



The Ultimate Guide To

Building An Online Marketplace

(For the Non-Technical Founder)

Building Supply Worksheets

Who are the providers?

Building Supply

One of the first problems that you will have to solve when building an online marketplace is solving the classic chicken and egg problem. Do you build supply or generate demand?

You need to learn how to get customers with little supply and how to get supply with only a few customers. Providers like owners, hosts, or sellers normally have a much larger incentive when it comes to joining a marketplace because they are able to generate a source of revenue when they join. As a result, it makes the most sense to immediately start to build supply. Your main prerogative should be signing up providers so they can list or post their supply. When supplying your marketplace, it's important to be clear about your value propositions. You need to make sure your providers clearly understand the value that they will gain by joining your marketplace.

If your buyers or renters land on your marketplace and don't find anything you've immediately lost a potential customer. They won't revisit your marketplace because they will not have found any value and it will be extremely difficult to build a network effect if you can't garner a loyal customer base.

Defining Your Supply User Persona:

When launching a marketplace, defining your initial supply-side users is crucial. While many types of providers may eventually fit your platform, narrowing them down to a common denominator gives you a clear focus at the start. We'll create a fictional profile representing your ideal early supply persona to guide messaging, onboarding flow, product decisions, and branding. Understanding their motivations and challenges ensures you build the right experience and attract the right providers from day one.



Pro Tip

Start with a Single City. *With most marketplaces, building out your supply density geographically is a solid strategy. You can start out small by working your way up in one single city. As soon as you've grown and proven to be successful within one market you can take what you've learned and move to the next. Building out your supply city by city will give you the opportunity to dominate niche markets before you set your sights on larger goals.*

Phase 1 Supply User Persona

This is the ideal supply user you will target both before and after launch. Early suppliers often require more hands-on support as the platform evolves, and this persona represents someone who is patient with bugs, willing to adapt to new processes, and open to providing feedback. They understand the value of being an early adopter and are motivated by the opportunity to grow with the marketplace. By focusing on this type of supplier first, you build strong relationships, gather valuable insights, and create success stories that help attract providers.

Name (ie: Joan Smith):

Are they an individual or business?

Current profession:

Annual earnings:

Industry they are in:

Current level of education:

Age and generation:

Gender:

Describe their lifestyle:

What interests do they have?

Top brands they follow:

Social channels they are active on:

Current problems they have?

How do you solve those problems?

What do they value most?

What features will appeal to them?

Craft a headline that will appeal to your ideal supply user (ie: Earn money for items sitting in your garage):

User Acquisition Strategy

Where are you likely to find/reach this audience? Consider their age, gender, and interests.

- TikTok
- Email outreach
- Door-to-door
- Cold calling
- Meetups/events
- Personal network
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Local groups/clubs
- Tradeshow
- Twitter
- Word-of-mouth
- Reddit
- Discord
- Radio
- Youtube
- Online blog or magazine
- Influencer marketing
- Online search
- Partnerships

Top 3 channels to prioritize

What incentives can help drive conversion?

Key messaging:

What do they need to be educated on most?

Goal acquisition cost:

Monthly marketing budget:

User Journey Thought Map

