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Evaluating Your Idea Before It's Too Late

(The Job-To-Be-Done Way)

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>> Recording in progress.

>> LEXI JONES: Joanne, can you take us back to presentation mode? Thank you. Welcome, everybody. We're going to give everyone a minute to come in. All right. We're going to start with some housekeeping first. Next slide, please, Joanne. All right. I apologize. I'm back.

>> NIKKI POWIS: I was about to say, it look like we lost Lexi. You're back. Okay, good. I'll be quiet.

>> LEXI JONES: Zoom decided to kick me out. Hopefully I can get through the housekeeping thing in the session. All right, Joanne. So here we go. Starting off, Zoom settings. The audio for today's meeting can be accessed using computer audio or by calling in by phone. If you select the computer audio, please make sure your speakers are turned on or your headphones are plugged in.

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Thank you for joining us today for Evaluating Your Idea Before It’s Too Late (The Job‑To‑Be‑Done Way), presented by Joanne Eriaku. And at this time, I'll turn it over to Joanne for the presentation.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Thank you, Lexi. Hello, everyone. Very, very nice to be here. I would love to see a little bit about you in the chat. Tell me, are you a business owner already? Are you thinking of starting a business? Did you start a business and it flopped, the idea did not work out? If you can, please put in the chat any thoughts to that effect. If you want to unmute and speak, I think you can.

Let me watch the chat so that I make sure that I get to know you. And while you are putting that in the chat, I am going to tell you a little bit about me. My name is Joanne Ayebo Oparo Eriaku. I know, it's a lot of names. I'm from Africa. Some of us have six names. But each of those names ‑‑ I'm putting them all there because at different phases in my life, different names were carried. And so I just want you to know the fullness of who you're dealing with over here.

I have a couple of businesses on my belt. There is the venture operating system, which is really for those who are starting their ideas from scratch. It's basically from concept to the first customer all the way to the time you, you know, are a fully fledged, running company. That's what the Venture Operating System is. And the boot camp that sort of consolidates all that knowledge from the Venture Operating System is called the Fever Project, it's about helping business owners to thrive.

And the latest one is the School of AI Readiness. As you know, ChatGPT and all its cousins AI are coming for us. I'm kidding. They're not coming for us, but you kind of know what I mean. It's all over us. We are all under pressure. So I just ‑‑ so that there were very few resources for us smaller to medium‑sized business owners. And so that's what the School of AI Readiness is, for the smaller to medium‑sized enterprises to master this thing called AI and what it do about it.

So that's a little bit about me. Now let me check the chat and see what you've said about you. Oh, wow. Thank you. I see Kim, Kim, you're starting. You also had another business. Kim, I'm going to assume that means that the idea didn't work out. You can put in the chat to clarify. Roxanne is working full‑time but thinking of starting a business. Thank you. Judith, a founder, just started. Perfect timing. Yes.

Okay. Michelle, had a business assisting others. Great! Lovely. I'm really glad I'm getting to know who is in the room so that I can make sure that I am taking care of us all and not leaving anyone out. Ashley is also trying to start up her business. Okay. I have a good understanding now. We're either planning on starting a new business, or already started a new business, or already had one whose idea did not work out.

So let's get into it now. Enough about me. And here's a statistic for all of us to digest. The thing which I want you to note the most is the biggest reason why most businesses fail. These are global statistics. This is not only U.S. When you come to U.S., it's even worse. That 42% is actually almost 53%.

But if we could just pause a little bit right there and think about it, basically, that's half of the people who start a business ‑‑ actually, their business fails, because they created something that either people did not want, or there was just no need for the thing. Now, you the business owner, I'm sure you are so passionate about it. You are like, oh my God, my idea. I'm so excited about it. You know how it is.

And the world did not buy it! Like, that is so painful. That is so sad. So, part of the reason why we are here today really is ‑‑ so I'm on a mission to sort of change that statistic and just really help people start from before you go all in, before you commit too many resources, how can you prove the concept, prove the idea first before you then pile on all the resources and then your heart gets broken.

That's what today is about. I personally have lost about four businesses. Every single time, super painful. So, I get it. I'm not talking just theory here. This is real. And the statistic ‑‑ now that ‑‑ I've created 17 businesses. Four of those ended really poorly, okay? So the statistic kind of applies to me also, at least more than 40% of my businesses. Okay. So, why does this happen?

Feel free to put in the chat why you think this happens. I forgot to say, this is going to be an interactive session! I'm not the only one talking to myself, okay? I would like to hear you. I would like to hear your thoughts. I would like to hear why do you think that half of us ‑‑ it's you. It's us, it's me ‑‑ start businesses and then half the market actually does not need them. Any thoughts? You can put it in the chat.

If there are no thoughts, don't worry. I've got you on the next slide. This is not a trick question. I genuinely want to understand. Okay, lack of planning. Mhmm. Okay. Feasibility research is hard and time‑consuming. Didn't research the need beforehand. Yeah. Marketing, maybe. (Laughing) Wait, Kim. Let me push you a little bit on that, Kim. Imagine the worst product you have ever thought of. Don't tell me what it is. I don't want to know what it is.

But, are you telling me that good marketing would have made it become a successful business? See what I mean, right? What I'm trying to say is, sometimes ‑‑ okay. You know, you're marketing something that is not really great. And the business flops just because it's the product. It's not the marketing. You can have the best marketing in the world and the product still flops. Mary Joe said insufficient funding. That's a perpetual reason.

But that's why I'm saying before you go all in financially and whichever resources, do not ‑‑ don't go big yet until you have proof of concept. This is what this is about, proof of concept, okay? Not being realistic about cost to produce a product.

