How do you get your team to rapidly test ideas?

A key element of customer experience projects is rapid prototyping. By quickly building in just enough resolution to make an idea real, you can get it in front of customers and solicit their feedback.

Most financial service providers are not used to quickly testing their ideas through rapid prototyping, particularly in the early stages. It can be difficult to break through existing mindsets and convince your team members to try (and risk failure) in order to quickly learn from customers. But prototypes take a wide variety of forms and some do not require much commitment on the part of your organization, as noted below.

PROTOTYPES

Iteration Type and Purpose	Description	Setting	Example
Idea Mockups (rough representations to illustrate)	Quick, tangible manifestations of your ideas. Low-fidelity, simple representation that can take the form of sketches, storyboards, or role playing scenarios. Best used as artifacts to push forward discussions on an idea.	Meetings or workshops	A storyboard that demonstrates a new service experience

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Prototypes (interactive concepts to experiment with or test)	The stage when you test a formed version of your concept/solution with specific features and representative users in a natural context. Prototypes are valuable tools for testing specific questions about features, audiences, or experiences in context. Generally used in facilitated experiences with users.	In the field (street, community spaces, branch offices, home)	A working wireframe of a mobile service platform for a potential customer to click through
Pilots or Mini-pilots (small scale programs to refine)	The act of putting your idea into the world in a more substantive way. At this stage, your solution is ready to be tested in a relatively unfacilitated manner in order to gather insights on its natural performance with users. Metrics and other evidence help your team hone and evolve a pilot into an implementable offering. Pilots and mini-pilots provide crucial trial periods before refining and launching an offering.	Target or representative service environment (branch, store, mobile platform, etc.)	A 60-day trial of a new service with a group of 100 customers, followed by short phone interviews
Implementa-tion (models or offerings to sustainably launch)	When a tested offering is rolled out to market in a more permanent way. At this point, your product or service should be able to stand alongside your existing portfolio of offerings. Internal (business model, operations) and external (service experience, marketing) details should be fleshed out and only tweaked slightly. Success is measured by indicators refined from the pilot stage, as well as business performance. Implementation stage offerings are real-world solutions launched with actual customers.	Actual service environment with real partners	A new loan offering with a digital onboarding experience facilitated by field agents and through mobile channels