

Absolutely. Lesson 6 is a very important turning point because it teaches students **not to spend months building something nobody wants**.

The NorthStar Business Expansion System specifically says to **rapidly test problem-solution hypotheses**, focus on “**proof of desire**” before “**proof of concept**,” start small through the **Niche Domination Principle**, and use feedback loops to refine the direction. The Knowledge Base also reinforces community engagement, user-centric design, rapid iteration, flexibility and focusing on a niche before expanding.

Lesson 6 — Validate Your Affiliate Marketing Idea

Lesson objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand what validation means.
 - Understand the difference between an assumption and evidence.
 - Test whether people actually care about their niche and content.
 - Look for **proof of desire** before investing lots of time.
 - Use conversations, questions and content engagement as feedback.
 - Test affiliate product ideas without needing a large audience.
 - Recognise signs that an idea needs adjusting.
 - Create a simple validation experiment.
 - Decide what to continue, change or stop.
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1. Welcome to Lesson 6

You've now done a lot of the groundwork.

You have:

Lesson 1:

👉 Learned how affiliate marketing works.

Lesson 2:

👉 Chosen a niche and audience.

Lesson 3:

👉 Identified potential affiliate products.

Lesson 4:

👉 Started thinking about where your audience is.

Lesson 5:

👉 Created content designed to attract and help them.

Now we need to pause.

Before you spend weeks creating:

- A website
- 100 pieces of content
- An email funnel
- A logo
- A course
- Social media accounts
- Paid advertising

we need to ask:

Does anybody actually want what I'm creating?

That's what validation is about.

2. What Does “Validation” Mean?

Validation means **testing your assumptions against real-world evidence.**

You might believe:

“People in my niche want this information.”

Validation asks:

“What evidence can I find that they actually want it?”

You might believe:

“People will be interested in this product.”

Validation asks:

“Are people asking questions, engaging with content, clicking, researching or otherwise showing interest?”

The goal isn't to predict the future perfectly.

The goal is to **reduce guesswork**.

3. Don't Fall in Love With Your Idea

This is a valuable mindset for beginners.

You might become excited about:

“My amazing affiliate business.”

That's great.

But excitement isn't evidence.

You might think:

“Everyone will want this.”

Maybe.

Maybe not.

A smart entrepreneur doesn't say:

“I know this will work.”

They say:

“Let's test it.”

That's the NorthStar approach: rapidly test problem-solution hypotheses rather than assuming they're correct.

4. Proof of Desire Before Proof of Concept

This is one of the most important principles in the NorthStar system.

Proof of desire comes before proof of concept.

What does that mean?

Proof of desire

People demonstrate that they **want or care about the solution**.

Proof of concept

You've built something that technically works.

The mistake many beginners make is:

Build first → hope people want it later.

NorthStar encourages:

Test desire first → then build further.

For affiliate marketing, this is particularly useful because you don't necessarily need to build a product at all.

You can test whether people are interested in:

- A topic
- A problem
- A type of solution
- A product category
- A recommendation
- A piece of content

before investing heavily.

5. What Counts as Evidence?

Students often ask:

“What exactly am I looking for?”

Evidence can include:

Questions

People ask you:

“Which one would you recommend?”

Comments

People discuss the problem you've identified.

Engagement

People consistently respond to certain topics.

Searches

People are actively looking for answers to the problem.

Clicks

People want to explore a relevant resource.

Conversations

People tell you they have the problem.

Sign-ups

People are willing to give you permission to contact them for more information.

Purchases

The strongest form of commercial validation is when someone actually takes the qualifying action required to generate a commission.

But remember:

One piece of evidence doesn't prove an entire business model.

You're looking for patterns.

6. Attention Isn't the Same as Desire

This is important.

Imagine a post receives:

10,000 views.

That sounds impressive.

But perhaps nobody:

- Asked questions
- Clicked
- Saved it
- Shared it
- Followed you
- Requested more information

Now imagine another post receives:

500 views

but:

- 20 people comment
- 10 people ask questions
- 15 people share it
- 25 people click your resource

Which one might be more useful for your business?

Potentially the second.

Why?

Because you're seeing **relevant engagement**.

7. The Validation Ladder

Give students this simple framework.

Level 1 — Awareness

People see your content.

↓

Level 2 — Engagement

People interact with it.

↓

Level 3 — Interest

People ask questions or want more information.

↓

Level 4 — Intent

People click, sign up, compare or investigate.

↓

Level 5 — Action

People purchase or complete the qualifying action.

The further people move down the ladder, the stronger the evidence of commercial interest can become.

8. Start Small

The NorthStar system calls this the:

Niche Domination Principle — start small, win big.

