Demo-Sell-Build Implementation Toolkit

Get Revenue Before Building Anything - Systematic Validation

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Customer Discovery Acceleration Framework

The Problem Discovery Revolution: From 50 Interviews to 15 Insights

The Traditional Approach Trap:

Most founders waste months conducting dozens of interviews and end up more confused than when they started. Steve's story–50 interviews, 200+ documented problems, zero customer commitments–illustrates this perfectly.

The Running Lean 3rd Edition Breakthrough:

The latest methodology uses a systematic two-phase approach that uncovers 80% of insights with just 10-15 focused interviews. Patterns emerge quickly when you follow the proven framework.

Phase 1: Broad-Match Problem Discovery Sprint

Objective: Map the True Opportunity Space

Instead of targeting your supposed early adopters immediately (local maximum trap), cast a wider net to discover the full landscape of customer struggles and switching forces.

Target Profile:

- Anyone who has recently used an existing alternative (within 90 days)

- Focus on usage recency, not customer fit
- Include indirect and complementary solutions
- Map triggering events that drive solution search

Sprint Structure (2 weeks, 10-15 interviews):

The 45-Minute Customer Discovery Interview Framework

Pre-Interview Setup (5 minutes):

- Recording setup with permission
- Note-taking preparation
- Mindset: journalist/detective, not salesperson
- Frame: "I'm seeking advice and learning, not selling anything"

Interview Structure:

Phase 1: Context Setting (5 minutes)

"Thanks for your time. I'm researching how [target audience] currently handle [broader context]. I want to understand how you currently get this job done using existing solutions."

Key Principles:

- Set learning frame, not pitching frame
- Reference broader context that includes your solution AND existing alternatives
- Avoid mentioning your specific solution

- Position as advice-seeking, not selling

Phase 2: Anchor Recent Usage (10 minutes)

"Could you walk me through the last time you used [existing alternative]? What triggered that need?"

Critical Techniques:

- Anchor in specific, recent experience (within 90 days)
- Focus on facts, not hypotheticals
- Avoid asking about problems directly
- Get specific dates, situations, contexts

Follow-up Questions:

- "When exactly did this happen?"
- "What was the specific situation?"
- "What were you trying to accomplish?"
- "What had changed that made you need this?"

Phase 3: Trigger Investigation (10 minutes)

"What prompted you to look for a solution that day? Had anything changed in your situation?"

Uncover Switching Triggers:

- External events that created urgency
- Internal changes in requirements
- Time pressures or deadlines

- New constraints or opportunities

Example Questions:

- "How long had you been dealing with this?"
- "What made this the day you decided to act?"
- "What would have happened if you'd done nothing?"
- "Who else was involved in this decision?"

Phase 4: Selection Process Mapping (10 minutes)

"Can you walk me through how you chose this particular solution? What else did you consider?"

Understand Solution "Hiring Criteria":

- Decision-making process
- Information sources they trust
- Evaluation criteria used
- Stakeholders in the decision
- Time spent researching

Key Areas to Explore:

- "Where did you first hear about this solution?"
- "What other options did you evaluate?"
- "How did you decide between alternatives?"
- "Who influenced your decision?"

Phase 5: Usage Story Deep Dive (10 minutes)

"Walk me through exactly how you got started. What did you do next? And after that..."

Listen for Emotional Switching Forces:

- Moments of friction or frustration
- Workarounds they've created
- Things they've "just accepted"
- Excitement about specific features
- Disappointment with outcomes

Journalist Technique: Chase emotional threads. When you hear excitement or frustration in their voice, dig deeper with follow-up questions.

Phase 6: The Hook & Referral Ask (5 minutes)

The Hook (Summarize, Don't Pitch):

"So if I understand correctly, you're dealing with [struggle 1] and [struggle 2], and it sounds like the biggest frustration is [core insight]. Is that accurate?"

The Follow-up Ask:

"I'm working on something that might address these exact issues. Could I follow up in a couple of weeks to show you what I'm building and get your feedback?"

The Referral Request:

"Who else deals with similar challenges? Could you introduce me to 2-3 people who might have valuable perspectives on this?"

Phase 2: Narrow-Match Problem Discovery Sprint

Objective: Double-Down on Most Promising Segment

After analyzing broad-match patterns, focus on your ideal early adopter segment with another 10 interviews to uncover:

- Ideal early adopter criteria
- True competition (existing alternatives)
- Problems worth solving (biggest struggles)
- Customer forces that drive switching

Advanced Interview Techniques:

Finding High-Quality Prospects

The 90-Day Recency Rule:

Target people who purchased or used an existing alternative within 90 days. This timeframe allows recall of important details while ensuring sufficient usage experience.

Prospecting Recipes:

1. Friends and Family Prospecting

- 2. Start with your personal network
- 3. Practice interview skills in low-stakes environment
- 4. Use for warm introductions to target prospects
- 5. Warm Referral Prospecting
- 6. Leverage 1-degree connections

- 7. Provide email templates for easy forwarding
- 8. "Play the local card" for geographic connection

9. Existing Customer Prospecting

- 10. Interview current customers about competitive usage
- 11. Understand their selection and switching process
- 12. Map their customer journey chronologically
- 13. Compensation-Based Prospecting
- 14. Offer \$50-100 for problem discovery interviews
- 15. Since you're not pitching, compensation is appropriate
- 16. Creates incentive for busy prospects to participate

Email Template for Prospect Outreach:

Subject: Quick favor - 30 minutes for startup research (not selling anything)

Hey [Name],

Hope all is well... I have a quick favor to ask.

I'm researching how [target audience] currently handle [broader context] and would love to get 30 minutes of your time to understand your world better.

I'm not selling anything - just looking for advice and insights to evaluate if a product idea is worth pursuing.

Would you be willing to share your recent experience with [existing alternative]? Happy to offer a \$[amount] thank-you for your time.

Thanks.

[Your name]

Customer Forces Story Analysis

From Raw Interviews to Actionable Insights

The Post-Interview Process:

Reserve 15 minutes immediately after each interview to synthesize raw notes into a Customer Forces Story while your memory is fresh. Block 60 minutes total: 45 for interview, 15 for analysis.

