

DON'T QUIT YOUR DAY JOB (YET):

The No-Nonsense Guide to Idea Validation



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Introduction

Passion is Great — But It Won't Pay the Bills (Yet)

Let me guess. You've got an idea. Not just any idea—*the* idea. The one that keeps you up at night, buzzing with excitement. Maybe you've already pictured yourself on a podcast, telling the host how it all started “with just a dream and a lot of coffee.” Maybe you've even drafted a resignation email to your boss (subject line: “I'm Outta Here!”).

But hold on. Don't quit your day job—*yet*.

Because here's the thing: Passion is powerful. It's the rocket fuel of entrepreneurship. But if you pour your heart, soul, and savings into an idea without validating it first, that rocket might explode on the launchpad. And trust me, I've seen it happen more times than I care to admit.

In my years working with entrepreneurs, I've witnessed smart, driven, wildly creative people sink their life savings into ideas that seemed brilliant...until reality disagreed. Passion told them, “*If you build it, they will come.*” But the market shrugged and said, “*Meh.*”

So, if you want to avoid the heartbreak of wasted time, money,

and dignity (because explaining why your “Luxury Organic Cat Spa” didn’t take off isn’t fun), you’re in the right place.

Why This Book Exists (and Why You Should Keep Reading)

This book isn’t here to kill your dream. In fact, it’s the opposite. It’s here to help you test that dream—quickly, practically, and without unnecessary headaches—so you can figure out if it has real potential. Because when you validate your business idea properly, one of two things will happen:

1. **You’ll realize it’s not as great as you thought.** And that’s okay! You’ll save yourself months (or years) of frustration and possibly a second mortgage.
2. **You’ll find actual evidence that your idea has legs.** Not just a hunch. Real data. Real people saying, “Take my money!” That’s when you can confidently say goodbye to that day job.

So, how do we get there? Not by guessing or hoping. We’ll follow a three-phase process that anyone—even the most passionate, big-vision entrepreneur—can apply:

The Three-Phase Idea Validation Process

1. **Reflection Phase:** Asking the right questions to figure out if your idea solves a real problem (or fulfills a genuine aspiration). Spoiler: “I think it’s cool” doesn’t count.
2. **Research Phase:** Digging into who your potential customers are, whether they care enough to pay you, and if there are enough of them to make this a business (instead of an expensive hobby).

3. **Testing Phase:** Running simple, low-cost experiments to validate your assumptions. No need to build a full product—sometimes a landing page or a well-placed survey can tell you everything you need to know.

What This Book Won't Do (Let's Set Expectations)

- It won't give you a magic formula for instant success. If you're looking for "10 Steps to a Million-Dollar Idea by Friday," you're in the wrong place.
- It won't bore you with MBA jargon. We'll talk about things like customer personas and basic financials, but in plain language.
- It won't tell you to follow your gut. Your gut is great for choosing a taco place—not for making business decisions.

One More Thing Before We Begin...

Throughout this process, stay curious. Be willing to question your assumptions. It's easy to fall in love with your idea and ignore red flags. But remember: Your goal isn't to prove you're right—it's to find out what's true.

Okay, ready? Let's get to work.

Phase 1: The Reflection Phase – Asking the Right (and Sometimes Uncomfortable) Questions

Why Reflection Matters (Even if You're Impatient to Get Started)

Reflection sounds like something you do on a yoga retreat, not when you're gearing up to launch a business. But trust me—this phase will save you from countless “Wait...why did I think this was a good idea?” moments down the road.

Think of it this way: If your idea were a road trip, reflection is making sure your GPS works before you hit the highway. Otherwise, you might end up lost, broke, and questioning your life choices in a gas station parking lot.

1. What Problem Are You Solving—or What Aspiration Are You Fulfilling?

Here's a harsh truth: People don't care about your product or service. They care about what it does *for them*.

So, what's the core problem or aspiration your idea addresses?

Ask yourself:

- Are you helping people avoid pain or achieve a dream?
- Are people already complaining about this problem? (Hint: Check reviews and forums.)

Exercise: Fill in the blanks:

- My idea helps _____ (target audience)
- solve _____ (problem or aspiration)
- so they can _____ (desired outcome).

2. Why Does This Matter—To You and to Them?

Ask yourself:

- Why does *this* idea excite me?
- Why would *they* care? What's in it for them?

Passion can sustain *you*, but the outcome has to matter *to them*.

3. Are You Solving a Real Problem or a Perceived One?

A “real problem” is something people actively try to solve. A “perceived problem” is something *you* think matters—but customers don't.

