



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