

How a JTBD Innovation Research Program Lifts Brands by Meeting Customer Needs



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A JTBD innovation research program drives growth by identifying and addressing specific needs.

If you watch [Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares](#), you know the pattern. A restaurant—often family-owned—is failing. The owner is despondent, the employees are fleeing, and customers are nowhere to be found. Ramsay acts more like a psychologist than a chef, trying to identify the restaurant's real problems. Usually, it comes down to an owner who has stopped listening to customers and employees, leaving the business stuck in the past. What remains is a relic of former success, unable to adapt to evolving customer needs and wants.

Ramsay's remedy is simple: he listens. He talks with employees, customers, and nearby businesses until he pinpoints the real issues. Then, he acts fast—updating the atmosphere, revamping the menu, and lifting the owner's ambition. The transformation is often dramatic, but success hinges on one thing: the owner's willingness to adapt to the new plan. Without it, even Ramsay can't save the business.

This scenario mirrors what happens when companies stop seeking and acting on customer input. Whether it's resting on their laurels or becoming complacent, brands that stop listening stop growing. This is where a JTBD (Jobs-To-Be-Done) approach to innovation makes the difference, ensuring companies remain connected to the evolving needs of their clients or customers.

Understanding JTBD and its role in innovation.

A **JTBD innovation research program** centers on understanding the tasks customers are trying to accomplish and the obstacles they face. Rather than focusing solely on product features or market trends, JTBD zeroes in on the motivations behind behavior. This approach aligns naturally with innovation research because it reveals the underlying problems that need solving—problems that, when addressed, lead to meaningful product or service innovations.

Adopting a JTBD approach combats complacency and stagnation. It forces brands to stay attuned to customer needs and competitive shifts, driving growth through proactive problem-solving. By addressing real, unmet needs, companies can unlock new revenue streams, expand their base, and strengthen market positioning.

The power of VOC insights in innovation.

A strong innovation program begins with listening to and observing people. Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews (IDs), **immersive learning**, and shopping observations offer rich opportunities for brands to understand the real-life contexts and challenges real people face. For instance, while a survey might reveal how a consumer says they clean their kitchen, observing their routine firsthand can uncover hidden barriers and unmet needs. This deeper understanding allows brands to design solutions that are both practical and impactful.

Quantitative research complements these insights by validating and prioritizing findings across a broader audience. Through **surveys and statistical analysis**, brands can confirm which needs are most pressing and determine how to best allocate resources. This combination of qualitative and quantitative insights ensures that innovation efforts are both grounded in real-world experiences and scalable across markets.

Build a consumer-focused JTBD innovation research program.

Integrating JTBD insights into an innovation strategy unifies teams around a common goal: solving specific consumer problems. Collaboration across departments, ensures that product development, marketing, and customer experience initiatives are aligned. Guided by clear consumer needs, brand teams can design product updates, introduce new offerings, and refine services that truly enhance user satisfaction.

Continuously engaging with customers or clients and adapting to their evolving needs helps brands maintain relevance and strengthen customer relationships. This cycle of insight-driven innovation not only leads to successful product launches but also builds a foundation of trust and loyalty.

The lasting business value of innovation.

Some companies view innovation research as a one-time investment tied to launching new products or expanding service lines. However, brands that embed a JTBD innovation mindset into their everyday operations create opportunities to consistently outperform competitors. A sustained focus on understanding and addressing consumer needs allows brands to deliver on their promises, adapt to market changes, and seize new opportunities.

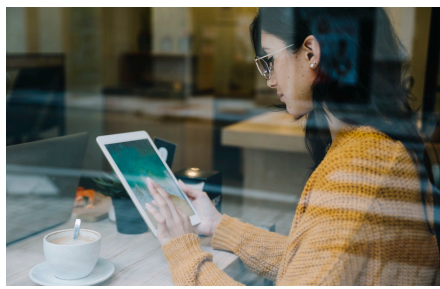
This proactive approach results in stronger brand loyalty, increased market share, and long-term growth. By continually innovating in response to consumer insights, brands position themselves as industry leaders committed to providing meaningful value.

A JTBD approach empowers brands to uncover and address the real problems their clients and customers face. By combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, teams create products and services that not only meet market demands but also inspire lasting loyalty. A strong innovation program driven by consumer insights is more than a strategy—it's a pathway to sustained growth and success.

How could a JTBD program refocus your innovation program? Let's talk.

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