Tools and Techniques for Testing your Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

1. **IDEO-style idea Generation**. IDEO has a structured approach for applying ‘design thinking’ to new product development.

2. **Business Model Generation**. Ash Maurya has adapted Osterwalder’s business model generation framework for use in info tech startups.

3. **Customer Discovery Interviews**. In *Four Steps to the Epiphany*, Steve Blank describes interview processes for assessing demand for a product idea.

4. **Focus Group Research**.

5. **Survey Research**.

6. **Persona Development**. A persona is a fictional character with demographic, psychographic, and behavior attributes of a representative product user. Many tech companies assess new features in terms of their fit with personas’ needs.

7. **Competitor Site Benchmarking**.

8. **Wireframing**. A wireframe is a skeletal depiction of a website showing key navigational concepts and page content. Many wireframing software tools are available, e.g., Balsamiq.

9. **Prototype Development**.

10. **Usability Tests**. For $39, UserTesting.com will videotape a representative consumer trying a product or feature.

11. **A/B Test of New Feature**.

12. **Conversion Funnel Analysis/Optimization**.


14. **Search Engine Marketing Campaign Design/Optimization**.

15. **Inbound Marketing Campaign Design/Delivery/Analysis**. This book by Hubspot’s founders explains the logic for relying on blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc. to drive traffic to a site.

16. **Public Relations Strategy**. Startup CEOs disagree on whether a DIY approach to PR makes sense, and how long startups should wait before they invest money/time in PR.

17. **Site Redesign Based on User Experience Analysis**.

18. **Analysis of User Requests for Product Support**.

19. **Analysis of User Suggestions for New Features**. Dropbox has implemented a site feature for soliciting feature suggestions, called “Votebox.”

20. **Product Roadmap/Feature Prioritization Process Design**. Startups who rely on agile development methods use project management tools such as Pivotal Tracker.

21. **Design/Delivery of Sales Pitch for Early Adopters**.

22. **Sales Lead Prioritization Process**.

23. **Design/Delivery of Charter User Program**. Silicon Valley Product Group, a consulting firm that helps tech companies improve their product management capabilities, makes the case for a structured approach to working with beta customers.

24. **Net Promoter Score Analysis**. NPS, a measure of product loyalty used by many tech companies, is obtained by asking customers: “How likely is it on a 0-10 scale that you’d recommend our product to a friend/colleague?” Respondents are categorized as Promoters (9-10 rating), Passives (7-8), or Detractors (0-6). NPS = Promoter % - Detractor %.

25. **Lifetime Value of a Customer Analysis**.