Customer Forces Story Framework

Definition: A Customer Forces Story describes the causal forces that drive a customer to hire a specific product to get a job done.

Story Structure Template:

1. Triggering Event

- What external or internal change created urgency?
- When did the customer realize they needed a solution?
- What consequences would occur without action?

2. Job-to-be-Done

- What outcome was the customer trying to achieve?
- What progress were they trying to make?
- How did they measure success?

3. Existing Alternative Evaluation

- What solutions did they consider?
- How did they discover these alternatives?
- What criteria did they use to evaluate options?

4. Solution Selection

- Which solution did they choose and why?
- What tipped the scales in favor of their choice?
- Who influenced the final decision?

5. Usage Experience

- How did they get started with the solution?
- What worked well? What frustrated them?
- What workarounds did they create?

6. Current Struggles

- What limitations do they still face?
- What would make them consider switching?
- What would they pay to solve these struggles?

Example Customer Forces Story: Sarah's Architectural Rendering Pain

Triggering Event: Client presentation deadline approaching for kitchen remodel project, needed 3D visualizations to help client make decisions.

Job-to-be-Done: Help client visualize different design options and make confident decisions on \$30,000 kitchen investment.

Existing Alternative Evaluation: Considered in-house 3D modeling (too time-consuming), freelance designers (quality concerns), professional 3D services (recommended by colleague).

Solution Selection: Chose professional 3D service for \$800 based on colleague recommendation and portfolio quality.

Usage Experience: Initial renderings were beautiful and client loved them. Problem emerged when client wanted to see island moved 3 feet - required another \$400 and 3-day delay. When client wanted different cabinet colors, another \$400 and 3-day delay.

Current Struggles: "I wish I could make simple changes myself without going back to the modeler. By the time we finished, I'd spent \$1,600 on revisions alone, and the client was frustrated with the delays. There has to be a better way."

Customer Forces Canvas Analysis

The Four Forces Model:

Push Forces (Away from Status Quo):

- Frustrations with current solution
- Unmet needs and limitations
- New requirements or constraints
- External pressures for change

Pull Forces (Toward New Solution):

- Attraction to new capabilities
- Better outcomes promised
- Social proof and recommendations
- Competitive advantages

Anxiety Forces (Hesitation to Switch):

- Fear of change and learning curve
- Cost and implementation concerns
- Risk of solution not working
- Time investment required

Habit Forces (Inertia with Status Quo):

- Comfort with current solution
- Sunk cost in learning/setup
- Integration dependencies
- "Good enough" satisfaction

Pattern Recognition Across Interviews:

Key Insight: There aren't infinite customer forces stories for any market. Patterns emerge quickly, and most markets have 3-5 recurring stories.

Analysis Process:

- 1. Summarize each interview into Customer Forces Story format
- 2. **Group similar stories** by triggering events and job contexts

- 3. **Identify recurring patterns** in struggles and switching forces
- 4. Prioritize segments with greatest struggle and switching intent
- 5. Map competitive landscape based on actual alternatives used

Customer Segment Prioritization Matrix:

Segment	Struggle Intensity	y Switching Inten	t Market Size	Priority
Architects (revisions) High	High	Medium	1
Interior Designers	Medium	Medium	Large	2
Real Estate Staging	Low	Low	Large	3

Mafia Offer Campaign System

The 3-Step Demand Validation Process

Campaign Overview: A systematic approach to proving customers will pay before you build anything, using the Demo-Sell-Build methodology.

Step 1: Problem Discovery (Weeks 1-2)

Understanding your customers better than they do grants you superpowers.

Completed: Broad-match and narrow-match problem discovery sprints following the frameworks above.

Deliverables:

- 3-5 Customer Forces Stories representing key market segments
- Prioritized list of problems worth solving
- Clear definition of ideal early adopter criteria
- Map of existing alternatives and competitive landscape

Step 2: Solution Design (Week 3)

If you can find a big-enough struggle in their current workflow (status quo), that's where you'll find opportunities for causing a switch.

Mafia Offer Creation Framework

Definition: A Mafia Offer is an offer your customers cannot refuse because it fits their problems like a glove.

Value Proposition Design:

Template: "What if I could help you [achieve specific outcome] in [timeframe] without [biggest concern] even if [worst-case scenario]?"

Examples:

- **Architecture VR Platform:** "What if I could help you handle client revisions in real-time during meetings without going back to expensive 3D modelers, even if you're not a 3D expert?"
- Project Management Tool: "What if I could help you eliminate status update meetings completely in under 30 days without losing project visibility, even if your team hates using new software?"

Proof-of-Concept Demo Creation:

Demo-Sell-Build Principle: Create the simplest possible demonstration that proves your core value proposition before building the full product.

Demo Options by Product Type:

Software Products:

- PowerPoint or Keynote mockups with click-through flows
- Figma/Sketch interactive prototypes
- Wizard of Oz backends with human operators
- Video demonstrations of expected functionality

Physical Products:

- 3D printed or cardboard prototypes
- Video demonstrations of intended use
- Before/after comparison visuals
- Component assembly demonstrations

Service Products:

- Manual delivery of automated service
- White-glove concierge MVP approach
- Process documentation and workflows
- Case study examples from manual delivery

Steve's VR Platform Demo Creation:

The \$500 Demo vs \$50,000 Product:

Instead of building a full VR platform:

1. **Created tablet mockup** showing real-time cabinet/color changes

2. **Filmed interaction demo** with client revision scenario

3. **Showed before/after timelines:** 3 days → 3 minutes for revisions

4. Cost: \$500 for mockup vs \$50,000 for full development

Demo Script:

"Sarah, remember when your client wanted to move the island and change cabinet colors? Instead of waiting 3 days and paying \$400 each time, what if you could make those changes instantly during the meeting? Here's how it would work..."

Step 3: Offer Delivery (Week 4)

This is where the rubber hits the road.

The Commitment Ladder Testing Framework:

Level 1: Problem Validation

"Do you have this problem?"

- **Target:** 70%+ confirm they have this struggle

- **Red Flag:** Less than 50% recognition

Level 2: Solution Validation

"Would this solve your problem?"

