

Jobs to be Done

Run switch interviews with recent customers and synthesise 3-5 candidate "When/I want to/so I can" job statements in a single half-day, giving the team a shared, specific view of what the product is actually hired to do.

DURATION

3h 45m

GROUP SIZE

4-6

synthesisers
(interviewees are
not counted)

WHAT YOU BRING

Three to six recent switchers booked for 45-min calls, a light interview guide, recording setup, and a team that has read prior transcripts.

WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

- 3-5 candidate job statements in When/I want to/so I can form
- Clustered wall of verbatim quotes tagged by the four forces
- Interview transcripts filed for ongoing team reference
- A "not our job" list of requests the team can decline

WHO TO INVITE

- **Facilitator.** Runs the session, co-conducts interviews, keeps synthesis honest; prior switch-interview experience is a big plus.
- **Interviewers (2-3, rotating).** Ask and listen in pairs, swapping between calls so no single theory hardens into the finding.
- **Note-taker / synthesiser.** Captures verbatim quotes, not paraphrase; paraphrase is where the team's existing theory sneaks in.
- **Product lead.** Mandatory in the room. The job statements reshape the roadmap and must not land as someone else's conclusions.
- **Ops / CS observer.** Optional. Talks to customers daily and contradicts the neat story emerging from three interviews.

USE WHEN

- Churn is stable but not improving and surface theories are exhausted
- Teams disagree on the problem a new feature area is meant to solve
- You have access to switchers from the last ninety days
- Multiple teams are prioritising against different implicit jobs

AVOID WHEN

- × You can't recruit recent switchers to actually interview
- × The decision in front of you is tactical backlog refinement
- × Leadership wants validation of a job they already believe in
- × The product lead can't commit 2-3 hours of focus

How the session runs

- **Phase 1 -- Brief and prep (15 min)**

Walk the team through the interview shape, the four forces as a back-of-mind lens, and the rotating roles. Hand out the three-prompt guide and head off pre-loaded theories or over-prepared question lists.

- **Phase 2 -- Switch interviews (45 min each)**

Run two or three calls asking customers to walk back through the day they switched, push for the concrete scene, and probe alternatives. Listen only -- don't diagnose, don't fill silences, don't summarise back.

- **Phase 3 -- Silent synthesis (30 min)**

Each synthesiser works alone from the transcripts, writing every telling verbatim quote on its own sticky -- no interpretation, no paraphrase. Notes go up on the wall in silence when the timer ends.

- **Phase 4 -- Cluster into candidate jobs (30 min)**

Five silent minutes of affinity-mapping, then discuss each cluster: what's the pattern, and is it a situation, motivation, or outcome? Aim for 4-7 clusters and prompt explicitly for anxiety and habit.

- **Phase 5 -- Name 3-5 candidate jobs (20 min)**

Turn the strongest clusters into strict When/I want to/so I can statements on cards. Read each aloud and challenge it against the quotes; split two-job statements and reject any that name the product.

- **Phase 6 -- Wrap-up (10 min)**

Pin and photograph the cards, read them once more, and assign owners -- product lead takes the statements forward, ops sanity-checks against live calls, engineering gets walked through them next. End on commitments, not summaries.