

# New Product Blueprinting vs. Traditional VOC

## - Ten Differences -

© Advanced Industrial Marketing (www.newproductblueprinting.com)

New Product Blueprinting builds on earlier methodologies, such as traditional Voice of the Customer (VOC), QFD and DFSS.<sup>1</sup> But Blueprinting was designed **just for B2B suppliers**. Your B2B customers are more insightful, more rational, more interested, and fewer in number than end-consumers. If you use hand-me-down consumer-goods VOC methods, you'll forego these advantages... and learn far less than you could about market needs.



**1. Digital Projection** Whenever possible, you'll use a digital projector to capture customers' ideas. This completely changes the interview dynamics, since customers don't have to guess what you're scribbling or typing. Our Blueprinter<sup>®</sup> software lets you record and sort their comments on digital "sticky notes"... creating a shared "idea-generation" atmosphere. This also allows for real-time corrections and greatly impresses customers. These *Discovery Interviews* can boost customers' view of you long before your new product arrives.

**2. No Questionnaires** Most VOC training encourages you to develop brilliant questions in an interview script. We teach you how to brilliantly probe customer responses. You ask a few simple questions and then follow their lead... as they direct you to the areas *they* are most concerned with (all within your project scope, of course). Customers feel like you are really *listening* to them... not just filling in your questionnaire. Customers say they find this "refreshing."

**Q: What should we ask customers about?**  
**A: Whatever is important to them!**

So, let's drop *our* long list of questions... and discuss what *they* want to see changed.

**3. No Selling, No Solving** Your commercial people have been trained to *sell* and your technical people to *solve*. But in Blueprinting interviews, they just *search*. They use highly-refined probing techniques to uncover market needs your competitors completely miss. Blueprinting is very intentional about staying clear of solving (which wastes time and jeopardizes your intellectual property) and selling (which wastes time and makes you appear self-serving).

**Ever Lead with *Your* Solution?**

Meet your architect.

This is the house for you. Want to talk about it?

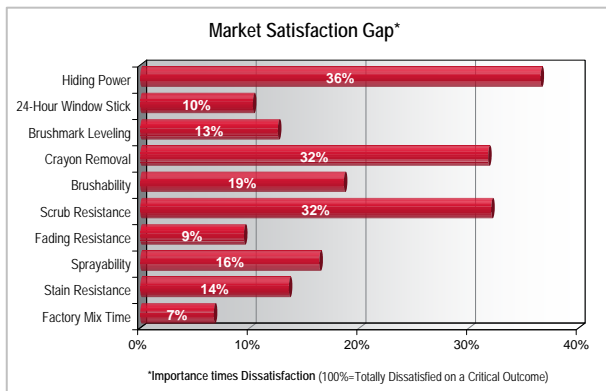
I created this design and it's all I sell. You like it?

### 4. Customer Needs before Supplier Solutions

Many companies say they want to understand market needs... when they really just want to validate solutions developed in *their* labs and conference rooms. If your NPD process begins with an "idea light-bulb," it's usually your idea, not your customers', right? No wonder most new products fail! Blueprinting inverts this process, so you *start* with market needs and then look inside and outside your company for the best solution.

<sup>1</sup> QFD (Quality Function Deployment) and DFSS (Design for Six Sigma) also promote interviews, data-driven decisions, use of multi-functional teams, etc.

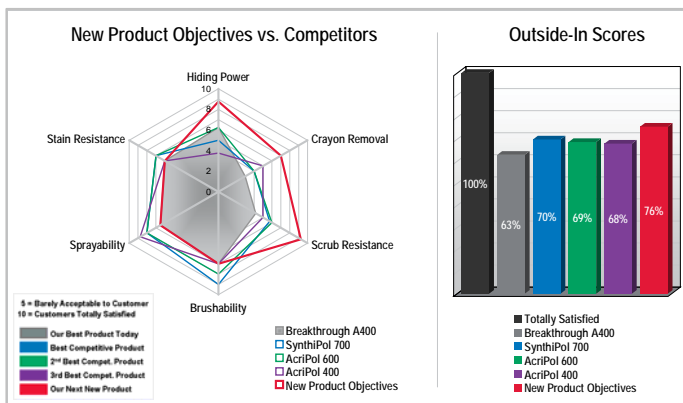
**5. Time-Efficient** Traditional VOC interviews that call for tape-recording require hours of transcribing and interpretation. Your B2B customers are capable—and usually eager—to help you understand and prioritize their needs while still in the room with you. (And B2C techniques such as tape-recording or one-way mirrors can make them feel more like Jane Goodall’s chimps than professional peers.) Your interview team has a short post-interview debriefing... and they’re done.



**6. Market-Driven Data** When you conduct *Preference Interviews* in a second round of customer visits, Blueprinter® software generates Market Satisfaction Gaps (MSG). Customer outcomes with MSG > 30% tell you the customer is eager for change. In some cases, you’ll learn customers are already satisfied: Instead of developing a product for this market, drop the project and move on to something customers care about. And celebrate! This is how companies stop squandering scarce R&D and marketing resources.

**7. Search Your Value Chain** Unlike B2C producers, your product might be part of your customer’s customer’s product, their customer’s product and so on. We teach advanced techniques to help you go down this value chain to understand needs. Also, B2C producers assign “one vote” per consumer... while you need to weight the buying power and value chain position of downstream customers. Blueprinting lets you do this with simple but powerful quantitative tools.

**8. Superior Value Propositions** Blueprinter software helps you set product objectives based on data from interviews and competitive testing. Visual tools let you view “what-if” product designs, predict market reaction to each, and select the best. Resulting value propositions—void of wishful thinking and internal bias—are captured in a 12-point VC-quality Business Case. You can use this as a stand-alone justification or as a supplement to your existing stage-and-gate process.



**9. Building Corporate Memory** Instead of using many unconnected tools, we capture the entire front-end of product development in a single Microsoft Excel®-based Blueprinter document. This gives teams an easy-to-follow roadmap and builds corporate memory by allowing easy data retrieval later. Clients have called Blueprinter “the lab notebook for marketing professionals.”

**10. Designed for the Masses** You don’t want just a handful of internal experts hearing your customers’ “voice.” With our workshops, coaching and follow-up, a critical mass of your organization will continually uncover customer needs and become less internally-focused. Don’t outsource this work to VOC consultants: It’s a strong competitive advantage you should own.