Okay. So we are bringing up very valid ideas. And this is from the observations that I've made so far on what causes this, really. One of the biggest reasons is just the way in which we do business right now. Our default journey. Let me explain. So you have an idea. And what happens is, you decide oh, I'm going to write up a business plan, which is not bad. Just follow me here.

I may say some things here which may feel a little controversial or a little bit what in the world is she talking about. I promise you, it's going to make sense at the end of the day. The default journey that we take these days when we have an idea is we go straight into business planning mode, partially because most financial institutions, if you're seeking external funding, require a plan, okay?

Regardless of whether the idea is proven or not, the plan is more important to them than proof of concept. Let me not get controversial yet. We have the idea. We have the plan. Let's launch it. Then what happens? Well, that's where it's about hoping that it's going to work out, or it's about really pushing, waking up at 4:00 a.m. or whatever it is, whatever hustle means to you, just keep pushing that rock no matter how hard it is until either the rock breaks you, or you just maintain that.

Some people maintain that for a long time. Business is generally hard. It's tough. Even successful businesses are tough on their owners, because it's on your shoulders. You are responsible for it. And so understand that I'm saying that I'm not saying that it's supposed to be easy. It will always have some element of being tough. However, there are certain things which have to start working out by a certain stage.

There's got to reach a point where you start having customers, and not just one‑off customers, but repeat. You have to get to a stage where actual money is coming in. Where you used to carry the business initially, but then now it can start to either break even or carry itself to the point of profitability. Those are things which need to happen at some point. If you find yourself going for too long ‑‑ and too long is very subjective ‑‑ if you find yourself going for too long without any of those two happening, it's time to really go back to the drawing board and ask yourself whether you're going to keep going or whether this idea has not worked out, okay?

All right. So, this is the default journey. Now, my recommended journey, and what we're really going to do today, is really, before we go into planning mode, can we start first by acknowledging that the idea that we have has not yet been tested. It's still an assumption. It's a hypothesis, okay? You have an idea. You think it will work out. It has not yet been proven to work out.

So, in order to prove that it works out, let's go and test this idea, live in the market, without committing too many resources, okay? Commit just enough resources, enough for you to have what they call a viable product. Viable means it is representative enough of what you want to bring to market, okay? You don't have to have all the bells and whistles. I'll give you an example.

At a minimum, a phone should be able to text and make phone calls. That's at a minimum what a phone can do. Everything else is extra. When this phone company started they did not start with all these bells and whistles. They started with the minimum viable product. Can it text, can it call, that's it. So the equivalent of whatever that is for your business. That is what you're going to test in the market.

And based upon the evidence which you gather from your test ‑‑ and I am going to show you how to test ‑‑ then you refine your idea and you say, maybe they don't like this part. Maybe I should remove this part. Or maybe this is actually not necessary. Or I'm realizing they really want this particular feature. I need to blow this part up.

So, the market will always give you evidence. And market is just a big word for saying people. We human beings, we are the market. Sometimes you are your own market. And so it helps to understand. Just speak to real people, real human beings. Not a survey, actual speaking to people. We're going to go there. Let me move along.

So, today we're going to start with context. Then we're going to go into a theory called Job‑To‑Be‑Done theory. It's existed for probably 2, 2 1/2 decades and it's a theory of how stuff works. Then we are going to go into how to actually design for value, because at the end of the day, an idea has to be valuable to the customer, to the market, okay? And so we're going to say how do you design for value?

Does value just happen? Is there a formula? Is this a science? Is this an art? And then if I behave well and end on time, we're going to take questions. I do need to hurry up. Let's get along. Okay. First context, okay?

So, every time you have an idea, this is sort of ‑‑ this was me scribbling. This is representative of how it is. At first on the extreme left it's very messy. There's ‑‑ you don't have clarity. Stuff is just ‑‑ you're not sure. You're guessing your way through. It's kind of like you are walking through a very thick bushy area and you don't know what's on the ground unless you maybe cut through the bushes, with a machete or whatever, but you don't really know what you're dealing with, which is very, very different from when you are on a well‑paved, well‑Tarmacked road which is clear, you can see a whole mile ahead of you.

Maybe a mile is too much. But you know what I mean. This is similar to the journey of entrepreneurship. When you're creating the new, when you're still anew, it's messy. There's too much uncertainty. We call that exploration. You're still exploring, okay? And then eventually you get to the point where you have figured this thing out. Now you go more into what we call maintenance mode. You're more of exploiting the knowledge that you already have.

Every business starts in the explore stage, even the big ones that you can see. Amazon was once a startup. Everybody was once a startup. And how you operate when you're just starting, how you do stuff is different from when you are now established. Now you have evidence. Now you have proof of concept. And you have repeatable customers and recurring revenue, okay?

So, basically, this is what it looks like. (Laughing) Okay? On left side, this is all of you guys who said I have an idea or I'm just starting, or all of you guys who put that in the chat. This is your journey for now, okay? Eventually, you may get to the part where you're like that well‑paved, beautiful‑looking road tracks where, you know, just everything has been finessed, okay?

Having said that, when you look at this, you get to understand that your position determines the type of tools that you will use, what will work for you, and what will not work for you. Just out of curiosity, can you put in the chat, if you're on the left side, the startup side, the bushy side and you need to go through, what kind of tools would you bring in such a case? Just put it in the chat.

Machete, yes, that's it. If anyone can think ‑‑ boots! (Laughing) Yes. Yes, that is true. Those are the tools you need for the bushy side, right? Compass. Oh, yes, Michelle, you're going to need a compass. (Laughing) Now, can you also ‑‑ now, similarly, can you put what tools you would need to move on this other side, the well‑paved side? What would you go with over there?

