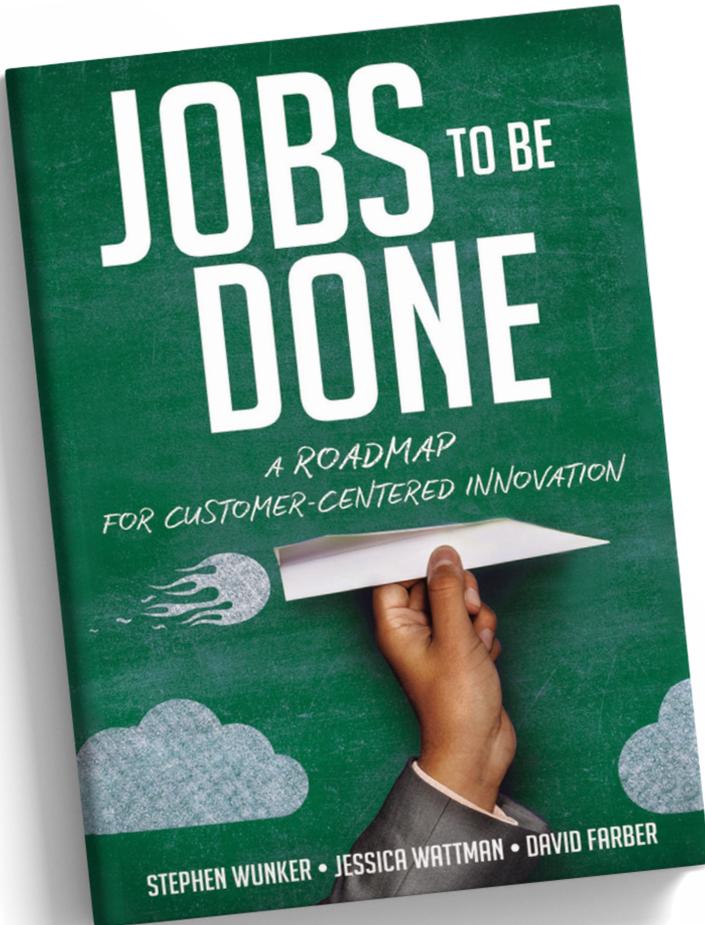


Jobs to be Done in Tech

How to Take the Guesswork Out of Innovation

BY CHARLOTTE DESPRAT AND STEPHEN WUNKER



In the exhilarating world of tech, imaginations can run wild.

The possibilities seem endless. It's alluring, and hazardous. When the product is so enticing, it's easy to lose focus on the customer.

Don't. As in most other industries, the customer's needs ultimately drive product success. Companies that aren't rooted in a deep understanding of customers will struggle to find product-market fit and to continue growing once competition inevitably materializes.

Tech is also notably distinct. Customers may not have any idea of how tech can solve their needs in totally new ways, they may have substantial barriers slowing adoption of those new solutions, and they may struggle to name a price they would expect to pay. You can't just ask them what they want, if they'd buy it, or how much they'd spend.

So tech companies have a special challenge. They have to understand customers extraordinarily well, they need to think beyond the world as it is today, and they can't just ask customers for the answers. What's the best way to resolve these dilemmas?

The answers lie in understanding your customers' Jobs to be Done.



About this volume

In these pages, you will find:

- An **introduction** to Jobs to be Done
- Advice on **best practices and watch-outs** for using Jobs to be Done in tech
- **Research methods** to start implementing Jobs to be Done on your own
- A **case study** examining how a high-growth tech firm used Jobs to build its product roadmap
- **How we can help:** ways to start implementing Jobs to be Done with us or on your own

This mini book is derived from our firm's popular book, *Jobs to be Done: A Roadmap for Customer-Centered Innovation*. It takes many of the key frameworks and applies them specifically to tech in a focused manner. If you are...

- A tech executive weighing competitive positioning and growth options
- A product manager charting your product and feature roadmap
- Or a marketing leader seeking to Go to Market in the most impactful way

...then this volume is for you.

“ “ In the world of tech, you can't just ask customers what they want, if they'd buy it, and how much they'd spend. ” ”

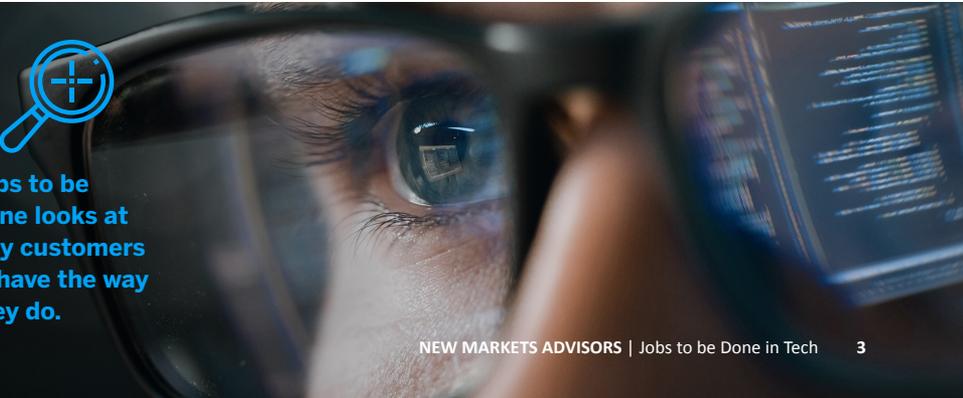
What is Jobs to be Done?

Most companies innovate by looking backwards – by researching who buys what and asking customers what they want in a product. This method is inherently flawed because it draws on what customers already do and know today, rather than considering new possibilities.

Jobs to be Done fixes that. Instead of focusing on the what and the how, Jobs to be Done looks at why customers behave the way they do. For every product or service a customer buys, you want to determine what functional or emotional priorities – or “Jobs” – they are trying to fulfill. What are the underlying motivations behind each purchase? Behind each use? Behind customers avoiding purchase and use altogether?

The shift in mindset with Jobs creates huge implications. Not only do you reach a deeper understanding of your customers – you also widen the range of possible solutions. An ice cream shop is not only competing with other ice cream shops. It is also competing with the many other ways people can celebrate, unwind, indulge, find comfort, cool down, or spend quality time with friends and family. This creates new vectors for growth, differentiation, and premiumization.

Using the lens of Jobs to be Done, you can open up a whole world of unexpected opportunities, all of which are directly tied to proven market needs. From there, you can design solutions that are tailor-made to satisfy your customers. This is how the most successful innovations are made.



Jobs to be Done looks at why customers behave the way they do.

Why use Jobs to be Done in tech?

1. Help Product and Engineering release the right features. The tech sector is unique for the endless possibilities it can bring to life. Yet, by releasing too many features left and right, companies risk muddying their value proposition, confusing their customers, raising costs, and wasting resources.



- Jobs to be Done provides companies with focus by giving them a clear compass heading to follow for their roadmap – not only which features to include, but also what they will be used for, how to design them, and which customers will prioritize them.

