



# Understanding Customer Needs Without a Plane Ride

**Virtual Voice of  
the Customer**

June 28, 2022



#inkjetinsight



**Get the most from your time with us!**

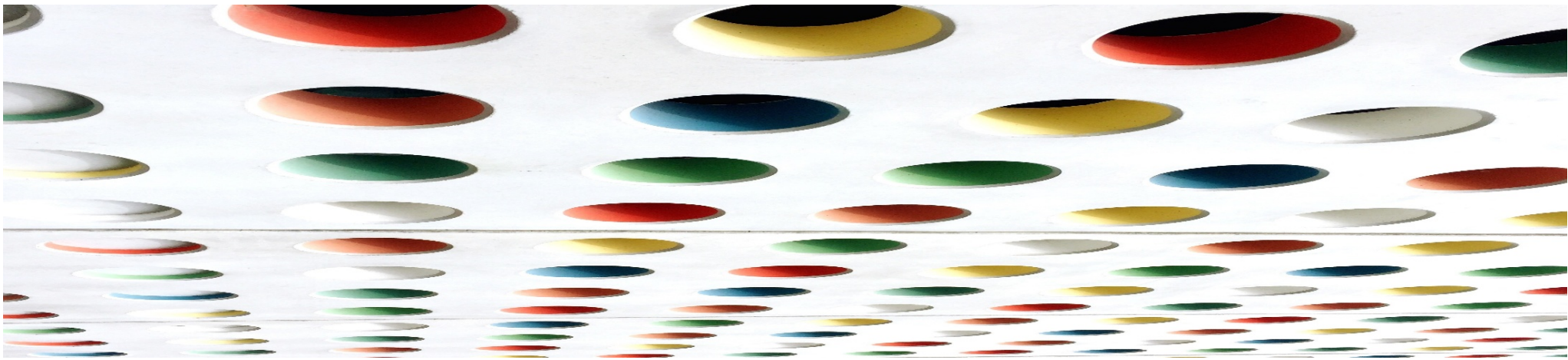
**SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS DURING THE WEBINAR**

**Question control is in the lower left corner**

Webinar video replay will be uploaded later today.







