

HUSTLE MAG

Hustle in Silence.

EDITION 003

VOLUME I

PREMIUM EDITION

RESEARCH

*Interviews that
reveal the truth*

INSIGHT

*Why people really
buy*



IMPROVEMENT

*Feedback into
improvements*

SERVICE

*Service that earns
loyalty*

THE COVER STORY

THE CUSTOMER MINDSET

Understanding the People You Serve

HUSTLE MAG — THE COMPLETE BUSINESS COLLECTION · EDITION 003

From the Editors

Every founder believes they understand their customers. Most are partly right, and the part they get wrong is usually the part that matters most. We assume customers think like us, value what we value and notice what we notice. They rarely do.

This issue is about closing that gap. It is about learning to see the business from the outside: through the eyes of the person who finds you for the first time, hesitates at the price, struggles with the instructions or tells a friend about you afterwards.

The methods here are not complicated. Ask better questions. Listen without defending. Watch what people do rather than only what they say. Map the journey customers actually take, not the one you imagine. Then improve one thing at a time, and keep asking.

Customer understanding is not a project with an end date. It is a habit, and like any habit, it compounds. Businesses that practise it steadily become easier to buy from, easier to recommend and harder to leave.

We hope this issue helps you build that habit. Start with one conversation this week.

The Editors, Hustle Mag

EDITION 003 · THE CUSTOMER MINDSET

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IN THIS EDITION · EDITION 003

The Customer Mindset

Understanding the People You Serve

Customers do not buy products. They buy progress in their lives: a problem solved, a fear removed, a goal brought closer. The businesses that understand that progress most clearly design better offers, write clearer messages and deliver experiences people want to repeat.

This issue moves from perspective to practice. We begin by learning to see through the customer's eyes, then turn to interviews and the jobs customers hire products to do. We map the customer journey, turn feedback into improvements and look at service and pricing from the buyer's side. We finish with the habits that keep customer understanding alive.

Every article ends with a practical step you can take this week.

The theme: Understanding customers deeply: research, jobs to be done and feedback loops.

01

Seeing Through the Customer's Eyes

Your business looks completely different from the outside. The outside is where customers stand.

Founders know their businesses too well to see them clearly. They know what the jargon means, where the important information is on the website, why the process works the way it does and what the price includes. Customers know none of this. They arrive with limited time, partial attention and their own worries, and they judge the business on what they can see and understand quickly.

Seeing through the customer's eyes means deliberately setting aside your inside knowledge and experiencing the business as a newcomer would. It is one of the simplest and most valuable disciplines a founder can practise.

The curse of knowledge

Once you know something, it is very difficult to imagine not knowing it. Psychologists call this the curse of knowledge. In business it appears everywhere: product names that only make sense internally, instructions that skip steps, websites organised around the company's departments rather than the customer's questions.

A useful test is to show your website or offer to someone outside your industry and ask them to explain what you do, who it is for and what happens after they buy. Wherever they hesitate or guess wrongly, the customer would too.

Walk through your own business

Experience your business exactly as a customer would.

Search for it online using the words a customer might use. Read your website on a phone. Send an enquiry from a personal email address and time the reply. Buy your own product or book your own service. Follow every instruction literally.

Note every moment of confusion, delay, doubt or friction. Founders who do this for the first time are almost always surprised. Small problems they had stopped noticing, a broken link, an unclear button, a confirmation email that never arrived, have been quietly costing them customers.

Look for what customers worry about

Customers rarely state their fears directly. Instead, they hesitate. They leave a page, abandon a basket or say they will think about it. Behind most hesitation is an unanswered question: Will this work for me? What if I do not like it? Is this business reliable? What exactly happens next?

Read your materials and ask which of these questions they answer. A clear explanation of the next steps, a straightforward refund policy or an example from a similar customer can remove a worry that would otherwise stop a sale.

“They leave a page, abandon a basket or say they will think about it.”

Notice effort and time

Customers value their time and energy. Every extra form field, unnecessary step, unclear choice or delay increases the effort required to buy from you. Even motivated customers give up when the effort feels greater than the expected benefit.

Count the steps between a customer deciding they are interested and actually receiving value. Then ask which steps could be removed, combined or simplified. Reducing effort is often more effective than adding persuasion.

