Experiment 17
Launch a Customer Council

To better understand how a portfolio of offerings holds up, test it with a Customer Council. Over time, use this champion group to better understand customer preferences, brand impressions, and market direction.

STEPS

1 Identify your purpose
When does your team wish they had customers they could turn to for feedback? What geographic regions, business challenges, or markets are most salient to your immediate work? As a group, identify 1-3 ways you want to incorporate customers into your business, product development cycle, or marketing.

2 Recruit organically
There are many ways to build your Customer Council, but don’t be afraid to start small (or big). Try: open applications from customers, open recommendations from local branches or agents, outreach using customer data, or cold calls to identify core targets.

3 Meet and cultivate meaningfully
Time is a valuable resource, and everyone wants to ensure that their time and opinions are used respectfully. Schedule Customer Council meetings with scoped topics or activities – and clear expectations. Ideas include:
- Focus group by segment issue areas (e.g., affording education, understanding next generation workforce needs, entrepreneur and mother, etc.)
- Early stage product idea review and testing
- Brand review

TIME
60-90 minutes

ROLES
Collective exercise

MATERIALS
DIY value mapping template (see Reference below)

USE IT WHEN
- Any time during the process

USE IT TO
- Get customer perspective on how well your products and services are integrated
- Better serve customer needs
- Get potential ideas on improving your products and services or simply communicating their value and benefits better

Reference: The DIY Toolkit (Nesta) Value Mapping Tool