

# What Does 0→1 Really Mean?

*(And Really Take?)*

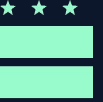
**Javi Calderon**

Founder, District Innovation

**Mylon Blueford**

Co-Founder, TattMe

# Hi, there!



**Javi Calderon**

**Founder, District Innovation**

Product strategist, designer and educator. 15+ years.  
Taught UX at General Assembly for 7 years, 400+  
career changers, 130+ startups.



**Mylon Blueford**

**Co-founder of TattMe**

Senior Software engineer, 12 years. Tattooed 30+  
times and building the tattoo booking experience he  
always wanted.

# Today's Agenda

- 01** What is 0→1?
- 02** Validating your idea
- 03** Prototyping & MVP
- 04** Testing with real people
- 05** Measure & iterate



**So you think you have an idea?**

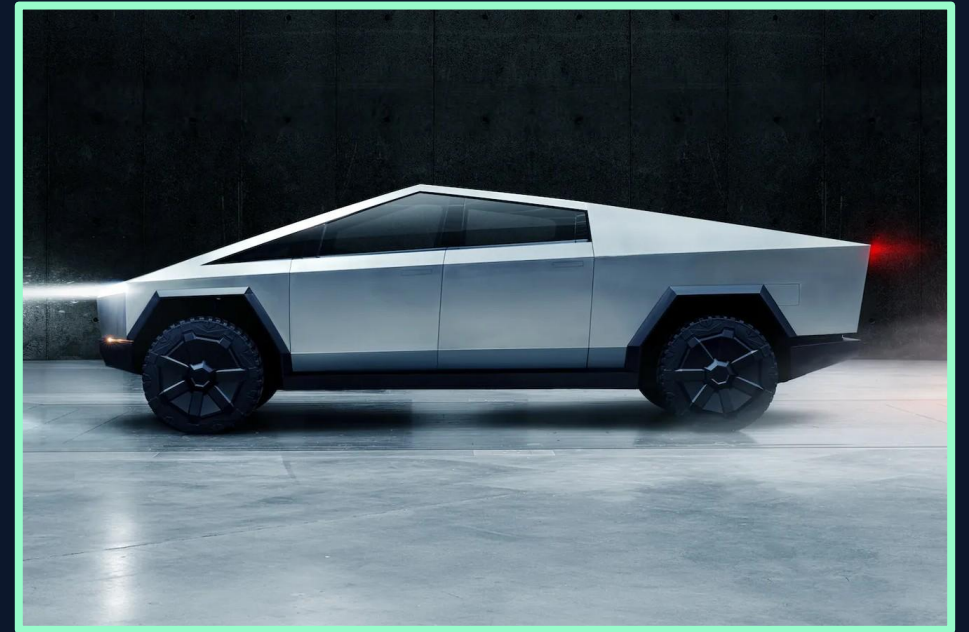
# Remember the Cybertruck?



## **The pickup truck, reinvented.**

- Stainless steel exoskeleton.
- 0 to 60 in under 3 seconds.
- Tows 14,000 lbs.
- 500+ miles of range.
- Starting at \$39,900!

*What could possibly go wrong?*



# The iphone of automobiles!



## It's like getting in line for BTS tickets...

- 146,000 reservations in the first weekend
- Then 250,000...
- Then a reported 1 million+
- Musk predicted 250,000 trucks sold per year by 2025



*\$100 to hold your spot. Who wouldn't?*

**How's that goin'?**

**~17,000**

**sold in 2025...**



# 7,263

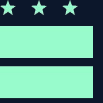
**sold in the first half of 2026...**

# So... what happened?

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# Swing and a miss!



## Womp, Womp.

- Shipped in 2023, four years after the reveal
- Started at \$61,000+
- Most of those \$100 reservations never became buyers
- A March 2025 recall of 46,096 trucks: essentially every one ever sold.



*A \$100 reservation isn't demand.*

# Tesla misunderstood their audience!

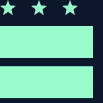


## WHO BUYS TESLAS?

- Tech-forward early adopters
- Status-conscious urbanites
- Eco-signaling buyers