Separate what you value from what customers value

Founders often take pride in aspects of their work that customers barely notice, such as technical sophistication, while overlooking things customers care about deeply, such as clear communication or punctual delivery. Neither view is wrong, but only one pays the bills.

Ask customers what made them choose you and what they value most now. Their answers may surprise you and should guide where you invest your effort.

Make it a regular practice

Your business changes over time, and so does your perspective. Repeat the outside-in review every few months, especially after changing your website, prices or

processes. Invite a friend, a new team member or a customer to go through the experience while thinking aloud. Fresh eyes notice what familiar eyes miss.

An example in practice

The owner of a small yoga studio believed her timetable was clear. When she watched a new visitor try to book a first class on a phone, the visitor could not tell which classes suited beginners, what to bring or where to enter the building. Three small changes, a beginner label, a short "your first visit" page and a photograph of the entrance, noticeably increased first bookings.

THE TAKEAWAY

Customers judge your business from the outside, where your knowledge does not reach. **This week, go through your business as a new customer on a phone, from search to purchase, and fix the three biggest points of confusion you find.**

RESEARCH · 4 MIN READ

02

Customer Interviews That Reveal the Truth

The right questions uncover what customers do. The wrong ones only collect polite opinions.

FIGURE 02 · CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS

Questions that reveal, questions that mislead

ASK THIS	NOT THIS
Tell me about the last time this happened.	Would you use a product that...?
What did you try before?	Do you like our idea?
What did that cost you?	How much would you pay?
What nearly stopped you buying?	Wouldn't reminders help you?

Past behaviour is evidence. Predictions and opinions are not.

Talking to customers is the most direct way to understand them, yet many customer conversations produce little useful information.

Customers want to be helpful and polite. Ask them whether they like your idea, and most will say yes. Ask whether they would buy it, and many will say they probably would. Neither answer reliably predicts what they will actually do.

Good interviews focus on real past behaviour rather than opinions or predictions. What people have done is evidence. What they say they might do is usually wishful thinking.

Talk about their life, not your idea

Begin with the customer's situation, not your product. Ask about the problem area in general: how they currently handle it, what they find difficult and what they have tried.

If you start by describing your idea, the conversation becomes an evaluation of your idea, and people will tend to be kind rather than honest.

For example, a founder developing meal plans for busy parents should ask how the family decided what to eat last week, rather than asking whether parents would like a meal planning service.

Ask about specific past events

Questions about specific events produce more reliable answers than general ones. "How do you usually choose suppliers?" invites an idealised answer. "Tell me about the last time you chose a new supplier" invites a real story, with real steps, frustrations and trade-offs.

Useful prompts include:

- Tell me about the last time you dealt with this problem.
- What did you try first? What happened?
- What was the most frustrating part?
- How much time or money did it cost you?
- What did you end up doing?

“A customer who says the problem is “a bit annoying” but has done nothing about it may never pay for a solution.”

Look for evidence of commitment

The strongest signal of a real problem is that people already spend time or money trying to solve it. A customer who has tried three different apps, built a spreadsheet or hired help has a problem worth solving. A customer who says the problem is "a bit annoying" but has done nothing about it may never pay for a solution.

Ask what solutions they currently use and what those cost. Existing spending is one of the best indicators of demand.

Listen far more than you speak

Aim to speak for no more than a fifth of the conversation. Resist the urge to explain, defend or correct. When customers criticise your product or describe a competitor favourably, ask them to say more. Criticism is where the most valuable information hides.

Silence is a useful tool. After a customer answers, wait a few seconds before speaking. People often add their most honest thoughts once the obvious answer is out of the way.

Avoid leading questions

Questions that suggest an answer produce misleading results. "Wouldn't it be helpful to have reminders?" invites agreement. "How do you keep track of appointments now?" invites an honest description. Keep questions neutral and open, and avoid giving examples that steer the customer.

Record and compare

Take notes during or immediately after each conversation, capturing exact phrases where possible. After several interviews, compare your notes. Patterns matter more than individual comments. If five out of eight customers mention the same frustration, it deserves attention. If one customer requests a feature nobody else mentions, record it but do not rebuild your business around it.

How many conversations are enough

You do not need hundreds of interviews. For a focused question, patterns often appear after five to ten conversations. When you stop hearing new themes, you have learned most of what this round of interviews can teach. Repeat the process whenever you face an important decision or notice behaviour you do not understand.

