

WELCOME TO

THE  _ F R G E

BUILT BY MCMMASTER UNIVERSITY

THE FORGE

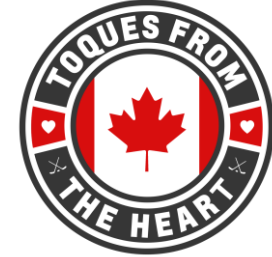


- **Startup Incubator** for McMaster University and Hamilton Region
- Supports **entrepreneurship and innovation** on campus and in the community
- Helps student and alumni entrepreneurs **launch and grow businesses**
- Connects students with startups for **work & experiential learning**
- Collaborates with Faculty of Engineering & DeGroot School of Business on **Innovation Minor**



Forge Overview

- 300+ Businesses Incubated
- \$56M+ Funds Raised
- 50+ Countries Reached





STARTUP SURVIVOR



Exclusive innovation program for McMaster student and alumni entrepreneurs



Challenge-based startup accelerator during May 1 - August 30, 2024



\$30,000 Pitch Competition during McMaster Entrepreneurship Week



We guide you through startup milestones

MAY:

Business Modelling

- ✓ Business Model
- ✓ Market Segmentation
- ✓ Customer Personas
- ✓ Customer Journey Mapping

JUNE:

Iterative Prototyping

- ✓ Low-fidelity prototype
- ✓ Mid-fidelity prototype
- ✓ High-fidelity prototype

JULY:

Go-To-Market Strategy

- ✓ Brand
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Sales
- ✓ Budget

AUGUST:

Pitching to Investors

- ✓ Market Sizing
- ✓ Financial Projections
- ✓ Live pitch to Front Row Ventures



Monthly challenges push you forward

WORKSHOPS: Each challenge begins with 1-3 entrepreneurship workshops taught by Forge mentors (*In person*)

MENTORSHIP: During weeks without workshops, teams meet with their mentor for advisory (*Virtual*)

TRIBAL COUNCIL: Before challenge ends, all teams meet to present progress updates and get feedback (*In person*)

DELIVERABLES: Teams submit challenge deliverables by deadline. Judging panel scores and provides feedback (*Virtual*)

FUNDING: Funding is released after each completed challenge.



DRAFT
Startup
Survivor
Calendar

MAY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 STARTUP SURVIVOR ORIENTATION	2 MENTORSHIP <i>(Team onboarding)</i>	3 MENTORSHIP <i>(Team onboarding)</i>	4
5	6 CHALLENGE 2 WORKSHOP 1 of 3: Business Modelling	7 CHALLENGE 2 WORKSHOP 2 of 3: Segmentation & Personas	8 CHALLENGE 2 WORKSHOP 3 of 3: Customer Journey Maps	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 MENTORSHIP	16 MENTORSHIP	17	18
19	20 HOLIDAY	21	22 MENTORSHIP	23 MENTORSHIP	24	25
26	27	28 TRIBAL COUNCIL	29 MENTORSHIP	30 MENTORSHIP	31	



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Startup
Survivor
Calendar

JUNE 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 DEADLINE: Challenge 2 due at 11:59pm	3 CHALLENGE 3 WORKSHOP 1 of 2: Prototyping Strategy	4 CHALLENGE 3 WORKSHOP 2 of 2: Prototyping Methods	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 MENTORSHIP	12 MENTORSHIP	13	14	15
16	17	18 MENTORSHIP	19 MENTORSHIP	20	21	22
23	24	25 MENTORSHIP	26 MENTORSHIP	27 TRIBAL COUNCIL	28	29
30						



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Startup
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Calendar

JULY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 HOLIDAY	2 DEADLINE: Challenge 3 due at 11:59pm	3 CHALLENGE 4 WORKSHOP 1 of 3: GTM	4 CHALLENGE 4 WORKSHOP 2 of 3: Sales	5 CHALLENGE 4 WORKSHOP 3 of 3: Financial Projections	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 MENTORSHIP	16 MENTORSHIP	17	18	19	20
21	22 MENTORSHIP	23 MENTORSHIP	24	25 TRIBAL COUNCIL	26	27
28	29 MENTORSHIP	30 MENTORSHIP	31 DEADLINE: Challenge 4 due at 11:59pm			



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Startup
Survivor
Calendar

AUGUST 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 CHALLENGE 5 WORKSHOP: Investor Pitch	2	3
4	5 HOLIDAY	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 PITCH PRACTICE: SKELETON DECK	13 PITCH PRACTICE: SKELETON DECK	14	15	16	17
18	19 PITCH PRACTICE: FULL DECK	20 PITCH PRACTICE: FULL DECK	21	22	23	24
25	26 TRIBAL COUNCIL	27	28 DEADLINE: Challenge 5 due at 11:59pm	29 INVESTOR PITCH DAY	30	31