## WHO BUYS TRUCKS?

- Contractors & tradespeople
- Towing and hauling needs
- Utility-first buyers



**What's the lesson?**  
**Know who you're building for!**



**So, how do we do it right?**

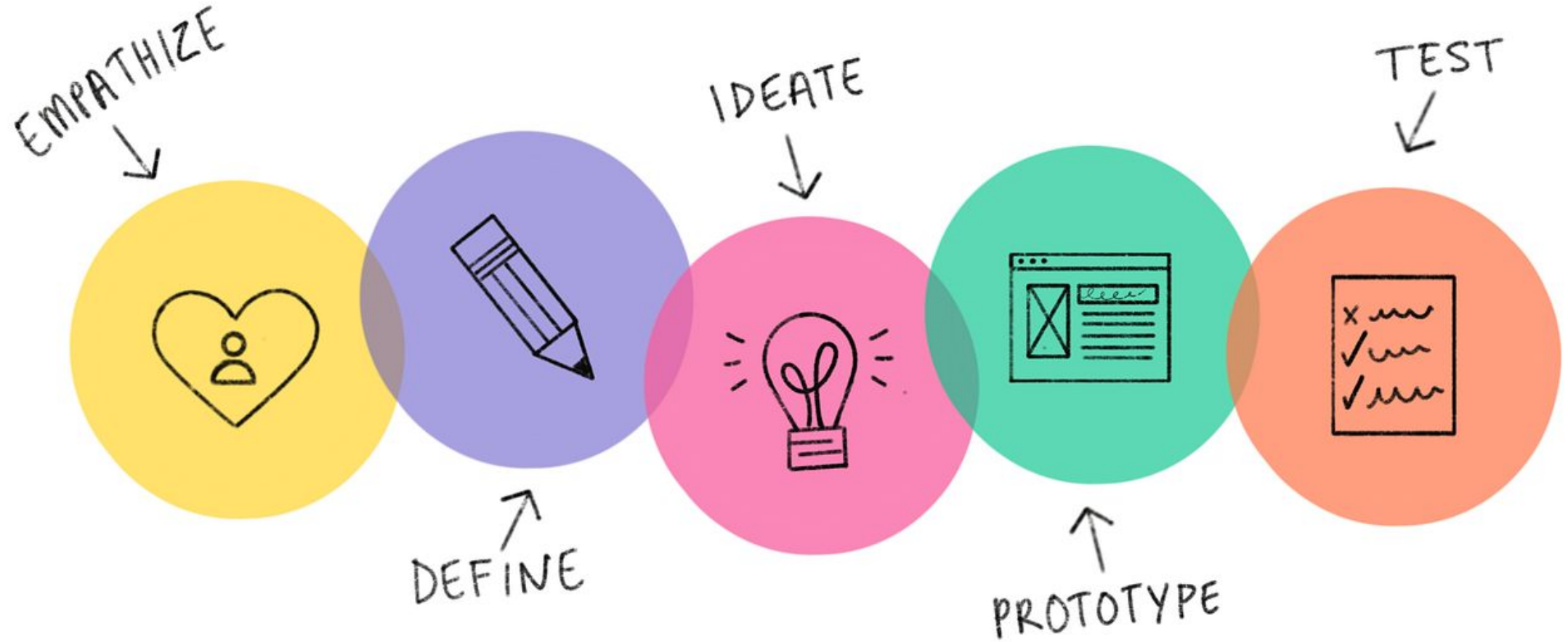
# It's all founded in research



## **Talk to the people who have the problem. Before you build anything.**

- Find 5 to 10 people who actually have the problem.  
Not your friends.
- Ask about the last time it happened, not whether they'd use your idea.
- Look around: who solves this today, and what do their reviews say they get wrong?

# Design Thinking!

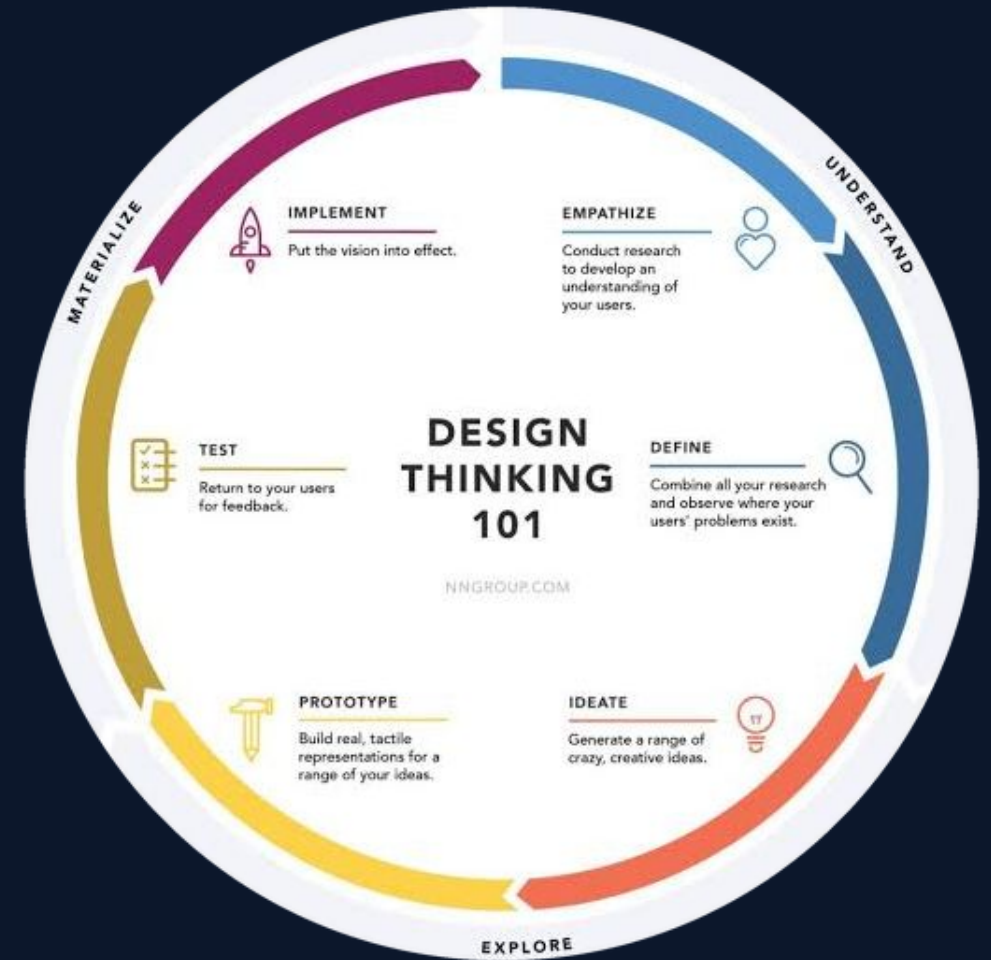


# What is Design Thinking?



## A commercialized “process” for human-centered design

- Start with people and the problem, not the solution.
- Define the real problem based on research
- Prototype cheap and often.
- Test with real people, then loop back.

