The idea is one of the most crucial factors in product creation or business running. If it is good, you are one huge leap closer to success. However, I also always stress that ideas alone are worth nothing if they do not resonate with the market. Especially – your prospective customers' needs. It seems obvious, but if it truly was, inventions like a smartphone pillow or avocado on a stick would never emerge. Then how do you know which idea is going to be successful? Today, let's talk about your first customers (early adopters) and the traits and needs your product should satisfy.

What is an early adopter?

According to Cambridge Dictionary, an adopter is *a person or company that starts to use a new product or service.* Going forward, early adopters will be your first customers. What is so special about them? Most importantly, they are the first to test your invention. It means that if they like your product, they are likely to spread the word about it. On the other hand, if they do not like it, chances are your product may not survive for long. Why? Because early adopters are the people who set trends.

What is an early adopter curve?

An early adopter curve, also called the technology adoption curve, illustrates the process of the acceptance of a new product on the market by five social segments. The first phase brings only a scarce number of customers called Innovators (around 3 %). The next group that comes is the Early Adopters (around 14%). It is they who, despite having little knowledge of the product, choose to test it and voice their opinion. That is why they are the most important at the early stage. They give the rest of the market, called the Early Majority and Late Majority (together amounting to 68%) confidence about the adoption of the innovation. The last segment, called Laggards (around 16%) are those who are usually reluctant towards novelties and risk-taking. That is why Laggards purchase your product at the latest.

The early adopter curve shows that your main customers are the Early Majority and Late Majority. Why should you bother with the Early Adopter then? Because at the beginning of your product journey, it is the Early Adopters who have the power to convince the other segments to use your product. Therefore, it is worth focusing your efforts on finding and attracting those precious individuals.

Early adopters features

Your first customers are not average Joes. From the business perspective, they are invaluable, which is why it is essential to know who they are. Below you can discover some of their most important traits:

- have opinion leadership in the market – they love to try new things before others even have a glimpse at them. This stems from the early adopter's mindset of a know-it-all. This means that they will be eager to share their 'infallible' opinion with others who (according to them) should agree.
- educated, with high financial literacy – they often invest in testing new technologies even if they are not connected with their field or industry as they are curious and like to seek new opportunities and solutions to their problems
- have a high social status – because of their social status, they are respected. And respect is why others often consider them credible.
- reasonable when it comes to taking risks – it means that they will likely try new things that others deem as dangerous or risky; they will be the first ones to buy a novelty, test it, and provide feedback. Thanks to that, the less adventurous part of the market can follow their lead.

How to find and attract early adopters?

Since we already know that it's good to have early adopters on your side, let's move to the more difficult part of how to attract them. As usual, it all comes down to appropriate research. You must do your homework as a detective first, trace, and get to know your 'victim' before you strike. The below four steps will help you attract potential early adopters.

Identify your target market

Take time to define who your first customers are. Perhaps the most important question is what they need and how your product satisfies that need. The answers to the above question will give you a representation of an ideal customer for your product. It will also generate a problem scenario which is the description of how your product solves a particular problem the customer faces.

Find the channels

Where and how do your customers spend their work and free time? How do they communicate? By answering these questions you find the way to reach early adopters. The places you will come across are often called ‘watering holes’ and will include (and are not limited to):

- social media platforms
- forums
- blogs
- webinars
- groups and online communities
- newsletters
- podcasts

Even though the era of the Internet and online connections is thriving, you still need to consider other offline channels, such as conferences, workshops, trade shows, etc.

Prepare your message

Write a clear, concise message and explain the solution to an ongoing problem that your product solves. The proposal should also prove your credibility. No one wants to engage with an unknown and unprofessional business, so ensure the structure is neat, error-free, and compelling. Use well-known marketing formulas such as PAS, AIDA, or USP, which include an all-important call to action. This action will, of course, be using your product.

Reach out and test

The time has come to interact at last. Test all your channels and find out which ones are the most effective in attracting your early adopters. Use tools that help with the effectiveness assessment, such as landing pages, email campaigns, and analytics.

Effective use of ‘watering holes’

The theory seems easy enough, but it may at times be difficult to implement in practice. We have got you! At Sailing Byte, we are eager to aid startups in their journey toward success by helping them acquire early adopters in a targeted and

effective manner. Implementing our tailored approach gives a noticeable surge in the number of early adopters and a growing community of loyal supporters who will champion your product within their networks. As a result, your startup will be well-positioned for broader market penetration and future growth.

If you are a startup owner eager to attract early adopters and embark on a journey of success, you have come to the right place! Our team at Sailing Byte is ready to help you turn your vision into reality. Book a call to discuss the endless opportunities we offer.