

# Early Concept Validation

## ROUNDTABLE SESSION MINUTES

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Expert

## KEY OUTTAKES

- Make strategy the tie breaker**  
Prioritise problems that ladder to corporate goals, invest more proof in market need, accept more uncertainty in feasibility and margins early.
- Layer gates and kill criteria**  
Use simple traffic light thresholds tied to strategy, kill or pivot quickly, do not let blessed ideas bypass gates.
- Decide with benchmarks, not vibes**  
Set channel and funnel benchmarks up front, require minimum sample sizes for significance, reverse engineer media budget to hit those numbers.
- Validate the right thing first**  
Rank assumptions by business criticality and evidence, then attack the upper right, if disproved it sends you back to the drawing board.
- Use smoke tests to compress learning**  
Pretend to sell, track ad response, page visits and preorder clicks, add an exit survey, this validates job to be done, solution format and willingness to pay in one run.

# The Corporate Entrepreneurship Community

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# Overcoming Barriers

## The Big Challenge of Early Validation?

Corporate teams often waste resources testing the wrong things, struggle to kill “blessed” ideas, and lack clear gates and benchmarks.

This risks either under-validating weak ideas that drain budgets, or over-validating concepts without strategic fit.

### CORPORATE BARRIERS

#### Testing the Wrong Things

Teams dive into logos, UX or small features instead of make-or-break assumptions.

Prioritise critical assumptions using a desirability/feasibility/viability matrix, focusing only on those that would kill the concept if disproven.

#### Inertia Around Blessed Ideas

Once senior leaders back an idea, teams resist invalidating it, even when data signals poor traction.

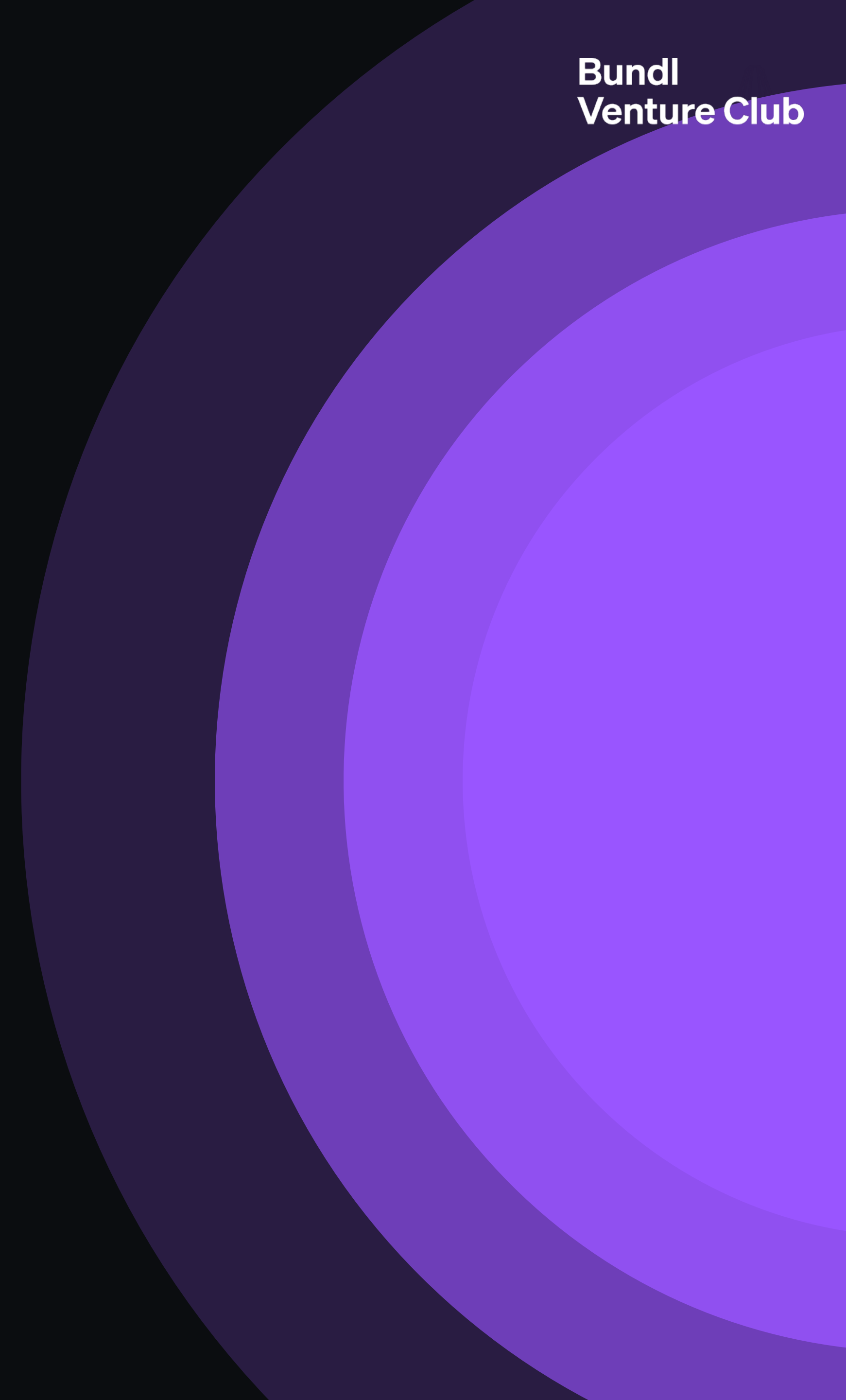
Establish kill criteria and stage gates up front, frame decisions as protecting resources, and reframe “kills” as saving capacity for stronger bets.