Commitment to program is critical for success

Program runs May 1 - August 30, 2024

Teams actively work on business ~20 hours/week

- Mix of pre-scheduled workshops/meetings, challenge tasks, etc

Mandatory attendance at in person and virtual events

- Minimum 1 co-founder must represent startup at each event

Submit deliverables before monthly deadlines

Participate in Investor Pitch Day



Startup Survivor Benefits

- ✓ **\$5,000 Funding**
- ✓ **Entrepreneurial workshops**
- ✓ **Mentorship and business advisory**
- ✓ **Professional service providers**
- ✓ **Investor pitch coaching**
- ✓ **Coworking space & Makerspace**
- ✓ **Entrepreneur Community**
- ✓ **Startup perks and discounts**

- ✓ ***Double the funding for startups focused on smart and sustainable transportation solutions: \$10,000***



\$30,000 Startup Survivor Pitch Competition

Eligibility

- Top 5 startups from Startup Survivor

Format

- Live event at McMaster
- Investor pitch and Q&A

Cash Prizes

- \$15,000 First Place
- \$10,000 Second Place
- \$5,000 Third Place





Application Process

Step 1

Submit Eligibility Form
& Attend Workshop



Step 3

Submit online Application Form
due March 31 at 11:59PM



Step 2

Complete Challenge 1:
Customer Discovery





Application Part 1 of 2: Customer Discovery Record

STARTUP SURVIVOR

Instructions: Refer to instructions in Challenge 1 Guide. Fill out the spreadsheet below. Depending on your industry, you will have to conduct up to 15 interviews as a minimum. (Refer to Challenge 1 Guidelines to confirm minimum number of interviews) We always recommend talking to more customers and encourage you to keep track of these interviews. Remember what you learned in the workshop - always try to record your interviews. Video or voice recordings are fine. (Refer to Challenge 1 Guidelines to confirm minimum number of recordings)

Questions? Contact Marisa Leslie (marisa@theforge.mcmaster.ca) / Marissa Principato (marissa@theforge.mcmaster.ca)

i) Company Information

Company Name: [Ensure company name matches your online Application Form]
Your Name(s): [Include names of all team members]
Google Drive/Dropbox link to video/audio recordings of interviews. (If folder is password protected, you must include password)

ii) Problem Statement Canvas

Answer the following prompts as they relate to the problem you are solving:

CONTEXT	PROBLEM	ALTERNATIVES
[When does the problem occur?]	[What is the root cause of the problem?]	[What do customers do now to fix the problem?]
CUSTOMERS	IMPACT	ALTERNATIVE SHORTCOMINGS
[Who has the problem most often?]	[How does the customer feel when experiencing the problem? What is the measurable impact of the problem? Include units if possible (Eg. time lost in hours / money wasted in CAD or USD)]	[What are the disadvantages of the alternatives?]

iii) Assumptions

Fill out your assumptions below. Prioritize in order of riskiness. Most risky - Assumption 1. Least risky - Assumption 10.

- Assumption 1: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 2: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 3: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 4: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 5: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 6: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 7: [Insert assumption]
- Assumption 8: [Insert assumption]

Application Part 2 of 2: Online Application Form

THE FORGE

Startup Survivor Application 2024

Submission Deadline: March 31, 2024 at 11:59PM EST.

Application Process:
Part 1 of 2: Interview customers. Record interviews. Fill out Excel file template.
Part 2 of 2: Submit this application form and link to Excel file.

Disclaimer: We understand this may be your first deep dive into your business idea. If you come across a question that you do not have an answer for, just use your best judgement. Many times, things will change along your startup journey and that's why you're here!

