

# Assumption killers

**ACHILLES DESIGN**

We help forward-thinking companies to design great user experiences and to reach successful market launches.

We do:

- Product Design & Engineering
- Brand Strategy & Design
- Service Design
- Digital Design & IoT
- Innovation & Growth Services

**[www.achilles.be](http://www.achilles.be)**

Want us to help you identify and validate the right assumptions across your design process?

**Let's talk**



Yuck!

Assumptions...

Are you onto the right problem to solve?

Are enough people interested in what you're trying to offer? Is your value proposition actually solving a pain?

Can you create a sustainable business with your product or service?

**Let's find out!**



# A

How to validate  
**THE PROBLEM**



You're at the beginning of your design process. At this stage you're dealing with a whole bunch of assumptions. You should start validating the assumptions about the problem or pain you want to solve for your user.

Only later, test out assumptions on the market attractiveness, on your solution and the willingness to pay for your value proposition.

To test assumptions on a problem, reach out to potential users and ask them open questions. Ask for facts (When did you last..?) rather than opinions (What do you think about..? ), because facts better reflect what's going on. Postpone your solution-related research for now. You're still exploring a problem.

# B

How to validate

**THE TARGET AUDIENCE**

# B

You're throwing away resources and taking huge risks if you're not investigating your market. Before you start to build your solution, be sure there are enough people waiting for it.

You've already validated the pain, but now it's time to find out how many people want your pain reliever -that's how big your market is.

Apart from knowing the market size, you of course also need to define the characteristics of the people that make up your market. Figure out who'll benefit most from your solution and if this group of people will provide you with enough revenue to sustain your business.

# C

How to validate  
**THE PRODUCT**



By now, you have identified a pain that is large enough for a group of people you've identified. Now you can come up with ideas to solve that pain, but the ideas are still worthless if you don't know if they actually solve the pain you're focusing on. Find ways to validate (parts of) your product ideas as fast and as cheap as you can.

You should not yet focus on building all the expensive support processes and the stuff you'll only need when you're ready to launch. For now, fake that your product is working or do a quick and dirty prototype that works 'well enough' for a test.

Build an MVP fast, test fast, iterate fast.

# D

How to validate

**THE READINESS TO BUY**

# D

Okay, you know what solution can solve what pain for what group of people. But are you able to build a sustainable business out of it? In other words, are people willing to pay enough for your solution?

Find out how many people will want to pay how much by using the right validation technique. Just asking someone if they would pay for it is not a good validation. It's better to ask for actual commitment from that person as a way to validate your viability. The key here is to reveal genuine readiness to pay.

# Blog

Write about your progress

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

awareness, time spent on webpage, shares, comments,..

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Just write regularly about what you're doing. What problem are you trying to solve or what product are you making to solve the problem?

Reach out to the people who comment or share your content. That way, you build a community around the project and you can use the members to give you feedback on the problem or an MVP.

If there's a community growing around your blog, you know you're onto something.

# Crowdsource

Get help from many random people

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

amount of feedback/help

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility

## **The technique**

Ask random, unknown people to back your project. You can ask them for i.a. feedback or ideas to get much work done at a very low cost. Because you get so many ideas, your chances to succeed rise.

# Short memory test

Test what people remember after a short view

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

What did respondents remember

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Show something to a respondent for only a few seconds and then hide what you were showing. Afterwards, ask your respondent what (s)he could remember.

This technique is easy and well-suited to test e.g. a layout design or logo, where the visual component of a design is key.

You can test if something is clear, or if you are conveying the right impression with your design, or if the value proposition is easily understood.

Aim for 4/5 respondents to answer correctly. Then you know your design is on-point.

# Survey

Further validate earlier research in a quantitative way

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

e.g. ranking of pains, respondent demographics,...

## **To validate**

Desirability, Viability

## **The technique**

Don't ask for opinions/open-ended questions because you cannot directly interact with your respondent. So only ask closed-ended questions to further validate what you previously researched in a qualitative way.

Also, beware to not suggest 'correct' answers. Don't formulate questions so that answers can be steered. You need unbiased responses!

# Track customer service

Read/listen to customer complaints

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Pains, user issues, demographics,...

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

If you have a product on the market already, find out what issues customers are having. Listening to calls from dissatisfied users can give you a clear -and first-hand- idea of what problems to take on in your next design.