Yes, you're going to need an axe and machete for the right side. Already. Left side where it's well‑paved. What tools are you going to use? Let's see it. Smooth wheels on a vehicle. I like that. Roxanne, you've got your game on. Yes, that is true. A bicycle. Yep. You can cycle through that. 100%. But you cannot cycle through the bushy forested area.

So, this is an analogy to help explain why the tools that I'm introducing today are new ‑‑ not new. You might not have seen them used so often. They are not so well, highly ‑‑ they are publicized, but they are not highly used. Most of the tools like business plans and all that are perfect when you are on this well‑paved side of the road, okay?

When everything has worked out and you have evidence, okay? So, you need to determine your position. You need to determine if you're on the well‑paved side, you have proven concept and how you know is you have recurring revenue and repeat clients. That's your proof that it's working. If you're not there yet, you're somewhere here. You may have ‑‑ may not yet have understood the problem you're solving for or you may not yet have understood the solution that you would like to solve that problem for the customer.

So your position determines the tools that you use, okay? And specifically, this is what I meant when I said your position determines everything. It determines the strategy that you use, when you're in explore mode, when you're still new. You're trying to exist. You don't even exist yet. You're either trying to exist or you're trying to survive. Your focus at that time is more of searching and discovering to make sure that you have evidence that your idea works.

That's your number one priority when ‑‑ it's not profit. I am so sorry to say this. As a 17‑time business owner, I have to say this. Your first priority is not profit. Your first priority is proof of concept. Once you have proof of concept, once you have validated your idea, then can you start having profitable dreams, okay? So, let's go into validation. I should not spend too much time over on this side. Okay.

So, the tools that we're talking about, what are those tools? I'm glad I asked myself. Let's go into those tools. The first that I would like to talk about is the theory of Job‑To‑Be‑Done. What on earth is that? Has anybody, please put in the chat, ever heard about Job‑To‑Be‑Done? Is this brand new for you? Are you like, I don't know what you're talking about, Joanne. Or is it, I've kind of heard about it? Or is it, I'm really great at this. I know what it is. You can teach this class.

Brand new. Never heard. New to me. Okay. All right. Brand new. Many brand new. You know, okay. I think, Judith, all right. I think I've heard about it. Let me demystify it. Majority never heard. Let me do this like never heard, like it's majority never heard. Okay. Let's go there.

So, what do you see here? For the purposes of time, I may answer ‑‑ I may both ask and answer myself. But if you're fast enough and you can put it in the chat, please put it in. What do you see here? Good. I love that, Mary. Yes. Okay, Roxanne, a drill. Anyone else seeing anything else? Holes. There you go.

There's a quarter‑inch drill, there's a quarter‑inch hole. Yes, there's wood. But for the purposes of the discussion now, this is what I really want us to talk about, okay? Most of the time, people think that ‑‑ let's say you are a manufacturer of drills, okay? You manufacture drills, okay? That's your product. That's what you do. You think that people want your drill, okay?

I love that, Daniel knows something. Okay. Sorry, I'm looking at the chat simultaneously. I want to make sure that I'm being sensitive to all that you're saying. So if you are the manufacturer of the drill, you own the company that creates the drills, you genuinely think that people are looking for your drill. Well, news flash, you don't wake up in the morning and dream of having a drill.

What you really want, the outcome that you're looking for is you want a quarter‑inch hole somewhere in your house for something, okay? So, this is not about the product, the drill. Every business ‑‑ I don't care what business you're in ‑‑ it's not about your product. It actually is not. Neither is it, shockingly, this is controversial, I'm sorry, but I have to say this.

Neither is it about the customer. I know. You've heard it said so many times, the customer is king. And they are. But it's not the way you think they are king. They are king, but it's the outcomes that they are looking for that are king. The outcomes are actually the job. That's what's king. The customer's job. Like these folks. Can you put it in the chat, what is the outcome they were looking for? Why did they find the drill from the basement or wherever they were?

What is the job? When you look at this, what is the job they were trying to get done? Exactly! They wanted to hang the pictures. Exactly. So, everything that you can think of, you're not necessarily in love with the product, but you're in love with how the product helps you get the job done. Yes, Daniel, you can also go into the memory part. Jobs can be emotional and we're going to get there. They can be functional and they can be emotional. We're going to get there, okay?

So, let's roll. This is the definition of what a Job‑To‑Be‑Done is. I'm not going to read every single word. You are actually going to have this recording and you're going to have these slides, also. But what I want you to note, most importantly, is people hire products or services to get a specific job done in their lives. It's not about the product. It's about the job.

In other words, you can also call the job an outcome. If you have any questions for me, if this is sounding too controversial, you can put it in the chat. I promise we will get to it. This is a simpler definition. I'm not going to read every word. But it's really about what are the outcomes, what are the outcomes my customers are looking for. That's what it is.

So you can create your beautiful product, but if it does not help the customer to get the job done, it's not really going to work. So your number 1 priority is really to understand that job, okay? Now, I want to explain a little bit more about jobs. Let me make sure I'm on time. Okay. I am on time. I'm going to drill down ton to the job to be done by going through the five key concepts about jobs to be done and I'm going to go slide by slide so we get it real good.

Like you say, this is new to you. We've already done number 1. People hire jobs to get a specific job done, okay? We've already done this part. I'm not going to talk about it. Basically, it's about what is the goal they're trying accomplish, okay? Like if I asked you why did you go to the cinema, it's not because you love the cinema, but you love what cinema was going to do for you.

When you go to the cinema when your children, that's a different job from when you go yourself, from when you go with your spouse. Different jobs. With your children you're trying to get the children out of your hair. (Chuckling) You're trying to find something to occupy them. It has nothing to do with the fact that there is a cinema. So, that's the outcome you're looking for ‑‑ entertainment.

