



From Idea → Evidence

Research and Customer Development in the Real World

ACS Athens Open Workshop

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Quick Background

12+ Years, 50+ Products

From 10-person startups to global brands—systems that turn vision into execution.

Led Product at Float

Shipped faster, aligned better, won in market with evidence-driven discovery.

Now in Athens

Time-boxed sabbatical to learn, publish, and mentor—plugging into Greece's tech scene.

My goal: help you *do* discovery, not just talk about it.

The Crema logo is displayed in a white rounded square. It consists of the word "Crema" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Case Study: Float Finance Estimates

The Problem

Agencies need to answer: "Should we take this project?" Pricing $\neq$ profitability. Decisions scattered across spreadsheets.

Who We Interviewed

Project Managers, Account Managers, Ops/Finance leaders, agency owners.

Top Assumptions

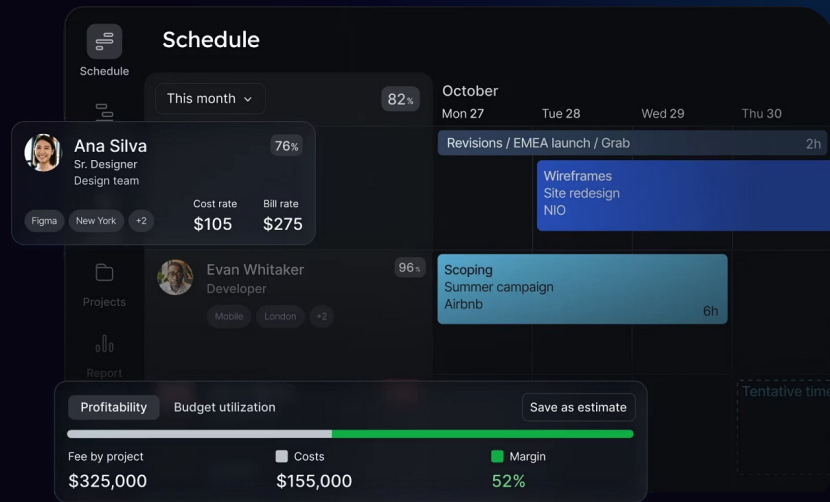
1. Single estimation view improves decision speed
2. Grouped tasks make reporting trustworthy
3. Adoption rises if flow fits existing planning

How We Tested

- Journey mapping
- Figma + Maze concept tests
- "Teach-back" interviews
- Private preview + async Loom feedback

Outcome

Clearer estimation conversations, fewer rogue spreadsheets, strong early-adopter pull. Feature set now live.



Mindset: Becoming Entrepreneurial

Fall in Love with the Problem

Not your solution. Solutions change; problems reveal opportunities.

Your Superpower

Curiosity + evidence. You don't need all answers—just the next test.

Small Loops Win

Talk → sketch → test → decide.
Repeat fast.

School is your sandbox. Start experimenting today.



Find Real Customers with Real Problems



People

Who experiences this?



Jobs-to-Be-Done

What are they trying to accomplish?



Pain Evidence

Where's the friction?



Context

When does it happen?

📌 **60-Second Activity:** Write one job statement: "When I'm [context], I want to [goal / job], so I can [desired outcome]."

On-campus sources: classmates, teachers, clubs, facilities. Look for time/money spent, workarounds, repeated friction.



Recruit Interviews Fast & Ethically

Make it easy to say yes

01

Warm Channels

Teacher intros, club leaders, class WhatsApp/Discord. Promise a short insight share-back.

03

DM/Email Script

Who you are → what you're exploring → why them → 10-min ask with two time options.

Stuck? Ask a teacher for a 10-minute hallway window to run 3 quick chats.

02

On-Campus Intercepts

2-3 questions in the innovation lab. 5-7 minutes max.





Get Truth, Not Politeness



Ask About Past Behavior

Not future intent. "Tell me about the last time you..." beats "Would you use...?"



Don't Pitch Early

Ask them to teach you their process. Listen more than you talk.



Prefer "Show Me"

Last document, screen, or paper sketch they made. No artifact = opinion.

"At Float we analyzed customer's real experiences before working on designs."

Identify & Test Assumptions

Map Your Assumptions

- **Desirability:** Do people want this?
- **Feasibility:** Can we build it?
- **Viability:** Will it work long-term?

Pick ONE Micro-Test

Paper/design click-through (3-min comprehension)
or Concierge trial (do it manually once).

