MODULE 3

Empower Lab

Validate Your Idea

EMPOWER 40K · GGFG

Module 3: Validate Your Idea

This module helps you move from a good idea to real evidence. You'll learn how to understand your customer, shape a clear value proposition, and test your assumptions before you spend too much time or money.

Introduction

In the last module, you learned how to identify problems and recognize opportunities.

You learned that entrepreneurs do not have to create problems in order to find opportunities.

Problems already exist around us.

People already have needs.

There are already things that could work better.

But finding a problem is only the beginning.

At some point, you may have an idea for what you could do about it.

You might think:

“I could create this.”

“I could sell this.”

“I could build a service for these people.”

That is exciting.

But there is something important to understand:

An idea is not yet a business.

You can have a great idea that nobody wants.

You can build something people do not need.

You can spend money on something customers will not buy.

And you can spend months building something before discovering that you were solving the wrong problem.

Entrepreneurs learn to test their ideas before making big commitments.

The goal is not to prove that your idea is perfect.

The goal is to find out whether your idea can create real value for real people.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe your customer and the problem you are solving
- Write a simple value proposition that is clear and specific
- Explain what an MVP is and why it reduces risk
- Plan a basic validation test and decide what "evidence" looks like
- Use feedback to improve (not abandon) a promising idea

From Idea to Business

An idea becomes a business when someone is willing to give something for it—money, time, attention, or trust. Validation is the bridge between "I think this could work" and "I have evidence it works."

> **In one sentence:** A business is a solution that customers consistently choose and can support sustainably.

Who Is the Customer?

Be specific. "Everyone" is not a customer. The more clearly you define who you serve, the easier it becomes to design, market, and sell.

- **Start with a real person:** age, location, daily routine, and what they care about
- **Notice constraints:** budget, time, access, literacy, connectivity, and trust
- **Choose one primary customer first:** you can expand later

What Value Are You Creating?

Value is the meaningful improvement your customer experiences. It could save time, reduce stress, improve income, increase safety, or help them feel seen and supported.

Type of value	Simple examples
Saves money	Lower fees, fewer wasted trips, affordable bulk options
Saves time	Faster delivery, shorter queues, easier ordering
Improves quality	More durable, more reliable, better service experience
Reduces risk	Safer transport, verified sellers, clearer information

Your Value Proposition

A value proposition is a clear promise of what you do, who it's for, and why it matters. Keep it simple and testable.

Value proposition template:

For **[customer]** who struggle with **[problem]**, we provide **[solution]** so they can **[result/benefit]**.

Test Before You Invest

Testing is how you protect your time and money. You don't need a perfect product to learn—just a clear question and a simple way to get a real response from customers.

- **Test the problem:** Do people truly feel this pain—and how often?
- **Test the customer:** Who feels it most, and who pays?
- **Test the solution:** Would they actually use it (not just say it's nice)?
- **Test willingness:** Will they pay, sign up, pre-order, or refer a friend?

What Is an MVP?

MVP stands for **Minimum Viable Product**. It's the smallest version of your solution that can still deliver value and help you learn quickly.

Not an MVP	An MVP
A full app with every feature	A WhatsApp order form + manual delivery for 10 customers
A polished brand + big launch	A simple flyer + short demo + sign-up list
Buying lots of stock “to be ready”	Small batch or pre-orders to confirm demand first

Validation

Validation is evidence that customers want what you’re building. Evidence is stronger when customers take real action—especially when it costs them something (time, money, effort, or reputation).

Strong evidence looks like:

- They pay (even a small amount) or place a pre-order
- They sign up and show up again (repeat use)

They refer a friend without being pushed

Listen to the Feedback

Feedback is a gift when you treat it as data—not as judgement. Your goal is to understand what customers are trying to achieve, what blocks them, and what would make your solution easier to choose.

- **Listen for patterns:** one opinion is a story; repeated opinions are a signal
- **Ask “why?” respectfully:** what made them hesitate or say yes?
- **Separate compliments from commitments:** “Nice idea” is not the same as “I will pay”

From Idea to Evidence

Entrepreneurs don’t guess their way to growth—they learn their way there. Evidence helps you decide what to keep, what to change, and what to stop before it becomes expensive.

Stage	Your focus	What you collect
Idea	What could work?	Assumptions

Test	What is true?	Customer responses
Evidence	What should we build next?	Actions: sign-ups, payments, repeat use

Your Idea Test

Choose one key assumption and test it this week. Keep the test small, clear, and measurable.

Simple test plan (fill this in):

- **Assumption:** The thing I believe is true is...
- **Customer:** The exact people I will talk to are...
- **Test method:** Interview / demo / pre-order / landing page / small batch
- **Success signal:** I will consider it validated if...

Time box: I will run this test by (date)...

Empower Lab Challenge

This is your fieldwork. Keep it real, respectful, and focused on learning.

- [ ] Speak to at least **5** potential customers (in person or phone/WhatsApp) and capture what they said
- [ ] Show a simple version of your offer (sketch, sample, demo, or message) and ask for a clear response
- [ ] Record **one metric** that matters (e.g., sign-ups, pre-orders, repeat interest, referrals)
- [ ] Write down the top **3** improvements you will make based on what you learned

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A Different Way to Think About Failure

Failure is not the opposite of success—avoiding learning is. When you test early, “failure” becomes information you can use while the cost is still low.

Reframe: If a test proves an assumption wrong, you didn’t fail—you saved yourself from building the wrong thing for too long.

Reflection

Use these prompts to capture what you learned. Write honestly—this is for your growth.

Reflection prompts:

- What surprised me most in the customer conversations?
- Which assumption feels weaker now—and what will I change?

What is the smallest next step I can take to get stronger evidence?

A Thought to Carry With You

Build with people, not just for people. The fastest path forward is listening closely, testing simply, and improving continuously.