

What is your customer actually hiring your product to do?

Background

Clayton Christensen · popularised 2003–2016

People don't buy products — they hire them to make progress in their lives. Jobs to Be Done reframes your customer not as a demographic but as a person in a specific situation trying to accomplish something. The job has three dimensions: functional, emotional, and social.

How to Run This

- 1 Pick one specific customer — a real person in a specific moment.
- 2 Write the job story: "When I [situation], I want to [motivation], so I can [outcome]."
- 3 Break into three job types: Functional, Emotional, and Social.
- 4 List what they currently hire — existing alternatives they use.
- 5 Identify the gap — what current solutions don't do. That's your opportunity.

Facilitator Tips

Common mistake

Defining the job by your product category. "They want a drill" is not a job. "They want a hole in the wall" is.

What good looks like

A job story so specific that, when you read it back, the customer says "that's exactly it."

When to move on

When you have a job story validated with 3+ real people and can describe the gap.

About Wade Institute

Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship is Australia's leading centre for entrepreneurial education, based at the University of Melbourne. The Studio is Wade's free, AI-powered innovation workshop platform — making 24 structured frameworks available to anyone, each one facilitated by Pete, an AI coach trained in Wade's methodology.

Try this interactively in The Studio

Pete will guide you through the Jobs to Be Done framework — uncovering the functional, emotional, and social dimensions of your customer's job. You'll leave with a validated job story and session report.

studio.wadeinstitute.org.au →

1 THE CUSTOMER

Who are they? Be specific about their context and situation.

2 JOB STORY

When I... I want to... So I can...

3 FUNCTIONAL JOB

What practical task are they trying to accomplish?

4 EMOTIONAL JOB

How do they want to feel during and after?

5 SOCIAL JOB

How do they want to be perceived by others?

6 CURRENT ALTERNATIVE

What do they use today? What's the workaround?

7 GAP ANALYSIS

Where is the biggest gap between what they need and what exists?