#### Lack of Benchmarks

Validation outcomes are often judged on gut feel or internal comparison rather than clear benchmarks.

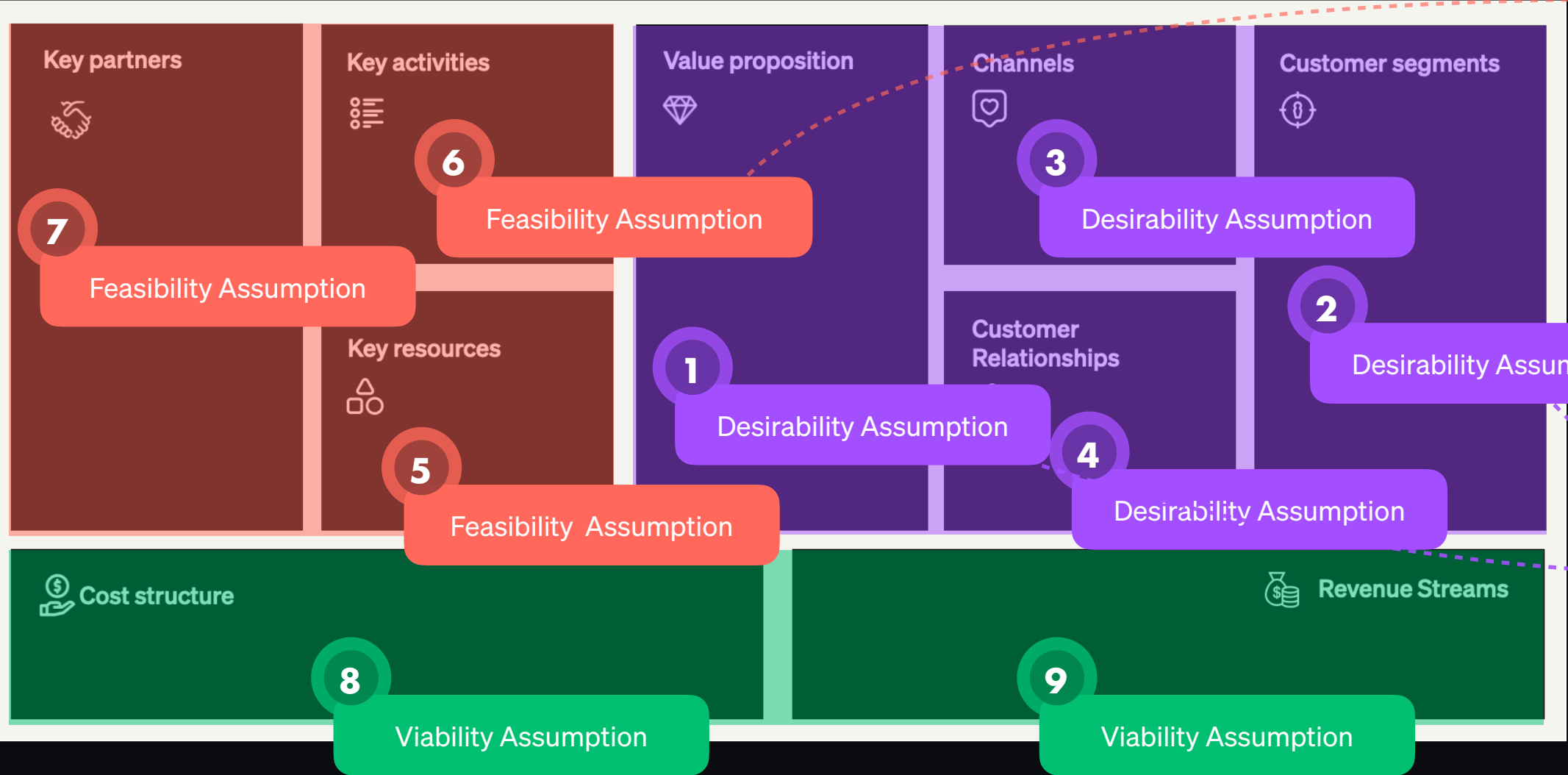
Set funnel benchmarks and sample-size thresholds in advance, reverse engineer media budgets to hit them, and make decisions against external reference points.