2. Enable Product to move beyond personas and functionality. It's easy for tech companies to paint their ideal customer profile in terms of a fictional persona, but it can be hard to determine what exactly to do to satisfy this persona. It's also tempting to define and test products from a purely technical standpoint (e.g., how many steps the user has to take to reach a Call To Action). But by focusing on the functional, you are merely describing what they are doing, rather than explaining why they do it in the first place and why they do it the way they do.



- Jobs to be Done is not just functional but also a highly emotive and story-based exercise. It is focused on overall motivations and desires, rather than the minutia of menus and button placements. This can widen the range of possible innovations considerably. Moreover, by placing Jobs in their appropriate and rigorously-defined contexts, you can move beyond personas to actionable guidance.

3.

Empower Product and Strategy to explore new purchase and usage occasions.

When testing a product or service, tech companies often emphasize the “average” customer and a “typical” user experience. This omits a wealth of opportunity that comes with investigating fringe cases and variations in the journey.



- Jobs to be Done is designed to be exploratory and open-ended. Rather than focusing on a set of “typical” use cases, we keep asking “why” while exploring specific situations in-depth. The goal is to understand not only the customer’s starting point and destination, but also the twists and turns along the way. This broad view unlocks needs and moments that competitors might overlook.

4.

Provide guidance for UX. UX designers are often given vague design criteria, like being asked to create a user experience that makes the offering “easy to use” – but how exactly should they go about it? And how does that criterion fit with other customer requirements, some of which may require making trade-offs?

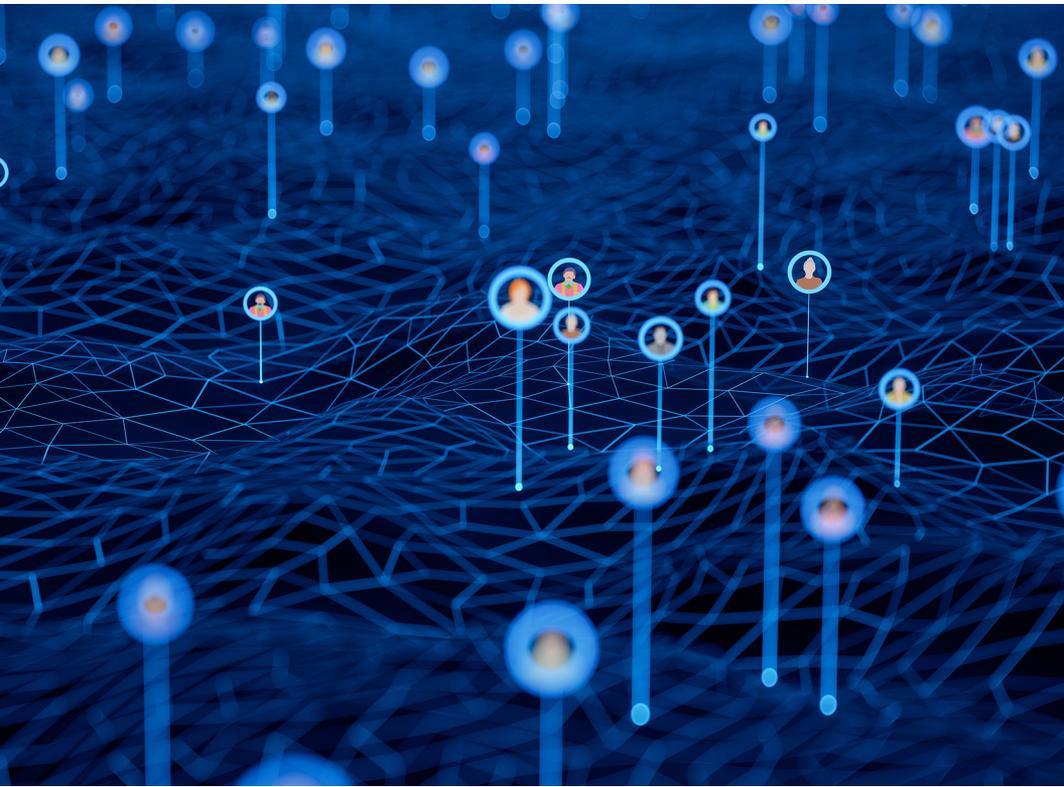


- Jobs to be Done gets very specific about what customers really want out of their user experience. By digging deep into their motivations and success criteria, Jobs offers actionable insights that can be turned into concrete design criteria.

“Jobs to be Done is designed to be exploratory and open-ended.”

5.

Target sales and marketing. These functions often focus on selling product features, but in tech oftentimes these features need to be related to tangible problems that customers have. By understanding Jobs in detail, and tying these to other critical factors like behaviors and customer journeys, sales and marketing can segment the market to determine who to target with what message at what time during the buying process.



Best Practices & Watch-outs

Putting Jobs to be Done into practice

In *Jobs to be Done*, the word “Jobs” gets a lot of press. That’s because the Jobs that people are trying to get done provide a critical lens for tech leaders to innovate in exciting ways. However, uncovering your customers’ underlying needs is only one step of the process. To make sure you cover your bases, we organize these steps into what we call the Jobs Atlas:

KNOW WHERE YOU’RE STARTING FROM



Discover the Jobs

The priorities that customers are trying to accomplish

Uncover the Job Drivers

The underlying factors by which customers prioritize their Jobs due to attitudes, occasions, and contexts

INVESTIGATE HOW CUSTOMERS LOOK AT TODAY’S SOLUTIONS



Determine the Current Approaches

The set of activities that represent what’s done today

Distinguish the Pain Points

Areas of difficulty or frustration in the customer’s current approaches

CHART THE DESTINATION AND ROADBLOCKS



Identify the Success Criteria

Indications of whether a Job has been satisfied

Investigate the Obstacles

Hurdles that limit a customer’s willingness to buy or use a new solution, and triggers that surmount hurdles