Company Name*

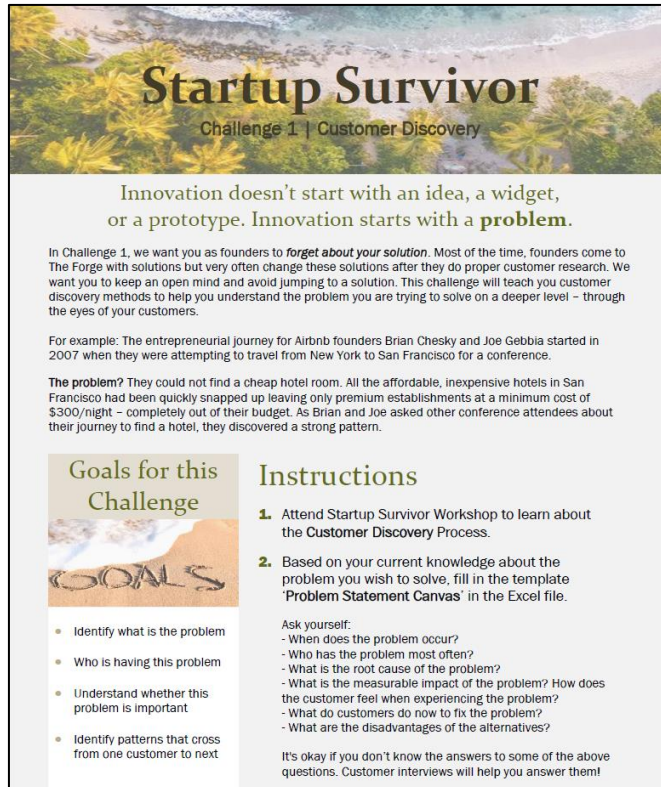
What's your company's name? If you don't have one yet, try making one up! Please don't put TBD - we want to see your creativity.

Previous Company Name

If you had a different company name when you submitted the Eligibility Form, please let us know so we can update our records.



Challenge resources to help you succeed



Startup Survivor
Challenge 1 | Customer Discovery

Innovation doesn't start with an idea, a widget, or a prototype. Innovation starts with a **problem**.

In Challenge 1, we want you as founders to *forget about your solution*. Most of the time, founders come to The Forge with solutions but very often change these solutions after they do proper customer research. We want you to keep an open mind and avoid jumping to a solution. This challenge will teach you customer discovery methods to help you understand the problem you are trying to solve on a deeper level – through the eyes of your customers.

For example: The entrepreneurial journey for Airbnb founders Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia started in 2007 when they were attempting to travel from New York to San Francisco for a conference.

The problem? They could not find a cheap hotel room. All the affordable, inexpensive hotels in San Francisco had been quickly snapped up leaving only premium establishments at a minimum cost of \$300/night – completely out of their budget. As Brian and Joe asked other conference attendees about their journey to find a hotel, they discovered a strong pattern.

Goals for this Challenge

- Identify what is the problem
- Who is having this problem
- Understand whether this problem is important
- Identify patterns that cross from one customer to next

Instructions

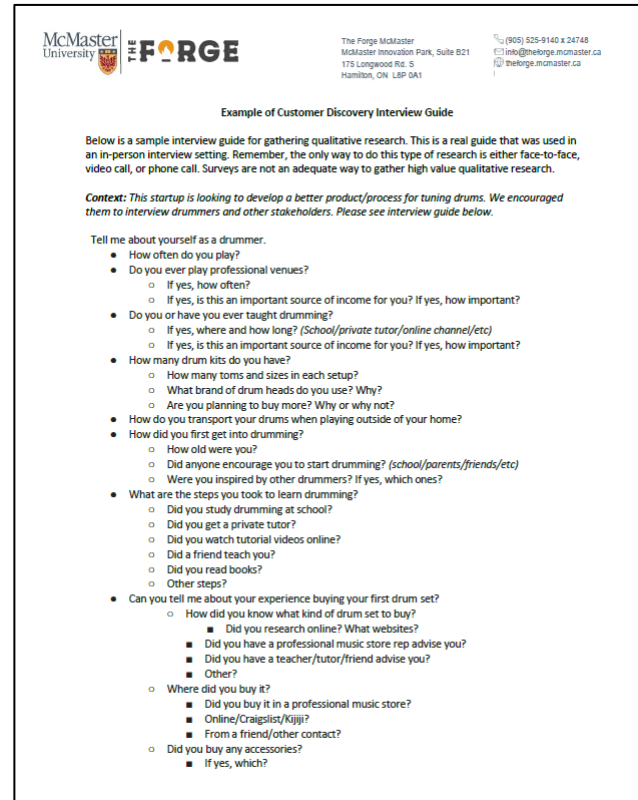
- Attend Startup Survivor Workshop to learn about the Customer Discovery Process.
- Based on your current knowledge about the problem you wish to solve, fill in the template 'Problem Statement Canvas' in the Excel file.

Ask yourself:

- When does the problem occur?
- Who has the problem most often?
- What is the root cause of the problem?
- What is the measurable impact of the problem? How does the customer feel when experiencing the problem?
- What do customers do now to fix the problem?
- What are the disadvantages of the alternatives?

