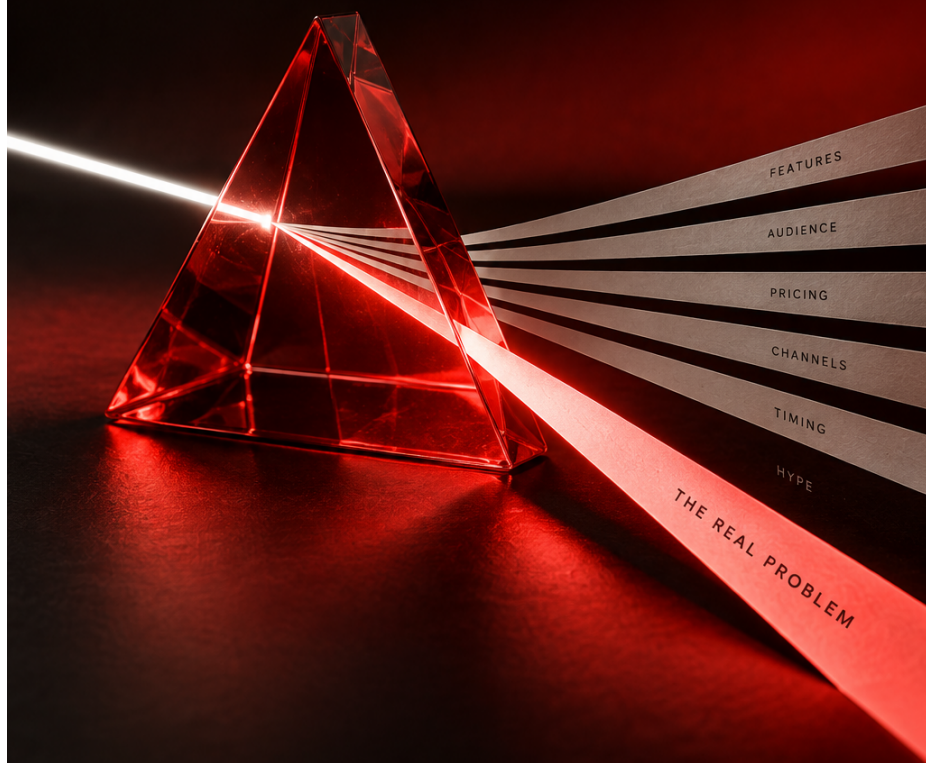


IDEA VALIDATION



Test the problem
before the product.

Idea Validation

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Use this book to make and record a specific product decision. Examples explicitly labeled hypothetical are teaching examples. Portfolio excerpts are taken from the original manuscript and preserve its publication context; they are not live revenue or traffic claims.

Reading path

A decision, not a confidence ritual

1. Choose one person and one difficult moment
2. Map what already gets the job done
3. Interview the last real occurrence
4. Separate signals from stories
5. Design the smallest honest experiment
6. Use a two-week decision window

Source-backed field notes / Worked example / Eight reusable worksheets

A decision, not a confidence ritual

Validation should change a decision. If every possible answer leads you back to the same build, you have designed a sales conversation with yourself. This book helps you turn one uncertain idea into a small, observable test, then decide whether to continue, narrow the audience, change the offer, or stop. It is a working companion to *From Zero to Public*. The portfolio excerpts later in this book are historical manuscript evidence; they are not current sales claims.

The goal is a useful decision under constraints. You do not need universal proof that a market exists. You need enough evidence to justify the next investment of your time and money. That investment might be a week building a prototype, a manual paid pilot, or another round of interviews. Match the test to the decision. Do not ask a landing page to prove retention, or an interview to prove that someone will pay.

Use the worksheets as a record. Write your expectation before the test, preserve the observations afterward, and make the next decision in the same document. This makes it harder to quietly rewrite the story when the result is disappointing. A negative result can save a month of building. An ambiguous result should produce a better test, rather than a triumphant launch announcement.

1. Choose one person and one difficult moment

An audience label is too broad to guide an experiment. "Restaurants" includes independent cafes, chains, caterers, and hotel kitchens with different budgets and workflows. Describe the person, the moment, the trigger, the current workaround, and the consequence. A useful starting sentence is: "When [event] happens, [person] needs to [job], but [obstacle] makes that difficult, so they currently [workaround]."

Consider a hypothetical independent cafe owner replacing a seasonal menu. The job is to publish an accurate, readable menu before the weekend. The obstacle may be collecting prices and dietary notes, not graphic design. If you interview only about attractive menu templates, you can miss the real bottleneck. Ask the owner to walk through the last update, including who supplied the information, which files moved between people, and what needed correction.

An audience should also be reachable. A group can have a real problem and still be impractical for your first test because you cannot contact members, enter the workflow, or earn trust. Keep a recruitment list with the reason each person fits the situation. Friends who like your enthusiasm can help rehearse the conversation, but label their answers separately from evidence gathered from the intended buyer.

Do not replace uncertainty with stereotypes. Technical founders can need manual assistance; nontechnical owners can have reliable systems. Record what this person did in this situation. After several conversations, compare situations rather than personality traits. You are looking for a repeatable job with enough friction that a different approach is worth considering.