



# JOBS-TO-BE-DONE UPGRADE HUMANS, NOT PRODUCTS

*A RESEARCHER'S GUIDE TO JOBS-TO-BE-DONE INNOVATION*

# TIME TO UPGRADE INNOVATION RESEARCH?

**Here's a short primer on how to use the popular 'jobs-to-be-done' (JTBD) framework to find new demand spaces for consumer innovation.**

You won't find a battery of technical JTBD processes here (plenty of those are just a Google search away). Instead, we'll focus on 12 practical things you can do to cultivate a 'JTBD mindset' when you're searching for, and researching, innovation opportunities.

Based on the metaphor that innovations are 'help for hire', we've found a JTBD mindset to be particularly powerful when it comes to identifying untapped demand spaces for our clients. When you see innovation in terms of upgrading people rather than products, a whole new world of opportunity emerges.



*Upgrade your user, not your product. Don't build better cameras - build better photographers*

Kathy Sierra





# JTBD BASICS: THE 'JOBS' METAPHOR

**First, let's cover the basics. What's with the 'jobs' metaphor and what are 'jobs-to-be-done'?**

A consumer 'job' is simply a task with a purpose or goal. And a job-to-be-done is simply a job that has yet to be completed. Pushing the 'job' metaphor harder, people 'hire' innovations to help get 'jobs' done. From this 'functionalist' JTBD perspective, innovations are simply 'help for hire'.

People have all sorts of jobs to be done in their lives, and consumer demand comes from jobs that have yet to be satisfactorily completed. The promise of JTBD is that by thinking of markets as 'job markets', rather than consumer segments or product categories, innovators can find new untapped demand spaces.



**YOU'RE  
HIRED**

“

*People don't want  
hand cream, they  
want soft hands*

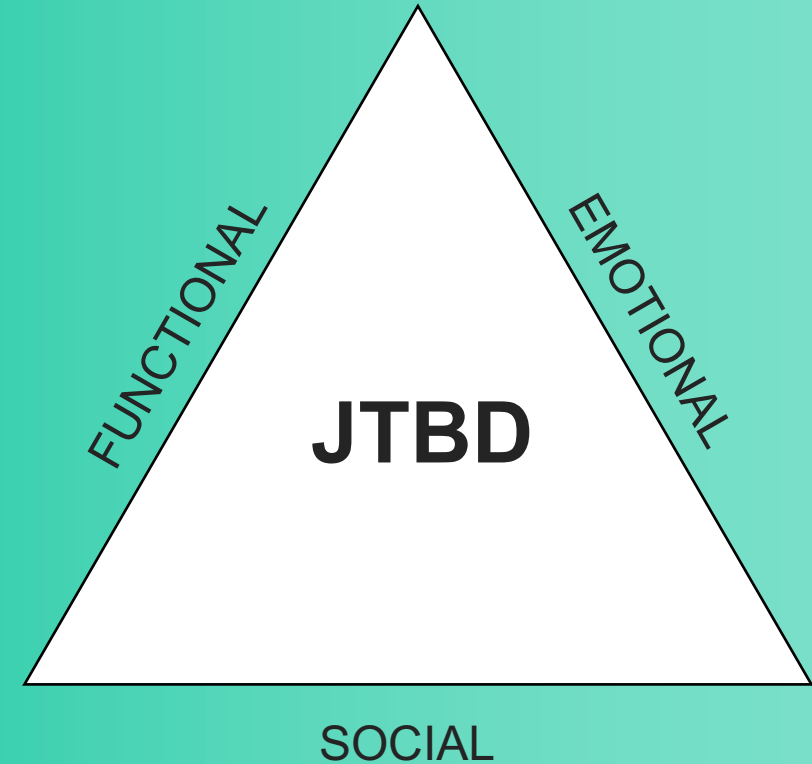
Anon

# START THINKING IN THREE DIMENSIONS!

**There are many ways to define and classify consumer 'jobs' but thinking about three dimensions of a job – its functional, emotional and social aspects - will help you cover your bases.**

When we think of innovations as 'help for hire' it's easy to focus on the physical task-based aspects of a job. But look more closely, and you'll find that most jobs have important emotional and social dimensions too.

