

Mapping Customer Jobs and Outcomes

How a jobs-based lens connects a customer's goal, their frustrations and the outcomes they actually value.

Theory session

Beginner

Running case: NurtureNest



Where this session sits

1.2 framed the problem; 1.3 asks what the customer was trying to accomplish

MODULE 1

Founder Thinking and Problem Framing

MODULE 2

Recognizing and
Investigating Opportunities

MODULE 3

Turning Insight
into Viable Ventures

SESSIONS IN THIS MODULE

1.1 Adopting an Entrepreneurial Mindset
How to act when outcomes cannot be known

1.2 Framing Problems Worth Solving
Turning observations into testable problem statements

1.3 **Mapping Customer Jobs and Outcomes**
What customers are actually trying to get done

YOU ARE HERE

What this session explains

A vocabulary for describing customers by what they are trying to get done

01 **A job is a goal, not a task**

What progress the customer is trying to make in a particular circumstance.

02 **Jobs have three dimensions**

Functional, emotional and social — and the last two often decide adoption.

03 **Pains and gains are asymmetric**

Removing a frustration and adding a benefit are not interchangeable moves.

04 **The roles can come apart**

The person who uses a product, the person who buys it and the person whose job it serves may be three people.

What a “job to be done” means

Describing demand by circumstance rather than by demographics

WORKING DEFINITION

A job to be done is the progress a person is trying to make in a given circumstance. People do not buy products; they hire something to make that progress, and fire it when something better appears.

1

Circumstance, not customer type

“A parent worried at 9pm” predicts behaviour far better than “urban parents aged 30–40”.

2

Stable over time

Solutions change constantly; the underlying job — reassure me that this is normal — barely moves.

3

Competition is redefined

Anything hired for the same job competes: a relative, a search engine, or doing nothing at all.

Christensen, C., Hall, T., Dillon, K. & Duncan, D. (2016). Competing Against Luck. · Ulwick, A. (2005). What Customers Want.

Every job has three dimensions

Products usually address the first and lose on the other two

1

Functional

The practical task. "Find out whether this symptom needs attention tonight." Easiest to observe, and the one teams optimise by default.

2

Emotional

How the person wants to feel while doing it. "Stop worrying without feeling like I am overreacting." Often decides whether the product is used at all.