It's okay if you don't know the answers to some of the above questions. Customer interviews will help you answer them!

Challenge Guide



McMaster University THE FORGE

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McMaster Innovation Park, Suite B21
175 Longwood Rd. S
Hamilton, ON L8P 0A1

(905) 525-9140 x 24748
info@theforge.mcmaster.ca
theforge.mcmaster.ca

Example of Customer Discovery Interview Guide

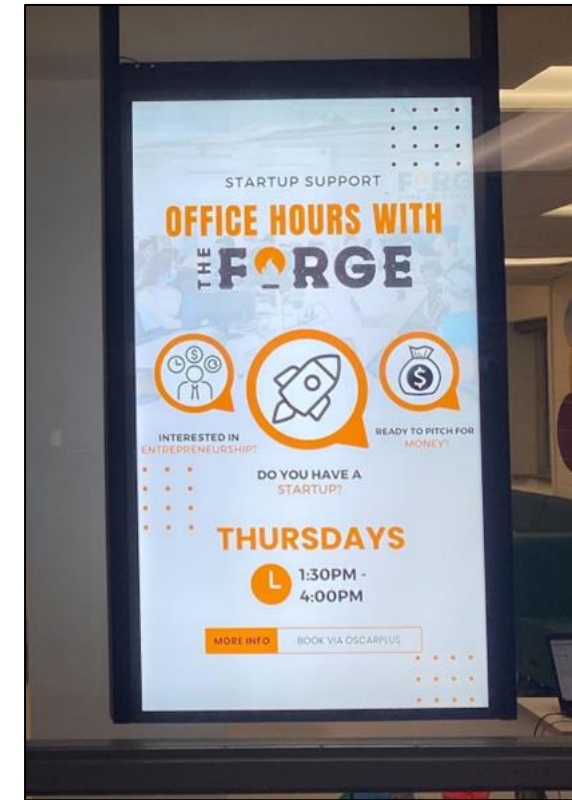
Below is a sample interview guide for gathering qualitative research. This is a real guide that was used in an in-person interview setting. Remember, the only way to do this type of research is either face-to-face, video call, or phone call. Surveys are not an adequate way to gather high value qualitative research.

Context: This startup is looking to develop a better product/process for tuning drums. We encouraged them to interview drummers and other stakeholders. Please see interview guide below.

Tell me about yourself as a drummer.

- How often do you play?
- Do you ever play professional venues?
 - If yes, how often?
 - If yes, is this an important source of income for you? If yes, how important?
- Do you or have you ever taught drumming?
 - If yes, where and how long? (School/private tutor/online channel/etc)
 - If yes, is this an important source of income for you? If yes, how important?
- How many drum kits do you have?
 - How many toms and sizes in each setup?
 - What brand of drum heads do you use? Why?
 - Are you planning to buy more? Why or why not?
- How do you transport your drums when playing outside of your home?
- How did you first get into drumming?
 - How old were you?
 - Did anyone encourage you to start drumming? (school/parents/friends/etc)
 - Were you inspired by other drummers? If yes, which ones?
- What are the steps you took to learn drumming?
 - Did you study drumming at school?
 - Did you get a private tutor?
 - Did you watch tutorial videos online?
 - Did a friend teach you?
 - Did you read books?
 - Other steps?
- Can you tell me about your experience buying your first drum set?
 - How did you know what kind of drum set to buy?
 - Did you research online? What websites?
 - Did you have a professional music store rep advise you?
 - Did you have a teacher/tutor/friend advise you?
 - Other?
 - Where did you buy it?
 - Did you buy it in a professional music store?
 - Online/Craigslist/Kijiji?
 - From a friend/other contact?
 - Did you buy any accessories?
 - If yes, which?

Interview Samples



STARTUP SUPPORT

OFFICE HOURS WITH THE FORGE

INTERESTED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP? DO YOU HAVE A STARTUP? READY TO RITCH FOR MONEY?

THURSDAYS

1:30PM - 4:00PM

MORE INFO BOOK VIA OSCARPLUS

1on1 Meetings



Key dates to remember...

MARCH 31 at 11:59 PM	APPLICATION DEADLINE
APRIL 1 - 10	Application Review
APRIL 11 - 17	Semi-finalist interviews
APRIL 18	Acceptances sent out
MAY 1	Orientation Day
May 2 – AUGUST 28	Startup Survivor in session
AUGUST 29	Investor Pitch Day
AUGUST 30	Program ends



Need Help? Get in Touch

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