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FREE TEMPLATE

MOM TEST QUESTION BANK

The Mom Test Question Bank: 25 Questions That Get the Truth From Customers

25 good questions, 10 bad ones with fixes, an outreach message, a call script, a notes template and a scorecard. Based on Rob Fitzpatrick's The Mom Test.

14	71	2026-11
SECTIONS	IDEAS, TOOLS & TEMPLATES	LAST CHECKED



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Tested, not guessed.

INSIDE THIS TEMPLATE

Questions that even your mom can't lie to you about, ready to use on your next call. Stop collecting polite compliments and start learning if people will actually pay.

> **WHO IT'S FOR**
>
> Founders, freelancers and agencies who talk to customers before building, pricing or pitching, and keep hearing 'great idea' with no sale after.

01 **If you only have 15 minutes**
Rob Fitzpatrick's book starts with a simple trap: ask your mom if your idea is good and she'll say yes, becaus...

02 **The book's 3 rules**
Fitzpatrick's point: people will lie to you to be nice if you ask about your idea. These rules make lying hard.

03 **Stage 1: The problem (7 questions)**
Find out if the problem is real, how often it shows up and how much it hurts.

04 **Stage 2: Current solution (6 questions)**
If they have done nothing to fix it, they probably won't pay you to fix it.

05 **Stage 3: Money (6 questions)**
Ask about what they already spend, not what they say they would spend.

06 **Stage 4: Next step (6 questions)**
Every good call ends with them giving something: time, an intro or money. Fitzpatrick calls this commitment.

07 **10 bad questions and what to ask instead**

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11 **Notes template: what to write down after every conversation**

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13 **After 5 calls: the scorecard**
Score each call 0–2 on each line. Add them up. This is our tool, built on the book's idea that only commitment...

14 **Common customer interview mistakes**

HOW TO USE IT

1

Only 15 minutes? Do the quick start before your next call.

2

Read the 3 rules, then pick 5 to 7 questions across the four stages. Don't ask all 25 on one call.

3

Run the call with the script, fill the notes template within 10 minutes of hanging up, and score each call with the scorecard after 5 calls.

01

If you only have 15 minutes

Rob Fitzpatrick's book starts with a simple trap: ask your mom if your idea is good and she'll say yes, because she loves you. Everyone else does the same to be polite. The fix is to change the questions, not the people.

1 **Minute 0–4: Delete your 'would you' questions**

Cross out every question with 'would you', 'do you think' or 'how much would you pay'. Those ask for guesses and compliments.

2 **Minute 4–8: Write 3 past-tense questions**

'Tell me about the last time [problem] happened.' 'What did you do about it?' 'What did that cost you?'

3 **Minute 8–12: Plan your ask**

Decide what you'll ask for at the end: an intro, a second meeting or a paid pilot. A call with no ask teaches you less.

4 **Minute 12–15: Open the notes template**

Have it ready before the call so you write their exact words, not your summary.

02

The book's 3 rules

Fitzpatrick's point: people will lie to you to be nice if you ask about your idea. These rules make lying hard.

1 **1. Talk about their life, not your idea**

Once you pitch, they start being polite. Keep your idea out of it and ask how they do things today.

2 **2. Ask about specifics in the past, not opinions about the future**

'Would you use this?' gets a guess. 'When did this last happen to you?' gets a fact.

3 **3. Talk less, listen more**

If you are talking, you are not learning. Ask, then stay quiet and let them fill the gap.

03

Stage 1: The problem (7 questions)

Find out if the problem is real, how often it shows up and how much it hurts.

- [ ] **Talk me through the last time [problem] happened.**
  A real story beats a general opinion.
- [ ] **What made that hard?**
  Shows where the pain actually is.
- [ ] **How often does this come up in a normal month?**
  Rare problems rarely get paid for.
- [ ] **What happens if you just leave it alone?**
  If nothing bad happens, it is not a priority.
- [ ] **Where does this rank on your list of things to fix this quarter?**
  Tells you if it beats their other problems.
- [ ] **Who else on your team deals with this?**
  Finds other people affected and who decides.
- [ ] **What does this cost you in time or money each week?**
  Puts a size on the pain in their own words.

04

Stage 2: Current solution (6 questions)

If they have done nothing to fix it, they probably won't pay you to fix it.

