AVIAN

Ask Six People kit

Six templates from *Ask Six People: rapid testing for non-researchers*. Tori Sanderson, Avian. DrupalSouth 2026.

What's the smallest useful piece of research we could do before we commit?

What's inside

01 Research Decision Canvas
A one-page plan that starts with the decision your research will change.

02 DO / KNOW / NOT KNOW screener
Who to recruit: what they must do, what they must know, and what they shouldn't know already.

03 Moderator cheat sheet
Keep it beside you in the session: three rules, what to watch for, and what to say instead.

04 Observation board
Share it with observers. One note per sticky: what we saw, and what we think it means.

05 Decision brief
After the last session: evidence, opportunity, proposal, and the small decision you need.

06 Bad Research Bingo
For the next meeting where someone says users will find it intuitive.

Using these pages

Print at A4, or A3 for a wall. Put real sticky notes in the boxes.

avian.au/a6pk

01 Research Decision Canvas

1

What decision will we make differently because of what we learn?

2

The uncertainty

What don't we know yet that matters?

3

Users and their tasks

Who, and what are they trying to get done?

4

Method

How will we watch them try it?

5

What counts as evidence

What would we need to see to change our minds?

6

What we're not testing

Write it down so nobody assumes it's covered.

02 DO / KNOW / NOT KNOW screener

DO

What must they do?

e.g. Prepares meat export paperwork

KNOW

What must they know?

e.g. How their export process works

NOT KNOW

What should they not know already?

e.g. Where our guidance sits on the site

Where to find them

Opt-in customer networks **Service channels**

Industry associations **then screen them**

You don’t have to start with a recruitment agency. Specialist users still take time to find, and appropriate incentives can matter.

Screening questions

A few questions that check DO, KNOW and NOT KNOW before you book anyone.

03 Moderator cheat sheet

Three rules

1. **Don’t lead.**
2. **Don’t rescue.**
3. **Don’t mistake what someone says for what they did.**

Watch for

Where they go first
Where they hesitate
When they backtrack

Record the outcome

Did they succeed? Ask how easy it felt too, but that’s not the same thing.

Say this

“What did you expect to happen?”
“What are you thinking now?”
“What would you normally do if I wasn’t here?”

Not this

“Yes, that’s the one.”
“Have you tried the menu at the top?”
“Keep going, you’re nearly there.”

A 45-minute session

Your guide: the scenario, what you’re watching for, and a few neutral prompts.



04 Observation board

What we saw

What they did and said.

e.g. The participant missed the arrow

What we think it means

Our interpretations. Check them in the next session.

e.g. Our navigation might be hard to recognise

For the debrief

Context, fixes and ticket ideas.

e.g. That button is there because of a 2017 migration

For observers

One note per sticky.
Blue: what they did or said.
Pink: what you think it means.
Yellow: anything for the debrief.
We're testing the design, not the participant or the moderator.

Five-minute debrief

After each session.

What stood out?

What repeated?

What do we want to check next?

After the last session

Group the notes by user need, not by page.

Shared user need

A hypothesis worth testing

05 Decision brief

01

Evidence

What did people do, across the sessions and tasks we tested? Observations, not opinions.

02

Opportunity

Where else is this pattern reused? How far could the problem reach?

03

Proposal

What would we build instead of one-off fixes?

04

Decision

What small, testable step are we asking someone to approve? When will we decide whether to scale it?

06 Bad Research Bingo

Five in a row? Time to ask six people.

“The executive really likes this design.”	Recruited whoever had a free calendar	Six findings, six Jira tickets	“Was that easy?” counted as success	Vanity research
Helped the participant	“Can we just zhuzh it?”	Twenty interview questions	An observer asked “Should we help?”	The report arrived three weeks later
Made the arrows bigger	Research theatre	**Asked six people**	Moderated and took notes	“This should go on the homepage.”
Bought the platform first	Ticket opened mid-session	“Users will find it intuitive.”	A findings list, but no decision	The great button-colour debate
“It’s there because of the 2017 migration.”	No decision waiting on the answer	Took what they said over what they did	Blamed the participant	“We don’t have time for testing.”