THE TAKEAWAY

Reliable insight comes from stories about real past behaviour. **Arrange three customer interviews this week, ask only about specific past events and current solutions, speak as little as possible, and write down the patterns you hear.**

03

Jobs to Be Done: Why People Really Buy

Customers do not want a drill. They want the shelf on the wall and the room finally finished.

FIGURE 03 · JOBS TO BE DONE

Writing a job statement

WHEN	I start a new month with unpaid invoices,
The situation	
I WANT TO	see exactly who owes me money,
The motivation	
SO I CAN	follow up confidently and keep cash flow steady.
The outcome	

A good job statement never mentions your product. It describes the customer's progress.

A useful way to understand customers is to ask what "job" they are hiring your product or service to do. The idea, often called jobs to be done, suggests that people buy things to make progress in a particular situation. The product is simply the means. The job is the real reason for the purchase.

Understanding the job explains behaviour that demographics cannot. It reveals who your true competitors are, which features matter and how to describe your value in words customers recognise immediately.

Functional, emotional and social jobs

Most purchases involve more than one kind of job. There is usually a **functional** job: the practical task the customer wants done. There is often an **emotional** job: how they want to feel. And there may be a **social** job: how they want to be seen by others.

Consider someone hiring a personal trainer. The functional job may be to become stronger or lose weight. The emotional job may be to feel confident and in control. The social job may be to look and feel good at an upcoming wedding. A trainer who understands all three can design a programme, communicate progress and market the service far more effectively than one who only talks about exercises.

The situation matters

Jobs arise in specific circumstances. The same person may hire different products for similar jobs depending on the situation. A business traveller choosing lunch between meetings wants speed and reliability. The same person choosing dinner with family on a weekend wants atmosphere and time together.

When interviewing customers, ask about the circumstances surrounding the purchase: what was happening, what triggered the search and what made it urgent at that moment. The trigger often reveals the job more clearly than anything else.

Your real competitors

Thinking in jobs changes your understanding of competition. Your competitors are not only businesses that sell similar products, but anything customers might hire for the same job. A cinema competes with streaming services, restaurants, games and even an early night. A

bookkeeping service competes with spreadsheets, accounting software, a relative who helps and doing nothing until the tax deadline.

Knowing the full range of alternatives helps you explain why your solution does the job better, faster, more reliably or with less effort.

“The same person choosing dinner with family on a weekend wants atmosphere and time together.”

Progress and obstacles

Customers move towards a new solution when the frustration with their current situation and the attraction of a better one outweigh their worries and habits. Even when a new option is clearly better, anxiety about change and comfort with the familiar can hold people back.

This explains why many customers who seem interested do not buy. Address the forces that hold them back: offer a simple start, reduce switching effort, provide reassurance and make the first result arrive quickly.

Writing a job statement

A simple format helps clarify the job: *When [situation], I want to [motivation], so I can [expected outcome].* For

example: *When I start a new month with unpaid invoices, I want to see exactly who owes me money, so I can follow up confidently and keep my cash flow steady.*

A good job statement does not mention your product. It describes the customer's progress. Use it to test ideas: does this feature, message or offer help the customer make that progress?

Using jobs in practice

Once you understand the main jobs, use them to guide decisions. Organise your website around the situations customers are in. Write headlines that describe the progress they want. Build features that remove obstacles to that progress, and remove features that do not serve any important job.

A small coffee roaster discovered that many subscription customers were not primarily coffee enthusiasts. Their job was to avoid running out of good coffee on busy weekday mornings. The roaster simplified the subscription, added flexible delivery dates and promoted reliability rather than tasting notes. Cancellations fell noticeably.

THE TAKEAWAY

Customers hire products to make progress in specific situations. **Interview two recent customers about the moment they decided to buy, write one job statement for each, and check whether your website describes that progress in their words.**

EXPERIENCE · 4 MIN READ

04

Mapping the Customer Journey

Customers do not experience departments. They experience one continuous journey.

FIGURE 04 · THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Five stages and how customers feel

STAGE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW THEY FEEL
Discovery	Notice a need, find options	Curious, hopeful
Consideration	Compare, read, seek proof	Uncertain
Purchase	Decide, pay, wait	Anxious
Experience	Use the product or service	Relieved or disappointed
Loyalty	Return, recommend or leave	Loyal or indifferent

Add reassurance exactly where uncertainty and anxiety peak.