So, in addition to the functional aspects of a job (what people want to get done physically), look for emotional jobs (what people want to feel) and also social jobs (how they want to be perceived) to see the fuller picture of the job to be done.

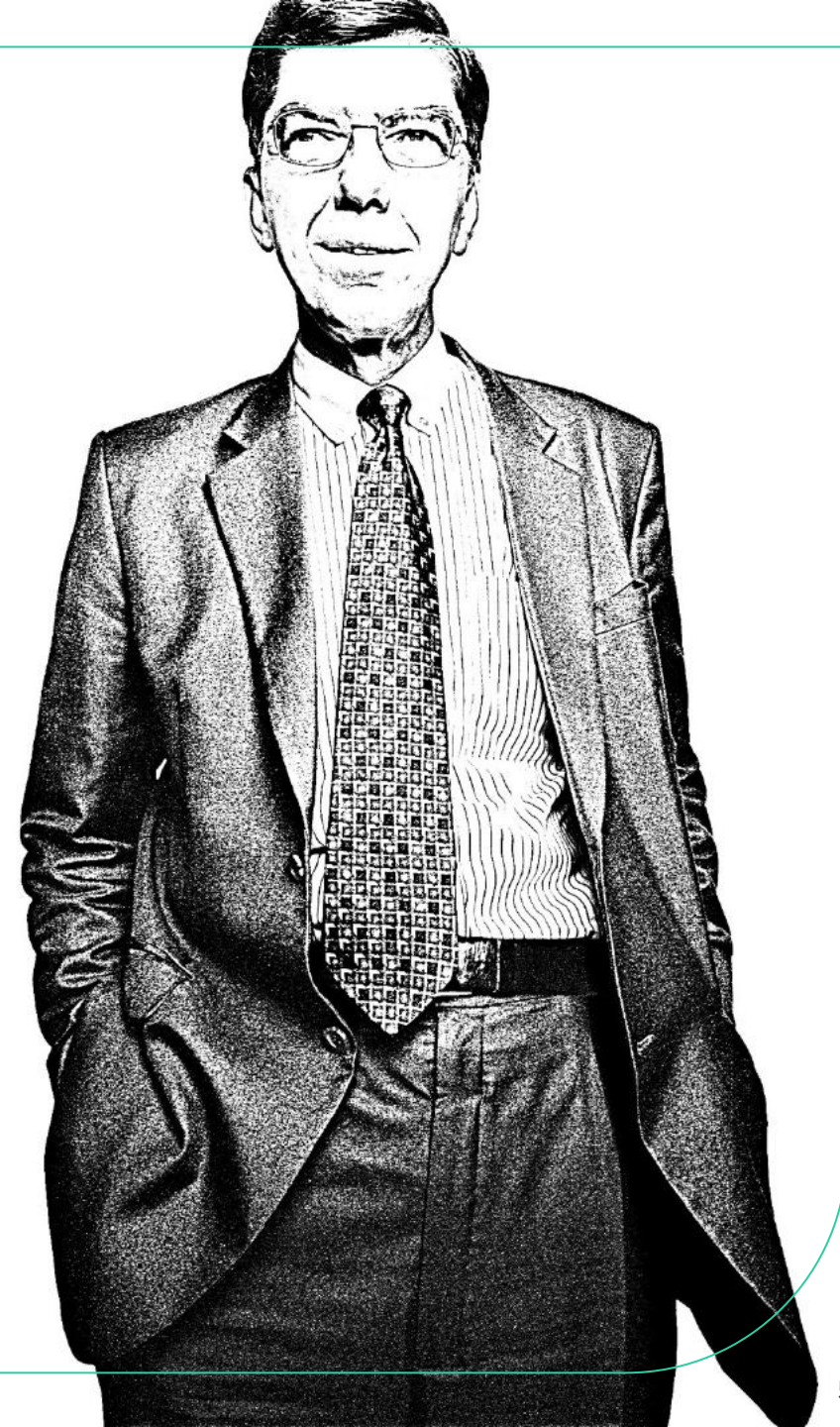




*People don't simply buy products and services, **they 'hire' them to fulfil a specific job in their lives***

