

How to GAIN CUSTOMER INSIGHT

Module: Developing your Interview Plan

Deliverable	Time	Activity Type
Develop an Interview Plan for at least (3) individuals from your team's Customer Contact List	25 minutes	Group

Before you meet anyone for any interview, you need to take the time and get *prepared*. Below are a few actions you should spend time on before speaking with anyone - people value their time, so don't waste it.

Abstracting Your Assumptions

Prepare for the interview by generating a list of questions based on your customer segment assumptions. Then, abstract your questions to disguise what you would otherwise ask directly. This may sound counterintuitive, but you don't want to ask questions in a manner that can influence a potential customer's response.

Developing Your Interview Plan

- **Conduct research on the industry** - if you are not a domain expert, you are going to have to take the time to become one. Search for industry reports, establish Google alerts, read scholarly articles, etc.
- **Conduct research on the company** - don't look foolish upon arrival and not knowing anything about the company. Take the time to read a company's website.
- **Conduct research on the person** - at the very least, take the time to read the person's public LinkedIn profile and any biography listed on their company's website. Additionally, you never know what will pop up from a Google search.
- **Starter Questions** - make sure to have a few opening questions to **build rapport**. This can commonly be something you discover about the company or person during your research.
- **Conversation Prompts** - asking "yeah, but why?" or "that's interesting, but how?" are great fallback questions if you feel the conversation stalling.
- **Ask for additional contacts** - you need to develop a reference story ... and write a highly professional email getting right to your ASK (which is an interview :)

Developing Your Approach

Conducting an interview with people you've never met before can be a little bit intimidating the first time you try. Thus, the importance of practice! Begin by practicing your opening approach with other teammates and overtime you will become more comfortable.

Sample Interview Questions

- *"Can you tell me the story about that?"*
- *"And then what happened?"*
- *"Why [or how] did you do that?"*
- *"What did you love [or hate] about that?"*
- *"If you could wave a magic wand, what would it be like?"*
- *Tell me about an experience when ...*
- *What are the best/worst parts about ...*
- *Can you help me understand more about ...*