If complaints are not recorded yet, start doing it -with agreement of the customer.

You can also go talk to the customer service team to get an idea of the pains, but it's better to get closer to the user by listening to calls, or better even is to take calls yourself for a while to find pain patterns.

# Focus groups

An informal group discussion

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Pains, gains, opinions

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Get a group of potential users together in a room and get an informal talk going on if/how they would use a certain product/service.

Key here is to not only listen to answers (they can be biased, groupthink,...), but to watch behavior) through a blinded mirror and video recordings.

# Cold calls

Call potential users to test desirability,  
or potential partners to test viability/feasibility

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Positive responses, demographics

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

Find the relevant people you want to contact (potential customers or partners) and prepare your pitch.

It's a good technique to create a network, but the conversion rate is low with cold calling; You'll need to perform many calls in order to get a few useful calls or meetings out of it.

# Organize an event

Meet up to discuss a problem

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Conversion rate, amount of visitors

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

The event should not be some random party, but a meeting that is about a specific problem that was announced up front, e.g. 'What to do with outworn clothes?'

The amount of contacts that show up, indicate the pain level really well, because people actually blocked time to talk about the stated problem. During the event, you can of course gain further insights about the problem.

Play around with accessibility of the event. If the event is e.g. paid or offline, you're sure the attendees left are a good validation of the pain existence.

# Forums

An online forum can teach you a lot about existing pains within a specific group of people

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Pain frequency, pain buzz, anecdotes

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Find forums that are relevant to the pain you're onto.

Generic sites like Reddit are a good place to start and find out about what drives people that share the same lifestyle or needs.

Read what's on these corners of the Internet and become involved yourself by responding and asking the questions you have.

# Understand-ability check

Test if your users understand what you're trying to communicate

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Conversion rate

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Write out your value proposition in no more than 50 words and show it to your respondents for just long enough to read the text.

Then, ask them to explain the value proposition to you. See if they are reformulating it correctly.

Aim for 4/5 respondents to respond accurately. That's when you know your value proposition is clear.

Test this clarity before you test actual desirability because an unclear value proposition will lead to incorrectly low desirability measures.

# Fake landing page

Fake that you have developed the product or service  
and measure how many people reach the 'buy-page'

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Views, conversions, visitor behavior

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Fake it 'till you make it! Just make it seem like your product or service has launched already by creating fake ads and create a website or -page with a clear value proposition, and maybe a few renderings and videos that trick visitors to believe you're operational already.

Then see how many people land on a page that only interested visitors will see, because they've clicked through.

# The customer's guest

Visit your user while he's at his place

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Observe, pain nuances

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

The designer visits the user at his home, working environment,..

During this visit, the designer gets a clear understanding of the user's environment and corresponding pains. The visit can last for a few hours, or even a few weeks and should result in insights that are the starting point to develop product/service improvements later on in the design process.

# Forefront service provider

Have a human to provide the service before you start automating that service. He'll then know what touch points will be key in the development process

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Pains/points to improve during service delivery process and at different touch points

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

A real person provides the service that would later on become automated, like an online onboarding process. Because you don't develop and automate the service right away, but first truly understand the service provision manually, you get to understand opportunities and flaws on a deeper level.

It's a very strong way to pinpoint what parts of your service or product need extra focus once you're at the development stage.

# Read product reviews

Spit through review sections from your own/competing products to find out what makes or breaks it

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Reviews, pain/gain indications

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

By reading product reviews you can feel about what aspects of the product people can get excited or frustrated. You can gain info on what features should (not) be included and what it is that makes the product (in)convenient.

Review sections are a great -and free- place to check out what pains users are experiencing.

# Hang out with the users

Go where your users go in their free time to get  
easy-going first-hand talks

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Anecdotes, pain/gain nuances

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Go to the bar, show, or event that attracts your target audience and just talk with present people about their pains and frustrations. Ask a lot of questions and follow-up questions without talking about solutions right away.

# Online user testing

Let users go through your online test without you  
having to supervise it in real-time

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback, product convenience

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility

## **The technique**

In advance, you prepare the online test well so that respondents can go through it all without the need for you to guide them.

