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WoDiLab

BUSINESS IDEA VALIDATION – SURVEY SYSTEM TOOLKIT

A practical step-by-step guide to testing your course idea before you build it

Why this toolkit matters

At this point in WoDiLab, you have already done something important.

You have taken your experience, your interests, your knowledge, and your direction — and you have started shaping them into a possible course idea.

That is a wonderful start.

But before you spend hours creating slides, recording lessons, designing worksheets, or planning modules, there is one very wise step to take first:

Check whether your idea connects with real people in the real world.

That is what this toolkit helps you do.

This process is called **business idea validation**.

Validation simply means this:
Instead of building something first and only later discovering whether people want it, you first gather real input from the people you hope to help.

This helps you answer questions like:

- Is this topic truly relevant?
- Is the problem strong enough?
- Do people describe it the way I imagined?
- What are they already trying?
- What do they really want instead?
- Which part of my idea feels most useful and needed?

This is not about proving that your idea is good or bad.

It is about listening well enough to make your idea clearer, stronger, and more useful.

Think of it like gardening.

Before planting a whole garden, you first check the soil.
You look at the conditions.
You understand what can truly grow there.

That is exactly what this toolkit helps you do with your course idea.

What this validation process includes

This toolkit guides you through a simple 5-step process.

You do not need to master everything immediately.
You just go one step at a time.

The full validation system

Step 0 — Choose the exact focus of your survey

You decide what, exactly, you want to learn more about.

Step 1 — Create and share your survey

You build a short survey and invite relevant people to answer it.

Step 2 — Thank people clearly
You make sure the experience ends with respect and clarity.

Step 3 — Follow up with value
You send useful follow-up to those who left their contact details.

Step 4 — Optional invitation
Later, if appropriate, you may invite interested people to go deeper.

Step 5 — Optional sale
At a later stage, this process may lead naturally toward an offer or sale.

At this stage of WoDiLab, your main focus is on the first three steps:

- choose your focus
- build and share the survey
- thank people
- follow up with something helpful

The optional invitation and sale steps come later, not now.

STEP 0 - Choose the exact focus of your survey
Before writing even one question, stop and get clear on this:

What exactly is this survey about?

Your survey should connect directly to:

- your **micro-niche**
- your **topic**
- your **ideal audience**
- and the problem or result your future course may address

Why this matters

If your survey is too broad, people will answer in broad ways.
That may sound helpful at first, but it often creates confusion instead of clarity.

For example:

Too broad:
"What are your biggest health challenges?"

Better:
"What are your biggest challenges when it comes to sleeping better during menopause?"

Too broad:
"What is hard about business?"

Better:
"What is hardest about finding your first paying clients as a beginner coach?"

The more focused your survey topic is, the easier it becomes to:

- write useful questions
- attract the right respondents
- and understand the answers

Questions to ask yourself before you begin

- Who is this survey for?
- What exact topic am I exploring?
- What exact challenge or desired result do I want to understand better?
- Would the right person immediately recognise that this survey is for them?

Examples of a clear survey focus

- women over 40 who want to improve sleep
- mothers struggling with teen communication
- beginners who want to create their first online course
- women returning to work after a long break
- people who want to reduce stress through simple daily routines

The survey focus is the foundation of everything else.
If this step is clear, the rest becomes much easier.

STEP 1 - CREATE YOUR SURVEY

Your survey is not meant to sound academic or formal.

It does not need complex language.
It does not need “perfect” wording.

Its job is simple:

- help you understand people
- show you what matters most to them
- reveal patterns you can later build into your course

A good survey is:

- short
- focused
- easy to answer
- relevant to the right people

It should feel simple and respectful for the person filling it out.

1.1 Create a clear and compelling survey title

The first thing people see is the title.

That means the title has one important job:

it should help the right people say,

“Yes, this is relevant to me.”

A strong title usually makes two things clear:

- who the survey is for
- what topic it is about

A simple title formula

A very useful structure is:

“Discover the biggest challenges facing [your audience] when it comes to [your topic].”

You can also adapt the wording slightly, but the principle stays the same:

be clear about the audience and the topic.