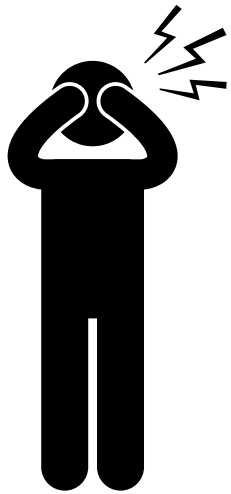
*A product that has been designed specifically to fulfil a well-understood Job to Be Done allows you to crawl into the skin of your customer and see the world through her eyes. **It says to the customer, 'We get you.'***

Clay Christensen



# THE BASIC JOBS-TO-BE-DONE FRAMEWORK

Take me from here  
CURRENT STATE



Job to Be Done



To here  
GOAL STATE



Consumers 'hire' innovations as a means to an end, which is help them get from where they are to where they want to be

Consumer demand is simply 'channelled motivation' produced by a perceived gap between our 'current state', and our future 'goal state'

Jobs-to-be-done are always about reducing the gap between current states and goal states



# FOR EXAMPLE ....

Take me from here  
CURRENT STATE

Guilty

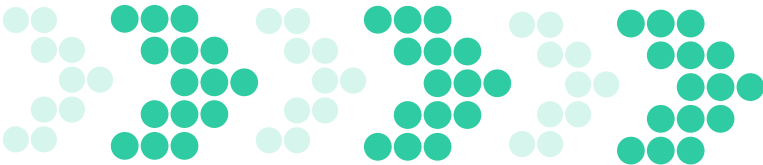
Inhibited

Unconfident

Low self-esteem

Bored

Job to Be Done



IVORY



Dove



To here  
GOAL STATE

Proud

Disinhibited

Confident

Higher self-esteem

Engaged



*Last year over one million quarter-inch drills were sold - not because people wanted quarter-inch drills but **because they wanted quarter-inch holes.***

*When you buy an automobile, you buy transportation. When you buy a mattress, you are buying comfortable sleep.*

Leo McGivena\*




# JTBD BASICS: WHAT JTBD ISN'T

**First, JTBD isn't about products, it's about people.**

Products and brands don't have 'jobs' - people do. If a brand talks about its job-to-be-done, then the metaphor fails. The point of JTBD is to shift away from brand-first thinking.

Second, JTBD isn't about focusing on consumer 'needs' (or need-states). JTBD was developed specifically because this word is so problematic in marketing - few teams can even agree on what a 'need' is; it's a flabby badly-defined word that creates confusion.

Likewise, JTBD is not simply benefit-driven innovation. If it's about anything, JTBD is about aligning with people's goals – the things people are striving to get done. The distinction is subtle but profound – and has a capacity to reveal exciting new breakthrough insights for innovation.



**JTBD is about people, not  
products; helping people  
perform better**

# 12 TIPS FOR DOING BETTER JOBS-TO-BE DONE RESEARCH

**#1**

MILK THE  
METAPHOR

**#2**

LEARN THE  
MILKSHAKE  
LESSONS

**#3**

MAKE USE OF  
MOTIVATION  
SCALES

**#4**

FOCUS FIRST  
ON WHAT  
DOESN'T  
CHANGE

**#5**

SUPPORT THE  
ARC OF  
HAPPINESS

**#6**

SEARCH FOR  
STRUGGLES

**#7**

LOOK OUT  
FOR  
ALTERNATIVE  
HIRES

**#8**

WATCH FOR  
'FIRES'

