

TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY

Launch Path Workshop

Three days to take an idea to a Launch Path Canvas ready to be validated with real customers.

DATES

August 4-6, 2026

VENUE

Remote, via video.

PARTICIPANTS

34 people

[View participants and canvases](#)

Bret Waters

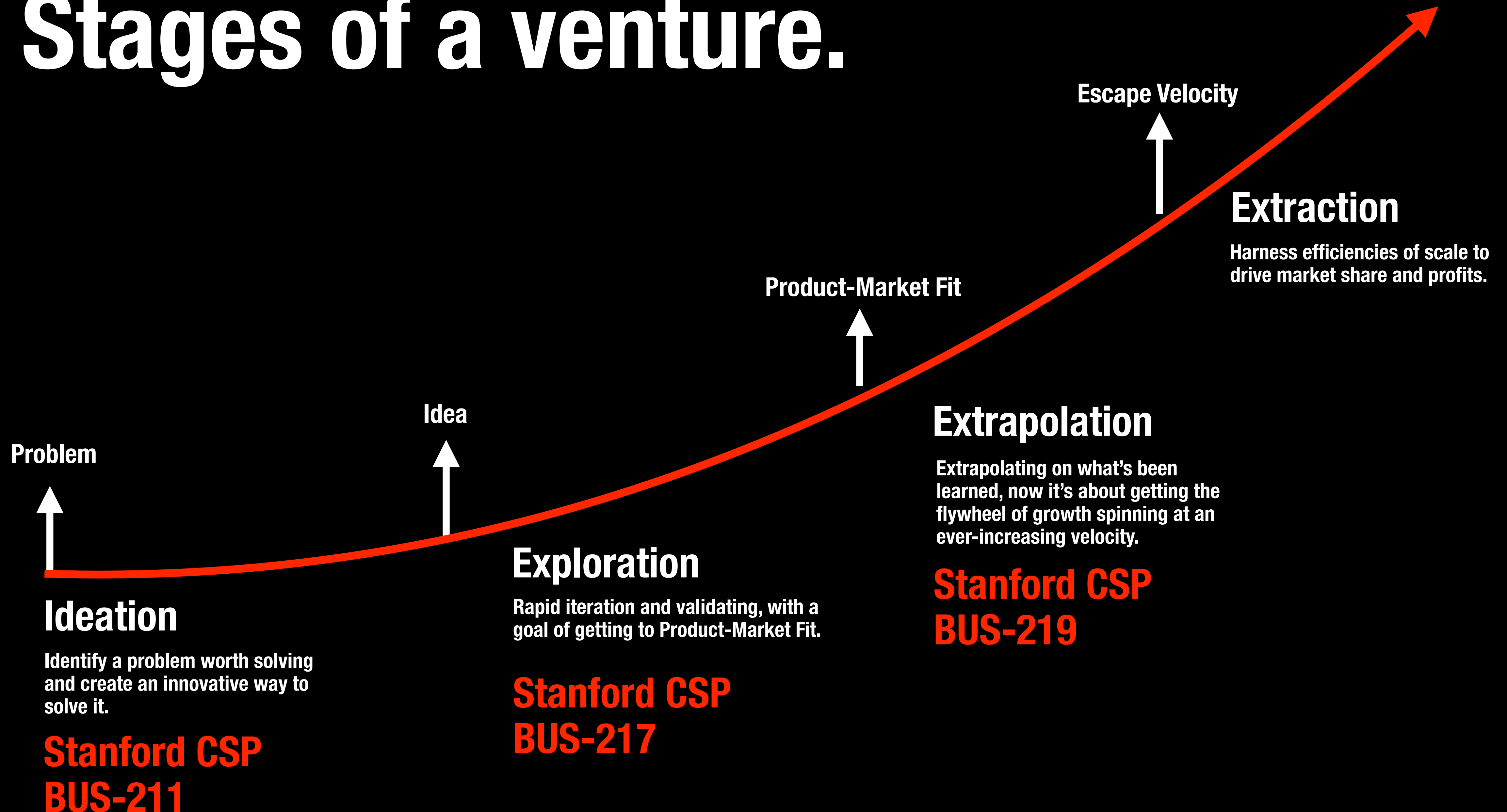
Founder and CEO of three Silicon Valley software companies:

- **Metagraphics – developed the first web-based document generation engine.
Sold to Linotext America.**
- **Artmachine – developed the first pure-SaaS digital media management system.
Sold to OpenText.**
- **Tivix – developed fintech systems for major banks around the world.
Sold to Kellton.**

Now I teach an entrepreneurship
course series at Stanford.



Stages of a venture.



For the past 15 years I've coached startup CEOs at Miller Center for Global Impact.



Entrepreneurship

“The pursuit of opportunity, without regard for resources currently controlled”.

Howard Stevenson
Harvard Business School

**With regard to startup success,
what do you think matters most?**

Here are some startup ideas that failed, but became a billion dollar business.

YouTube thought their main use case would be video dating.

Android's idea was an OS for digital cameras.

Uber's idea was a fleet of company-owned cars, called "UberTaxi".

Instagram's idea was a mobile check-in app (like Foursquare) called "Burbn".

The Twitter team's idea was a Flash-based podcasting platform called "Odeo".

Slack's original idea was a video game studio.

**These companies are not a success
because of the idea.**

**They are a success because after the idea
failed the founders were good enough to find
a path to success after the idea failed.**

**My goal with this course is to make you one
of those founders.**

So where do great startup ideas come from?

“The verb you want to be using with respect to startup ideas is not “think up” but notice. The way to get startup ideas is not to try to think of startup ideas. **It’s to look for problems.”**

**- Paul Graham
Co-founder of Y-Combinator**

Uber was born when a group of friends spent \$800 to hire a private driver and then listened to the driver talk about how much downtime he had every week, waiting for business.

Airbnb was born when roommates in San Francisco needed to rent out a spare bedroom to pay the rent.

Cisco was born when two computer administrators at Stanford were frustrated by slow network speeds.

This is often how great startups begin, when a founder notices a problem worth solving and **falls in love with solving that problem**

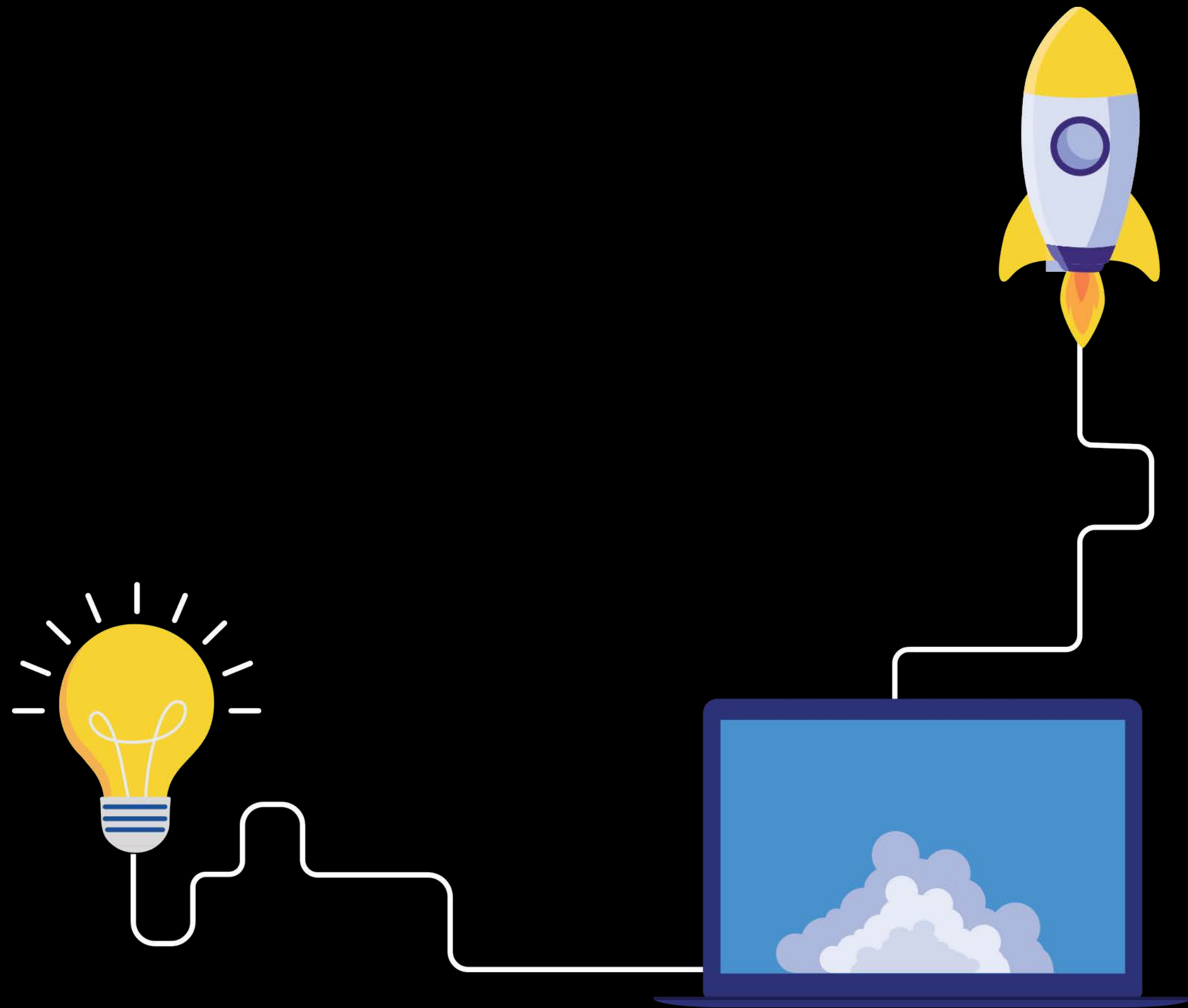
In my career, I've worked with hundreds of startup founders. I've seen patterns with regard to which ones succeed and which ones fail.

Based on these patterns, I've put together an 8-step process for getting from a startup idea to a launched and funded venture, poised for success.

That's what this course is about.

The Launch Path.

Eight steps to a successful startup.



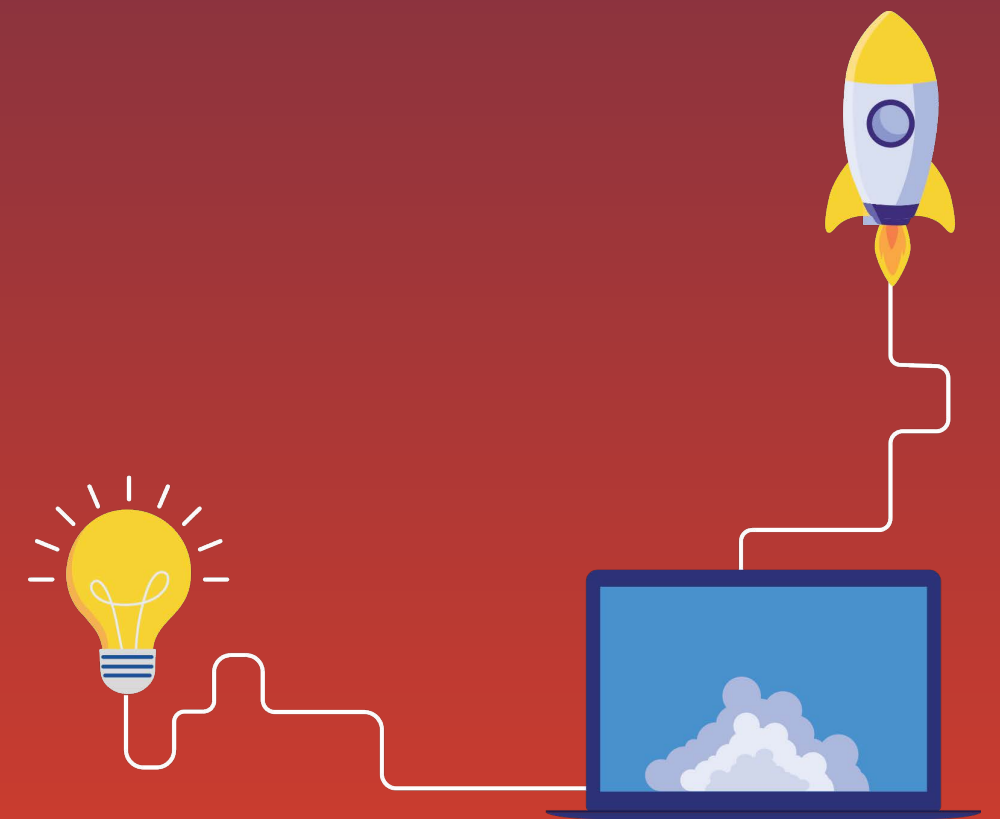
- 1) Listen to the waves.
- 2) Innovate, Iterate, Validate.
- 3) Get Uncomfortable.
- 4) Draw the landscape.
- 5) Frame a funnel.
- 6) Engineer an economic model.
- 7) Create a capital strategy.
- 8) Be a master storyteller.

STEP 1:

Listen to the Waves.

Where do successful startups begin?

**Most great startups begin with
a founder who notices a
problem worth solving.**

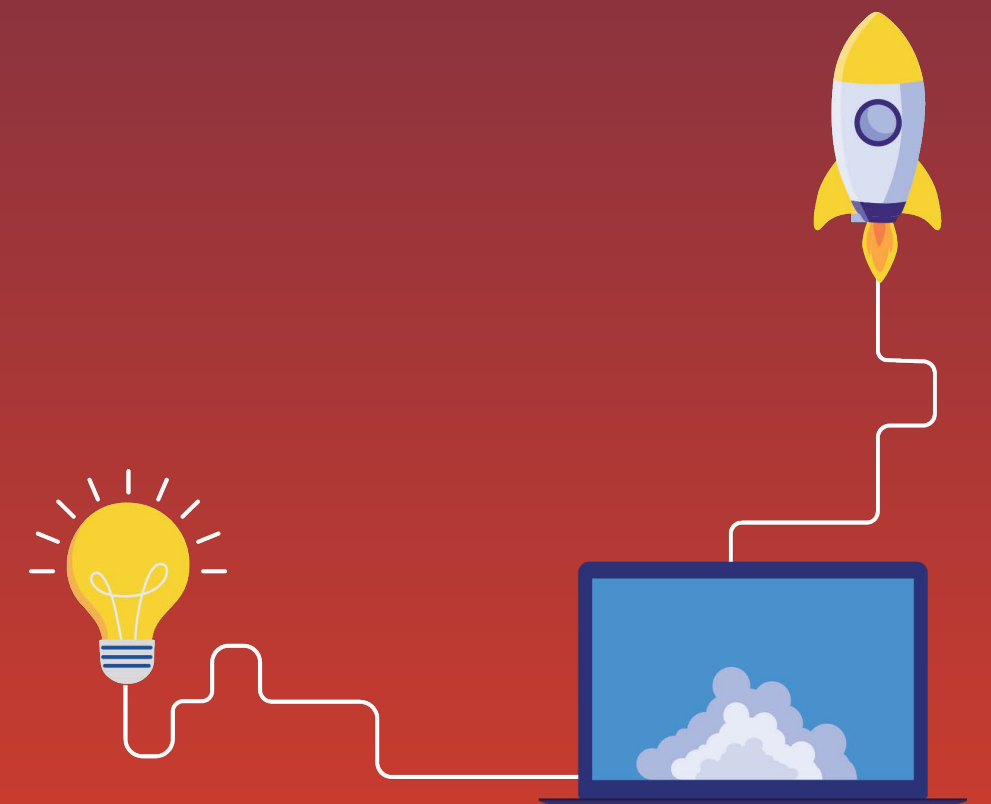


STEP 2:

Innovate and Iterate

How can we solve the problem we have identified?

**The goal is to solve the problem
in a unique way (that customers
will pay for).**

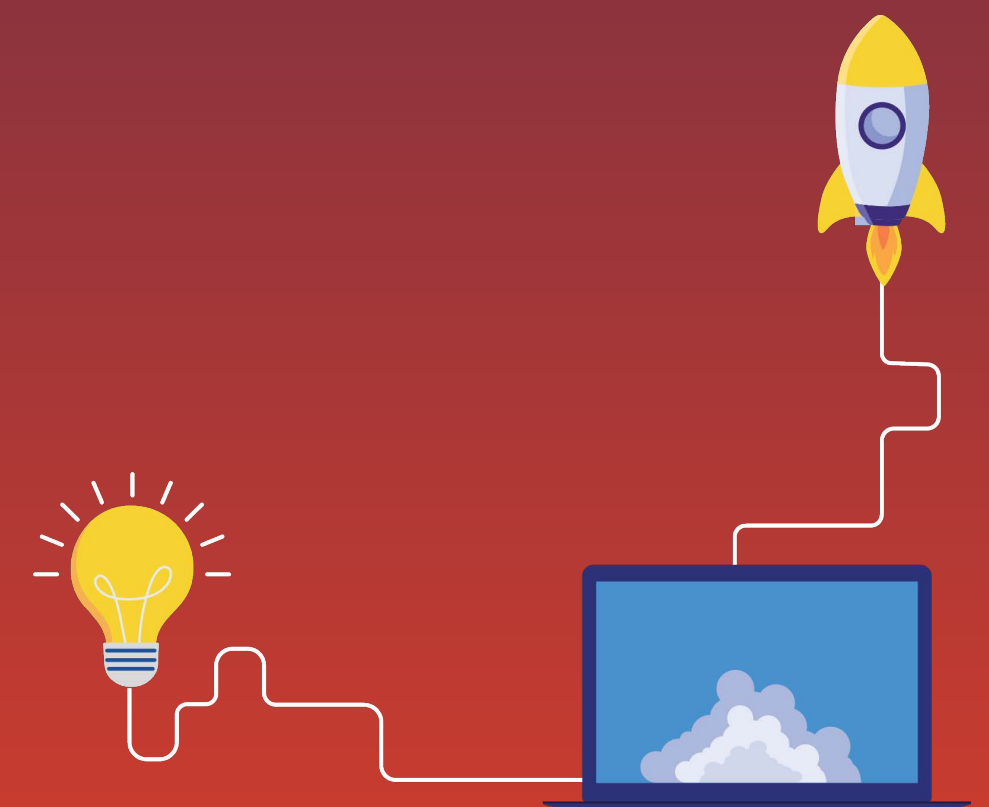


STEP 3:

Get uncomfortable.

Talk to strangers. Be willing to be wrong.

Customer discovery interviews are an uncomfortable step that many founders skip. Most of those founders fail.