# Concept Validation Framework

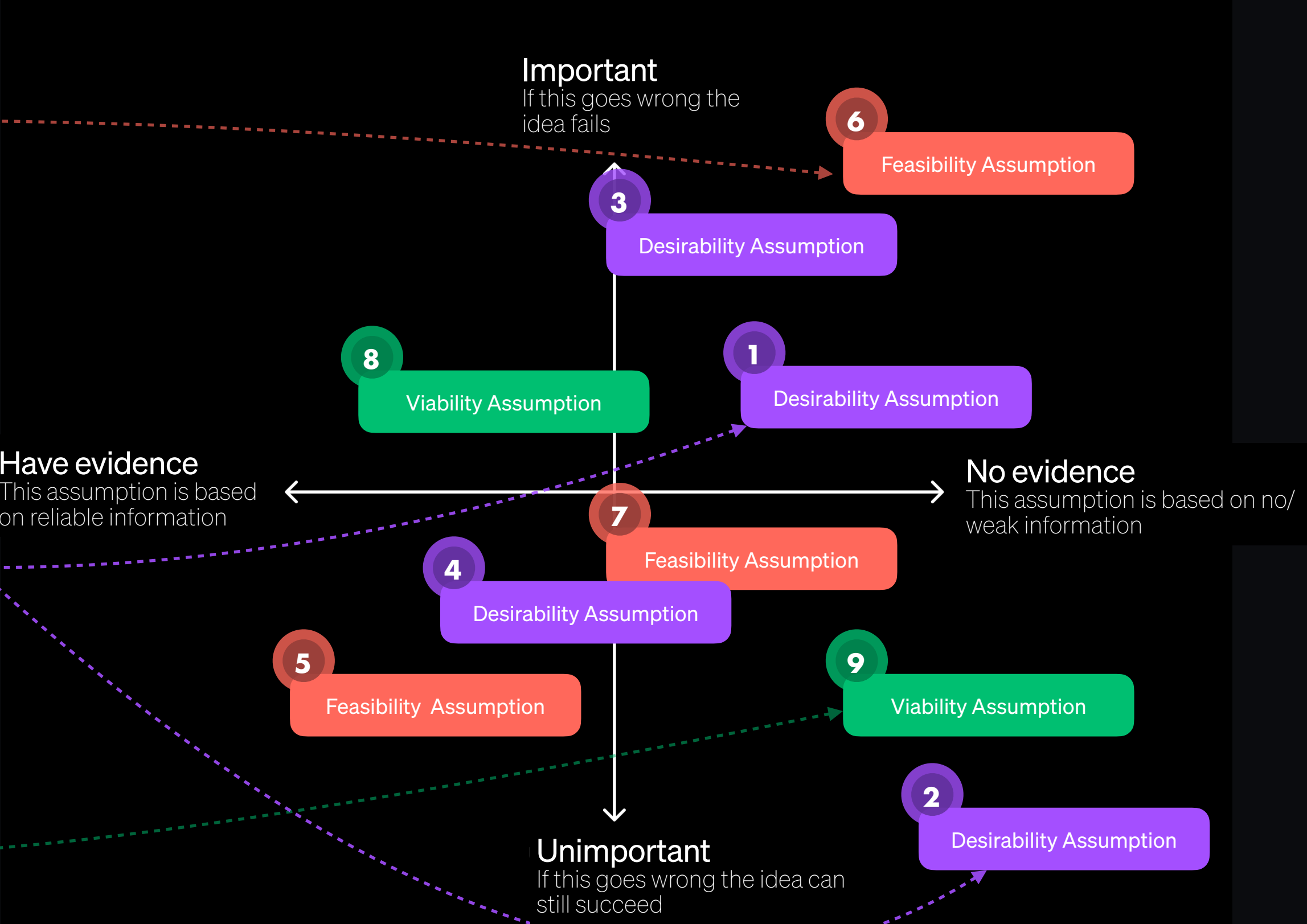


# Validating the right thing.

## Business model canvas



## Assumption mapping

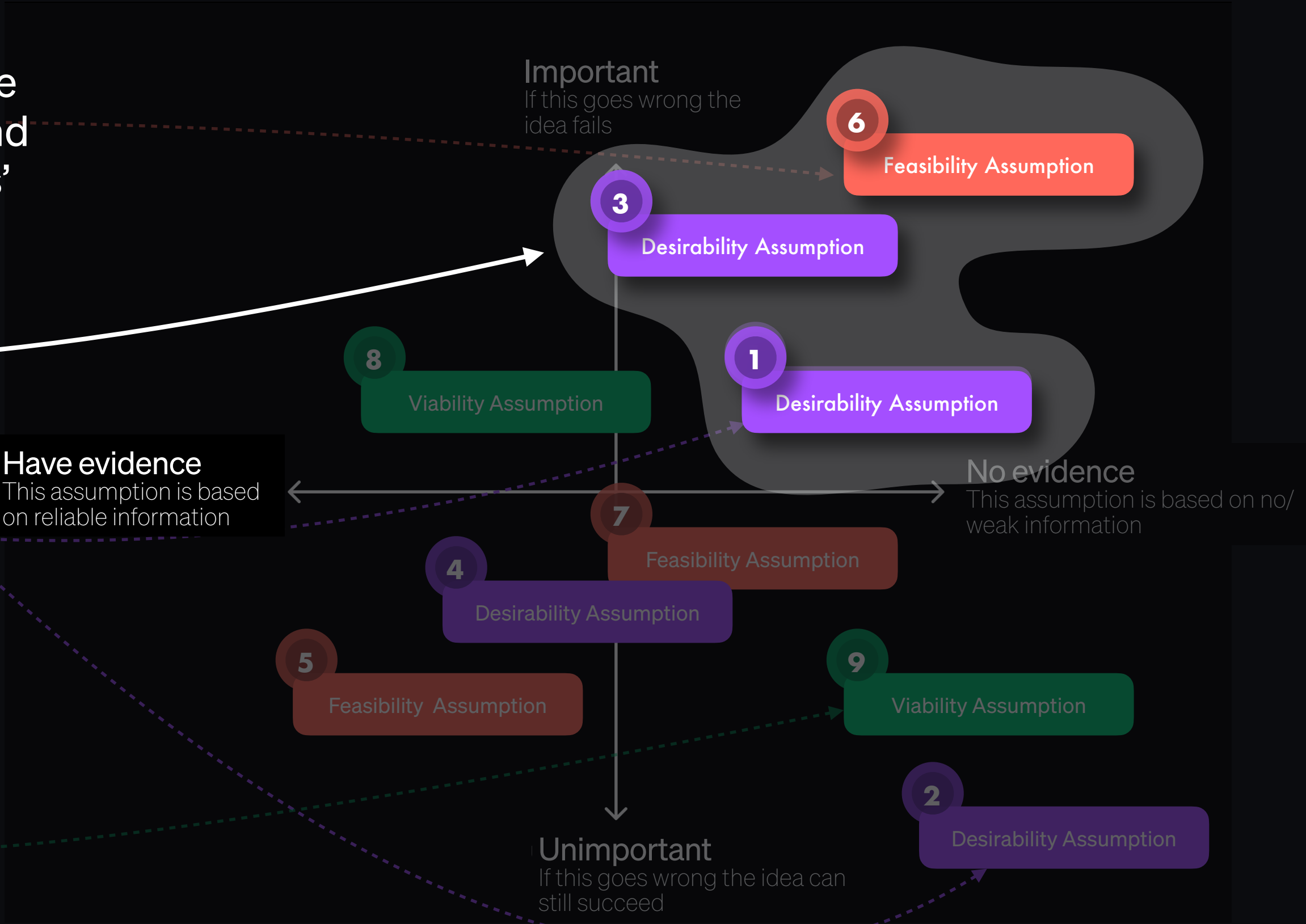


# Validating the right thing.

## Assumption mapping

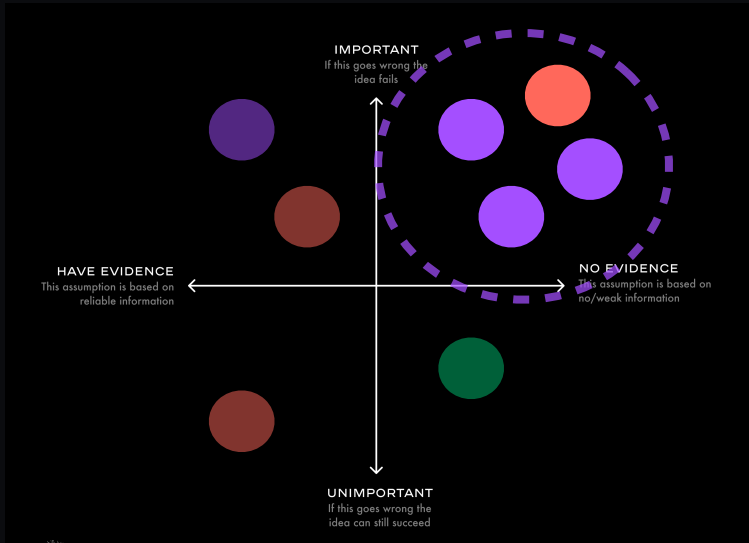
