

A photograph of a busy street market. The scene is filled with various shops and signs. On the left, there's a shop with a large, ornate sign that partially reads 'K...'. Below it, a sign for 'Fragrance' lists 'Fresh Flowers & Gifts' and 'NATURAL Anti Mosquito'. A red sign for 'PERFUMES' is visible. In the center, a large red sign for 'SHAKTI FRUITS' advertises 'IMPORTED FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES' and 'Fragrance'. To the right, a shop named 'PARCOS' is visible, along with a sign for 'SUGAR' and another for 'GAR & SPICE'. The street is paved with cobblestones, and a few people can be seen walking in the distance. The overall atmosphere is that of a traditional, bustling market.

LISTENING  
AND  
RESPONDING  
TO  
STAKEHOLDERS  
IN CRISIS

discoveredmarkets  
DESIGN · DEVELOP · DISCOVER

# LISTEN DESIGN RESPOND



Current events have changed us all, including our business's stakeholders — partners, vendors, distributors, investors, customers. Their needs have suddenly shifted and so have their responses to our old outreach, sales, and marketing. Additionally, as the underlying market conditions are volatile as well as uncertain, time to explain their decisions is limited. Even the self-defined "listening" organization may find their existing methods strained or inadequate under this environment.

To respond, organizations need to re-evaluate their systems to listen, design, and respond in changing environments. Discovered Markets is a business design firm that uses stakeholder insights to build market entry strategies for businesses in already complex and opaque emerging markets. We deal in uncertainty and volatility regularly in our work, and are experts in sorting through the messy human data. Based on our previous work, we've pulled together some guidelines organizations should consider when listening and responding in uncertain times.

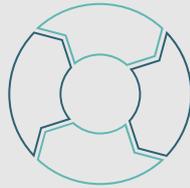
# LISTEN

*In crisis environments, the gathering of insights can be a source of additional emotional strain on both the user and the researcher. However, if the results of data collection are valued by both sides, continuing a considered approach to data collection can yield relevant solutions to benefit all.*

## Commit to a consumer collection circle.

Listening and responding are circular: prepare, do, analyze, adjust.

Once new strategy and tactics are introduced, listening and responding starts again.



## Bring value and empathy during research.

Despite the stress stakeholders are experiencing, research by HHS suggests that interviewees don't regret participating, especially when the questions are novel and their utility is seen.



## Utilize in-market resources.

Travel is a limited option, however human resources in market of interest exist that can be accessed as long as tools are pre-tested. This also allows data collection to start faster.

Discovered Markets uses a pool of Innovation Strategists and Design Researchers to conduct in-market research across the globe.



## Determine if qualitative or quantitative data is needed.

Some extensive quantitative data is difficult to get in times of uncertainty and change. Understand what data is needed to make a decision. Does qualitative data suffice?



## Explore online tools for digitizing data collection.

Google Docs is great for writing up interview notes and sharing with virtual teammates.

Typeform has user friendly interfaces for creating data entry forms or self-guided surveys.

User Testing lets you record users action.

Keep in mind that digital literacy varies among participants.



## Focus on how your stakeholders are handling change.

Consider the following questions:

- How has the day to day changed? Walk me through a day before and day now.
- What do you believe a day will look like in 3 or 6 months?
- How do you believe your business will change?
- Where are you in the planning process for the next 12 months?
- Are you investing more / less / same in your business? Dig into categories: sales, marketing, people, operations, equipment
- How could we help?



# DESIGN

*Human data is messy. Insights from each collection method should be sorted through multiple techniques. Strategy, research, and design teams love doing this in-person and giving time to ideate. Both of these are in short supply in current conditions.*

## Set up some remote design tools.

With remote teams, there are tools to work through qualitative and quantitative data.

[Miro](#) is a great virtual whiteboard tool for mind mapping and customer journeys.



## Stay human-centric.

Businesses are started, led, and staffed by humans. Drill down to both emotional and rational needs through mapping exercises such as Say, Do, Think, Feel.