**#9**

RESEARCH  
'HACKS'

**#10**

FIND JOB  
CLASHES

**#11**

INVESTIGATE  
'NO HIRE'  
SITUATIONS

**#12**

LOOK TO  
ELIMINATE  
JOBS

# TIP #1

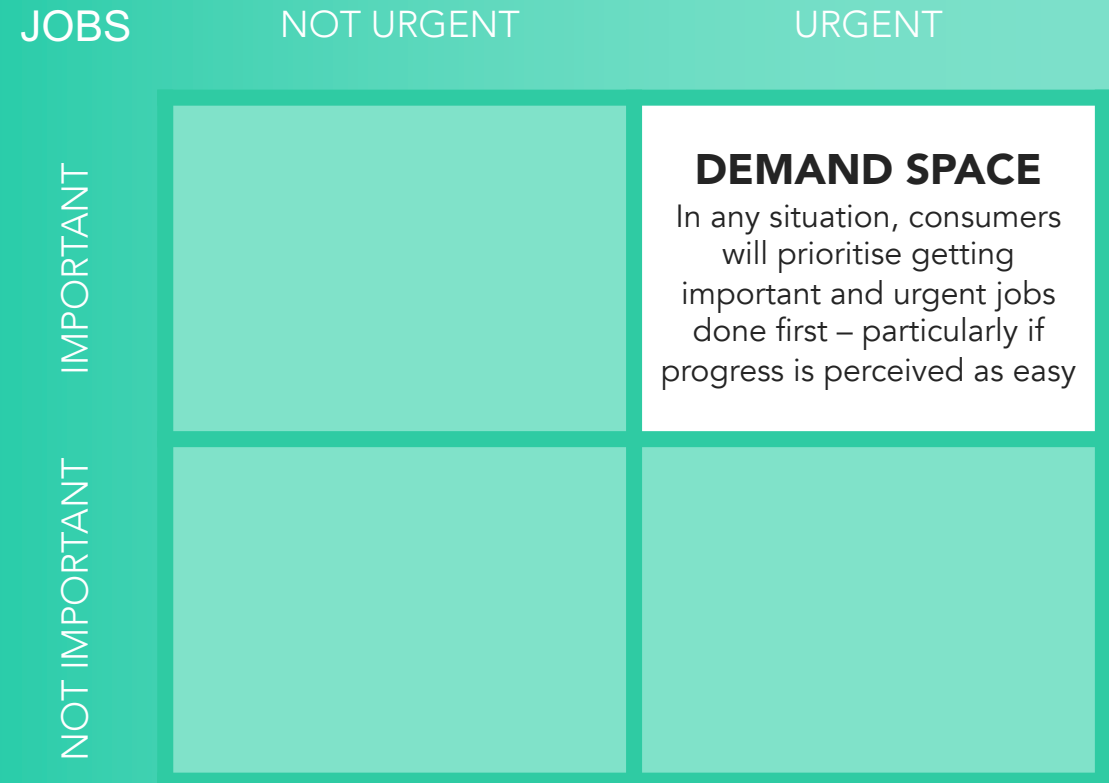
## MILK THE METAPHOR

**JTBD is based on a simple and powerful metaphor. People 'hire' innovations to get 'jobs' worth paying for, done.**

We've found that it's helpful to really push this metaphor when conducting JTBD research. For example, we survey the 'job market' and go 'job hunting' for clients to produce 'job descriptions', summarise 'job roles' and create concise 'job specs' for innovation 'hires'.

We'll summarise the job, give it a title, specify the 'job location' and even 'qualifications and skills' required. We'll also focus on critical success factors for job hiring, evaluation and success. If you work the jobs metaphor hard, you'll end up with a well-defined innovation blueprint.

