

The customer interview kit

Twenty questions that pass the Mom Test, a log sheet and a scoring grid for twenty interviews.

Every question asks about something that already happened. Never pitch before question twenty. Use the same script for every interview so the answers compare, and fill the grid after every five.

The opener

Thanks for the time. I'm trying to understand how people in your role deal with [the problem area] - not selling anything, just learning. Would you walk me through how it works for you today? I'll keep it to about twenty-five minutes.

The twenty questions

A. The problem and how often

- 1. Tell me about the last time [the problem] came up. What happened?
- 2. How often does that happen - weekly, monthly, once a quarter?
- 3. Who else was involved or affected when it did?
- 4. What did it cost you that time - hours, money, a missed deadline, a difficult conversation?
- 5. On a normal week, where does this sit on your list of annoyances?

B. The workaround and its cost

- 6. What do you do about it today? Walk me through the steps.
- 7. What tools, people or spreadsheets are part of that?
- 8. Have you ever paid for anything to solve this? What, and what happened?
- 9. What have you tried that did not work? Why did it fail?
- 10. If the workaround broke tomorrow, what would you do?

C. Buying and budget

- 11. Who would decide if your team bought a tool for this? Who would need to agree?
- 12. Where would the money come from - an existing budget line or a new one?
- 13. What was the last tool or service your team started paying for? How did that decision happen?
- 14. What would make a new tool a no, however good it was?
- 15. How long did the last purchase take from first conversation to money paid?

D. The ending

- 16. What have I not asked about that I should have?
- 17. If you could wave a wand at this, what would be different on Monday?
- 18. Who else do you know who deals with this? Could you introduce me?
- 19. May I follow up in a few weeks to show you what I learned?
- 20. (Only now, if you must) Here is what I'm thinking of building - what is your first reaction? What would you do with it this week?

Interview log (one per interview)

Who

Name, role, company or context, source

Date and channel

Warmth and next step

Warm or cold; introduction, follow-up date, pilot?

Facts

What happened, how often, what it cost, what they pay for

Quotes

Their exact words - these become your headline and your pitch

Surprises

What contradicted the brief

Scoring grid (twenty rows)

Tick only behaviours. Compliments do not score.

#	Name	Has the problem (unprompted)	Pays or paid for a workaround	Gave something (intro, email, time)	Would pilot at a price	Notes
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#	Name	Has the problem (unprompted)	Pays or paid for a workaround	Gave something (intro, email, time)	Would pilot at a price	Notes
19						
20						

Totals	Problem	Paid	Gave	Pilot	Decision: go / pivot / stop

General information as of October 2026. Not legal, tax or investment advice; fees, thresholds and programme terms change - check the official page before relying on a figure, and use a qualified professional where the roadmap says so.