I already said this before. The job is not a description of what they are doing, but it's the outcome they are looking for. That's key. I know I've kept saying it. Moving along, I believe it was Daniel or somebody put it in the chat. When he was talking about the folks hanging the picture it was about the emotional side of having the picture hung up. I agree with that. The job, you can go deeper. Instead of thinking about your customers in terms of the functional reason why they are doing their job, why they are doing the job, you can go to the emotional reason.

You can even go to the social reason. I mean, does anyone know what this is? This picture over here? And how much it costs? Because that's going to help explain why this picture is up here. Anybody got any idea what this is? Oh, yeah. Mary Joe, you're onto it. It is a Rolex. Anybody got an idea how much a Rolex is? Don't go to Google, no cheating. Guess how much.

3500, 25,000. They are not 3.5, closer to what Kim's got up. They are bloody expensive, I will say that. Very, very expensive. But they are watches for ‑‑ you can go to Amazon and find a watch for $60 maybe. So, functionally speaking, you can get a $60 watch. If all that you wanted was to be able to tell the time, you could get the $60 watch.

Why on Earth does someone buy a Rolex? I can tell you this. It has nothing to do with function. It has everything to do with social and ‑‑ exactly, Michelle. Status. All right? So, and that's okay. I'm not saying it's not good. I like nice stuff also. It's okay for you to create products for your customers which serve their functional, social, or emotional needs.

Not every product has to be purely about function, okay? That's why we have the Ritz‑Carlton and the Holiday Inn. Each will be full with their target customers. When you're thinking of the job to be done, you should not only be thinking about watches are to tell the time. No. You should be thinking about the person who I want to buy this. What do I want them to feel.

I need to move along. So, that's the second characteristic of jobs. The third one is that jobs are solution‑agnostic. I'm going to go a little bit slower here. It took me time to understand this. Meaning, it's not so much about I need to buy a drill bit if we go back to our example of a drill bit. It's really more of, what is out there that can help me create this hole? Maybe there's a laser pen which can do it.

The job ‑‑ it's about the job. So, if a laser pen does it well, I'm going to get the laser pen. If ‑‑ let's do the transportation example here. We started with horses way back when. Then we got cars. The job is transportation. It doesn't matter how you get transported over there. You can go with a bike. Or you can use ‑‑ I think that thing is called a hover ‑‑ I've never rode one. You know my age.

So I don't know what it's called, but I think it's a hoverboard. And it's a form of transportation properly. You decide what ‑‑ the job of I need to be transported from A to B ‑‑ that job can be fulfilled by multiple products. So jobs are solution‑agnostic. When you're trying to think of what is the job my customer is trying to do, this should help you realize that it's not about any specific product.

So when you're going to ask them questions about their job, do not ask them about their use of the solution. And another day maybe we'll be able to have another webinar where we'll go really deep on how to conduct Job‑To‑Be‑Done interviews. Not today. Today is the concept. I'm introducing the concept. And then jobs are stable over time and I'm going to explain how.

This is an example. Let's look at the job. Don't you just love babies? Anyway. (Laughing) Babies, music, look at this gentleman enjoying the music. This is a job almost all of ‑‑ I hope all of us ‑‑ most of us enjoy or imagine we could enjoy, listening to music. Now, let's go through the ages and understand the different ways in which different solutions were used to accomplish the same job.

Way, way back when, we used to have the gramophone. I don't think anyone of us was born at that time, but it was there. It was a way of listening to music. Then we had the radio. These still exist, but there was a time when these were the only way you could be able to listen to music apart from live ‑‑ listening to live music. Then we had the vinyl records. And if anybody remembers, don't date yourself, but if you remember them, they were a thing at some point.

Then we had CDs. We no longer even have computers that can take CDs. If your computer has a CD holder, it's about to get replaced. If not already. Then we went to MP3. If we had a lot of time, we would have done this together. You would have been putting in the chat which technology next. All these technologies are doing the same job. The job is constant. After that is kind of where we are right now. We are on streaming, right?

Well, can anybody guess what's going to come next? I do not have the answer to that, but seeing the history of this is about seven different devices and I might have left out one or two, I'm not sure. It's very possible that streaming is not going to be the end all be all way to listen to music. Why did I show you all these images? I needed to show you this to help you understand that people are not married to your product.

They are married to getting the job done better, cheaper, or faster. That's your priority. If what you do is help people get their job done better, cheaper, faster, then you will be so valuable to them. Netflix has reinvented itself as a company thrice. They started by they would mail over to you DVDs. I don't think they were DVDs. I think they were ‑‑ I have forgotten what they were called, but they were those big things.

They would mail them to you or you would walk into the store and buy it. They had to reinvent themselves in order to remain relevant. What is the need of the market. They reinvented themselves thrice. And now they are not just a streaming company, but now they even own their own content. Sorry, the cassette was in the middle. I was wondering why there was a gap.

You've now understood, as much as can be, what a job to be done is. So let's go into how to use that to then build a valuable business idea, build certainty, move from just being a hypothesis to being a proven idea, okay? That's what we're doing now, okay? We're going to get very practical through eight steps.

Fairly simple. So, the first step, we talked about this. Understand what your customer's job is. That's step one. Not the business plan. Step one is what is the job, what is the outcome they are trying to accomplish. That's step one. Once you understand that, as part of continuing to understand the customer's job, there are other elements which you factor in. You are trying to next understand what are the pain points they feel.

Pain points could be obstacles, risks, annoying things, frustration. What are the pain points they go through while they are trying to accomplish this job? If I am to just use our music example, which we have just been in, I remember CDs would get scratched. That was a massive pain point. They were so delicate. They could scratch easily. They could ‑‑ I don't know. If by mistake ‑‑ they could easily break. That was a major pain point. So just a little scratch could render your entire CD useless. That was really a pain point.

