

Free Book Excerpt

CYCLES: The simplest, proven method to innovate faster while reducing risks
A work from Bryan Cassady and 22 Innovation Experts

CHAPTER 6

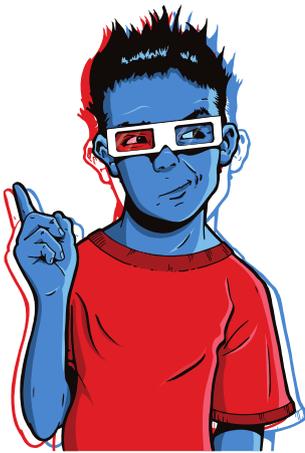
FINDING THE JOBS TO BE DONE: ALIGNING YOUR BUSINESS WITH CUSTOMER VALUE

“Gourmet takeaway and streaming music can teach us about customers’ true jobs to be done”

BRYAN CASSADY

LEAD AUTHOR OF THE BOOK CYCLES





WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THE CHAPTER

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- JTBD is centered on human behavior – that means the discovery of the JTBD arises from understanding your customers as much as the products and services you wish to sell to them.
- JTBD is about understanding the real reasons people buy products and services – these may not be immediately obvious, even to the customer. You cannot just ask a customer what their real JTBD is; you need to engage in a dialogue and deduce this.
- Successful innovation is not about the number of new features your product offers – it is about the jobs that these features fulfill. Focus on features that have high meaningful/uniqueness scores and from which you can extract maximum value.
- Not all JTBD are created equal – to succeed, you need to focus on delivering meaningful uniqueness

YOU WILL ALSO GET A LINK TO SOME USEFUL CANVASES

The Alignment Canvas

Created for: _____ Created by: _____ Date: _____

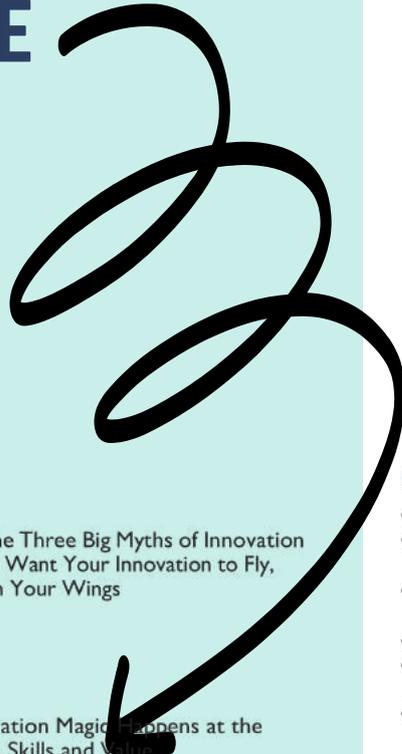
Step 1. Mission			Step 2. Meaningful value		
Significance What important things do you want to do?	Skills What skills can you leverage?	Value What are people willing to pay for?	What Situation	I want to Mission	So I can Expected outcome
Mission			How will they measure progress? How will they measure long-term growth? Who or what is the competition? Why will they file their current solution to hire you?		
Business Model (right now)			Who are you today?		
The Core Challenge(s)			Who do you need to be tomorrow?		
How can it be improved/generators?			Growth objectives		
What	Who	How	What	Who	How
Value Extraction		Value Extraction			

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CYCLES
www.thecyclo.com

CHAPTER FROM THE BOOK CYCLES



PART 1: INTRODUCTION

- Chapter 1: An Honest Introduction
- Chapter 2: Knowing What Ain't So: The Three Big Myths of Innovation
- Chapter 3: The Power of Theory: If You Want Your Innovation to Fly, Theory Is the Wind Beneath Your Wings

PART 2: ALIGNMENT

- Chapter 4: Alignment Introduction
- Chapter 5: Finding Your Mission: Innovation Magic Happens at the Intersection of Significance, Skills and Value
- Chapter 6: Finding the Jobs To Be Done: Aligning Your Business with Customer Value
- Chapter 7: Looking at the Big Picture: Delivering and Capturing More Value Through Business Model Innovation
- Chapter 8: The Value of Culture: How Supportive Cultures Can Reverse the Innovation Slope
- Chapter 9: Alignment: Conclusion

PART 3: BUILD

- Chapter 10: Build Introduction
- Chapter 11: Defining Your Innovation Challenge: What Is the Problem You Need To Solve?
- Chapter 12: Starting with What You Have: Effectuation and the Power of Action
- Chapter 13: No More Brain Drains. It's Time to Start Building Ideas. If You Want More High-Quality Ideas, Look for Stimulus and Diversity.
- Chapter 14: The Power of Persistence: Why You Must Keep Moving Forward While Being Prepared to Change Direction
- Chapter 15: Build Conclusion

