JOBS TO BE DONE | 2019

From deep insight comes successful innovation

"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."

- Clayton Christensen

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Think about the last time you made dinner ...

What did you choose to make? And why? Odds are, it wasn't simply a choice based on fulfilling hunger, there was much more to it. Did you need something quick and easy because you had a busy night? Were you trying to get some nutrition into your family to balance out snacking? Was it an opportunity to bring the family together and bond over a nice meal? Or was something else entirely?

Why did you ultimately choose the dinner you chose? Because you had a specific job to be done, and you hired something specific to complete that job.

Why Jobs To Be Done (JTBD)?

For decades, the market research industry has benefited from numerous techniques specifically designed to understand what consumers want and need so that marketers could bring innovation to product development. Though each method has proven successful in certain situations, they often lack the deep insight necessary to innovate for long-term success. For example:

Personas: Research may rightly inform that people aged 16 and over are much more likely to drive, but knowing this age criterion isn't sufficient to help marketers improve cars in ways that will increase consumer satisfaction.

Expert recommendations: Certified beer brewers know all the minutia required to brew technically "better" beer, but changing a fermentation process from 11 days to 12 days because a Master Cicerone says to do so doesn't mean consumers will be more satisfied with the resulting beverage.

Customer queries: We've all heard Henry Ford's story, "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." Sometimes, people simply don't know what product and service innovations would increase their satisfaction.

In some situations, these techniques can be too simplistic and fail to delve deep enough into the customer mindset. Fortunately, this is where JTBD excels. JTBD gets at the heart of *why* people choose specific products and services, both large and small.

Where did JTBD come from?

Jobs To Be Done is a theory developed and honed over decades. While there are many brilliant practitioners and theorists, arguably the best known include Anthony Ulwick and Clayton Christensen. Christensen, a world renowned management leader, Rhodes Scholar, and Harvard Business School professor, is most often credited with the current popularity of the approach. Known for coining the term "Disruptive Innovation," Christensen is the author of nine books, including "The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail" (1997) and "Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice" (2016) which solidifies his years of research on the theory of *Jobs To Be Done*.

Based on his research, Christensen suggests that differentiating your product from a competitor's product does not necessarily require a better/faster/cheaper product, something that is easy for anyone to copy. Rather, it requires an understanding of what customers need your product to accomplish and ensuring that component is clearly superior.

What is the basic theory of JTBD?

JTBD is grounded in the theory that every job has hiring and firing criteria, as well as clear specifications on how to fulfill those criteria perfectly. A dinner your family hates gets fired from the job, healthy or not. Ice cream that does not put delightful smiles on a child's face is fired from that job. A diaper that leaks overnight will be replaced with one that won't.

Jobs often have functional components but, in many cases, they also have emotional, personal, social, cultural, environmental, or other components.

Jobs can be as small as spiking your energy levels (pick-me-up) throughout a busy workday, and Jobs can be as big as developing artificial intelligence to handle frontline customer service support at a streaming media company. They can be executed in the moment, or planned at the point of purchase. And they vary based on category, product, even the fundamental emotional or functional foundation of the category in general.

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Used successfully, the JTBD technique identifies:

Drivers, barriers, and unmet needs: Key insights about the Job To Be Done are extracted which can subsequently be used to suggest necessary product and service improvements and innovations. The benefits and attributes that people experience with the products and services they have hired, and the disadvantages of products and services they fired or failed to hire are identified. And, the process discovers what people are doing to solve problems of unmet needs, and how they make trade-offs in the process.

Situations and occasions: JTBD elicits insights into where, when, and how products and services are used including decisions about which options are preferred over others and why those options are sometimes reconsidered and reversed.

A multi-phased approach can further explore the jobs landscape — as a value add — to identify:

Relative importance: Many products and services are hired to fulfill multiple jobs. The JTBD framework helps to prioritize the various jobs and gain a better understanding of why some jobs are more important than others.

Size of the market: As with any product innovation, knowing the size of the market is a key factor for prioritizing innovations. The JTBD process helps to identify the landscape of mega-jobs, those over-riding key jobs, and any sub-jobs within that category. The process helps to identify which jobs will benefit the greatest number of people or lead to the greatest ROI.

