



Seven Steps to Market Testing

1. You need to care about the problem you are going to solve, and there has to be a sizable number of other people who also care. Always remember the lesson of convergence: the way your idea intersects with what other people value.

2. Make sure the market is big enough. Test the size by checking the number and relevancy of Google keywords—the same keywords you would use if you were trying to find your product. Think about keywords that people would use to find a solution to a problem. If you were looking for your own product online but didn't know it existed, what keywords would you search for? Pay attention to the top and right sides of the results pages, where the ads are displayed.

3. Focus on eliminating “blatant admitted pain.” The product needs to solve a problem that causes pain that the market knows it has. It's easier to sell to someone who knows they have a problem and are convinced they need a solution than it is to persuade someone that they have a problem that needs solving.

4. Almost everything that is being sold is for either a deep pain or a deep desire. For example, people buy luxury items for respect and status, but on a deeper level they want to be loved. Having something that removes pain may be more effective than realizing a desire. You need to show people how you can help remove or reduce pain.

5. Always think in terms of solutions. Make sure your solution is different and better. (Note that it doesn't need to be cheaper—competing on price is usually a losing proposition.) Is the market frustrated with the current solution? Being different isn't enough; differentiation that makes you better is what's required. There's no point in introducing something if the market is already satisfied with the solution—your solution must be different or better. It's significance, not size, that matters.

6. Ask others about the idea, but make sure the people you ask are your potential target market. Others may provide insignificant data and are therefore biased and uninformed. Therefore, create a persona: the one person who would benefit the most from your idea. Examine your whole network—community, friends, family, social networks—and ask yourself if any of these people match your persona. Take your idea to this person and discuss it with him or her in detail. This will get you much more relevant data than talking to just anyone.

7. Create an outline for what you are doing and show it to a subgroup of your community. Ask them to test it for free in return for feedback and confidentiality. As a bonus, the subgroup feels involved and will act as evangelists. Giving builds trust and value and also gives you an opportunity to offer the whole solution. Use a blog to build authority and expertise on a subject. Leave comments on blogs where your target audience hangs out.

**Parts of this section are based on the advice of Jonathan Fields, the smartest guy I know in market testing. Learn more at JonathanFields.com.*