Streaming solved for that. We no longer have to deal with scratchy CDs. That's an example of understanding a pain point and creating a solution that solves for that pain point. So, that's step two. Understand the pain. All this is a conversation with your customers or potential customers, for that matter, if it's still an idea. And remember, you're not asking them about the solution they are using per se.

You're trying to understand what is the pain. What is the outcome. And then you're going to try and understand well, gains are literally what we mean by how do they measure success. Like, okay. So, how do you ‑‑ what does it mean ‑‑ a lot of things are subjective. You can ask them, how would you measure and say that this was a job well done? This product helped me get my job done really well.

You need to hear it from their perspective, not yours. Not in your head. The biggest thing you're going to do is you're going to have to get out of your head and try and hear their language. How do they measure success in their words, okay? That's what understanding the gain is. This is an odd example but I have to bring it up.

Toilet paper ‑‑ why do you buy Charmin, the soft one, versus Charmin strong or not Charmin at all? Some people say Charmin is too soft. Some say I love the softness. So the job is the same, but how the customer measures it differs. So if ‑‑ the folks who want the softer stuff, it's probably going to be Charmin. If it's those who want more hard stuff, they're probably not going to be going to Charmin.

The point is understand your specific customers and how they measure success. Then once you have done that, you've listed all the jobs. There's not only one job. There are micro jobs under the main job, functional, emotional, social. You list all their pains. You list all their gains. And then you rank them. That is step four. You rank the jobs, the pains, and the gains, because you do not want to be solving for an insignificant job.

They may mention it as a job, but it's in the grand scheme of things, that doesn't really matter to me. I really do not need to necessarily go to that place. If you're the one solving for the insignificant job, you did your homework, but you may need to pivot your product to be able to start serving a job that is so important to them that they will move heaven and earth to be able to find something that will help them get the job done.

Also, similar with pains. Solve for the extreme pains, not the moderate pains. If something is not really hurting them, it doesn't really bother me much, that's a signal to you that I should not pursue this idea. It's not painful enough for folks to want to pay money for it, okay?

And the same with the gains. Then step five, we are getting to the end, I promise. Then is when you can start talking about your solution. All this time we've just been trying to understand the customer need. The customer was king, but specifically the customer's jobs, outcomes, that's the king part. That's the customer is king part.

Then is when you go back to your garage, whatever it is, in your head, and design a product or a service that directly correlates to that job, okay? That's step five. Step six, you are then going to design pain relievers. Those are going to be features within your product, which directly correlate to those pains that they mentioned, okay?

And then you probably know what step seven is. You guessed it. You then design what we call gain‑creators, things which help them to achieve that outcome based upon their definition of success. Okay? This is all a part of your product design.

And then after you do that, you're going to go to the field. All this is going to the field and you're going to see if they fit, if you have attained a state. This is the hallowed state which we call fit. When you have attained fit, it means that your job enablers, your product is a job enabler, is fulfilling a job that the customer ‑‑ a need the customer has.

And you are actually relieving actual pains that they have. And you are actually creating actual gains for them. If you can actually map out your product, your idea, on a wall, wherever it is, however it is you brainstorm, like this, where you can map, match, and it actually does make sense, then my friends, you are in a good spot, okay?

You are basically ‑‑ have achieved what we call a state of fit, okay? Now, there are two types of fit. Most people talk about product‑market fit which is basically a state where you have market evidence that your product has gained traction. My news, you do not get product‑market fit until you have problem‑solution fit.

Those ‑‑ like the butterfly, those six steps, the butterfly needs both sides of the wings to fly. The solution is in service to the customer's job or the customer's need, okay? All right. I'm going to hurry it up a little bit. We're running out of time. We are at the end. I have put some helpful tools together for you. We do not need to go through every tool here, but I'll tell you how this works.

This is a quick value check, okay? Where you can fill in the blanks. If you can articulate this for your product, for your service, our ‑‑ whatever your product or service, the job enabler, helps ‑‑ you should be able to talk about your customer segment in term of their jobs, pains and gains. Don't just say women who are 30 years and above. Actually describe the pain you're solving for them or the job.

Their actual profile. I'm not talking about demographics. I rarely ever talk about demographics and psychographics mainly because it's about the job at the end of the day, okay? Who want to get job X done, whatever job X, fill in the blank, by ‑‑ whether that would be you fill in the blank with your verb. Whether you're relieving a pain or whether you are enabling a gain.

It's a verb. It's got to be a verb. Verb means it's a doing word. Reducing, avoiding. It's got to be a doing word. Unlike, and you can put whatever alternatives or competitors are out there if you want to put that. So this is a tool. You can use this. You fill in the blanks. You'll have the slides. This is another tool.

This will help you with your elevator pitch if you're trying to describe to somebody what your product is. We help customer X and you describe the customer, not in terms of the psychographics, you are describing them in terms of the pain points and how you have created a product that is a job enabler and the gain it is gives them.

This is a test card which actually helps you test your hypothesis. Step one, you're going to fill in the blanks. You actually write this out. You say, we believe or I believe you will put in the chat, you have an idea. We believe whatever hypothesis you have, we believe that people in this area need this product, okay?

Step two, to test that, to verify that, we will ‑‑ and you specify what you're going to do to test it. We will talk to 50 of them. Or we will send a preorder form. There are different tests. That's another conversation for another day, business tests. And to measure that, the metric we are using is, if 50 sign up on the preorder, that's the metric. If less than 50 sign up, there's no demand.

