

Testing Product Viability

After making your MVP, the next step is to test your products viability i.e. seeing if people actually are interested in your product or not and what work is left to do. What this does not mean is that you are simply seeing if anyone wants to buy your product as is and for how much. The answers we are looking for are much deeper.

When you are doing this, it is important to be honest with yourself and not just seek to find whatever evidence which validates your MVP. It is completely acceptable if what you find from this stage is that no one likes your product and that they think it is pointless and ineffective. This is not the point. The point is to determine what is valuable about your MVP, where is your MVP not aligning with our original need, and where you can go next. If we were honest with our assessment of our need (and that's ok if we weren't, let's just start being honest about it now), then there is a viable need which our product can address. It's just a matter of pivoting (a fancy word for changing) our idea, whether this means tweaking our MVP or coming up with a completely new and drastically different idea and/or need.

It is expected that a startup company will go through many iterations of creating/modifying an MVP and testing its viability. This is why it is important not to stress too highly about making sure the MVP is a fully working prototype because it may just be completely scrapped anyways. In fact, having a refined MVP can even work against a company as if the individuals have spent significant amount of time/effort/money into making an MVP then they are less open-minded to the new possible ideas which address their need and require significant pivots.

What you are looking to learn when you are testing your product viability:

- What are the strengths of your MVP
- What are the weaknesses of your MVP
- How does your MVP address the original need
- How does your MVP not address your final need
- How does your MVP differ from those solutions currently available for your need i.e. what makes it unique and what is its value
- How valuable does the customer feel this MVP is and how valuable do they find the need to be

How to go about testing your product viability:

- Find potential users/customers and get them to interact with your product
- Ask users/customers feedback questions. Try to have a mix of objective (yes/no, on a scale of 1-5 type questions) and subjective (open-ended questions). The strength of objective questions is that they are more concrete and less affected by our personal want for positive feedback, while the strength of subjective questions is that they allow for deeper and more meaningful responses.
- Come up with a list of questions to ask aligning to those bullet points above. Additionally, getting feedback from just a discussion is completely acceptable and sometimes preferred.
- Whatever feedback you do get, **WRITE IT DOWN AND RECORD IT**

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- Ask some questions to gauge how likely someone is to use/buy this product and how much, but this should not be the only emphasis.

Going forward:

The next step would be to re-evaluate our need and our MVP and further iterate our product. If you do not have time for this and can only proceed with what you have, even if the evidence of the product's viability is far from good, that is ok!