### Business model canvas

These assumptions will be prioritised in the next phase of the concept development and have a significant impact on your solutions' development process





# Validating the thing right.



If desirability assumptions are mostly prioritised....

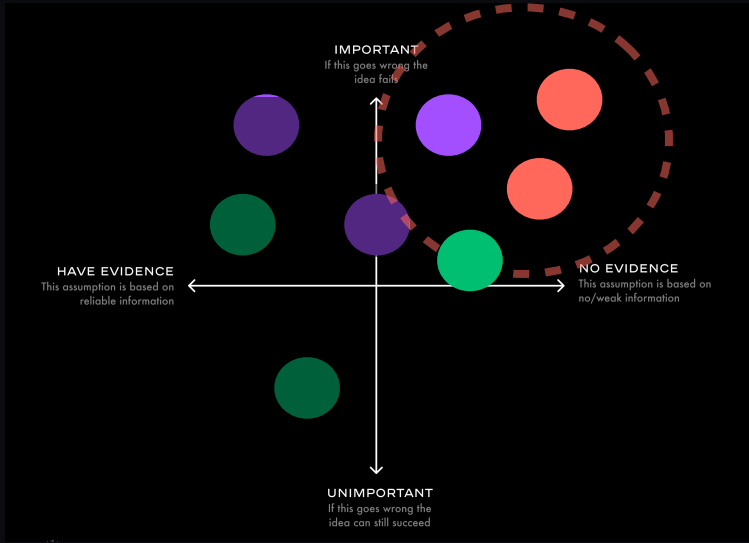
... this indicates a need to validate the value creation process of the solution

 Quantitative Survey

 (AI video)interviews

 In-store testing





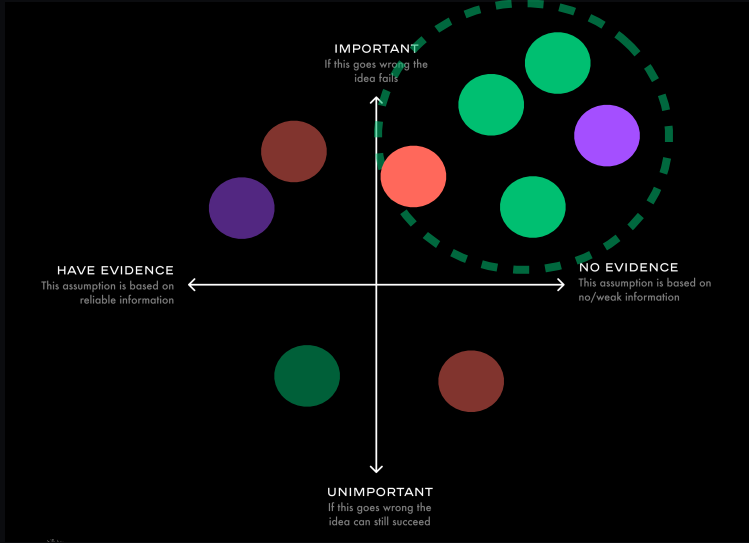
If feasibility assumptions mostly take precedence...

