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**Innovate Like Amazon**

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# **Working Backwards**

# **Innovation Workshop**

by Amir Elion



# **What is Working Backwards?**

# What is Working Backwards?

The Working Backwards process is a mechanism designed to help people create innovations that focus on customers, and to support investments decisions based on evidence, a vision, and thorough discussion.



## 01 – Working Backwards questions

Be clear and aligned about the customer you are solving for and the problem or opportunity you focus on

## 03 – Quick experiments

Design experiments to test your assumptions and get evidence that supports or challenges your vision

## 02 - PRFAQ document

Articulate your vision for a solution in customer-centric, clear language, and get inputs from stakeholder

## 04 – Build and iterate

Release a Minimum Loveable Product (MLP) quickly and iterate, maintaining focus on customer needs

# | The Working Backwards Questions

Be clear and aligned about the customer you are solving for and the problem or opportunity you focus on.



Who is the  
**customer**?

What is the  
**customer**  
problem or  
opportunity?

What's the most  
important  
**customer**  
benefit?

How do you  
know what  
**customers** need  
or want?

What does the  
**customer**  
experience look  
like?

# | Today Statement

Today [**customers**]

Have to [**customer problem**]

When [**situation when the problem occurs**]

[**Customers**] need [**most important benefit**]



# #1 Who is the Customer?

Be specific.

Identify the customer that represents the biggest problem you want to solve most prominently.

The more focused you are, the more unique and delightful the solution will be.



# #1 Who is the Customer?

## Examples:

1. A Swedish resident, who has a family with young children, and manages their family's affairs.
2. A CIO of a large enterprise in a traditional industry who manages hundreds of business applications.
3. A university technical degree graduate who has no work experience in the field of expertise they studied.



## #2 What is the Customer problem or opportunity?

What are they frustrated with today?

What is the missed opportunity they don't leverage?

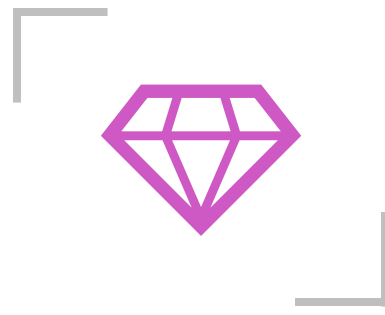




## #2 What is the Customer problem or opportunity?

### Examples:

1. [Family persons] struggle with different, multi-step, login methods to various digital services at banks, public services, healthcare and education providers.
2. [CIOs] lack up-to-date information about the status of critical applications.
3. [Students] cannot get a chance to build and demonstrate their skills and start their career.



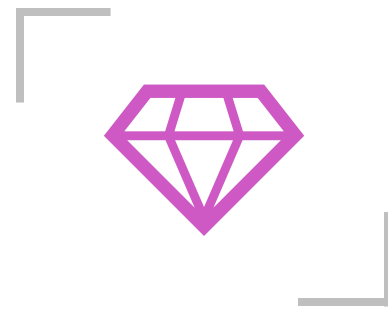
# **#3 What is the most important customer benefit?**

Consider their priorities.

What is the one thing they care about most?

Think in terms of values rather than features.

Speed? Quality? Cost? Reliability? Simplicity? Visibility?



# #3 What is the **most important** **customer benefit?**

Examples:

1. [Family persons] **Simplicity** (would you prioritize speed or security?)
2. [CIOs] **Control**
3. [Students] **Access** (would you prioritize visibility or exposure?)

# | **Today Statement - example**

Today Swedish residents, who have a family with young children, and manage their family's affairs,

have to remember different passwords and go through multi-step verification processes,

whenever they need to use digital services at banks, public services, healthcare or education providers.

**They need a simple way to use digital services which require secure identity verification.**

# Framing of the Challenge

# | Today Statement

Today [**customers**]

Have to [**customer problem**]

When [**situation when the problem occurs**]

[**Customers**] need [**most important benefit**]

