

kenchadconsulting Ltd

We can help you with innovative approaches to user-centric products and services
The Jobs-To-Be-Done (JTBD) methodology

kenchadconsulting

Home

About

How We Can Help

Resources

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We help make sense of a confusing landscape....

...digital content and ebooks, social media, open source, open access, open data, the cloud, 'library services platforms', research data, shared services, disruptive innovation, hard economic times, strategy, and new business models



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Contents

Part 1: Jobs-to-be-done approach/ methodology	2
Jobs-To-Be-Done definition	2
Breaking down the Jobs-To-Be-Done	3
Identifying the jobs customers are trying to get done	3
Categorising the Jobs-To-Be-Done	3
Creating job statements	3
Jobs-to-be-done statements	4
Analysing the 'job'	4
Prioritising jobs.....	4
Part 2: Applying the methodology	5
1. Staff	5
2. Customers	5
Focus groups	5
One-on-one interviews	5
Customer observations.....	5
Other helpful customer focussed approaches	5

Part 1: Jobs-to-be-done approach/ methodology

Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen is best known for his work on 'disruptive innovation' encapsulated in his books *'The Innovator's Dilemma'* and *'The Innovator's Solution'*. In 2011 he applied this analytical approach to the Higher Education sector in *'The Innovative University'*. The *Jobs-To-Be-Done* (JTBD) concept is often considered as part of that overall approach and provides a very productive way of analysing customer 'needs'. "*Most companies segment their markets by customer demographics or product characteristics and differentiate their offerings by adding features and functions. But the consumer has a different view of the marketplace. He simply has a job to be done and is seeking to 'hire' the best product or service to do it.*"¹

Understanding the 'jobs' your customers want done, provides insights and can help universities and libraries design or acquire new products or services. It can be a helpful tool, for example, in evaluating new library system offerings. This is because it not only helps to identify the jobs that need to be done or problems that customers (library users and staff) need to solve, but also provides a way of analysing potential solutions. In particular it can highlight how existing offerings are not meeting important needs. For example sometimes a good solution for a JTBD, or a family of JTBDs, does not exist; when this is the case, there is real opportunity to innovate.

Jobs-To-Be-Done definition

Customers *hire* products and services to get jobs done. So users don't want a library catalogue, a VLE, an ebook or 'easier access to e-resources': they want to solve a *particular* problem.

Taking this approach means a focus is on those critical jobs that can't get done **satisfactorily** (well enough) with available solutions. Consider three elements: -

- (1) what is the problem to be solved?
- (2) Who needs to solve the problem?
- (3) What's the ***circumstance*** of the problem? (i.e. I'm on the train with a smart phone)

This analysis produces a series of 'Job-to-be-done' statements like this
{User} wants to {solve a problem} in {this circumstance}

¹ Finding the Right Job For Your Product. By Clayton M. Christensen, Scott D. Anthony, Gerald Berstell and Denise Nitterhouse. MIT Sloan Management Review April 2007
<http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/finding-the-right-job-for-your-product/>

Breaking down the Jobs-To-Be-Done

- Be as specific as possible when describing the job
- Pay particular attention to the 'circumstance'—it can have a big influence on the solutions you may consider and how you evaluate those solutions

Types of JTBDs:

1. Main jobs to be done: the task that customers want to get done.
2. Related jobs to be done: jobs customers want to accomplish in conjunction with the main jobs to be done.

Within each of these two types there are:

- Functional aspects: the practical customer need.
- Emotional aspects: the subjective customer needs related to feelings and perception. These are often ignored but can be critical.
 - Emotional job aspects are further broken down into:
 - The personal dimension—how the customer herself feels about the solution.
 - The social dimension—how the customer believes others perceive them while using the solution.

The better a solution can fulfil all of these factors the better chance it has of being successful

It is important to recognise that the jobs are completely neutral of the solutions (the products and services). While a customer JTBD remains generally stable over time, the products and services an organisation delivers will typically change over time. The change may take place, for example, when a library is reviewing its strategy or its technology infrastructure.

Identifying the jobs customers are trying to get done

Part 2 describes the ways in which an organisation can apply the JTBD approach. It is particularly helpful to identify those jobs that have ad-hoc or unsatisfactory solutions. When customers have to cobble together solutions themselves there may be opportunity to find or develop innovative solutions.

Categorising the Jobs-To-Be-Done

Jobs can be main jobs or related jobs (see above). Some jobs are parents of other jobs. For example there will be a number of jobs leading up to the one of 'get a degree' (or get a first class degree) etc.

Creating job statements

The job statement is used to describe a JTBD. It can be helpful to think about them in terms an action (verb), the object of the action, and clarification of the context in which the job is performed.

Jobs-to-be-done statements

Problem to be solved (be as succinct as you can)	
Customer User (be precise as possible)	
Circumstance (be descriptive and precise)	

Analysing the 'job'

It can be helpful to put yourself in the customer's mindset and think through the following (and then test out the outcomes with real customers):

- What is the problem the user is facing..and why do they *care*?
- What *objective* do people use to evaluate solutions?
 - think beyond the functional to social and other 'soft' factors such as social norms (e.g. it's 'cool', it impresses friends and colleagues)
- What are the *barriers* that limit the solution?

There are essentially four main barriers to getting a job done:-

 - Price
 - Time
 - Skill
 - Access to the technology or solution.
- What *current solutions* do customers consider? - What is the process they currently use to solve that problem?
 - What alternatives are considered when going through this process?
 - Why is any option selected?
 - What is liked about the current option?
 - What is disliked about it?
 - What are the frustrations when trying to solve this problem?
- What are the options for new/innovative solutions?

What are the gaps between what customers want and the different solutions available? If there is an important job that isn't being adequately addressed -then there is an opportunity for innovative solutions.

Prioritising jobs

'Jobs' can be prioritised by 'scoring' them:

Key jobs/problems have these attributes.

- The job is important to the customer
- The job occurs relatively frequently
- The customer is frustrated by the inability to get the job done with current solutions

Job to be done	Importance 1=not important; 5=critical	Frequency 1=rarely 5=very frequent	Frustration 1=very happy 5=very frustrated	Score (importance+frequency) X frustration = a score 2 to 50

Part 2: Applying the methodology

1. Staff

Team brainstorming

- Make sure the group is diverse as possible. Outsiders can be useful
- Introduce the JTBD concept
- Provide some starting contexts: maybe a particular customer group or a particular technology
- Provide some background information on the area—something to stimulate and open up people’s minds -for example results from research or a provocative article
- Guide the discussion with the questions in section 1

2. Customers

Focus groups

Focus groups can be especially good at shaping long lists of jobs that come out of brainstorming. Focus group can also be helpful in identifying jobs which have most promise and to get feedback on specific ideas. However be very wary about getting *solutions* from customers. Customers do tend to latch on to existing solutions so may not see the ‘gaps’ for innovative products and services. Indeed customers are often not a good source for telling you what they ‘need’. That why it’s important to frame the questioning around the overall JTBD approach.

One-on-one interviews

This can be good on the specific questions described in Part 1 viz:-

- What is the process you currently use to solve that problem?
- What alternatives do you consider when going through this process?
- Why do you select a particular option?
- What do you like about the current option?
- What do you disliked about it?
- What are the frustrations you encounter when trying to solve this problem?

Customer observations

Customers can find it hard to articulate their frustrations clearly, or they may have compensating behaviours they don’t even realise. So actually watching customers can be very helpful in spotting things that might otherwise go unnoticed and unidentified

Other helpful customer focussed approaches

- Customer diaries
- Walking in the customer’s shoes—try doing some jobs yourself

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