# Speakers



**Dan Adams**  
**President**  
**The AIM Institute**



**Kelly Lawrence**  
**President**  
**Lawrence Innovation**

# Why is talking to customers even more critical today for inkjet OEMs and companies using inkjet?

Paper shortages

Expanded substrate compatibility

Shifts to electronic alternatives

Changes in consumer's use of print

New things inkjet can do

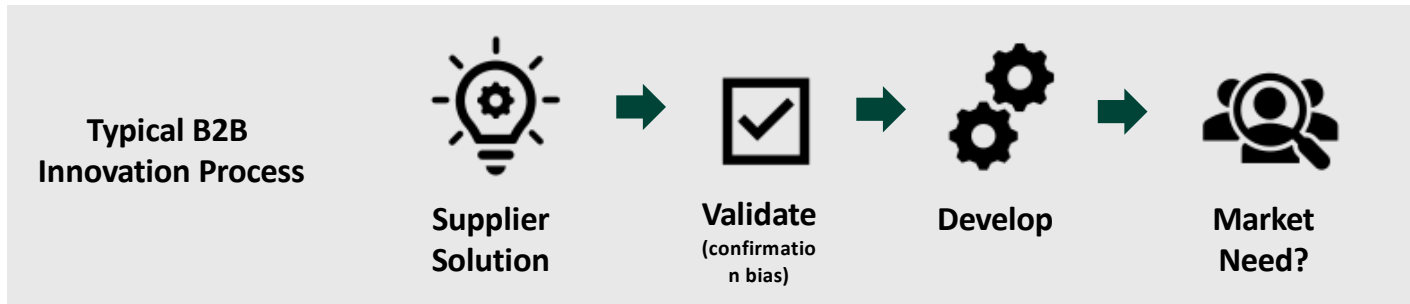
Emerging markets for inkjet

**Understanding what customers need *now***

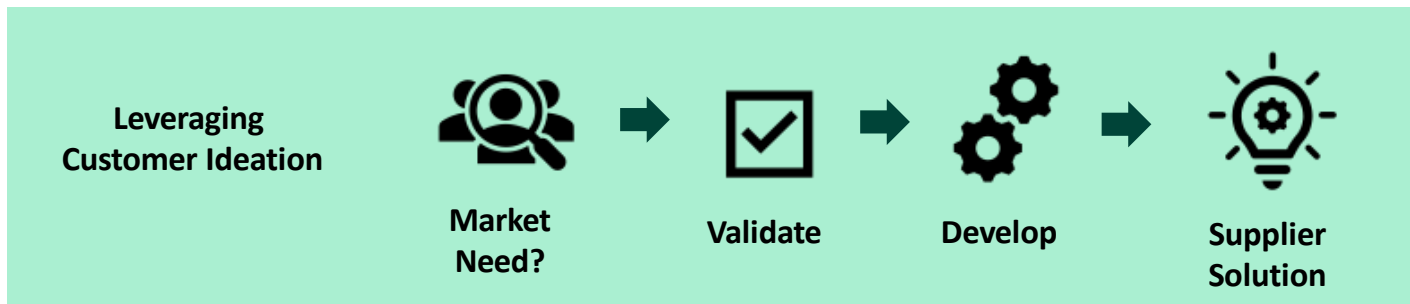
**Focus Limited Resources On  
The Profitable Problems To Solve**



# Impact of Talking to Customers

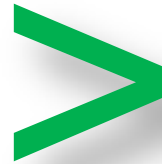


Success Rate  
**≤25%**



**>50%**

~~Which is better?~~ → When does each make sense?



**2 Hour interview**





# 10 Advantages of Virtual VOC

1. Lower cost
2. Dispersed customers
3. Viewable probing tips
4. Training for colleagues
5. Probing suggestions
6. Assistance for note-taker
7. Rapid de-briefing
8. Easier scheduling
9. Low-impact cancellations
10. Greater project speed



**Plus 8 Tips for Great VVOC**

# Advantage 1: **Lower cost**



**In-person VOC**



**Virtual VOC**

- **In-Person Expenses**
  - 10-20 trips
  - 2-3 interviewers
  - \$50,000+
- **In-person Time**
  - 2-3 person-months
  - >80% unproductive

- **Virtual Expenses**
  - \$0
- **Virtual Time**
  - 100% productive





# Advantage 3: **Viewable Probing Tips**


**Refer to probing tips,  
such as “What & Why”**  
(Discovery Interview Quick-Start Card)





## Advantage 4: **Training for Colleagues**

**Your trainees can  
join VVOC**

- 
- **First-hand experience**
  - **Not disruptive**
  - **No travel costs**
  - **No travel time**

## Advantage 5: **Probing Suggestions**

**Your observers can write probing suggestions for the moderator on a whiteboard.**

**In Discovery interviews, identify the sticky note #.**





# Advantage 6: Assistance for Note-taker

With in-person interviews, the poor note-taker can easily fall behind.