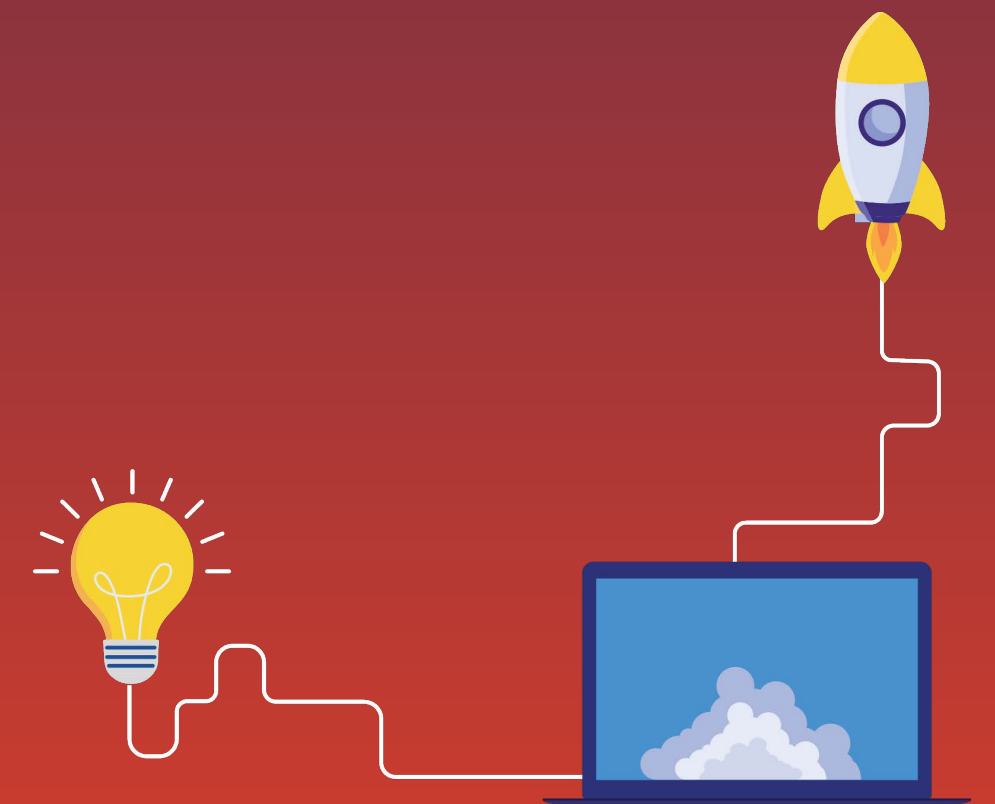


STEP 4:

Draw the landscape.

Every venture operates within a competitive landscape.

**What is the landscape of
competitors and alternatives
and how do we fit in?**

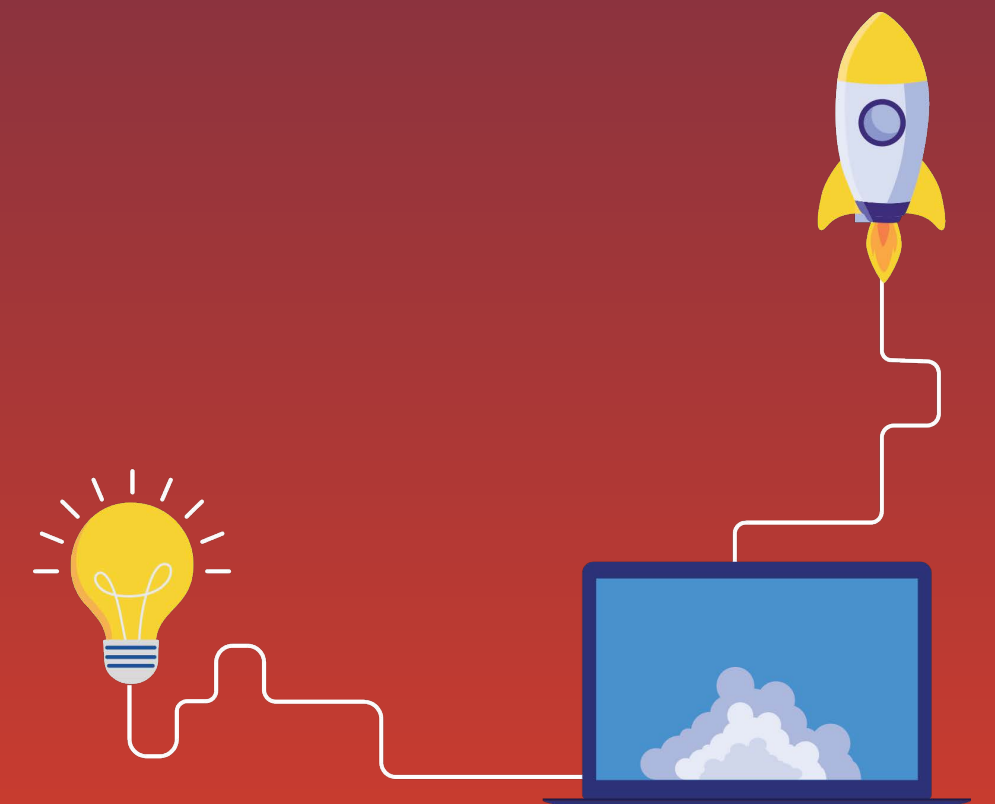


STEP 5:

Frame a Funnel

How we will get and keep customers at a rational cost?

**Ultimately, all that matters is
getting and keeping customers.**

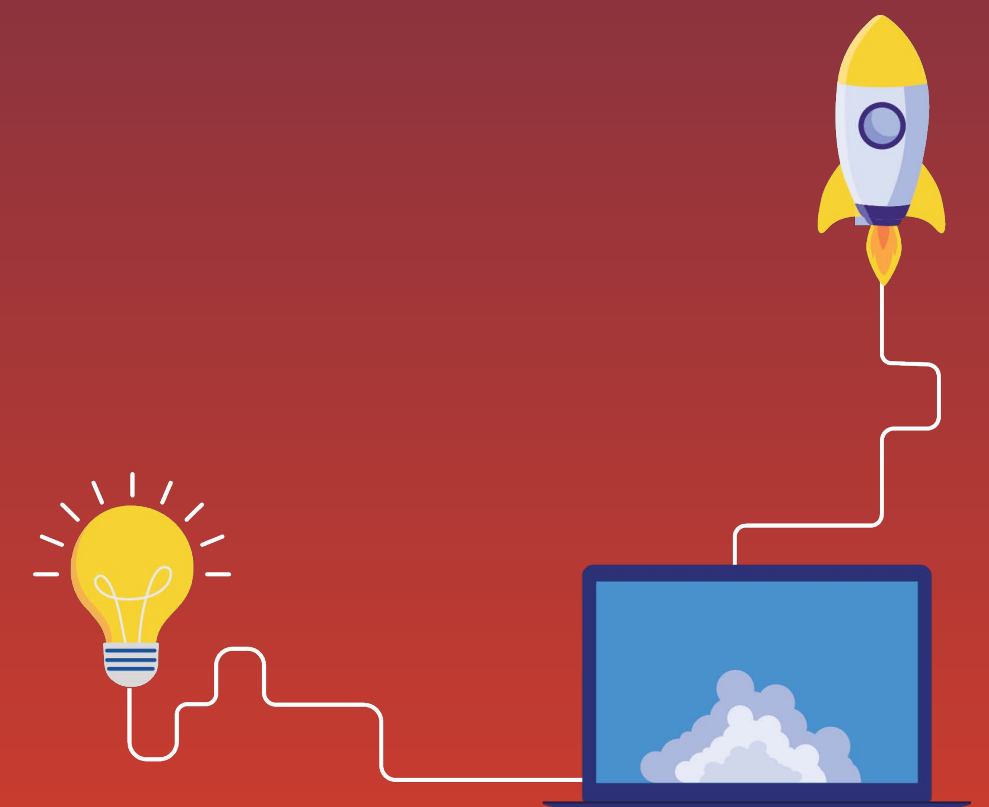


STEP 6:

Build an economic model.

What does it cost us to create, deliver, and capture value?

There are a lot of things that are part of your economic model, but it distills down to just one equation: $CAC < LTV$.

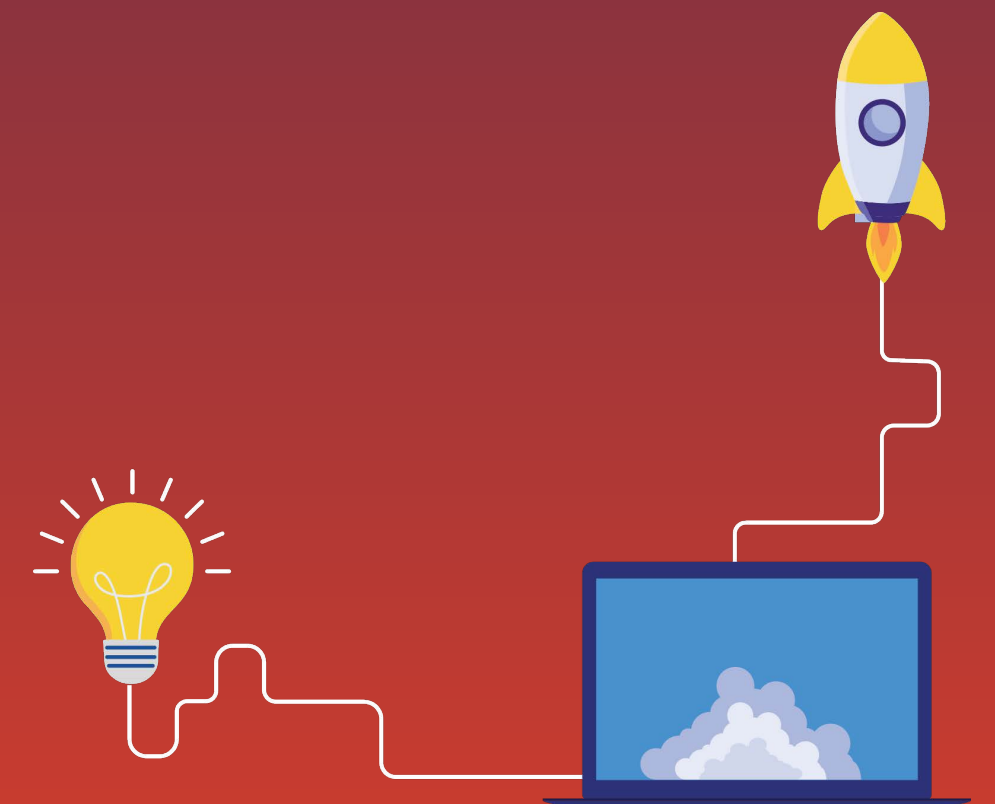


STEP 7:

Create a capital strategy.

Venture capital? Grants? Bootstrap?

In 2026 there are more sources and structures of capital than ever. Choose the one that best aligns your interests with investors' interests.

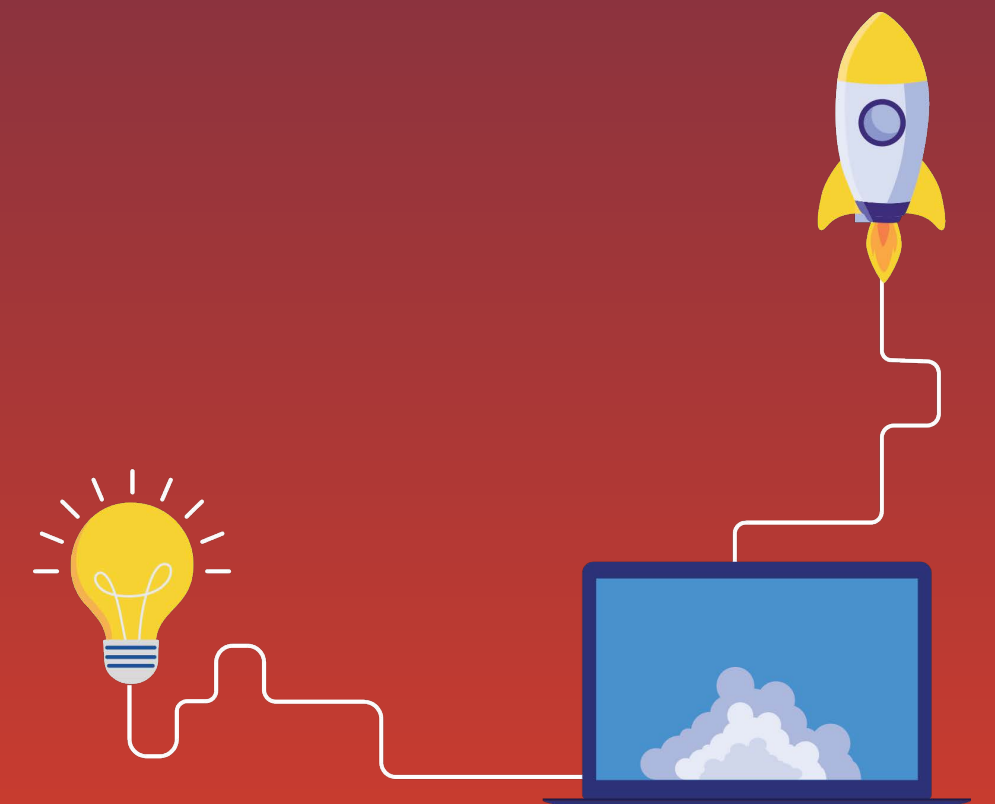


STEP 8:

Be a Master Storyteller.

Communicate the vision to customers and stakeholders.

Every great entrepreneur has the ability to tell a crisp, clear, and compelling story about what she's working on, and why it matters.



Business Model

“A **business model describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value”**

The Launch Path Canvas 2.0

THE WHY

**Problem**
One clear sentence that articulates the problem your startup solves.



Solution
How does your venture solve the problem you have articulated? Keep this short and concise!



Why it Matters
Why is this a problem worth solving?

PM(D)F



Path to PMF
What is your plan for getting to Product-Market Fit?



PMF Metrics
As you work your way toward Product-Market Fit, what are the key metrics that matter?



Distribution
What are your distribution channels? Direct to consumer, or via resellers, or?



Economics
What are the Unit Economics for this venture, what do we expect the CAC:LTV to look like, and what are out capital needs?

Unit Economics: _____
Customer Economics (CAC:LTV goal): _____
Enterprise Economics (runway): _____

Link to a full visualization.



Capital Strategy
What source and structure of capital will best align interests between founders, employees, shareholders, and investors?



Landscape
This is a list of competitors and alternatives. When a customer looks at alternative ways to solve the problem your startup solves, what will they see?

Link to a full visualization.



Positioning
Within this landscape of competitors and alternatives, how is your venture positioned?



Unfair Advantage
What unique advantage does your startup have that may help to defend from competitors?



ICP
What do you think your startup's Ideal Customer Profile will be?

Link to a full visualization.



Trigger
What makes someone suddenly be in the market for what your startup provides?



Top 3 Benefits
What are the top 3 benefits that your product or services provides to customers?

ECONOMICS

COMPETITION

CUSTOMERS

The Launch Path Canvas 2.0

THE WHY



Problem

One clear sentence that articulates the problem your startup solves.



Solution

How does your venture solve the problem you have articulated? Keep this short and consise!



Why it Matters

Why is this a problem worth solving?



Landscape

This is a list of competitors and alternatives. When a customer looks at alternative ways to solve the problem your startup solves, what will they see?



Link to a full visualization.



ICP

What do you think your startup's Ideal Customer Profile will be?



Link to a full visualization.

PM(D)F



Path to PMF

What is your plan for getting to Product-Market Fit?



PMF Metrics

As you work your way toward Product-Market Fit, what are the key metrics that matter?



Distribution

What are your distribution channels? Direct to consumer, or via resellers, or?



Positioning

Within this landscape of competitors and alternatives, how is your venture positioned?



Trigger

What makes someone suddenly be in the market for what your startup provides?



Economics

What are the Unit Economics for this venture, what do we expect the CAC<LTV to look like, and what are out capital needs?

Unit Economics: _____

Customer Economics (CAC:LTV goal): _____

Enterprise Economics (runway): _____



Link to a full visualization.



Capital Strategy

What source and structure of capital will best align interests between founders, employees, shareholders, and investors?



Unfair Advantage

What unique advantage does your startup have that may help to defend from competitors?



Top 3 Benefits

What are the top 3 benefits that your product or services provides to customers?

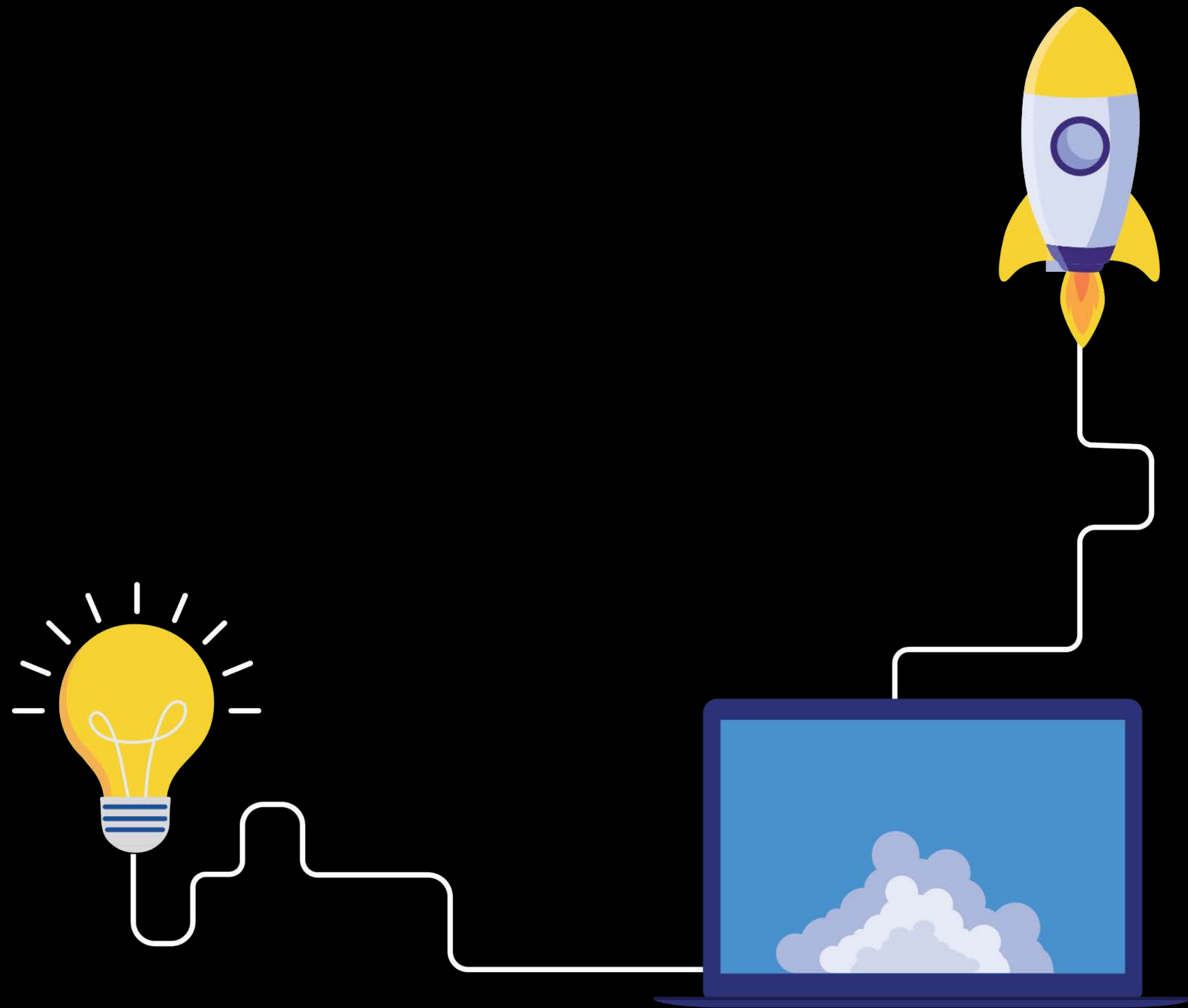
ECONOMICS

COMPETITION

CUSTOMERS

The Launch Path.