Use the Eisenhower job-prioritisation matrix to identify key jobs-to-be-done demand spaces





## TIP #2 LEARN THE MILKSHAKE LESSONS

**The JTBD approach was made famous with a widely shared milkshake case study. In describing the study, advocate Clay Christensen made three key points.**

First, don't ask consumers what they want from a new milkshake. Instead, observe real-world behaviour to infer the jobs that are being done, and then build something better.

Second, don't let 'category thinking' get in the way. Milkshakes compete with out-of-category products when it comes to doing different jobs, such as relieving in-car boredom on a commute.

Third, if you are going to segment your market, segment on jobs rather than people. The same person can 'hire' a milkshake for different jobs in different situations, and their personal profile is often fairly irrelevant.



## TIP #3 MAKE USE OF MOTIVATION SCALES

**You can get a head start on JTBD research by learning from science-backed psychometric scales that reveal the validated jobs-to-be-done for a wide range of human activities.**

Did you know that key jobs-to-be-done for a wide range of activities, including eating, drinking, gaming, working, sports and even sex, are just a Google Scholar search away?

We use validated motivation scales as our 'secret source' to guide JTBD research. For decades, motivation science has dedicated itself to uncovering and testing the hidden jobs-to-be-done in a vast array of situations. It makes sense to use them!



EATING  
MOTIVATIONS  
(TEMS)



DRINKING  
MOTIVATIONS  
(DMQ)



TRAVEL  
MOTIVATIONS  
(TMS)



LEISURE  
MOTIVATIONS  
(FTMS)



GAMING  
MOTIVATIONS  
(GAMS)



WORK  
MOTIVATIONS  
(BNSF-W)



SUSTAINABILITY  
MOTIVATIONS  
(SCS)



EDUCATION  
MOTIVATIONS  
(DMQ)



SEX  
MOTIVATIONS  
(SMS)

## TIP #4 FOCUS FIRST ON WHAT DOESN'T CHANGE

**Innovation fetishizes change, but the biggest innovation opportunities can lie in jobs that don't change.**

Amazon's Jeff Bezos famously remarked that successful innovation is about investing in what doesn't change rather than what does. For Amazon, this means helping people with choice, low prices and fast delivery.

When looking at things that don't change, we find it helpful to look at insight into our human nature that was forged in our hunter-gatherer past. There are many models of human nature, but recent motivational science has identified a set of universal and timeless human jobs-to-be-done.

### FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN JTBD

(GRISKEVICIUS & KENRICK)

#### KIN CARE

Invest in and care for family and kin

#### MATE ACQUISITION

Acquire a desirable romantic partner

#### MATE RETENTION

Foster long-term mating bond

#### STATUS

Gain and maintain respect and prestige

#### AFFILIATION

Form and maintain co-operative alliances

#### DISEASE AVOIDANCE

Avoid infections to stay healthy

#### SELF-PROTECTION

Evade physical danger to remain safe

#### IMMEDIATE PHYSIOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

Ensure survival and regulate the body's balance





*I frequently get the question: 'what's going to change in the next 10 years?' That's a very interesting question and a very common one.*

*I almost never get the question: 'what's not going to change in the next 10 years?' And I submit to you that that second question is actually the more important of the two – because you can build a business strategy around the things that are stable in time.*

Jeff Bezos, CEO Amazon

## TIP #5 SUPPORT THE ARC OF HAPPINESS

**At the heart of motivation science lies the insight that human happiness and wellbeing depends on us getting three essential jobs done - experiencing 'autonomy', 'relatedness' and 'competence' in our everyday lives.**

Given that the pursuit of happiness a universal human goal, a new 'positive technology' movement is flourishing that seeks to put innovation to the service of human happiness.

From this perspective, supporting the 'ARC' of happiness is the essential job for innovation. This means helping people feel more choice and empowerment (autonomy), feel that they matter and connect (relatedness), and feel they are smart(er) (competence). We systematically lean into this positive vision of JTBD in our research.