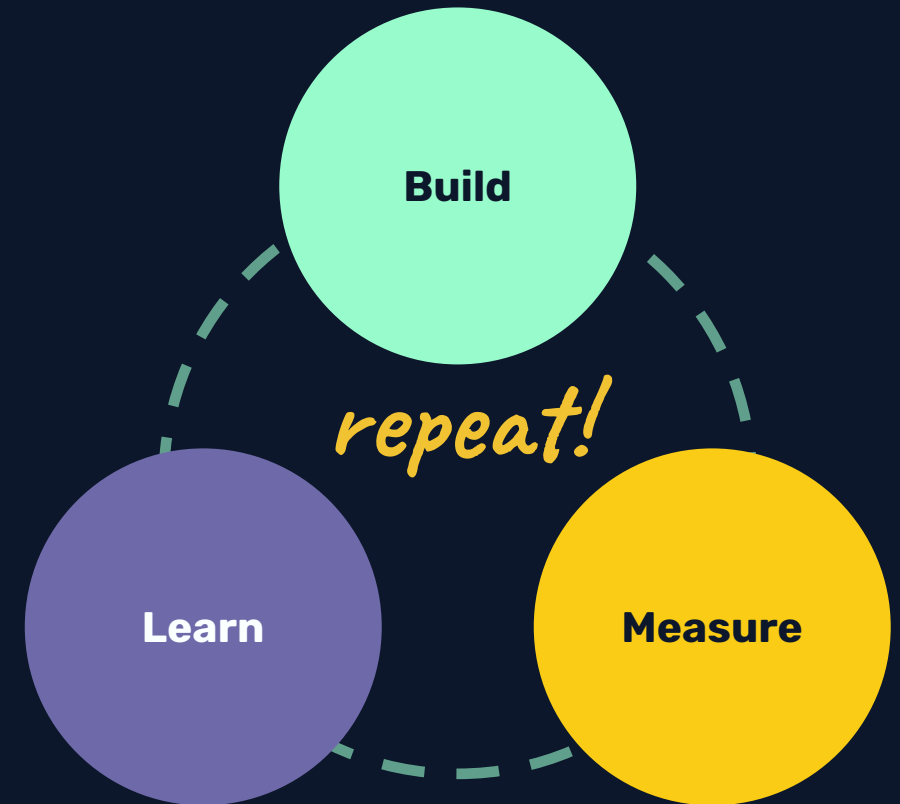


# Lean Startup

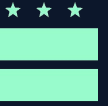


## Use build-measure-learn sprints to launch fast, and iterate quickly

- Start with your riskiest assumption.
- Build the smallest thing that tests it
- put it in front of real customers.
- Measure what people actually do, not what they say.
- Learn from your users, then adapt.
- Follow the data, not your gut.

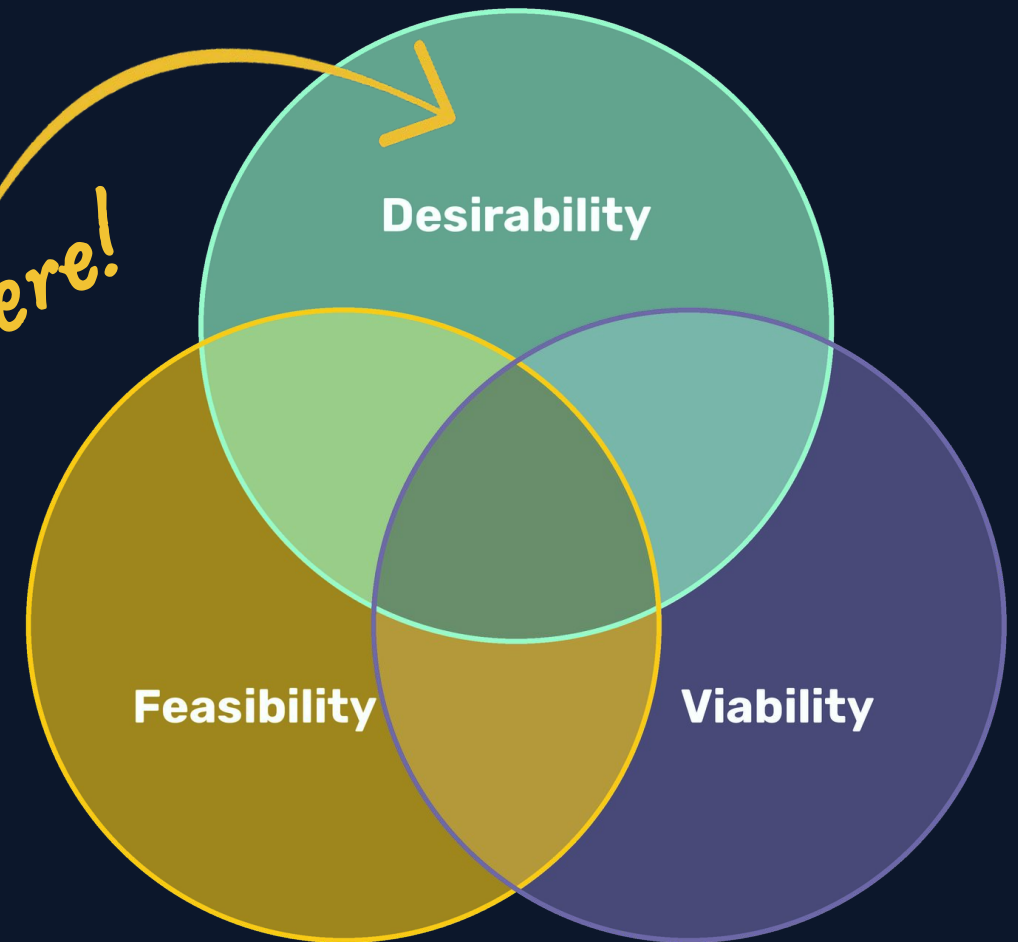


# Desirability. Feasibility. Viability.



- **Desirability.** Do people actually want this?
- **Feasibility.** Can we actually build it?
- **Viability.** Should we? Does the money math work?