**But with VVOC, customers help by...**

- slowing their pace
- repeating points
- suggesting changes



## Advantage 7: **Rapid debriefing**

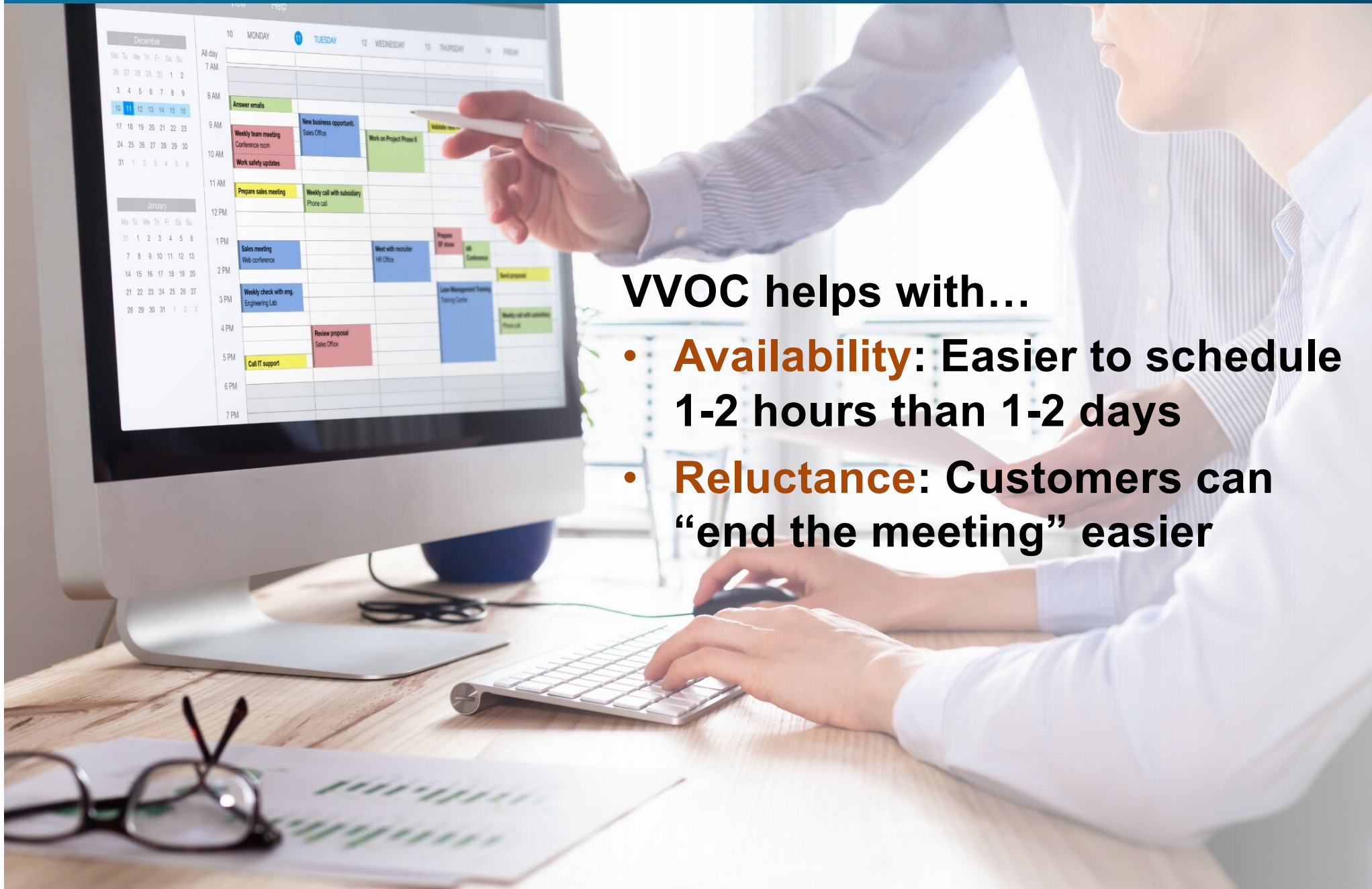
Ebbinghaus 'forgetting curve' tells us to quickly debrief.

With VVOC, you start *immediately*. No...

- Traveling to a coffee shop or airport lounge
- Finding a place to speak openly
- Unpacking & restarting your laptop



# Advantage 8: **Easier Scheduling**



## VVOC helps with...

- **Availability:** Easier to schedule 1-2 hours than 1-2 days
- **Reluctance:** Customers can “end the meeting” easier



## Advantage 9: **Low-impact Cancellations**

### **Plan on cancellations:**

- Your main customer contact got sick.
- They had a business emergency.
- Their boss called an all-hands meeting.
- A VP took over their conference room.
- Your contact made a calendar mistake.

**No need to waste the day. Just reschedule.**

# Advantage 10: **Greater Project Speed**

**What's the NPV of accelerating your project by 1 month?**  
(If eventual sales are \$5Mil/yr with average profits)

**\$80,000: \$4,000/workday!**



**With VVOC, you can...**

- Find open 1-2 hr. calendar slots easier
- Schedule interviews sooner
- Conduct multiple interviews per day