PART 4: COMMUNICATE AND CHECK

- Chapter 16: Communicate / Check Introduction
- Chapter 17: The Power of Clarity: Understanding, Humility, and the Curse of Knowledge.
- Chapter 18: What You See Isn't Always What You Get! Good Research, Bad Research and the Art of Really Listening to Feedback
- Chapter 19: Will They Pay? The Question Too Many People Forget to Ask
- Chapter 20: Shoot Your Puppies and Move On: Why Killing Ideas Is as Important as Building New Ideas and How To Do It
- Chapter 21: Communicate / Check Conclusion Make it Clear; See if They Want It and Will Pay. Then Decide To Kill or Continue

PART 5: LEARNING SYSTEMS

- Chapter 22: Systems Introduction
- Chapter 23: Uncertainty and the Fear of Losing: How to Change Your Mindset To Focus on Winning
- Chapter 24: Systems Thinking and Profound Innovation: Getting to the Heart of Innovation
- Chapter 25: One Thing at a Time: Using Focus and Sequentially To Avoid "Monkey Brain" Innovation
- Chapter 26: Bullets First, Then Cannonballs: The Secrets of a Learning Organization
- Chapter 27: Systems Conclusion

PART 6: CONCLUSION

- Chapter 28: Bringing It All Together: Using Behavioral Science and a Habit-Building Approach To Deliver Sustainable Innovation

CHAPTER 6: FINDING THE JOBS TO BE DONE: ALIGNING YOUR BUSINESS WITH CUSTOMER VALUE



Gourmet takeaway and streaming music can teach us about customers' true jobs to be done.

Sorry Is the Most Expensive Word...

After working late again, I found myself having to run along the crowded concourse. I dodged between irate passengers, having just 22 minutes to get to my train, and still had to pick up takeaways for my wife and me.

The place was Waterloo Station in London, the busiest railway station in the UK, with some astonishingly expensive takeaway food vendors. I quickly stopped at possibly the most expensive takeaway food stand in all of London to buy a luxury chicken Tikki Masala for two and a bouquet of flowers before finally running to board my train.

It had become a depressingly regular scenario. Only when looking back, did I realize that I could have purchased a cheaper takeaway. But I didn't! Each time, I chose to buy the most expensive, luxury takeaway food available.

In retrospect, the reason was clear; I wasn't just purchasing good-tasting food; I was "hiring" an apology for my wife for being late. Again! Getting something to eat was only part of my purchase; the apology was the real *job to be done*.

Businesses thrive because they help customers get a job done, but sometimes, just what that job actually is may not be obvious even to the customer. Looking at what products and services offer in terms of (sometimes unwitting) value to customers is called *Jobs-to-be-Done* (JTBD); what job is the customer buying that product or service to fulfill?

As discussed in the previous chapter, offering value is a fundamental element of any successful new product or service. But, value is not always obvious in terms of a purchasing decision, and JTBD is an essential tool for ensuring that we really understand the value we offer our customers.

The Sad Truth About Products That Fail.

The vast majority of products fail. Figures quoted in leading business publications and books cite failure rates ranging from 70% to as high as 90%. The typical product development process is clearly not working, and failed products too often lead to companies going out of business. We – you – cannot keep going on like this.

The big question is, what can we do to reduce the failure rate? A JTBD focus is one of the most effective solutions.

We must think about consumer needs when designing products, but these are not always clear or obvious. In my takeaway dinner example, buying just any dinner would not provide an appropriate solution for the real job to be done. A fancy and expensive enough dinner that would also qualify as an apology for being home late again was more appropriate.

If your product or service does not deliver on your customer's *real* JTBD, what you have to offer will never be considered. If you do not do that job better than someone else, your product will not be hired. And if the value you provide is too low, you will never get paid enough.

The Hard Math of Innovation.

The facts	Outcome	Numbers
100 products launched		100
About 40% do not do a real job	Solution is not even considered	60
About 50% of the remaining products do not offer enough value to be hired	Solution is considered, but not hired	30
About 50% of the remaining products are not good enough to sell for the price	Solution is hired, but is not profitable	15

Successful products out of 100 launched 15

Source: A combination of data from 12 studies presented in *Jobs to be done* by Anthony W. Ulwick

The hard reality is that the unacceptably high product failure rate results most often from companies creating products that are not aligned with what customers want. All too often, the product design and marketing processes do not adequately consider the context for purchasing decisions or the context for the customers' use of those products.

It is not uncommon for product creators to add new features to products, assuming it adds value. Occasionally this may be successful, but too often, prospective customers care less about new features than you might expect and far more about a core benefit they consider critical to their needs.

Successful innovation is about achieving two things; offering value to the customer through a product or service *and* extracting value from that product or service. If you do not offer value, no-one is going to buy your new product or service. If you cannot make money from it, it will never be a commercially viable proposition.

By aligning your product development and innovation efforts with the real jobs that customers want to fulfill, you can reduce the number of new product failures and even re-develop existing products to address your customers' jobs better. It may be the difference between the success or failure of your business.