And you specify the criteria. We are right if X amount sign up or whatever. This is what we call a test card. This is a learning card. This is the final tool, then I'm going to stop sharing ‑‑ I'm going to stop talking. The learning card, you track if what you've learned ‑‑ don't guess it in your head. Actually write this down. You, your team, whoever is involved, this is what we believed, step one, the hypothesis.

Step two, we observed that, whatever the observation was. People did not sign up. I don't know what it was. We learned that our idea is great. It just needs some tweaking. Or we need to kill the idea. And therefore our action, now that you've learned, don't be stubborn. Listen to the data, no matter how beautiful your idea is. Listen to the data from your customers.

That, my friends, is how you test your business idea using Job‑To‑Be‑Done theory. Before you go all in and write business plans and things that just don't work. Okay. I do not think I'm going to dwell on this slide for too long. I can absolutely put in the chat my website for you to be able to reach me. Just because we are almost out of time and I want to get to your questions.

So, thank you, all of you, seriously. Oh, there's my email. There I am. You can find me on LinkedIn. I love LinkedIn. I'm there. Or you can reach out to the lovely team of NDI. Team NDI, I am so sorry. I talked too much. I would like to hand it back to you. Oh, we actually do have time. Sorry, guys. I thought this thing was running until 3:00. But that's even more time. We have a whole half hour for clarifying questions.

Thank you, Roxanne. I appreciate that. Thank you, Daniel. Sorry, Nikki. Over to you.

>> NIKKI POWIS: You're fine. I'm glad you said something. I could not get off mute. Now my camera is at the wrong place. I'm not sure what that's about, but we'll figure it out. You're going to see the side of my face. I'm going to unplug it and plug it back in because it's not doing ‑‑ you've got to love technology. There we go. It's working now.

That was great, Joanne. You know, I learned a lot. I was really ‑‑ when you think about ‑‑ I've not really thought about it from the perspective of the job like you were talking about, what job is your customer trying to do. I know a lot of people that start businesses that have disabilities ‑‑ it's because they themselves have a job that is ‑‑ the market isn't meeting their need. And they create something that therefore is useful for other people as well, because they can't find it themselves.

Great way to innovate, wonderful as well. You're right. So many times people come to us and they say, I need a business plan. That's the first thing that is thought about is the business plan. And oftentimes we work with financial institutions a lot. And it depends on where you're going and how much money you need in the first place as to what even kind of business plan, how comprehensive, what you're supposed to be doing.

So, it makes sense that that's not the right place to start.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: My recommendation is do not get money until you have proven your hypothesis. Otherwise, you're going to end up in worse shape than before, because now you're going to have all the failed business and you're in debt. So my sincere advice before you go getting money ‑‑ money does not solve everything. If the idea is not of value, just do not even try and get ‑‑ I've been there, people.

I don't want to talk about the trouble I got into just trying to ‑‑ money can be a Band‑Aid to try and cover up for a lack of true value. Sorry, Nikki.

>> NIKKI POWIS: No, thank you for being so transparent and vulnerable and explaining that the businesses that you've done ‑‑ you said at the beginning, 17 different businesses have not all flourished and that's okay. Maybe there needs to be something tweaked about the idea you've got. It's good, but when you do that customer piece.

I ‑‑ there were so many different things in the chat. I was trying to see what questions ‑‑ lots of wonderful presentations, thank you so much, terrific. Can we see the QR code again? Judith says. There we go. Okay. Perfect. So let's leave it on that. Thank you for your time.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: If somebody has a burning question, they can bring it up front on the chat, I guess.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Please do. Or you're welcome to raise your hand. If you need the interpreter, please do raise your hand so we can bring you on‑camera. A lot of people in the chat are just starting businesses, so this hopefully should be ‑‑ someone says they're in the feasibility phase. That's great, looking at that. Someone else said that they did start a business and it didn't work out. Thanks for sharing that.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: I'm not seeing questions, but if you want, we can have somebody on a "hot seat" and actually talk through the eight steps with them, any one of these folks who's willing to almost go under the practical lense of let's do it together with you. Let's understand your job together with you. If anyone is willing.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Yeah. Hey. That would be great. Is anybody who's getting ready, they're checking out their business that would be willing to come on and talk about what they're doing so that Joanne can take that concept and take through those steps? Anybody willing to do that? And if not, if they're not, then I will, because ‑‑ someone. Me, Daniel says me. Okay. All right. Daniel, do you want to turn your camera on?

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Should I stop sharing, and then we'll re-share at the end?

>> NIKKI POWIS: We can do that, unless anybody still needs the QR code. We can always bring it back up again, but, sure. Daniel, are you able to turn your camera on?

>> DANIEL: My camera does not work. Can you hear my audio?

>> NIKKI POWIS: We can. Go ahead.

>> DANIEL: You were asking -- can you repeat the question?

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: So, we can do this live with you where we actually go through what you think ‑‑ what your idea, what you think your customer jobs are, your customer pains. We can do this together with you live right now so that it's very practical and not just theoretical in your head. If you are willing, you can be our test subject, so to speak.

>> DANIEL: Sure. I'm working with Ruth. I think she's here as well. And we're going to be starting ‑‑ or working on a business plan together through NDI. But my business is going to be a fine art printing business aimed towards hobbyist photographers.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. What is the outcome that your target customers are seeking?

>> DANIEL: I think education mostly. They're trying to improve their skills without going the whole Instagram route. These days in photography, everybody is trying to take shortcuts to get as good as they can be as quickly as possible. But the knowledge that they're getting online is not as good as it could be. And so we're trying to create a community built on teaching people photography. And it's going to be a sales funnel to sell our own products, photography prints and all that.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: So, you've mentioned a couple of things in there. So if I was in a physical room where you are putting this together as a session, we would have maybe pink sticky note ‑‑ yellow notes for the job. Red or pink for the pains and green for the gains. So you've mentioned the job is something to do with they're looking to better themselves, to better their knowledge. Okay. But you've also mentioned within that same sentence, one of their pain points is fragmented knowledge.