# How can we do *great* Virtual VOC?





# Tip 1: Use Visual Tools

## Engage customers with real-time *visual* feedback.

### Qualitative Discovery Interviews

SCOPE: Possible Innovations for e-commerce packaging

Blueprinter 5.0

Discovery Meeting with Acme Packaging and LLBean

Agenda

Current State 3

Problems 13

Ideal State 8

Triggered Ideas 4

Top Picks 8

Next Steps

Views

- Normal view
- 6 per page
- 12 per page
- 36 per page
- Full Text

Card #	Problem Statement	Solution	Rating
1	MINIMIZE THE FREQUENCY THAT BOXES ARE TORN DURING	Damage torn boxes. Boxes can tear at multiple points in the delivery process...	TP: 1, MH: 0
2	MINIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE DUE TO MOISTURE	Water damage can come from a couple of sources. May be actual water, with the box sitting in a puddle...	TP: 2, MH: 0
3	Crushing. Boxes can collapse due to weight. Too many boxes stacked on top of one another...	Crushing. Boxes can collapse due to weight. Too many boxes stacked on top of one another...	TP: 3, MH: 0
4	All manufacturer glue joints must meet ASTM D 1974	All manufacturer glue joints must meet ASTM D 1974	TP: 4, MH: 0
5	MAXIMIZE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT CUSTOM PRINTING REMAINS	Talked about pre-printed boxes, but boxes that we custom print are also an issue...	TP: 5, MH: 0
6	If we could print shipping information directly on the box...	If we could print shipping information directly on the box, would save from having to apply labels and shipping envelopes...	TP: 6, MH: 0
7	MAXIMIZE THE PERCENT OF RECYCLABLE CONTENT IN A NEW	Recycle! The amount of recycled content in the boxes you provide. Would like it higher...	TP: 7, MH: 0
8	Never having to add packing materials -- could put produc...	Never having to add packing materials -- could put product in the carton and it would not bounce around or get damaged!	TP: 8, MH: 0
9	Pack and ship our products without a carton! Save materi...	Pack and ship our products without a carton! Save materials, save effort.	TP: 9, MH: 0
10	Shorten the lead time for new empty boxes. We have a var...	Shorten the lead time for new empty boxes. We have a variety of sizes and shapes, can't afford to keep lots of inventory on hand...	TP: 10, MH: 0
11	Put some sort of tracker on pallets of boxes as they ship...	Put some sort of tracker on pallets of boxes as they ship to us? That way we could track them before arrival and then in your warehouse...	TP: 11, MH: 0
12	Box sizes! We have had some issues where the boxes are n...	Box sizes! We have had some issues where the boxes are not uniform in size. Creates lots of problems -- can make for an unstable stack...	TP: 12, MH: 0

### Quantitative Preference Interviews

SCOPE: Possible innovations for e-commerce packaging

Blueprinter 5.0

Preference Notebook

Preference Meeting with Acme Packaging and LLBean

Agenda

- Outcome Rating
- Measuring Outcomes
- Must-Haves
- Top Outcomes
- Other Information

Next Steps

Export to PDF

How **IMPORTANT** is it (to your company) to...  
**MINIMIZE THE LIKELIHOOD OF BOX DAMAGE FROM MOISTURE**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8.5

Not important at all | Not too important | Moderately important | Very important | Critical

Does not matter at all. If nice outcome to have, this outcome is satisfied but not very important. Fairly valuable to our customers or our process. Highly valuable to our customers or our process. Among a few absolutely essential outcomes.

Comments

Next >

Outcome Name	Importance	Satisfaction
Moisture Damage	8.5	4.5
Recycle Content	7.5	6
Vertical Crushing	9.5	4.5
Illegible Printing	7	7.5
Box Tearing	9	7
Box Punctures	7.5	4.5
Effort to Unload Box	7.5	7.5

(Examples from New Product Blueprinting)

Don't skip this: It's *critical* to holding customers' interest.

# Tip 2: Choose Wisely



## Conditions favoring In-person VOC

New to Interviewing

Unfamiliar Prospect

Tour Needed

Discovery

Able to Coordinate

Low

Initial Interviews



Team Experience

Customer Relationship

Need for Tour

Interview Type

Scheduling

Travel Costs

Interviewing Progress



## Conditions favoring Virtual VOC

Comfortable with Interviewing

'Friendly' Customer

Not Needed / Not Available

Preference

Difficult to Coordinate

High

Many Interviews Completed



# Tip 3: Build Your Team's Skills

Build VVOC skills in a graduated, stepwise fashion...