What Is JTBD?

Perhaps the best way to define JTBD is to focus on its core concept. JTBD is a way to ask the following uncomfortable question; do customers really care about your product? No, they care about what it helps them do. They hire a product to get a particular job done. This job is not something you invented; it already exists for your customers and may or may not be obvious.

In my case at Waterloo Station, I was not aware of the real job I wanted the food to accomplish. My real job was to hire an apology and a form of compensation for my bad habit of being late. My use of the food was not as simple as the restaurateur's intended use, selling a convenient, high-quality dinner at a prime location.

A JTBD starts with a situation, an objective, and a desired outcome. For most customers, a job can be explained by filling in the blanks in the following sentence.

When _____ Situation	I want to _____ Motivation	So I can _____ Expected outcome
--------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---

As you can see, the components of a JTBD are personal. It is more about benefits than features, and the only benefit that truly interests the customer is the one that applies specifically to his/her case. The benefit fits a situation, addresses a motivation, and produces the desired result.

The following questions should help you frame your thinking about applying the JTBD theory:

1. What job or personal progress is your prospective customer trying to achieve?
2. What are the circumstances of his/her struggle with the job?
3. What obstacles prevent him/her from getting the job done?
4. What imperfect solution is he/she presently employing to address the job?
5. How would he/she describe a better-quality solution, and what trade-offs would be acceptable?

Therefore, before you try to develop a product, you need to ask, “*What job does a prospective customer want done?*” How will that customer use your product to address a pain point that has arisen within the context of his/her unique situation? That is the true measure of the value that the product offers to customers.

Your focus must be on using JTBD to understand user experiences with your products. Thinking in terms of user experiences acknowledges that customers may very well hire your products to accomplish something you would never have imagined or intentionally designed those products to do.

But, what about those many benefits you identified through data mining, focus groups, and demographic analysis? JTBD does not render all of that information useless; it complements it in a more behavior-oriented or experiential way.

Innovation expert Clayton Christensen says that the “*functional, emotional, and social dimensions of the jobs that customers need to get done constitute the circumstances that they buy. The jobs that customers are trying to get done or the outcomes they are trying to achieve constitute a circumstance-based categorization of markets.*”

To summarize, when you use the JTBD process, you start to view innovation as not just adding more features to products or focusing solely on technical functionality. Instead, you strive to look for and develop products that are genuinely better in addressing customer needs. They will enable your customers to make progress in solving their problems – to get their jobs done.

The Theory of JTBD.

The theory of JTBD is not new. It has been described many ways by dozens (or maybe hundreds) of business experts. To grasp how complicated and jaded the story of JTBD is, all you have to do is look at how many experts claim to have devised it and developed the true, winning application methodology.

Peter Drucker talked about “*the job to be done*” in reference to innovation back in 1985. Before Drucker, there was Theodore Levitt, who, in his book *Marketing Myopia*, proposed the idea that people buy products for the benefits they offer and not just their list of features. He famously said that consumers do not buy drills; they buy quarter-inch holes – the real value offered by drills.

There have been many, many books on this subject, including:

- (2005) *What Customers Want: Using Outcome-Driven Innovation to Create Breakthrough Products and Services*, by Anthony Ulwick.
- (2014) *The Jobs-to-be-Done Handbook: Practical Techniques for Improving Your Application of Jobs-to-be-Done*, by Chris Spiek and Bob Moesta.
- (2016) *Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice*, by Clayton Christensen.
- (2016) *Jobs to Be Done: A Roadmap for Customer-Centred Innovation*, by Stephen Wunker and Jessica Wattman et al.
- (2018) *When Coffee and Kale Compete: Become great at making products people will buy*, by Alan Klement.
- (2020) *The Jobs To Be Done Playbook*, by Jim Kalbach et al.

If your target is to build an innovation into a successful product, using JTBD is one of the most important ways to avoid failure. Carefully read the rest of this chapter. If you still have questions, buy one of the books listed above. My personal recommendation is *Competing Against Luck*. In my opinion, this is one of the best business books of all time.

Looking for (Non-Obvious) Jobs in all the Right Places.

The key to successful innovation is figuring out the jobs your customers want to do and conceptualizing or re-designing your products based on these job requirements. It relates directly to why customers purchase particular products (solutions), so you can forecast what they will want next with a high degree of accuracy. In other words, “*What will customers hire our products to do in the future?*”

Finding current and future jobs is best described as a discovery process. Listening to prospective and current customers is vital. It is important to note: I am *not* saying that surveys are the answer here. Customers often do not know or cannot articulate precisely what their JTBDs are or can only think in terms of products available to them today. You need to keep on asking until you **really** understand.