Provide context info, describe the tasks you want your respondents to perform and formulate questions that ideally aren't open-ended.

Now find your many respondents on e.g. forums and get info back without the need to moderate interviews anymore.

# Crowdfund

Fundraise your go-to-market

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Amount of views, amount of funders, feedback sections

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

Show off your value proposition on the right fundraising platform (not all platforms have the audience you want to reach).

Fundraising is a great way to get lots of feedback, while creating awareness about your project. You can build a community of beta testers here as well.

Key is to manage your audience well. Respond fast and keep the momentum going on your funding page. Also, don't underestimate the importance of a high-quality ad video when opting for crowdfunding.

# How many fingers?

Five. If you cannot quite easily find at least that amount of people who really feel the pain you're trying to solve, you better rethink your audience/pain/approach

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Feedback, conversion rate,...

## **To validate**

Desirability, viability

## **The technique**

Once you've defined the pain to solve, your target audience -and optionally your value proposition- you should test out traction fast.

As a rule-of-thumb you should easily find at least five people (not friends or family) who are showing real interest in what you're trying to solve. If finding five is too hard, pivot and go find another pain that more people are experiencing, or go find another audience that feels the pain more deeply.

# Concept describer

Write down the following things; target group, their pains and your solution. Writing it down will help you to see what assumptions you'll have to test first.

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Key assumptions, pains, gains

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

Writing down a concept is so easy, yet very powerful to get a better grasp on the idea.

It helps to use tools like the value proposition canvas and the business model canvas to make sure you're not overlooking aspects of the concept.

Now that you've written down your concept you can start listing all assumptions and even 'feel' what assumptions need to be validated first.

# Fake ads

Show your still-to-develop product or service in online ads that make it seem as if you're operational already

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Conversion rate, clicks,...

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Create ads that show your still-to-develop service or product. Put a call to action in the ad, like an invite to buy or to sign up.

The ad can be fairly simple with just an image, a headliner and essential info.

Share the ad where your target group hangs out online, like a specific forum or on a famous display network that allows you to target ads well based on location, age, interests,...

Targeting your ad well is key to find out if your value proposition resonates with your target group.

# Order up front

Let people buy your product before  
you've even launched it

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Clicks, conversion rate

## **To validate**

Viability, desirability

## **The technique**

You create a simple webpage where people can order your product before you have developed it. You'll want to track how many people clicked through, and how many actually went on to pay you.

This method lets you gain true insight in how many people want to pay for your offer, and it also provides you with the funding needed to start building your product. But when not enough people are paying you up front, promise to refund your backers, because it may indicate that you're better off not starting development and production due to low demand. This promise also ups trust, leading to a better funding, thus better info on traction.

# Conjoint analysis

Find the perfect combo of different product features

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Feature importance, ideal price point

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

You can find out what product features and feature combinations are interesting by proposing different versions of the product with different feature combinations, each with different price suggestions. Out of the valuation responses, you can then extract what features and combinations are key to convince people of the value of your product.

Make sure your respondents understand the value behind each feature and don't suggest too much product variations (best to keep it at three) per question because that's easier for the respondent to answer in a well-considered way.

# Data, data, data

Data is what you need to uncover market trends

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Pains and gains

## **To validate**

Viability, desirability

## **The technique**

Always use more than one data source and make sure to use high-quality data, otherwise the results of your test won't have value.

Compare a data set of 'the control group' to see patterns in the data set of 'the experiment group'.

Data is power, but beware of false correlations.

# Fake pay-now

Include a fake button to buy the product

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

page landings, conversions, clicks, mailing subscriptions

## **To validate**

Desirability, viability

## **The technique**

Fake your checkout on your website and let visitors believe they are actually buying the product.

Let them end on a page that says they won't be billed and that the product is e.g. not available at the moment, or be honest about it all being a test.

You don't want visitors to actually pay, but you want to know that they want to pay by tracking their online behavior on your website.

# Fake new feature

A button showing people there's a new feature  
-but the button is just a test to measure user interest

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Clicks, conversion rate

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Show people that you have a new feature. If people tap the button 'to know more' or 'to buy', you know the different levels and rates of user interest.

After the final conversion to measure, inform people that the feature is not available yet and that they now have a chance to give feedback to make the feature a better fit. You can even ask these people if you can contact them in the future for more feedback.

