

FRAMEWORK

Product Discovery Canvas

One page to structure product discovery: the problem, the people, the buyer, the alternatives, your position and the cheapest test of the riskiest assumption.

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For	A product leader or founder deciding what to build before spending on building it.
Use with	The Product Opportunity Assessment on the XONIK website.

The canvas

Fill it in on screen or print it. Write in plain sentences. Where you have evidence from people outside your team, say so; where you are assuming, say that too. A canvas that is full of assumptions is a good result if it names them.

1. The problem What goes wrong, for whom, and how often it matters to them. 	2. The people who have it Roles and situations, in their words.
3. What they do today The workaround, the tool or the nothing. What it costs them. 	4. The change they want What would be different in their work if it were solved.
5. The idea, in one sentence What you would build, for whom, and why it beats the workaround. 	6. Who pays, and who decides The budget holder, the person who can say no, and how they buy.
7. The alternatives What the buyer would use instead, including doing nothing. 	8. Why they would switch The reason, stated so a buyer could confirm or deny it.
9. Evidence so far Conversations held, commitments made, things observed. Not opinions. 	10. Riskiest assumptions The things that, if wrong, end the idea.
11. The cheapest test The smallest thing you could do to find out whether the riskiest assumption holds. 	12. The decision Stop, test, or build a bounded first version. Who decides, and by when.

How to use the canvas

- 1 Start with boxes one to four, and fill them from conversations with the people who have the problem. If you have not had those conversations, write that, and make them your first test.
- 2 Fill in boxes six to eight before you describe the idea. A product with no named buyer and no reason to switch is not yet positioned.
- 3 Write the idea in box five last, in one sentence. If it needs two, it is two ideas.
- 4 Read boxes nine and ten together. Mark each claim in the canvas as evidence or assumption. The assumptions that would end the idea if wrong go in box ten.
- 5 Choose the cheapest test in box eleven that could prove the riskiest assumption wrong. Run it before you build.
- 6 Repeat the canvas after the test. The decision in box twelve should change when the evidence does.

What a good answer looks like

Box	A weak answer	A strong answer
Problem	Teams struggle with manual work.	Who struggles, in which task, what it delays, and what happens when it goes wrong.
What they do today	They use spreadsheets.	The steps of the workaround, who does them, and what they would give up to stop.
Who pays	The user will pay.	The role that holds the budget, the person who can veto, and how a purchase like this is approved.
Evidence	People liked the idea.	Someone gave time, data or a commitment because of it.
Cheapest test	Build a prototype.	Put a written proposal to the buyer, or run the task by hand for one customer.

Limits of this document

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