorough understanding of the different customer types that make up your market. At the same time, you will also have a set of potential opportunities for responding to unmet needs in the market that directly responds to the organization's priorities outlined at the start.**



# 3 Tips for Innovators



**Use oblique questions to triangulate customers' Jobs, then confirm. If possible, observe what people do. Interviewees' thought processes are not always linear and obvious, and you want the real story.**

**Don't ask people about "typical" purchase or use occasions, but specific ones. Get stories. The rich detail can illuminate major insights that are washed away by averages.**

**Step back and take an objective look at what you've found. Don't put too much weight on the first or last interviews. Use surveys to quantify your initial qualitative insights.**

*Case Study:*

## Jobs to be Done in Action at Twitter



### The Challenge

---

Twitter wanted to re-ignite its innovation engine. When the platform launched, users invented ways to interact that the founders had never considered. They even created one of Twitter's most famous features, the hashtag. But the company had seen user-generated innovation drop off, and it wanted to figure out how to activate the diffuse, eclectic developer community that had many alternative ways of spending its programming time. The company turned to New Markets to understand what makes these people tick, how they arrive at decisions, and the best ways to communicate why they should partner with Twitter.

### The Approach

---

New Markets took a multi-pronged approach. We started with the facts in hand; looking at trends in developer behavior, who had been developing what, and the sort of events that seemed to trigger spurts of developer activity. We then interviewed a wide range of developers, including academics, hackers, business owners, and a prolific app creator who turned out to be all of 16 years old. And we gathered data to understand how common these different types of developers were.

With this information, we could build profiles of distinct types of developers, define what drove them, and lay out the paths they would typically take to decide on a Twitter project. We then held an intensive workshop with Twitter staff to prioritize these segments, determine how to excite them, and create pathways to reach and interact with them appropriately.

## The Result

Twitter's new approach to its developer community proved critical to its overall strategy, and it became the subject of an in-depth feature story in *The New York Times*. This de-centralized approach to innovation became a critical complement to features developed within the company, and it ignited totally new uses of Twitter data to assess trends, map peoples' relationships, and monitor real-time for events. The external developer community is now a central pillar of Twitter's identity, and Twitter understands the best ways to partner with it.



***"Partnering with New Markets Advisors on a Jobs to be Done project for the Twitter developer platform accelerated short term experiment definition and long term vision planning. As Twitter embarks on a mission to decentralize, in part through the developer platform, we continue to refer back to the emotional and functional needs that New Markets expertly uncovered. Thank you New Markets!"***

Greg Lyon, Group Product Manager  
Twitter 

# Let's Partner Together to Uncover your Customers' Jobs to be Done

Our firm's leadership worked for years to develop and refine the concept together with Clayton Christensen, the Harvard Business School professor who first popularized the Jobs to be Done theory. We now stand as a global leader in Jobs to be Done, having a nearly two-decade trajectory applying it to hundreds of contexts and helping companies outperform their competitors.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT OUR  
APPROACH?

Contact us or visit our website:

**Stephen Wunker**, Managing Director | [swunker@newmarketsadvisors.com](mailto:swunker@newmarketsadvisors.com)

[www.newmarketsadvisors.com](http://www.newmarketsadvisors.com)