Inside a business, work is divided into parts: marketing, sales, delivery, support and billing. Customers do not see these divisions. They experience one continuous journey, from the moment they first hear of you to the moment they decide whether to buy again. A single weak moment anywhere along that journey can undo good work everywhere else.

A customer journey map makes that experience visible. It shows each stage the customer passes through, what they do, think and feel, and where things go well or badly.

The five stages

Most journeys can be described in five broad stages:

- **Discovery:** the customer becomes aware of a need and finds possible solutions, including you.

- **Consideration:** they compare options, read information and look for reassurance.
- **Purchase:** they decide, pay and receive confirmation.
- **Experience:** they use the product or receive the service.
- **Loyalty:** they decide whether to return, recommend you or leave.

Your business may need more detailed stages, but starting with these keeps the map manageable.

Map what actually happens

A useful map describes the real journey, not the ideal one. Base it on customer interviews, support messages, website analytics, reviews and your own walk-through of the experience. For each stage, write down what the customer is doing, which channels they use, what questions they have and how they are likely to feel.

Be honest. If customers often wait two days for a reply, or have to search for delivery information, the map should show it. A flattering map hides the problems it was meant to reveal.

“If customers often wait two days for a reply, or have to search for delivery information, the map should show it.”

Find the moments that matter

Not every moment carries equal weight. Some points have a disproportionate effect on whether customers continue: the first reply to an enquiry, the clarity of the price, the checkout process, the first use of the product and the handling of any problem.

Mark these critical moments on your map. Ask where customers most often hesitate, drop away, complain or ask for help. These points of friction are usually where improvements produce the largest results.

Look at emotions, not only actions

Customers' feelings change throughout the journey. Excitement during discovery can turn into uncertainty during consideration, anxiety at the moment of payment and relief or disappointment after delivery. Mapping emotions helps you see where reassurance is needed.

For example, many customers feel uncertain immediately after paying, before anything has arrived. A clear confirmation email explaining exactly what happens next and when can turn anxiety into confidence.

Pay attention to the gaps between stages

Problems often occur in the handover between stages. A sales conversation promises one thing and delivery provides another. A customer finishes onboarding and then

hears nothing for weeks. A product arrives without instructions.

Look closely at these transitions. A short follow-up message, a welcome guide or a check-in after the first week can make the journey feel connected and cared for.

Improve one moment at a time

A complete map often reveals many problems. Resist the temptation to fix everything at once. Choose the single moment that causes the most damage, perhaps the stage where most customers drop away, and improve it. Measure the effect, then move to the next.

Small changes can have surprising effects. A home-cleaning business that sent a photograph and short bio of the assigned cleaner the day before each first visit reduced cancellations, because customers felt more comfortable letting a stranger into their home.

Keep the map alive

Update your journey map whenever you change your offer, website or processes, and review it at least twice a year. Share it with anyone who works with customers. A shared map helps everyone understand how their part affects the whole experience.

THE TAKEAWAY

The customer experiences your business as one journey, and the weakest moment defines it. **Draw your five-stage customer journey on a single page, mark the three moments where customers most often hesitate or leave, and improve the most damaging one this month.**

05

Turning Feedback Into Improvements

Feedback is only valuable when it changes something customers can notice.

FIGURE 05 · FEEDBACK

The four-step feedback loop

1**Collect**

Ask at natural moments, including when customers leave.

2**Organise**

Group comments into themes and count them monthly.

3**Act**

Fix frequent, important problems with reasonable effort.

4**Close the loop**

Tell customers what changed because of them.

Most businesses collect some feedback: a review here, a complaint there, a comment in an email. Far fewer turn that feedback into steady improvements. Without a system, feedback is either forgotten or handled one complaint at a time, and the underlying problems remain.

A simple feedback loop has four parts: collect, organise, act and tell customers what changed. Small businesses can run this loop with nothing more than a spreadsheet and a regular hour in the calendar.

Collect feedback deliberately

Do not rely only on customers who volunteer opinions. Those who complain loudly or praise enthusiastically are not always representative. Ask for feedback at natural moments: after a purchase, after a project is completed and

when a customer cancels or stops buying.