## TIP #6 SEARCH FOR THE STRUGGLES

**You'll find innovation opportunities where people are struggling to get a job done.**

Diagnosing the real job-to-be-done is only part of the JTBD puzzle. If most people are already making good progress to their goals with minimal time, effort, stress or cost, then there's little opportunity for innovation. So, we've found it useful to look for where consumers are struggling to get their job done satisfactorily.

Consumers may not be great at telling you what you should build next, but they'll be great at telling you about their struggles. Explore the roadblocks, obstacles or complications that get in their way when getting things done. Solve their struggles, and you'll solve your innovation challenge.





## TIP #7 LOOK OUT FOR ALTERNATIVE HIRES

**It pays to look at the range of different 'hires' that people make to get jobs done, because this can reveal your true competition and new opportunities.**

The JTBD approach gained traction as a way to break out of the myopic constraints of artificial 'category' thinking. For example, Church & Dwight built their baking soda empire by ditching category thinking (Baking soda = washing), and exploring the alternative jobs that their products could be hired to do across different categories.

For example, by using baking soda as a deodorizing ingredient they unlocked innovation including toothpaste, laundry detergent, underarm deodorant, and cat litter.

To identify innovation opportunities, audit the full range of alternative options people choose to help with a job, and look for alternative jobs that your current products are hired to do.





## TIP #8

# WATCH FOR 'FIRES'

**To understand why people might hire an innovation, it helps to understand why they've already 'fired' alternatives, including yours.**

For example, Hershey's found that original Reese's Cups were being 'fired' by consumers in many situations because their cup cases left a visible trace and guilty proof of the number eaten. Functionally, the cup cases and wrappers were also a hassle to deal with, particularly in one-handed eating situations.

This insight led to the launch of less guilt-provoking Reese's Minis, without messy cases or wrappers, and all in a convenient but reassuringly opaque grab bag.





## TIP #9

### RESEARCH 'HACKS'

**To find key jobs-to-be-done, look for how consumers 'hack' current options by modifying them or putting them to new uses.**

In searching for innovation opportunities we find it helpful to look at how people are using current solutions 'off-label' in unexpected ways to get jobs done. Vicks famously found that people were using their cold remedy NyQuil to help them sleep, leading to the launch of ZzzQuil.

We pay particular attention when people use work-arounds or 'hacks' to get a job done better, faster, more easily or more cheaply. These hacks can be a clear signal of innovation opportunity.