- **Target:** 60%+ believe solution would work

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- **Red Flag:** Less than 40% confidence

Level 3: Usage Intent

"Would you use this if it existed?"

- **Target:** 40%+ express usage intent

- Red Flag: Less than 25% interest

Level 4: Payment Willingness

"Would you pay \$X for this?"

- **Target:** 20%+ willing to pay asking price

- Red Flag: Less than 10% payment intent

Level 5: Actual Commitment

"Can you give me \$X now for first access?"

- Target: 10%+ provide real money/commitment

- Success: Any actual money validates demand

Revenue Validation Techniques:

Pre-Orders with Deposit:

- "Reserve your founding member spot for \$X"
- "Early access pricing: \$Y (50% off future price)"
- "Limited beta program: \$Z deposit, refundable if not satisfied"

Letters of Intent:

- "Commitment to purchase when ready for \$X"
- "Enterprise procurement interest documentation"
- "Partnership agreement outline with revenue terms"

Pilot Program Contracts:

- "Custom implementation proof-of-concept for \$X"
- "Consulting engagement to solve this specific problem"
- "White-glove service delivery at premium pricing"

Waitlist with Commitment:

- "\$X refundable deposit holds your priority position"
- "Founding customer investment: \$Y for lifetime pricing"
- "Advisory role in exchange for early access and equity"

Steve's \$13,500 Revenue Validation Results:

Presentation Results (12 Architect Prospects):

- **8 confirmed problem** (67% problem validation)
- 6 believed solution would work (50% solution validation)
- **5 expressed strong usage intent** (42% usage validation)
- **5 willing to pay \$225/month** (42% payment willingness)
- **3 provided \$500 deposits** (25% actual commitment)

Financial Validation:

- **Annual commitments:** $5 \times \$225 \times 12 = \$13,500$

- **Upfront deposits:** $3 \times \$500 = \$1,500$

- Total validation: \$15,000 revenue confirmed

- **Investment:** \$500 demo creation cost

- ROI: 3,000% return on validation investment

Revenue-First Validation Strategies

Demo-Sell-Build vs Build-Demo-Sell Comparison

Traditional Build-Demo-Sell Approach:

Timeline & Investment:

- **Months 1-6:** Product development (\$50,000-200,000)

- **Months 7-8:** Customer demos and feedback (\$10,000-20,000)

- Months 9+: Sales and revenue generation (10-20% success rate)

Total Investment Before Revenue: \$60,000-220,000

Time to First Revenue: 6-9 months

Success Rate: 10-20% of products achieve product-market fit

Risk Profile:

- High upfront investment with uncertain returns

- Late customer validation increases failure risk

- Difficult to pivot after significant development
- Sunk cost bias prevents necessary changes

Demo-Sell-Build Approach:

Timeline & Investment:

- **Weeks 1-2:** Customer discovery (\$500-1,000)
- **Week 3:** Demo creation (\$500-2,000)
- **Week 4:** Revenue validation (\$0-500)
- **Months 2-4:** Customer-funded development

Total Investment Before Revenue: \$1,000-3,500

Time to First Revenue: 3-4 weeks

Success Rate: 60-80% of validated ideas achieve product-market fit

Risk Profile:

- Minimal upfront investment with early validation
- Customer-guided development reduces feature risk
- Easy to pivot based on early feedback
- Revenue funds development costs

Systematic Approach to Proving Customers Will Pay

The Revenue Validation Hierarchy:

Foundation Level: Problem Severity

- How much does this problem cost customers?
- How frequently does it occur?
- What's the emotional impact of the problem?
- How urgent is finding a solution?

Validation Level: Solution Effectiveness

- Does your approach solve the core problem?
- Is it better than existing alternatives?
- Can customers understand the value clearly?
- Do they believe it will work for them?

Commitment Level: Financial Validation

- Will customers pay for this solution?
- How much are they willing to pay?
- What payment terms work for them?
- Who controls the purchasing decision?

Evidence Level: Money on the Table

- Will customers give you money now?
- Can you collect pre-orders or deposits?
- Will they sign partnership agreements?
- Can you get procurement commitments?

Revenue Validation Scripts:

Pre-Order Script:

"Based on what you've seen, this solution could save you \$X per month in revision costs. Our founding customer pricing is \$Y per month, which pays for itself in the first

week. Would you like to reserve one of the 50 founding customer spots with a \$Z de-

posit?"

Letter of Intent Script:

"If we build this solution to your specifications, would your company commit to a

\$X annual contract? We're looking for 3-5 founding customers to guide development

and receive preferred pricing."

Pilot Program Script:

"What if we solved this specific problem for you manually over the next 30 days for

\$X? This lets you experience the value immediately while we build the automated solu-

tion. If it doesn't work, we'll refund your investment."

Enterprise Validation Methodology:

Stakeholder Mapping:

- **User:** Person experiencing the problem daily

- **Influencer:** Person who researches and recommends solutions

- **Decision Maker:** Person with budget authority

- **Champion:** Internal advocate for your solution

Validation with Each Stakeholder:

- **User:** Problem severity and solution fit

- **Influencer:** Competitive analysis and ROI justification

Decision Maker: Budget availability and procurement process

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- Champion: Internal selling and implementation planning

Enterprise Commitment Ladder:

- 1. User confirms problem and solution fit
- 2. Influencer recommends solution to decision maker
- 3. Decision maker agrees to pilot program
- 4. Champion secures budget and procurement approval
- 5. Contract signed with committed timeline and payment

Customer Factory Implementation

Building Repeatable Revenue Generation

Customer Factory Definition: A systematic process that repeatably attracts, activates, and converts prospects into paying customers.

The 5-Stage Customer Factory Model:

Stage 1: Awareness Creation

Content Marketing with Systematic Insights:

- Share customer discovery methodologies and frameworks

- Publish case studies showing transformation results
- Create educational content that demonstrates expertise
- Build authority through proven systematic approaches

Authority Building Strategy:

- Methodology Documentation: Running Lean framework adoption
- Case Study Publication: Steve's \$13,500 validation story
- Educational Content: "30 minutes beats 50 interviews" positioning
- **Social Proof:** "1000+ startups" systematic approach validation

Stage 2: Interest Qualification

Lead Magnet Strategy:

- Demo-Sell-Build Implementation Toolkit
- Customer Discovery Acceleration Framework
- Mafia Offer Campaign Templates
- Revenue Validation Scripts and Templates

Self-Qualifying Assessment:

- "Rate your confidence in customer discovery (1-10)"
- "How much have you invested in unvalidated product development?"
- "How many customer interviews have you conducted?"
- "What's your biggest product development challenge?"

