

Solution Design Template

The objective of the Solution Design process is to test your original value proposition with customers and validate the product or service that you plan to bring to market. Once complete, you will present your findings in a 30-min presentation.

1. **VALUE PROPOSITION:** Use the following structure to create a statement that clearly describes what value to provide to customers.
 - a. I solve problem X: Define the activity or problem
 - b. For people who are Y: Describe your prospective target customers
 - c. By providing: This is your solution, product, or service
 - d. Unlike other solutions: How is your offering significantly better than alternatives?
2. **MARKET RESEARCH:** Now that you have an initial value proposition and target customer, you will need to conduct research in order to understand:

Target Market	a. What market segment are you going after? b. What is the annual revenue of the segment? c. What is the growth rate of the segment?
Competitive Positioning	a. Who are your competitors? b. What is your competitive advantage? c. How do you add value that others do not?
The Ecosystem	a. What partnerships will it take to build your product? b. Who will be your suppliers/partners/buyers? c. Who will be using your product? d. Who will distribute the product and how?

3. **TARGET CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS:** Validate the assumptions you made in your Value Proposition by having live conversations with potential target customers. Do not use electronic surveys for this exercise. Be sure that you gain an understanding of both the problem customers are facing and their honest opinion of your proposed solution.
 - a. Define target group(s): Who is your customer? Determine the criteria that define your expected customers /users (age, location, interests, income, etc.) Keep in mind there may be multiple groups.
 - b. Find at least 10 people who belong to each target group and interview them .
 - c. Ask two sets of interview questions, one about the problem you claim to solve and another about your product/service as a solution to this problem (See appendix)
4. **SOLUTION DESIGN / USER EXPERIENCE:** Now combine your original hypothesis and customer feedback to create a new modified Solution Design that meets your customer's needs.
 - a. What have you learned about the problem your target customers are facing?
 - b. What have you learned about the customers' view of your solution?
 - c. Now provide a detailed description of your product or service and the user's experience
 - i. How and where do people prefer to discover your product/service?
 - ii. Is there an on boarding or purchasing process? Please describe.
 - iii. How does the product work? Provide a set by step description of the most common use case(s).

- iv. What ongoing service will customers require to ensure happiness/success?
- v. In the customer's view, how is this product better than the current alternatives?

NEXT STEPS: SOLUTION DESIGN PITCH

In order to pass from the READY stage to the SET stage you will need to complete a Solution Design pitch. Please schedule a time during office hours to review your work with a coach. They will help you prepare a short slide deck and schedule a time for you to pitch your findings to the IDEA Staff. Following the pitch, you will either A) pass into the Set Stage or B) be given additional questions to be answered during a second Solution Design pitch meeting.

Your presentation should cover the following:

- d. Your original Value Proposition and background on your concept
- e. Market Research including: Target Market, Competition, Ecosystem
- f. A detailed account of your Target Customer Interviews and how your findings have affected the design of your product or service
- g. Your Solution Design including the full user's experience and most common use case(s)

APPENDIX

Target Customer Interview Guide

The target customer interviews should help you understand how your customer thinks about the problem and how they perceive your proposed solution. These need to be live conversations. DO NOT use an electronic survey for this exercise.

1. **FIRST ASK ABOUT THE PROBLEM:** How does the customer define the activity or problem? Note: DO NOT describe your solution. Focus on the customers view of the problem with questions like:
 - Do you have problem X?
 - How do you currently solve it?
 - What do you use in terms of products or services in this activity right now?
 - Where or from whom do you buy products or services? What is good about this channel? What is not good?
 - How satisfied are you with your current products or services for this activity?
 - What is your greatest dissatisfaction with your current products or services?
 - Who is responsible for the buying decision for this product or service? Is it you or someone else?
 - What are the criteria that are used for evaluating alternatives?
 - How much do you spend each month or year on these types of products or services?
 - Would you accept an alternative solution? Why or why not?
 - What would be the ideal solution for you and how would you measure its value to you?
2. **PRESENT SOLUTION AND COLLECT FEEDBACK:**
 - At this point you can describe your solution. Be sure to share the full details of the user experience and validate each step of the process i.e. onboarding, set up, any and all user input that is required, how ongoing service will be delivered etc.
 - Ask specific questions such as:
 - Would you...?
 - Use my product/service? Why or why not?

- How much and when?
 - Would you pay for it? How much
- o What fears would you have in trying this solution?
- o Who would be the ideal supplier? / Where would you want to buy it?