MAKE THE TRIP WORTHWHILE



Access the Value

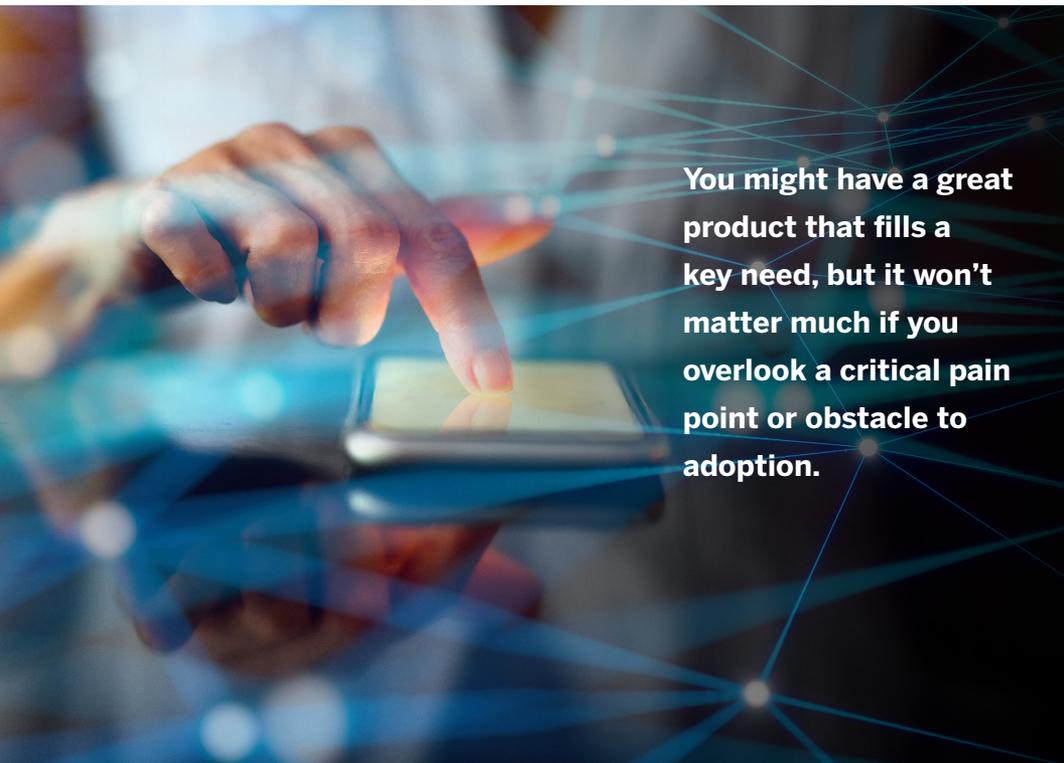
The value of getting the Job done for the customer

Beat the Competition

Traditional and nontraditional competitors that help customers complete similar sets of Jobs

Designing a product that meets a certain Job is only half the battle. To be truly successful, you must also make sure that you have addressed each element in the Jobs Atlas. You might have a great product that fills a key need, but it won't matter much if you overlook a critical pain point or obstacle to adoption. Likewise, you may have the ingredients to build a great offering, but if you don't know how to communicate its value or differentiate yourself from competitors, your positioning will be weak.

Let's dive into the Jobs Atlas and learn what each element means for the tech sector. As we move through each step of the process, we will examine how a marketing technology company can use Jobs to revamp its digital ads software. We'll do so by getting to know a customer, Megan, and her individual Jobs as a marketer placing digital ads for her employer.



You might have a great product that fills a key need, but it won't matter much if you overlook a critical pain point or obstacle to adoption.

Discover the Jobs

Jobs to be Done are the functional and emotional priorities that customers are trying to accomplish.

WHY THINK ABOUT JOBS?

Jobs are an especially useful concept in the tech world because they bring clarity and focus to a range of strategic questions you could be facing:

- What should come next in our product roadmap?
- How can we differentiate ourselves in a meaningful way?
- How should we go to market with our new solution?
- Which acquisition targets should we be looking at?

When faced with so many options on how to devote your resources, Jobs are a useful compass to help you make the right decision.

However, as you think through your customers' Jobs to be Done, you may be asking yourself a few questions...



My customers are accomplishing many things with my product. How do I know which ones are Jobs?

→ Don't turn every step that a user takes into its own Job. They might be setting up their account, activating their account, filling out their profile...

If this happened, you could end up with a list of 85 Jobs, many of which would be closer to parts of a process rather than real Jobs.

Remember, a Job is the underlying priority behind a user's actions (e.g., have confidence that the app provides me with the right recommendations), not the step they are taking to accomplish this priority (e.g., set up a user profile). The individual tasks that users undertake can be listed instead in the Success Criteria part of the Jobs Atlas.



How specific should the Jobs be?

- While you should start broad when exploring customers' Jobs to be Done, be specific about the Jobs themselves. This is especially important in the tech sector if your product can be used in a range of contexts.

Let's take an API, for example. No matter what data your API allows customers to access (e.g., social media usage, weather, traffic), you can't end your research with customers simply using your API to "gather and analyze data". That may very well be true – but what are they using this data for? What decisions are they trying to make? The answer to this question will open a much broader and more exciting field of opportunities for you to assist your customers.



What if I find contradictory Jobs?

- We are complicated beings, and it is not uncommon for customers to have conflicting Jobs. In healthtech, a doctor may want to know if a patient is at high risk of suffering an acute disease complication at home, but she doesn't want to deal with dozens of false alarms about potential concerns every month. Look for the tensions between Jobs as fertile ground for solutioning: if you can be the one to resolve that tension, you will blow your competitors out of the water.



We are complicated beings, and it is not uncommon for customers to have conflicting Jobs.



I have narrowed down my customers' Jobs, but the list is still quite long. What now?

- Even after you have successfully identified your customers' Jobs, the list can still be quite long and difficult to share around your company. This is especially true for products or services that can be used in a myriad of ways.

To make the list more manageable and create some sort of hierarchy, consider bucketing related Jobs into higher-level Jobs, which we call "North Star Jobs." That way, you will usually end up with a list of 5-6 North Star Jobs at most. Under that, each North Star Jobs may have several Jobs, and that can cascade downward as far as you wish to go (sometimes there can be a very large number of Jobs, as with ERP software for example). This hierarchy makes your data much more digestible and useable at the end of your research.



REMEMBER, HUMANS ARE NOT ROBOTS

Even in tech, humans are far from being rational creatures. Many decisions we make are born out of deeper emotional cues, rather than carefully reasoned logic. The best innovations often address customers' insecurities or frustrations with a process. To capture these opportunities, make sure you account for emotional Jobs as well. This applies equally in B2C and B2B contexts.



JOBS IN ACTION

To see how this plays out in an example, let's assume you work for a company that makes digital marketing technology and you are looking to design more customer-centric solutions. As part of your research, you schedule an interview with Megan, a marketer tasked with placing digital ads for her own firm.

When speaking with Megan, you set out to answer the following questions: What are her functional and emotional Jobs, and what hierarchy do they have? How will she express these Jobs not in some artificially constructed way, but in actual customer language?

During Megan's interview, you hear about her days, goals, and challenges when it comes to placing digital ads. You learn about her company's perception of the ads, and the way they fit into their broader business objectives for the year. Through the details she shares, you are able to identify several critical Jobs:

Sample functional Jobs

- Build awareness for our brand
 - Communicate our brand essence to prospective customers
 - Make our brand recognizable in future interactions
- Capture users' details
- Determine qualified leads

Sample emotional Jobs

- Alleviate my colleagues' concerns about poor ad targeting
 - Make the targeting comprehensible to others
 - Share quantitative data about our targeting's performance
- Get my colleagues excited about the progress we're making
 - Show results in a visually engaging way
 - Share quantitative evidence of the progress we're making
- Reduce concerns about our ads being displayed alongside toxic content

While it's important to understand Megan's Jobs, we won't know which ones are most salient until we know her context. That's next.

Uncover the Job Drivers

Job Drivers are the attitudinal, occasion-based, and contextual factors that make a Job more or less important to a given customer at a particular time.

WHY THINK ABOUT JOB DRIVERS?

Together with Jobs, Job Drivers allow you to segment and target your users in meaningful ways. A Jobs-based segmentation combines Jobs with contextual and behavioral factors, making it a powerful tool to tailor your value proposition, user experience, and marketing to each type of customer. *(For more information on Jobs-based segmentation, check out our Forbes [article](#) on the topic and our later section in this volume on segmentation.)*



What exactly do Job Drivers look like?