>> DANIEL: Yes.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Leave the pain aside. Leave the gains aside. Really hone in on the job only. Specifically only the job. What is the outcome that they are looking for? Because education is not an end in of itself. It is a tool to something, a stepping stone to something. What is the outcome? And you can make it easier by thinking in terms of one specific person you have in mind who's your ideal customer.

>> DANIEL: Mainly getting them to a point where they can create professional art without the expense.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Why do they want to create professional art? I'm going deeper and deeper. I'm going to continue asking why.

>> DANIEL: With anybody who gets into a hobby, they want to get really good at it. They want to improve their photography. It's part of the journey. If we can take them from a beginner to somebody who can create professional photography and prints, then they could either make it a living or just really enjoy their art.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: So, you're getting to it. It seems to be economically driven. I'm asking. I'm not saying. I just ‑‑ I'm pulling out your words. Is it economically driven? Is the outcome that they are really looking to make a living out of their art?

>> DANIEL: For a lot of photographers, I believe so, yes.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: No, for your customers. Don't say a lot. I want to know about yours.

>> DANIEL: Yes. That's who I'm trying to serve.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. So, you're trying to educate them. So the job really is make a living out of your art or something like that. Without enough knowledge about your customers, this is what I'm starting to understand. And it seems to be more about ‑‑ anything to do with money, finances ‑‑ there's a security component in there.

Part of it is emotional almost. It's almost like financial security. So in a way, you're helping them with not just a functional job like this is how you do art well, but you're also helping them ‑‑ it's more of security is what is driving them. They seem to be more driven by that. These are the questions you're going to dig. Right now they are hypothesis until they prove you wrong or right.

And you're going to do the same for the pains. You're going to try and understand. You have an assumption that the market is too fragmented to educate them well enough, is ‑‑ that's the main pain I've heard you speak about. Feel free to expound on other pains.

>> DANIEL: It's mostly financial and getting the proper education like you were saying.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. Anything else, any other pain points or frustrations or annoyances?

>> DANIEL: Well, the major competition like Shutterfly, they have a really high failure rate. Their shipping is not very good. So their packages get destroyed. So I think a lot of people are frustrated with the options that are available now, because they're not living up to the quality that they say they do.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Can you double click into that? I'm now hearing a different job. You've talked about shipping. What does shipping have to do with the education?

>> DANIEL: It's a pain point I was mentioning.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. But ‑‑ if you ‑‑ in your words, were to say what is the job, what is the pain, that are the outcomes or gains, what would you say those are?

>> DANIEL: Everything, or . . .

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Not everything. The main ones. You can just pick the top of each. The top job, the top pain, the main gain.

>> DANIEL: So I think the biggest would be getting the hobbyist photographers to a point where they can make money doing their own work. Their pains, not being able to make money currently. That's pretty much the biggest one. And then what was the last one? I have a head injury. I can't remember.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Don't worry. You've almost rolled it in in the same. You've talked about the need. Let's go to your solution and try and see if there's a correlation. To be honest, this can take like 20 to 30 minutes just trying to understand each of those, just the job, the pain, the gain. But for now, in case somebody else wants to come on or anybody has a question, I would like to bring them on.

I want to go to the other side of the butterfly, which is the solution. Exactly what solution are you building to solve for that job, the pain, and the gains.

>> DANIEL: My solution is going to be a community brand. We're going to bring in hobbyist photographers and teach them. We're going to have people from YouTube bringing in their people, their audience. And we're going to do a lot of live education on Zoom meetings like this. And then we're also going to have a lot of guides written up on different photography and outdoor subjects that help them.

But then we're also going to have the printing service, which is going to be top of the line, premium printing services that we're going to offer at reduced costs to our customers.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: So, controversial question. Are you sure nobody has done this yet for them?

>> DANIEL: There are some people who have done similar things, but they're not at the level that we're trying to get to.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: What's different with yours?

>> DANIEL: Ours is going to be a community built around the customer, not a store where people can go. Everybody else ‑‑ it seems more transactional everywhere else you to so we're trying to be more of a community where people are welcomed.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. So, your product ‑‑ it's a community which helps you accomplish a certain goal. So initially, this can go many different ways. Initially we had just honed in on helping them make money. But the more we talk about it, you seem to be now more of a community, which is the main feature than, you know, from hobby to professional art education service. I think the education is an aspect.

Now, take everything that I'm saying with a grain of salt because I am absolutely not an artist. Okay? But also, I do not have as much knowledge as you have about your potential customers and then most importantly, I haven't talked to your customers. So everything which I've said, just take as pure directional, some of the things you're going to be doing as you're going to be talking to your customers.

So, I want to conclude on this. Do you have a plan to go and speak to actual potential customers and roughly if you could mention if you do, what that plan might look like.

>> DANIEL: I've been working with a local business here, a local printing business. We're going to sit down with some of their customers hopefully soon and see if there's a survey or something we can put together to talk to them about that.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Okay. My general advice A. let it not be a survey. At least initially. Surveys are very good if you have enough qualitative data ‑‑ enough context from their voice already and you are just trying to refine something that's already got partway there. But since this is a new idea, I would highly encourage you to talk to them directly one‑on‑one. And do not do it in the regular focus group or customer‑type discussions where ‑‑ you want to hear their voice on what they are saying.