Test it:

- Search online forums and product reviews. Are people complaining about the issue you're addressing?
- Talk to potential customers. Ask: “*What's frustrating about your current solution?*”

4. What Makes You Different—and Why Now?

Competition isn't a problem—it's a sign of demand. But what makes *you* the better choice?

Ask yourself:

- What's your unique angle? (Better, cheaper, faster, simpler?)
- Why now? Is there a market trend that makes this the perfect time to launch?

5. Would People Pay for This—and How Much?

Interest is easy. Payment is proof.

Start with a simple question:

- “Would you pay \$X for this today?”

If they hesitate or say, “*Maybe someday*”, that's a red flag.

Wrapping Up the Reflection Phase

Reflection isn't about self-doubt—it's about clarity. Next up: The Research Phase, where we test these assumptions against reality.

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Phase 2: The Research Phase – Who, What, and How Many?

1. Who Actually Cares? (Hint: It's Not “Everyone”)

Ideal Customer Profile (ICP): Identify the people who *really* need your solution.

- **Demographics:** Age, income, profession.
- **Psychographics:** Motivations, frustrations, desires.

Exercise: Describe one ideal customer in a single paragraph.

2. Will These People Actually Pay?

Ask directly:

- “Would you pay \$X today for this?”
- “What’s a fair price to you?”

Or test it indirectly with a landing page or pre-order button. If no one bites, adjust.

3. Are There Enough of Them?

Market sizing sounds fancy, but it's just common sense. Estimate:

- **TAM (Total Addressable Market):** Everyone who *could* buy.
- **SAM (Serviceable Available Market):** Those you can *realistically* reach.
- **SOM (Serviceable Obtainable Market):** The group you'll target first.

If your SOM is too small, rethink your audience or pricing.

4. What Are They Doing Now?

Customers already have some solution—what is it?

Ask them:

- “*What’s frustrating about your current solution?*”
- “*What would make you switch?*”

5. What Makes You Different?

Find your edge.

- Better quality?
- More affordable?
- A stronger brand?

If your only differentiator is “better customer service,” you need more work.

6. Is the Timing Right?

Good ideas can fail if the timing is off. Ask yourself:

- *“What trends make this idea more relevant today?”*
- *“Is there a cultural or technological shift I can ride?”*

Wrapping Up the Research Phase

You’ve identified your audience, tested willingness to pay, sized the market, and studied the competition. Next: The Testing Phase—where we move from theory to reality.

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Phase 3: The Testing Phase – Turning Assumptions into Evidence

1. Identify Your Core Assumptions

Write down your biggest assumptions:

- **Problem:** People care about this issue.
- **Solution:** Our product solves it effectively.
- **Pricing:** Customers will pay \$X.

2. Design Simple, Low-Cost Tests

Test #1: Landing Page Test

- Describe your product on a webpage and track sign-ups.
- Use tools like Carrd or Unbounce.

Test #2: Concierge MVP

- Manually deliver the service to test demand before automating.

Test #3: Fake Door Test

- Add a “Coming Soon” button and track clicks. If no one clicks, rethink.

3. Talk to Real Humans

Have 10 conversations with potential customers. Ask:

- *“What’s frustrating about your current solution?”*
- *“What would make you switch?”*

Listen for repeated themes.

4. Apply the Napkin Math Principle

Estimate your business potential with a simple formula:

- **Revenue potential:** Customers × Price
- **Profit potential:** Revenue – Costs

If the numbers look unrealistic or underwhelming, pause and reassess.

5. Make the Go/No-Go Decision

Now it’s decision time:

- **Go:** Strong demand, positive feedback, viable numbers.
- **Pivot:** Adjust based on what you’ve learned.
- **Stop:** If the market isn’t interested, let it go. There’s always another idea.

Conclusion: Validate or Regret – The Choice Is Yours

The Entrepreneur's Dilemma: Leap of Faith or Calculated Risk?

By now, you've done what many entrepreneurs skip: you've validated your idea. You've moved beyond gut feelings to real-world data.

Key Takeaways:

1. **Passion needs validation.** Love your idea—but make sure others do too.
2. **Assumptions are dangerous.** Test everything.
3. **Math doesn't lie.** If the Napkin Math doesn't work, the business won't either.

The Power of Outside Perspective

No matter how sharp you are, you have blind spots. That's why the most successful entrepreneurs seek out coaches, mentors,

and advisors. These people aren't here to agree with you—they're here to challenge, support, and help you see what you can't.

What's Next?

If the tests were positive, start building. If not, walk away knowing you made the smart call. Ideas are infinite—your resources aren't.

So go ahead. Validate smart. Build smart. And when you're ready...quit that day job.

