

TweetPocket

Don't Just Start A Business, Solve A Problem

You may not think that the “Pet Rock” solved a problem for consumers, but Gary Dahl did and discovered something interesting.

In April 1975, Gary Dahl was in a bar (which is now Beauregard Vineyards Tasting room in Bonny Doon) listening to his friends complain about their pets. This gave him the idea for the perfect “pet”: a rock. A rock would not need to be fed, walked, bathed, or groomed; and would not die, become sick, or be disobedient. He said they were to be the perfect pets, and joked about it with his friends. Dahl took the idea seriously and drafted an “instruction manual” for a pet rock. It was full of puns, gags, and plays on words that referred to the rock as an actual pet.



Pet Rocks were a smooth stone from Mexico’s Rosarito Beach. They were marketed like live pets, in custom cardboard boxes, complete with straw and breathing holes for the “animal.” The fad lasted about six months, ending after a short increase in sales during the Christmas season of December 1975. Although by February 1976 they were discounted due to lower sales, Dahl sold 1.5 million Pet Rocks for \$4 each,^[3] and became a millionaire. **Source:**

Wikipedia

Does your startup business solve a problem or meet a consumer need in the market? Unless it does, you may end up spinning your wheels developing a solution that the marketplace does not need or want.

Keep in mind that a business exists to solve problems and meet the needs of consumers

better than competitors in the market; at an affordable price.

READ Entrepreneurship... Catalyst for Change

A problem/need is a condition that a consumer has that is calling for a solution that either does not exist or the available solution has shortcomings or gaps.

Successful businesses identify these gaps in the marketplace and attempt to fill them with a solution.

- Google made search better.
- Amazon simplified online buying & selling.
- Netflix solved on-demand streaming media.
- Uber is attempting to make on-demand car service better.

The key point to remember is, you want to identify what the marketplace says is a problem/need or gap and not what you believe is the problem.

To help you identify the problem ask questions such as:

- What is the consumers/clients main concern?
- What conditions/circumstances that are preventing consumers/clients from getting what they desire?
- Why are consumers/clients are seeking a solution?

Another important point to remember is to not define your business around the product/service. Instead, you want to define your business around the problem or the need.

Consumer Problem	Product/Service	Business Defined As
Feels Unsafe	Locks, security alarm, guard dog	Providing safety/security
Needs customers for product/service	Print ads, website, social media	Providing consumer audiences
Youth Delinquency	Mentoring, job placement, support groups	Youth Social Services Provider
Wants family recreation	Theme parks, movies, TV Networks, Cruises	Family Entertainment
Homebound Parent	In-home care, skilled nursing, family counseling	Family Care Provider

See More On How To Identify The Problem or Need

<https://absmagazine.com.au/2012/04/03/how-to-identify-gaps-in-the-market/>

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/240164>

<https://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/identifying-market-problems/>

<http://entm.ag/1X45ycR>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lead_user

Let me know your thoughts in the comments below. If you like the article, please share it.

TweetPocket

Download Our Complimentary Guide

You want to start a business but don't know where to begin, what to do, when to do it or how? Download our free guide and learn the 3 most critical things you need to know before embarking on your startup journey. Written in plain English, it's easy to understand and super practical. Just enter your best email below for instant access.

Download Now