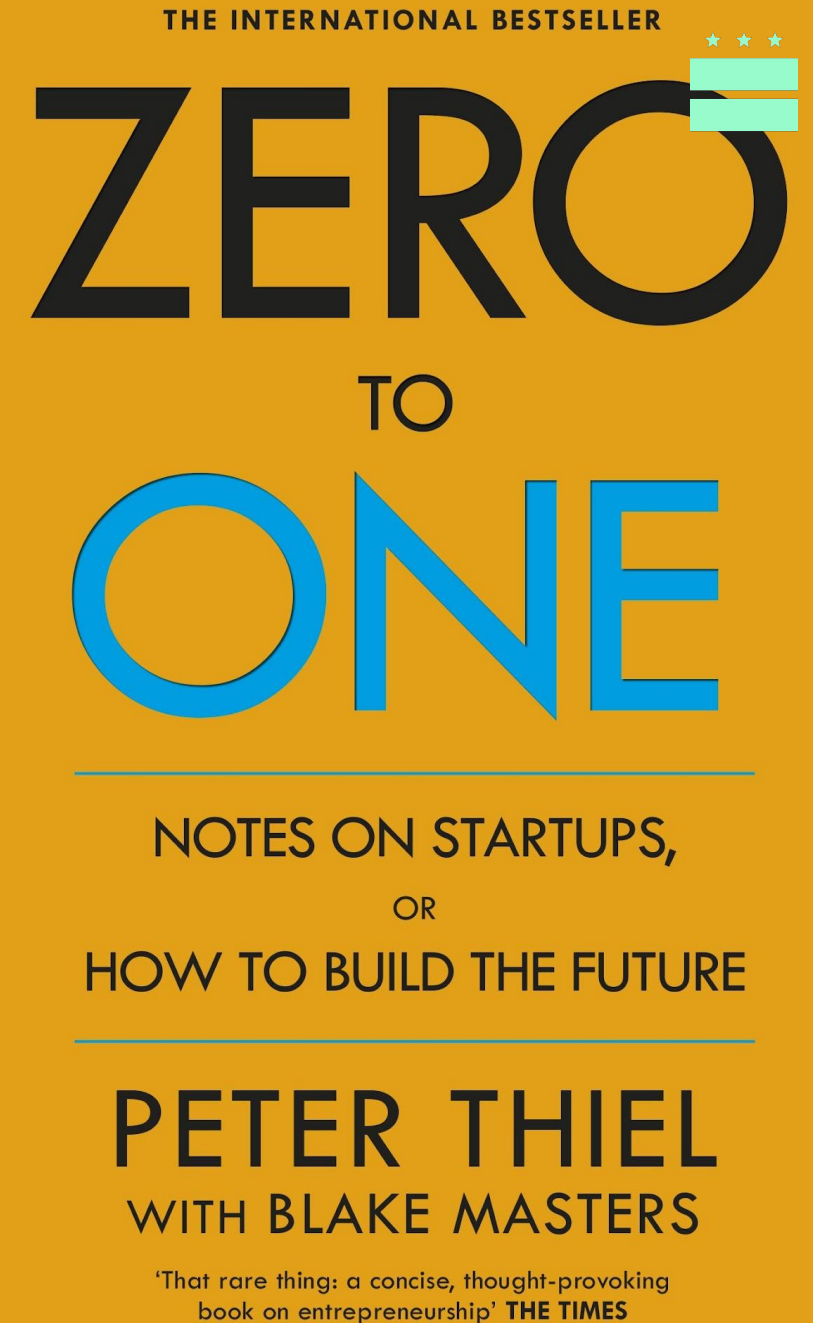
*Start here!*



# So what is 0→1?

## Building something that didn't exist before.

- No roadmap, no historical data, just a hypothesis.
- Speed over polish, launch to learn.
- Launch doesn't mean the job is done – it's just begun!
- You've made it when real people want the version of your product that you're selling



## Familiar examples



amazon



ebay

NETFLIX

Uber



# Did Hulu go 0→1?

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## What do you think?

- Netflix was already streaming in January 2007.
- Hulu launched in March 2008. Late to the party?
- But nobody was offering **last night's network TV, free, the next day.**
- Netflix had old movies. YouTube had clips.
- Hulu gave a specific group something they couldn't get before.
- 0→1 isn't being first. It's being first **for someone.**

NETFLIX  
hulu



**So what was TattMe's big  
idea?**

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**It's hard for Black people to find artists that know how to tattoo their skin tone. You can't find them on Google. You can't easily find them on Instagram. Let's build that.**

*Mylon Blueford*

# The big bet

## **That enough people would want it at all!**

- On two-sided marketplaces, you have to convince two groups of people! We needed clients to show up, and enough artists to make it worth showing up for.