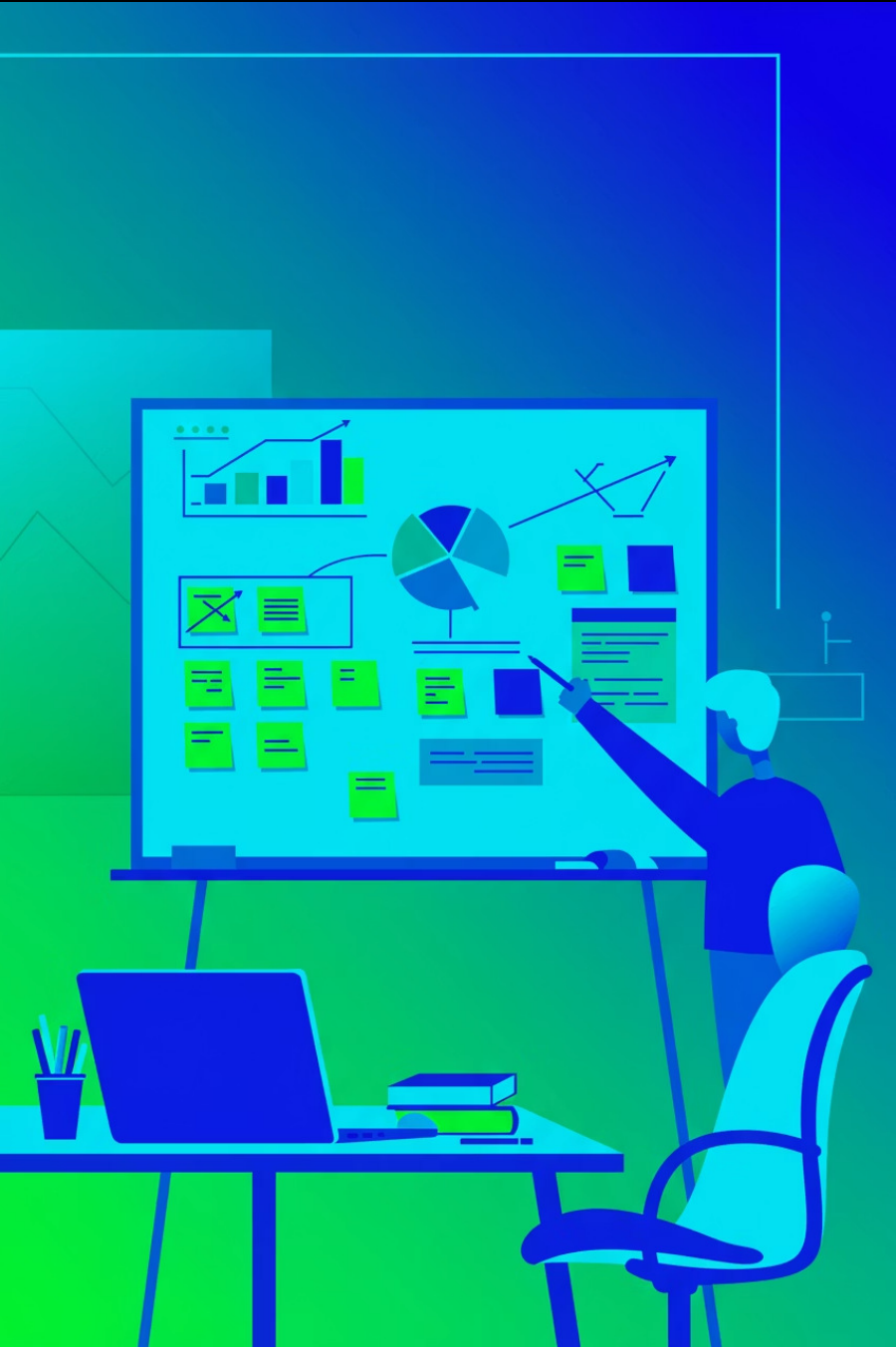
Define success upfront: "5/8 complete flow unaided" or "≥10 sign-ups in 48h."

Keep experiments tiny, time-boxed, tied to one assumption.

AI Callout

Use AI to draft guides, summaries, & research. Use humans to validate.





Process & Respond to Feedback



Demo Your Learning

Share short Loom/phone videos showing what you discovered.



Simple Decision Log

Learned → Decide → Next. Keep it visible and updated.



One Visible Board

Innovation Lab + async updates keep everyone aligned.

In Float's case, behavior moved: clearer conversations, fewer spreadsheets, faster go/no-go decisions.

Persevere or Pivot?

Green Flags

- Repeatable pull from users
- Measurable improvement
- Willingness to "pay"
(money/time/attention)

Core metric example: # of allocations being made (engagement/use).

Red Flags

- Polite praise + zero usage
- "Just add X" without behavior change
- Can't find 5 people with the pain

Rule of three: If 3 tests don't move your metric, change something big.

Smart teams kill ideas fast to find great ones faster.