Ideally, you should initiate conversations with customers in-person. The goal is to learn what they truly wish to accomplish with your product within the scope of their circumstances for using it. You are looking for stories – shopping and purchasing scenarios – not statistics! As you start to hear similar objectives and motivations in those stories, you will get a clearer idea about the elusive jobs your customers want to address.

To understand how different JTBD discovery is versus traditional market research, consider companies like Intel. They employ social anthropologists to observe and interview prospective customers as they use prototype technologies. Other companies hire business anthropologists to conduct similar studies to exchange ideas about concepts for new products and gain insights into the actual circumstances in which customers use those products. Many times, they discover that products are used in totally unexpected ways and for

unanticipated purposes. The JTBD discovery process can provide highly valuable information through listening, observing, and asking meaningful questions.

Take, for example, the humble dishwasher. You find this appliance in many homes, but just what JTBD does it fulfill? The obvious answer may seem to be that it provides a more time-efficient way of washing dishes. However, that is not the full story. By the time that you have rinsed the dishes, placed them in the dishwasher, and removed them afterward, in most cases, it would actually take less time to wash your dishes by hand.

So, what JTBD does the dishwasher really fulfill? Part of the answer is that it removes stacked-up, dirty dishes from the sink. No-one likes to see that, yet most of us let it happen. By putting these dirty dishes into the dishwasher, you can put off the job of washing the dishes without seeing an unwelcome reminder every time you go into the kitchen. The dishwasher does not just wash dishes; it makes you feel better about your failure to do this job as often as you probably should by allowing you to hide the evidence.

Five Questions to Discover JTBD.

Look at jobs in your own life

The next time you buy takeaway food, ask, “*Am I buying dinner or something else?*” When you find your old Apple iPod at the bottom of a drawer covered with dust, ask, “*Why did I stop using it?*” When you buy new products and services, try to identify the *real* jobs you are trying to get done and how you will measure progress. Your question to ask is, why am I really buying this product or service?

Find opportunities in non-consumption

In other words, learn from people who are not currently hiring any product or service for jobs they would like to get done. If you are running a restaurant, it is easy to focus on other restaurants as your primary competition. But the reality is the biggest competitor is probably non-consumption – people staying at home to cook and eat. Your question to ask is, is your biggest competitor, another company, or non-consumption?

Identify common workarounds

See whether workarounds used by prospective customers are signaling a market that is ripe to be served. A client of mine, TakeAir, saw an opportunity in office building air management. Their founder saw that when people become fatigued in the office, they open the windows to get some fresh air. He asked the question, “*Could we simply bring the fresh, invigorating outdoor air into the building when the windows are closed?*” Based on this insight, they built a new air enhancement system that adds natural, beneficial microbial enriched air – like forest air – into offices to make people feel refreshed and more alert. Your question to ask is; what more effective solutions could replace workarounds?

Find jobs people do not want to do

We call these negative jobs, and they can signal great opportunities for innovation. Everyone (maybe other than accountants!) hates preparing annual tax returns. The goal is to get them completed as quickly and painlessly as possible. Based on this insight, Intuit developed Quicktax. Using Quicktax, consumers can take a phone photo of their W-2 form from their employer, answer a few questions, submit their taxes digitally and they are finished. Intuit could have built a program with far more features, but the JTBD was to minimize the onerous task of tax reporting. Your question to ask is; what are the tasks that people must do that could be significantly simplified by your product or service?

Spot unusual or unexpected uses of your products

Discover how customers use your products in ways that are different from what you imagined. The reality is that people are often not buying what you think you are selling, meaning that there are huge opportunities in pivoting to serve those novel uses. In Clayton Christensen's book, *Competing Against Luck*, he talks about Church & Dwight, the Arm & Hammer baking soda producer. In the 1960s, management found that consumers were adding their baking soda to laundry detergent, mixing it into toothpaste, and sprinkling it on their carpets. Today, they sell the cleaning and deodorizing benefits of genuine Arm & Hammer baking soda in products they and other companies developed for those specific uses instead of just for cooking. Your question to ask is, how are/might my customers use my products to address their jobs in unintended ways?

Choose the most promising JTBD

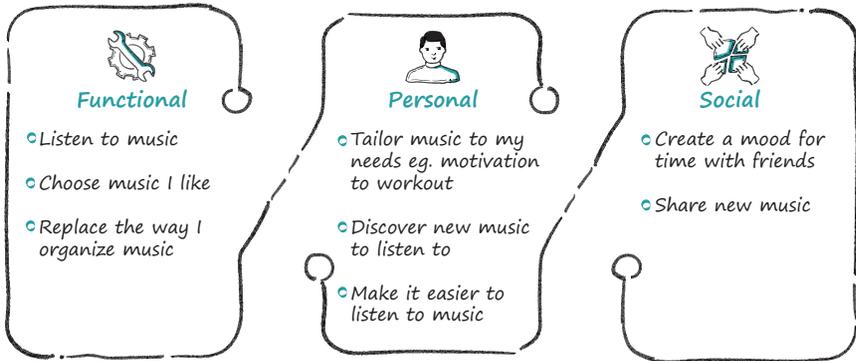
The chances are that you will identify more than one promising JTBD during your discovery process. That means you must prioritize to start with the best one. I know that choosing is tough, but it must be done unless you have unlimited product development resources. The best objective measure of your solution to JTBD is to ask whether it is meaningfully unique? Meaningful means how important the job is to the customer, and unique is a measure of how many other products or services fulfill the same JTBD. The higher the scores, the better the chances of success.