Eight steps to a successful startup.



- 1) Listen to the waves.
- 2) Innovate, Iterate, Validate.
- 3) Get Uncomfortable.
- 4) Draw the landscape.
- 5) Frame a funnel.
- 6) Engineer an economic model.
- 7) Create a capital strategy.
- 8) Be a master storyteller.

TEC.startup-workshop.com

TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY

Launch Path Workshop

Three days to take an idea to a Launch Path Canvas ready to be validated with real customers.

DATES

August 4-6, 2026

VENUE

Remote, via video.

PARTICIPANTS

34 people

[View participants and canvases](#)

Day 1 Ideas, innovation, and landscape

Day 2 Funnel, economics, and capital

Day 3 Storytelling and presentations

Ideas, innovation, and landscape

Explore where startup ideas come from, practice problem-framing techniques, and map the competitive landscape.

09:00

Course Introduction

Lecture

Launch Path Step 2: Listen to the Waves — Where do innovative startup ideas come from?

09:50

Group activity: Pet Peeves and Five Whys

Group Activity

10:40

Break

Break

11:00

Launch Path Step 2: Innovate and Iterate

Lecture

What is PMF and how do we get there?

11:50

Group activity: Crazy Eights

Group Activity

Materials

The core reading for the workshop, by Bret Waters. Download the version you prefer.

THE LAUNCH PATH

GETTING FROM A STARTUP IDEA
TO A LAUNCH - READY VENTURE



THE LAUNCH PATH

Transformando uma ideia de
startup em um empreendimento
pronto para ser lançado.



Participants

Search for your name and open your page to access your Launch Path Canvas.

34 of 34

NP

Nathaly Pinzón Rubio

Launch Path Canvas

PS

Pablo Salazar

Launch Path Canvas

BM

Bilal Mirza

Launch Path Canvas

MD

Maria de los Dolores González Saucedo

Launch Path Canvas

DI

Diana Ibeth Cruz Mar

Launch Path Canvas

MA

Moisés Aguirre Mar

Launch Path Canvas

LR

Linda Ruiz

EO

Eduardo Ochoa

EW

Edgar Williams Garcia

THE LAUNCH PATH CANVAS 2.0

 Copy link

 Leave

Your Startup Venture

NAME OF STARTUP VENTURE

e.g. Northwind Robotics

PREPARED BY

Your name

ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION

What does your venture do, in one line?

THE WHY? The core reason your venture exists

Problem

One clear sentence that articulates the problem your startup solves.

Solution

How does your venture solve the problem you have articulated? Keep this short and concise.

Why it Matters

Why is this a problem worth solving?

COMPETITION How you stack up in the market

Landscape

Positioning

Unfair Advantage

TEC.startup-workshop.com

Pet Peeve

Something that you personally find annoying.

“I hate it when people talk in movie theaters”.

“I hate seeing people driving while talking on the phone”.

“It drives me crazy when people are late for meetings”.

“I hate people who leave their dirty dishes in the sink”.

Famous new product failures.





Perfected by Earth.



Pressed by Us.

JUICERO



Juicero:

(noun) /joos/ār/rō

Cold-pressed juicing system





Juicero

Founded 2014, raised \$120M in capital.

“The only wifi-connected juicer on the market today”.

\$699, plus a subscription to receiving the juice packets, at \$5-7 each.

Just 16 months after launch they went bankrupt and shut down. \$120M in capital, down the toilet.

**But as bad as Juicero was, it was not the worst
new product failure ever.**



1958

The greatest new product failure in history.

THIS IS THE EDSEL

Newest Expression of Fine Engineering from Ford Motor Company



Ford Motor Company

- **After revolutionizing mass production, Ford had their IPO (initial stock offering) on the New York Stock Exchange in 1956.**
- **The stock opened the day at \$64.50/share and by the end of the day was trading at \$70.50, giving them a market capitalization of \$660M (over \$6 billion in today's dollars).**
- **It was the most successful IPO in American history.**

Ford Motor Company

- **So having had the most successful IPO in American history, they decided they would use all their new cash to design and build the most advanced automobile ever.**
- **They put all their senior engineers on the project and gave them an unlimited budget to create an amazing product - the best car ever.**

THIS IS THE EDSEL

Newest Expression of Fine Engineering from Ford Motor Company



Rolling-dome speedometer.

Push-button Teletouch transmission shifting

Self-adjusting brakes.

410-cubic-inch Edsel "E-475" Engine.

Warning lights on dashboard.

Speedometer glows when speeding.

Transmission locks in park until ignition key turned.

Triple-thermostat cooling system.

Front-mounted distributor, coil, fuel pump, dipstick.

Hood release controlled electronically.

"The Newest Expression of Fine Engineering from Ford Motor Company".

The most advanced automobile ever.

Projected sales for the first year were 200,000 units, with over one million units within three years.

They were so sure it would be a success they launched it in 18 models spread over four product lines.

EDSEL CITATION

The Edsel Citation Convertible



The Edsel Citation 4-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Citation 2-Door Hardtop

EDSEL CORSAIR



The Edsel Corsair 2-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Corsair 4-Door Hardtop

EDSEL PACER



The Edsel Pacer 2-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Pacer 4-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Pacer Convertible



The Edsel Pacer 4-Door Sedan

They hired **Foote, Cone & Belding**, the finest advertising agency on Madison Avenue to create the ad campaign.

An unprecedented \$50M budget, in including a teaser campaign about “E-Day”, the day the Edsel would be first shown to the public.

They produced a star-studded TV special called “The Edsel Show”, featuring Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby.

They'll know you've *arrived*
when you drive up in an Edsel



Step into an Edsel and you'll learn where the excitement is this year. Other drivers spot that classic vertical grille a block away—and never fail to take a long look at this year's most exciting car. On the open road, your Edsel is watched eagerly for its already-famous performance. And parked in front of your home, your Edsel always gets even more attention—because it always says a lot about you. It says you chose elegant styling, luxurious comfort and such exclusive features as Edsel's famous Teletouch Drive—only shift that puts the buttons where they belong, on the steering-wheel hub. Your Edsel also means you made a wonderful buy. For of all medium-priced cars, this one really new car is actually priced the lowest.* See your Edsel Dealer this week.

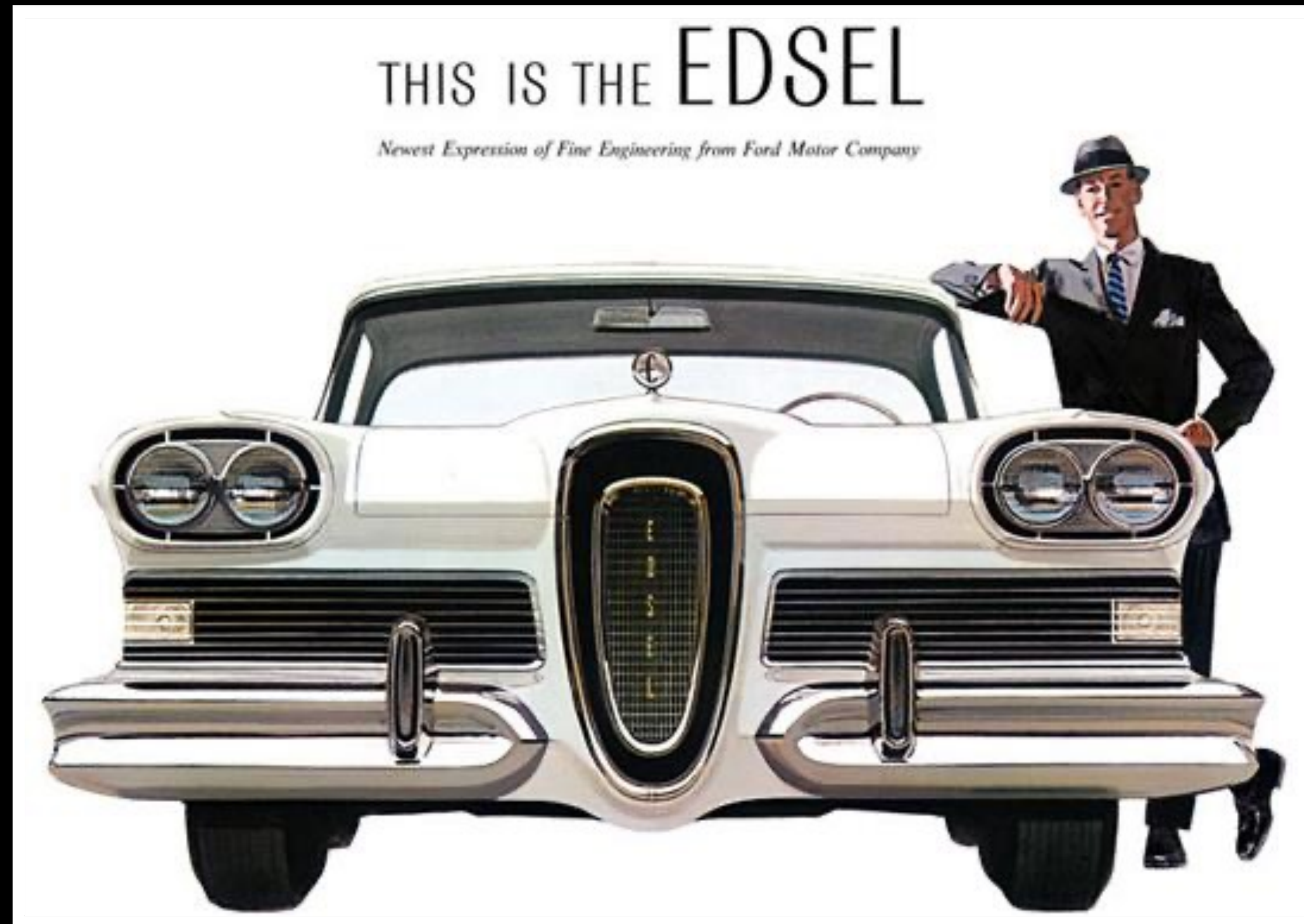
*Based on comparisons of suggested retail delivered prices of the Edsel Dealer and similarly equipped cars in the medium-price field.

Also: Edsel Clinton 2-door Hardtop. Engine: the E-475, with 10.4 to one compression ratio, 245 hp, 175 ft.-lb. torque. Transmission: Automatic with Teletouch Drive. Suspension: Ball-joint with optional air suspension. Brakes: 4Q-adjusting.

EDSEL DIVISION - FORD MOTOR COMPANY

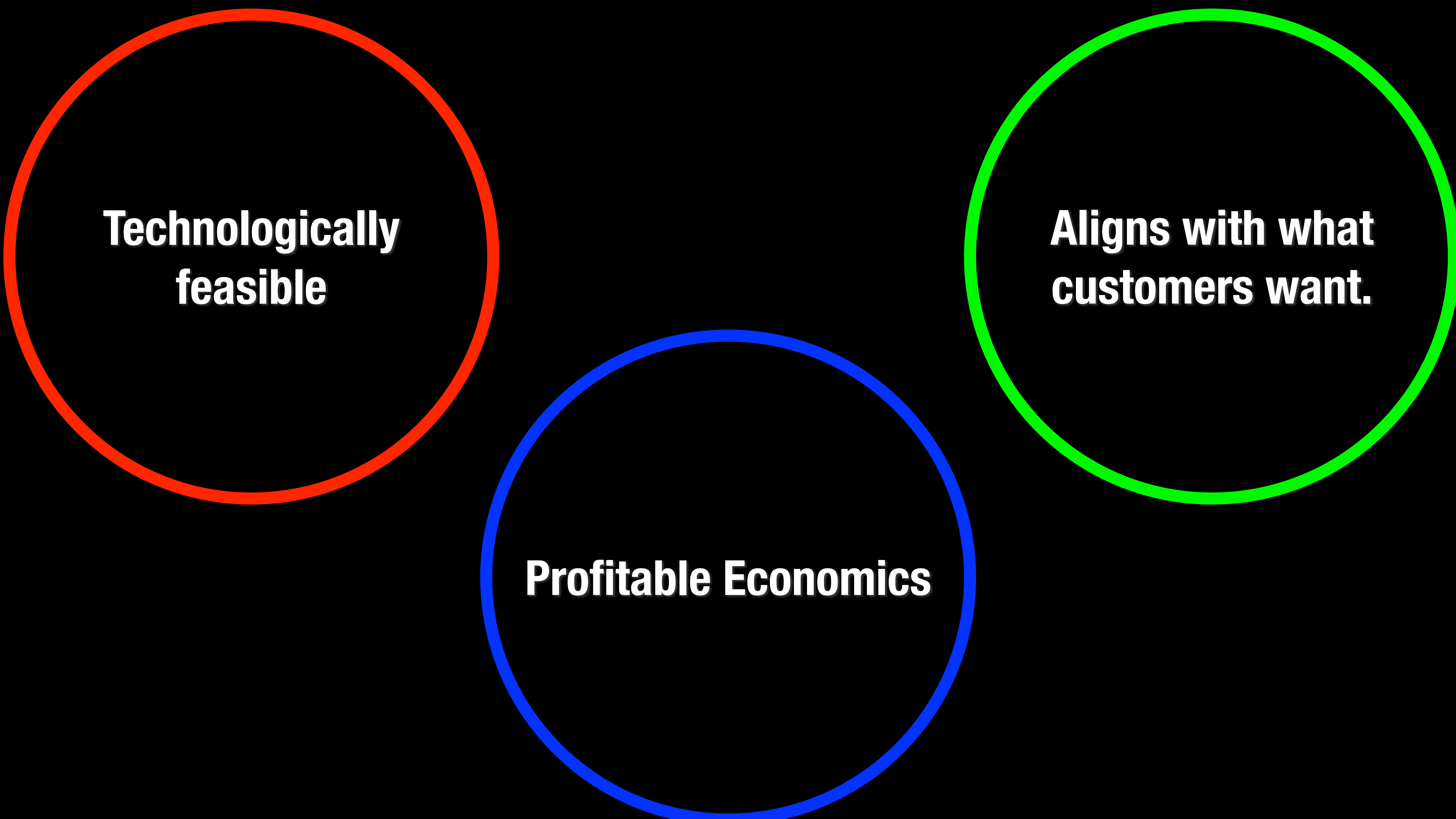
1958 **EDSEL**

Of all medium-priced cars, the one that's really new is the lowest-priced, too!



- **Projected sales for the first year were 200,000 units, with 3-year projections of over one million units.**
- **First year sales were less than 60,000.**
- **The second year was 56,000.**
- **Total units sold were less than half the company's projected break-even point.**
- **Each one sold cost 2x to make.**
- **The Edsel project lost a colossal \$350 million (over \$3 billion in current dollars).**

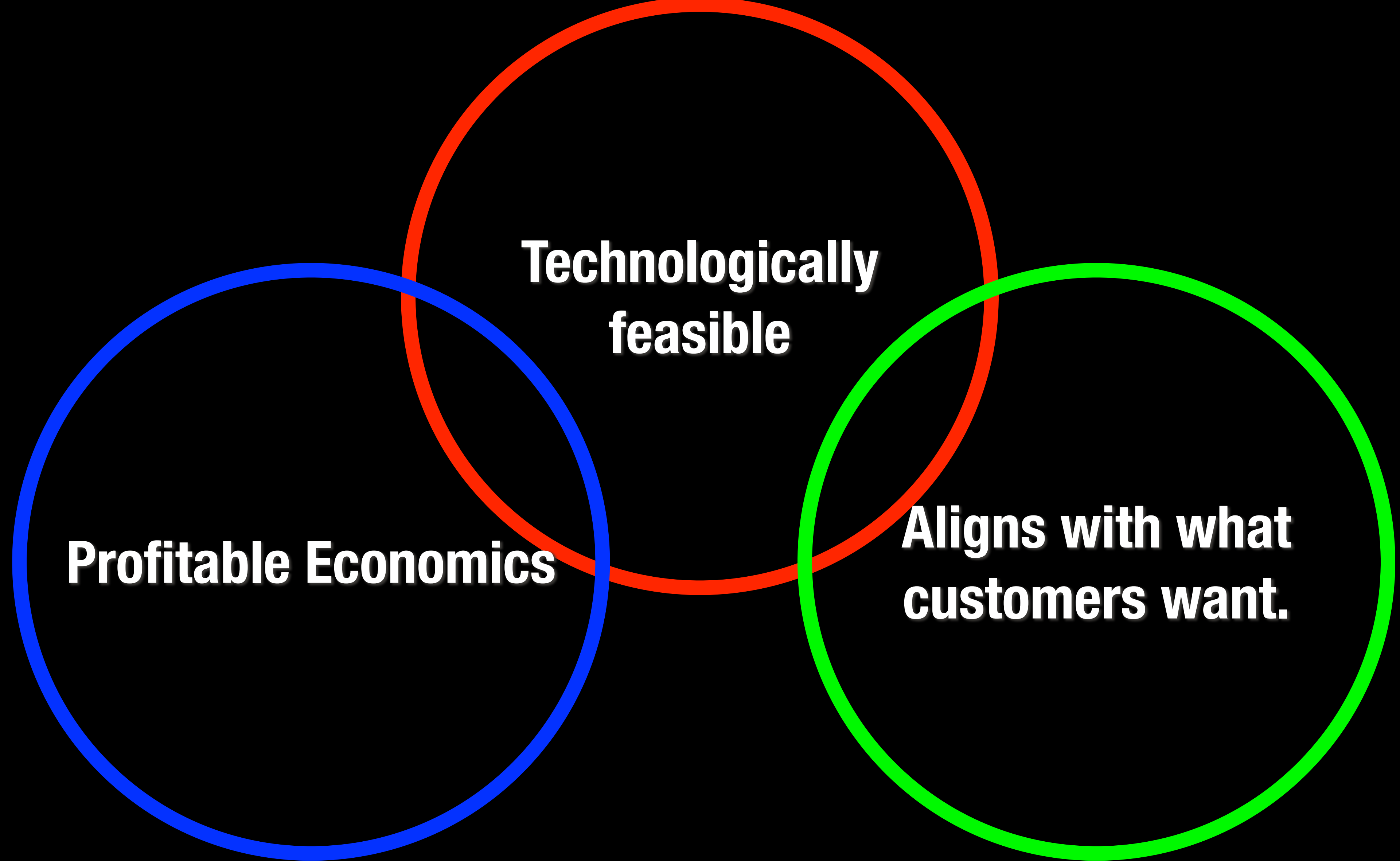
The greatest new product failure in history.



