Guide 5: Test your solution

Your goal

Test whether your proposed solution addresses the customer's problem, need, or want. Use the result to improve the idea.

Bring the product idea from Task 4. A test is useful even when the result is different from what you expected.

What to produce

An improved product idea with an explanation of problem-solution fit. Record the hypothesis, test, evidence, and product decision.

Use paper or your own document. Follow your teacher's instructions for research. The test record and sentence starters below are optional support, not extra official requirements.

Key terms

- **Hypothesis:** a clear prediction that you can test.
- **Test:** a planned way to collect evidence about a prediction.
- **Problem-solution fit:** how well the solution addresses a customer's problem, need, or want.
- **Measure:** a way to record a result, such as time, a count, or a completed action.

Step 1: Make a testable prediction

Choose an important assumption about how the solution would help. State who will do what and under which conditions.

“Is my idea good?” is a question, not a hypothesis. “Customers will love it” is too unclear to measure.

A useful starting frame is: “If [customer group] uses [solution] for [task], then [predicted result].”

Before the test, decide what result would support the prediction and what would challenge it. Choose a reasonable measure for your own situation. There is no universal pass score in this guide.

Step 2: Match the test to the claim

Ask what you need to observe. A survey about preferences may help explain opinions. It cannot prove an actual purchase, a faster action, or repeated use.

If you predict a behaviour, collect evidence of that behaviour. A short trial or observation may help. If your prediction concerns buying, a promise to buy is not the same as a completed purchase.

Choose a safe, practical test with your teacher. Ask permission before involving people. Do not sell, spend money, or use equipment without approval. If you cannot safely test the exact claim, revise the claim and explain the limit.

Example: Ready Pouch tests a benefit

Ready Pouch is our fictional example business. Its proposed product is a small pencil pouch for students.

The team could test this prediction: “Students will find a pen faster using our trial pouch than using their usual way of storing pens.”

They could ask willing participants to complete the same pen-finding task both ways and record the time. They should keep the task conditions similar. Trying the task twice may itself make people faster, so test order is a possible weakness to consider.

If the pouch is no faster, the team should not describe the test as a success. They might improve the opening or choose a different benefit to investigate. If the pouch helps some people but not others, they should explain that difference.

These are a possible test and possible outcomes, not completed research. Even a faster result would not prove that customers will pay for the pouch.

Step 3: Run the test and record results

Write the plan before collecting results. Keep a record of who the test involved as a group, what they did, and the relevant conditions. Do not include personal contact details in your project.

Record results accurately, including results that challenge your prediction. Do not change the success rule after seeing the data just to make the idea appear successful.

If the test did not work as planned, explain what happened. Missing or unclear evidence needs another check, not an invented answer.

Step 4: Decide what to change

Compare the evidence with your prediction. Explain whether it supports, partly supports, or challenges the hypothesis.

Then decide whether to keep, improve, replace, or test the solution again. A change should respond to the evidence. If you keep the idea, explain why.

Your turn

Complete this record:

1. **Prediction:** What did we expect?
2. **Method:** What did we do to check it?
3. **Evidence:** What actually happened?
4. **Meaning:** What does the result suggest? What can it not show?
5. **Decision:** What will we change or keep, and why?

Update your product description so it reflects the decision.

Check your work

- My hypothesis predicts a clear result.
- My method checks that result.
- I recorded real findings, including unhelpful results.
- I explained limitations and avoided claims beyond the evidence.
- My updated idea shows how testing shaped a decision.

Next: Explain the business's purpose

In Task 6, you will develop vision and mission statements for the business.

Independent guidance based on the AP Business with Personal Finance CED, printed pages 156-157. This is not an official College Board resource.