Keep requests short. One or two open questions usually produce better answers than a long survey. For example: "What nearly stopped you from buying?" and "What is one thing we could do better?" Customers who leave are particularly valuable sources of insight. A brief, polite question about why they left can reveal problems that satisfied customers never mention.

Look beyond direct comments

Feedback also appears indirectly. Support questions show where information is unclear. Abandoned baskets show where buying becomes difficult. Returns show where expectations differ from reality. Repeated questions in sales conversations show what your marketing fails to explain.

Treat these signals as feedback too. Often they reveal problems customers would never think to report.

Organise it into themes

Record all feedback in one place, with the date, the source and a short summary. Every month, group comments into themes such as pricing, delivery, communication, product quality and ease of use. Count how often each theme appears.

Themes are more important than individual comments. One customer asking for a new colour may be a personal

preference. Ten customers struggling with the same setup step is a problem worth solving.

“Record all feedback in one place, with the date, the source and a short summary.”

Decide what to act on

Not all feedback should lead to change. Some requests conflict with your positioning or would help only a small number of customers. Ask three questions: How many customers does this affect? How much does it matter to them? How much effort would a solution require?

Prioritise frequent, important problems that can be solved with reasonable effort. Record the decisions you make, including the reasons for not acting on some requests. This prevents the same discussions from repeating every month.

Make changes customers can notice

Improvements should be visible from the customer's side. Rewriting confusing instructions, simplifying a checkout, improving packaging, changing reply times or adding a frequently requested option are all changes customers experience directly.

Measure whether the change worked. If customers

frequently asked how to track deliveries, check whether those questions decrease after you add tracking information to the confirmation email.

Close the loop

Tell customers when their feedback has led to a change. A short message such as "You told us the booking form was confusing, so we simplified it" shows that you listen and makes customers more willing to share feedback in future.

When you contact customers who raised a specific issue, thank them personally. People who see their suggestions taken seriously often become strong advocates for a business.

Handle complaints as opportunities

A complaint is feedback delivered with urgency. Respond quickly, listen fully, apologise where appropriate and resolve the problem. Then ask whether the complaint reveals a wider issue. Fixing the individual case satisfies one customer. Fixing the underlying cause protects every future customer.

THE TAKEAWAY

Feedback creates value only when it leads to visible improvement. **Gather the last three months of feedback into one sheet, group it into themes, fix the most common problem and tell the customers who raised it what changed.**

SERVICE · 4 MIN READ

06

Service That Earns Loyalty

Customers forget most transactions. They remember how they were treated when it mattered.

For a small business, service is one of the most powerful ways to stand out. Large companies often struggle to offer personal, responsive and flexible service at scale. A small business can make every customer feel known and looked after. That experience builds loyalty that discounts and advertising rarely achieve.

Good service is not about grand gestures. It is about reliability, attention and ownership, repeated consistently.

Speed and clarity

Customers value a fast response, even when the problem cannot be solved immediately. A quick reply saying "Thank you, we are looking into this and will update you by tomorrow afternoon" reduces anxiety and builds trust. Silence, by contrast, makes customers assume the worst.

Set clear response times and keep them. Make sure customers know how to contact you and what to expect. An automatic acknowledgement can help, but a short personal reply is better whenever possible.

Take ownership

Few things frustrate customers more than being passed from person to person or told that a problem is someone else's responsibility. Even in a small business, take ownership of each issue until it is resolved. If you need help from a supplier or partner, manage that relationship yourself rather than sending the customer elsewhere.

Ownership also means using the customer's name, remembering previous conversations and not making them repeat information they have already provided.

Solve the real problem

Listen carefully to understand what the customer actually needs. A customer asking for a refund may really want a working product delivered quickly. A customer complaining about a late delivery may need reassurance that their event will not be affected. Ask questions, confirm your understanding and then solve the real issue.

Wherever possible, give staff or yourself the freedom to resolve problems without unnecessary rules. A small gesture made quickly is often more valuable than a larger one made after a long delay.

Recover well from mistakes

Every business makes mistakes. A strong recovery can turn a disappointed customer into a loyal one. Apologise sincerely without excuses, explain what happened in simple terms, put the problem right quickly and, where appropriate, offer something that recognises the inconvenience.