Examples

- Discover the biggest challenges facing women over 40 when it comes to sleeping better
- Discover the biggest challenges facing beginner course creators when it comes to choosing a profitable topic
- Discover the biggest challenges facing mothers of teenagers when it comes to creating calmer communication at home

- Discover the biggest challenges facing women returning to work after a long break

Why this works

Because it tells people immediately:

- this survey is meant for a specific group
- it focuses on a specific issue
- and you are trying to understand challenges, not sell something to them

That sense of clarity increases the chance that the right people will respond.

1.2 Decide what helpful value you will offer afterward

One of the most practical parts of this process is this:

you can offer something useful in return for people's time and input.

This is sometimes called your **valuable follow-up**.

It is not a prize.
It is not a random gift.
It is something **relevant** and **connected to the topic** of the survey.

Why offer something at all?

Because answering a survey takes time and attention.

When people know they may receive something genuinely useful afterward, they are often more willing to take part.

But the key is this:
the thing you offer should be related to their challenge.

What to offer

A very good choice is a short helpful resource based on the top challenges you uncover.

This could be:

- a short summary of the key findings
- a short training
- a simple guide
- or, very practically, a short email sequence with tips, one message for each of the top challenges you discover

This last option is especially beginner-friendly because it does not require you to create a whole workshop. The source material specifically suggests that the follow-up can be as simple as an email sequence that addresses the top 3 challenges.

Examples

If your survey topic is sleep:
- a 3-part email series with simple sleep support ideas

If your survey topic is confidence:
- a short guide to the 3 most common confidence blocks and what helps

If your survey topic is beginner business:
- a practical summary of the top 3 obstacles and small first steps

What not to offer

Avoid unrelated rewards such as:

- gift cards
- prize draws
- expensive gadgets
- random freebies that have nothing to do with the topic

Why?

Because unrelated rewards can attract people who are interested in the prize, not in the actual problem.

That means you may get more answers, but worse answers.

And your goal is not maximum volume.
Your goal is relevant insight.

1.3 Write your survey invitation message

Once your survey is ready, you need a short message to invite people to take it.

You can use this message in:

- Facebook groups
- LinkedIn groups
- emails
- direct messages
- online communities
- WhatsApp or Messenger, if appropriate

The source calls this a survey note. In WoDiLab language, we can think of it as your invitation message.

What your invitation message should do

A good invitation message should:

1. state what the survey is about
2. state who it is for
3. explain why you are asking
4. show that their input matters
5. say how long it takes
6. mention the follow-up value
7. include the survey link

A useful structure

Headline

Use something simple like:

- Your feedback is needed
- I'd love your input
- A quick question for women over 40
- Short survey: your experience matters

Main message

Then briefly explain:

- the topic
- the group you want to hear from
- why you are collecting feedback
- how long it takes
- what you will share afterward
- where to click

Example invitation

Hi,
I'm currently exploring how to better support women over 40 who want to sleep better and feel more rested.
I've created a short survey to better understand what feels most difficult in this area.

If this topic feels relevant to you, I would really value your input.
The survey takes less than 3 minutes, and I'll also share the key insights and a few simple support ideas based on the results.
You can take part here: [insert link]

Thank you so much for your time.

Why this works

Because it is:
- clear
- warm
- honest
- and not pushy

It sounds like a real person speaking to another real person.
That matters, especially for this audience.

1.4 Keep your survey short

This is one of the most practical and important rules:

Do not make your survey too long.

The source recommends keeping the survey between **3 and 10 questions**. For most WoDiLab participants, a very strong and manageable survey will often have **5 to 8 questions**.

Why this matters

People are busy.

If your survey feels too long, people may:

- abandon it halfway
- rush through it
- skip thoughtful answers
- or decide not to start at all

A short survey gives you:

- better completion rates
- less overwhelm
- more focused information
- easier analysis later

The goal is not to ask everything.
The goal is to ask the most useful things.

1.5 The 3 core questions every strong survey should include

At the heart of your survey are three essential areas.

These help you understand:
1. the problem
2. what people have already tried
3. what they want instead

That alone gives you a very strong foundation for building a useful course.

Core Question 1: What is the biggest challenge?

This question explores the problem.