**Technologically
feasible**

**Aligns with what
customers want.**

Profitable Economics

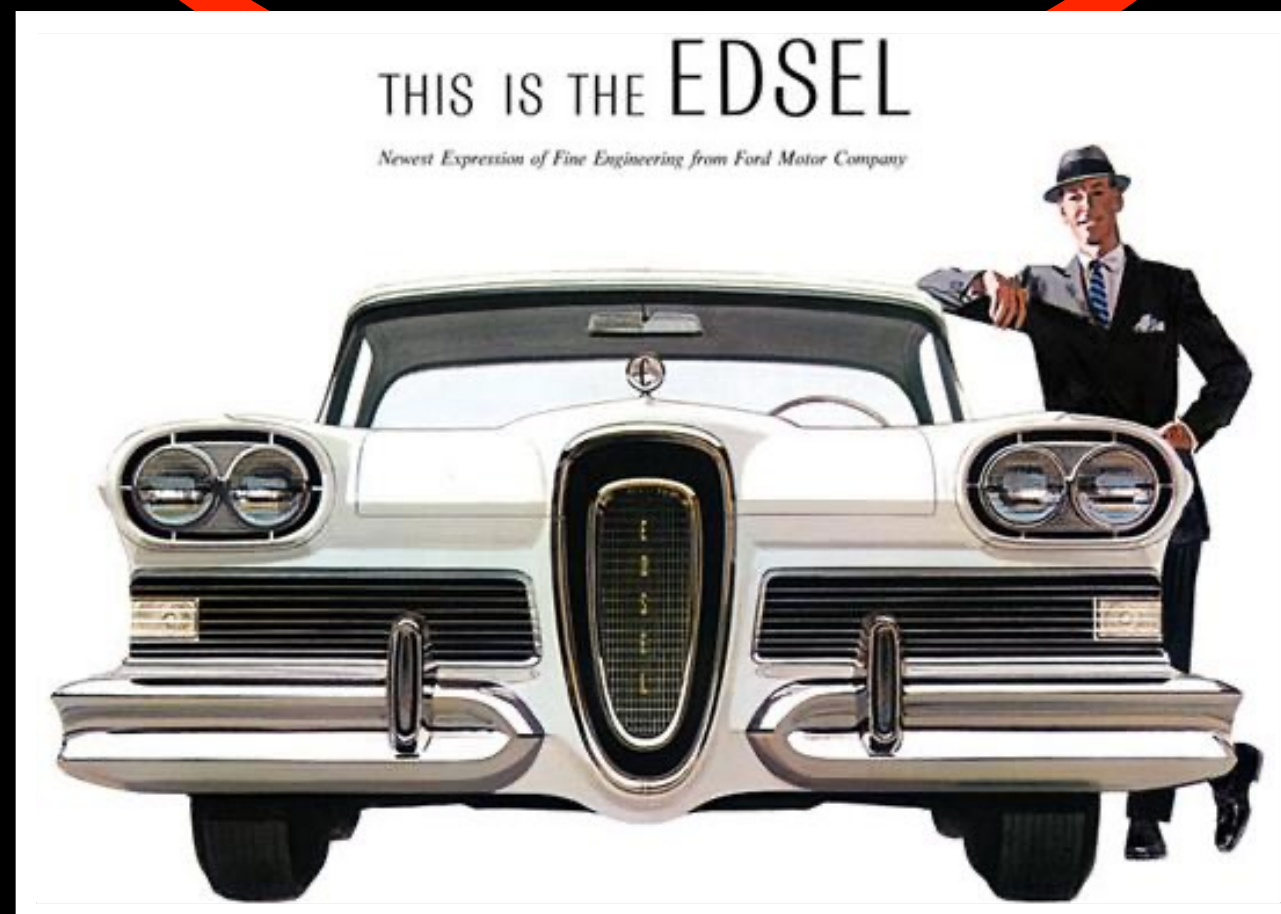


Successful product innovation has to have all three.

Technologically Feasible • Profitable Economics • Aligns with what customers want.

The Edsel had just one.

**Technologically
feasible**



Profitable Economics

**Aligns with what
customers want**

**This has been a recurring issue since
the dawn of entrepreneurship:**

**How does one reliably create products
that succeed?**

We've all seen examples of companies that have sent millions of dollars developing products they thought they world needed, only to find out that no one wanted to buy those products.

I'm embarrassed to admit that I've done it myself.

In 2000-2001 I used a linear product development process:

Congratulations! You've spent 2 years and \$5 million proving that there is zero demand for your product!



Three concepts I wish I'd known before I did that:

Product Market Fit
Customer Development
Design Thinking

EE204: Business Management for Electrical Engineers and Computer Scientists

[Main Page](#) » [Product/Market Fit](#)

On this page:

[Product/Market Fit](#)

Product/Market Fit

“ *The only thing that matters is
getting to product/market fit.* ”

by [Marc Andreessen](#), June 25, 2007

This post is all about the only thing that matters for a new startup.

But first, some theory:

If you look at a broad cross-section of startups -- say, 30 or 40 or more; enough to screen out the pure flukes and look for patterns -- two obvious facts will jump out at you.

On this page:

[Product/Market Fit](#)

Product/Market Fit

“ The only thing that matters is getting to product/market fit. ”

by [Marc Andreessen](#), June 25, 2007

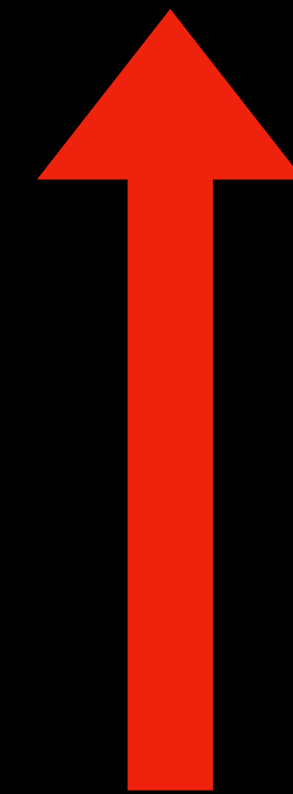
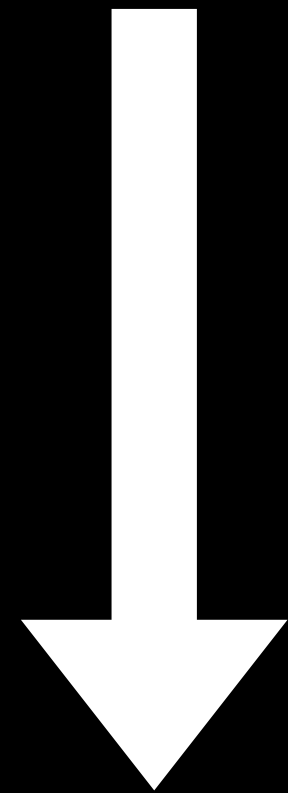
This post is all about the only thing that matters for a new startup.

But first, some theory:

If you look at a broad cross-section of startups -- say, 30 or 40 or more; enough to screen out the obvious facts will jump out at you.

Product Market Fit

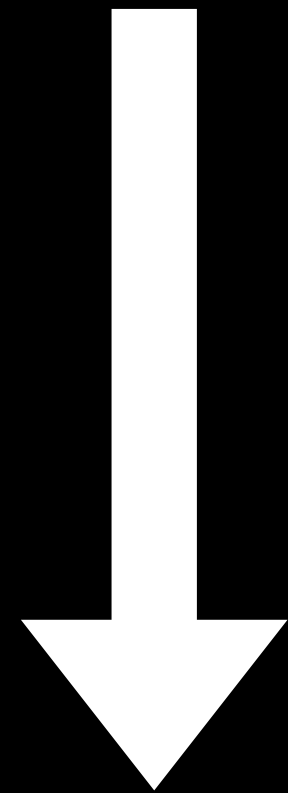
What the Market Wants



What Your Product Does

Product Market Fit

What the Market Wants



What Your Product Does

“ The only thing that matters is getting to product/market fit. ”

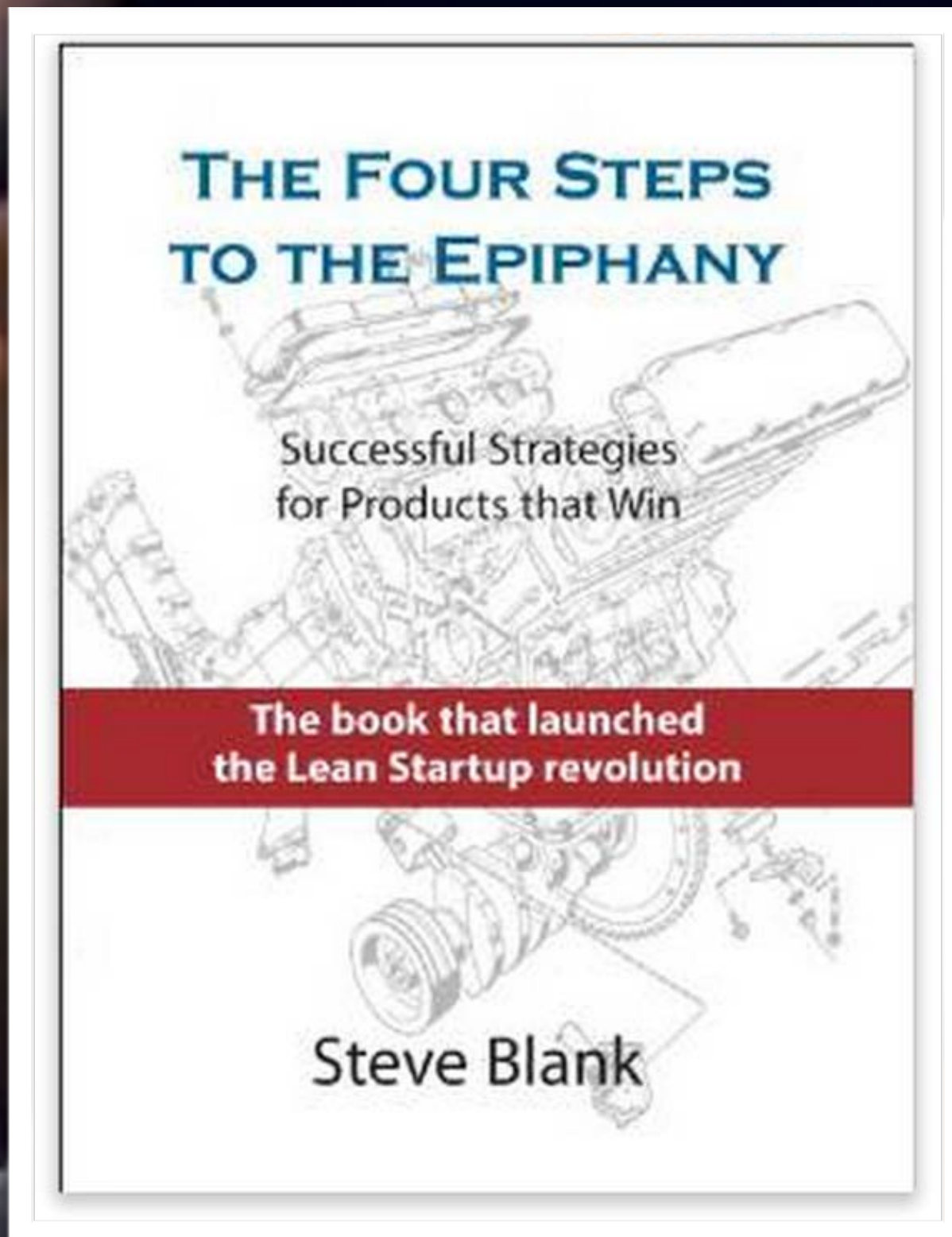
If the only thing that matters is product/market fit, then the only thing we should care about is how do we get there most efficiently and effectively?



Steve Blank founded 8 companies, four had IPO's

The other four resulted in “large craters in the ground”.

Retired and wrote “The Four Steps to Epiphany”.



Customer Development

**AKA “Get your ass out of the building and go talk
to some actual customers”**

Customer Development

Before you write a business plan or begin product development, spend a lot of time talking with actual prospective customers.

**“Before you begin product development
you need to do customer development”.**

-Steve Blank

In 2000-2001 I used a linear product development process:

Congratulations! You've spent 2 years and \$5 million proving that there is zero demand for your product!



In 2000-2001 I used a linear product development process:



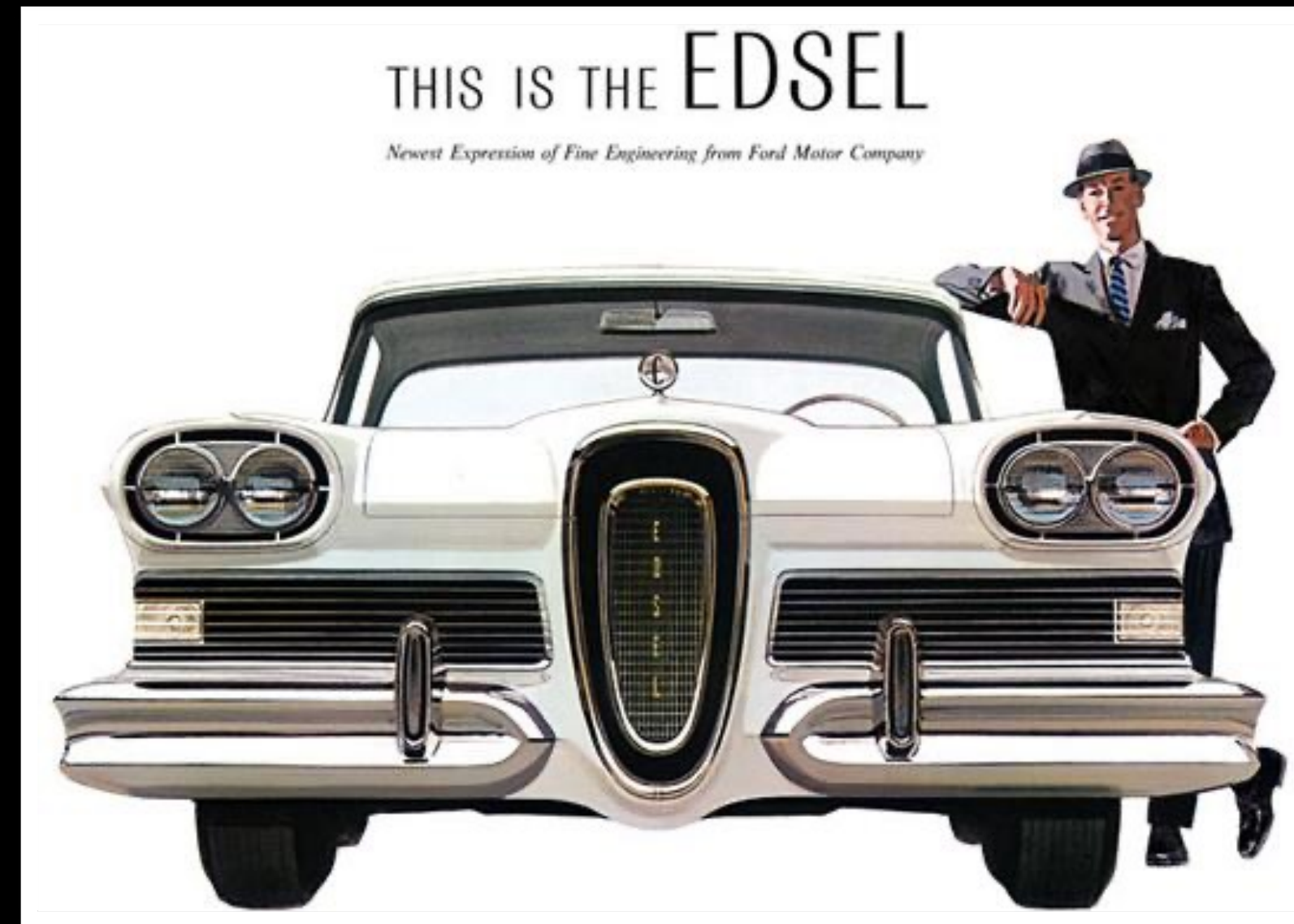
I should have taken the money, put it into a 6-month CD, and spent six months out interviewing prospective customers before writing a single line of software code.

Your product roadmap should be informed by actual conversations with customers.

“No business plan survives first contact with customers”.

-Steve Blank

Now, back to cars for a moment:



Until the 1970's, American auto makers dominated the global market .

**Driven by industrial might, they used the principles of mass production.
Design a car, order parts for 300,000 units, set up the production line for 300,000 units, make 300,000 units, ship them to dealers and wait for them to sell.**

Toyota Lean Manufacturing Management System

Developed in Japan.

Short production runs.

(contrary to the principles of mass production)

Rapid Cycle Times.

(as dealers sell them, we can quickly make more).

Establish continuous improvement.

(even during a single model year).

Empower workers to make improvements.

(the workers know better than management where problems are)

Eliminate processes that do not add value for customers.

(the only thing that matters is learning what customers care about).

Toyota Lean Manufacturing Management System

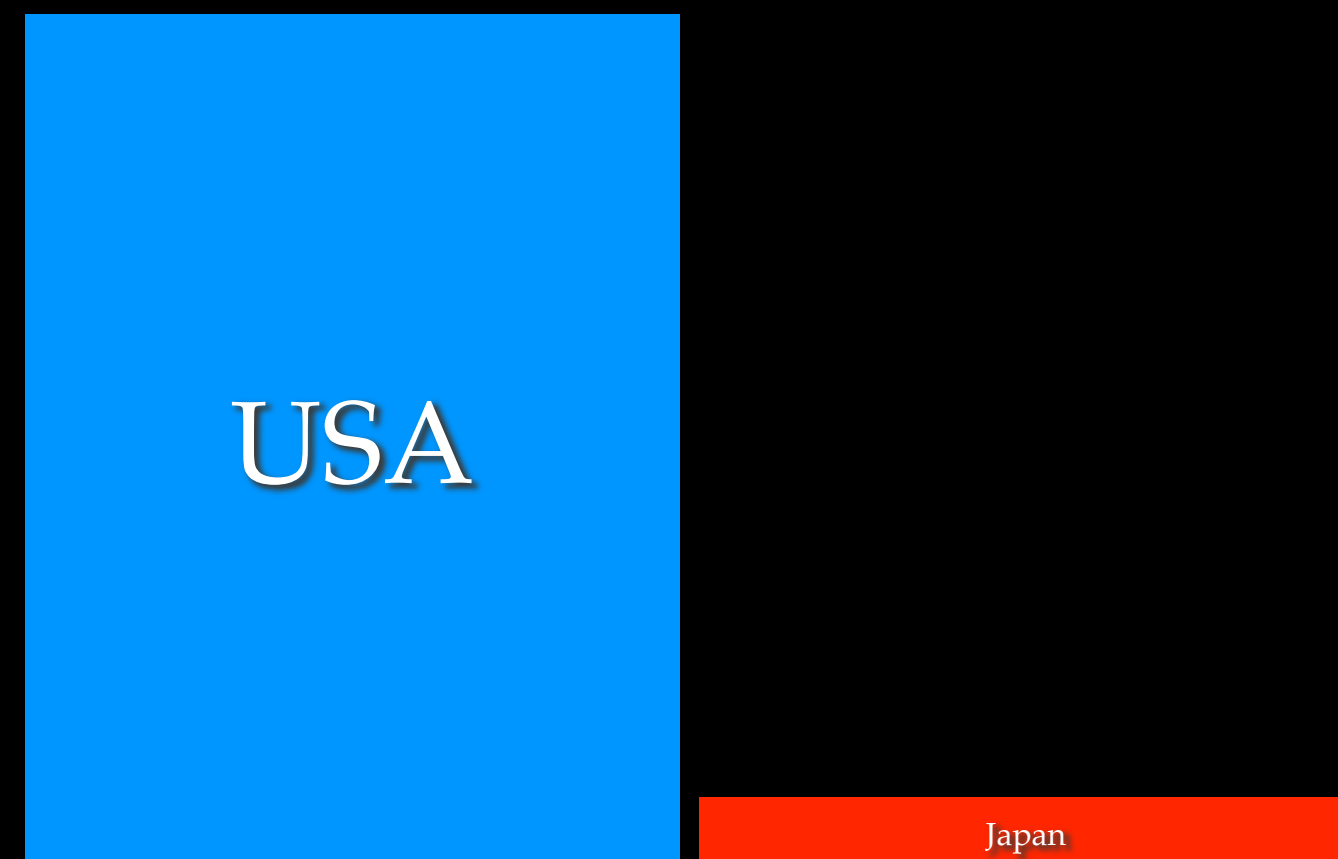
Developed in Japan.