3

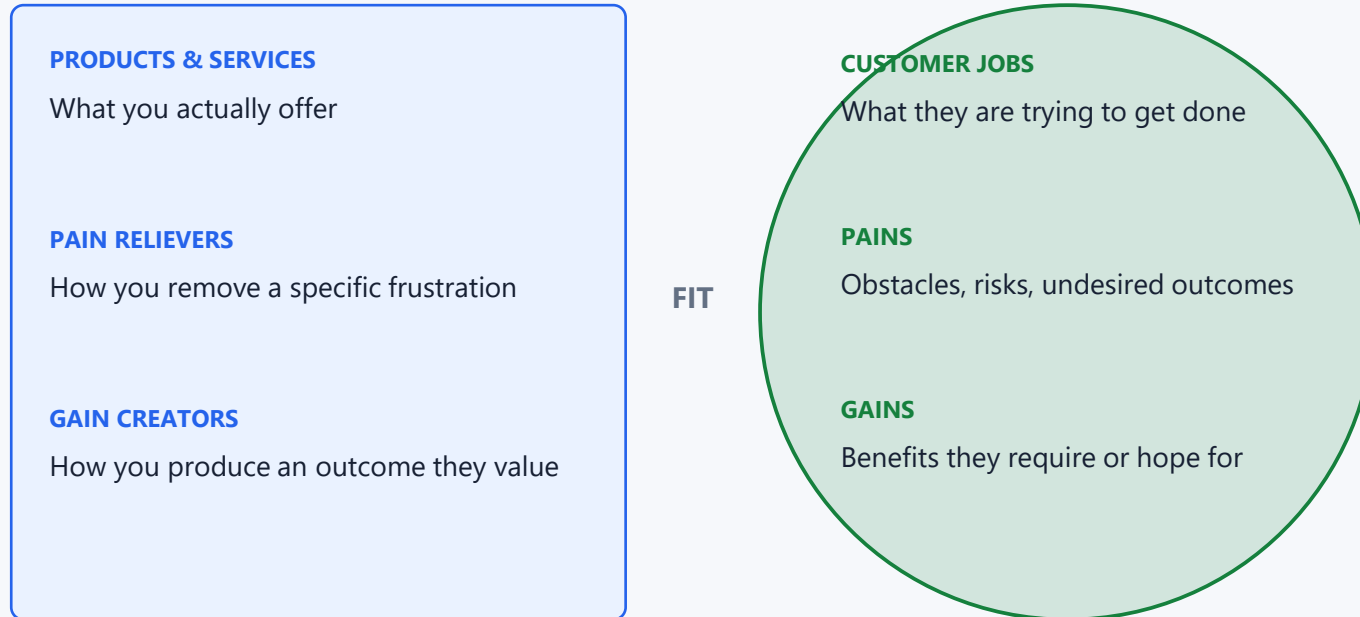
Social

How they wish to be seen by others. "Look like a careful parent, not an anxious one." Rarely stated, frequently decisive.

A product that performs the functional job while violating the emotional or social one is typically abandoned rather than criticised.

Customer profile and value map

Fit is a claim about the relationship between two lists, not a property of either



Fit exists when specific items on the left address specific items on the right — not when both lists are long.

Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Bernarda, G. & Smith, A. (2014). Value Proposition Design. Hoboken: Wiley.

THE DISCIPLINE

One-to-one, or nothing

Draw a line from each pain reliever to the pain it removes. Anything unlinked is a feature looking for a justification.

ORDER OF WORK

Right side first

The customer profile is research. The value map is a design decision. Doing them in the wrong order produces a canvas that agrees with you.

CAUTION

A canvas is not evidence

It organises what you believe so the weakest belief becomes visible and testable.

Pains and gains are not mirror images

Removing a frustration and adding a benefit buy different things

PAINS

What gets in the way

KINDS

Undesired outcomes, obstacles that block the job, and risks of it going wrong.

WHY THEY MATTER MORE EARLY

A severe pain creates urgency. People will tolerate a rough product that removes one.

TEST

Ask what they did the last time it happened — and what that cost them.

GAINS

What good looks like

KINDS

Required (without it the product fails), expected, desired, and unexpected.

WHY THEY MATTER LATER

Gains differentiate once the pain is handled. They rarely trigger a first purchase.

TEST

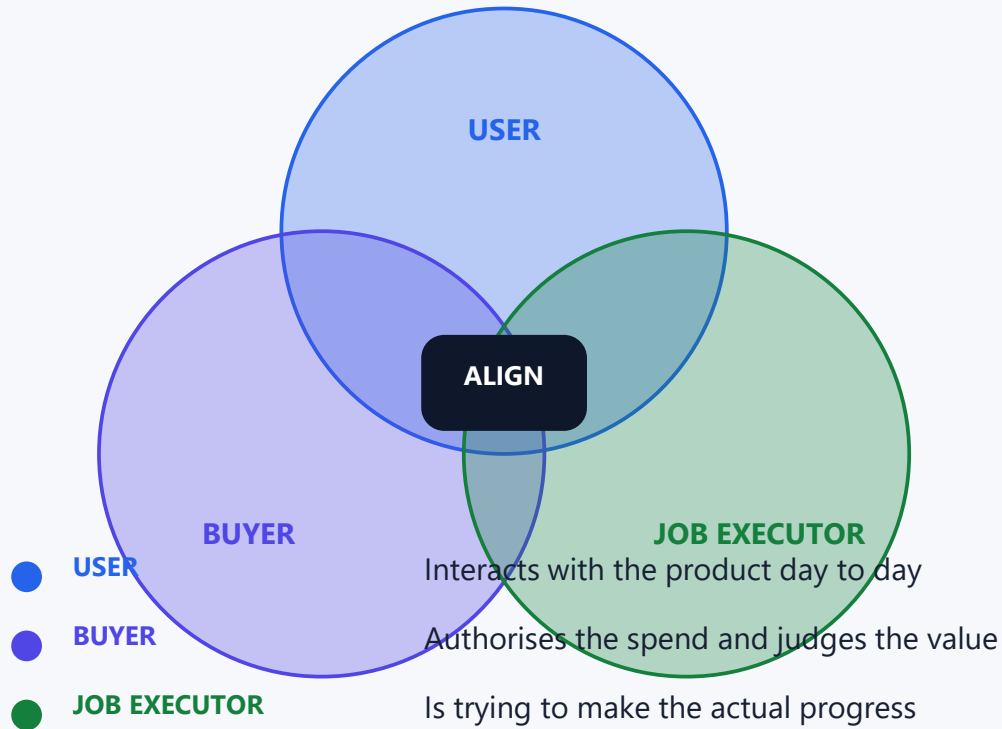
Ask which outcome they would notice if it disappeared tomorrow.