***“These are the problems that no matter how big your business gets, you’re still solving.”***

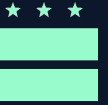




**Test the assumption that  
your idea depends on.**

# Generative Research Methods

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**Generative research tells you what to build.  
Start here, before you build anything.**

**User Interviews**

**Competitive Analysis**

**Field Observation**

**Landing Page Tests**

# Validating the TattMe concept

## We validated it three ways.

- **A Facebook survey:** five questions, nearly 100 responses.
- **Interviews with tattoo artists.**
- **We got more tattoos from artists.**

**“We are the customers we were building for. What better way to validate than by being the customer?”**

**51%**

didn't know talented artists nearby

**60%**

couldn't decide what to get

**82%**

would download and use the app

Source: TattMe Facebook survey, nearly 100 responses



# Building an MVP

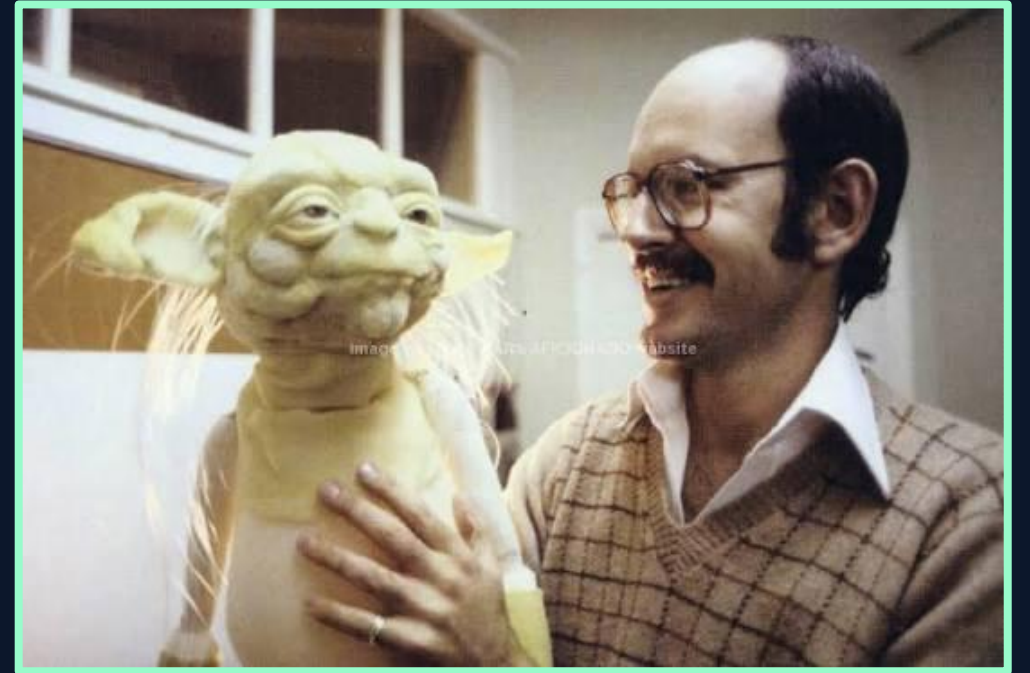
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# What is an MVP?