Stage 3: Desire Building

Personalized Problem Identification:

- Use assessment results to identify specific struggles
- Share relevant case studies matching their situation
- Demonstrate framework application to their challenges
- Show ROI potential based on their current approach

Social Proof Strategy:

- Steve and Mary character story progression
- Specific transformation metrics and timelines
- Industry recognition and methodology adoption
- Community testimonials and success stories

Stage 4: Action Facilitation

Simple Purchasing Process:

- Clear value proposition and pricing
- Multiple payment options and terms
- Immediate access to resources and community
- Step-by-step onboarding and implementation

Risk Reversal and Guarantees:

- 90-day transformation guarantee
- Money-back satisfaction policy

- Success coach assignment and support
- Community access and peer learning

Stage 5: Advocacy Development

Exceptional Customer Experience:

- Systematic methodology delivery
- Ongoing support and coaching
- Advanced framework training
- Implementation success tracking

Community Building:

- Alumni network and peer connections
- Success story sharing and recognition
- Referral incentive programs
- Advanced methodology development participation

Customer Factory Metrics:

Awareness Metrics:

- Content engagement and sharing rates
- Authority building content performance
- Social proof and testimonial generation
- Educational resource download rates

Interest Metrics:

- Lead magnet conversion rates
- Assessment completion and scoring
- Email engagement and progression
- Webinar attendance and participation

Desire Metrics:

- Case study engagement rates
- Consultation booking rates
- Proposal request and review rates
- Competitive comparison engagement

Action Metrics:

- Purchase conversion rates
- Payment completion rates
- Onboarding completion rates
- Initial implementation success

Advocacy Metrics:

- Customer satisfaction scores
- Referral generation rates
- Success story participation
- Community engagement levels

Demo-Sell-Build for Any Product

Universal Application Framework

The Demo-Sell-Build methodology works across all product types by focusing on proving customer demand before development investment.

Software Products

Demo Creation Options:

- **Interactive Prototypes:** Figma, InVision, or Principle mockups
- Video Demonstrations: Screen recordings showing expected functionality
- PowerPoint Click-throughs: Detailed user flow presentations
- Wizard of Oz MVPs: Human-powered backend simulating automation

Validation Techniques:

- User Story Testing: "Can you complete this task using our interface?"
- **Feature Priority Ranking:** "Which capabilities matter most to you?"
- **Integration Requirements:** "How would this fit into your current workflow?"
- **Performance Expectations:** "How fast does this need to work?"

Revenue Models:

- SaaS Subscriptions: Monthly/annual recurring revenue
- **Usage-Based Pricing:** Pay per transaction or API call

- **Enterprise Licenses:** Custom implementation and support
- **Freemium Conversion:** Free tier leading to paid features

Physical Products

Demo Creation Options:

- **3D Printed Prototypes:** Functional form and fit testing
- Cardboard/Foam Models: Rapid iteration and user feedback
- **Video Demonstrations:** Usage scenarios and benefit proof
- **Component Testing:** Individual feature validation

Validation Techniques:

- Usability Testing: "Can you complete this task?"
- **Aesthetic Preference:** "Which design option do you prefer?"
- **Feature Priority:** "What capabilities are must-have vs nice-to-have?"
- **Price Sensitivity:** "What would you expect to pay for this?"

Revenue Models:

- **Pre-Order Campaigns:** Crowdfunding and direct sales
- **Limited Production Runs:** Founding customer exclusivity
- **Licensing Agreements:** Partnership with existing manufacturers
- **Direct-to-Consumer:** Online sales and fulfillment

Service Products

Demo Creation Options:

- **Manual Service Delivery:** White-glove concierge approach
- **Process Documentation:** Step-by-step methodology explanation
- **Case Study Examples:** Before/after transformation stories
- **Consultant-Led Pilots:** Expert delivery with documented results

Validation Techniques:

- Outcome Measurement: "Did we achieve the promised results?"
- **Process Efficiency:** "How much time/cost did this save?"
- Quality Assessment: "How does this compare to alternatives?"
- Scalability Planning: "How could this work across your organization?"

Revenue Models:

- Consulting Engagements: Custom project-based pricing
- **Training Programs:** Group education and certification
- **Software-as-a-Service:** Automated service delivery
- **Licensing and Franchising:** Methodology replication rights

AI/Machine Learning Products

Demo Creation Options:

- **Wizard of Oz Implementation:** Human intelligence simulating AI
- **Pre-trained Model Demos:** Existing Al showing expected capabilities
- **Scenario-Based Simulations:** Expected input/output demonstrations

- **Rule-Based Prototypes:** Logic systems mimicking Al behavior

Validation Techniques:

- Accuracy Requirements: "What error rate is acceptable?"
- Training Data Needs: "What data do you have available?"
- Integration Complexity: "How would this fit existing systems?"
- Performance Expectations: "How fast do you need results?"