Note that Lean does not mean “cheap”. Toyota makes Lexus and other expensive, high-end cars.

It means removing the bloat from assembly lines through short production runs and continuous improvement.

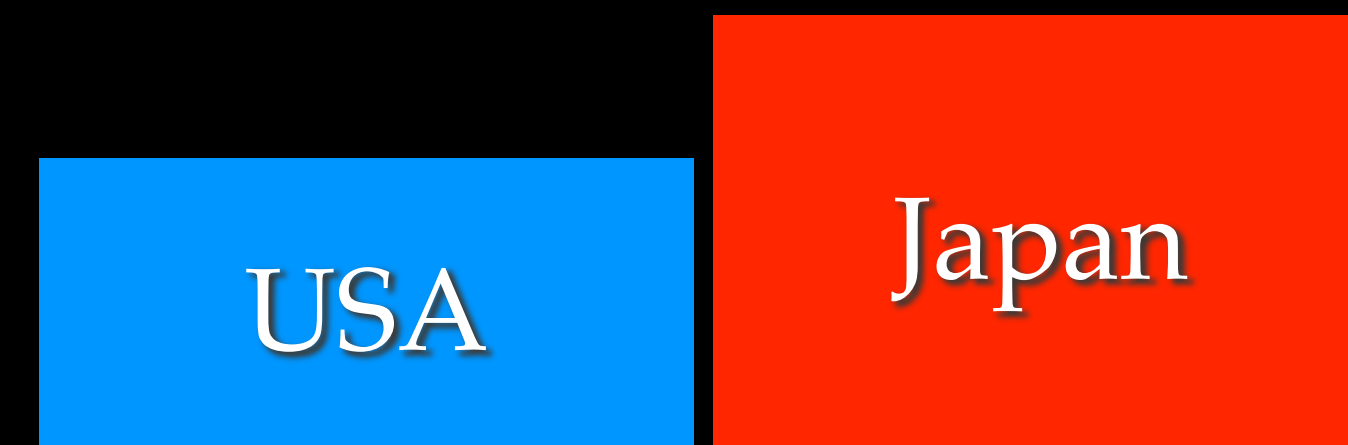
Toyota Lean Manufacturing Management System

In 1960, GM, Ford,
and Chrysler
controlled 90% of the
US domestic market,
and more than half
the global market.



Global Market Share
Automobiles 1960

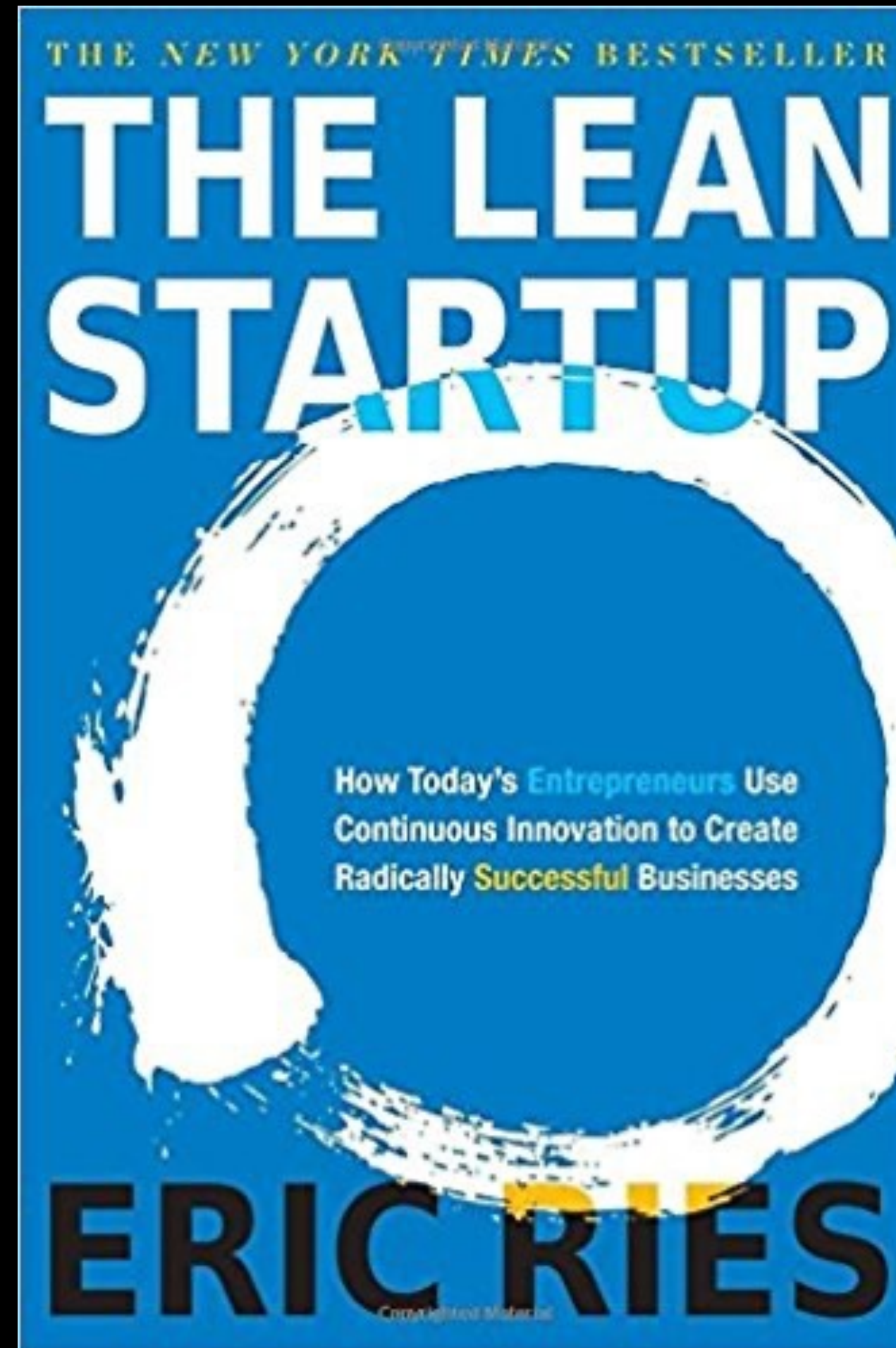
By 1980, Japan had
25% of the US
market, and the
global market share
for US automakers
had dropped in half.



Global Market Share
Automobiles 1980

Now, back to startups.

The Lean Startup, a 2011 book by Eric Ries.



Learn from Customers

Short production runs.

Continuous improvement.

Rapid iterations

Learn, measure, adjust. Repeat.

From the author's introduction to the book:

THE ROOTS OF THE LEAN STARTUP

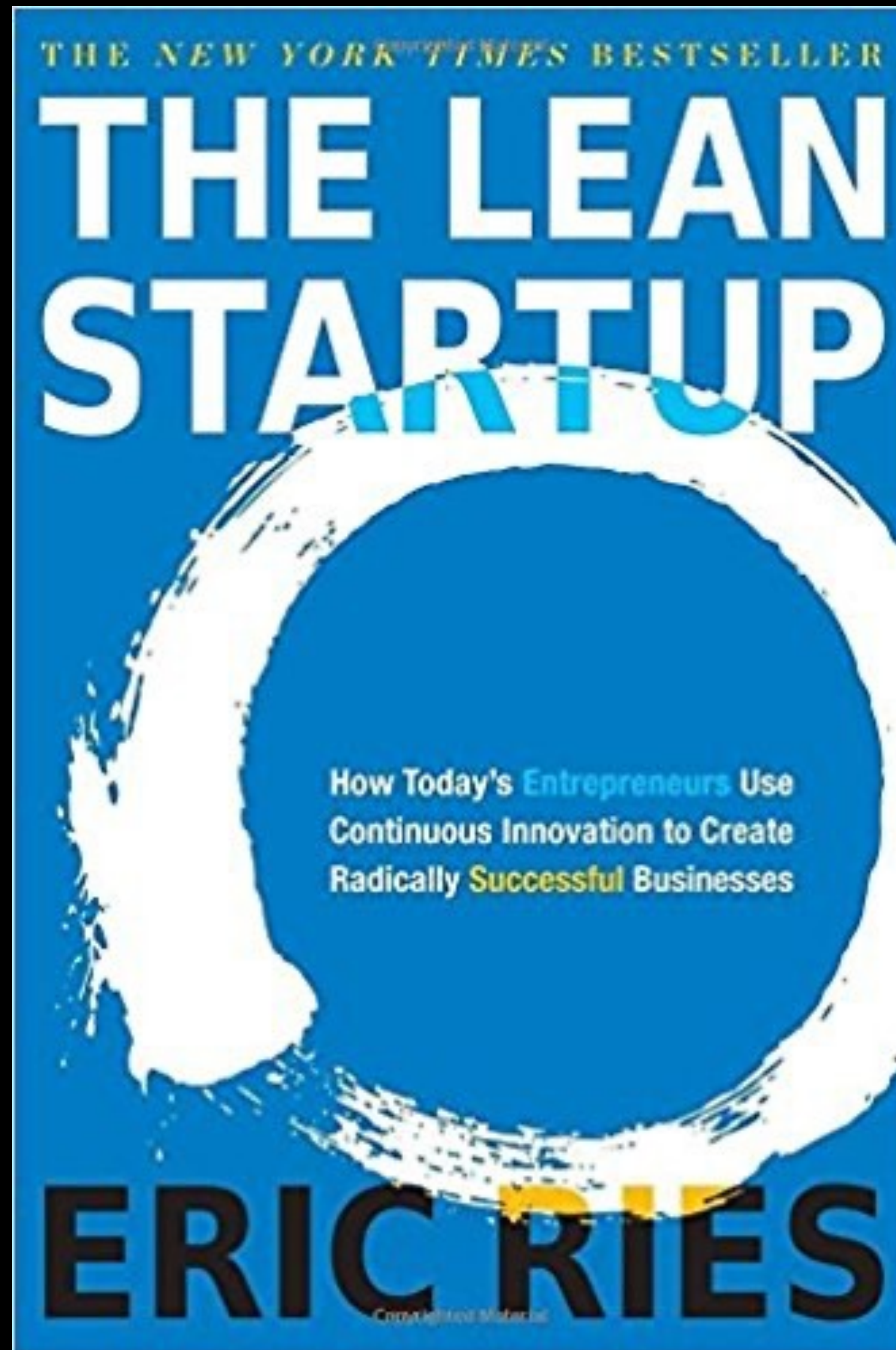
The Lean Startup takes its name from the lean manufacturing revolution that Taiichi Ohno and Shigeo Shingo are credited with developing at Toyota. Lean thinking is radically altering the way supply chains and production systems are run. Among its tenets are drawing on the knowledge and creativity of individual workers, the shrinking of batch sizes, just-in-time production and inventory control, and an acceleration of cycle times. It taught the world the difference between value-creating activities and waste and showed how to build quality into products from the inside out.

The Lean Startup adapts these ideas to the context of entrepreneurship, proposing that entrepreneurs judge their progress differently from the way other kinds of ventures do. Progress in manufacturing is measured by the production of high-quality physical goods. As we'll see in Chapter 3, the Lean Startup uses a different unit of progress, called validated learning. With

From the author's introduction to the book:

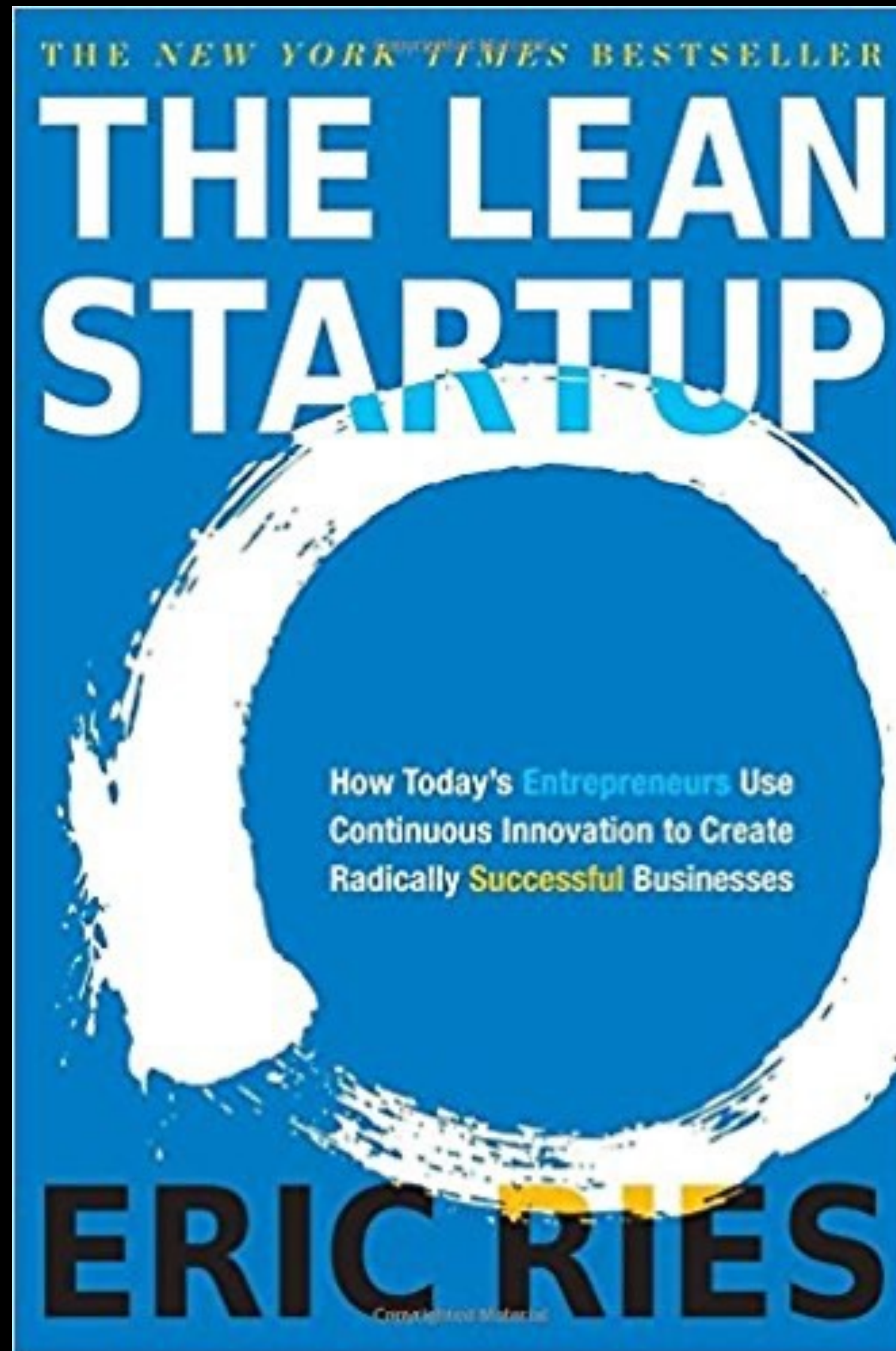
THE ROOTS OF THE LEAN STARTUP

The Lean Startup takes its name from the lean manufacturing revolution that Taiichi Ohno and Shigeo Shingo are credited with developing at Toyota. Lean thinking is radically altering the way supply chains and production systems are run. Among its tenets are drawing on the knowledge and creativity of individual workers, the shrinking of batch sizes, just-in-time production and inventory control, and an acceleration of cycle times. It taught the world the difference between value-creating activities and waste and showed how to build quality into products from the inside out.



Learn from Customers
Short production runs.
Continuous improvement.
Rapid iterations
Learn, measure, adjust. Repeat.

The book by Eric Ries popularized the term “MVP”.



MVP

Minimum Viable Product

“A Minimum Viable Product is that version of a new product which allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort.”

- Eric Ries, in The Lean Startup

“A Minimum Viable Product is that version of a new product which allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort.”

- Eric Ries, in The Lean Startup



Welcome to Amazon.com Books!

*One million titles,
consistently low prices.*

(If you explore just one thing, make it our personal notification service. We think it's very cool!)

SPOTLIGHT! -- AUGUST 16TH

These are the books we love, offered at Amazon.com low prices. The spotlight moves **EVERY** day so please come often.

ONE MILLION TITLES

Search Amazon.com's [million title catalog](#) by author, subject, title, keyword, and more... Or take a look at the [books we recommend](#) in over 20 categories... Check out our [customer reviews](#) and the [award winners](#) from the Hugo and Nebula to the Pulitzer and Nobel... and [bestsellers](#) are 30% off the publishers list...

EYES & EDITORS, A PERSONAL NOTIFICATION SERVICE

Like to know when that book you want comes out in paperback or when your favorite author releases a new title? Eyes, our tireless, automated search agent, will send you mail. Meanwhile, our human editors are busy previewing galleys and reading advance reviews. They can let you know when especially wonderful works are published in particular genres or subject areas. Come in, [meet Eyes](#), and have it all explained.



[thefacebook]

[login](#) [register](#) [about](#)

Email:

Password:

[register](#)

[login](#)

Welcome to Thefacebook!

[Welcome to Thefacebook]

Thefacebook is an online directory that connects people through social networks at colleges.

We have opened up Thefacebook for popular consumption at **Harvard University**.

You can use Thefacebook to:

- Search for people at your school
- Find out who are in your classes
- Look up your friends' friends
- See a visualization of your social network

To get started, click below to register. If you have already registered, you can log in.

[Register](#)

[Login](#)



San Francisco, USA
8 Listings

© smurphy

Host

Make money by sharing your space and local knowledge. [List a room.](#)

Travel

San Francisco, CA

Check in Nights:

[Search »](#)

New Listings

 Country-house-
pietralunga

[Pietralunga,
Umbria, IT](#)



[Tacoma, WA, US](#)



[San Francisco,
CA, US](#)



Use twtr to stay in touch with your friends all the time. If you have a cell and can txt, you'll never be bored again...EVER!

What your friends are



.timeline

follow along with what your friends are doing throughout the day

- ★ Florian X [txt]
- ★ Garrett X [txt]
- ★ goldman X [txt]

txt

(or)

What are you doing?

.what up?

send updates from your cell or from the web about whats in yr head

Sign in.

Mobile number (or email)

Password (or PIN)

☐ Remember me

New? Sign up!

twtr works best when updated from your mobile phone. To verify you are you, we'll need your number.

Mobile number



Everyone's Private Driver

Username: Password: [Login](#)

[Forgot password?](#)

[How To](#)
[Sign Up](#)

Learn more: [How it works](#) | [Pricing](#) | [Blog](#)



On - demand car service via iPhone & SMS.