You want to understand:
- where people feel stuck
- what frustrates them
- what feels difficult right now

Examples

- What is your biggest challenge when it comes to sleeping better?
- What feels hardest about finding your first paying clients?
- What is your biggest struggle when trying to feel more confident at work?
- What do you find most difficult about managing stress in daily life?

How to ask this question

You can ask this in two main ways:

Option A: Open answer

People respond in their own words.

This is very useful because you hear:

- their exact language
- their emotional tone
- and sometimes surprising insights you would never have thought to include

Option B: Multiple choice

You create a list of likely challenges and people choose the ones that fit them best.

This is often easier:

- for respondents
- and for you as a beginner analysing results

The source specifically notes that the simpler approach is often to list the top challenges as you currently see them, keep the list short, and allow people to choose what they most relate to.

Very important practical rule

If you use multiple choice:

- keep the list to **no more than 7 options**
- include **"Other"** if your survey tool allows it

The reason for "Other" is important:

you may have a blind spot.

People may reveal something you had not considered.

Example multiple-choice list for a sleep topic

What is your biggest challenge when it comes to sleeping better?

- falling asleep
- waking up during the night
- waking too early
- feeling anxious around sleep
- poor sleep during hormonal changes
- feeling tired even after sleeping
- other

Core Question 2: What have they already tried?

This question explores past attempts.

It helps you understand:

- what people have already done
- what they believe in
- what they may already have spent time or money on
- and what has not worked well for them

The source explains that this question is valuable because it shows what people have already taken action on, and even what they may have invested in before.

Examples

- What have you already tried to improve your sleep?
- What have you already tried to attract clients?
- What have you already tried to reduce stress?
- What have you already tried to feel more confident in presentations?

Question format

This question is especially well suited to multiple choice.

Again:

- keep it to **no more than 7 options**
- include **Other** if possible

Example answer options for a business topic

What have you already tried to attract clients?

- posting on social media
- asking friends or contacts
- networking events
- paid advertising
- working with a coach
- nothing yet
- other

Why this question matters

It helps you see:

- whether the problem is real enough that people are already trying to solve it
- whether common solutions are failing them
- and where your future course could offer something clearer or more effective

Core Question 3: What do they want instead?

This question explores the desired outcome.

You are no longer only asking:

“What is wrong?”

You are also asking:
“What do you hope for instead?”

This matters because a good course is not only built around pain.
It is also built around the result people want to move toward.

The source presents this question as a way of understanding people’s goals and hopes, and of shaping your product and marketing language around what they genuinely want to achieve.

Examples

- What would you most like to achieve when it comes to sleeping better?
- If this challenge were solved, what would be different in your life?
- What result do you most want in this area?
- What would success look like for you?

Example answer options for sleep

- fall asleep more easily
- wake up less at night
- feel rested in the morning
- have more energy during the day
- feel calmer about sleep
- improve daily focus
- other

Why this question matters

It helps you later with:
- course outcomes
- module structure
- messaging
- and your promise

It shows not only what people want to escape,
but what they want to move toward.

1.6 Practical rules for writing the survey

Here are the beginner-friendly rules that make your survey easier to answer and easier to use later.

Rule 1: Keep the whole survey between 3 and 10 questions
That is the source recommendation, and it helps keep the survey manageable.

Rule 2: Keep multiple-choice lists to no more than 7 options
Long answer lists overwhelm people and make it harder to choose. The source repeats this guidance.

Rule 3: Add "Other" where useful
This gives people space to show you something unexpected.

Rule 4: Use open text only where you are willing to read and analyse answers carefully
Open text is rich and useful, but it requires more work from you later. The source explicitly points out that a comment box creates extra reading and analysis work.

Rule 5: Do not ask unnecessary questions
Only include questions that truly help you make better decisions.

Rule 6: Keep wording clear and human
Do not use complicated business words.

Ask the way a real person would ask.

1.7 Optional extra questions you may include

The three core questions are the foundation.

In many cases, they are enough.

But the source also provides 7 optional additional questions you may use when relevant. These are helpful, but you do not need to use all of them. In fact, the source clearly says you may use none, one, two, or more, depending on what is appropriate.

Use these only when they genuinely support your understanding.