→ Job Drivers are also useful in identifying which trends might grow and which will last. By measuring the specific attitudinal, occasion-based, and contextual Drivers that underpin customers' Jobs, you can determine which Jobs will hold sway in the near and longer terms. *(For more information on identifying lasting behavior changes, see our [working paper](#).)*

Use cases can be key drivers, but Job Drivers actually come in many shapes and sizes. Beyond the short-term occasions usually reflected in use cases, consider longer-term contexts. For instance, does an accounting department have one person to reconcile accounts, or ten? That may impact the degree of customization and reporting that financial software may require.

Also consider attitudes, such as whether a company tends to adopt new technologies early or late – that will impact the emotional Jobs that tech gets done, in addition to factors around training, proving the value of a new system, and much else.



DON'T FORGET THE EMOTIONS

Emotional factors can be just as influential as technical nuance—even in a highly scientific field. Personality traits, the need to impress others, cultural backgrounds, and fear of a boss' wrath are all behavioral factors that can affect what matters most to whom.

Job Drivers allow you to segment and target your users in meaningful ways.





JOB DRIVERS IN ACTION

What really matters to Megan will depend on her attitudes, short-term occasions, and long-term contexts. These will shape the importance she places on Jobs:

| | JOB DRIVERS | AFFECTED JOBS |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| ATTITUDES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about whether digital ads can convey sophisticated messages about product differences Distrust of social media metrics (e.g., bots, incomplete click-throughs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our brand essence to prospects Alleviate my colleagues' concerns about poor ad targeting |
| SHORT-TERM OCCASIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New product launch requires focus on offering, not brand message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make our brand recognizable in future interactions |
| LONG-TERM CONTEXTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex products require multiple interactions to educate customers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture users' details |

Now that we understand motivations and context (Jobs and Job Drivers), we can drill into what a customer does about those issues today, and where opportunities lie to stand out from those solutions.

Determine the Current Approaches and Pain Points

Current Approaches are the methods that customers use and the journeys they take to get their Jobs done today.

Pain Points are areas of difficulty or frustration in the customer's current approach.

WHY THINK ABOUT CURRENT APPROACHES AND PAIN POINTS?

Inertia is often the innovator's greatest enemy, including in the tech world. When a company has come up with an exciting new solution, it often assumes that customers will recognize its value and instantly adopt it.

But we are creatures of habit. A customer's Current Approach might seem dysfunctional, and you may even have identified specific Pain Points to address – but if these Pain Points are not “painful” enough, or if the buyer has been using the same process for so long that they haven't even noticed these inefficiencies, they are less likely to switch to your solution. Understanding your customers' existing methods and what gets in their way will help you figure out where to intervene in their journey and how.



What kinds of Current Approaches should I be looking for?

- Take a broad view of current approaches, including DIY methods. Especially in newer and emerging markets, or for those who can't afford to buy or train on specific tech solutions, customers often end up cobbling together a make-shift alternative. This will give you a sense of what you are really competing against.

In fact, looking at these DIY alternatives can be a great source of inspiration for your own innovation efforts. For instance, for many software companies, DIY on Excel is their greatest competitor – it may be a time-consuming workaround for users, but there is no incremental cost or learning curve.



How do I know where the journey starts and ends?

→ Companies often assume that the journey starts when a customer first comes across their product. Unfortunately, that's a very company-centric way of thinking. To understand where your offering fits in, you must think back to the very beginning of your customer's own journey. What triggered this customer to go out and satisfy this Job? What steps did they go through and what approaches did they try out before stumbling on your solution? And once they were there, how did their past experience shape their hopes and expectations from your offering?

The same goes for the end of the journey. Companies often locate this where the customer is done buying or using their product. But the customer's own journey might last a while longer. When do they feel like they've successfully addressed their Job? What other steps did they have to take to reach their goals? By looking at what happens before, while, and after a customer uses your product, you will uncover many more opportunities for your company to intervene and create a phenomenal user experience. Think for instance about the hidden inefficiency costs customers might have in transitioning to your new system, or the ecosystem of products and processes that your technology's outputs feed into.



What if there is no clear start and end?

→ Our tendency is to think of user journeys in very linear ways. Journey maps look nice when they show a straightforward progression, with a clear start and finish.

But the world often does not look that way. The reality is messy, circuitous, filled with hesitation, questioning, trials, and repetition. For instance, a customer might come across your offering, try it out, put it aside for a moment, and come back to it with new expectations. Capture the world as it really is, and you may discover opportunities. *(For more information on how to combine Jobs with journey mapping, refer to our working paper).*



YOUR CUSTOMER IS NOT ALONE ON THEIR JOURNEY

Bear in mind that the buyer is not the only person who needs to be satisfied, especially in a B2B setting. If you are in the business of selling hardware or software to corporate clients, it is common for multiple stakeholders to be involved across different teams or departments. Some might be responsible for researching your offering in detail, while others have the final say on budget. Perhaps only a few of them will be a direct user of your service, with others offering administrative support or being impacted by the direct users. And each of them will have their own set of Jobs and Job Drivers. So as you research customer needs and pain points, make sure you are not missing key stakeholders in the purchase and usage process.



CURRENT APPROACHES AND PAIN POINTS IN ACTION

Megan's journey isn't confined to placing ads. The process of determining her ad budget, which ad networks should receive what spending, what ads should communicate, and whether campaigns have succeeded all matter greatly to her.

Within each key part of the journey, there are several steps that relate back to her Jobs. Pain points can occur at specific spots, and should be understood in the context of her Jobs:

DETERMINE AD BUDGET

Jobs

- Estimate Return on Ad Spend
- Estimate metrics vs. non-digital media

Current Approaches

- Use past benchmarks

Pain Points

- Campaigns can greatly differ
- Metrics from past campaigns are hard to choose

Pain Points

- Guesswork on which images will perform best
- Testing takes work to set-up and time to execute

PLACE ADS

Jobs

- Develop targeting strategy
- Decide what targets are worth in budget terms

Current Approaches

- Copy targeting from prior campaigns
- Manually adjust parameters for each ad

Pain Points

- Prior campaigns may be poor precedents in a creativity-driven field

IDENTIFY NETWORKS

Jobs

- Determine allocation between industry leaders and upstarts/niche players

Current Approaches

- Adjust allocation within pre-set bands
- Re-appraise allocation after a few weeks

Pain Points

- Target parameters differ by networks
- Competitors are also using the leading networks

REVIEW RESULTS

Jobs

- Understand which ads are most effective
- Get management to understand impact

Current Approaches

- Download extensive metrics then sort
- Create presentations based on metrics

Pain Points

- Time consuming and tedious process
- Time lag between campaign and having report

FINALIZE MESSAGING

Jobs

- Decide right creative content for markets
- Determine what image type is best

Current Approaches

- Search for images based on keywords
- Test content in small samples

Identify the Success Criteria

Success Criteria are the metrics that customers implicitly or explicitly use to measure how well a Job is being done.

WHY THINK ABOUT SUCCESS CRITERIA?

