Designing Your Learning Launch[1]

A learning launch is a carefully designed experiment or prototype used to test the key underlying assumptions of a potential new initiative. It is a learning experiment conducted **quickly and inexpensively** to gather in-market data to determine whether the hypothesis that underscores your proposed solution e has enough merit to warrant the commitment of further time, people, and resources. A learning launch forms a bridge between customer co-creation and a pilot.

The purpose of a learning launch is to **learn**. If you learn valuable information, the learning launch is a success, whether the particular idea is validated or not. To be successful, learning launches must quickly determine the validity of key underlying assumptions. And learning launches should be designed as a low-risk or affordable-loss way of testing. Learning launches have also been described as "placing small bets fast."

If it turns out that your assumptions are not true, and your hypothesis is disproved, then you should take the new data and go back and use it to restate the hypothesis better. And then you test that new and improved hypothesis. It is an iterative process that you cycle through continuously, learning something new each time that allows you to develop a better hypothesis for the next pass. This hypothesis-driven approach is based on the idea of learning, rather than knowing. As a result, it is particularly useful under conditions of uncertainty in which we don't know as much as we'd like to.

	Learning Launch	**Pilot Project**
Scope	Limited subset of your target audience	Full target audience
Duration	Short (approx. 1-3 mos)	Longer (approx. up to 1 year)
Geography	Limited	Full geographic area that matches your target audience
Equipment/resources	Tries to use existing resources	Probably purchases new resources
Cost	Defined up front, kept small enough so that if the project fails to achieve the outcomes, it is still considered money well spent	Defined up front, always larger scale; funds are dedicated to the launch
Confidence	Still need to learn key information about project	Have answered all possible assumptions about the project

[1] Adapted from Edward D. Hess and Jeanne M. Liedtka. *The Learning Launch: How To Grow Your Business With The Scientific Method*. June 20, 2016 and from Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie. *Designing for Growth, 2011.*

Designing Your Learning Launches (template)

Strategic Intent:

Remaining key assumptions to be tested:

1.

Learning Launch #1: (state assumption to be tested)

Who:

Where:

How:

Time:

Cost:

Designing Your Learning Launches (example)

Strategic Intent: To enable patients living in a rural setting with on-demand transportation to short-notice health care appointments.

Remaining key assumptions to be tested:

1. The technology to schedule on-demand trips will work as the vendor promised.
2. Patients will trust the new transportation service that arrives at their home to take them to their appointment.
3. The cost estimates for providing trips for this service are accurate.
4. In this rural setting, we have the capacity to provide trips within a short enough time frame that it responds to the patient's need for a short-notice trip.

Learning Launch #1: The technology to schedule on-demand trips will work as the vendor promised.

Who: RoundTrip and the ARC

Where: In Lexington Park, MD (8 sq. mi)

How: The ARC will dedicate one of its existing sedans, and use a retired part-time driver to provide the trips. RoundTrip's technology will be provided and we will use an existing tablet for the limited launch. The trips will be provided for identified patients for only one doctor's office (approx. number: 10 total patients). For this limited launch, the trips received through the app will be manually scheduled by ARC staff.

Time: September 1 to October 30, 2018

Cost: $200 gas, $15/hour for driver, $150 to cover part-time driver insurance