Optional Question 1: How long has this been a challenge?

Example:
• How long have you been dealing with this problem?
• How long have you been trying to improve this area?

This helps you understand experience level and how long someone has been living with the situation.

Optional Question 2: Age range

Only ask this if age is relevant to your topic or offer.

Examples where it may be relevant:

- menopause
- second career
- parenting a certain age group
- health topics specific to life stage

If age is not important to your course idea, do not ask it just because it seems standard. The source specifically warns against asking questions that do not seem relevant to the topic.

Optional Question 3: Income or revenue range

Use this with care.

This is a sensitive question.

The source says to use it only if it is absolutely relevant, for example in finance-related contexts, tax, loans, or business-to-business settings where revenue matters.

For many WoDiLab beginners, it is better to leave this out unless it is truly necessary.

Optional Question 4: Preferred support style

Example:

• If I could support you in overcoming your top challenges, how would you prefer to receive support?

Possible options:

• 1-to-1
• small live group
• self-paced learning
• written resources
• community-based learning

The source includes this because it helps you understand what format of service or product people may be willing to buy later.

Optional Question 5: Which topic areas are most interesting?

Example:

• Which parts of this topic would you most like to learn more about?

This helps if your course could go in several directions and you want to know which subtopics feel most useful or appealing.

The source specifically frames this as a way to test which topic areas you are considering for your course are of most interest to the audience.

Optional Question 6: What question do you wish someone could answer for you?

This is a beautiful open question.

It often reveals:

- hidden confusion
- emotional pain points
- specific language
- unexpected needs

The source includes this as an open-ended way for people to say what they really want to know.

Optional Question 7: Where do people like you spend time or look for information?

Examples:

- What events do you attend?
- What groups are you part of?
- What websites, blogs, or publications do you follow?

This is especially useful if you are unsure where to find more people like them later. The source notes that this can help you ramp up future outreach and survey distribution too.

1.8 Should you use open questions or multiple-choice questions?

This is one of the most practical beginner questions.

The answer is:
both can work well.

But they serve different purposes.

Open questions

These give people the freedom to answer in their own words.

Advantages

- rich detail
- emotional language
- surprising insights
- very helpful for messaging

Challenges

- slower to answer
- sometimes skipped
- more work to analyse

The source specifically points out that open comment boxes require you to read every response and analyse the information.

Multiple-choice questions

These give people options to choose from.

Advantages

- faster to answer
- easier to compare
- easier for beginners to review

Challenges

- you only learn what you thought to ask
- you may miss unexpected answers

A very good beginner approach

For many WoDiLab participants, the easiest approach is:

- mostly multiple-choice questions
- with short answer lists
- plus “Other”
- and 1 or 2 open questions for deeper insight

That gives you both structure and real language.

1.9 Add a final optional contact-information question

At the end of your survey, add one final question:
Would they like to leave their name and email so you can send the helpful follow-up you promised?

This should be:

- optional
- respectful
- clear
- and never forced

The source presents this as a final question in the survey itself, not just a separate idea. It also makes clear that people should be allowed to stay anonymous if they prefer.

Example wording

To thank you for your answers, I’d love to share a short follow-up with practical insights and support based on the most common challenges that appear in this survey.

If you would like to receive this, you can leave your name and email below.

If you prefer to stay anonymous, simply finish the survey here.

Thank you so much for your time.

STEP 2 - CREATE A CLEAR THANK-YOU PAGE OR FINAL MESSAGE

Once someone completes the survey, do not leave them with silence.

A simple thank-you page or final message is part of a good experience.

The source treats this as a separate step, and for good reason: it acknowledges the person's time and keeps the process feeling professional and respectful.

Why this matters

A thank-you message:

- confirms that the survey is complete
- acknowledges their effort
- reminds them their answers matter
- and, if relevant, tells them what happens next

Important practical detail

The source recommends having two different thank-you versions:

1. one for people who left their contact information
2. one for people who did not

This is worth keeping, because it adds clarity and creates a second opportunity for contact details if appropriate.

Option A: If they left their email
Thank them and remind them they will hear from you.

Example:

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Your answers are genuinely helpful and will help shape practical support around this topic.