Success is not defined only by what the end-state should look like – it is also about how you should reach that end-state. What criteria will customers use to assess whether your product succeeds or not?

If you're selling a traffic management platform to a city government, for example, you can't just say that the system reduces traffic. How much does it reduce traffic on critical arteries? What about on roads that are essential for emergency services? At what times of day? In what weather conditions? With what degree of reliability? These are all likely to be essential criteria for success.



How specific should I get when identifying Success Criteria?

→ Success Criteria are only useful insofar as they help you design your solution in detail. So you will need to get specific.

A common criterion we see among our tech clients is customization. But what exactly do customers want to customize? Which parts of the offering are essential vs. a nice-to-have? The answers to these questions will help you prioritize which areas to invest in, instead of making every feature customizable.

The same goes for ROI: every B2B buyer wants to see proof of ROI, but what kinds of metrics or evidence are customers looking for? Do they need precise calculations, or will a back-of-the-envelope estimate be enough?

Success criteria are also where you can map specific tasks that users need to carry out, while taking care to remain agnostic about the exact shape of your solution until you've sketched the full Jobs Atlas. These steps may relate to Current Approaches, but be careful not to focus too narrowly on the world as it exists today. By first laying out the Jobs, Job Drivers, and the Pain Points associated with Current Approaches, you can think about what steps are truly necessary vs. legacies of old ways that you may be about to outmode.



I have identified my customers' Success Criteria, but the list is quite long. What now?

- As with Jobs, Success Criteria can vary quite a bit across different customer types. Avoid sifting through dozens of Success Criteria by bucketing them and creating a hierarchy. You can then share and reference only the most important success criteria for distinct audiences.



What if I can't address all Success Criteria? How do I choose which ones to focus on?

- Any perfectionist Product Manager wants to hit as many Success Criteria as possible. Yet, as with Pain Points, you may not be able to excel on all fronts. It is preferable to give up on certain features that matter to a limited number of customers, and instead focus on what success looks like to your target audience or for your target occasion. Otherwise, you risk not being great at anything. Jobs-based surveys, discussed later in this volume, help to prioritize what to do for whom.



MORE IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

Tech companies often fall into the trap of thinking that more is better – more data, more amenities, faster service. However, that's only part of the picture and it may even actively go against users' preferences. In some cases, much of the value for a customer relies on reducing the complexity of the user experience or in balancing different needs. So instead of pushing the limits of "How much is too much?", ask yourself: What do customers want more of? What do they want less of? And what do they need to balance?



It is preferable to give up on certain features that matter to a limited number of customers, and instead focus on what success looks like to your target audience or for your target occasion.

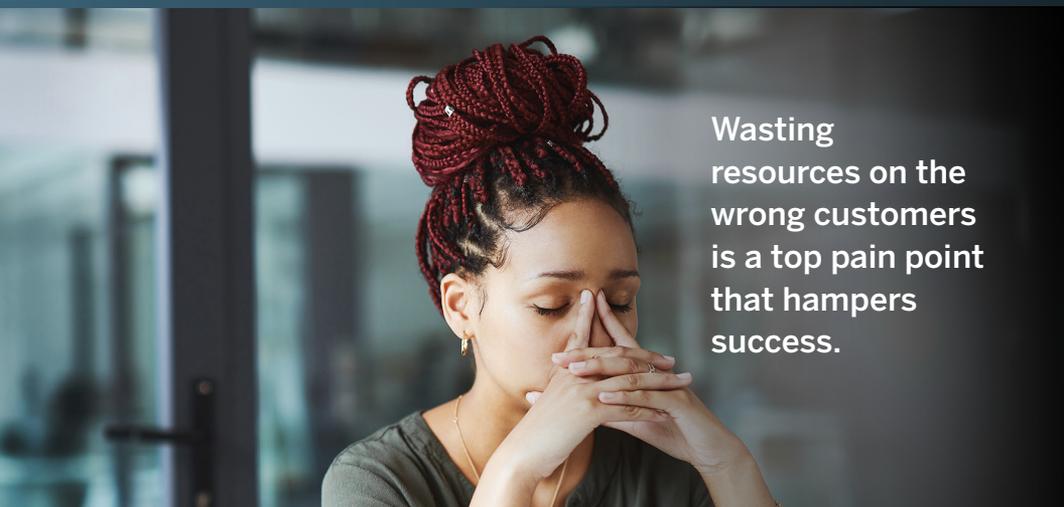


SUCCESS CRITERIA IN ACTION

To do her Jobs successfully, Megan needs tools that help her focus on the correct audience. Wasting resources on the wrong customers is a top pain point that hampers success. You talk through how her Success Criteria change according to her specific Jobs and Job Drivers, but she also articulates a few high-level criteria, which she always considers:

- I am efficient with my time when scheduling ads
- I feel confident that my ads are reaching the right audience
- My ads appear alongside those of other reputable brands
- I can quickly identify quality leads
- I can easily generate reports to measure my success and bring my team up to speed

Now we have a clear view as to what a new solution must accomplish – but that's not everything. What traps must new solutions avoid? That is our next topic.



Wasting resources on the wrong customers is a top pain point that hampers success.

Investigate the Obstacles and Triggers to Action

Obstacles to adoption are the variables that hinder your target customer from either purchasing or effectively using your offering.

WHY THINK ABOUT OBSTACLES TO ADOPTION?

Time and time again, tech leaders are faced with an uncomfortable truth: having a great solution doesn't mean that customers will adopt it. If your solution does not fit existing behaviors and expectations, users are unlikely to make the switch. Figure out what your solution might require to lead a customer to take action. *(For more information on what drives product adoption, see our [working paper](#)).*

Tech is rife with Obstacles to adoption, which come in various forms:

- The physical infrastructure is lacking
- The business infrastructure is lacking
- Buying this solution requires too many decision-makers
- This solution requires customers to change their behavior significantly
- The sales and / or implementation process is too slow
- The cost of switching from customers' previous solution to yours is too high
- The cost of failure is too high



How do I know which Obstacles to address?

→ Some of these Obstacles are more common than others, depending on the context. B2B software companies often struggle with the need to integrate into existing IT systems or with customers' staff being reluctant to change the way they do things. In a B2C setting, ease of use and lack of complementary products are among the most common issues that tech companies must wrestle with. At the end of the day, you will need to speak with your target audience directly and understand what Obstacles you might be dealing with.



LOOK AT THE FLIPSIDE OF OBSTACLES: WHAT PUSHES YOUR CUSTOMERS TO TAKE ACTION?

Equally important are the triggers to action – the specific events that lead up to a user's decision to consider or buy your product. What makes your prospects take action? What makes them say “today's the day”? By investigating past examples with your prospects and customers, This approach makes you dig into stories of why people took action in the past.



At the end of the day, you will need to speak with your target audience directly and understand what Obstacles you might be dealing with.