I will illustrate this process by working through a concrete example from the music industry, which has significantly changed, from delivery on records, tapes, and CDs, to digital downloads and online streaming services. We will evaluate a hypothetical new music service using the JTBD process.

Step 1: List all the jobs of your product or service.

There is seldom a product or service that delivers just one job. To begin, list all of the JTBD for your conceptual or existing product. Think in terms of functional, personal (emotional), and social jobs. A three-column chart like the following will help you organize your ideas.

Jobs to be done



Step 2: Rank the jobs by importance and uniqueness.

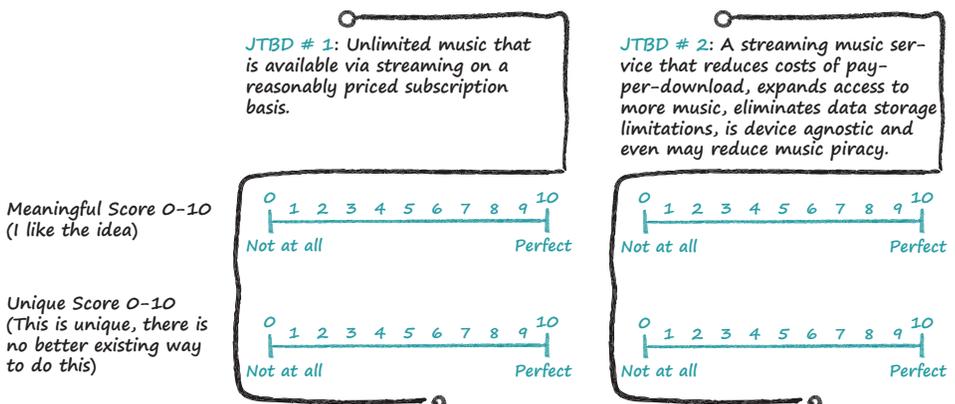
When rating jobs, different jobs have different levels of importance. A powerful way to classify jobs is to use the meaningful-uniqueness scale developed by the consulting firm Eureka! Ranch.

It uses a 0 to 10-point score for each measure and then combines these into one overall score (60% meaningfulness and 40% uniqueness). In general, each job needs a score of at least six to have a good chance of success.

Here are the questions to ask your team and, importantly, prospective customers:

1. How much do you *like* each of the following ideas?
2. How *new* and *different* are each of the following ideas?

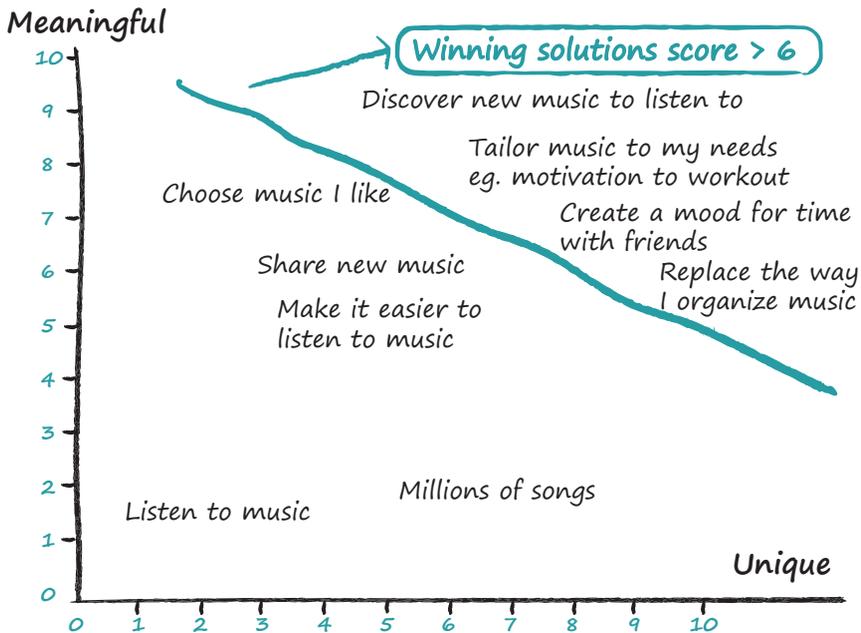
Your rating system might look like the following:



This process might produce an overall score for each job as follows:

Rating Different JTBD			
	Meaningful	Unique	Score
	0-10	0-10	$M \times 0.6 + U \times 0.4$
Discover new music to listen to	9	8	8.6
Tailor music to my needs	8	8	8
Create a mood for time with friends	7	8	7.4
Choose music I like	8	4	6.4
Share new music	6	6	6
Make it easier to listen to music at home	6	5	5.6
Listen to music	8	2	5.6
Millions of songs	2	7	4

If you put these in a graph, the jobs with the best potential are shown in the upper right part of the graph. (For more information, you can read *Driving Eureka* by Doug Hall or just trust me for now.)