I'll follow up soon with helpful insights and simple resources based on the most common challenges that emerge.

Option B: If they did not leave their email
Thank them warmly and, if you wish, gently offer a second chance.

Example:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

Your answers are genuinely appreciated.

If you would still like to receive a short follow-up with key insights and practical support, you're welcome to leave your name and email below.

This second version matters because the source explicitly notes that it gives people another opportunity to leave their contact information.

STEP 3: CHOOSE A SIMPLE SURVEY TOOL

This is where many beginners get nervous.

So let's make it easy.

You do not need advanced software.
You do not need expensive systems.
You do not need technical confidence to begin.

The source recommends keeping this stage simple and names several tools.

Beginner-friendly tools

A simple place to start is:

- Google Forms
- SurveyMonkey
- Typeform

All of these are commonly used and good enough for this stage. The source specifically recommends keeping it simple and starting with these kinds of tools.

More advanced tools

If later on you want something more sophisticated — for example embedded forms, quizzes, or more advanced customisation — tools such as:

- JotForm
- Gravity Forms

can be useful.

But the source is clear that these require more work and are not necessary for now.

Beginner advice

Choose the tool that feels:

- least overwhelming
- easiest to access
- easiest to share

At this stage, simple wins.

The quality of your questions matters far more than the sophistication of your tool.

STEP 4: SHARE YOUR SURVEY WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Now your survey is ready.

The next step is to get it in front of the right people.

This is extremely important.

Because even a beautifully written survey will not help you if the wrong people answer it.

The source is especially clear here:
do not send the survey to people who are not your ideal prospects, because that can skew your data and confuse your conclusions.

The golden rule

Share the survey with people who are genuinely relevant to your topic.

If your course is for women over 40 navigating menopause, you want responses from women who fit that situation — not random people outside that audience.

If your course is for beginner course creators, you want answers from beginners — not advanced digital marketers.

Places where you can share the survey

The source recommends several channels:

- Facebook groups
- LinkedIn groups
- your email list
- someone else's email list
- direct messages
- relevant contacts you already know

Start with communities and contacts you already have

This may include:

- women in your network
- colleagues
- former clients
- friends who fit your audience
- groups you are already part of
- people you know are interested in the topic

That is often the best place to begin.

How many responses should you aim for?

The source recommends aiming for 50 to 100 responses so that you have a solid enough sample to notice patterns.

That said, if you are just starting and this feels new, do not let that number scare you.

Even 10 relevant responses can teach you something valuable.

The key is to begin.
Then keep going.

STEP 5: SPECIFIC WAYS TO FIND PEOPLE

Let's break this down even more clearly.

The source identifies several practical ways to reach people for the survey.

1. Facebook and LinkedIn groups

These can be excellent places to share your survey if the group is relevant to your topic and allows this kind of post.

For example, if your topic is:
• better sleep for women over 40

you might look for:
• menopause communities
• women's wellbeing groups
• over-40 wellness groups

If your topic is:
• first clients for beginner coaches

you might look for:
• early entrepreneur groups
• women in business communities
• coaching startup groups

Always:
• read the group rules
• make sure your message fits
• be respectful of the space

2. Your own email list

If you already have an email list, even a small one, you can share your survey there.
But again, only if the list is relevant.
The source explicitly warns against emailing people who are not your ideal audience, because that distorts your data.

3. Someone else's audience

If you know a community leader, association, business owner, or group organiser who already serves your ideal audience, you may ask whether they would be open to sharing your survey.

This can help a lot if your own audience is still small.

4. Direct messages

This is often one of the easiest and most effective ways to begin.

You can send a short, kind personal message to someone who is relevant.

The source notes that you can use the same basic survey note in a direct message, and personalise it if helpful.

Example direct message

Hi [Name],
I'm currently shaping a course around [topic], and I'm trying to understand what people are really struggling with in this area.

I've created a short survey, and if this topic feels relevant to you, I would really value your input.

It only takes a few minutes:
[link]

Thank you so much.

Why this works

Because it is:

- personal
- respectful
- simple
- not pushy

STEP 6: FOLLOW UP WITH VALUE

This is a very important step.

If people gave you their email because you promised useful follow-up, send it.

This is where trust begins.

