



3 .WHERE DOES THIS FIT?



Technology-based entrepreneurship focuses on the exponential curve of a startup, which typically goes through the following phases: (i) zero stage/ideation, in which a relevant problem is discovered with an interesting solution to the need identified; (ii) validation/establishment, when the first solutions start making sense, and the first efforts are made to sell the product and adapt its initial versions to actual demand; (iii) growth, in which the product is better elaborated and the startup begins to lubricate its marketing process and build a larger team; (iv) maturity, when processes and technologies are scaled up, policies to attract and retain talent are implemented, and strategies are put in place for scenarios of more intense competition.

Scientific entrepreneurship as originally created by Steve Blank, who called it evidence-based entrepreneurship, focused on early-stage startups, embryonic ventures corresponding to phases (i) and (ii) above. At this stage the focus is on understanding the market's "pain" and formulating a suitable solution. "Make something people want" is Y Combinator's motto. Understanding the user's needs in depth, and developing the best solution for those needs – the famous goal of "problem-solution fit".

To achieve problem-solution fit, it is usually necessary to execute an iterative process that presupposes both an understanding of the user's needs (Customer Discovery)³ and the development of quick prototypes for value validation (Agile Development)⁴. A startup that has paying

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users is considered to have achieved a “fit”, and hence to have completed its crossing of startup “death valley” (also known as the chasm)⁵. When the number of paying users is large enough, product-market fit has been achieved.

The Shell for Scientific Entrepreneurship is designed for early-stage entrepreneurs in this sense. Its main thrust is special attention to discovery processes based on exploration.

Exploration is fundamental owing to the extreme uncertainty that prevails at the beginning of the journey. Will the market really want this? Is the technology viable? Is a good structure of partnerships in place to assure adequate distribution of the solution? Is there enough money on the table? All these questions are addressed by our method. They are essential to get past the gaps in the early stages.

3. <https://steveblank.com/tag/customer-discovery/>

4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agile_software_development

5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossing_the_Chasm