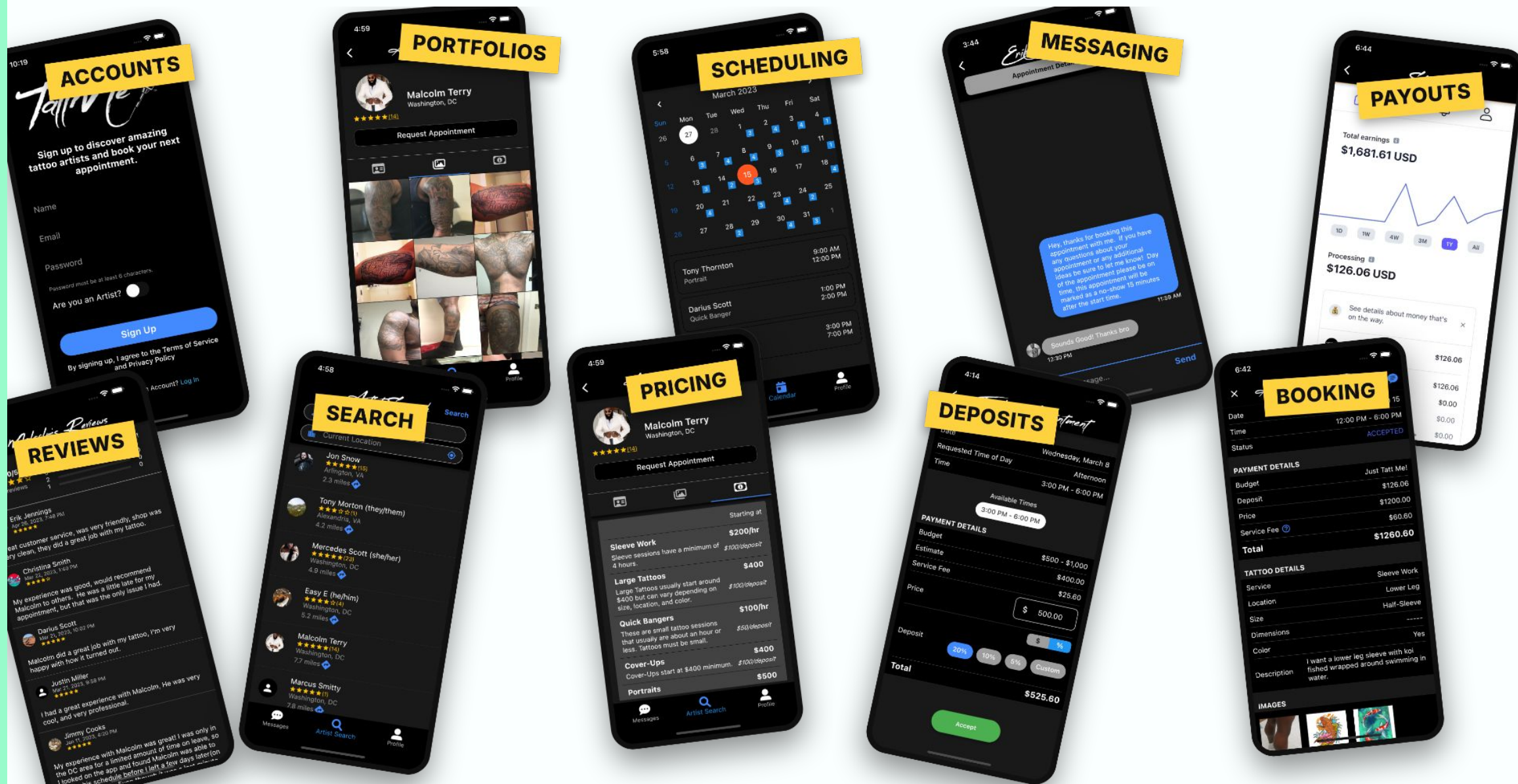


## **It is not just a smaller version of your product...**

- It's the quickest possible answer to the question your whole idea depends on.
- The MVP has to deliver on that promise, or you prove nothing.
- The goal of your MVP is to get your idea in front of people and see if they see the value.

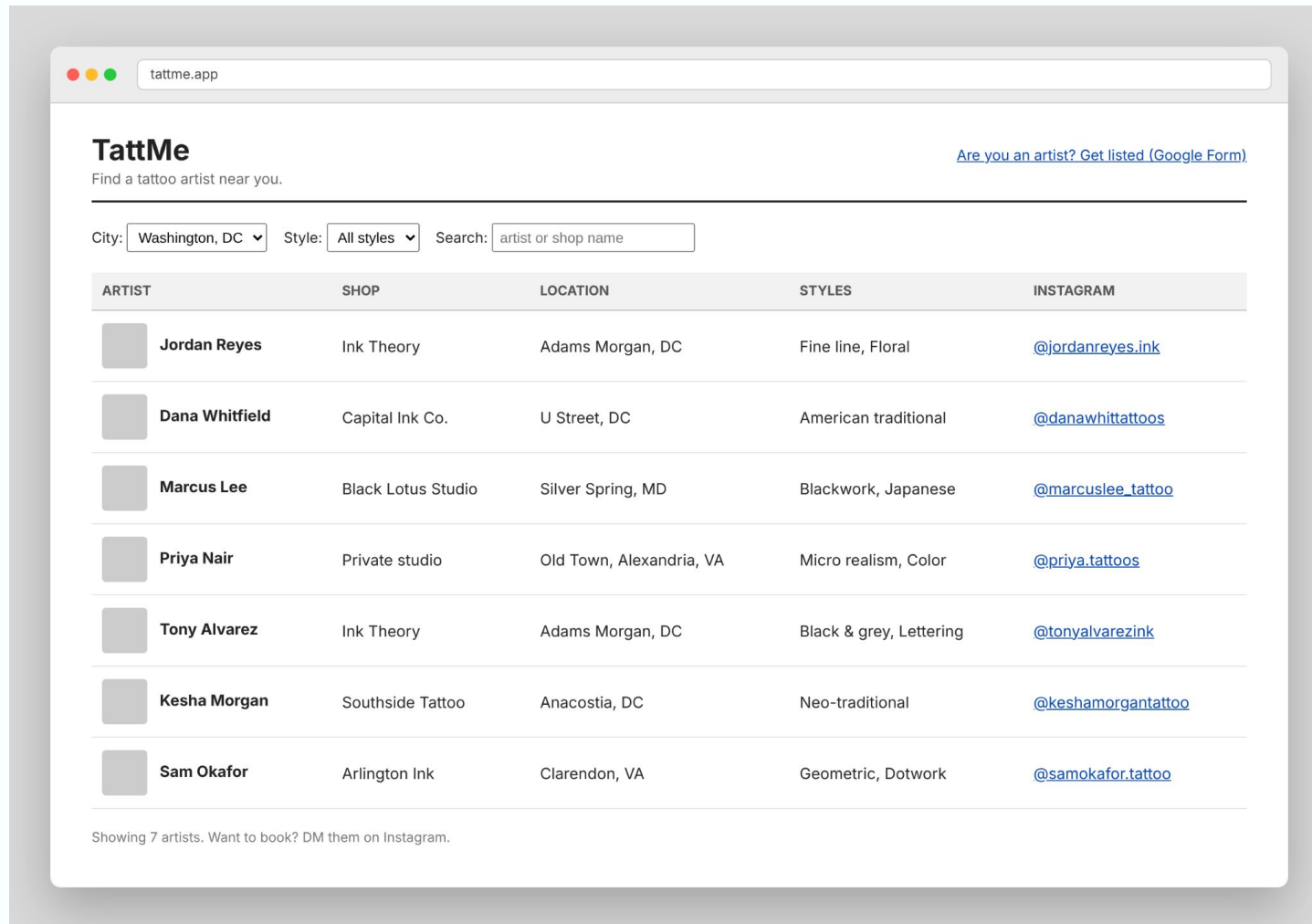


# TattMe "MVP" at launch



**“Our MVP was not an MVP.”**

# What TattMe's MVP SHOULD have been



A plain page listing tattoo artists. You can't book. But you can find an artist.