The source describes this as the valuable follow-up step and recommends that you use it to deliver insights on the top 3 challenges and send free resources specifically designed to support those challenges.

When should you send the follow-up?

The source recommends sending this follow-up **as soon as possible after you have your first 50–100 responses**.

That timing matters.

Why?

Because if you wait too long, people may forget:
- the survey
- your name
- the topic
- and why they cared in the first place

Fast follow-up keeps the connection warm.

A practical beginner-friendly follow-up structure

The source suggests at least 3 emails to start with:
- one for each of the top 3 challenges
- over about one week
- for example: Day 1, Day 3, Day 6 or 7

What each email can include

Each email can:

- name one common challenge
- say that many people mentioned it
- offer one practical idea, encouragement, or small next step
- build trust through usefulness

Why this is powerful

This is the moment where:

- people feel seen
- your knowledge becomes visible
- and strangers begin to see you as someone helpful and trustworthy

The source also notes that giving fast value opens the door for future communication and future launch nurture later on.

STEP 7: READ THE SURVEY RESULTS PROPERLY

Once the answers come in, take your time.

Do not rush straight into course creation.
First, review what people actually said.

You are looking for:
patterns.

Questions to ask as you review

- Which challenges come up again and again?
- What words do people repeat?
- Which frustrations feel strongest?
- What outcomes do people want most?
- What have they already tried?
- What seems to be missing from the solutions they tried before?

Why repeated answers matter

One answer may be interesting.
Repeated answers are important.

When many people mention the same issue, even in slightly different words, that is a sign you are touching something real.

What to write down

As you review your results, note:

- repeated phrases
- emotional language
- common frustrations
- common hopes
- surprising insights
- words you could later use in your course language

This is the raw material of a relevant course.

STEP 8: TURN THE ANSWERS INTO COURSE DIRECTION

Now your validation process begins to do its deepest work.

You take what people told you and use it.

How answers become part of your course

Problems become topics
If many people mention the same struggle, that may become a lesson, module, or theme.

Words become language

The phrases people use often become the best language for:

- your course title
- your promise
- your invitation message
- your sales page later

Desired outcomes become your course result

What people most want can help you define:

- what success should look like
- what your course should help them achieve

Past attempts reveal what may be missing

If many people have tried common solutions and still feel stuck, this tells you something important:

your course may need to offer:

- more clarity
- more structure
- more support
- or a more practical path

This is where your idea stops being based only on your own imagination and starts being shaped by real life.

That is what makes it stronger.

Important reminders for first-time course creators

Before you finish, here are a few things worth remembering.

1. You do not need a perfect survey
A clear, useful survey is enough.

2. You do not need a huge audience to begin
Start with the relevant people you can reach.

3. You do not need to ask everything
Ask what matters most.

4. You do not need advanced tools
Simple tools are enough at this stage.

5. You do not need to wait for confidence
Confidence often comes after action, not before it.

6. Do not send your survey to random people
Relevance matters more than volume.

7. Follow up quickly
Trust fades when the gap is too long.

Your action steps

Here is the full process in simple order.

1. Choose your exact survey focus
2. Write a clear survey title
3. Decide what helpful follow-up you will offer
4. Write your survey questions
5. Keep the survey between 3 and 10 questions
6. Keep multiple-choice lists to no more than 7 options
7. Add “Other” where useful
8. Add an optional name/email question at the end
9. Create your survey in a simple tool
10. Write your invitation message
11. Share the survey with relevant people only
12. Aim toward 50–100 responses if possible
13. Review the answers and look for patterns
14. Send a helpful 3-part follow-up as soon as possible after the first 50–100 responses
15. Use the insights to shape your course direction

Final encouragement

If this feels new, that is okay.

If it feels slightly uncomfortable to ask people for input, that is okay too.

This is part of the shift from:
“I have an idea”

to

“I am building something real.”

You do not need to be a market researcher.
You do not need to sound polished.
You do not need to get everything right on your first attempt.
You only need to begin.

Because once you begin listening, your idea becomes clearer.

And once your idea becomes clearer,
your next step becomes easier.

And that is exactly what we want in WoDiLab:
not perfection,
but clear, practical, courageous progress.