Revenue Models:

- **API Access:** Pay-per-use or subscription pricing
- **Custom Model Training:** Bespoke AI development services
- **Platform Licensing:** White-label AI solution deployment
- **Data Processing Services:** Input transformation and analysis

Universal Demo-Sell-Build Process

Week 1: Customer Discovery

- Identify existing alternatives customers currently use
- Map triggering events that create solution urgency
- Understand selection criteria and decision processes
- Document customer forces and switching triggers

Week 2: Problem Validation

- Confirm problem severity and frequency
- Validate current solution limitations
- Quantify cost of status quo maintenance
- Identify early adopter characteristics

Week 3: Solution Design

- Create minimum viable demonstration
- Test core value proposition with prospects
- Iterate based on feedback and objections
- Refine positioning and messaging

Week 4: Revenue Validation

- Present solution to qualified prospects
- Test commitment ladder progression
- Collect actual payments or commitments
- Validate pricing and packaging

Success Criteria (Universal):

- **50%+ problem recognition** among target customers
- **30%+ solution belief** that approach will work

- 20%+ payment willingness at proposed price point
- 10%+ actual commitment with money or contracts
- **\$5,000+ validated revenue** before development investment

Steve & Mary Transformation Case Studies

Steve's Journey: From Feature Factory to Customer-Driven Development

Background: The Traditional Approach Disaster

Steve's Profile:

- Technical founder with VR/AR expertise
- 10+ years in architecture industry
- Traditional product development mindset
- Feature-driven building approach

The 3-Month Validation Nightmare:

Month 1: Market Research Phase

- **Investment:** \$5,000 in industry reports and competitive analysis
- **Activities:** Feature comparison spreadsheets, technology trend research

- **Results:** 47 documented features, no customer validation

Month 2: Customer Interview Marathon

- **Activities:** 50 individual interviews, 5 focus groups, 3 surveys
- Questions: "What are your biggest challenges with 3D rendering?"
- **Results:** 200+ problems documented, conflicting priorities

Month 3: Product Development Start

- **Investment:** \$50,000 in development team and infrastructure
- Focus: Building feature-rich VR platform based on survey feedback
- **Customer Commitments:** Zero actual pre-orders or revenue

Total Investment After 3 Months: \$65,000

Revenue Generated: \$0

Customer Validation: Opinions and feedback, no financial commitment

The Mary Intervention: Systematic Methodology Introduction

Mary's Background:

- Business model design expert and Running Lean practitioner
- 5+ years applying systematic validation methodologies
- Customer discovery specialist and revenue-first advocate
- Constraint-based optimization expert

Week 1: Methodology Training

Mary's Diagnosis:

"Steve, you're collecting opinions, not insights. You're asking customers what they want instead of studying what they actually do. This approach leads to feature creep, not customer-driven products."

The Systematic Approach Introduction:

- **Problem Discovery Framework:** 45-minute interview structure
- **Customer Forces Analysis:** Understanding switching triggers
- Back-Door Problem Discovery: Studying existing alternative usage
- **Revenue Validation:** Getting money before building

The Transformation: Week-by-Week Implementation

Week 2: The Breakthrough Interview

Target: Sarah, Senior Architect at Austin Design Firm

Approach: Running Lean systematic customer discovery methodology

The Interview Process:

Context Setting (5 minutes):

Mary coached Steve: "Don't mention VR or your solution. Ask Sarah to walk you through her last client presentation project where she needed 3D visualizations."

Anchor Recent Usage (10 minutes):

Steve: "Sarah, can you tell me about the last time you needed 3D renderings for a client project? What triggered that need?"

Sarah's Response: "It was a kitchen remodel for a \$30,000 project. The client couldn't visualize the space from 2D plans, so I needed 3D renderings to help them make decisions."

Trigger Investigation (10 minutes):

Steve: "What prompted you to use 3D renderings for this specific project?"

Sarah: "The client was hesitant about the island placement and cabinet choices. They'd invested \$5,000 in design fees and wanted to be absolutely sure before ordering materials."

Selection Process (10 minutes):

Steve: "How did you choose your 3D rendering solution?"

Sarah: "A colleague recommended a professional service. I paid \$800 for initial renderings showing three different island configurations."

Usage Deep Dive (15 minutes):

Steve: "Walk me through what happened after you got the initial renderings."

Sarah: "The client loved them initially, but then wanted to see the island moved 3 feet to the left. I had to go back to the 3D service, pay another \$400, and wait 3 days. Then they wanted different cabinet colors and appliances. Another \$400 and 3-day wait. By the end, I'd spent \$1,600 on revisions alone, and the client was frustrated with delays."

The Insight Moment:

The real problem wasn't rendering quality—it was **revision speed and cost during client decision-making**. Sarah's voice showed clear frustration with the revision cycle.

Week 3: Pattern Validation

Steve conducted 10 more systematic interviews using Mary's framework:

Pattern Results:

- 12 of 15 architects had identical revision pain points

- **Average revision cost:** \$400-800 per change

- **Average delay:** 2-5 days per revision cycle

- Client frustration: High due to decision-making delays

Architect frustration: High due to cost and timeline pressure

Customer Forces Analysis:

Push Forces (Away from Current Solution):

- High cost of revisions (\$400-800 each)
- Long delays (2-5 days per change)
- Client frustration with decision process
- Loss of project momentum during revisions

Pull Forces (Toward New Solution):

- Real-time revision capability
- Architect-controlled changes
- Instant client decision-making
- Professional-quality output

Week 4: Mafia Offer Creation

Value Proposition Development:

"What if I could help you handle client revisions in real-time during meetings without going back to expensive 3D modelers, even if you're not a 3D expert?"

Proof-of-Concept Demo:

Instead of building full VR platform (\$50,000 investment):

- Created tablet mockup showing real-time changes (\$300)
- Filmed interaction demo with revision scenario (\$200)
- Demonstrated before/after: 3 days → 3 minutes for revisions
- Total Demo Cost: \$500

Demo Script:

"Sarah, remember your \$1,600 revision nightmare? Watch this. Your client wants to move the island-click, drag, done. Different cabinet color? Tap, select, instant change. What used to cost \$400 and take 3 days now happens instantly during your meeting."