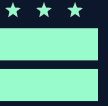
# What that cost

**Started building August 2019. Launched June 2023.**

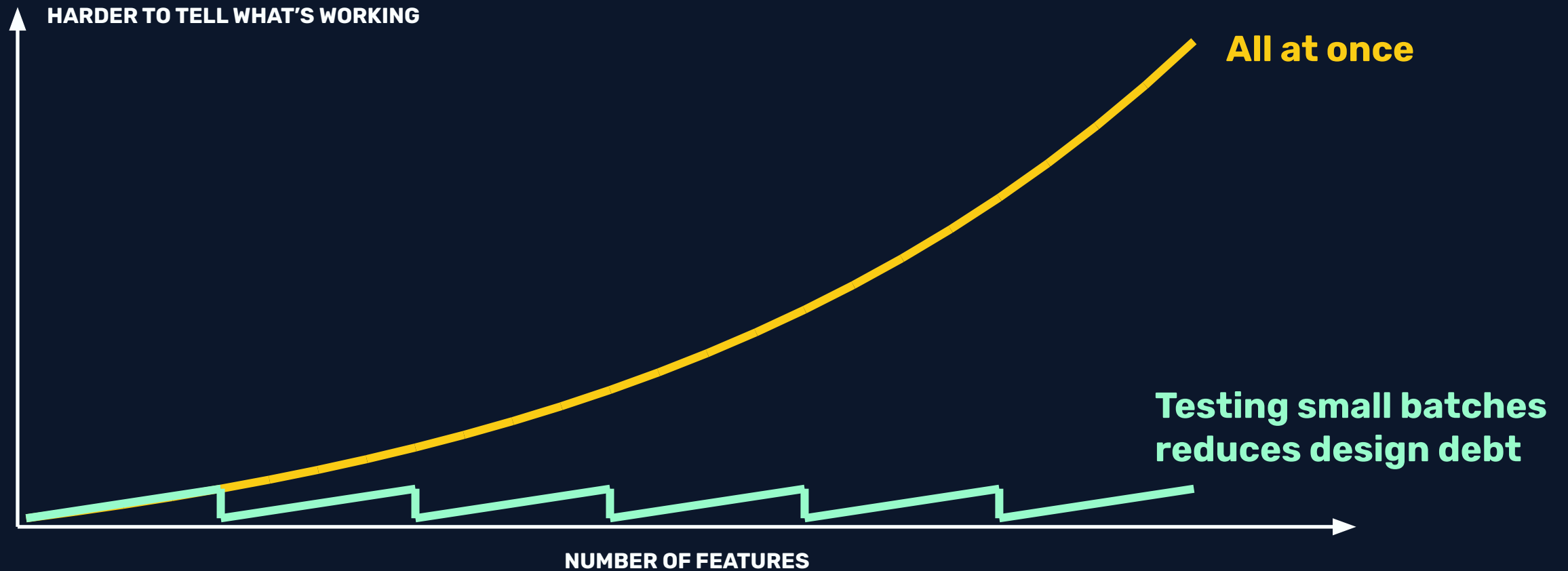
- Day one shipped with search, discovery, payments, scheduling, bookings and reviews.
- Learning curve, then COVID, and then a lot of feature bloat.



# Design Debt



Launch it all at once, and you can't tell what's working.



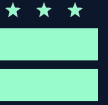


**The cost of a too-big MVP isn't the wasted code. It's the **feedback you didn't get.****

# Lesson learned: what we'd do differently

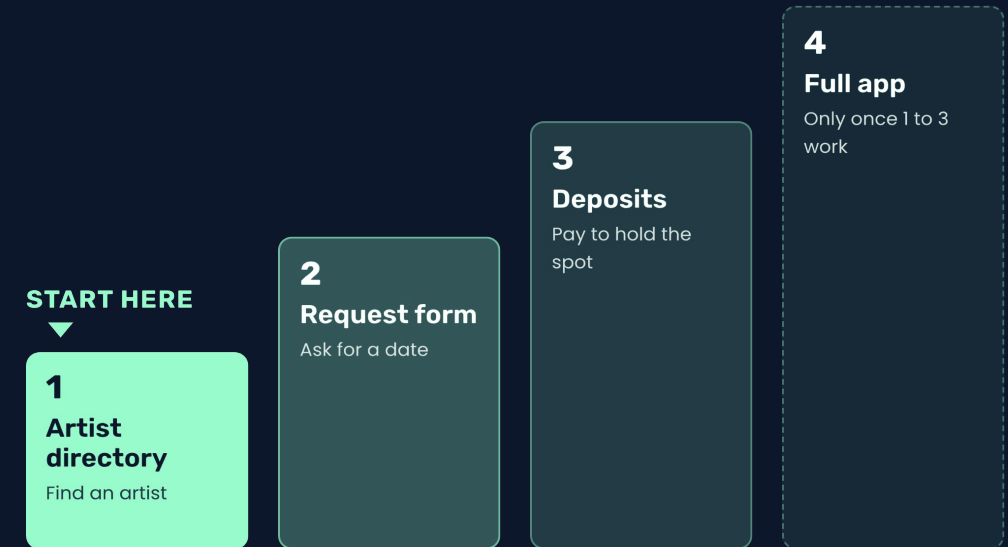
- We wasted time chasing features over feedback.
- Users will lie to you about what they “think” they want.
- Let the data drive your decisions.

# How do you build an MVP?



## Build the smallest thing that answers your riskiest question.

- Name the one question your idea hangs on.
- Cut every feature that doesn't help answer it.
- Use tools that already exist for everything else: a Google Form, Instagram DMs, a spreadsheet.
- Ship it in weeks, then watch what people actually do with it.