# TIP #10

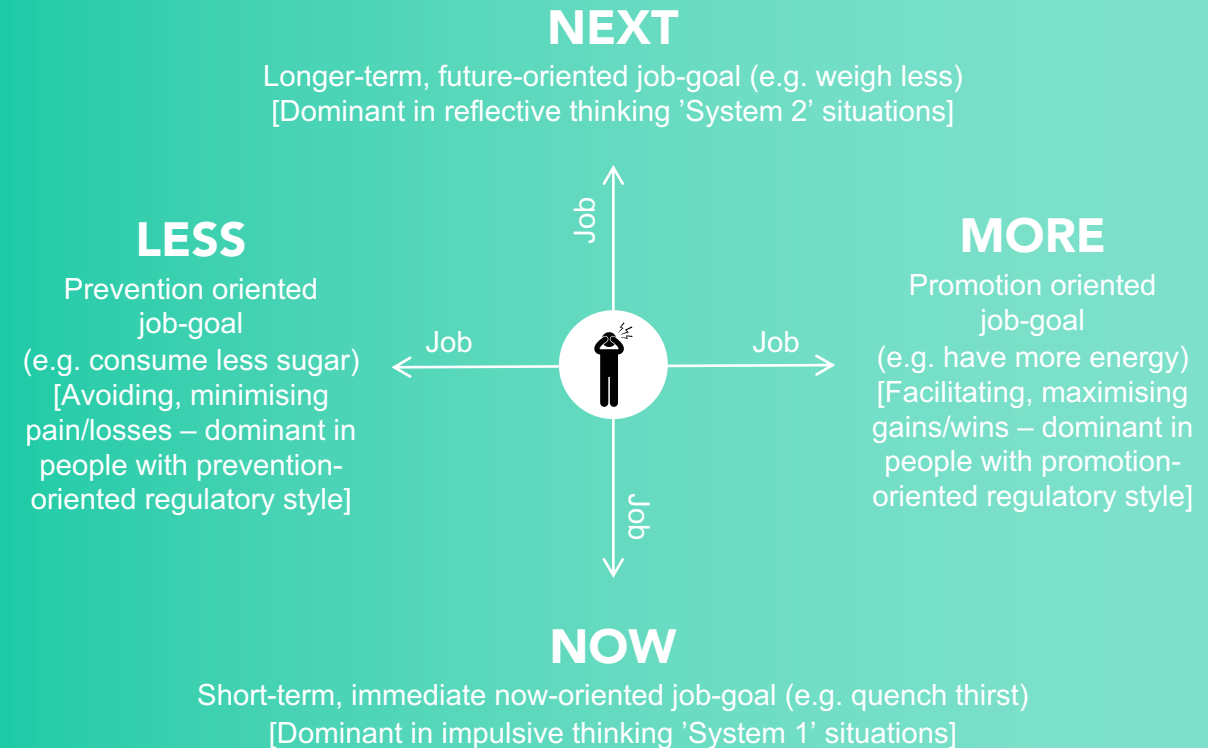
## FIND JOB CLASHES

**Sometimes, people have multiple jobs that need doing at the same time, and sometimes these jobs can seem incompatible with each other.**

We've found breakthrough insights for innovation tend to happen when people are conflicted with jobs that 'clash' with each other. For example, someone might be motivated to hire a snack to experience a sugar high, but they also want to project the image that they are mindfully watching their weight. 'Squaring the circle' with a solution that helps people do both jobs becomes your innovation opportunity.

Could your next innovation get hired because it helps people do two important, urgent and seemingly conflicting jobs at the same time?

**Innovation opportunities lie in resolving competing and conflicting job-goals**



## TIP #11 INVESTIGATE 'NO HIRE' SITUATIONS

**Some jobs matter to people, but they don't get hire help.**

One of the most impactful JTBD insights to date is that innovations often compete against non-consumption. Many people get jobs done without paying to hire a perfectly good product or service to help them. This may not signal lack of demand. Instead, not hiring may simply be a matter of not having enough time, effort or money available to make the hire. JTBD pioneer Clay Christensen coined the term 'disruptive innovation' for new cheaper, quicker or easier options that may do jobs less well, but are just 'good-enough' to get hired.

Could your next innovation be disruptive enough to get people to start hiring?