Week 4: Revenue Validation Results

Prospect Presentation Results (12 Architects):

Architect	Problem Recognition	Solution Be- lief	Usage Intent	Payment Will- ingness	Actual Com- mitment
Sarah	✓	✓	✓	√ \$225/month	√ \$500 de- posit
Mike	✓	✓	✓	√ \$225/month	√ \$500 deposit
Jennifer	✓	✓	✓	√ \$225/month	✓ \$500 de- posit
David	✓	✓	✓	√ \$225/month	X
Lisa	✓	✓	✓	√ \$225/month	X
Totals	10/12 (83%)	8/12 (67%)	8/12 (67%)	5/12 (42%)	3/12 (25%)

Financial Validation:

- Annual Subscriptions: $5 \times \$225 \times 12 = \$13,500$

- **Upfront Deposits:** $3 \times \$500 = \$1,500$

- **Total Committed Revenue:** \$15,000

- Validation Investment: \$500 (demo creation)

ROI: 3,000% return on validation investment

The Transformation Results:

Steve's Traditional Approach (3 months):

- **Time Investment:** 3 months full-time

- Financial Investment: \$65,000

- **Customer Interviews:** 50 interviews

- **Problems Documented: 200+**

- Revenue Validated: \$0

- **Product Built:** 30% complete VR platform

- Customer Commitments: Zero

Mary's Systematic Approach (4 weeks):

- **Time Investment:** 4 weeks part-time

- Financial Investment: \$500

- **Customer Interviews:** 15 systematic interviews

- **Problems Identified:** 3 core pain points

- **Revenue Validated:** \$15,000

- **Product Built:** \$500 demo mockup

- **Customer Commitments:** 3 paying customers

Transformation Metrics:

- **95% cost reduction** (\$65,000 → \$500)

- **4x time acceleration** (3 months → 3 weeks to revenue)

- ∞% revenue improvement (\$0 → \$15,000 validated)

- **100% customer commitment** (0 → 3 paying customers)

Mary's Systematic Methodology Framework

The Running Lean 3rd Edition Implementation

Mary's Teaching Philosophy:

"Don't ask customers what they want. Study what they actually do. Don't validate your solution. Discover their problems. Don't collect opinions. Generate revenue."

The 4-Step Systematic Transformation:

Step 1: Mindset Shift (Week 1)

- **From:** Feature-driven product development
- **To:** Customer-driven demand validation
- **From:** Building first, validating later
- **To:** Validating first, building with certainty

Step 2: Methodology Training (Week 1)

- Running Lean customer discovery framework
- Customer Forces Canvas analysis
- Back-door problem discovery techniques
- Systematic interview structure and timing

Step 3: Implementation Coaching (Weeks 2-3)

- Real-time interview coaching and feedback
- Pattern recognition and insight development
- Customer forces mapping and analysis

- Early adopter criteria refinement

Step 4: Revenue Validation (Week 4)

- Mafia offer creation and testing
- Commitment ladder progression
- Pre-order collection and validation
- Financial commitment confirmation

Mary's Key Insights:

Insight #1: Memory vs Prediction

"People can accurately tell you what they did yesterday. They can't reliably predict what they'll do tomorrow. Focus on recent behavior, not future intentions."

Insight #2: Problems vs Solutions

"Don't ask about problems directly—you'll get surface complaints. Study their usage of existing alternatives and let the real problems reveal themselves through their struggles."

Insight #3: Forces vs Features

"Customers don't buy features. They hire products to make progress. Map the forces that cause them to switch, not the features they think they want."

Insight #4: Evidence vs Opinions

"Opinions are free and worthless. Evidence costs money and reveals truth. Always follow the money trail to validate real demand."

The Ongoing Mentorship

Monthly Progress Reviews:

Month 2: MVP Development Planning

- Use customer commitments to fund development
- Prioritize features based on Customer Forces insights
- Develop with committed customers as design partners
- Focus on solving revision workflow, not VR technology

Month 3: Customer Success Implementation

- Onboard first 3 paying customers
- Document usage patterns and additional insights
- Identify expansion opportunities and feature requests
- Build referral system based on customer success

Month 6: Scale and Optimization

- Expand to 15+ paying customers
- Optimize pricing based on value delivered
- Develop enterprise offerings for larger firms
- Create customer success and advocacy programs

The Continuing Education:

Steve becomes advocate for systematic validation and helps other founders implement Demo-Sell-Build methodology through:

- **Conference speaking** on customer discovery transformation
- **Mentorship programs** for technical founders
- Case study sharing in startup communities
- Methodology refinement based on implementation experience

90-Day Implementation Roadmap

Complete Transformation Timeline

This roadmap integrates all frameworks into a systematic 90-day journey from idea validation to revenue generation.

Phase 1: Foundation (Days 1-30)

Week 1: Customer Discovery Acceleration

Days 1-2: Framework Study and Setup

- Study Running Lean 3rd Edition customer discovery methodology
- Set up interview recording and note-taking systems
- Create Customer Forces Canvas templates
- Identify initial prospect targeting criteria

Days 3-5: Prospect Identification and Outreach

- Create list of 20+ prospects who used existing alternatives (90-day window)
- Develop prospecting emails using provided templates
- Schedule first 5 interviews using compensation strategy
- Practice interview framework with friendly contacts

Days 6-7: First Interviews and Analysis

- Conduct first 2 systematic customer discovery interviews
- Post-process interviews into Customer Forces Stories
- Begin pattern recognition analysis
- Refine targeting and outreach approach

Week 2: Broad-Match Problem Discovery Sprint

Days 8-12: Interview Acceleration (10 interviews)

- Conduct 2 interviews per day following 45-minute framework
- Record and analyze each interview immediately
- Track patterns across Customer Forces Stories
- Maintain prospect pipeline for continued scheduling

Days 13-14: Pattern Analysis and Synthesis

- Analyze all interviews for recurring themes
- Create Customer Forces Canvas summaries
- Identify 3-5 primary customer segments

- Map existing alternative landscape

Week 3: Narrow-Match Problem Discovery Sprint

Days 15-19: Focused Interview Sprint (5-8 interviews)

- Target most promising customer segment identified
- Conduct deeper interviews with ideal early adopter profile
- Focus on switching forces and competitive dynamics
- Validate problem severity and urgency

Days 20-21: Early Adopter Definition

- Define ideal early adopter criteria
- Map customer journey and touchpoints
- Identify key stakeholders in buying process
- Prioritize problems worth solving

Week 4: Solution Design and Demo Creation

Days 22-26: Mafia Offer Development

- Create irresistible value proposition using template
- Design proof-of-concept demo approach
- Build minimum viable demonstration
- Test demo with friendly prospects for feedback

Days 27-30: Demo Refinement and Launch Preparation

- Iterate demo based on initial feedback
- Develop presentation script and flow
- Prepare commitment ladder conversation framework
- Schedule revenue validation meetings

Phase 2: Validation (Days 31-60)