## Utilize design sprints.

[Design sprints](#) allow teams to move quickly from idea to test, allowing for faster iteration and go-to-market.

[Peer Insight](#) has a toolkit for identifying when to sprint or not.



## Map the systems around you for warning signs and opportunities.

We've learned that issues in another sector can seem irrelevant to a business until it isn't. Consider what trends in the system around the business could have impact.



Board of Innovation is tracking trends towards a new [Low Touch Economy](#).

## Identify which level of the hierarchy of needs is priority.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Physiological, Safety, Belong, Esteem, Self-Actualization) is a cornerstone of psychology.



A crisis event may move an individual's or company's focus down a level or two. This may be to cover the safety of a revenue stream or the physiological health needs of employees. Understand where your stakeholder may need help today or where they may need help tomorrow.

[FlieshmanHillard](#) recommends crisis management principles for each level.

## Map current state vs future state.

In an uncertain environment, strategists need to forecast multiple scenarios. Strategic planning should focus on the elements of the business model that are relevant across all or most scenarios.



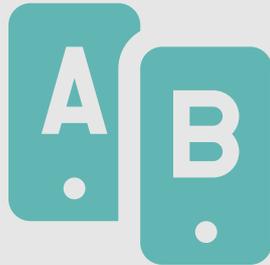
# RESPOND

*Stakeholders have been thrust into change that is unexpected and unwanted: some are shut down completely, others are adapting to a new environment, and some are busy keeping up with new demand. Organizations must deploy a needs-based response that recognizes these differences and approaches with the humans in mind.*

## Test, Test, Test.

Ideas aren't perfect from the start. Don't waste time. Get user feedback to your new approach quickly.

Discovered Markets coordinates testing all over the world.



## Offer Help.

When going back to market, start with an offer of help. Creating value for your stakeholders leads to value creation for the company.



## Staff accordingly.

Flexibility and comfortability with the unknown are two key skills employees need now. Can you train into those? Or do you need to hire?



## Aid the changes your stakeholders are motivated to make.

Public health officials utilize a behavior change approach looking at the opportunity, capability, and motivation to make change happen. Our stakeholders are changing a lot now. For a relevant offer, they could be extremely motivated at the moment.



## Forge new partnerships.

No person or company can be an expert in all things. Some skills may only be needed temporarily. What skill sets are needed to provide your new solutions? Is there a partner that can fill those in the short-term?



## Keep collecting feedback.

As you respond with solutions that are empathetic and human-led, don't stop listening. The feedback from any interaction with the market should be fed back into the system to improve.



Remember: prepare, do, analyze, adjust.

## Set go / no-go stages.

A critical part of testing is setting go / no-go criteria along the way. What are the metrics you will define early success by? What will you do if those are met or not met? Create a plan from the start which is agreed by all team members.



# QUESTIONS? FEEDBACK?

---



discoveredmarkets  
DESIGN · DEVELOP · DISCOVER

Like this toolkit? Want more? We'd love to hear from you.

Discovered Markets works with business development and growth teams to collaboratively identify new potential customers, test solutions, and de-risk market entry.

Get in touch:

Jason Eaves

[jason@discoveredmarkets.com](mailto:jason@discoveredmarkets.com)

[www.discoveredmarkets.com](http://www.discoveredmarkets.com)



# TOOLS & RESOURCES

## DISCOVER

[User Testing](#) - Remote Product Testing Software  
[Google Meet](#) & [Zoom](#) - Virtual Conferencing

## DESIGN

[Miro](#) - Online Collaborative Whiteboard  
[THNK Resources](#) - Insights from THNK School of Creative Leadership

[IDEO Design Kit](#) - Human Centered Design Tools

[Peer Insight Sprint ToolKit](#) - Corporate Innovation Insights

## DEPLOY

[Discovered Markets](#) - Market Testing Services  
[Behavior Change Wheel](#) - Behavior Change Approach