... this indicates the need to prioritise validation and exploration of how the value can be delivered

 Partner interviews


 Feasibility Study








If viability assumptions are mostly prioritised...

... this indicates a need to focus on evaluating how the solution can capture greater value

 Smoke testing

 Shop testing

 Cost/benefit analysis



# Validating the thing right.



## Quantitative Survey

Gather structured feedback on preferences, pricing, features, and messaging. Learn about proportions and sizing.

TARGET

- 50+ responses

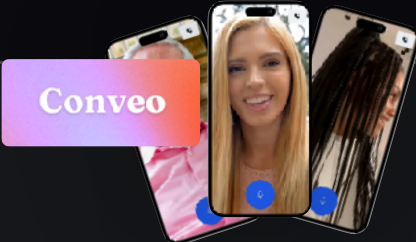


## (AI video) interviews

Capturing qualitative insights at scale by leveraging natural language processing and emotion detection to uncover deep motivations.

TARGET

- Variable according to the number of Value Spaces and validation timeframe



## Smoke testing

Measuring real consumer interest by driving visitors to landing pages via targeted digital ads. We track conversion across versions (e.g. product, positioning)

TARGET

- 100k+ impressions
- 3k - 6k website visits

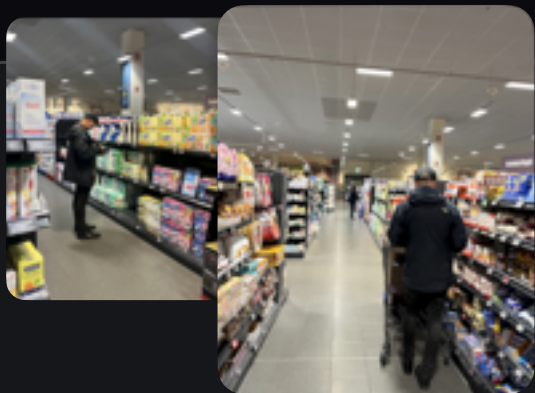


## In-store testing

Products, packaging, or concepts are introduced in a retail environment to observe purchase behaviour and collect feedback.

TARGET

- ±1K product views/concept (quant).
- ±7 interviewees/concept



## Depth interviews

Desirability check looking at the explicit and latent needs customers say they have, based on concrete commercial stories.

TARGET

- ±7 interviewees
- Leverage existing learnings



## No/Low code POC

A functional prototype (built with minimal or no coding) is tested with real users to validate usability, desirability, and engagement.