# Understanding the customer

# Customer Empathy Map

Context: describe the context

## Facts

List all relevant facts about the customer in the specific context

## Pains

List the problems that they face and the source of their frustration

## Goals

List all the goals and things they'd like to achieve in this context

## Actions

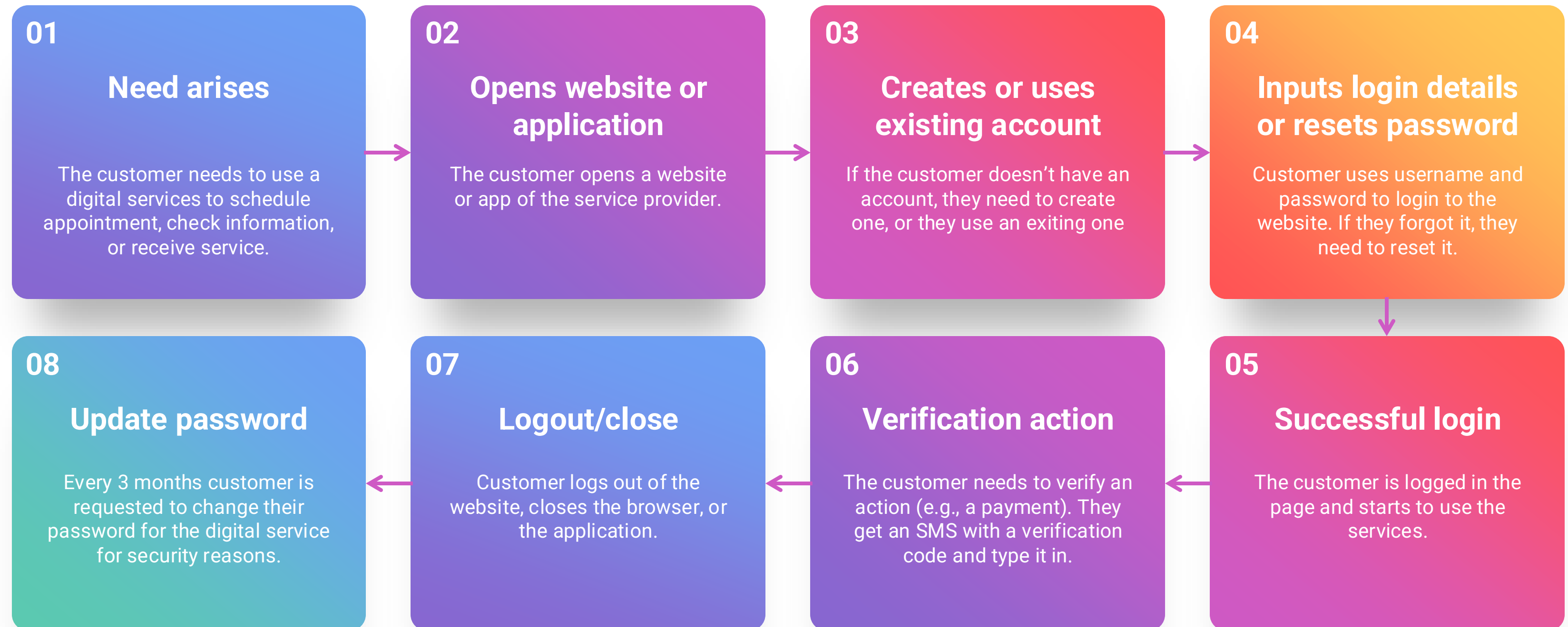
List the actions they take to accomplish their goals and overcome pains





# Mapping the Customer Journey - example

Note: this should describe the CURRENT customer journey – when there isn't yet a new solution



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Note: this should describe the CURRENT customer journey – when there isn't yet a new solution



# A Snapshot from the Future

# | From a Today Statement to How Might We

How might we... + Intended action (use an action verb) + for + Potential Users + So that + Desired outcome



How might we allow secure login to any digital service with one solution for Swedish residents so that they can use them daily?

How might we make application issues visible for CIOs in large companies so that they can minimize critical downtime?

How might we create opportunities for demonstrating skills for university technical degree graduates so that they can kickstart their career?

# | Let's create **How Might We** statements

**How might we...** + **Intended action**  
(use an action verb) + for + **Potential Users** + So that + **Desired outcome**



How might we...

How might we...

How might we...

# What if...?

**Remove constraints with “What if...?” statements.**

- What if we could read students' minds?
- What if we had unlimited personnel?
- What if we had no GDPR limitations?
- What if...?
- What if...?
- What if...?
- What if...?

# The PRFAQ document



01



## Press Release

The press release (PR) is a one-page document explaining the vision for a business or product. It's a tool focused strictly on customers and not internal structure or financial goals.

Leap into the future imagining how you want customers to feel and experience a product, feature, or service that does not yet exist.

02



## FAQs

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are up to 5 pages that complement the PR and dive into details. There are two types of FAQs, Customer FAQs answer potential customer questions or concerns, and Stakeholder FAQs address internal questions such as business or technical choices and assumptions.

03



## Visuals

Add visual information to the document, by showing a sketch of key elements of the user interface, a storyboard of the customer journey, or a high-level design and components of the solution.



# Headline [Short, compelling description, 5-7 words]

Subheading [What is being launched, and the most important customer benefit]

1<sup>st</sup>

**Short summary/“Elevator pitch”:** Describe what you’re launching and the most important benefit + launch date to set expectations.

2<sup>nd</sup>

**Customer problem/opportunity:** Clearly explain the opportunity or problem you are solving with your product or service, make sure you focus on the customer problem.