Make sure to not use the technique too extensively. If you make the test too long, people could feel angry about you stealing their time. If you test it on too many people, you might lose a lot of early adopters.

# Terrible UX

Make your UX bad on purpose to know how many people desperately want your product

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Online behavior, conversion rate

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

You can e.g. let people go through an extremely long survey, or ask for a lot of user info -which is also of high value to you- before people can finally proceed. Just make sure people will need to put in some work, because the ones that don't give up along the way are the ones that really want your product.

# Backyard MVP

Create an early MVP by using tools and products  
that are already available on the market

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Conversions, user feedback, MVP costs

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

You don't need to develop everything yourself. Use third-party tools and products as parts of your MVP. Things like device responsiveness are fixed by other parties so you don't need to anymore. Stitch these products and tools together with some really basic code or even non-code to focus your time on the value proposition of your MVP, and not on little extra things like a responsive design.

# Give only a taste

Offer just a little sample of the real product

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Feedback, conversion rate

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Give users a taste of the 'real' product by offering them a small part of it for free.

You can then measure initial conversions and ask for feedback on the free product.

Make sure your free giveaway lets users clearly feel the value.

Now that people have experienced a part of the real product already, they have more trust in you while you can better trust results when testing the price elasticity on the real product with these people.

# Limited in time and place

Let users in a specific location test the whole service or product for a limited period

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Feedback, operational costs,  
conversion rate

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

You give people in a very specific location access to your full service or product, for a limited period that is long enough to really experience what you have to offer.

For this test you need to accurately mimic what the offer will be able to do once you want to actually roll out your product or service.

# Low-tech first

Test your value proposition in a low-tech form  
before building the expensive digital version

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

Test your value proposition through a low-tech product because this saves you the risks and costs of developing an expensive digital service or product that nobody likes.

Just make sure that the physical version can deliver the same value to the user as the value you intend to deliver with your digital version later on.

# Aim for 40%

If +40% of respondents would really hate it to never be able to use the product or service anymore, you're sure there's a product-market fit

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Pains, gains, JTBD

## **To validate**

Desirability, viability

## **The technique**

Perform a survey to ask around 50 people how they'd feel if the product or service would no longer be available. When at least 4/10 people would be very displeased, you know there's a product/market fit.

Ask why and see what group of people show the most extreme need for the solution.

# Start local

Start offering your solution locally before you scale

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Feedback, costs, conversions

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

It's often extremely cash-burning to scale. So don't do it right away, but test your product or service locally first. Just serve a small part of your final market and learn about i.a. the best marketing strategy, or about potential pitfalls before you scale.

But don't postpone growth too much either, because you might get eaten by a faster competitor.

# Ad A/B tests

Run many ads that differ in appearance and value proposition to test what ads lead to more conversions

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Clicks, conversion rate, ad ROI

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Create ads that land people on a webpage to buy (in advance) or to sign up for something.

Try out different ads by playing with the call to action (CTA), text, images, video,...

Let the ads run and find out what elements and value proposition can better convince what specific target group. Now keep on iterating.

It's a fast and cost-effective way to test many value propositions with a large group of people.

# The pitch

Pitch your product or service in just a few words to a person within your target group

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback, conversions

## **To validate**

Desirability, viability

## **The technique**

Ask someone of your target group about the problem you want to solve and how they currently try to fix it. Only after digging deep into the pain from the user's point of view, quickly pitch your solution. Then ask your listener if your product or service would relieve their pain.

Make sure to look at the behavior of your target user when they're talking because they might just say what you want to hear. Look for signs of genuine interest.

# Super niche MVP

Test an MVP that only relieves a very specific pain for a specific target group

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback, conversions

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

Narrow the value proposition of your MVP down to one single pain of a specific target group. That's a good way to keep a focus and find a solutions that resonates with that niche group. Testing a specific pain reliever gives you better insights in its value than when you test a mixture of pain relievers together in the same MVP.

Only after getting that one value proposition right, you can start adding extra pain relievers that fit the initial/main pain reliever.

# Keywords reveal

See what keywords are trending to estimate market attractiveness, competitiveness, size, and target group

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Keyword usage per user group, market size

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

It's fast and cheap to just check Adwords for trends in keywords to figure out if your value proposition will be popular (amount of entries) and for whom (location, group size,..) it will be most interesting.

