

# Knowing Your Customer

Knowing your customer is essential to turning a great idea into a successful product or service that generates sales and profit.

## Pre-Launch

### MARKET RESEARCH

Before launching a product, research to understand your potential customer base and overall size of the reachable market. This involves reviewing demographics, psychographics and industry trade tools.

- **Demographics:** Age, gender, race, location, and employment.
- **Psychographics:** Personality, values, attitudes, lifestyle, and interests.
- **Industry Trade Tools:** IRI, SPINS, Mintel (among others), trade groups, and trade shows.

### DIRECT PRODUCT FEEDBACK

In the early creation stages of your product, obtain potential customer feedback so it's easier to make changes, if necessary. Whether from friends, family, small and informal focus groups, social media, or others within your industry, this is your chance to:

- Understand if you're on the right track with product design or formulation.
- Get product-specific data such as how and when it might be used, willingness to pay, and other preferences.
- Learn the product appeal (i.e., is it new to a market or does it take the place of an existing product).
- Create early promotion channels via social media.

As you review feedback, look for trends and commonalities, as individual feedback may not be wholly accurate. It is not uncommon for customers to respond as the person they would like to be rather than the person they are today.

## Post-Launch

Once your product launches, you will gain more inputs on your product and how you might need to adapt, so you can refine your product and grow. Here are ways to gain this information post-launch:

- Establish success metrics (e.g., sales, units, market share, repeat purchases) to see if your product is reaching the intended customers.
- Meet with business partners regularly to stay aligned on expectations and make decisions on changes in plan.
- Maintain customer feedback channels to find out what motivates them, identify potential improvements, and gather feedback as you make changes.

Continually staying in line with your current customers will keep you relevant and help attract new customers for continued growth.