Step 3: Can you extract value?

The meaningful-uniqueness score is useful because it tells you how important each job is to the customer and how much competition you face, but that does not necessarily mean you can extract value. To assess that, you must combine the

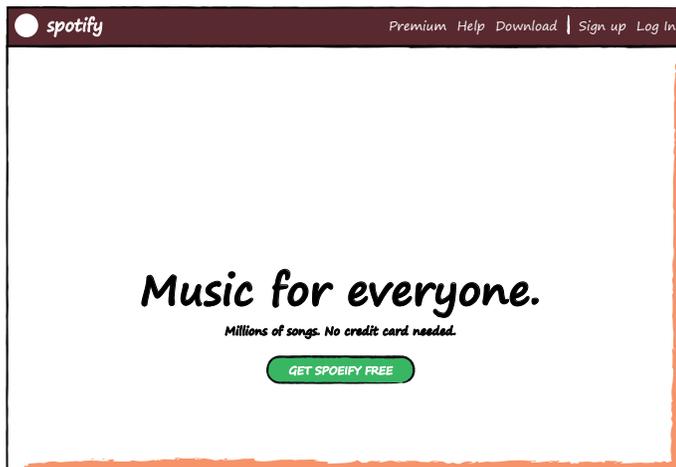
meaningfulness-uniqueness score with a subjective determination of your ability to extract value to assign an overall value extraction score for each job. Again, the solution will be to focus on jobs that are as high as possible in both areas.

Value Extraction Scores		
	Score	Value Extraction
Discover new music to listen to	8.6	8
Tailor music to my needs	8	8
Create a mood for time with friends	7.4	8
Choose music I like	6.4	7
Replace the way I organize music	6.2	8
Share new music	6	7
Make it easier to listen to music at home	5.6	4
Listen to music	5.6	4
Millions of songs	4	4

Step 4: Group your “yes” jobs.

The last step is to look for overlap between the jobs that are important to the customer and those from which you can extract the most value. You must focus on developing features that address these customer needs. If possible, you should try to group these jobs into a single, more comprehensive job with an even larger value for your customers.

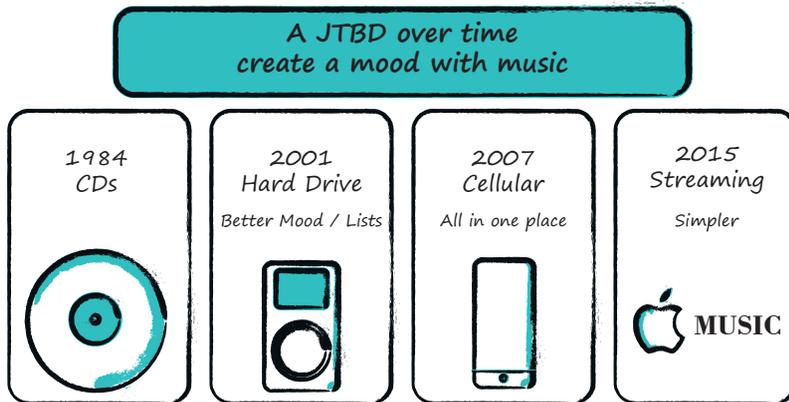
In our example of a music service, all of the benefits of a streaming music service have been combined into the successful company, Spotify. This service offers a reduced cost versus pay-per-download, expands access to more music, eliminates data storage limitations, is device agnostic, and even may reduce music piracy. Spotify fulfills multiple JTBD in a way that allows value capture.



JTBD Are More than the Solution Today.

In his new book on JTBD, Anthony Ulwick uses a similar example of JTBD but focuses on the key job of creating a mood with music. He shows how this fundamental job has remained stable over time. Each time a product got better at doing the job, they won the market, but the job remained the same.

The message is clear that JTBD are stable, consistent, and usually exist before the solution is created. The big question, and many times the billion-dollar question, what is a new and better way to deliver the job consumers are looking for in a product to hire.



Inspired by a visual in a presentation by Anthony Ulwick

Final Thoughts About JTBD.

JTBD is a powerful way to re-invent how you do business, especially how you conceptualize, develop, and market new products and services. The JTBD discovery process will enable you to better define the market fit for your products and services by really understanding the jobs customers want to address. You can design your entire business around JTBD. It is a way to build sustainability by closely aligning with customers' current jobs and future jobs.