Job profiles: With a more detailed understanding of jobs, we can then add to that any relevant consumer profile information, e.g., demographics and psychographics, and short-term and long-term opportunities.

Key to all of these results is that marketers gain this knowledge within the language of the people – their word choices, phrasing, slang, and idioms, all of which lead to a more genuine and human understanding of the relationship between the user and the product or service.

What is the basic methodology?

JTBD can be conducted in a series of stages. Typically, the first stage is an exploratory analysis that aims to identify the broad set of jobs across the entire category. This is done via a set of qualitative, one-to-one interviews with a small number of targeted participants.

> **JTBD identifies current jobs products are being hired for, while simultaneously identifying potential gaps for innovation and short-term positioning on base products and services**

More recently, automated techniques, including those enabled by artificial intelligence, may allow for much larger sample sizes than what are typically used in qualitative research, up to several hundred participants. These larger sample sizes lead to:

1) Increased reliability and generalizability of the results;
2) A greater likelihood of identifying more jobs, and
3) Moving the analyses and interpretations beyond anecdotal evidence and permitting the application of advanced statistical analyses.

While not always included, additional phases can be incorporated to size and profile each job. In Stage 2 the results from Stage 1 are used to populate a quantitative survey with the key jobs such that the marketplace opportunity for each job can be identified. In addition, this survey helps to identify other products and services that people have hired or fired for the same jobs. Gaining a better understanding of these hires and fires inspires innovation and potential messaging.

Finally, a third stage may be included to clarify the key jobs that have been prioritized as a result of Stages 1 and 2. In this phase, in-depth, one-to-one interviews—whether in-person or by telephone—clarify the key jobs, permit a deeper understanding of use occasions, and illuminate key findings from earlier stages.

How is the discussion guide built?

The discussion guide is designed to address the strategic business objectives. Ideally, the client and research provider collaborate to build a guide that will accommodate the interview, which is typically 30-minutes or longer.

The discussion guide may include both qualitative and quantitative components. This serves to increase participant engagement but, more importantly, harmonizing qualitative and quantitative components allows the analysts to integrate the findings into one consistent story.

Typically, a JTBD discussion guide addresses several topics with questions about products and services that are hired and fired, emotions associated with a job, or situations and occasions associated with the job. Researchers with extensive experience in the JTBD framework will have tested and standardized a set of modules that address each of the key topics. These modules can then be customized for inclusion or excluded, depending on the unique aspects of a project, the category, and/or the internal needs of the organization.

Within each module, questions should be formulated using casual language and will cover a broad range of topics such as:

1) What set of tasks or outcomes did they want to accomplish with the product, i.e., what jobs were they hiring for?

2) How often did they need the job performed?

3) What was preventing them from doing the job?

4) What led them to hire a product or service to perform a job?

5) What did they NOT want to accomplish, i.e., what would they fire a product or service for?

6) What were they doing when they purchased the product?

7) How did they feel and what were their emotions during the use of the product or service?

8) What other products or services did they consider hiring or firing during the purchase journey or product use cycle?

How is interview data analyzed?

One of the keys to the success of JTBD is the expert analyses from linguists, ethnographers, and researchers. After interviews are collected, the key themes and ideas are identified and intricately coded.

Studies that are able to incorporate sample sizes of several hundred people can go one step further. The data can be parsed through advanced statistical processes such as cluster analysis and regression to identify unique segments and key drivers for each product or service.

Next steps

As a standardized tool that can be customized to accommodate both big and small jobs as well as functional and emotional jobs, JTBD holds great potential in the innovation space. It offers marketers a deep and broad understanding of what people hire products for, and allows them to successfully leverage insights into product and service innovations that genuinely increase customer satisfaction.

While there is a lot of complexity built around the various Jobs To Be Done approaches, at its core, JTBD is quite simply about understanding people's wants and needs. What's more, it's not a "one-size-fits-all" proposition. An approach that works for one category or product may be completely insufficient for another. A customized approach can and should be done for every jobs research undertaking.

If you'd like to learn more about Jobs To Be Done, please get in touch with us.

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