OBSTACLES IN ACTION

To understand Megan's Obstacles to purchasing new software for managing digital ads, you talk to her about the preferences and decision-making practices at her company. In doing so, you learn that decisions tend to be very bureaucratic, budgets are often tight, and the company is largely hesitant to make changes. The Obstacles to adopting a new software at her company include:

- Many decision-makers need to sign off on new software, including IT and marketing
- Megan must craft and deliver a pitch for various leadership teams to make headway on a decision, taking her time away from other critical undertakings
- The software will need to be adopted by many people beyond her team
- Culturally, many of her teammates are resistant to change, so implementation will be slow

At this point, you have the Jobs Atlas defined to the point that you can create solutions customers will adopt. We now turn to commercial considerations – what is a great solution worth, and how will it be distinguished from the competition?



Complex buying processes make understanding Obstacles essential.

Articulate the Value and Beat the Competition

Value is the degree of benefit or willingness of customers to pay for a new product or service, especially in the face of Competition from other approaches to a given Job.

WHY THINK ABOUT VALUE?

Many tech companies tend to price their offering by starting with the product itself, rather than the *value* of the product – which means they could price far below or above the ideal pricing point, with long-standing repercussions. Jobs to be Done helps determine exactly how important your solution is to them, and how much they would be willing to pay for it.

Imagine you have developed a potential solution and are looking to price it. You could go down the classic route of simply looking at competitors and pricing roughly at their level. But what if you are entering a less established market with few competitors, or even creating a new market from scratch? If there are no easy references to benchmark against, you could do a basic cost-plus pricing model. Unfortunately, without understanding your offering's true value, you risk underselling your solution.

To understand how expensive your offering can be, you must figure out the value of the underlying Job you are solving for. This kind of value-based pricing will also help to develop the rest of your positioning, including marketing messaging.



How do I quantify the value of a Job?

- 1. First, you must understand how valuable your solution is to your customers. For instance, does it directly create value? Or does it save time or frustration down the line?
- 2. Second, examine what references your customers use to understand the value of your solution. What are they comparing you against?
- 3. Then, you can also probe on the consequences if this Job is not satisfied. How much pain does that create for the customer?
- 4. You can also look at how similar Jobs have been satisfied in other industries or through other product lines, and use these examples as benchmarks.
- 5. Finally, you can simply ask customers what an expected price for your solution might be. What would they expect to pay? How much would be considered really expensive? How much might be considered too cheap and a warning sign about quality?



How far should I go in my overview of the competition?

- Regardless of whether your market is established or not, make sure to account for non-traditional competitors. This includes non-consumption, i.e. customers who manage to get their Job done without using a specially-designed offering, but rather through a combination of DIY and make-shift solutions.

Take OKR software, which companies can use to track their performance according to Objectives and Key Results – what would it be competing against? Non-traditional competitors include Excel and informal conversations between colleagues. Those may not be tools specifically designed to track organizational performance, but they are good enough to get the Job done. Looking beyond formal rivals gives you an edge in thinking through design criteria as you develop your own solution.



VALUE AND COMPETITION IN ACTION

As we talk to Megan, we need to make sure we understand her perception of value and competition in the digital ads space. We expect Megan to reveal these insights alongside discussion of her current approaches, pain points, and success criteria, so as we speak with her, we keep the following questions top of mind:

- What other digital ad software have you heard of? Which have you considered?
- Why have you chosen the approach you currently have? (Probe on features, and price)
- How much would you be willing to pay for a product that addresses these specific pain points?
- How much would you expect to pay for a product that addresses these specific pain points?

We now have the full Jobs Atlas articulated, and we know what an outstanding solution must do, what it must avoid, and whether it has commercial prospects.

Turning your idea into a business

Moving from concept to business plan requires detail, and doing it too early can create both delay and inflexibility. But once you have settled on a potential concept that makes sense for customers, you can go through this five-step litmus test to see if your idea is viable from a business perspective. This is not designed to be a fully comprehensive assessment; instead, it will allow you to zero in on deal-breaker risks that might take some ideas off the table. For more on the details on plotting business strategy and plans, see our book *Capturing New Markets*.

ASSESSING THE VIABILITY OF YOUR IDEAS



Research Methods

The Concepts in Action: When to Use Which Research Method

By now, you know what Jobs to be Done is all about, and you have the tools to turn your insights into fully customer-centric solutions. How do you get your customer data in the first place?

Here at New Markets, we use a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods to learn from our clients' customers. They each have their pros and cons, so we will briefly walk you through them to help you make the best decision for your own research.

In-Depth Interviews: IDIs are at the core of most JTBD work. These interviews, which typically range from 30 to 60 minutes, allow you to dig deep into context, the user journey, and many layers in the hierarchy of Jobs. For purchases involving multiple stakeholders, you might organize interviews of 2 to 3 people at once. You'll often find that customers can vary quite a bit, so don't under-scope these interviews. It's usually wise to interview at least 20 people, and in some complex markets we've interviewed up to 80.

Ethnography: If you want to discover a person's full context, and how their decision-making works in real-time purchase and usage occasions, watch them. In tech situations, this can mean co-browsing a webpage with them via screenshare, or having consumers keep a



In-Depth Interviews allow you to dig deep into context, the user journey, and many layers in the hierarchy of Jobs.

video diary as they consider purchasing expensive electronics, for instance. However, this isn't always possible to do in B2B environments with many stakeholders and users, or with wide-ranging use cases or occasions, or with purchase decisions that might take several months to play out.

Intercepts: If your product is sold or used in a retail environment, it can be ideal to question people at the Point of Purchase. Makers of mobile phones or accessories, for instance, can engage in brief questioning at a store to understand what triggered the visit on that particular day, and what specific considerations and processes users went through. Keep in mind that online shoppers may be different, and that you're talking only to people who made the decision to come vs. those who considered the trip but didn't end up making it.

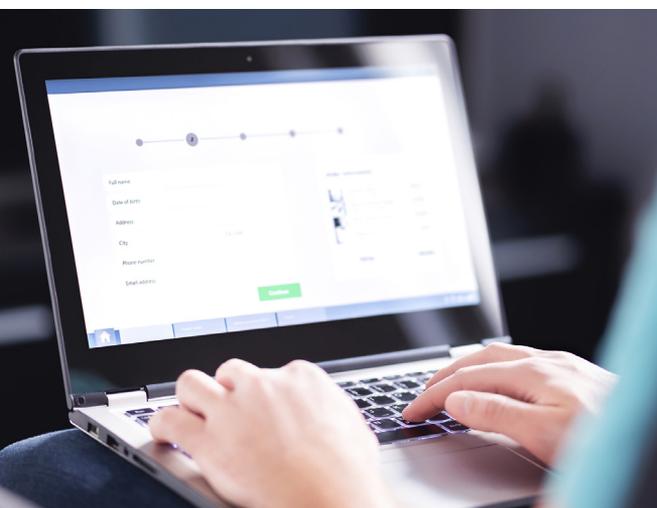


Focus Groups / Online Boards: Groups are efficient but hazardous. You can gather a lot of opinions quickly, but a big value of Jobs research lies in the richness of detail about individual stories. These details tend to get glossed over in groups, and people talk about average occasions where key opportunities can be missed. Groups and online boards are best used for assessing social factors, such as when trying to understand social phenomena (e.g. how teens share on social media) or consumer messaging (e.g. how people process images associated with product positioning).