I urge you to adapt the JTBD methods in this chapter to suit your business culture, company, and industry – experiment with new and existing products, as well as concepts for future products.

Key Take-Aways



- **JTBD is centered on human behavior** – that means the discovery of the JTBD arises from understanding your customers as much as the products and services you wish to sell to them.
- **JTBD is about understanding the real reasons people buy products and services** – these may not be immediately obvious, even to the customer. You cannot just ask a customer what their real JTBD is; you need to engage in a dialogue and deduce this.
- **Successful innovation is not about the number of new features your product offers** – it is about the jobs that these features fulfill. Focus on features that have high meaningful/uniqueness scores and from which you can extract maximum value.
- **Not all JTBD are created equal** – to succeed, you need to focus on delivering meaningful uniqueness.



Next Steps: Complete Step 2 in the Alignment Canvas. By repeating multiple cycles of this process for different products and services, you will be able to identify JTBD and promising ways to help customers address those jobs.

- *When* - means the situation, the circumstances or environment, in which the customer will use the product.
- *I want to* - refers to the customer's motivation for using the product, not just the intended function.
- *So I can* - is the customer's expected outcome or experience using the product.

After completing this step, ask the following three questions:

1. How will customers measure progress?
2. What is the real competition (remember, this might be non-consumption)?
3. Why would customers stop using their current solutions to use your product or service instead?

If you can answer these questions clearly and confidently, you are on the right path. If not, it probably makes sense to more carefully assess whether you are offering meaningful and unique value.

Repeat this for several products to get a feel for JTBD thinking. Completing this canvas is an essential step towards understanding JTBD; writing things down will help clarify your thinking.

Note: A second more detailed canvas is available if you want to take a "deep-dive" into JTBD. Use this canvas to identify different JTBDs and prioritize the one you want to focus on.

Chapter 6A

Finding the Jobs To Be Done: Aligning your business with customer value



30
Minutes

Objectives

To clarify your core JTBD and your key competition.

Deliverables

Clarity on your core JTBD.

How to

Use the canvas below to define your JTBD
When (the circumstances or the environment).
I want to (the customer's motivation for using the product, NOT just the intended function)
So I can - (The customer's desired outcome)
Then answer the 3 follow-up questions.

This Chapter

The Full Alignment Canvas

Step 2. Meaningful value

When
Situation

I want to
Motivation

So I can
Expected outcome

How will they measure progress ?

What is the competition ?

Why will they fire their current solution to hire you ?

How do you know if you have done this canvas right ?



CHECK LIST

- There is a focus on a specific situation where there is a real JTBD.
- There is an outcome with real value for your target.
- You've clearly thought about motivation (this is not always obvious) and competition (this is also not always obvious)



tiny.cc/m-align-template

Chapter 6B

Finding the Jobs To Be Done: Aligning your business with customer value



30
Minutes

Objectives

To clarify your JTBD and key competition.

Deliverables

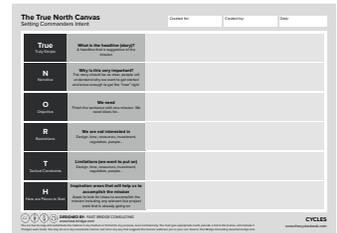
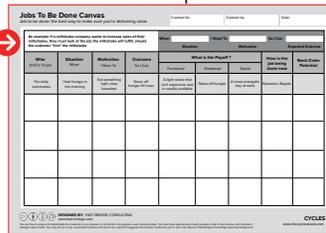
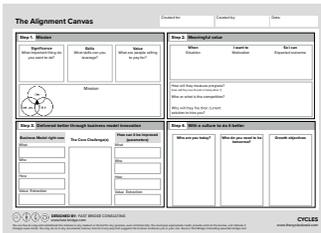
The rank order of your JTBD so you can choose where to focus your efforts.

How to

Step 1: Write as many JTBD as you can think of.
Step 2: Rank order them in terms of potential.

The Full Alignment Canvas

This Chapter



Jobs To Be Done Canvas				When	I Want To	So I Can		
Job to be done: the best way to make sure you're delivering value An example: If a milkshake company wants to increase sales of their milkshakes, they must look at the job the milkshake is offering will be done if hire the product.				Situation		Motivation	Expected Outcome	
Who Define Target	Situation When	Motivation I Want To	Outcome So I Can	What is the Payoff?			How is the job being done now	Rank Order Potential
				Functional	Emotional	Social		
For daily commuters	I feel hungry in the morning	Eat something light, stop boredom	Stave off hunger till noon	A light snack that isn't expensive and is readily available	Stave off hunger	A more energetic day at work	Banana's, Bagels	

How do you know if you have done this canvas right ?