Week 5-6: Revenue Validation Sprint

Days 31-42: Demo Presentations (10-15 prospects)

- Present solution demo to qualified prospects
- Test commitment ladder progression systematically
- Collect feedback and objections for iteration
- Track conversion rates at each commitment level

Days 43-45: Analysis and Optimization

- Analyze demo presentation results
- Identify common objections and responses
- Optimize value proposition and positioning
- Refine pricing and packaging strategy

Week 7-8: Commitment Collection and Iteration

Days 46-56: Pre-Order and Commitment Focus

- Focus on prospects showing highest commitment intent
- Collect actual money, deposits, or letters of intent
- Document specific requirements and use cases
- Build pipeline of committed customers

Days 57-60: Revenue Validation Analysis

- Calculate total revenue validated
- Assess customer acquisition cost and lifetime value
- Determine minimum viable customer factory
- Plan MVP development based on commitments

Phase 3: Implementation (Days 61-90)

Week 9-10: Customer Factory Development

Days 61-70: Systematic Lead Generation

- Create content marketing based on discovery insights
- Develop lead magnets and qualification systems
- Build email nurture sequences for different segments
- Implement referral programs from existing customers

Days 71-75: Process Optimization

- Optimize customer discovery and demo processes
- Create scalable systems for prospect qualification
- Develop sales process and conversion optimization
- Build customer success and onboarding systems

Week 11-12: Scale and Growth

Days 76-85: Growth Acceleration

- Scale customer acquisition based on proven process
- Implement systematic growth experiments
- Optimize pricing and packaging based on data
- Develop customer advocacy and referral systems

Days 86-90: System Integration and Planning

- Integrate all systems into unified customer factory
- Plan next 90-day cycle for product development
- Set growth targets and optimization priorities
- Prepare for transition from validation to building

Success Metrics by Phase:

Phase 1 Success Criteria (Days 1-30):

- 15+ customer discovery interviews completed
- 3-5 Customer Forces Stories documented
- Ideal early adopter criteria defined
- Proof-of-concept demo created
- Problem validation achieved (50%+ recognition)

Phase 2 Success Criteria (Days 31-60):

- 10+ demo presentations completed
- Solution validation achieved (30%+ belief)
- Payment willingness validated (20%+ at price point)
- _ \$5,000+ revenue committed or collected
- 3+ customers providing money or strong commitments

Phase 3 Success Criteria (Days 61-90):

- _ Customer factory process documented
- Scalable lead generation system operational
- Customer acquisition cost < 3x monthly revenue

- 10+ qualified prospects in pipeline
- Next 90-day development cycle planned

Weekly Check-in Framework:

Monday: Plan and Prioritize

- Review previous week's results and lessons
- Set current week's interview and demo targets
- Schedule prospect meetings and follow-ups
- Prepare materials and refine processes

Wednesday: Mid-Week Assessment

- Assess progress toward weekly targets
- Troubleshoot challenges and obstacles
- Refine approaches based on early feedback
- Adjust schedule and priorities as needed

Friday: Weekly Review and Synthesis

- Analyze week's interviews and demo results
- Update Customer Forces Stories and insights

- Calculate conversion rates and financial progress
- Plan following week's activities and targets

Integration with Business Model Design Challenge:

Days 1-7: Toolkit Implementation

- Immediate value delivery through systematic frameworks
- Early wins with customer discovery methodology
- Success with first systematic interviews
- Authority building through proven approach

Days 8-14: Challenge Awareness Building

- Introduction to comprehensive Business Model Design Challenge
- Case studies showing complete transformation examples
- Social proof from previous challenge participants
- Early bird pricing and limited enrollment messaging

Days 15-30: Challenge Enrollment Period

- Personal consultation to assess transformation goals
- Customized challenge participation planning

- Community access and peer learning introduction
- 90-day success guarantee and support commitment

Days 31+: Advanced Implementation

- Advanced frameworks and methodologies
- Expert coaching and personalized guidance
- Community collaboration and accountability
- Comprehensive business model optimization

Resource Requirements:

Time Investment:

- Hours per week: 15-20 hours (days 1-30), 10-15 hours (days 31-90)
- **Peak intensity:** Weeks 2-3 (interview sprints), Week 6 (demo presentations)
- **Ongoing commitment:** 2-3 hours daily for systematic implementation

Financial Investment:

- **Customer discovery:** \$500-1,000 (prospect compensation, tools)
- **Demo creation:** \$500-2,000 (prototyping, design, video)
- Marketing systems: \$200-500 (email tools, landing pages)

- **Total investment:** \$1,200-3,500 before revenue generation

Expected Returns:

- **Revenue validated:** \$5,000-25,000 (varies by market and pricing)
- Customer commitments: 3-10 paying customers confirmed
- **Market knowledge:** Deep understanding of customer forces and competition
- **Systematic process:** Repeatable customer acquisition and validation system

Next Steps: Your Demo-Sell-Build Journey

Immediate Actions (Next 48 Hours)

Download and Organize Resources:

Print Customer Discovery Framework - The 45-minute interview structure and question sequence

- Set Up Customer Forces Canvas Template Digital or physical tracking system
- 3. **Create Interview Recording Setup** Phone app or software with backup options
- 4. **Prepare Prospect Compensation** \$50-100 budget for customer discovery interviews

Identify Your First 5 Interview Targets:

- **Recent users criterion:** People who used existing alternatives within 90 days
- **Specific usage experience:** Actual purchase or implementation, not just research
- **Accessible contacts:** People willing to share 45-60 minutes for advice and insights
- **Representative sample:** Mix of user types and use case scenarios

Schedule Your First Systematic Interview:

- **Use email template provided** with compensation offer and learning frame
- **Block 60 minutes total:** 45 minutes interview + 15 minutes post-processing
- **Prepare recording setup** and Customer Forces Story template
- **Practice framework** with low-stakes friendly contact first

Week 1 Success Checklist:

Customer Discovery Preparation:

- _ Study Running Lean interview framework thoroughly
- Set up recording and note-taking systems
- Create prospect list of 15-20 potential interviews
- _ Schedule first 5 customer discovery interviews

Interview Execution:

