

Your Launch
BLUEPRINT

TAKING YOU FROM BUSINESS VISION
TO BUSINESS LAUNCH

STEP ONE
Build a Strong Foundation

Chapter 2:
Your Customers' Stories

WELCOME!



Welcome to the second chapter
of Your Launch Blueprint
Workbook!

Your Launch Blueprint carves out
the time and focus you need to
create an action plan to bring
your business vision to life. With
the input and expertise of a
business coach with 14 years
experience as a business owner.

Too often I see business owners
launch their business without
getting clear on what their
customers really want or need. They
end up wasting a lot of time or
money designing a beautiful website
which is trying to "sell" something
that no-one actually wants.

I don't want that to happen to you!

This second chapter of Your Launch
Blueprint workbook helps you to
uncover the stories and perspective
of your ideal customer.

If you have any questions, please
don't hesitate to contact me!

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**YOUR
LAUNCH
BLUEPRINT
Step One -
Chapter Two**

Your Customers' Stories

The second step in uncovering your business' most compelling story is to uncover the stories and perspective of the people you most want to work with. You are trying to get clear what their desires, challenges and needs are - the things that they want to invest in. Too many business owners skip this step and create products or services that they think their customers want. Only to later discover that they don't! This step is VITAL not only before you launch your business but also before you launch any new product or service as you grow your business.

In this chapter of Your Launch Blueprint, you are attempting to put yourself in your perfect clients' shoes and really get clear on what their needs, goals, challenges and obstacles are so that you can specifically address and meet those needs in the services or products you provide and the story you tell about those services. This step of the process is an exercise in compassion and empathy.

It is helpful to ask yourself: "what are my ideal customers saying, thinking, feeling or doing shortly before they look for my product or service?"

"In an era of infinite choices and product parity, if we are to create sustainable, meaningful businesses and brands, it makes sense to start the innovation journey with the customer's story and allow our customers to become not just our target, but our muse."

- Bernadette Jiwa

YOUR CUSTOMERS' STORIES

It can be really helpful to think about your own experiences as a consumer. I celebrated my 50th birthday with a trip to Rome with my sister. I knew that I wanted to buy a special pen while I was in Rome. I didn't want to just buy a pen. My context as a customer - what I was thinking, feeling and saying before I bought the pen - was that I wanted to buy a special pen in Rome that would remind me of the time I spent in Rome every time I used it. The pen I bought perfectly satisfies that desire. It makes me smile every time I use it.

Even though I could have bought a very similar pen online or in a different city, that was never an option for me. There was no sales copy or marketing technique that would have convinced me to buy the same pen online or in New York.

The experience of buying the pen also mattered to me. I wanted it to feel special. I looked at one tiny shop near the Trevi Fountain and I thought that it might be the perfect place but when I went in and interacted with the sales assistant it just didn't feel special. It felt like one of the slightly tacky souvenir stores that are in every popular tourist city. On the final morning in Rome, my sister and I retraced our steps to a beautiful store we had seen when wandering around the city on our first evening there. The experience was perfect. It was the kind of store where I could linger for hours. I'm obsessed with pens, stationery and books and this store was heaven for me. The sales assistant who helped us spoke so lovingly about the pen, how it was made and how each pen is unique. The whole experience felt special and memorable which is what I knew I wanted when I thought about buying the pen.

YOUR CUSTOMERS' STORIES

As a business owner, you might be selling the same product or offering the same service as other businesses but the way you sell it and the experience you provide to your clients can make you the perfect choice for your perfect clients.

A lot of business advice talks about creating an avatar of your ideal customer based on their age, gender, interests, the magazines that they read etc, etc. Which can be helpful to a point.

However, I think that so much of that information is two dimensional. It doesn't really get to the heart of who your most perfect clients are.

If you've even been to a Bruno Mars concert or shopped in an IKEA store, you will have found yourself surrounded by people of every gender, race, religion, political and sexual orientation and yet they are drawn to Bruno Mars or IKEA with just the same passion that you are.