- ✓ Book a car on the fly from your phone or the web.
- ✓ Pay from the app: no cash required!
- ✓ Give us your feedback about the driver.

[Join for Free!](#) [or Learn More Here](#)

UberCab Beta is currently live in San Francisco.

Learn how it works



What are people saying



sacca
9:24pm, May 30 from Twitter for iPhone

I don't always take sedans, but when I do, I use @ubercab. Stay in need of transportation, my friends.



trammell
9:01pm, May 30 from Twitter for iPhone

Rolling in an @ubercab w/ @mm @robweychert. Hella-swanky, super-simple black car service on your iPhone. Feeling quite undeservedly baller.

twitter

As seen on

TechCrunch



TECH
cocktail



“A Minimum Viable Product is that version of a new product which allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort.”

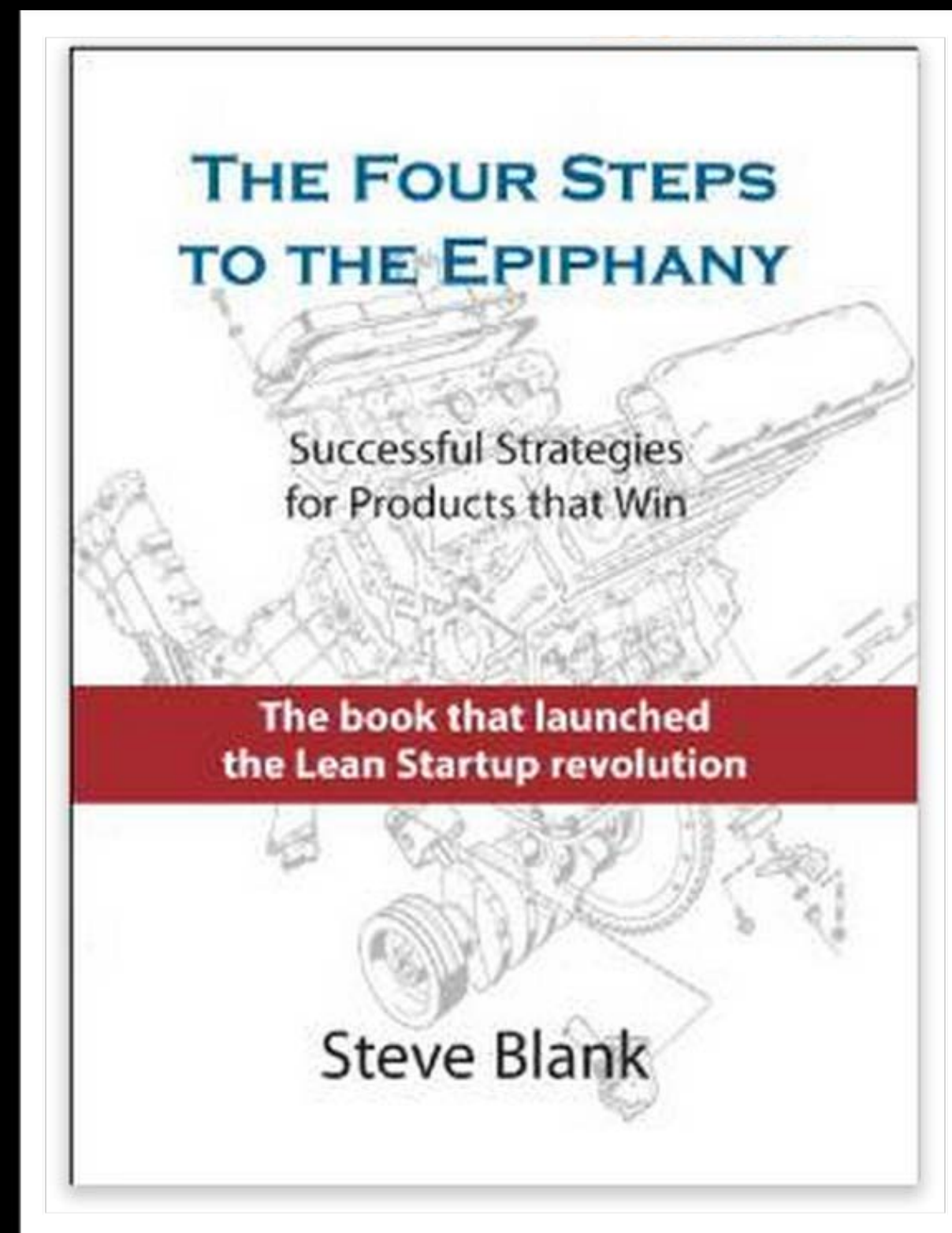
- Eric Ries, in The Lean Startup

Mediocre entrepreneurs build an MVP to show something.

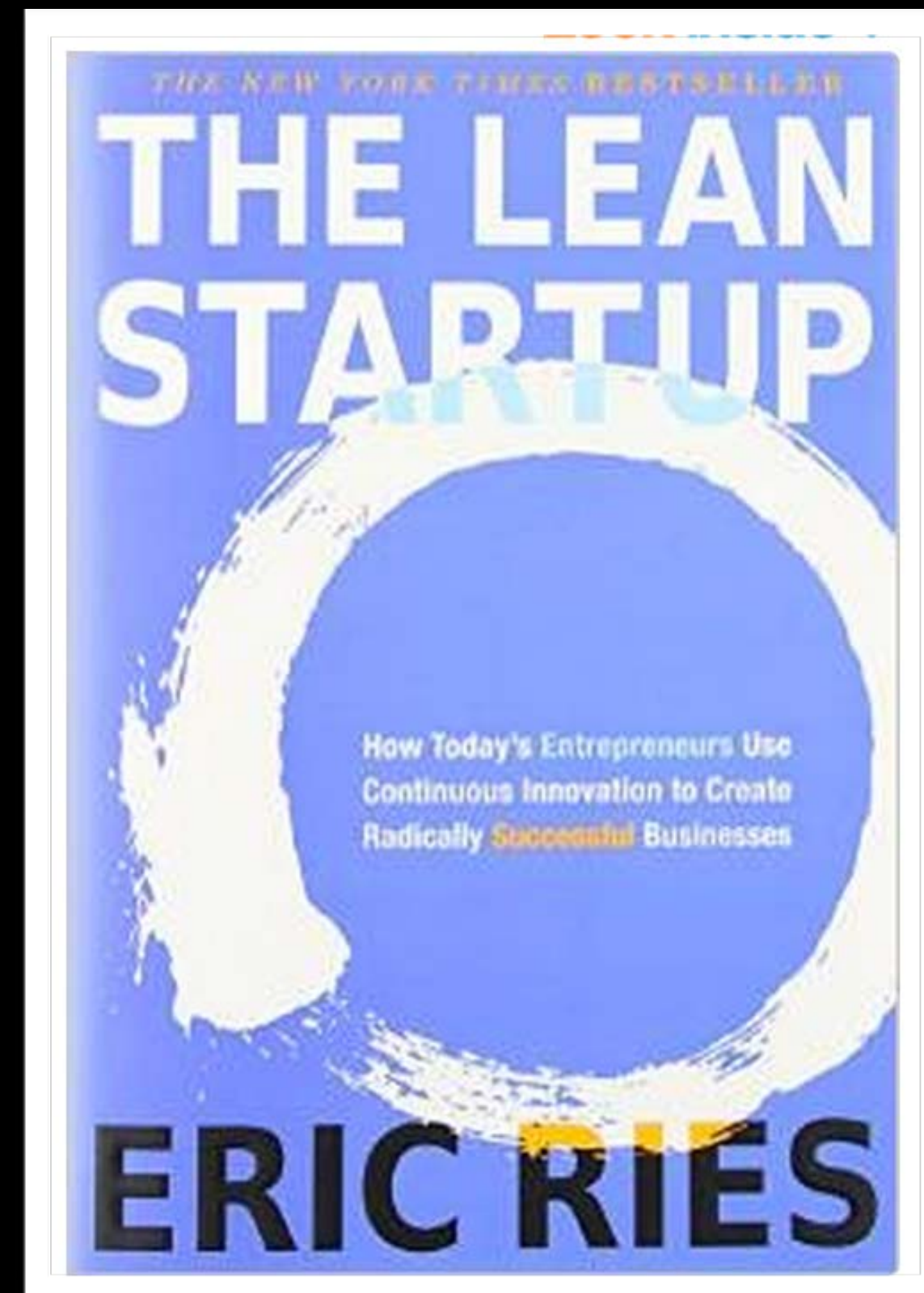
Great entrepreneurs build an MVP to learn something.

-Me

Difficult.



Easier.



Easiest.



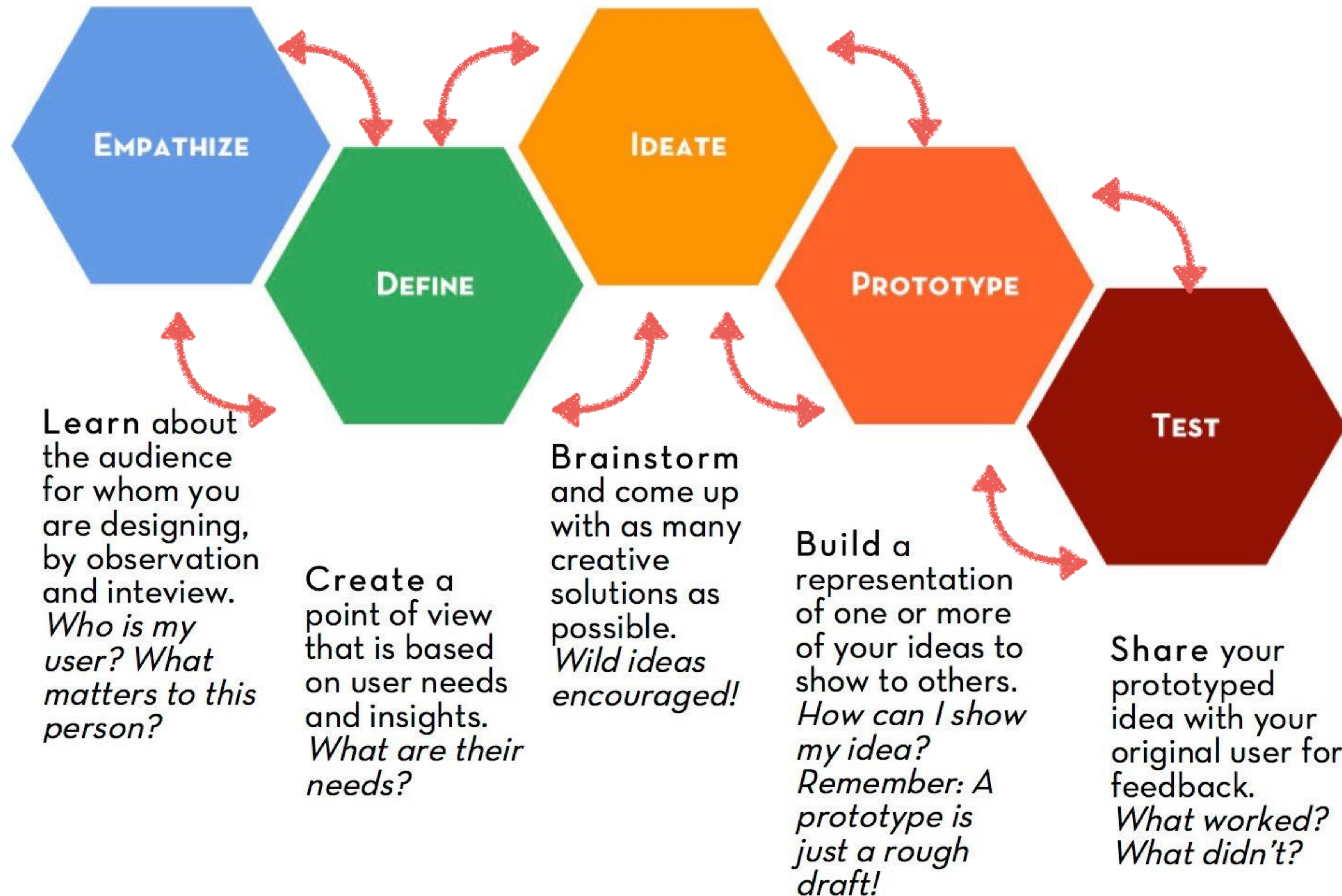
All are on the recommended reading list on the class website.



Design Thinking

Developed at the d.school at Stanford

Design Thinking: An engineering framework for creating products that succeed.



Product Market Fit

Customer Development

Design Thinking

All of these methodologies are versions of the same concept: Make sure your product design and development is informed by actual interactions with real customers.

Don't build what you think is cool. Build what customers value and will pay for.

This is a theme for the whole course.

All of us are sure our startup will be a big success.

But that's an opinion is based on a whole bunch of assumptions, many of which will turn out to be wrong.

Figure out how to test and validate your assumptions.

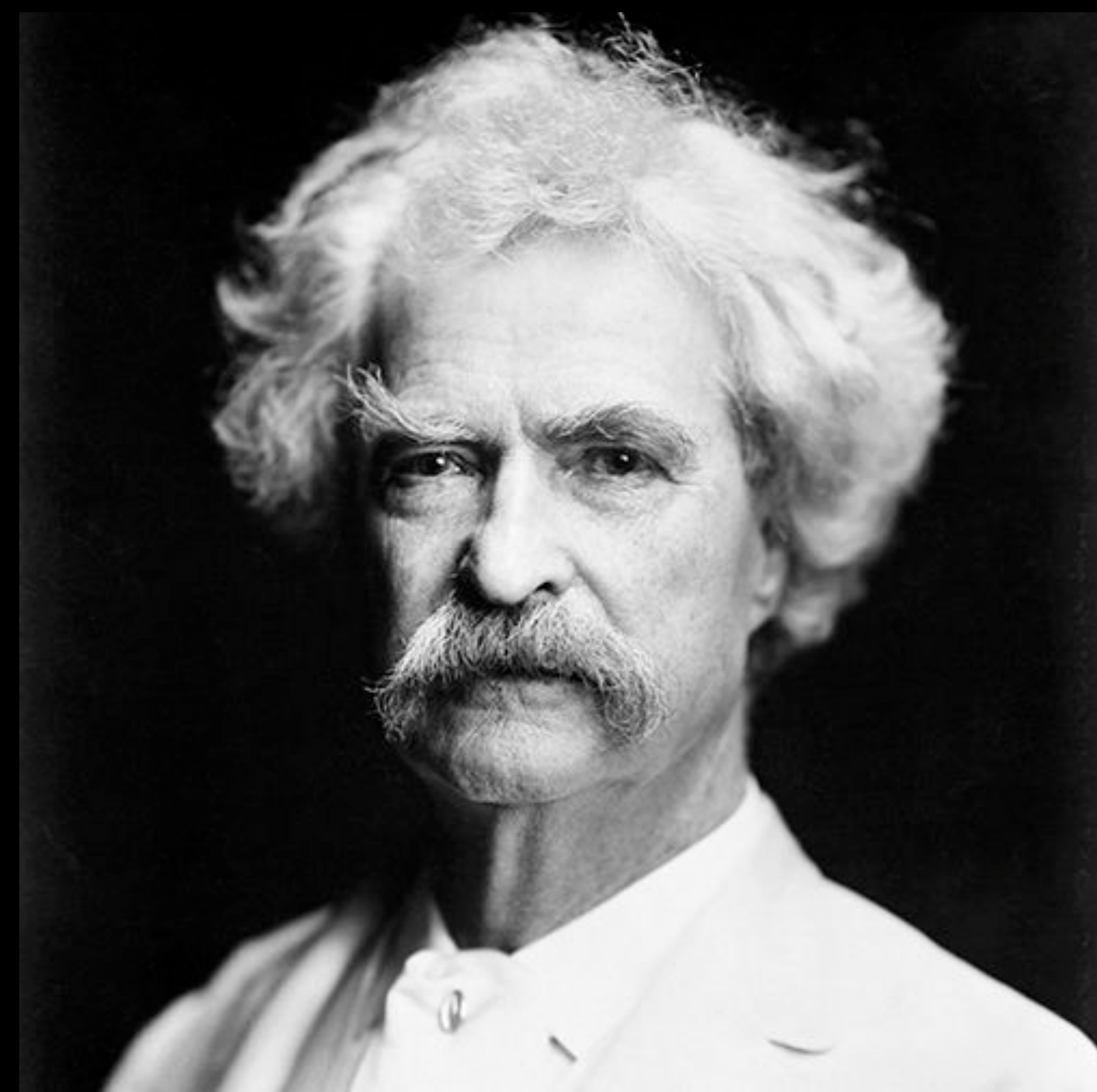
Always be thinking to yourself, “What is the smallest possible experiment I could do right now that would provide me with the greatest possible learning?”

Use the scientific method.

Customer Development, Lean startup, MVP, Design Thinking, Design Sprints are all variations on the same theme: **small experiments are what lead to Product-Market Fit.**

“It ain’t what you don’t know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for sure that just ain’t so”.

- Mark Twain

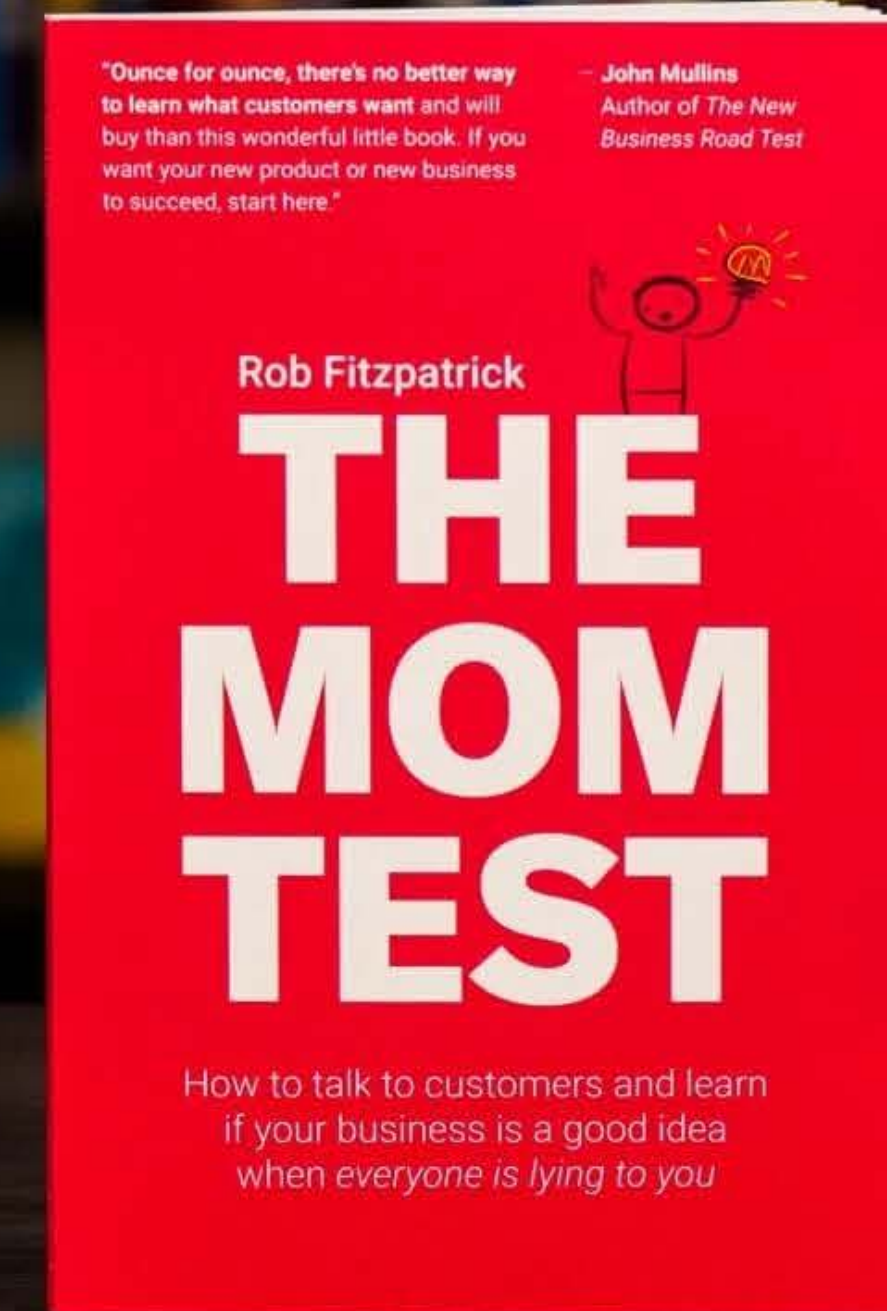


Humans have a tendency to believe that what we think is fact, when it’s just opinion. When we act based on a belief and it turns out to not only be opinion but wrong, this is when things can often go spectacularly wrong.