- Complete 2 systematic customer interviews using 45-minute framework
- Post-process each interview into Customer Forces Story format
- Begin identifying patterns and recurring themes
- _ Schedule additional interviews based on insights

Foundation Building:

- Create Customer Forces Canvas for pattern tracking
- _ Document initial insights and hypothesis refinements
- Plan Week 2 interview sprint targeting and scheduling
- _ Set up systems for scaling interview and analysis process

Advanced Resources and Support

Methodology Deep Dive:

- **Running Lean 3rd Edition** Complete systematic methodology and case studies
- **Demand Validation Playbook** Advanced frameworks and implementation guides
- **Customer Forces Analysis Tools** Digital templates and analysis software
- **Interview Best Practices** Advanced questioning techniques and insight extraction

Community and Coaching:

- **LEANFoundry Community Access** Peer learning and methodology discussion
- Office Hours and Q&A Sessions Expert guidance and troubleshooting support
- **Implementation Accountability Groups** Weekly check-ins and progress tracking
- **Success Story Sharing Platform** Inspiration and learning from other founders

Business Model Design Challenge:

For founders ready for comprehensive transformation:

- Complete 90-day business model optimization
- Expert coaching and personalized guidance
- Advanced frameworks and systematic methodologies
- Community collaboration and accountability
- Guaranteed transformation or money-back

Expected Transformation Timeline:

Days 1-30: Foundation Mastery

- Master customer discovery methodology
- Complete 15+ systematic interviews
- Identify core customer forces and problems
- Create proof-of-concept demonstration

Days 31-60: Revenue Validation

- Achieve \$5,000+ validated revenue commitments
- Confirm willingness to pay at target price points
- Collect actual money or strong purchase commitments
- Optimize value proposition and positioning

Days 61-90: System Implementation

- Build repeatable customer acquisition system
- Scale revenue validation to 10+ committed customers

- Create systematic growth and optimization processes

- Plan product development funded by customer commitments

Beyond 90 Days: Sustainable Growth

- Launch MVP with confirmed customer demand

- Scale customer factory for predictable growth

- Optimize constraints and system performance

- Build sustainable competitive advantage

About This Toolkit

The Systematic Methodology Behind Demo-Sell-Build

This Demo-Sell-Build Implementation Toolkit represents the culmination of systematic methodology development and testing by Ash Maurya across thousands of startup implementations worldwide.

Methodology Foundations:

Running Lean 3rd Edition Integration:

- 10+ years of continuous testing and refinement
- Hundreds of product case studies across industries

- Integration of multiple proven frameworks (Lean Startup, Design Thinking, Jobs-to-be-Done)
- Systematic step-by-step process for breakthrough innovation

Demand Validation Playbook Enhancement:

- Customer Forces Canvas and Story frameworks
- Mafia Offer Campaign systematic implementation
- Back-door problem discovery techniques
- Evidence-based decision making processes

LEANFoundry Proven Results:

- 1,000+ startup implementations and case studies
- Millions of Lean Canvas users worldwide
- 60-80% success rate improvement over traditional approaches
- Systematic 3,000%+ ROI on validation investment

Framework Validation:

Academic Research Integration:

- Jobs-to-be-Done theory (Clayton Christensen)
- Customer Development methodology (Steve Blank)
- Lean Startup principles (Eric Ries)
- Systems Thinking and Constraint Theory (Eli Goldratt)

Industry Testing:

- Software products: SaaS, mobile apps, enterprise platforms
- Physical products: consumer electronics, industrial equipment
- Service businesses: consulting, education, healthcare
- Al/ML products: automation, analytics, decision support

Success Metrics:

- **Time to Revenue:** 75% reduction (6 months → 6 weeks average)

- **Validation Cost:** 95% reduction (\$50,000 → \$2,500 average)

- **Success Rate:** 400% improvement (15% → 60% product-market fit)

- **Customer Commitment:** ∞% improvement (opinions → money)

Continuous Innovation Framework:

Methodology Integration:

Rather than limiting to single frameworks, Demo-Sell-Build integrates the superpowers of multiple proven methodologies:

- **Lean Startup:** Build-Measure-Learn with customer discovery
- **Design Thinking:** Human-centered problem identification
- **Business Model Design:** Systematic business model innovation
- **Jobs-to-be-Done:** Customer progress and outcome focus
- **Systems Thinking:** Constraint identification and optimization
- **Behavior Design:** Customer action and commitment drivers

Framework Evolution:

The methodology continues evolving based on:

- Real-world implementation results and feedback
- New research in customer psychology and decision-making
- Technology changes and market dynamics
- Community contributions and case study analysis

Created by Ash Maurya:

Authority and Experience:

- Author: Running Lean (3 editions), Scaling Lean
- **Creator:** Lean Canvas (used by millions of entrepreneurs)
- **Founder:** LEANFoundry (business model education platform)
- Background: Serial entrepreneur, advisor, and methodology expert

Teaching and Coaching:

- **1,000+ founders** trained in systematic validation
- **Hundreds of workshops** delivered worldwide
- **Multiple industries** validated across B2B and B2C
- **Continuous refinement** based on real implementation results

Recognition and Impact:

- **Industry standard:** Lean Canvas adopted by accelerators globally
- **Academic integration:** Taught in universities and business schools
- **Consulting clients:** Fortune 500 companies and startups
- **Community building:** Global network of practitioners and coaches

Get Started Today

Immediate Access: All frameworks, templates, and scripts ready for implementation

Proven Results: Methodology tested with 1,000+ startups worldwide

Systematic Approach: Step-by-step guidance from discovery to revenue

Community Support: Access to practitioners and ongoing methodology devel-

opment

Visit LEANFoundry.com for:

- Advanced training and certification programs

- Community access and peer learning

- Updates and methodology refinements

- Expert coaching and implementation support

"The goal isn't just to validate an idea. The goal is to build a systematic customer factory that repeatedly generates revenue with predictable growth. Demo-Sell-Build gets you there faster, cheaper, and with dramatically higher success rates than traditional approaches." - Ash Maurya

Start your transformation today. Download the toolkit, conduct your first systematic interview, and join the thousands of founders who've revolutionized their product development approach through systematic customer-driven validation.