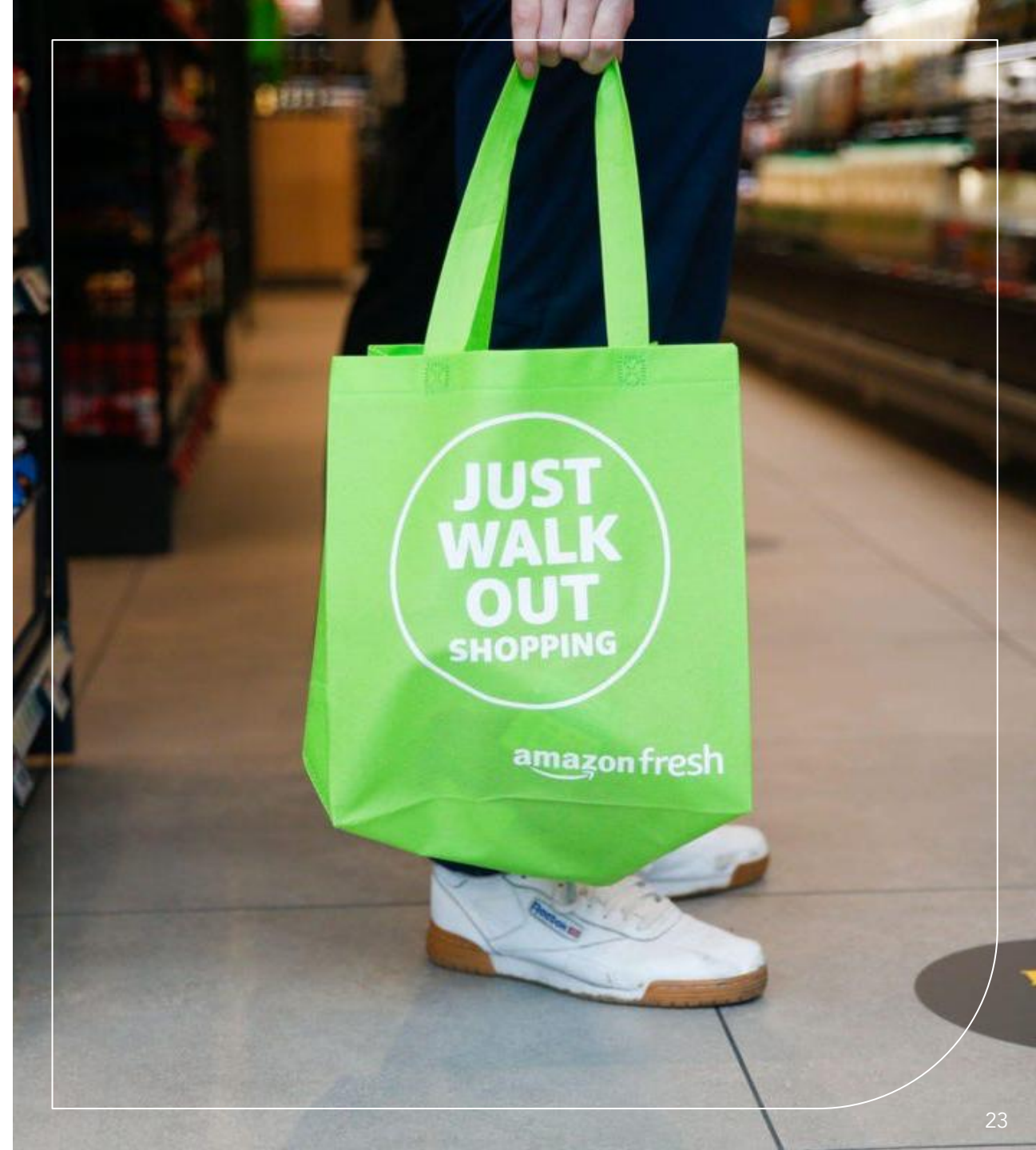


## TIP #12 LOOK TO ELIMINATE JOBS

**A 'help for hire' offer to assist in getting jobs done can be valuable. Helping people not have to do the job in the first place can be even more valuable.**

What jobs do people want to avoid or eliminate from their lives? Shopping can be fun, but sometimes it's a chore. Amazon's 'subscribe and save' automates and eliminates a tedious task. Similarly Amazon Fresh stores eliminate the check-out job. Just grab your shopping and walk out. Our human lives are approximately 2.5 billion heartbeats long.

How can innovation help us make the most of our heart beats by eliminating time-hungry tedious jobs, so we can focus on the jobs that matter most to us?





# SUMMARY JTBD AS POSITIVE INNOVATION

There are many ways to frame JTBD, but we see JTBD as a practical way to do human-first innovation.

For us at Brand Genetics, JTBD is about upgrading people, not products. It's about extending what's brilliant about humans - building on human strengths, abilities and potential - and helping people thrive. We call this 'positive innovation'. And we use the twelve JTBD tips in this document to help us do it. We'd love it if you could find a use for them too!

In the meantime, if you're looking to 'hire' an agency with a fresh and positive approach to innovation, we'd love to chat...

#1

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by thinking human first

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