You can also check market saturation by checking if your keywords are used by many competitors already. That may indicate that you're entering a highly competitive landscape.

# MP4 MVP

Use video to explain how your still-to-develop product or service will work

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Comments, views, shares

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Video is ideal if you want to show what your product or service will look and feel like. You can visualize all functionalities as if they were really working.

Use such an explainer video to market your solution by putting it on your website, on social platforms and see how people respond to this MVP.

# Wizard of Oz

An actual person does the work to mimic the costly,  
digital, automated user experience

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

When you test your value proposition and UX with respondents, you fake automation by doing it manually. That's because actually developing the software is too costly and risky at this point.

You don't tell your user that you're doing stuff manually, so your user experiences the product as a digital one because that's the experience you want to test.

It's a fast and easy test that you can tweak equally as fast, no recoding needed.

# Product A/B test

Test different variations of the product design to find out what will make your final product successful

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Conversions, feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Create multiple variations on your product design and test them all by showing them equally often to a bunch of people.

Track how certain tweaks in your design lead to more positive responses or desired respondent actions, like a click on the fake buy-button.

You'll know what design tweaks should be incorporated in your actual design and what tweaks to avoid.

# Beta users

Your almost-ready product may still be flawed  
So give a few interested early adopters access  
to the product to gather their feedback

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback, costs

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

You have a functioning product at this moment. Let's not launch it yet, but test it out with a select group of interested users first. In return for e.g. a discount price, ask them for feedback and if they've found flaws in the product still.

Apart from that, you are now also able to do an extra desirability check (i.e. is the product really solving a pain worth solving?) and you have the opportunity to create product awareness within a highly engaged community of early adopters who can be turned into brand ambassadors.

# Tappable MVP

Build a prototype with screens that users can click or tap to be directed to another screen

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Feasibility

## **The technique**

After experimenting with paper prototypes, it's time for an interactive one that takes into account all the feedback from testing the paper prototypes.

In the interactive version, you connect different screens through buttons or gestures like a swipe. It's a way to test if users can easily understand and navigate your prototype.

This digital prototype helps to get the conversation going on i.a. functionalities, visual appearance or interactions, because the final product now becomes more tangible.

# Tap journey

Track the taps of the user to see where he followed the wrong path in order to complete a task

That's to find out if your product is understandable

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Feedback, time to complete tasks, successful completions

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

You give users a task to perform on your prototype and then let users tap or click the prototype. You pay attention to where they got it wrong, how long it took them to complete the task and the success rate.

Afterwards, ask for feedback and focus on the moments where they got it wrong. Did they not see a button or did they misunderstand it? Were they annoyed?

Now it's time to iterate and test the new design again in the same way to see if you actually made improvements.

# User tests with random pedestrians

Go outside, look for people that look somewhat like your target user and ask them to test your prototype

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

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## **To measure**

Time to complete task, success rate,  
User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility

## **The technique**

Random strangers can provide a fresh set of eyes. Ask a handful of those strangers to quickly test your product. Give them a task to perform by using your product and see what happens.

Based upon what you notice when observing the respondent, ask follow-up questions, like why he thought he was tapping the right button.

# Rewrap a competing product

Let people test a competing product instead and ask them for feedback

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

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## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

If a product that looks a lot like your idea is already out there, use that one for user tests instead of developing a prototype yourself.

# LEGO MVP

Lego is ideal to build physical prototypes fast and tweak them real-time during a discussion with the user

for validation of the;

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READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility

## **The technique**

It's pretty straightforward; Just build a quick and dirty prototype and start talking about it with your potential user. It's easy to get the conversation going and to iterate the prototype while talking about it.

# Pop-up questions

Brief questionnaires that show up on your website or app when users are performing a relevant action that fits the pop-up question.

for validation of the;

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## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

Once your user is showing relevant online behavior -like visiting your webpage on food jars- you pop the question. Ask an open question like; "Is this the first time you see our food jars?".

These mini questionnaires should be fast to answer, targeted towards the right people and limited in time.

# Strip it down

Remove functionalities from your product until you end up with a basic product that's only just enough to launch

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

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## **To measure**

Conversions, target group characteristics, costs, user feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

Launch a very basic yet functioning product to gather valuable info fast. Don't invest in creating a more complex product than needed, because you might just be wasting resources that way.