Afterwards, find the cause and fix it. A mistake handled well once builds trust. The same mistake repeated destroys it.

“Listen carefully to understand what the customer actually needs.”

Anticipate needs

Exceptional service often comes from anticipating what customers will need before they ask. Send care instructions before a product arrives. Remind customers about renewals before they expire. Warn them about delays before they discover them.

Look at the questions customers ask most often and answer them proactively in confirmation emails, guides and onboarding messages. Each answered question is a small moment of reassurance.

Small personal touches

Personal touches make customers feel valued: a handwritten note, a follow-up after an important event, remembering a preference from a previous order. These gestures cost little, but they show that the customer is a person rather than an order number.

Make sure personal touches are genuine and appropriate. Automated messages pretending to be personal can feel insincere if they are poorly written or badly timed.

Make service consistent

Customers expect the same standard every time. Write simple guidelines for common situations: response times, how to handle refunds, how to apologise and when to offer goodwill gestures. Consistency allows good service to continue when the business grows or when you are busy.

An example in practice

A small online bike-parts shop shipped the wrong size of brake pads to a customer preparing for a weekend race. The owner replied within the hour, apologised, sent the correct parts by express delivery at no charge and included a short handwritten note. He did not ask for the incorrect parts to be returned before sending the replacement.

The customer posted about the experience in a local cycling group. Several new customers mentioned that post when placing their first orders. The owner also traced the cause, two similar product codes stored side by side, and changed the storage layout so the mistake could not easily happen again.

THE TAKEAWAY

Loyalty is earned in the moments when customers need help. **Set a clear response-time standard, write a short guide for handling the three most common customer problems, and review every complaint from last month for its underlying cause.**

07

Pricing From the Customer's Point of View

Customers do not judge prices in isolation. They judge them against value, alternatives and risk.

Founders usually set prices from the inside out: costs, desired profit and what competitors charge.

Customers judge prices from the outside in. They ask whether the price feels fair for the value they expect, how it compares with their alternatives and how much risk they are taking. Understanding that perspective helps you price more confidently and explain your prices more clearly.

This is not about psychological tricks. It is about making value visible and removing unnecessary doubt.

Value is the customer's judgement

The same product can feel expensive to one customer and cheap to another, depending on the value they expect to receive. A business owner who believes a new website will bring ten extra clients a month judges its price very differently from someone who sees it as a decorative expense.

Help customers understand the value in their own terms: time saved, money earned, problems avoided, stress reduced. Concrete examples and customer stories make that value easier to imagine.

Customers compare with alternatives

Customers rarely consider a price alone. They compare it with something: a competitor, a cheaper option, doing the job themselves or doing nothing. If you do not provide a

reference point, customers will choose their own, and it may not be favourable.

Explain how your offer compares with realistic alternatives. A bookkeeping service might show the cost of the hours an owner would otherwise spend on bookkeeping each month, or the cost of missed deadlines. Comparisons must be honest and relevant, or they will damage trust.

Clarity reduces resistance

Unclear prices create suspicion. Customers worry about hidden fees, unexpected extras and complicated conditions. Make your pricing easy to understand: what is included, what is not, how payment works and what happens if the customer's needs change.

If prices vary, explain why and give realistic examples. "Most small business websites cost between €1,500 and €3,000, depending on the number of pages and features" is far more reassuring than "contact us for a quote".

“Explain how your offer compares with realistic alternatives.”

Packages make choosing easier

Offering a small number of clear packages helps customers compare options and choose what suits them. Many

businesses use three packages: a basic option, a recommended option and a more comprehensive one. Each should be clearly different and designed for a particular type of customer.

Avoid creating packages that exist only to make another option look attractive. Customers notice, and it undermines trust. Every package should be a genuinely useful choice.

Reduce the perceived risk

Price resistance is often really risk resistance. Customers hesitate because they fear paying for something that will not work for them. Reduce that risk with clear guarantees you can honour, small starter options, payment in stages for larger projects or transparent cancellation terms.

Lowering the risk can make a price feel acceptable without lowering the price itself.

Explain price changes respectfully

When you raise prices, tell customers in advance, explain the reason clearly and, where possible, give existing customers time to adjust. Most customers accept reasonable increases when they understand them and continue to receive good value. Sudden, unexplained increases damage relationships.