And you want to remove as much as can be any solutions that they're talking about. Let me try and give you an example. Like, for example, do not ask them ‑‑ I don't know much about art. I'm going to talk about food. I know food really well. I'm going to talk about food. Yes! Okay. So, do not ‑‑ if you want to start a new restaurant, okay, do not ask them hey, what do you think of the Momofuku restaurant food, which is a restaurant where I'm from in New York.

Do not put the ‑‑ you're not asking them about the solution that they are working with. You're just trying to understand the last time you went to find food, what drove you? What motivated you? What was the thing you were trying to accomplish? What was the outcome you were looking for? So you're going to ask questions like that. You're going to ask questions like, okay, if you didn't go to a restaurant, what would have been your alternative to fill in that gap?

We did a vast survey of this sort where ‑‑ this wasn't me. It was a whole group of researchers I was a part of, trying to understand why people go to a particular brand of yogurt from a particular restaurant. And they were trying to get their restaurant sales of yogurt up. And they would survey customers. They literally did that. And they had all the data. Every time the customer said I wish it could be strawberry flavor, I wish it could be this.

They would change it based upon how the customer said it, but the sales never changed, they never went up, okay? Until eventually, they brought in us, the research group. And we understood that people were not buying the yogurt for the yogurt's sake, okay? They were buying ‑‑ it wasn't yogurt, it was smoothies. They were buying those to fill their bellies so that they didn't get hungry before 10:00 a.m.

They just needed something to just sit in the belly until then. It had nothing to do with the flavor. So, understand the job. Ask them the last time you did this, what did you use? Some were like I did a bagel, a banana, that didn't work. but the smoothie stays. So that was the job. The job was just sit in my belly until 10:00. So, that's an example. I hope that helps.

>> DANIEL: It does. Thank you.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Of course. You're so welcome. Nikki, I should behave and hand it over to you.

>> NIKKI POWIS: We don't have any other questions in the chat, so unless you want to add anything else, then I can sort of talk a little bit about NDI and the things that we do around small business, unless anyone else wants to jump on.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Let me put back the slides that you ‑‑ I know the last four or so slides. Do you need the slides, Nikki?

>> NIKKI POWIS: It would be helpful, yes.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Let me bring them up.

>> NIKKI POWIS: It helps prompt me. Otherwise I'll probably forget something.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Let me bring them up, yes. And feel free, anyone, you can always put in the chat any question you have. I'm still here for a couple minutes.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Please do. The way you break that down ‑‑ if Daniel hadn't said anything, and nobody else had I was going to say, I have an example. Because I'm trying to help my teenage daughter get her business off the ground. She is grooming dogs. And as you were talking I'm thinking about what people really want is a clean, good‑looking dog. I guess is what they're wanting.

But anyway, that's an aside. But it's making me really think. It's very thought‑provoking. NDI Small Business Hub ‑‑ we help anybody that is at any part of the business life cycle. As Daniel said, he's working with Ruth. She is our Small Business Counselor. So she is there to help. I will say with the caveat of a lot of times we are funding‑ dependent, so sometimes we're restricted to a certain location or a certain place ‑‑ we do not charge.

It's totally free, but we have to be able to get a funding stream to be able to pay for the time. So, that's the only caveat. So if you contact us, we are going to help you in any way, shape, or form that we can, even if it's to refer you to someone else if we can't personally do it because it doesn't fit with one of our funding mechanisms. But we're here to help you start, build, and grow your business.

And we have so many resources on our website. And so please visit that. We have two years worth of wonderful webinars with all kinds of different topics. We have podcasts. We have success stories. We have resources.

(Dog barking)

>> NIKKI POWIS: Oh, my goodness. I am so sorry. Dogs are barking in the background. There are people moving around out there. We also have a streaming television channel that also has a lot of content and some great stories from people that have had the journey, they've walked that path. And sometimes I think that storytelling is so good. And it really helps you to put your own things into frame of reference.

So disabilityowned.com is that one. And we also have a partnership with Verizon. They have an all‑virtual platform, amazing videos and content on anything you could possibly think about that is small business‑related. I'm hoping the dog barking is not as loud for you as for me. It sounds horribly loud. They also have coaching, mentoring, live events, really encourage you to go check that out.

And periodically they put out a $10,000 grant opportunity to apply for. You do have to get in there, register, and participate in a couple of activities in order for the system to open up that grant opportunity to you. So, don't just register. Really get in there and look around and see how valuable some of the information is.

And then we would love you ‑‑ if you're not already a part of our mailing list, we do a newsletter with great information and grant opportunities, not just the Verizon one, what our partners are doing, different opportunities coming up and great information. So you can link to our mailing list. And all of these links are going in the chat right now. You can subscribe through the link. You can go to the Verizon website.

And remember that as Lexi mentioned, all of this information is recorded and will be available within the next two weeks on our website. This is just our team. Ruth, we talked about. Lexi our powerhouse in the back. She is always making sure that everything works really well and you saw her in the beginning. And then Caroline is another one of our team small business specialists.

So, let's see. The next slide is nothing. So that was it! (Laughing) Okay. All right. Well, thank you so much for joining us. Please do still stay in touch. Let us know. We're always looking for other opportunities for other webinars, things that are of use to you. If you shoot us an email and tell us I'd really like something about this, maybe it's something we've already done. We can point you to a recording.

Or maybe it's something we've never thought about. We can find somebody to bring them on and do that. We're here to support all of your endeavors as much as we can. Joanne, thank you. Very thought‑provoking. We've got some wonderful comments in the chat about how helpful that was.

>> JOANNE ERIAKU: Thank you so much, NDI. Love you guys, really do. Really, really do. My small business friends, we're in this together. Feel free, reach out. You can absolutely ask any questions. None is off the table. Happy to be of service. Thank you so much.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Thanks, everyone. Good‑bye.

(Session concluded at 3:23 p.m. ET)

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