THE CATEGORY THAT IS ALWAYS MISSED

Required gains are invisible when present and fatal when absent — which is why they are so often left off the list.

User, buyer, and job executor

When these are different people, optimising for the wrong one is invisible until adoption stalls



Role separation is standard in B2B and healthcare; it is equally common in family and household products.

THE CARELOOP ERROR

Serving the supplier

Patients supplied data; care managers held the job. Building for the supplier produced 18% weekly submissions.

THE CORRECTION

Serve the job

Alerts and risk scoring served the care manager's decision. Submissions rose to 64%.

THE GENERAL RULE

Ask who gets value

Whoever changes their behaviour because of the output is the customer worth designing for.

Which outcome to work on first

Outcome-driven innovation ranks by importance and dissatisfaction together

Outcome the customer wants	Important?	Satisfied today?	What it implies
Know tonight whether a symptom needs attention	High	Low	Underserved — the strongest place to build.
Keep a record of past concerns for the next appointment	Medium	Low	Secondary opportunity; real but less urgent.
Book an appointment quickly	High	High	Already served. Competing here wins little.
Compare against other children's development	Low	Low	Interesting to build, unimportant to them. Avoid.

READING THE TABLE

The opportunity is greatest where importance is high and satisfaction is low. A high-importance outcome that is already satisfied is a trap: it feels valuable and changes nothing.

CASE STUDY

CareLoop

A remote monitoring product that found fit only once it identified whose job it was really doing.

The same data, a different job

Product-market fit emerged from re-identifying whose job the product was doing

BEFORE

Built around the data supplier

WHO IT SERVED

Patients, assumed to be both the user and the reason the product existed.

WHAT IT DELIVERED

Raw vital signs, collected through a patient-facing app.

RESULT

18% of patients submitted vitals weekly — too irregular for a monitoring product to work.

AFTER

Built around the job to be done

WHO IT SERVED

Care managers — the buyer, whose job is deciding who needs attention.

WHAT IT DELIVERED

Actionable alerts and AI risk stratification on a care-manager dashboard; collection moved to SMS.

RESULT

64% weekly submissions and 35% faster time-to-intervention.

READING THE CASE

The data was the same. Separating the person who supplies information from the person who gets value from it is what changed the product.

Drawn from the session case pack; figures as reported there.

Bringing the theory to NurtureNest

Turning the framed problem from 1.2 into a job map

Element	The question to answer	NurtureNest example
Job	What progress, in what circumstance?	Decide, at bedtime, whether a symptom can wait until morning.
Functional	What is the practical task?	Compare what I am seeing against something trustworthy.
Emotional	How do they want to feel?	Reassured without feeling foolish for asking.
Social	How do they want to be seen?	As attentive rather than anxious.
Top pain	What blocks the job today?	No trustworthy source is reachable at that hour.
Required gain	What must be true or it fails?	The answer must be specific to this child, not generic advice.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Module 2 takes this job map and asks how many people share the job, and how to find them.

What to carry out of this session

1

Describe demand by circumstance, not demographics.

The situation a person is in predicts behaviour far better than who they are.

2

Functional jobs win trials; emotional and social jobs decide adoption.

A product that works but embarrasses the user is abandoned quietly.

3

Pains create urgency, gains create preference.

Early on, removing a severe frustration beats adding an attractive benefit.

4

Find out who actually gets the value.

The user, the buyer and the job executor can be three different people.

5

Prioritise where importance is high and satisfaction low.

An important outcome that is already well served is the most convincing dead end there is.

Sources for this session

Primary references behind each concept

JOBS TO BE DONE	Christensen, C., Hall, T., Dillon, K. & Duncan, D. (2016). <i>Competing Against Luck</i> . New York: HarperBusiness.
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