Listen to price objections carefully

When a customer says a price is too high, ask what they are comparing it with and what result they expect. The objection may reveal that the value has not been explained, that the customer needs a smaller option or that they are not the right customer for this offer. Each answer suggests a different response.

THE TAKEAWAY

Customers judge prices against value, alternatives and risk. **Rewrite your pricing page so each option states who it is for, what is included and the result it supports, and add one honest comparison with the customer's real alternative.**

DISCIPLINE · 4 MIN READ

08

Building a Customer-Centred Habit

Customer understanding fades unless it is practised regularly.

Many founders begin close to their customers. They talk to every buyer, answer every message and notice every complaint. As the business grows, other responsibilities take over: operations, finances, hiring, suppliers. Customer contact becomes occasional, and decisions start to rely on assumptions that slowly drift away from reality.

The solution is not a large research project once a year. It is a small, regular habit that keeps customers at the centre of decisions.

Schedule customer time

What is scheduled tends to happen. Block time in your calendar for customer contact: perhaps two conversations a week, an hour each Friday to read feedback or a monthly session reviewing support messages. Treat this time as seriously as a meeting with an important client, because it is one.

Even fifteen minutes a week spent reading customer messages can keep you aware of changing needs and recurring problems.

Hold a monthly customer review

Once a month, review what you have learned. Use a simple set of questions:

- How many customer conversations did we have?

- What themes appeared in feedback and support messages?
- What did we change as a result?
- What effect did last month's changes have?
- What will we test or improve next?

Write short answers and keep them in one document. Over time, this record shows how the business is evolving in response to customers.

Track a few meaningful measures

Choose a small number of measures that reflect customer experience. Useful examples include response time, the proportion of customers who buy again, the number of complaints, refund requests, reviews received and the percentage of enquiries that become customers.

Track them consistently and look for trends rather than reacting to every small change. A rising number of support questions about the same topic is a signal. A single unusual week may not be.

“A designer, writer or developer who understands your customers will produce better work.”

Share customer stories inside the business

If others work with you, share what customers say. Read a customer comment at the start of a team meeting, circulate positive and negative feedback, and explain how decisions connect to customer needs. When everyone understands the customer, decisions improve throughout the business.

Freelancers and partners benefit from this too. A designer, writer or developer who understands your customers will produce better work.

Make decisions with customers in mind

Before making significant decisions, ask how they will affect customers. A cheaper supplier may reduce costs but increase delivery problems. A new feature may please a few customers while making the product more complicated for everyone else. A simple question, "What will this mean for our customers?", prevents many costly mistakes.

Where possible, test changes with a small group of customers before rolling them out widely.

Stay curious

Customer needs change. New competitors appear, technology shifts and customers' circumstances evolve. A business that stops learning eventually serves customers who no longer exist. Stay curious: ask new questions, watch how customers actually use your product and pay attention

to unexpected behaviour.

When customers do something you did not expect, such as using a product in an unusual way, treat it as an opportunity to learn rather than a mistake.

Small habits, large effects

The habits described here take little time individually. Together, they create a business that responds quickly to customers, improves steadily and builds strong relationships. Over months and years, that steady attention becomes a significant competitive advantage.

An example in practice

The founder of a small software company noticed that his decisions were increasingly based on internal discussions rather than customer evidence. He introduced a simple routine: every Monday he read twenty support messages, and every month he spoke with four customers chosen at random.

Within two months, a pattern emerged that nobody had noticed. New customers were struggling with the same setup step and many were quietly giving up. A short video guide and one simplified screen reduced support questions about setup by more than half. The routine took about two hours a week, and it changed the company's priorities.

THE TAKEAWAY

Customer understanding is a habit, not a project. Book a recurring monthly customer review in your calendar, choose three customer measures to track, and schedule two customer conversations for the coming week.

BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS ISSUE

Your Action Plan

Turn what you have read into the next thirty days.

Your next 30 days

Week 1: Listen. Hold three customer conversations using open, past-focused questions. Record their exact words.

Week 2: Map. Draw your customer journey from first discovery to repeat purchase. Mark the three points where customers hesitate or drop away.

Week 3: Fix one thing. Choose the most damaging point of friction and improve it. Tell customers what changed.

Week 4: Make it routine. Schedule a monthly customer review: conversations held, feedback received, changes made and results observed.

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