You're launching an actual product on the market here, but you postpone extra functionalities and want to gain insights before developing a 2.0 version.

# AB/CD tests

In A/B tests you tweak only one thing, but here you test what combo of multiple variables works best

for validation of the;

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## **To measure**

Conversions

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

It's just A/B testing to the next level. Instead of tweaking one element, you tweak whole combinations of elements and find out what combo works best. You're actually not testing the individual performance of an element, but the performance of unique interactions between different elements.

Though insights are valuable here, you'll need to be more patient in comparison to A/B tests because many more combinations need to be tested before you can subtract insights.

So if your business is just starting, this technique might not be your best pick.

You first need a substantial user base.

# Recommend- er rate

Ask how many of your users would recommend  
your solution to other people

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback, user satisfaction

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

You've seen this for sure; Questions popping up about how likely you are to recommend the product or service to others.

It's almost always on a scale from 0 to 10.

Calculate the percentage of recommenders (those giving you at least a 9) and the percentage of haters (giving you a 6 or less).

The percentage of recommenders minus the percentage of haters is what you want to know to compare your user satisfaction with competing or previous products or services.

Always ask for a 'why' on the score a user gave you.

# Paper prototyping

Quick and dirty prototyping of interaction designs  
by using just a bit of paper and a pencil

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

TARGET-AUDIENCE

PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

Successful task completions, time to complete, user feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility

## **The technique**

After you've validated the pain and the target audience, you can start ideating and testing out some first prototypes.

Paper prototyping is a fast, no-cost way to gain feedback on your UI.

You draw out your UI on some blank pages and simulate the interactions by sliding/replacing the pieces of paper once someone taps a drawn button.

# Imagine it's a smart object

Use a low-tech item lying around and pretend  
it's your newly designed solution  
Then play out a user scenario

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

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PRODUCT

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## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Feasibility

## **The technique**

Use an object that is somewhat similar in size and weight if that's important to test e.g. convenience in use.

Use that random, dumb object to play out how you would use the real product.

This technique of course is best suited when you're designing physical products, or when the physical context of a digital service plays a crucial role.

# No crazy investing 'till you validated viability

If you need too expensive assets to test your solution,  
borrow or hire them for a moment. Don't buy them  
before you have validated viability

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

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## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability, feasibility, viability

## **The technique**

If you need expensive assets for your user test, don't you dare buying them because that's a huge risk if it turns out your solution is not viable.

Instead, rent the assets or use them for free for a moment if you can.

# Trim test

Take away features to find out if they were important to your user

for validation of the;

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PRODUCT

READINESS-TO-BUY

## **To measure**

User feedback

## **To validate**

Desirability

## **The technique**

You take away a feature of your product without saying anything about it to your users. Now see if and how they react on your silent move.

This technique is used to find out what features are not needed in order to simplify your product for yourself and your user.

# Sign here please

Let people sign to use your still-to-develop product later on and have them promise they'll pay for it

for validation of the;

PROBLEM

PRODUCT

TARGET AUDIENCE

READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Conversions

## **To validate**

Desirability, viability

## **The technique**

Ask potential users to sign your contract, stating they'll pay for your solution once you've developed it.

This test gives you a solid validation on if people want your solution and if they are ready to spend money on it.

By having them sign a contract, users are showing actual commitment. They aren't simply saying your solution is cool anymore.

# Sorry, access denied

Understand how much your users value your service by  
paying them enough to not use the service anymore

for validation of the;

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READINESS TO BUY

## **To measure**

Conversions

## **To validate**

Viability

## **The technique**

Current users can take a service for granted so it can be tricky to talk about the value of that service.

If you want to understand how much people actually value the service, you can pay them to not get access to the service anymore.

How much you'll have to pay a user to not use the service anymore gives you a clear understanding of the real value that the service brings to that user.

Our innovation team can help you to identify and validate the right assumptions during all stages in the design process of your next product, service, brand or business model.

That's to launch successfully, with a proposition that the user will love and to make sure it'll help you reach your business goals.

Interested?

**Let's talk**

[www.achilles.be](http://www.achilles.be)