Don't try to validate:

“Affiliate marketing for everyone.”

That's far too broad.

Instead test:

“Beginner home fitness equipment for busy women over 40.”

Now your questions become specific.

You can ask:

- Are these people interested in this problem?
- What do they struggle with?
- What products are they researching?
- What content do they engage with?
- What recommendations do they want?

Specificity makes validation easier.

9. Test the Problem Before the Product

This is important.

Students may be tempted to ask:

“Will people buy this product?”

But first ask:

“Do people actually care about the problem?”

For example:

Assumption

“Busy people want home fitness equipment.”

Test:

“What makes it difficult for you to exercise at home?”

If people repeatedly say:

“I don't know what equipment I need.”

Now you've discovered something useful.

You have evidence of a problem.

10. Then Test the Solution

Once you've identified a problem, test potential solutions.

For example:

Problem

“I don't know what home fitness equipment I need.”

Potential solutions:

- Beginner equipment guide
- Equipment checklist
- Product comparison
- Starter kit
- Fitness app
- Workout programme

Now create content around these solutions and observe what people respond to.

11. The “Ask Before You Assume” Principle

One of the easiest ways to validate an idea is simply to ask people.

For example:

“What's the hardest part about getting started with home fitness?”

Or:

“If you're starting a home gym, what's the one thing you're most confused about?”

Or:

“What do you wish someone had explained before you bought your first piece of fitness equipment?”

These questions can produce extremely valuable information.

12. Where Can You Ask?

You can gather feedback through places where your audience already exists.

For example:

- Comments
- Direct conversations
- Email replies
- Online communities
- Social media questions
- Surveys
- Your own audience
- Conversations with people in your target market

The principle is:

Go to the people you're trying to help.

Don't build your strategy entirely from assumptions.

The Knowledge Base specifically highlights **community engagement and personalised feedback loops** as important for understanding users and improving what you offer.

13. Listen for the Language People Use

This is a powerful validation technique.

Suppose you ask:

“What is your biggest challenge with starting a home business?”

Someone says:

“I don't know where to start and everything feels overwhelming.”

That's valuable.

Don't rewrite it immediately into corporate marketing language.

The audience has just given you:

“I don't know where to start and everything feels overwhelming.”

That could become a content title:

“Starting an Online Business Feels Overwhelming? Here's Where to Begin.”

Your audience's own language can make your content more relevant.

14. Validation Through Content

You don't need a sophisticated research system.

Your content can become your experiment.

Suppose you have three possible topics:

Topic A

Beginner equipment.

Topic B

Workout motivation.

Topic C

Nutrition.

Create content around all three.

Then observe.

Perhaps you discover:

Equipment: high engagement.

Motivation: moderate engagement.

Nutrition: very low engagement.

That's information.

You may decide to create more equipment content.

You're letting the audience help shape your direction.

15. The Content Experiment

Give students this framework:

Hypothesis

"I believe my audience wants help with _____."

Test

Create one useful piece of content about it.

Measure

Look at:

- Views
- Engagement
- Comments
- Questions
- Clicks
- Sign-ups
- Other meaningful responses

Learn

What did the response tell you?

Adjust

Create the next experiment based on what you learned.

This is the **iterative feedback loop** described in NorthStar.

16. Don't Judge an Idea From One Post

Another common beginner mistake is:

“I posted one video and nobody watched it. My niche doesn't work.”

Not necessarily.

There are many possible reasons:

- The topic wasn't strong.
- The title wasn't clear.
- The hook wasn't strong.
- The content didn't reach the right people.
- The platform didn't distribute it.
- The format wasn't appropriate.
- The audience wasn't established yet.

One experiment isn't enough to make a major conclusion.

Think in **patterns**, not isolated events.

17. Run Small Experiments

Instead of saying:

“I'm going to build this business.”

Say:

“I'm going to run a 7-day experiment.”

That's psychologically easier.

You aren't committing to years.

You're learning.

18. The 7-Day Validation Experiment

Here's a simple challenge.

Day 1 — Identify the assumption

Write:

“I believe my audience wants help with _____.”

Day 2 — Ask the audience

Ask a question related to that problem.

Example:

“What's the hardest part about choosing your first home fitness equipment?”

Day 3 — Research

Look at:

- Questions
- Comments
- Search results
- Discussions
- Existing content

Look for repeated problems.

Day 4 — Create content

Create one useful piece addressing the problem.

Day 5 — Observe

Look at:

- Comments
 - Questions
 - Engagement
 - Clicks
-

Day 6 — Create a second piece

Take what you've learned and create another piece.

Day 7 — Review

Ask:

“What evidence did I find?”