Each step works on its own. Add the next one when people use this one.

# Do you need to be technical?

**You don't have to write code. You have to be technical enough.**

- In 2026 there's no such thing as "not technical enough."
- Know which tools and services your product is built with, and who has the logins.
- Know enough to ask good questions of whoever builds it.

***"If your business relies on technology to exist, you need to understand how that works."***

**Can you answer these?**

Where does our code live?

Who owns the domain?

Who has the Stripe login?

If our developer left tomorrow, could we keep running?



**Get your idea in front of real people.**

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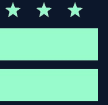
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**Until a user gets your product in their hands without you around, you'll never really understand how it's actually being used, or where the gaps are.**

*Mylon Blueford*

# Evaluative Research Methods

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**Generative research tells you what to build.**

**Evaluative research tells you if what you built actually works.**

**Data Analysis**

**Surveys**

**Usability Testing**

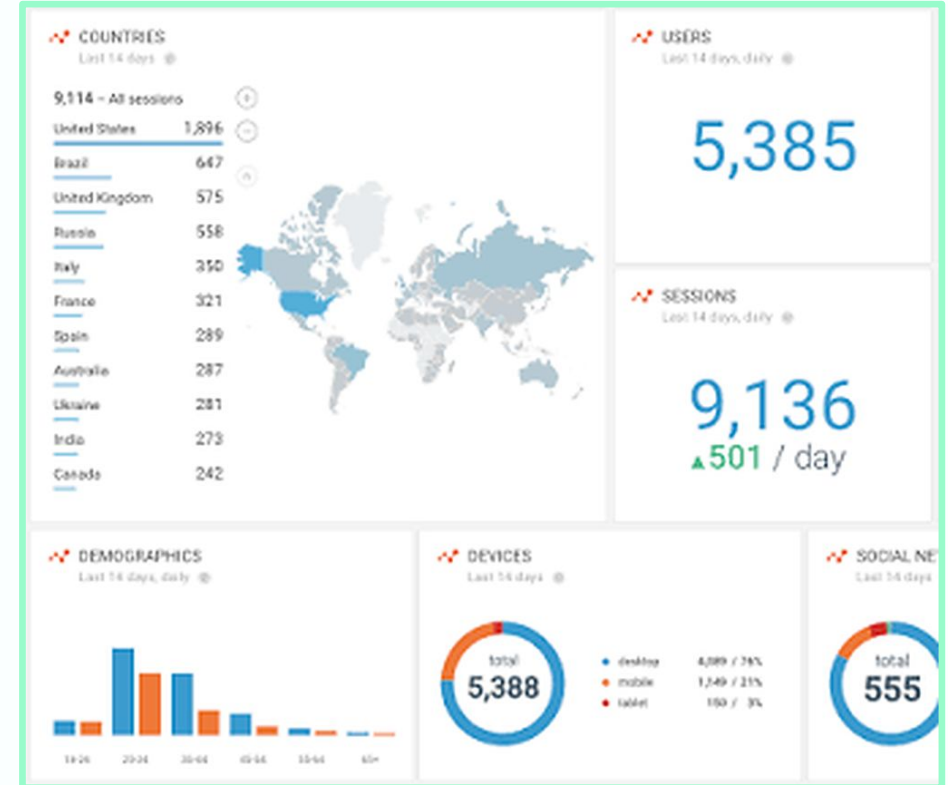
**A/B Testing**

# How we learn through data

**Track everything. Keystrokes, funnels, session replays, watched in real time.**

- Surveys
- Direct outreach.
- Actual conversations.

***"You have to hunt people down for it."***





# Measure, learn, repeat.

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# What's your core action?



**Once you have a hundred users you can't watch over their shoulders.**

- So: what is the one action your business dies without?
- And separately: what do you actually need to learn?  
Don't test the easy unimportant stuff.
- Is it new signups? Likes? Booked appointments?
- What's that action that users take, and the number of that action taken, that tells you that you're on track?

# TattMe's most important number

**A client starts an appointment request, finishes it, and sends it to an artist.**

- Not every request is accepted. Not every acceptance becomes a payment.
- So it's a throughput game: get as many into the top of the funnel as possible.
- They track it every day.



# How we've iterated

## **Small changes, measured every day.**

- Moved clients from the mobile app to the web. The app now serves artists.
- Rebuilt the booking flow around one number: requests that end in a paid deposit.
- Redesigned the artist app's navigation around daily work: calendar, messages, Quick Pay.
- Track the funnel daily, change one thing, then measure again.



**How do you know if it's  
working?**

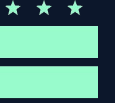
# How do you know it's working?



**Struggling to keep up with demand? You've got it.**

**Struggling to make a sale? You don't. Yet.**

# Pivot or Persevere?



# Kodak

- Invented the digital camera in 1975.
- Shelved it to protect their film sales.
- Film collapsed when smartphones came out in the 2000s
- Kodak filed for bankruptcy in 2012.

VS

# FUJIFILM

- Same collapse, same time.
- Asked what else its film science could do.
- Pivoted to healthcare and cosmetics.
- Still thriving!



**“You never really get it right. We’re  
still trying to get it right.”**

***Mylon Blueford***

# So, what does 0→1 really take?

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- ✓ Know who you're building for.
- ✓ Research the problem.
- ✓ Establish a hypothesis: your riskiest bet.
- ✓ Make the smallest thing that tests it.
- ✓ Test it with real people.
- ✓ Iterate and refine.

Questions?

# More questions? Reach out!

*Don't be shy!*



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# Thank You!