Industry  
Experts

Sales  
Colleagues

Internal  
Depts.

Distributors  
& Agents

Smaller  
Customers

Larger  
Customers





# Tip 4: Prepare your customers

- Work to get **several** contacts to the **interview**
- Ensure everyone gets an **agenda**
- Call this a “**meeting**” or “**session**” (not interview)
- Ask your contact to set up **10-15 minutes** early
- Give customers the “**WIIFM**” (What’s in it for me?)



## Tip 4: Prepare your customers

**Why should customers meet with you?**

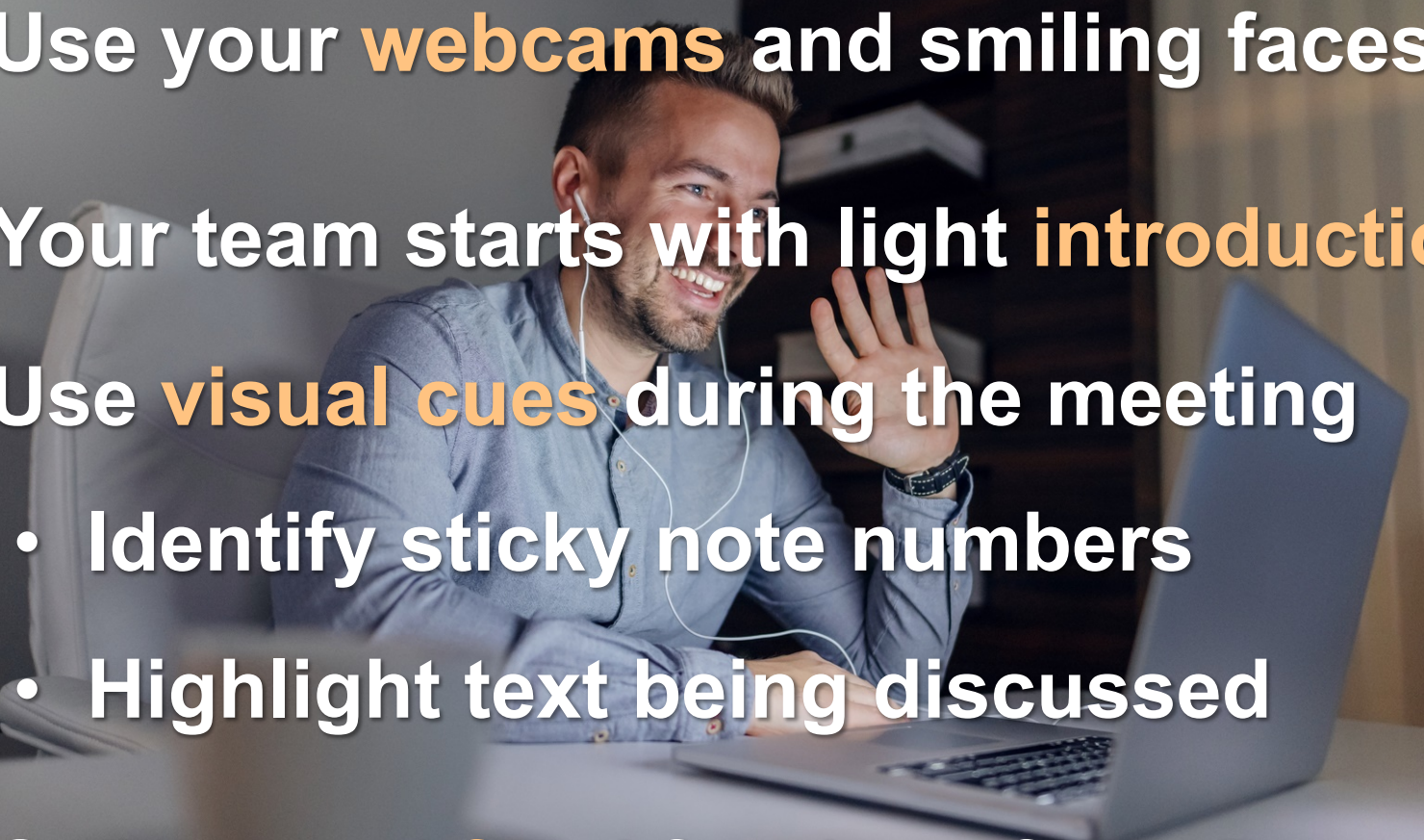
**You could be their source of open, external innovation.**