TARGET

- 1 working prototype used by +100 users



## Shop testing

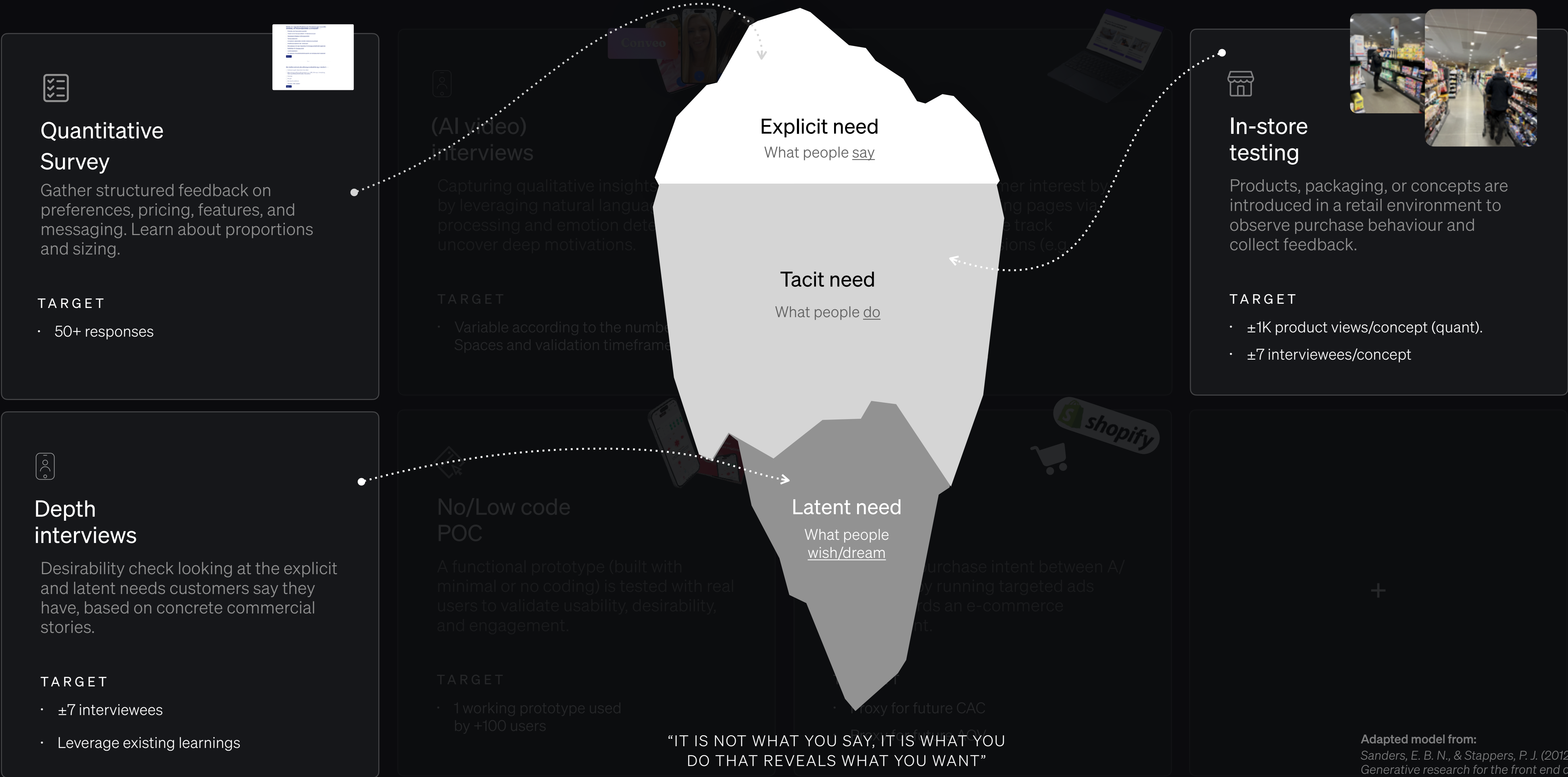
Measuring purchase intent between A/B versions by running targeted ads direct towards an e-commerce environment.

TARGET

- Proxy for future CAC
- Proxy for future AOV



# Validating the thing right.





# Growth Beyond Core for Consumer Brands

## New Innovation Units

Build growth engines that unlock industries and markets.



## New Offerings and Ventures

Validate and launch scalable business models with AI-powered speed.



## Strategic Partnerships

Transform alliances into global revenue streams.



essity



kpn



Resmed



WILLIAM GRANT  
& SONS



BNP PARIBAS  
FORTIS



# Innovation Leaders' Focus Areas

## Balancing Validation Depth vs. Speed and Resources

Deciding how deep to go with limited resources. And, overcoming corporate inertia.

## Tools, Methods, and Practices

Choosing the right validation practices: AI or not? Traditional tools in combination?

## Defining What Metrics and Validation Flow is Needed

Identifying viable ideas vs. weak ones. And, validating products, services, and ecosystems.

## Governance, Alignment, and Strategic Fit

Getting executive buy-in and ensuring validation criteria align with corporate strategy.

# Balancing depth, speed, and resources

## STRATEGIC MUST HAVES

Agree with leadership on how deep to go in early validation, balancing portfolio breadth against certainty.

Set clear validation depth expectations

Define gates and thresholds early to depoliticise decisions. Otherwise “blessed” ideas get pushed forward without evidence.

Kill criteria must be explicit

## MEMBERS' CHALLENGE



“How do we know when validation is ‘enough’ to move forward or kill an idea?”

## EXECUTION LEVERS

Validate the strength of the problem first. You can pivot solutions later, but a weak problem space kills ventures regardless.

Prioritise problem validation over solution testing

Treat validation as a portfolio exercise: more ideas mean shallower tests, fewer ideas justify deeper validation. Make this an explicit trade-off, not an accident.

