Do People Really Want Your Product?

Product-Market Fit, and how The Mom Test helps you find out

One of the biggest mistakes entrepreneurs make is confusing people who like an idea with people who need a product. Compliments cost nothing. Demand costs the customer something.

01 — THE DESTINATION

Product-Market Fit

Product-Market Fit (PMF) is the point at which a product solves a real problem for a specific group of customers. The weight sits on two phrases: **real problem** and **specific group**. A product that is mildly useful to everyone rarely becomes essential to anyone.

PMF shows up in behavior rather than applause: customers who return, pay, and tell others. It names what you are seeking, but not how to tell whether you are getting closer.

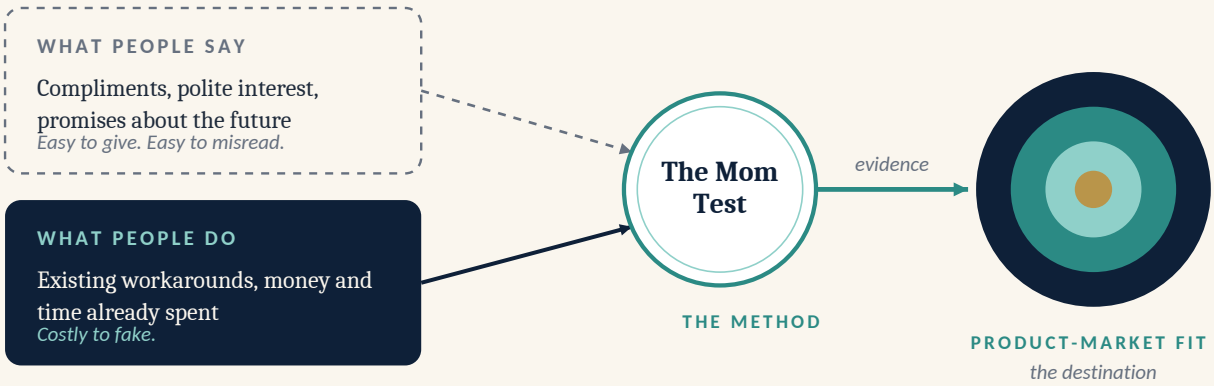
02 — THE METHOD

The Mom Test

The Mom Test is a customer research approach developed by **Rob Fitzpatrick**. Ask people whether they like your idea and even those who care about you will encourage you. The aim is to ask questions so grounded that even your mother could not give you a polite but misleading answer.

1. **Talk about their life, not your idea.**
2. **Ask about specific past behavior, not future promises.**
3. **Talk less. Listen for problems, workarounds and spending.**

HOW THE TWO CONNECT



PMF is what you seek. The Mom Test is how you investigate. It helps you gather honest evidence about whether a real need exists, but it does not guarantee that you will find Product-Market Fit.

03 — IN PRACTICE

HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO · NOT MARKET DATA

An online English academy

An entrepreneur plans an online English academy in Afghanistan. Before building anything, they talk to people who might become learners. The same conversation can go two very different ways.

THE COMFORTABLE QUESTION

"Would you join my online English course?"

"That's a great idea!"

What you learned: very little. Agreeing is free, and it commits them to nothing.

THE MOM TEST CONVERSATION

"How have you been trying to improve your English?"

"What challenges have you faced?"

"Have you paid for any course or tutor before? What happened?"

"What did you stop using, and why?"

What you learn: real needs, the workarounds people already use, and what they have actually spent.

READING THE ANSWERS

Stronger evidence

- A specific story of needing English for something concrete, and trying to solve it
- Time or money already spent on lessons, books or apps
- Detailed frustration with a current option

Weaker evidence

- General enthusiasm for the idea
- Intentions without action, such as "I should study more"
- Promises to enrol "one day"

Next step: ask for a small commitment, such as a booked trial lesson, a deposit, or an introduction to someone with the same need. Commitments are harder to fake than praise.

THE INSIGHT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Opinions are cheap. Evidence costs the customer something.

Praise tells you what people think of your idea. What they have already done tells you whether the problem matters to them.

DISCUSSION QUESTION FOR THE AEBLN COMMUNITY

In your own market in Afghanistan, what does a real signal of demand look like, and how can you ask friends, relatives and community contacts for honest feedback without causing offense?

This brief is for discussion. The scenario above is hypothetical and illustrates a method; it is not evidence about any market. Concept source: Rob Fitzpatrick, *The Mom Test* (2013).

04 — CONCLUSION

The Real Measure of a Business Idea

Every successful business begins with an idea, but not every idea becomes a successful business.

The difference lies in understanding the people behind the market: their problems, their needs, and the solutions they truly value.

The Mom Test teaches us to look beyond what people say, while **Product-Market Fit** helps us discover whether what we build genuinely matters to them.

Because in business, success isn't about proving that your idea is good. **It's about discovering whether it solves a problem worth solving.**