19. Your Validation Scorecard

Students can use this simple worksheet.

Signal	Evidence Strength
People ask questions	Low / Medium / High
People engage with content	Low / Medium / High
People request more information	Low / Medium / High
People click resources	Low / Medium / High
People sign up	Low / Medium / High
People take commercial action	Low / Medium / High

The purpose isn't to create a scientific score.

It's to stop students saying:

“I think people want it.”

and encourage:

“Here's what I've observed.”

20. What If Nobody Responds?

This doesn't automatically mean:

“The idea is terrible.”

Instead, investigate.

Ask:

Was I talking to the right people?

Maybe your audience definition is too broad.

Was the problem important enough?

Maybe the problem isn't urgent.

Did I communicate it clearly?

Maybe the content didn't make the value obvious.

Did I test enough?

Maybe one post isn't enough evidence.

Is there a different problem?

Your audience may have a related problem that's more important.

This is where flexibility matters.

The Knowledge Base identifies **rapid iteration and flexibility** as recurring traits of successful businesses.

21. What If People Love the Content but Don't Buy?

This is an important distinction.

You might discover:

People love learning about photography.

But they don't click your camera recommendations.

That doesn't necessarily mean your audience isn't interested in photography.

It might mean:

- They're beginners who aren't ready to buy.
- The product isn't right.
- Your recommendation isn't clear.
- The affiliate offer isn't attractive.
- They need more education first.
- They want a different type of product.

Again:

Don't immediately abandon the entire niche.

Investigate the gap between:

Interest → Intent → Action.

22. What If People Click but Don't Buy?

Now you have another useful signal.

People are interested enough to investigate.

But something may be stopping the purchase.

Possible reasons include:

- Price
- Product fit
- Lack of trust
- Poor product page
- Wrong audience
- Weak offer
- They need more information

You can't always control the final conversion.

But you can learn from the pattern.

23. Validation Isn't About Proving Yourself Right

This is perhaps the most important mindset lesson.

Validation isn't:

“How can I prove my idea is brilliant?”

It's:

“What can reality teach me?”

If the evidence tells you:

“This isn't working.”

That's useful.

If it tells you:

“This part is working, but this part isn't.”

That's even more useful.

You now know where to adjust.

24. The Pivot

Sometimes validation tells you to change direction.

That's called a **pivot**.

You might change:

The audience

From:

“Everyone interested in fitness”

to:

“Busy women over 40.”

The problem

From:

“General fitness”

to:

“Finding simple 15-minute workouts.”

The product category

From:

“All fitness products”

to:

“Beginner home equipment.”

The content strategy

From:

“General fitness tips”

to:

“Simple fitness for beginners.”

A pivot isn't necessarily failure.

It can be progress.

25. Keep Your Validation Lean

Don't spend £1,000 building a website to discover that nobody wants the offer.

Start with:

- A simple social profile
- Useful content
- Conversations
- A basic landing page if needed
- A simple email sign-up
- A small content experiment

The NorthStar system explicitly favours **lean building and MVP thinking**, including prototypes and feedback loops.

For affiliate marketing, this means you can keep the early stage particularly simple.

26. Don't Build Before You Learn

Here's a useful rule for students:

Learn → Test → Improve → Build.

Not:

Build → Build → Build → Hope.

This is especially important because beginners can spend enormous amounts of time on things that don't directly help them learn about their audience.

27. The “Minimum Viable Test”

Introduce this concept.

A Minimum Viable Test is the **smallest experiment you can run to learn something useful.**

Example:

Instead of:

Build a huge website with 100 product reviews.

Try:

Create three useful comparison posts and see whether people engage and click.

Instead of:

Build a complete email course.

Try:

Offer a simple checklist and see whether people want it.

Instead of:

Buy lots of products to review.

Try:

Start by researching and comparing products transparently, while only claiming personal experience where you actually have it.

28. Your Validation Questions

Give students these ten questions:

1. **Who am I testing this with?**
2. **What problem am I testing?**
3. **What solution am I testing?**
4. **What evidence would show genuine interest?**
5. **Where will I find that evidence?**
6. **How long will I run the experiment?**
7. **What will I measure?**

8. What would make me continue?
9. What would make me change direction?
10. What did I learn?

This turns vague hope into a simple experiment.

29. The Affiliate Marketing Validation Map

Students can think of the journey like this:

Niche



Audience



Problem



Content



Engagement



Interest



Product research



Affiliate clicks



Qualifying actions



Learning



Improve



Repeat

This is a business feedback system.

30. Your 3-Question Validation Test

Before moving forward with an affiliate product, ask:

Question 1

Do people have the problem?