“ If your product is sold or used in a retail environment, it can be ideal to question people at the Point of Purchase. ”

Data Analytics: Data about purchase and usage can provide important clues about Jobs to be Done, but do not assume they tell the full story. For instance, analytics convey only what users did, not what they were seeking to do but found too cumbersome to follow through with. They can be most useful in getting a sense of what types of customers there are and therefore where to focus your primary research. For instance, if you were researching online purchases of petfood, the fact that a surprisingly large share of these shoppers live in rural areas would tell you that you should invest in understanding those people.

Surveys: You'll typically want to begin with qualitative research, which will give you an excellent picture of particular users and their Jobs Atlas components. Yet you may have little idea of how common these people are, how to find them based on easily obtainable data, or how these user types correlate with your existing market segments. You may also want to get quantitative input on factors like pricing without the potential biasing factor of having just conducted a conversation with the user. Surveys are the answer. Keep them focused (<20 minutes), and push people to make choices (you don't want to end up with scatterplot data with all the dots clustered right near the middle). Done right, surveys can reveal extensive, actionable data useful both in making decisions and convincing others in your organization about how solid your insights are.



Keep surveys focused (<20 minutes), and push people to make choices (you don't want to end up with scatterplot data with all the dots clustered right near the middle).

Case Study

CASE STUDY:
JOBS TO BE DONE IN TECH



FIRSTBASE

THE CHALLENGE

Firstbase is a leading platform for employers to supply and manage physical equipment for their remote teams. Covering anything from desks and ergonomic chairs to laptops and keyboards, Firstbase was exceptionally well-positioned to help companies transition to remote work when Covid-19 hit. However, after their initial success and with so much opportunity around them, the team was unsure where to focus. They could provide custom swag, offer innovative employee benefits, support employers in hiring people abroad, help foster company culture through offsites and remote events... The options seemed endless. What should they prioritize?

To help answer this question, Firstbase partnered with New Markets to complete its first-ever Jobs to be Done project, designed to explore what matters most to various types of employers and why. From there, we would focus their product roadmap on offerings that were guaranteed to resonate with target customers.

THE APPROACH

The workplan consisted of in-depth interviews coupled with secondary research. Our questioning required having customers go deep into context and motivations, beyond what they thought they wanted in a solution, because many hadn't considered how much they could potentially outsource. For instance, it had always been a pain point for IT and HR departments to deal with people leaving a company, which required the implementation of IT security protocols and retrieval of devices. We had to understand the fundamentals underlying the pain point to see where the possibilities really lay. The lines of inquiry had to uncover the Jobs behind the existing Current Approaches, and when these Jobs varied according to certain Drivers. Only then could we drill into what Success Criteria really mattered, in which context.

THE SOLUTION

Through these inquiries, we realized that Firstbase's customers could be broadly categorized into four segments, each with their own Jobs, Job Drivers, Pain Points and Current Approaches. Given their distinct profiles, each segment would benefit from a different solution and positioning. One segment, for example, consisted of booming startups that needed help in getting their new hires set up as efficiently as possible. They were typically overwhelmed by an unexpected surge in hiring that their onboarding team was simply not equipped to handle. These firms were not seeking to be on the cutting edge of remote work; they just needed to get things done on the logistical front. For a group like this, the best solution would require focusing on the nuts and bolts of onboarding, device repairs, and offboarding – essentially making IT and furniture procurement “out of sight, out of mind.” This was a very different approach from other segments, which featured other priorities, and by extension required a different set of design criteria and value propositions.

THE IMPACT

Looking at all four segments and what each required, Firstbase could decide which ones were worth pursuing in the near term, and which ones should be tabled for later. By prioritizing the target customers to pursue, Firstbase could put together a roadmap showing which services or features would need to be developed, by whom, and by when. Firstbase ended up with a clear objective, specific milestones along the way, and key steps to reach them.

Firstbase powers every team.

For IT

Streamline procurement, deployment, retrievals, and simplify device management across regions.

For HR

Deliver a best-in-class employee experience from onboarding before day one to offboarding and everything in between.

For Facilities

Scale your remote work strategy and delight your employees by supporting ergonomic needs in any environment—make every worker's home an extension of your HQ.

For Finance

Free up cash flow without incurring large expenses upfront with a Hardware-as-a-Service subscription and have real time visibility into what assets are deployed where.

Using Jobs to create a sophisticated, actionable segmentation

Jobs to be Done underlie a sophisticated and highly actionable market segmentation. Combining Jobs and Drivers with behavioral factors that make segments findable and targetable, you can get quite specific with your offerings. Consider a mobile gaming company that monetizes its traffic through both advertising and in-app purchases of gems that can be used for changing an avatar’s look, for example, or obtaining tools that enable a player to progress through levels more quickly. Which players should be targeted? What offerings will be most compelling to priority players? When should those be communicated? Jobs provides a critical lens. The company can create a segmentation, then dive deep into priority cells to determine the right offerings to provide at the right moments.

| | Jobs-based Segments | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| | FILL IDLE TIME | ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING | SOCIALIZE | TOTAL |
| Uncommitted Play <5 min, <3x/wk | 37% of users 10% of \$ | 5% of users 5% of \$ | 1% of users 2% of \$ | 43% of users 17% of \$ |
| Frolickers Play >5 min, <3x/wk | 5% of users 1% of \$ | 8% of users 12% of \$ | 8% of users 8% of \$ | 21% of users 21% of \$ |
| Habit Lovers Play <5 min, >3x/wk | 7% of users 2% of \$ | 3% of users 2% of \$ | 1% of users 2% of \$ | 11% of users 6% of \$ |
| All-In Play >5 min, >3x/wk | 3% of users 6% of \$ | 10% of users 28% of \$ | 12% of users 22% of \$ | 25% of users 56% of \$ |
| TOTAL | 52% of users 19% of \$ | 26% of users 47% of \$ | 22% of users 34% of \$ | 100% |

Behavior Segments

- Top Jobs to be Done and Priority Offerings**
1. Brag about game achievement to friends (sell purchase of booster pack)
 2. Challenge myself (push immediate access to Hydra Monster)
 3. Learn new skill (provide user tip and link to purchase of special tool)

How We Can Help

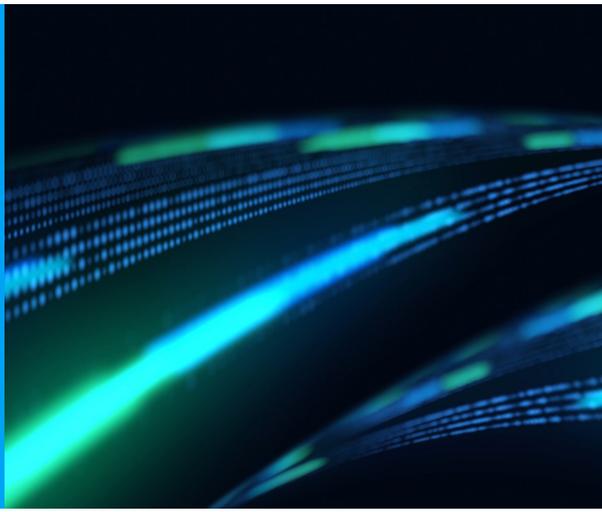
Getting Started

Understanding Jobs to be Done can re-make strategies, product roadmaps, and Go to Market approaches. The potential uses are vast. Where should you begin? Here are a few steps to get you going:

