Business Idea Validator

An NLP-Based Business Clarity & Validation Worksheet

Purpose
Use this worksheet to clarify your business idea, uncover assumptions, identify the customer's real problem, test your thinking, and design small real-world validation experiments.

Important: NLP can help you improve clarity, challenge assumptions, explore values and perspectives, and make better decisions. It cannot prove that a business idea will succeed. Market evidence—customer conversations, competitor research, testing, pre-sales and measurable results—must validate the commercial opportunity.

Name:		Date:	
Business idea:		Stage:	
Target customer:		Version:	

Rule: Separate *what you believe* from *what you have evidence for*. That distinction is one of the most important parts of this worksheet.

1. Clarify the Business Idea

Start with a simple, specific description. Avoid vague words such as “everyone,” “better,” or “successful.”

In one sentence: What exactly are you offering?

Who specifically is the primary customer?

What problem, frustration, desire, or opportunity does it address?

What is the customer currently doing instead?

Why would someone choose your solution rather than doing nothing?

NLP Tool — Chunking

If the idea feels too broad, move from a big category to a specific segment, problem and offer.

Broad idea → Specific customer → Specific problem → Specific solution → Specific result

2. Well-Formed Business Outcome

Use the NLP well-formed outcome process to define what you actually want the business to achieve.

What do you want the business to accomplish? State it positively and specifically.

What will you SEE when this outcome is happening successfully?

What will you HEAR from customers, yourself, or your team?

What will you FEEL when the business is working as intended?

How will you know objectively that the outcome has been achieved? Give measurable evidence.

What parts of the outcome are within your control?

What is the first realistic milestone?

3. Customer Values & Buying Criteria

Do not assume you know what customers value. Write your hypothesis, then identify how you will test it.

What do you believe your customer values most when solving this problem?

What would make the customer say “this is worth paying for”?

What could make the customer hesitate or refuse?

What emotional outcome might the customer want? (e.g., confidence, relief, freedom, status, safety)

Hypothesis vs Evidence

Customer assumption	Evidence I already have	How I will test it

4. Meta Model: Challenge the Assumptions

Use Meta Model-style questions to turn vague statements into specific, testable claims. You are not trying to “win” an argument—you are trying to discover missing information.

Pattern	Example	Challenge question
Universal statement	“Everyone needs this.”	Who specifically? How do you know?
Cause & effect	“This will make customers successful.”	How exactly does X lead to Y?
Mind reading	“Customers will definitely love it.”	How do you know what they will think or feel?
Necessity	“I must launch now.”	What makes it necessary? What happens if you wait?
Possibility	“People will not pay.”	Which people? What evidence supports this?
Comparison	“My idea is better.”	Better than what, for whom, and by what criterion?

Write your 3 biggest assumptions about this business idea.

For each assumption: What evidence would prove it wrong?

5. Problem–Solution Fit

A strong business usually solves a problem that is important enough for a specific customer to act on.

How often does the customer experience this problem?

How painful, costly, frustrating, risky, or time-consuming is it?

What happens if the customer does nothing?

What existing alternatives are available?

What is genuinely different about your proposed solution?

What result can the customer reasonably expect—and what evidence supports that claim?

Problem Strength Rating

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The problem is frequent.					
The problem is important to the customer.					
The customer already spends time/money trying to solve it.					
Current alternatives are unsatisfactory.					
Customers have a reason to act now.					

6. Founder Values & Limiting Beliefs

Your business decisions are influenced by your own values and beliefs. Make them visible so they do not silently drive the strategy.

What personally matters most to you about building this business?

Which values must the business protect? (e.g., freedom, income, impact, creativity, family time)

What belief might cause you to overestimate this idea?

What belief might cause you to underestimate this idea?

What is a more useful, realistic belief that keeps you open to evidence?

Ecology Check

If this business succeeds, what else in your life could change—positively or negatively?

Who else may be affected by this business decision?

7. Three-Position Business Perspective

Use perceptual positions to avoid evaluating the idea only from the founder's viewpoint.

Position 1 — Founder

Why do I believe this idea is valuable? What do I want it to become?

Position 2 — Customer

If I were the target customer, what would make me buy? What would stop me?

Position 3 — Objective Observer

Looking at the idea neutrally, what is strong, weak, unclear, or unsupported?

Key insight after changing perspective:

What did you notice that you could not see from only your original viewpoint?

8. Future Pace & Failure Pre-Mortem

Imagine two futures: one where the business works, and one where it fails. Use both to identify useful information before committing significant resources.

Future A — The idea works

One year from now, what evidence shows the business is working?

What did you have to get right?

What did customers respond to most strongly?

Future B — The idea fails

One year from now, the business failed. What most likely caused the failure?

Which warning signs could you detect early?

What small test could reduce this risk now?

9. Reality Check & Evidence Plan

NLP helps you think better; this section makes you collect external evidence.

Validation area	What I currently believe	Evidence / result	Confidence
Customer problem			
Customer willingness to pay			
Competition / alternatives			
Differentiation			
Delivery feasibility			
Acquisition / marketing			

What is the single most important unknown you need to validate?

What evidence would make you increase your confidence?

What evidence would make you change or abandon the idea?

10. Minimum Validation Experiment

Do not try to prove the entire business at once. Test the riskiest assumption with the smallest useful experiment.

Element	My answer
Riskiest assumption	
Target people to test with	
Experiment / test	
Number of people / attempts	
Success threshold	
Deadline	
What result would change my plan?	

Possible low-cost validation methods:

Customer interviews • Problem surveys • Landing-page test • Prototype/demo • Pre-order or deposit test • Pilot service • Small paid advertising test • Competitor/market analysis • Direct outreach

11. Business Idea Decision Matrix

Score the idea after completing the evidence work. Avoid giving high scores simply because you love the idea.

Criteria	Score 1–5
Problem importance	
Customer urgency	
Willingness to pay evidence	
Strength of differentiation	
Founder strengths fit	
Founder values fit	
Feasibility	
Access to target customers	
Growth potential	
Evidence quality	
TOTAL / 50	

Interpretation: A high score does not guarantee success. A low score does not automatically mean “bad idea.” Use the score to identify what needs stronger evidence.

12. Decision & Next 7-Day Action Plan

My current decision: ■ Test further ■ Modify idea ■ Proceed to pilot ■ Pause ■ Drop idea

Why did I choose this decision?

What is the ONE most important thing I need to learn next?

Action	Date	Expected learning	Actual result

Final reminder: Your goal is not to become emotionally certain that the idea will work. Your goal is to become increasingly informed by evidence while staying flexible enough to improve the idea.