3<sup>rd</sup>

**Approach/solution:** The vision for how to solve the customer problem. An overall description of the new product or service you are launching.

4<sup>th</sup>

**Leader quote:** A quote from an appropriate leader within your company. Reinforces the value that will be provided and articulates the vision of the solution.

5<sup>th</sup>

**Customer experience/journey:** Describe how customers typically encounter and use the new product or service.

6<sup>th</sup>

**Customer testimonial:** A fictional customer quote reinforcing why the customer cares. It is specific, believable, and uses a language they would use.

7<sup>th</sup>

**Call to action:** Where would users go to start using the product or service.

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

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7<sup>th</sup>

Sixth paragraph

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## Customer Testimonial

This is a fictional customer quote reinforcing why the customer cares. It should be specific, believable, and use language they would use.

A typical structure would start with a sentence about the previous frustration, then describe how they started using the solution and how it changed their experience. It includes a specific event that demonstrates their delight and culminates in them advocating for others to use it.

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup>

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# Anatomy of a Customer Testimonial

- Frustration before the solution
- Name and relevant info about the customer
- Discovery of the solution
- Key benefit(s)
- One delightful moment
- How it changed their reality
- Optional: Converted to an admirer/ambassador

## Tips:

Use their style and vocabulary. They are NOT from you marketing department!  
Make the emotion evident.

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

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7<sup>th</sup>

## Example of a Customer Testimonial

“Before ID-me, I struggled with keeping track of countless passwords and annoying verification processes every time I needed to access my accounts,” said Johan Andersson, 35, from Stockholm, “With ID-me, things are much easier. Just yesterday, I made payments in my bank, booked a doctor’s meeting for our son, and submitted an address change on Skatteverket – all in just 15 minutes and no SMS codes. It made my digital life so much simpler. I am telling all my family and friends that they have to use it, too!”

1<sup>st</sup>

First paragraph

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2<sup>nd</sup>

## The “Elevator pitch”

3<sup>rd</sup>

**Short summary:** Describe what you’re launching and the most important benefit + launch date to set expectations.

4<sup>th</sup>

The first sentence establishes who the customer is and the benefit you will provide.

5<sup>th</sup>

Then summarize what you’re launching, using words your customer will understand.

6<sup>th</sup>

7<sup>th</sup>

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup>

4<sup>th</sup>

5<sup>th</sup>

6<sup>th</sup>

7<sup>th</sup>

## Anatomy of an “Elevator pitch”

- Date and location of announcement.
- 1<sup>st</sup> sentence – solution name, customer characterization, main benefit.
- When/in what context is the solution relevant?
- The gist of how it works.
- Who is it available to?
- Selected metrics.

### Tips:

Should clearly answer the WB questions.

Metrics and details should be one that customers care about – cost, speed, availability...

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

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## Example of a "Elevator pitch"

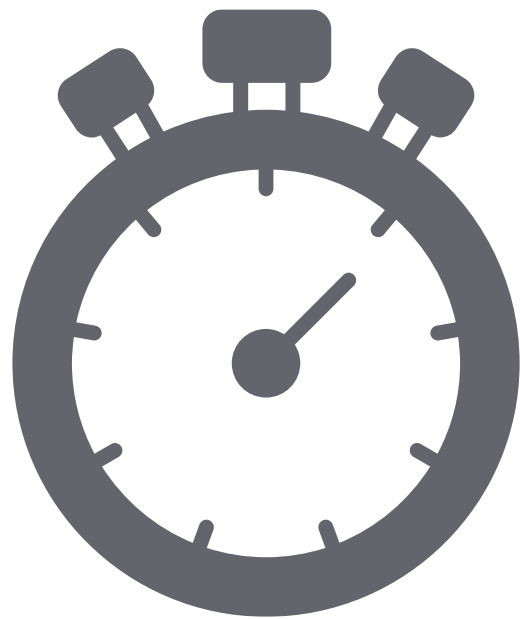
STOCKHOLM – Dagens Nyheter – 1/1/2025.

ID-me now allows Swedish residents to easily and securely login to all online digital services. The service works with everything from financial services to healthcare and government platforms. It works through a free mobile app with a few simple taps. By providing a single, secure digital identity, ID-me empowers users to control and manage their personal information across a wide range of essential services with a single and hassle-free solution.



Your task:

# Write the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph



20 minutes

- ✓ **Pairs (5')**: write the first paragraph.
- ✓ **Groups (15')**: share drafts and combine to one text.
- ✓ Send to [amir@thinkbigleaders.com](mailto:amir@thinkbigleaders.com)



# Full Press Release Structure

1<sup>st</sup>

First paragraph

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2<sup>nd</sup>

## The “Elevator pitch”

3<sup>rd</sup>

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1<sup>st</sup>

First paragraph - example

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2<sup>nd</sup>

STOCKHOLM – Dagens Nyheter – 1/1/2025.

