

Customer Interview Script

A 30-minute, founder-led conversation to learn how people experience the problem you're solving. Works whether your customer is a consumer, a household, a business, or an organization.

Before the call

Fill in the blanks

Before your first call, replace two phrases throughout the script:

- *[problem area]* : the broad topic, such as "planning family meals" or "tracking inventory"
- *[problem]* : the specific pain, such as "deciding what to cook on a weeknight" or "running out of a best seller"

Who to talk to

Talk to people who had the problem recently, not people who like your idea. Good sources:

- Online communities, forums, and groups where people ask for help with _____ (*problem area*)
- People already paying for a competitor or a workaround
- Friends of friends, since close friends are too kind
- Former colleagues, if the problem shows up at work

Avoid family, close friends, and anyone who knows your idea in detail.

Asking for the call

Sample message:

*I'm researching how people handle _____ (*problem area*). I'm not selling anything. Would you give me 30 minutes to hear about your experience? Your answers will shape what I build.*

Setup

- Write your three riskiest assumptions at the top of your notes before every call
- Ask permission before recording
- Keep your solution out of the conversation. No slides, no demo, no website link.

Three rules for the call

1 Ask about the past, not the future

2 Talk 20% of the time

3 When an answer surprises you, ask "Tell me more about that"



Opening 2 MINUTES

Thank them for their time. Say: "I'm here to learn, not to sell. There are no wrong answers, and the most useful thing you can do is tell me what happens day to day, even the messy parts."

Context 3 MINUTES

- 1 Tell me a little about yourself and where _____ (*problem area*) shows up in your life or work.

The problem 10 MINUTES

- 2 What's the hardest part of _____ (*problem area*) for you?

- 3 Tell me about the last time you ran into _____ (*problem*). What happened?

- 4 Why was the situation hard? What did the problem cost you?

- 5 How often does this come up?



How they handle the problem today 8 MINUTES

6 How do you handle this today?

Listen for: an app or product, a notebook or spreadsheet, a routine, another person, paying someone, or nothing at all.

7 What does your current approach cost you in time, money, or hassle?

8 What have you tried before? Why did you stop?

Priority and spending 5 MINUTES

9 How does this problem compare with the other things competing for your time and money right now?

10 Have you ever searched for or paid for something to fix this? What happened?

11 Does anyone else get involved when this problem comes up? Who has a say in spending money to fix it?

Listen for: a partner or family member, a manager, a team, or no one else.

Close 2 MINUTES

12 Who else should I talk to about this? Would you introduce me?

Last question: "Is there anything I should have asked, but didn't?" Thank them. Ask whether you may follow up later.



After the call

Write these notes within an hour. Memory fills the gaps with what you hoped to hear.

Interviewee: _____ Date: _____

About them (role, situation, or context): _____

Three quotes in their exact words:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

How they handle the problem today:

What the problem costs them:

What they offered at the end:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Time: agreed to a follow-up call or to try an early version | ☐ Reputation: introduced me to someone |
| ☐ Money: offered to pay, pre-order, or put down a deposit | ☐ Nothing beyond the call |

My three riskiest assumptions, and what this call said about each:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

What I'll change in the script before the next call:

Want help reading what your interviews are telling you?

[Book a strategy call](#)