- [ ] **How are you dealing with this right now?**
  Every problem has a current fix, even a messy one.
- [ ] **What else have you tried?**
  Past attempts prove they care.

- [ ] **Why did you stop using that?**
  Shows what a new option must beat.
- [ ] **What do you like about how you do it now?**
  Tells you what you must not break.
- [ ] **Can you show me how you do it today?**
  Screens and spreadsheets don't exaggerate.
- [ ] **Have you looked for a tool or person to fix this? What did you find?**
  No search usually means low pain.

05

Stage 3: Money (6 questions)

Ask about what they already spend, not what they say they would spend.

- [ ] **What do you pay for your current fix, in money or hours?**
  Real spend is the best price anchor.
- [ ] **Is there a budget for this already? Where does it come from?**
  Budget that exists is easier to win.
- [ ] **Who signs off when you buy something like this?**
  Tells you if you are talking to the buyer.
- [ ] **Tell me about the last tool or service you bought for this kind of work.**
  Shows how they really buy.
- [ ] **What made you say yes to it?**
  Gives you their real buying reasons.
- [ ] **What would have to be true for this to be worth paying for?**
  Gets their bar, without you naming a price.

06

Stage 4: Next step (6 questions)

Every good call ends with them giving something: time, an intro or money. Fitzpatrick calls this

commitment.

- [ ] **Who else should I talk to about this?**
  Intros are a cheap, honest sign of interest.

- [ ] **Can we book 30 minutes next week to go through a first version?**
  Asks for time, a real cost.

- [ ] **Would you be open to a paid pilot for [short period]?**
  Money is the clearest signal.

- [ ] **Can I see the data or files you use for this today?**
  Sharing work shows trust and need.

- [ ] **Would you introduce me to the person who signs off?**
  Moves you toward the real buyer.

- [ ] **Is there anything I should have asked but didn't?**
  Often brings up the most useful answer of the call.

07

10 bad questions and what to ask instead

Bad question	Why it fails	Ask this instead
Do you think it's a good idea?	Asks for an opinion about your idea. They'll be nice.	How are you handling this right now?
Would you buy a product that does X?	A guess about the future. Yes costs them nothing.	When did you last pay for something to fix this? What was it?
How much would you pay for X?	They make up a number.	What do you spend on this today, in money or time?
Would you use this every day?	Future habit, not past fact.	How many times did this come up last week?
What features do you want?	Customers own the problem; you own the solution.	What were you trying to get done when this got in your way?
Isn't it annoying when X happens?	Leading. You told them the answer.	Tell me about the last time X happened.
Can I show you my idea?	Pitching switches them into polite mode.	Can you show me how you do it now?

Bad question	Why it fails	Ask this instead
Do you have this problem?	Yes or no, no story.	What's the hardest part about [job]?
Would you recommend this to friends?	Hypothetical and free to say yes to.	Who else do you know who deals with this? Could you introduce us?
Is this something you'd want in the future?	Future wishes are not demand.	What have you already tried to fix this?

08

Where to find people + a message to send

Outreach message (DM, email or WhatsApp)

Hi [Name], I'm trying to learn how [type of business] handles [job/problem]. I'm not selling anything. Could I ask you 4–5 questions for 15 minutes this week? Happy to share what I learn from others too.

> Asking for advice, not a sale, gets more yeses. Offering to share what you learn gives something back.

Where to find them

1. Your own customers and past leads.
2. Google Maps: businesses of that type in your city.
3. LinkedIn: search the job title.
4. Reddit, Facebook groups and WhatsApp groups where they ask questions.
5. Events and meetups for that industry.
6. Ask every person you talk to: 'Who else should I speak to?'

> The last one is the best. Intros from one call lead to the next.

09

1-page interview call script (20 to 30 minutes)

Call script

1. OPEN (2 min)
"Thanks for the time. I'm trying to learn how [type of business] handles [job]. I'm not selling anything today. Is it OK if I take notes?"

2. CONTEXT (3 min)
"Tell me a bit about your role and what a normal week looks like."

3. PROBLEM (8 min)
"Talk me through the last time [problem] happened."
"What made that hard?" "How often does it come up?"