Question 2

Do they want a solution?

Question 3

Does this product appear to be a relevant solution?

If the answer is yes to all three, you have something worth testing further.

31. Lesson 6 Practical Exercise

Now let's create your student's first validation experiment.

Step 1 — Write Your Hypothesis

Complete:

I believe that _____ audience has a problem with _____ and wants help with _____.

Example:

“I believe busy women over 40 struggle to exercise consistently and want simple home fitness solutions.”

Step 2 — Identify Your Evidence

What would prove that people care?

Choose at least three:

- Questions
 - Comments
 - Shares
 - Saves
 - Clicks
 - Sign-ups
 - Direct conversations
 - Product research
 - Purchases/qualifying actions
-

Step 3 — Ask Your Audience

Write one question:

“What is your biggest challenge with _____?”

Your question:

32. Step 4 — Create Your Test Content

Complete:

Problem I'm testing:

Content title:

Hook:

What I'll teach:

Relevant solution/product:

Call to action:

33. Step 5 — Record Your Results

After publishing:

Views/reach: _____

Comments: _____

Questions: _____

Shares/saves: _____

Clicks: _____

Sign-ups: _____

Other useful signals: _____

34. Step 6 — What Did You Learn?

Complete:

What seemed to interest people?

What questions did they ask?

What didn't seem to resonate?

What surprised me?

What should I test next?

35. The Continue / Change / Stop Framework

At the end of your experiment, choose one.

CONTINUE

The evidence suggests there is meaningful interest.

Create more content and test further.

CHANGE

There is some interest, but something needs adjusting.

Change:

- Audience
- Problem
- Content
- Product
- Message
- Platform

STOP

There is little evidence of desire after reasonable testing.

Move on to another problem or opportunity.

This isn't failure.

It's **information**.

36. Lesson 6 Quick Check

Question 1

What should come before building something extensively?

- A. Proof of desire
- B. A logo
- C. A large website
- D. Paid advertising

Answer: A

Question 2

What does validation mean?

- A. Proving you're right
- B. Testing assumptions against real-world evidence
- C. Creating a perfect website
- D. Getting thousands of followers

Answer: B

Question 3

Is one unsuccessful post enough to prove an entire niche doesn't work?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Answer: B

Question 4

Which is a useful validation signal?

- A. People asking relevant questions
- B. The colour of your logo
- C. How long your website took to build
- D. How many pages your website has

Answer: A

Question 5

What should you do when evidence suggests your approach isn't working?

- A. Ignore it
- B. Learn from it and adjust
- C. Spend more money immediately
- D. Blame the audience

Answer: B

37. Lesson 6 Key Takeaways

Give students these five points:

1. **Don't assume people want something—test it.**
2. **Look for proof of desire before investing heavily.**
3. **Start small and test one problem at a time.**
4. **Use audience feedback as information, not criticism.**
5. **Continue, change or stop based on what you learn.**

The bigger lesson is:

Your audience can help you build the business by showing you what they actually want.

That's the heart of the NorthStar feedback-loop approach.

38. Lesson 6 Homework

Before moving to Lesson 7, students should:

- Write one **problem-solution hypothesis**.
- Identify their target audience.
- Ask at least **one audience research question**.
- Create and publish **2–3 test pieces of content**.
- Record the response.
- Look for repeated questions or patterns.
- Test at least **one relevant affiliate product/solution**.
- Record any meaningful clicks, interest or other signals.
- Decide whether to **Continue, Change or Stop**.
- Write down their biggest lesson from the experiment.

Their final validation statement:

I believed: _____

I tested: _____

I discovered: _____

The evidence suggests: _____

I will now: Continue / Change / Stop

My next experiment is: _____

The Bridge Into Lesson 7

Your students now have something much more valuable than an idea.

They have **evidence**.

So the journey now looks like:

Lesson 1 — Understand Affiliate Marketing

↓

Lesson 2 — Choose Your Niche & Audience

↓

Lesson 3 — Find Relevant Products

↓

Lesson 4 — Build Your Audience

↓

Lesson 5 — Create Content That Attracts

↓

Lesson 6 — Validate What People Actually Want

And now we can move into the next question:

“I’ve got an audience, content and products. How do I turn the attention I’m getting into affiliate clicks and commissions—without becoming pushy or salesy?”

That makes **Lesson 7 — Turn Content Into Affiliate Sales** the natural next lesson.

In Lesson 7, I'd cover **the customer journey, calls-to-action, affiliate links, product reviews, comparison content, buying-intent content, simple funnels, trust-based selling, disclosure, tracking clicks/conversions, and how to improve conversion without simply posting more content.**

Today 9:27 PM

next lesson please