CHECK LIST

- You have looked at the different jobs you might be delivering through the eyes of your customer.
- To be meaningful, there needs to be a real payoff. Is this payoff clear?
- Rank your jobs by meaningfulness and uniqueness (Jobs with value are both). (Hint: we score jobs by both attributes 0-10 and sum the scores, but you can find your own method)



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Next Up: Once you have identified JTBD, your next challenge is to look at how you can fine-tune your business model to increase the value you offer or the value you can capture. In the next chapter, you will learn why business model innovation is a powerful way to improve your ability to do both simultaneously.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



LEAD AUTHOR

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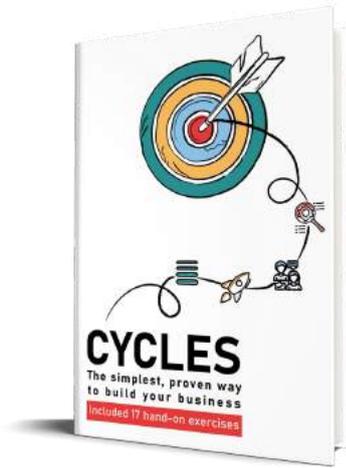
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Chapters: Lead Author

Bryan is a passionate believer in anyone's ability to innovate and build new businesses. He has personally built 11 companies in 6 countries, with eight of these making money. For the last eight years, Bryan has been coaching startups and scale-ups and trying to help larger companies regain the spirit of startups.

He has taught at the KU Leuven, The Solvay business school, EDHEC, ESCLA, and been a guest lecturer at the University of Chicago, INSEAD, Cornell, Berkeley, and many other schools. He has also led programs like Founder Institute Brussels and the European Innovation Academy. This book results from four years of research with over 400 companies on what really drives innovation success.



BOOK CYCLES

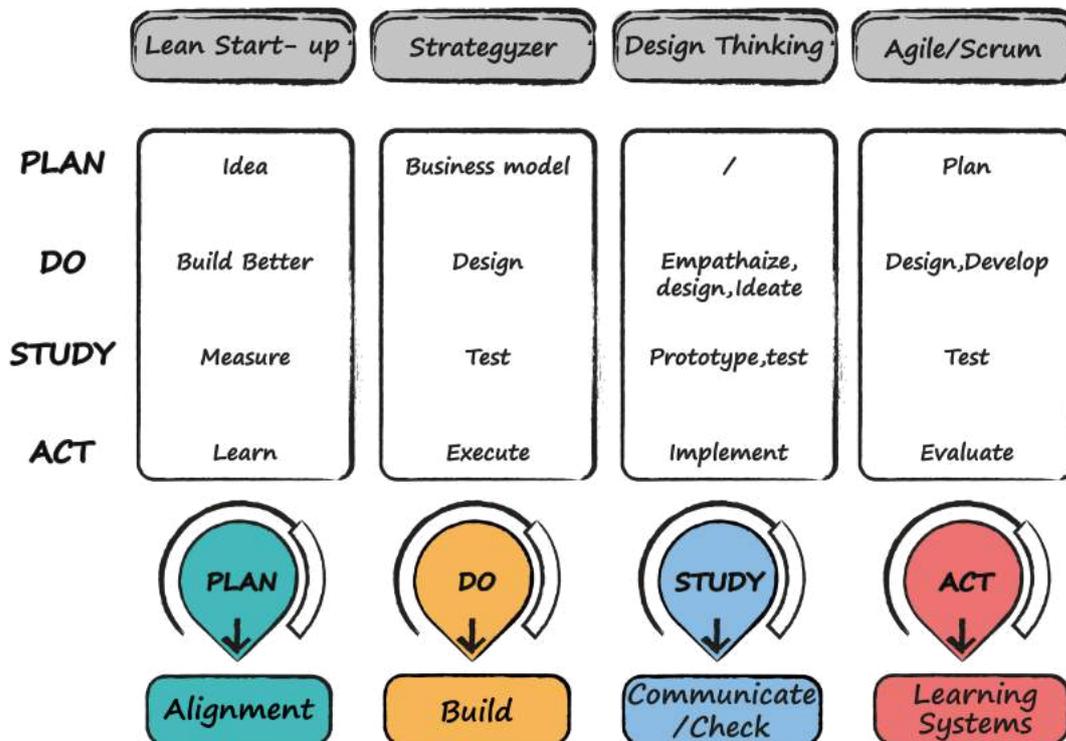
Standing on the shoulders of giants...

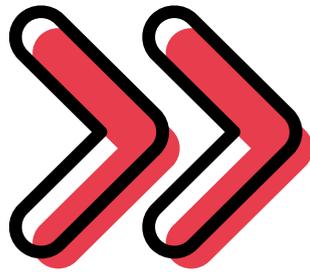
Many of the leading methods- lean start up, scrum, agile are built around the ideas of PDSA (Plan, do , study, act)

This book builds on these ideas, but thanks to the expertise of 22 co-authors, goes one step further.

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All the leading methods are Plan, Do, Study, Act and Cycles brings it all together





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