4. CURRENT SOLUTION (6 min)
"How are you dealing with it now?" "What else have you tried?" "Why did you stop?"

5. MONEY (4 min)
"What does your current fix cost you?" "Who signs off when you buy something like this?"

6. NEXT STEP (3 min)
"Who else should I talk to?"
If the pain is real: "Can we book 30 minutes next week to look at a first version?"

7. CLOSE (1 min)
"Is there anything I should have asked but didn't?" Thank them.

RULES DURING THE CALL
- Don't mention your idea until the last few minutes, if at all.
- After each question, stop talking. Count to 5 in your head.
- When they say "usually" or "always", ask: "When was the last time?"

> Keep it casual. Fitzpatrick suggests a conversation can be short and informal, even over coffee, and doesn't need to feel like a formal interview.

10

Worked example: the same call, two ways

Illustrative. A made-up freelancer testing an idea for an SEO service for local gyms.

Bad version	What you learn	Mom Test version	What you learn
'Would you pay for SEO for your gym?'	'Sure, maybe.' (a polite guess)	'Where did your last 3 new members come from?'	2 from Instagram, 1 walked past. None from Google.
'Do you think Google matters for gyms?'	'Oh yes, very important.'	'When did you last look at your Google listing?'	'I don't know my login.' (low priority, or a quick-win)
'How much would you spend a month?'	'Maybe ₹10,000?' (made-up)	'What do you spend on getting members today?'	₹8,000/month on Instagram ads, from the owner's own pocket
'Great, I'll send you info.'	Nothing	'Could you introduce me to 2 other gym owners?'	2 names, with numbers. A real commitment.

11

Notes template: what to write down after every conversation

After-call notes

Name / role / company:
Date:

THE PROBLEM
- Last time it happened (their words):
- How often:
- What it costs them (time/money):
- Rank vs other priorities:

CURRENT SOLUTION
- What they use now:
- What they tried before, and why they stopped:

MONEY
- Current spend on this:
- Who signs off:

BEST QUOTE (exact words):

SIGNALS
- Commitment given (time / intro / money / none):
- Compliments I got (ignore these):

SURPRISES (what I didn't expect):

NEXT STEP + DATE:

VERDICT: Real pain / Mild / No pain

> Write it within 10 minutes of the call. Share notes with your team so nobody keeps the learning in their head.

12

Real buying intent vs a polite compliment

Polite compliment (ignore)	Real buying intent (count)
"That sounds great."	They ask when they can start or what it costs.
"I'd definitely use that."	They have already paid for or built a fix for this problem.
"Let me know when it's ready."	They book a next meeting on the calendar, now.
"Send me some info."	They introduce you to their boss or the person who signs off.
"I love the idea."	They agree to a paid pilot or pre-order.
"My friends would love this."	They introduce you to those friends by name.
"Sounds interesting, keep me posted."	They share their real data, files or workflow with you.
Vague 'usually' and 'someday' answers	Specific stories with dates, numbers and strong feelings.

13

After 5 calls: the scorecard

Score each call 0–2 on each line. Add them up. This is our tool, built on the book's idea that only commitments count.

Signal	0	1	2
Problem is real and recent	Never happened	Happened once, long ago	Happened this month, with a story
They already spend on it	Nothing	Time only	Money
They've tried to fix it	No	Looked around	Tried and dropped something
They gave a commitment	Compliment only	Next meeting booked	Intro, files shared or paid pilot

Signal	0	1	2
Total	0–3: weak. Change who you're talking to or the problem.	4–5: keep going.	6–8: strong. Start a small paid pilot.

14

Common customer interview mistakes

- [ ] **You pitched in the first 5 minutes.**
  Once they know your idea, they switch to being nice.

- [ ] **You counted compliments as progress.**
  'Love it' costs nothing. Count time, intros and money.

- [ ] **You accepted 'usually' and 'always'.**
  Ask for the last time it happened. Specifics don't lie as easily.

- [ ] **You talked more than they did.**
  If you're talking, you're not learning.

- [ ] **You only spoke to friends and family.**
  They care about you, so they protect your feelings.

- [ ] **You didn't write notes right away.**
  Memory rewrites what people said into what you hoped they said.

- [ ] **You ended with no ask.**
  Every call should end with a clear next step they can say yes or no to.

- [ ] **You treated one call as proof.**
  Look for patterns across 5–10 calls with the same type of person.

Sources

Every claim in this Template traces back to one of these. Checked 2026-11.

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