I believe that it's more important to understand how your most perfect client thinks and feels, why they behave the way that they behave, what matters to them, what resonates with them, what lights them up, what makes them angry, what thrills them and what makes them show up time and time again as a loyal and passionate consumer of certain products and services.

My two daughters (aged 21 and 18) and I (aged 52) will see Bruno Mars in concert every chance that we get. There's no short and pithy customer avatar that would describe the three of us and yet there we are.

YOUR CUSTOMERS' STORIES

A glance at our family photo albums reveal what loyal consumers of IKEA products we have been for almost two decades. We have invested in almost every bed/bunk bed/sofa bed configuration available from IKEA. They truly "get" their customers. They understand how we think and feel about our homes and create products and services that perfectly fit our desires, needs and home design challenges. Like how to fit three children, two adults, one drum kit, two saxophones, a piano and a trombone in a two bedroom urban apartment.

So how do you uncover your customers' stories? By talking to them. By observing them - both in real life and on social media. What conversations are they having? What frustrations are they expressing? You can ask people who seem like they might be your ideal clients if they would mind getting together for coffee or on a phone call for you to do some research on your new business. You will ask them questions that help you to better understand what they are searching for when they look for products or services similar to the ones you plan to sell or offer. It's important to hear - in their own language - how they express their desires, frustrations and challenges in relation to the products or services you plan to offer.

"Go out and find some real people. Listen to their stories. Don't ask for the main point. Let the story run its course. Like flowing water, it will find its own way, at its own pace. And if you've got patience, you'll learn more than you might imagine."

- Bernadette Jiwa

YOUR CUSTOMERS' STORIES

You can then create a first iteration of your product or service based on the research you do and test that product or service. As you get more feedback from clients, you can keep improving the product or service.

Maybe you will choose to "scratch your own itch" by creating a product or service that you wish existed. In the book "Rework" by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hannson write:

"When you build a product or service, you make the call on hundreds of tiny decisions each day. If you're solving someone else's problem, you're constantly stabbing in the dark. When you solve your own problem, the light comes on. You know exactly what the right answer is."

If you are creating a product or service based on your own "itch", make sure that you're aware of any blind spots you have that might cause you to make some false assumptions.

YOUR CUSTOMERS' STORIES

Here are some questions to ask to help you to uncover your customers' stories (I have included them in the separate workbook and also as a Google document):

1. Start with the basics - their age, gender, whether they have children (if so, how many and what ages), job, interests, where they live etc. This basic information about their demographics can be helpful as a starting point.
2. Try to flesh out the basic information as much as possible - what more do you know about them? What are their hobbies or interests? What are they passionate about? What are their values or beliefs?
3. What is their typical day like? Do you see any patterns of behavior that might be relevant to your product or service? For example, if you're thinking about providing services to mothers with young children, you are going to notice how little time they have to focus on themselves. This will help you to create a product or service that fits into their lifestyle.
4. Make a list of frustrations, needs, challenges, desires that you think they have or that they've told you they have (if you have conducted some interviews).
5. What are they thinking, feeling, saying or doing just before they look for your product or service?
6. Where do they spend their time both in the real world and online?
7. Which businesses do they already buy from? What are their favorite brands? What does this tell you about them?

As with your personal inventory, keep working on this list as you gather more information from the people you talk to or from observations you make from things you notice online or in the real world.

Your Launch Blueprint Resources

On my website, you can find a list of books, blog posts and podcast episodes that are helpful for getting clear on the stories that will create the foundation of your business.

The URL for the Resources page is:

www.SalRobertson.com/resources-launch

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

I'm here to help.

As you read through the material and do the written assignments, please remember that I am here to support you in any way that I can.

If you have a question, please email me at Sal@SalRobertson.com and I will get back to you as soon as I can.



We will schedule coaching calls as you work through the materials too so that I can provide advice, perspective and encouragement along the way.

I'm excited to learn more about your personal story as you uncover it!

Sal x

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