How to Identify Real Customers — and a Real Problem

Simple Method

- **Lean Canvas Lite:** Focus on customer segment, problem, and unique value proposition (UVP) in one line. Test your best guess.
- **Talk like a scientist:** Interview people not trying to please you. Ask about past experiences, not future intent. "Show me" beats "tell me."
- **Behavior > opinions:** Define what action would prove the problem is real before conducting interviews.

Genuine-Problem Checklist

- **Frequency:** The problem occurs often or predictably.
- **Intensity:** People create workarounds (spreadsheets, hacks, screenshots) to deal with it.
- **Spend:** Time or money is already being burned, or failed alternatives have been tried.
- **Recency:** They can recall and describe the last time they faced the problem in detail.
- **Reachability:** You can actually find 5–10 people who experience this problem this week.

24-Hour Micro-Test

- **Fake door:** Set up a 1-page landing site (e.g., Lovable) with a single Call to Action (CTA) like "Join waitlist" or "Book 10-min interview."
- **Recruit:** Use tools like Maze for quick concepts, Respondent/Askable for targeted participants, and leverage teacher/club intros.
- **Automate:** Use a tool like n8n to route form submissions to a sheet, send calendar options for interviews, or market.
- **Decide upfront:** Establish a clear pass/fail hurdle (e.g., ≥10% visitor CTA clicks, or 5 bookings in 24–48h).
- **Iterate:** If you pass, conduct 5 "Mom Test" interviews. If you fail, refine your customer/problem hypothesis and rerun the test.

Tools: Figma/FigJam • Lovable • Maze • Respondent • Askable • Tally/Typeform • n8n • Loom/phone video

How to Process & Respond to Customer Feedback



Capture

Log raw signals (interviews, tests, tickets) with artifacts (screens/files). Tag by who/segment, context, recency.

Rule: No artifact = opinion.

Tools: HeyMarvin/Otter → Notion/GSheet



Synthesize

Cluster in Miro/FigJam; name each insight in 1 line.
Map to assumptions (Desirability/Feasibility/Viability).
Score frequency × severity × business value against effort; ~ pick the highest value; lowest effort.



Decide & Act

Triage: Kill • Commit • Change. Decision Log: learned → decide → next test (+ owner & date). Share a 2-min “demo of learning” + update one visible board or shared channel.

Float Case: Continuous Discovery in Practice

- **Always be learning:** Set up Continuous Discovery Interviews (CDIs) on a rolling schedule.
- **Smart backfill:** Asked for feedback + permission to reconnect if a customer canceled.
- **Frictionless booking:** Sent Calendly link (team round-robin).
- **Good interviews, every time:** Used a script with Mom-Test posture.
- **Effortless capture:** Recorded via HeyMarvin (screen + auto-transcript).
- **Instant signal:** AI summary posted to team chat with tactical recommendations.
- **From notes to roadmap:** Recommendations logged into product backlog (owner + next step).
- **Important:** Votes / #requests were one signal, not “truth.” We weighed them alongside severity, segment fit, strategy, and experiment results.

Tools: HeyMarvin/Otter • Notion • Miro/FigJam • Loom (or phone) • Calendly (round-robin) • Linear/Trello

Your 48-Hour Challenge

1

Write 3 Job Statements

Use the "When I'm..." format from earlier.

2

Book 3 Interviews

10 minutes each. Use warm channels or intercepts.

3

Run 1 Micro-Test

Paper/wireframe or Concierge—your choice.

4

Share 1 Loom

What you learned + what you'll do next.

Work in pairs or teams. Happy to answer any questions!

Resources to Learn & Practice

Learn the Craft

- The Mom Test — Rob Fitzpatrick
- Sprint — Jake Knapp et al.
- Continuous Discovery Habits — Teresa Torres
- Testing Business Ideas — Bland & Osterwalder
- Value Proposition Design — Strategyzer
- Competing Against Luck — Christensen
- Lenny's Newsletter

Run Real Tests

- Interview & notes: Maze, Respondent, Askable, HeyMarvin, Otter, Notion
- Scheduling: Calendly (10-min slots)
- Prototyping: Figma + FigJam/Miro, Lovable (AI), n8n
- Usability checks: Maze (fast concept tests)
- Forms & sign-ups: Google Forms, Typeform
- Share learning: Loom (or phone recording)
- Organize: Linear or Trello (simple board)
- No-code pilots: Bolt.new, Replit

Communities & Practice

- Indie Hackers (maker stories & feedback)
- r/Entrepreneur • r/UXResearch (Q&A, critiques)
- Figma Community & Miroverse (strategy templates)
- YC Startup School (talks & worksheets)
- Product School webinars/meetups (PM basics)
- Replit community (ship tiny apps)
- Local: ACS Open mentors & lab peers

Q&A: What's one assumption you could test this week with zero code?

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