



# The Pre-Build Checklist

*10 Questions Every Founder Must Answer Before Writing a Single Line of Code*

You can build almost anything with AI. This checklist keeps you from building the wrong thing perfectly.

## How to Use This Checklist

- Block 45-60 minutes before you write a single line of code.
- Answer each question with specific evidence (links, data points, customer quotes, screenshots, interview notes, etc), not vibes. Left box for answers, right box for specific evidence
- If you can't answer a question confidently, that's your next discovery task—not a reason to guess.

## What to do after answering

- Use this checklist before your next MVP.
- Run it as a pre-mortem with your co-founder or first hire.
- Save a copy of this completed checklist and share it with your co-founder or dev partner as your validation snapshot.

Built from founder discovery calls and post-mortems on early-stage products.

Want the full playbook? Watch for the next asset in The Validation Imperative series.

# The 10 Questions

1 What pain did a real customer describe to you in their own words?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

2 Who would be genuinely upset if your product disappeared tomorrow?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

3 What have customers already tried to fix this problem, and what do they hate about those solutions?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

4 What is the smallest, testable behavior that would prove this problem is urgent enough to pay for?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

5 What measurable relief will your first version deliver within two weeks of use?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

6 Which of your beliefs about the customer or problem would kill the idea if proven false?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

7 How will you test those beliefs before writing code (interviews, landing page, concierge test)?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

8 What hard numbers after 30 days (retention, activations, revenue) would prove real signal, not vanity traction?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

9 What features or builds will you deliberately pause if validation is weak?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

10 What decision rule will you follow when validation data arrives — pivot, persist, or pause?

Enter answer

Enter specific evidence

Validated

Needs work

**Use this space to document extra evidence for each question—links, data points, interview notes, etc.**

(If more than 3 questions are still "Needs work," you're not ready to open your IDE yet)



**Ready to go deeper? Book a discovery call with  
Intelligent Ignition at**

**[intelligentignition.com/contact](https://intelligentignition.com/contact)**