Use portfolio logic to allocate effort

## PRACTICAL TOOLS

Frame validation decisions as if you had to use your own resources. This creates sharper, more accountable go/no-go calls.

“Would you spend your own budget?”

Start with light, fast tests for low-risk assumptions, and reserve resource-heavy validation for high-risk assumptions.

Layer validation to risk level

# Defining What and How to Validate

“Validate the problem space before diving into solutions.”

## PROBLEM-FIRST VALIDATION

“Weak problem validation undermines ventures regardless of solution strength.”

“Use light, rapid experiments (ads, interviews, smoke tests) to confirm core need.”

## MEMBERS' CHALLENGE

"How do we decide what to validate first and which methods give us the strongest early signals?"



“Don't just test single products — test journeys and connected experiences.”

## ECOSYSTEM VALIDATION

“Use front-end “Wizard of Oz” prototypes (service front looks real, backend manual).”

“Helps uncover willingness to engage across multiple touchpoints.”

Design MVPs around actual consumer behaviour (e.g. sign-ups, purchases).

## MVPS THAT TEST DEMAND

Loyalty/retention pilots: simulate benefits cheaply before scaling.

Use “Would customers actually switch/pay?” as the litmus test

“Define explicit criteria to stop weak ideas early and avoid sunk cost.”

## EARLY KILL SIGNALS

“Focus resources on concepts with the clearest signals of traction.”

“Portfolio mindset: better to test many lightly, go deep only where signals are strong.”

# Tools, Methods, and Practices

MEMBERS' CHALLENGE

“How can we adopt emerging validation tools (like AI) while balancing risk and ensuring leadership trust?”



Risk-Balanced  
Validation Practices

“Don’t expose the brand to excessive risk. Start with low-risk, fast experiments and reserve complex methods for later stages.”

AI-Enabled  
Validation

“AI accelerates validation by scaling interviews, synthesising insights, and reducing cost but synthetic users still follow scripts - be cautious.”

Leadership’s Trust in  
New Tools

“Execs often default to legacy tools. Gaining buy-in requires benchmarks, side-by-side comparisons, and portfolio-wide evidence.”

TOOLS



Prelaunch

Place small deposits to prove their buying intent



Aipermind

AI market place simulation



Conjointly

Survey platform with access to millions of human respondents



Quantilope

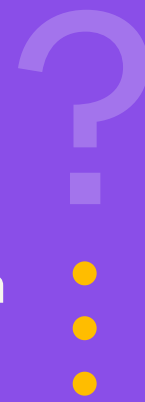
Automated customer research tracking



# Governance, Alignment, and Strategic Fit

## MEMBERS' CHALLENGE

"How do we align execs quickly on when to greenlight or stop an idea without endless debate?"



IDEA

Frame validation like an investment or M&A case, not just a test. Highlight clear upside, downside, and decision rights

Executive Buy-In

"Exco commits when decisions are framed like deals, not experiments."

DECISION

Tie validation gates directly to corporate strategy KPIs. Ensure progress measures link to growth, cost, or risk objectives.

Strategic Criteria

"If validation criteria aren't strategy-linked, you'll never get consensus to scale."

ALIGNMENT

Pre-define thresholds, kill criteria, and approval roles. Avoid ad-hoc politics with a shared governance model.

Governance Playbook

"De-risk approvals with pre-agreed criteria instead of debating case by case."

See recap of "When to Kill your Venture"





Bundl's experience in

# Validating concepts from scratch to scale

MVP LAUNCH

## Beiersdorf

Validated and launched two skin-tech ventures.

MVP LAUNCH



Validated and launched a new kidswear subscription service.

EARLY CONCEPT

## WILLIAM GRANT & SONS

Tested new value propositions and to discover customer engagement opportunities.

LEAN BRANDING



## PEPSICO

Tested new packaging and branding options for legacy brands.

EARLY CONCEPT

## galp

Validated new business models for sustainable home renovations.



Looking for frameworks to guide key venture decisions? Reach out to [thomas@bundl.com](mailto:thomas@bundl.com) for more info on how we can help.



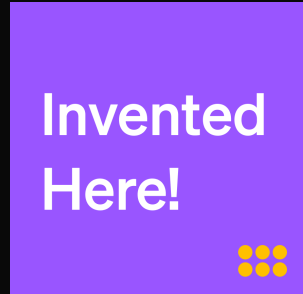


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