- 1.** Determine your key business questions where customer-centric insight will matter most. Dig to the next level of detail – if you need to consider adjacent markets for growth, for example, what specific questions do you need to answer? Prioritize a set of related questions to use as a focus for your Jobs work.
- 2.** Assess your hypotheses, uncertainties, and internal divergences around those questions. Where will Jobs be most impactful? What areas might your Unknown Unknowns be lurking in?
- 3.** Decide your research method. If in doubt, start with In-Depth Interviews as a way to deeply explore the Jobs Atlas.
- 4.** Identify the people you want to talk to. Are there specific types of customers you would like to home in on? What about churned customers, or prospective users who may have considered your product but decided against it? Be specific about your screening criteria. This will also help you determine sample size, depending on which populations you want to focus on and how much you need to learn
- 5.** Draft your discussion guide for the interviews. Take great care not to lead the witness, but rather let them talk freely about their priorities and contexts before focusing them on specific topics. Prioritize your guide between Must-Ask questions and areas where you're looking to be surprised and can follow up on the fly.

6. Set up a tracking spreadsheet to compare responses across specific themes and to enable you to assess why certain types of people share particular Jobs and other Jobs Atlas components.
7. Ensure that your ideation is rooted in these insights in a direct manner, rather than as background context that may not sway people from their preconceptions.
8. Above all, get out of the conference room. The point of using Jobs to be Done is to think expansively and creatively, understanding customers deeply. To do that, you must interact with customers. Listen intently, ensure you have an open mind, and discover the possibilities.

In a world as fast-moving in tech, it's certain that 20 years from now our current products will look primitive in hindsight. What is waiting to be discovered? Use Jobs to be Done to find out!



Jobs to be Done Service Offerings

Are you ready to explore what Jobs to be Done can do for your company? New Markets is a global leader in this field, and our firm's leadership worked for years to develop and refine these methods with Clayton Christensen, the Harvard Business School professor who first popularized the approach. We invite you to discuss what we can do together. Broadly speaking, our projects using Jobs to be Done have two basic constructs as options:

Full Service Research and Recommendations: We can deploy Jobs through a suite of research methodologies, qualitatively and/or quantitatively, to produce insights tied to specific and actionable recommendations in areas such as growth strategy, product roadmap, and go-to-market approaches. We can do this in ways that are highly collaborative with clients as well as more turnkey, to suit the client's particular circumstances.

Research and Capability Building: For clients that wish to build a long-term capability in their teams to perform Jobs-based research and interpret the findings, we perform demonstration projects where team members can shadow our work, collaborate with us in key activities such as survey development, and refer post-project to extensively documented processes. We embed 1 – 3 training workshops throughout the engagement. This approach enables participants to repeat the approaches afterward, provides reference to a specific company-relevant project, and creates an in-depth experience which empowers these people to spread their knowledge to others.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Explore additional resources related to Jobs to be Done.](#)

BOOKS

Capturing New Markets: How Smart Companies Create Opportunities Others Don't

Jobs To Be Done: A Roadmap For Customer-Centered Innovation

WORKING PAPERS

Quantifying Feelings: Using Surveys to Measure Emotional Jobs to be Done

Speeding Growth: 8 Drivers of Fast Product Adoption

Understanding the “Why” in Customer Experience: Journey Mapping Meets Jobs to be Done

Using 'Jobs to be Done' To Become a Customer-Centered Organization

ARTICLES

Four Deadly Innovation Pitfalls—and How to Prevent Them Using Jobs to be Done

How Jobs to be Done And Other Simple Concepts Underlie a Sophisticated, Actionable Segmentation

How 'Jobs To Be Done' Is A Concept Being Debased

OKRs, Jobs To Be Done, And The Changing World Of Work

Six Steps For Using Jobs to Be Done For Market Segmentation

ABOUT NEW MARKETS ADVISORS

New Markets Advisors is a leading boutique firm founded in 2009 and focused on innovation. We help clients determine what to bring to market and how to do it successfully. We are experts in this space, widely published, and work with top companies around the world. We are both thinkers and doers who know you need more than slides; you need actionable recommendations.

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Charlotte Desprat has been widely recognized as a leading emerging thinker and doer in the field of market insights and growth strategy for fast-moving industries. She was named by *Significant Insights* magazine to its global list of 30 Under 30 who are re-shaping the market insights field, and she leads New Markets' work in Europe. Charlotte publishes in the likes of *Forbes* on topics including Jobs to be Done, growth strategy, and scenario-based analysis of market

trends. She has led client work across several continents with companies as diverse as Firstbase, Twitter, Roche, and many others. Results from her work have featured in *The New York Times*.

While Charlotte has led many of New Markets' tech relationships, she has also spearheaded work in the nonprofit sector, and she has published about how arts and cultural institutions have re-invented themselves both during the pandemic and in light of broader audience trends. As she has with arts and culture, she seeks opportunities to look for bridges across traditional industry silos, making new connections between fields to find emerging patterns of innovation and unseen vectors for differentiation and growth.

Prior to joining New Markets, Charlotte focused on international affairs. Her work included time at the Carnegie Moscow Center think tank. A French native raised in Prague, she speaks several languages and is a Yale University cum laude graduate.

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MEET THE AUTHORS

Stephen Wunker



Steve Wunker led development of one of the world's first smartphones, has built and sold several successful businesses, and advises companies worldwide on creating and executing bold plans for growth.

Steve is the noted author of three award-winning books: *Capturing New Markets: How Smart Companies Create Opportunities Others Don't* (McGraw-Hill, 2011), *Jobs to be Done: A Roadmap for Customer-Centered Innovation* (HarperCollins Leadership, 2016), and *Costovation: Innovation That Gives Your Customers Exactly What They Want—And Nothing More* (HarperCollins Leadership, 2018). He also writes for *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *The Financial Times*, and other major outlets. Steve's media appearances include Bloomberg and BBC television, and he has been a guest lecturer at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business.

As a leading consultant on growth and innovation for the past dozen years, Steve was a long-term colleague of Harvard Business School Professor Clayton Christensen in building up his innovation consulting practice. He has co-written two articles with Professor Christensen and helped to put together his book on healthcare *The Innovator's Prescription*. He also spent several years consulting at Bain & Company in their Boston and London offices. He founded New Markets Advisors in 2009 and advises innovative companies including Microsoft, Fujitsu, HP, Cognizant, and many venture-backed firms. Within our tech practice, Steve has a particular focus on B2B SaaS start-ups. Early in his career, he was CEO of a pioneering B2B SaaS company, Brainstorm, and he has since worked with dozens of these firms to deploy Jobs in Product, Marketing, Design, and Strategy functions.

Steve has an MBA from Harvard Business School, a Master's of Public Administration from Columbia University, and a BA cum laude from Princeton University.

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[Steve's Books](#)