Description

One of the most important roles of product managers and product marketing managers is to understand the market and their customers. While there are many methods for understanding customer problems … surveys, user observation, ride-alongs with sales reps, secondary research, etc. … one of the most impactful tools can be in-depth interviews with customers, potential customers, or market experts.

Interviewing people effectively is a skill that takes practice, and capturing the key takeaways from the interviews should follow a process to ensure efficiency. In this masterclass, learners will gain an understanding of the tools and best practices for conducting in-depth interviews for gaining market insights. Learners will be shown examples from past research projects, and be asked to create their own artifacts for either a current or past research project of their own. Assignments will be handed in and reviewed by the instructor and other class enrollees.

Learning Objectives
1. Define the scope of the research project
2. Create an issue tree
3. Describe the target personas
4. Create an interview guide
5. Recruit experts / customers for the research
6. Conduct phone, video or in-person interviews
7. Analyze interview notes / transcripts
8. Identify recurring themes and key takeaways
9. Develop a report of the research

Tools / Templates Involved
- Situation-Complication-Hypothesis-Answer (SQHA) framework
- Issue tree
- Buyer and user personas
- Interview guide
- Affinity diagram

Syllabus

Week	Learning Objectives	What You Will Learn	Attachments	Assignment
1	- Define the scope of the research project - Create an issue tree	- How to frame up the project, in order to socialize it with your co-workers and boss, and gain consensus on what problem(s) you are trying to solve with the research. - Definition of an issue tree, how to construct one, and what level of detail to include at this stage.	- SCHA article - Issue tree example	Create SCHA and issue tree
2	- Describe the target personas	- How to create persona profiles, and how to prioritize which persona(s) should be targeted for research	- Persona templates	Create persona document

Week	Learning Objectives	What You Will Learn	Attachments	Assignment
3	• Create an interview guide • Recruit customers for the research	• What constitutes a good interview guide for particular lengths of interviews (e.g., 30 minutes vs. 60 minutes), how to start and end an interview, and the importance of open-ended questions • Methods for identifying, soliciting and securing agreement from your interviewees	• Interview guide example	Create interview guide
4	• Conduct phone, video or in-person interviews	• How to prepare for a good phone interview, as well as processes and technologies to help them be successful	• Best practices when conducting an interview • Recording of past interviews	5-10 minute audio / video recording of a mock interview
5	• Analyze interview transcripts • Identify recurring themes, voices and key takeaways	• The value of recording and transcribing interviews, and a method to identify the right data contained in the interviews • How to "boil the ocean" and pull-out the most-important messages from the body of interviews	• Transcript examples • Affinity diagrams	Read three transcripts and develop an affinity diagram
6	• Develop a report of the research	• Common report templates and storylines, and how to frame the results appropriately for the audience you're presenting to	• Final report examples	Slides or document summarizing market intelligence gleaned from research