



FREE WORKSHEET • FEZ INNOVATION LAB

Is Your App Idea Ready?

The App Idea Evaluation Worksheet: pressure-test your idea before you spend a dollar building it.

Zaye • FEZ Media • fezmedia.co

10 PAGES • 30-45 MINUTES • FILLABLE PDF

How to use this.

01 Give it 30 to 45 minutes.

Type into the fields or print it out and write by hand. Either works. What does not work is skimming it in five minutes and deciding you already knew all this.

02 Answer honestly, not impressively.

Nobody else sees this. The point is to find the soft spots in your idea now, while changing your mind is still free. It gets expensive later.

03 A low score is not a no.

The scorecard on page 8 is not a verdict. It is a to-do list in disguise. Your lowest score tells you exactly what to go and do next.

WHO MADE THIS

Zaye Flowers, FEZ Media.

I am a product designer in Baltimore. I have spent ten years designing products inside large organizations — **GEICO, CNN, IHG, Publicis Sapient and ADP** — and the last stretch building and shipping one of my own. This worksheet is the first week of the FEZ Innovation Lab, condensed into something you can do alone at a kitchen table.

01 The Problem

Start with the trouble, not the app. If you cannot describe the problem without describing your solution, that is the first thing to fix.

In one sentence, what problem does your app solve?

One sentence. If you need two, the problem is probably still two problems.

How do people deal with this problem today?

They are already doing something — a spreadsheet, a group chat, a person they call, or nothing at all.

What does it cost them: time, money, or frustration?

Be concrete. “Two hours every Sunday” beats “it’s inefficient.”

How often does it happen?

Daily problems get solved. Once-a-year problems get tolerated.

02 The Person

An app built for everyone gets built for no one. Name one real human being and keep them in the chair for the rest of this worksheet.

Describe one specific person who has this problem. Not “everyone.”

What do they do all day? What is their week like? A real person you could point at is best.

Where do they spend time, online and offline?

This is also how you will find five of them to talk to on the next page.

Why would they care enough to try something new?

Trying a new app costs them attention and trust. What makes that worth it?

03 Five Conversations

Before you design anything, talk to five people who have this problem. Five is small enough to actually do this week and big enough that the pattern starts showing up.

WHO THEY ARE	DID THEY CONFIRM THE PROBLEM?	WHAT SURPRISED YOU?
01	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No	
02	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No	
03	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No	
04	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No	
05	☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No	

THE ONE RULE

Do not pitch your idea. Ask about the last time the problem happened to them. People will be polite about your idea and honest about their week — so ask about their week.

04 The Six Features

Now, and only now, the app itself. Start with one sentence that says who it is for and what it does for them.

YOUR VALUE STATEMENT

For _____ who _____ ,
who it is for what is true of them
 _____ helps them _____ .
app name do what

FEATURE	WHICH PROBLEM IT SOLVES	MUST-HAVE FOR LAUNCH?
01		
02		
03		
04		
05		
06		

THE SIX-FEATURE RULE

If your app needs more than six features to do its core job, it isn't focused yet. Six is not a magic number — it is a forcing function. It makes you decide what your app is actually for.

Parking lot

Everything that did not make the cut. You are not deleting these, you are dating them.

05 What Already Exists

Something is already solving this, even if it is solving it badly. Your real competition is usually a spreadsheet, a group chat, or doing nothing.

Another app, a spreadsheet, a person, or doing nothing

ALTERNATIVE	WHAT IT DOES WELL	WHERE IT FALLS SHORT
01		
02		
03		

Why would someone switch to yours?

“It’s better” is not an answer. What specifically would make someone change what they do today?

SCORECARD

Score your idea.

Rate each one from 1 to 5, using what you wrote on the pages before this. Be stingy. A generous score here only costs you later.

CRITERION		1 = WEAK	5 = STRONG	1	2	3	4	5
01	Problem clarity Can you state the problem in one sentence?							
02	Specific person Could you name five real people who have it?							
03	Evidence How many of your five conversations confirmed it?							
04	Focus Does your app do its core job in six features or fewer?							
05	Difference Can you say why someone would switch from what they use now?							
06	Access Can you reach these people to test with them?							
TOTAL								/ 30

25–30

Ready to prototype.

You know the problem, the person, and the shape of the thing. The next move is to build something clickable and put it in front of someone.

16–24

Promising. Close the gaps first.

There is something here. Your lowest score is your next step — go and do that one thing before you spend money on anything.

6–15

Go back to the conversations.

The idea isn't dead; it's early. Almost every idea that scores here is missing evidence, not ambition. Five more conversations will move this more than five more features.

If you left a row blank, that is a finding too. It usually means you have not done that part yet.

Before Us

Before Us is my own product — a daily inheritance of Black wisdom, one quote a day with the person behind it. Built in React Native, shipped on the App Store, and built alone. Here is how it answered these questions — including the one it never answered at all.

Everything below is published: the case study at fezmedia.co/work/before-us/ and the app's own site, beforeus.app. Section 03 is the exception, and it is the most useful part of this page.

01 The Problem

IN ONE SENTENCE

Black wisdom is quoted constantly and attributed carelessly — a name gets detached from a life, passed around until it means nothing in particular.

02 The Person

THE PERSON

Someone who wants a quiet daily practice, not another feed. People do not open an app like this to browse — they open it in a mood.

WHY THEY WOULD CARE

The alternative is a feed. The product answer was restraint — one quote a day, no ads, nothing to scroll past.

03 Five Conversations

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

There were none. I built Before Us alone, and the feedback arrived after it shipped rather than before. Week two is the week the Lab says changes the most minds about what the thing should be, and it is the one week I did not run on my own product.

WHY THAT IS ON THIS PAGE

Because every answer above it came from conviction rather than evidence. It worked out here. That is not the same as it being the right way round, and it is why five conversations are a requirement of the cohort rather than a suggestion.

04 The Six Features

VALUE STATEMENT

For people who want a daily practice rather than another feed, Before Us gives them one quote a day and the person behind it.

WHAT WAS IN SCOPE

Six, written down in week one and published on beforeus.app as “small on purpose”: a voice a day, collections, know the voice, keep what moves you, two moods, and a gentle nudge.

PARKING LOT

A feed, a social graph, a streak. In the case study's words, a quote app wants to become all three. The v1 list written in week one is the v1 list that shipped.

Scope held. Evidence did not — this idea scores a 1 on line 03.

Ready to turn this into a prototype?

The FEZ Innovation Lab is a six-week cohort for non-technical founders. Small group, hands-on, and you leave with a clickable prototype of your app.

- You bring one idea. The worksheet you just filled in is a head start.
- Six weeks, live, in a room of twelve — not a course you watch alone.
- You leave with a working prototype, a scoped feature list, and a launch plan.

See the next cohort →

fezmedia.co/cohort

Questions? Reply to the email this came with and tell me your idea in a sentence.