The Mom Test

How to find out if your business is a good idea, when everyone is lying to you.

Buy this book, and then also read my article on the class website on Customer Development interviews.





Allison Gopnik

**Professor of Psychology
UC Berkeley**



Allison Gopnik
Professor of Psychology
UC Berkeley

Humans have an unusually long childhood. Human children aren't self-sufficient for around fifteen years after birth – much longer than any other species.

As a result, our brain wiring is optimized for learning until our mid-teens, then the brain wiring switches to become optimized for the execution of what has been learned.



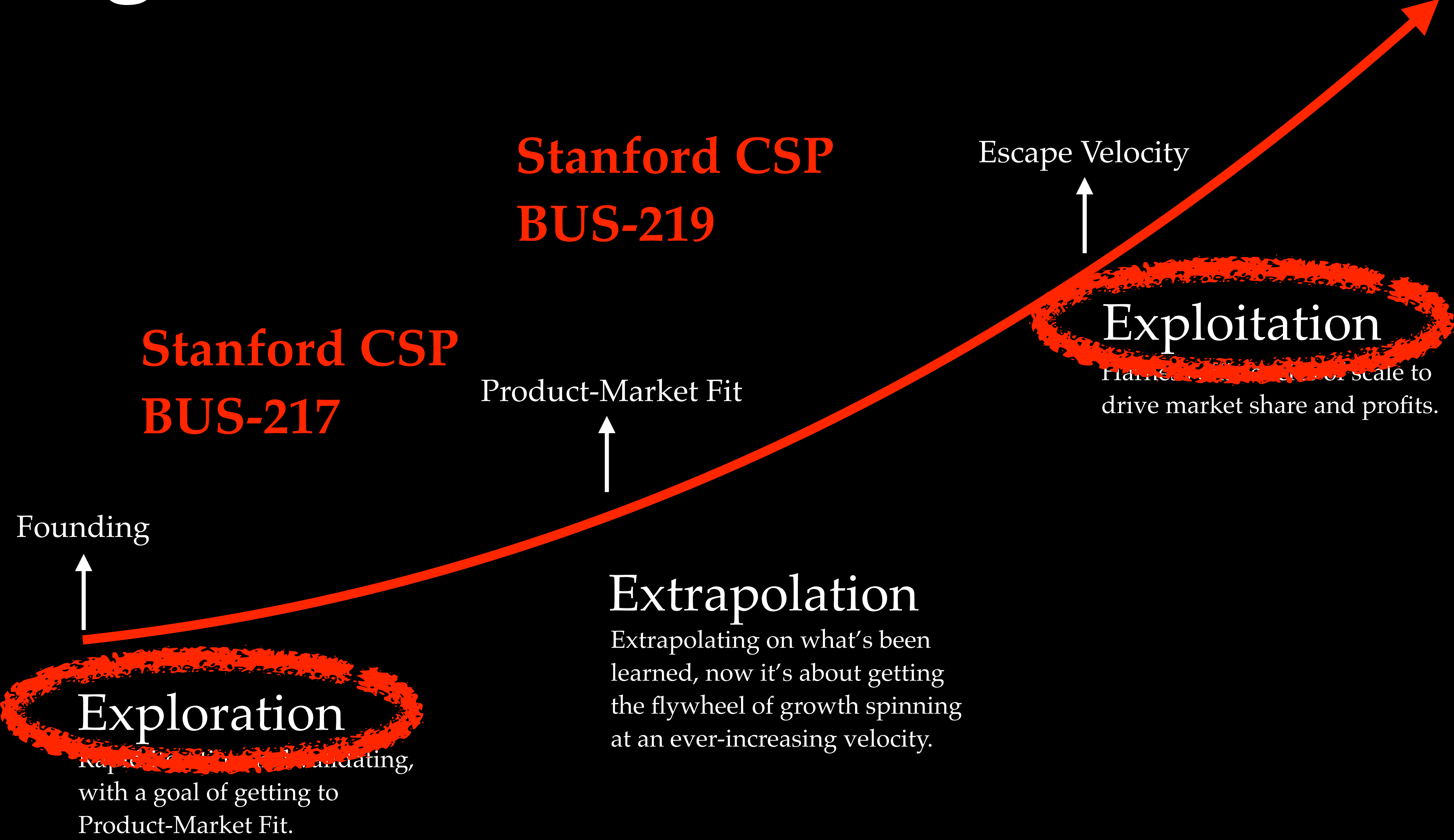
Allison Gopnik
Professor of Psychology
UC Berkeley

To support the hyper-learning mode of a four-year-old, for example, the body routes sixty percent of its calorie intake to the brain, whereas in an adult only about twenty percent of calories are routed there.

In Gopnik's words, human childhood brains are optimized for “exploring,” and then as adults our brain wiring changes to optimization for “exploiting”



Stages of a venture.



In Gopnik's words, human childhood brains are optimized for "exploring," and then as adults our brain wiring changes to optimization for "exploiting"



And so it is for startups. As a startup CEO, you need to be optimized for learning.

Always be thinking of the smallest possible experiment you could do that would provide the greatest possible learning.

AI



A startup is in a race to get to PMF before the money runs out.



UNICORN STARTUP MARATHON

So how can AI help you win that race?

Here are ten very simple ways you can use AI chat to accelerate the standard PMF methodology.

1. Identify the right problem to solve.

Use web scraping so
comment threads from
groups into a flat file

gossip" Basically it's possible to be able to express yourself fluently with perfect grammar and appropriate vocabulary but still have thousands of words, expressions, idioms, phrases, etc that natives use daily which you might be completely oblivious to So, I guess we need to get rid of this expectation that one

2K 250 1 Share

u/Cmeesh11 N | A2 · 22 hr. ago

How do you increase your comprehension speed?

When I listen to CI, I find that very often I hear sentences where I know all of the vocabulary, but it goes over my head. After reading the subtitle, I also find that I understand the grammar structure too, but it takes

Prompt: Here is a giant
discussion group thread
+ pain points people are

Perplexity

What do you want to analyze?

learning a new language

+ Social Learn step by step +

Model →

Upload files or images

Connectors and sources >

Deep research New
Upgraded AI models and sandbox

Create files and apps

Learn step by step

Model council Max

Upgrade to connect more sources Recommend

Web ☐

Social ☒

Gmail with Calendar ↗

Academic ☐

Outlook ↗

Discussions and opinions

discussing.

2. Test and validate every assumption.

Every founder begins with assumptions they are absolutely sure are true. Most will turn out to be wrong.

Prompt: Here is the Launch Path Canvas for my startup. List all the assumptions on it and suggest ways I can test and validate those assumptions.

3. What alternatives am I competing with?

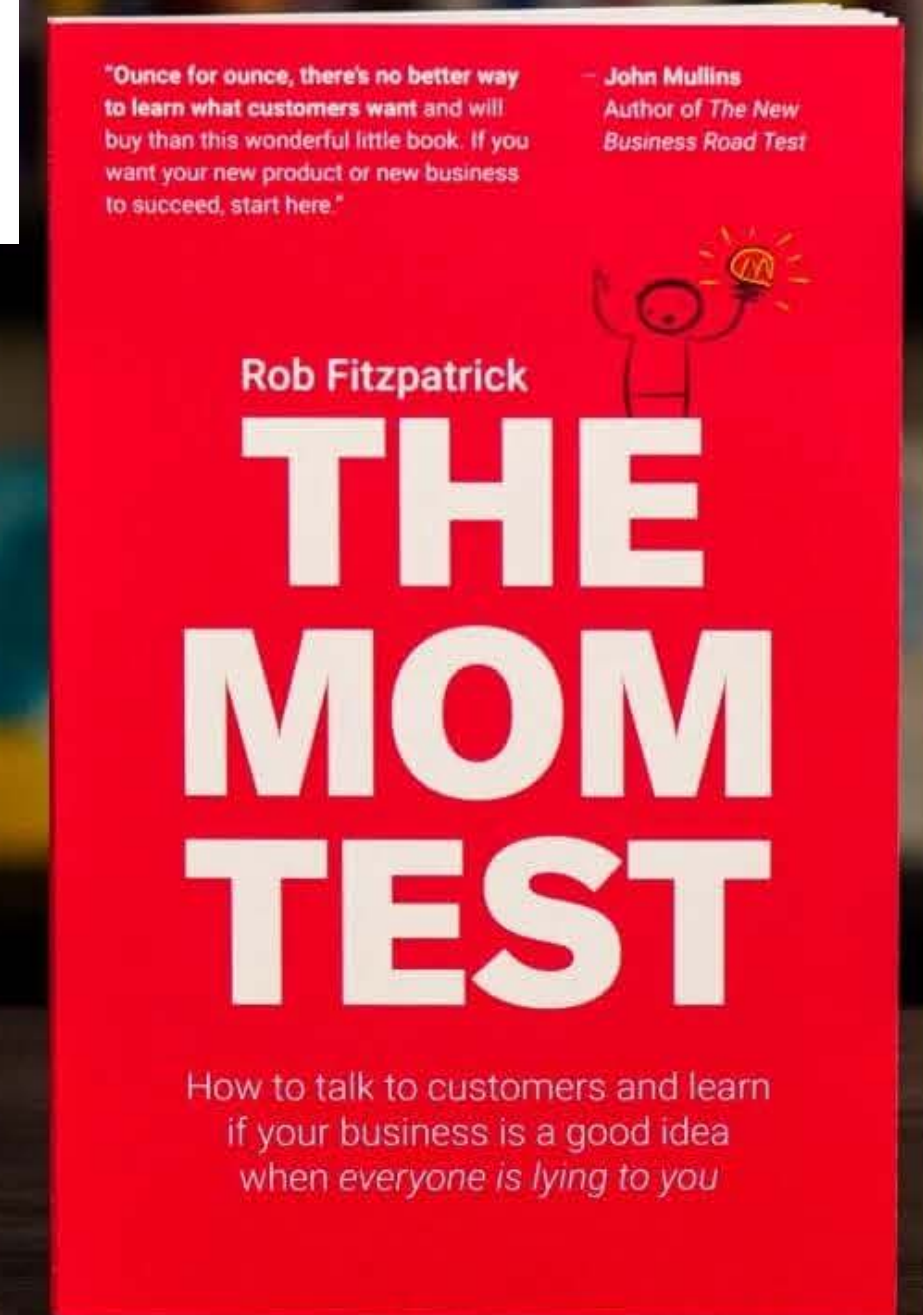
Every startup operates within a landscape of competitors and alternatives.

Prompt: Our app helps users to plan every day more efficiently. What are all the alternative ways this problem can be solved?

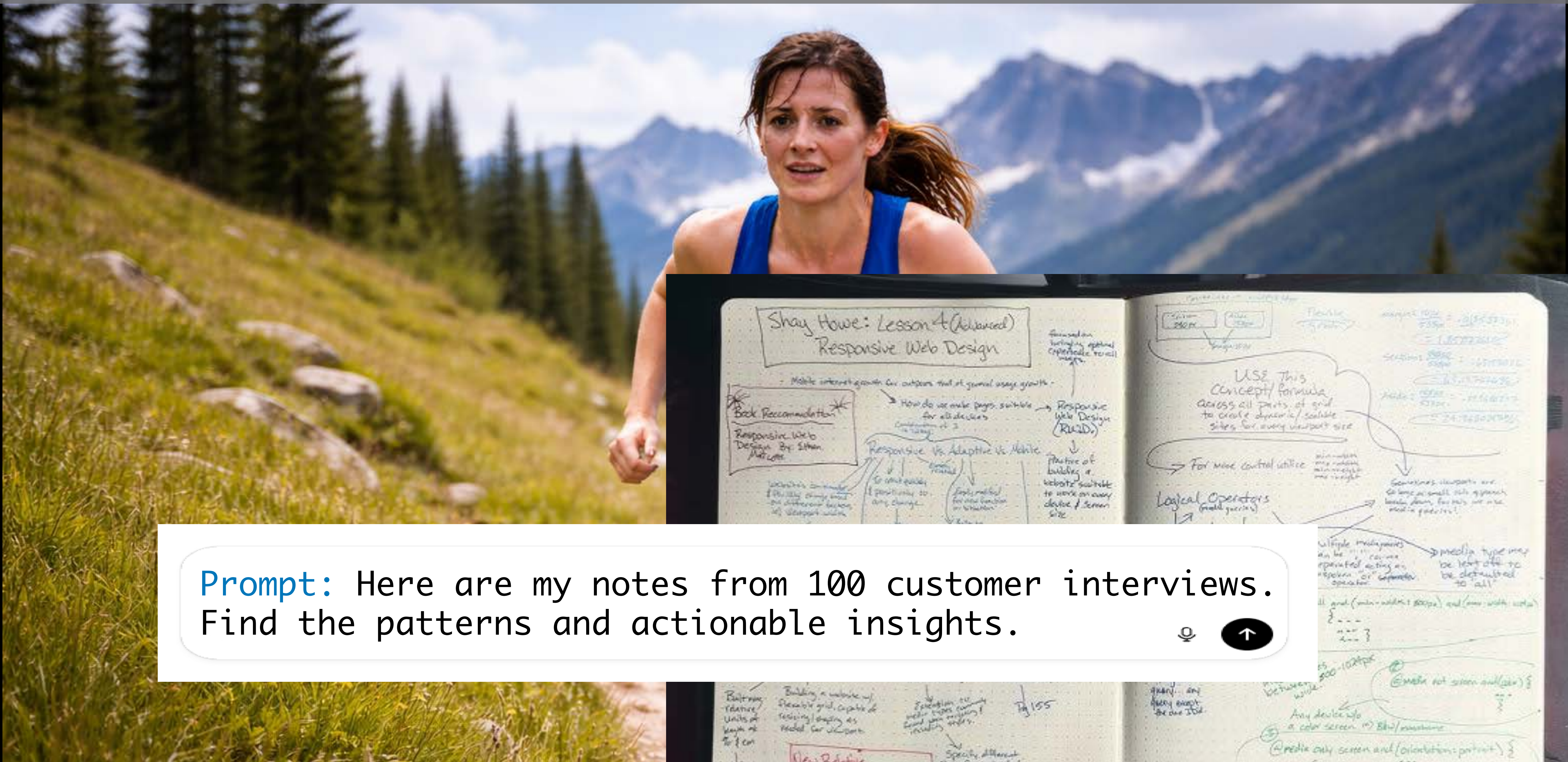


4. Design customer interviews right.

Prompt: “We’re targeting [persona]. Our hypothesis is that they struggle with [problem]. Design a 15-minute interview guide that avoids pitching and maximizes signal”



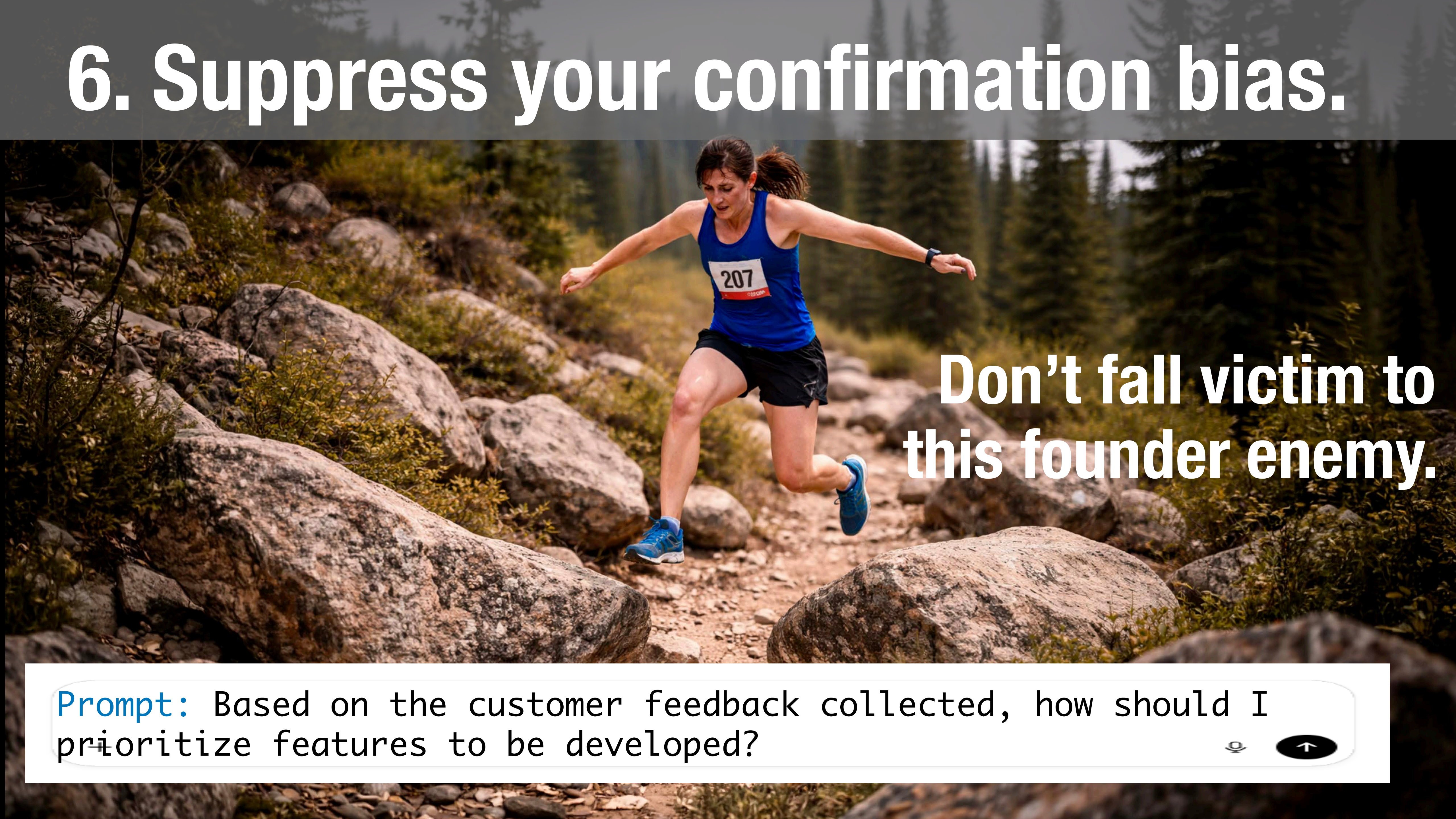
5. Extract insights from messy qualitative feedback.