3<sup>rd</sup>

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4<sup>th</sup>

5<sup>th</sup>

6<sup>th</sup>

7<sup>th</sup>

1<sup>st</sup>

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7<sup>th</sup>

Second paragraph

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## **The Problem or Opportunity**

Clearly explain the opportunity or problem you are solving with your product or service, make sure you focus on the customer problem (not the business problem).

Be factual, but compelling. Avoid overstatement. Include metrics that demonstrate the extent and impact of the problem/opportunity.

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## Second paragraph - example

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In today's digital world, verifying identity across different platforms has become cumbersome and frustrating. People need to remember countless passwords for different services - with different rules and security measures. Many existing methods of verification are unreliable, making it difficult to prove who you are. This leads to wasted time, frustration, and a lack of trust in online systems. The average person logs in to digital services 30-50 times a week. In the past year, thousands of fraudulent logins led to the loss of 12bn SEK.

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Third paragraph

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## **The Approach or Solution**

Clearly explain your vision for how to solve the customer problem. This is an overall description of the new product or service you are launching.

Use clear customer friendly language and avoid jargon or marketing fluff.

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

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## Third paragraph - example

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ID-me solves these problems by providing one simple and secure way to verify your identity for all the services you need. Whether you're logging into your bank account, accessing healthcare, or signing important documents, you can use ID-me from any device. Instead of juggling passwords or carrying physical identification, you can confirm your identity with just your phone. Your personal information stays safe while you enjoy the convenience of fast, easy access to everything that matters.

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Fourth paragraph

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## Leader Quote

A quote from an appropriate leader within your company. The leader quote should reinforce the value that will be provided to customers at launch and articulate the vision of the solution and how it changes people's lives.



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2<sup>nd</sup>

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## Fourth paragraph - example

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“ID-me isn’t just a digital identity - it’s the future of secure, hassle-free access to essential services. We’ve listened to what people need and created a service that makes life simpler and more secure. Our goal is to make sure everyone in Sweden can access the services they rely on without worrying about security or complexity,” said Eva Svensson, CEO of ID-me.

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Fifth paragraph

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## **Customer Experience or Journey**

Describe how customers typically encounter and use the new product or service.

Your goal with this paragraph is to show how easy it is and motivate the reader to want to try it out.

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## Fifth paragraph - example

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When a user logs into a service using ID-me, they open the ID-me app on their smartphone and scan the QR code provided on the website. Next, they confirm their identity with a fingerprint or a quick code, and within seconds, they can securely access services like banking, healthcare, or government platforms. They may also perform actions that require a verification step, such as money transfers, personal information updates, and ordering of services.

1<sup>st</sup>

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7<sup>th</sup>

Sixth paragraph

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## Customer Testimonial

This is a fictional customer quote reinforcing why the customer cares. It should be specific, believable, and use language they would use.

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4<sup>th</sup>

5<sup>th</sup>

6<sup>th</sup>

7<sup>th</sup>

## Sixth paragraph - example

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“Before ID-me, I struggled with keeping track of countless passwords and annoying verification processes every time I needed to access my accounts,” said Johan Andersson, 35, from Stockholm, “With ID-me, things are much easier. Just yesterday, I made payments in my bank, booked a doctor’s meeting for our son, and submitted an address change on Skatteverket – all in just 15 minutes and no SMS codes. It made my digital life so much simpler. I am telling all my family and friends that they have to use it, too!”

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Seventh paragraph

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## Call to Action

Describe where would users go to start using the product or service, or when can they get it (e.g., a link, an Appstore, a physical location).

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2<sup>nd</sup>

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7<sup>th</sup>

## Seventh paragraph - example

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Visit [www.ID-me.se](http://www.ID-me.se) or download the app in the Appstore to get started.

Using metrics in the  
Press Release

**35,000**

**Only mention metrics that  
customers care about**

**Clarify the scope of the  
problem and the impact**

**Use in paragraphs 1, 2,  
3, and/or 6**



# FAQs



# Customer FAQs

- # What do I do if I need help?
- # What are you doing with my data?
- # Which languages are supported?
- # Will this work with [other tech/solution]?
- # How can I stop using it?

# #2

## Stakeholder FAQs

- # Why are we doing this now?
- # What are the risks and how do mitigate them?
- # How are we planning to scale?
- # What are the business/pricing model options?
- # How does this align with our [service/product]?

# The Visuals (optional)



**Option 1:** customer journey storyboard

**Option 2:** sketch UI wireframes

**Option 3:** high-level  
architecture or solution  
components

# Visuals - Customer Journey Mapping