- You're staffed with industry experts
- You're eager to work on *their* problems
- You expect no up-front payment
- Customers can decline your innovation
- There's no risk on customers' part

***But you need to understand their needs first!***



## Tip 5: Make this enjoyable for customers

- Use your **webcams** and smiling faces
  - Your team starts with light **introductions**
  - Use **visual cues** during the meeting
    - Identify sticky note numbers
    - Highlight text being discussed
  - Order good **food** for them from Panera!
- 
- A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and white earbuds, is sitting at a desk. He is smiling broadly and waving his right hand towards a laptop screen. The laptop is open in front of him. The background is a dimly lit room with a window and some furniture.



## Tip 6: Probe Like a Pro

- Ensure high-quality **audio**
- Get help from **observers**
  - Consider 2 observers
  - Have them put notes on white-board
- **Train** by attending other VVOC interviews
- Use **probing tips**

### “What and Why” Probing

#### WHAT is customer saying?

- WHEN does this happen?
- WHERE do you see this?
- Can you DESCRIBE this?

#### WHY is this important?

- WHY is this a problem?
- How does it impact you?

#### More to learn?

Anything else we should know before we move on?

#### Next Note

What other problems are you seeing?



# Tip 7: Consider Sending a Local Colleague

## Supplier

Part of your team



## Customer

Rest of your team



Your in-person colleague can...

- Arrive early and set up
- Break the ice with introductions
- Observe restlessness, missed questions, etc.



## Tip 8: Ensure Strong Follow-up

*They did a nice interview...  
but then we never heard  
from them again.*

- **Ask the customer how they'd like to be updated... and do it.**
- **Use a phone call or e-mail to say thank you.**
- **Send a PDF of the interview notes & ask for any updates.**
- **Call them to ask for help in clarifying some points.**
- **Share summarized industry results of your interviews.**
- **Call or e-mail to indicate that your project is still active.**
- **Have your sales rep provide them with periodic updates.**
- **Share your new product prototypes with the customer.**

# Inkjet Insight

## Potential Interviewees

- End-user
- Brand/CPG
- Printer
- Integrator
- Printer OEM
- Consumable Suppliers

## Where to Conduct VOC

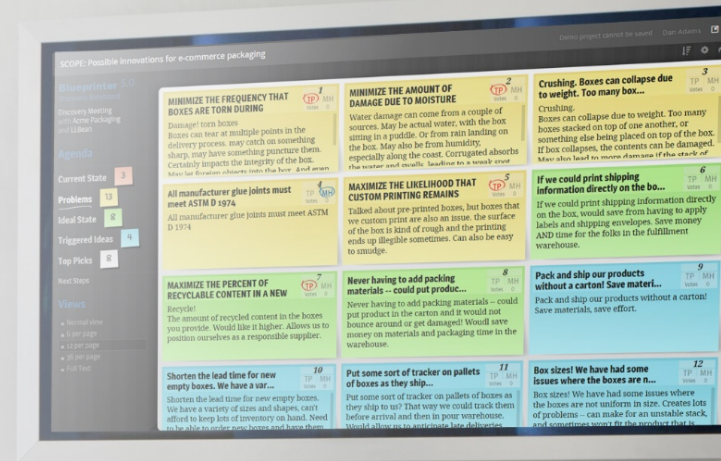
- Virtually – from anywhere
- Customer's business
- Your business
- Tradeshow

**To grow inkjet, ensure you understand the unmet needs to solve.**





# Balance **Virtual** and **In-Person** VOC for great customer insight!



*Let's take some questions, but first...*



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# Questions?

**Our Message to Printers, OEMs and the Industry at Large**  
**Evaluate. Optimize. Grow.**  
**Repeat**

For information on speaking, sponsorship or membership please contact:  
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