Prompt: Here are my notes from 100 customer interviews.
Find the patterns and actionable insights.



6. Suppress your confirmation bias.

A female trail runner with bib number 207 is captured mid-air, jumping over a large rock on a rocky trail. She is wearing a blue tank top, black shorts, and blue running shoes. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees.

**Don't fall victim to
this founder enemy.**

Prompt: Based on the customer feedback collected, how should I prioritize features to be developed?



7. Open up the solution set.

Maslow famously observed: “If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything tends to look like a nail.”

Prompt: Here's a problem I've observed. Give me five fundamentally different ways this problem could be solved.



8. Find and define your ICP.

You think you know
who your Ideal
Customer Profile is.
But are you right?

Prompt: Here is all my HubSpot data, plus all of the analytics from our Meta campaigns. From this engagement data, what is my Ideal Customer Profile?

9. Identify Customer Triggers.

What makes
someone suddenly
looking for what
your startup does?

Prompt: Our startup offers healthy dinners, tailored for your particular dietary or medical needs. What are the customer triggers likely to be?



10. Do Red Team Analysis.

Understanding how competitors sell against you can give you deep insights into PMF.

Prompt: Here are the websites and slide decks from my top three competitors, plus mine. How would they sell against me?



A person in a blue athletic top and black shorts is running on a narrow, rocky trail that winds through a forest. The trail is composed of many large, light-colored rocks and smaller stones. The surrounding area is filled with green foliage and trees, creating a natural, rugged environment. The person is positioned in the middle ground, facing away from the camera and towards the end of the trail.

You are in a race to get to PMF.

Think of AI as a thought partner that accelerates your learning loops—not a replacement for the hard work of talking to customers and testing in the market.



PRODUCT MARKET FIT

\$1,263

REMAINING

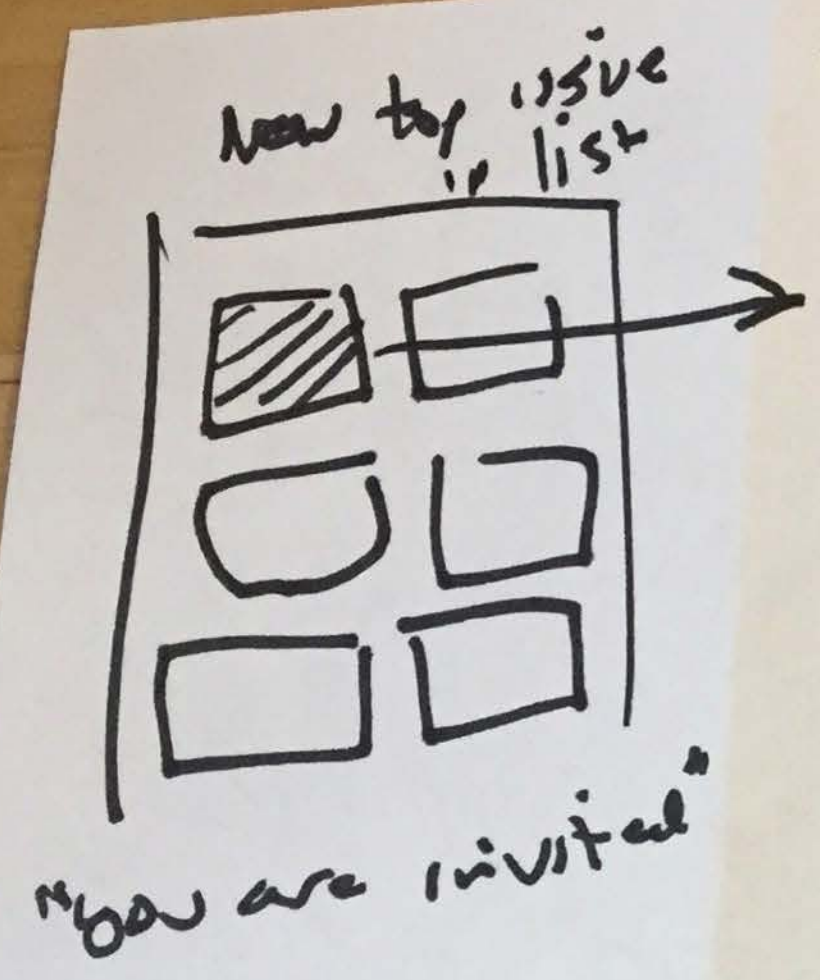
207

COLORED

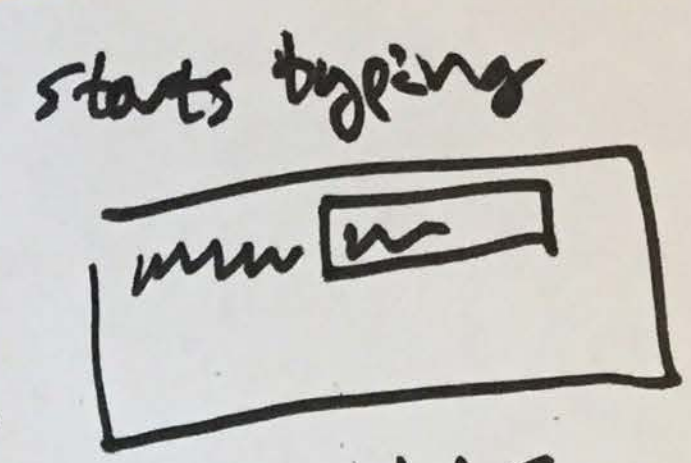
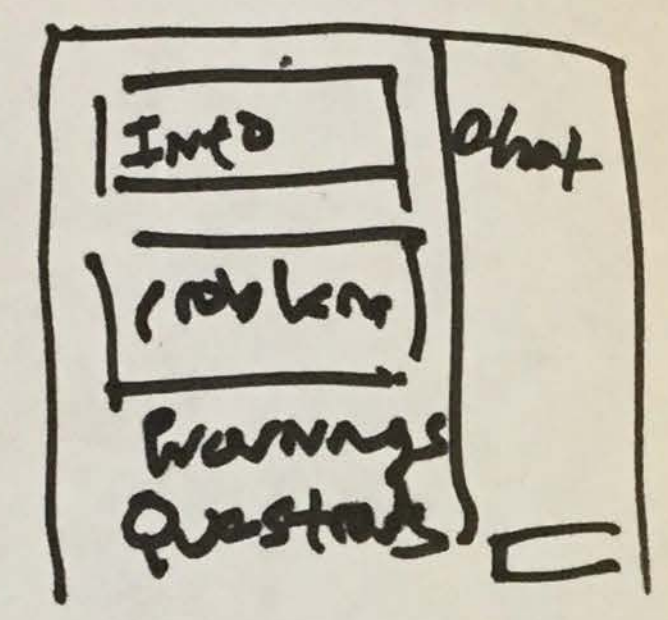
If you do it right, you'll win the race to PMF.

How could your grocery shopping experience be improved?

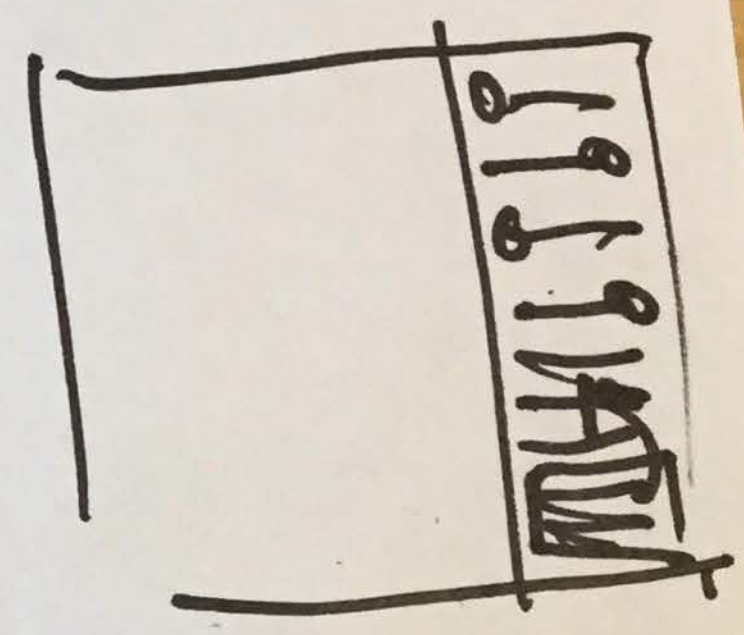
Sketch eight different ideas.



Info. collected so far

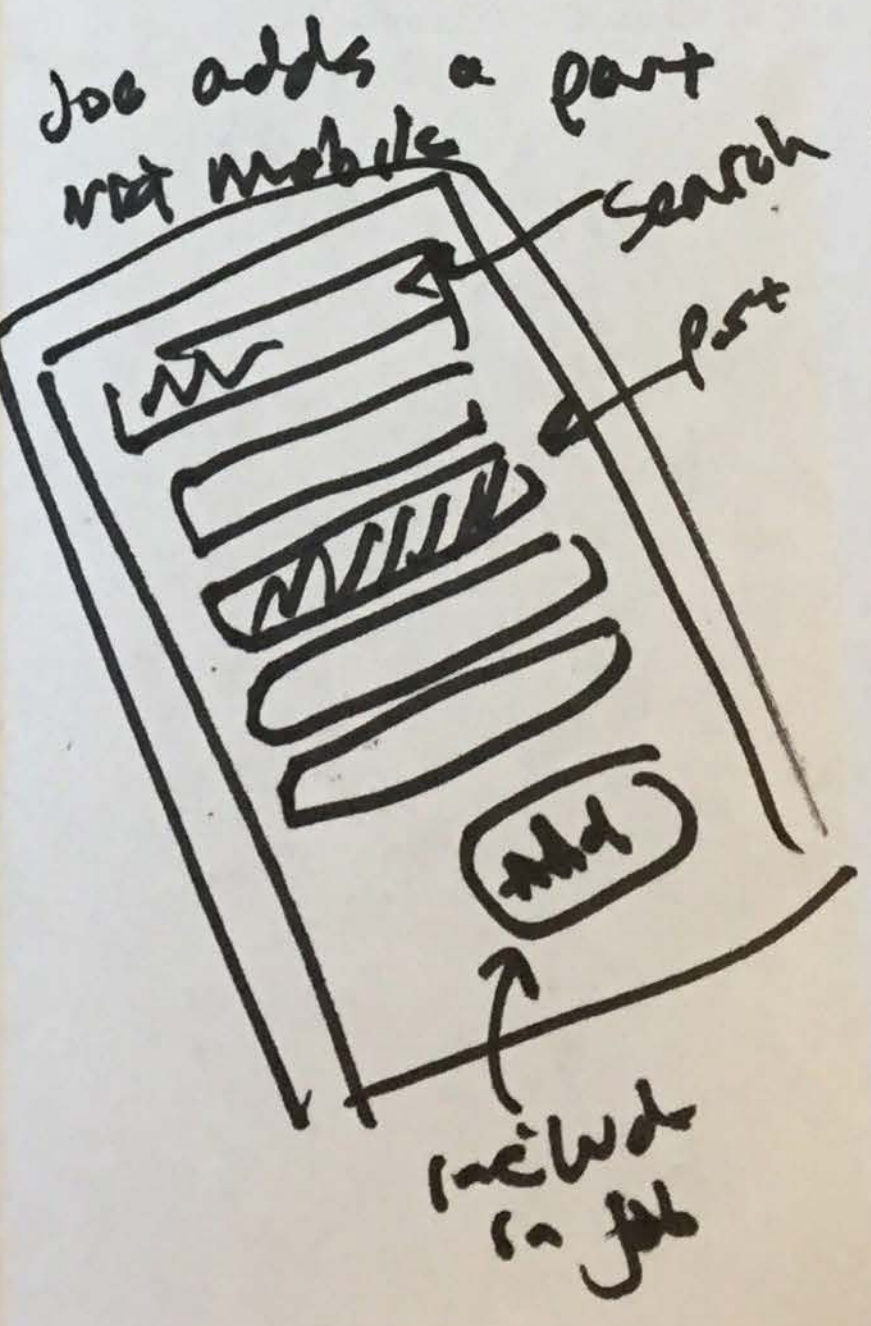
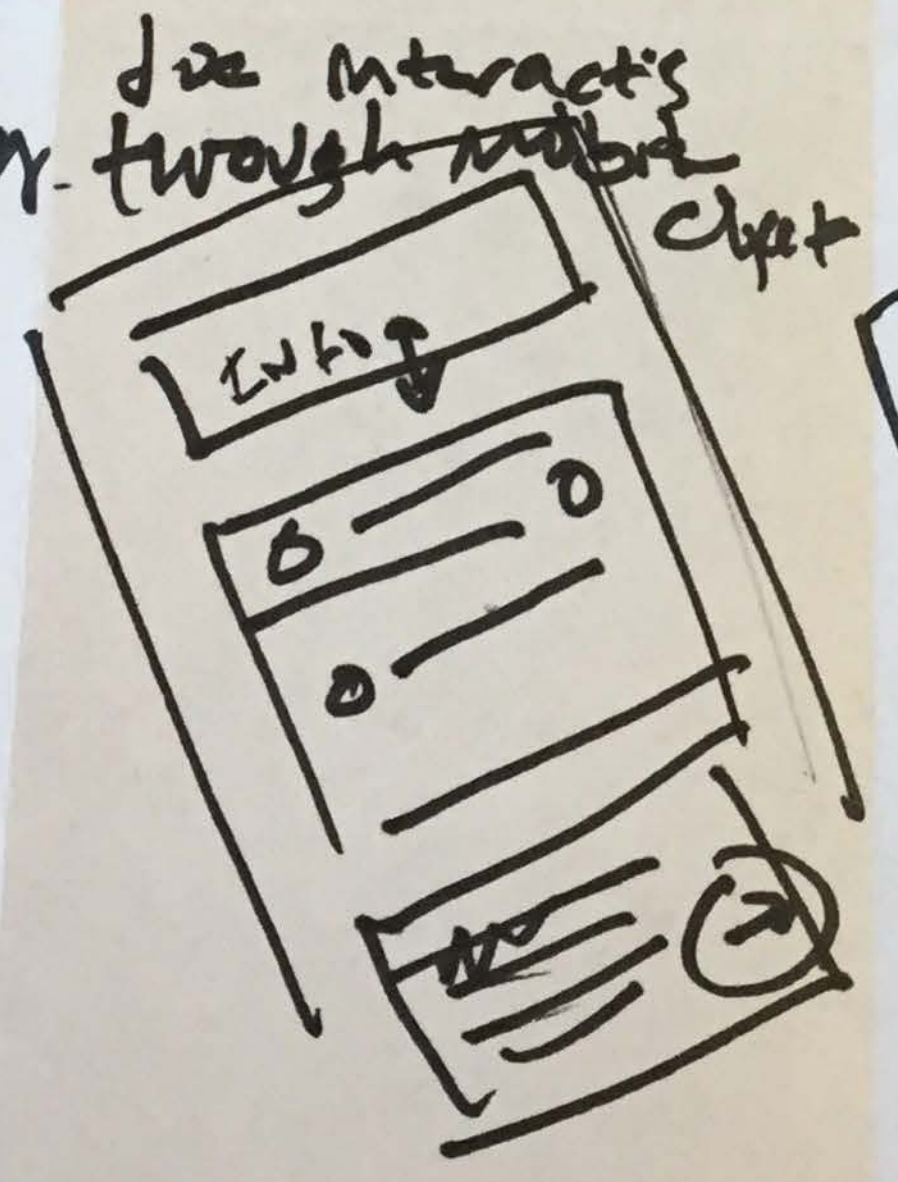
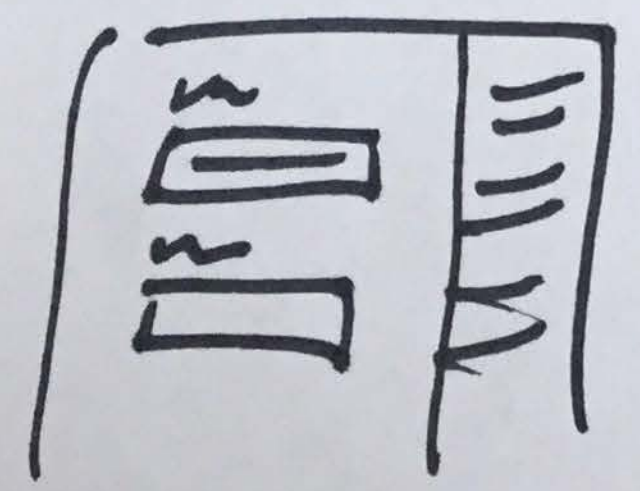


Asks for help to set rest of info

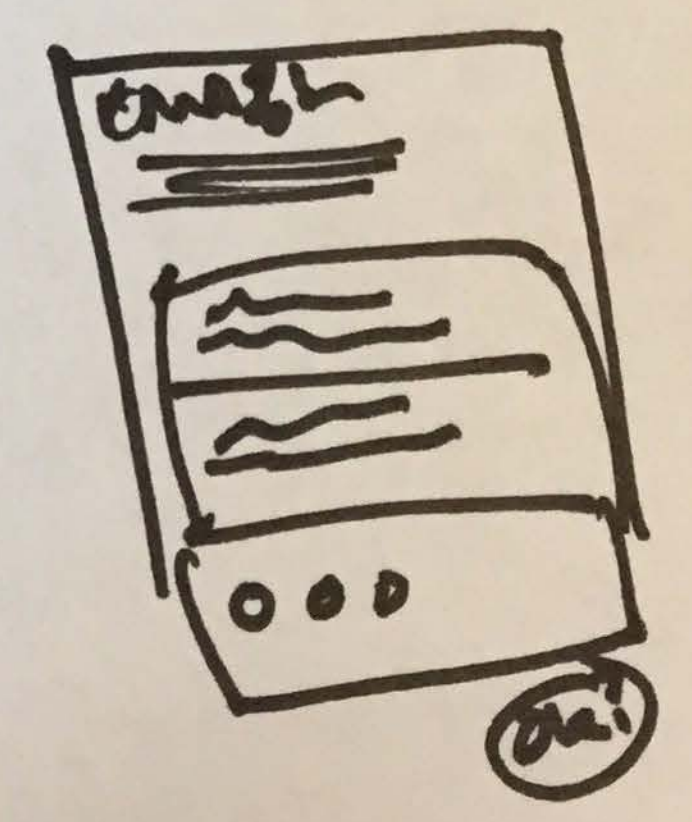


Auto completes + Shows interesting case that are related

AI automatically adds new teammates
 Adds Qs to A
 die interact's through mobile chat



Quote sent to link to verify (or mail \$)



How could your grocery shopping experience be improved? Sketch eight different ideas.

