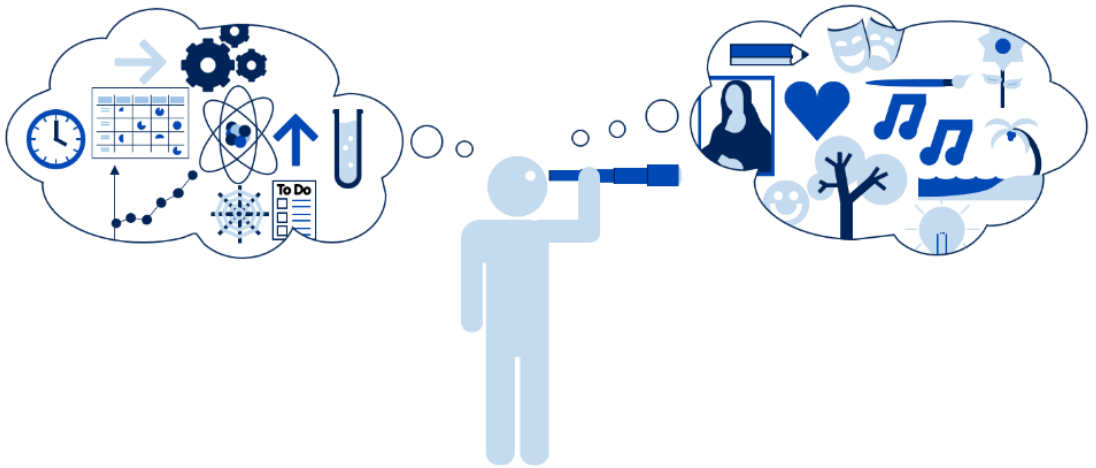


The secrets of **ongoing**

Innovation Success



Nick Skillicorn

CEO & Founder of Improvides

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Summary

This book gives an insight into what is required by entrepreneurs and companies in order to continuously and successfully release innovations which delight their customers.

It is based on the principles of the **3 Dimensions of Innovation**, developed by me, Nick Skillicorn at Improvides in 2013 to determine the capabilities which actually enable ongoing innovation.

While some books on innovation just give case studies of what famous companies have done (such as the famous examples of Apple, Procter & Gamble, Netflix etc), this book will show you what those companies had within them which allowed them to produce these innovations in the first place.

Take your teams' capabilities to consistently produce breakthrough innovations to the next level through our full online training, available at <https://www.udemy.com/3-dimensions-of-innovation/?couponCode=HighFive>

The importance of being able to innovate

The pace of change in the world of business is increasing at a higher rate than ever. Improvements in transportation, communications and technology mean that it is becoming easier for companies of any size to compete on a global scale. Customers are becoming savvier, often comparing prices and deals while they're in front of a product to see if it is giving them the best value (Tradedoubler, 2012). And the continued growth in economic, educational and personal wealth terms of emerging economies is creating both opportunities and competitors to established companies.

The only way for a company to survive in the long run is to continuously innovate. Those which don't, no matter how large or well established they are, will eventually see their market share erode as other companies find ways to offer customers the offerings which they perceive as better value to them. History is littered with examples of once-great companies which were overtaken by more innovative competitors.

Some notable examples of giants who were overtaken by nimbler competitors:

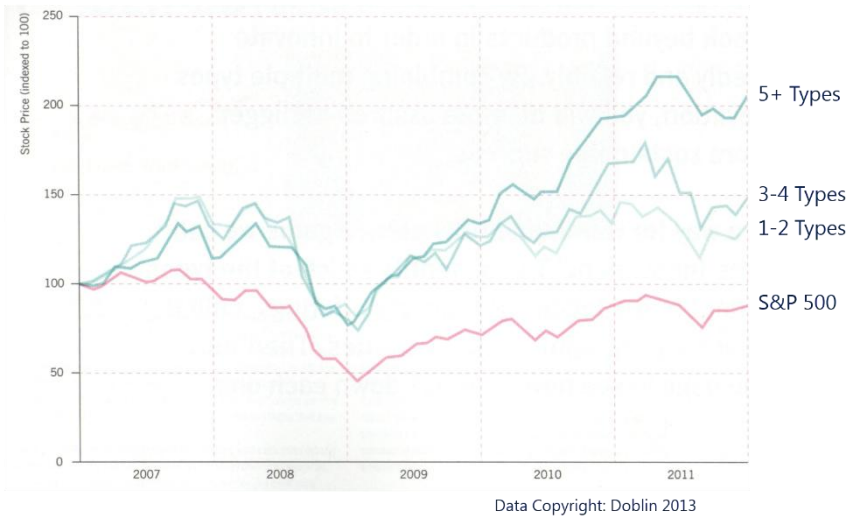
- **Mobile Phones:** Ericsson & Motorola, overtaken by Nokia, Apple and Samsung
- **American Car manufacturing:** GM & Ford, overtaken by Toyota, Volkswagen & Kia
- **Enterprise Software:** Oracle & SAP, being overtaken by Salesforce
- **Retail:** Amazon.com overtaking almost all brick-and-mortar retailers

In fact, out of the Fortune 500 companies in 1999, 40% were no longer there 10 years later (Doblin, 2013). The leaders of the world's largest companies therefore understand how important innovation is. A survey of 1,500 CEOs from top companies even listed creativity and the ability to innovate as the most important capability to navigate the corporate world, more than rigor, management discipline, integrity or even vision (IBM, 2010).

Doblin's research also showed an extremely strong correlation between how diverse a company's innovation investments were

and how they consistently outperformed the rest of the market, as shown by this graph of stock prices compared to the types of innovation done at those companies since the recession:

How stock prices for companies correlated with the variety of innovations they drove internally.



The fundamental reason why being able to deliver innovations is so important is that it enables the company to:

1. **Grow organically:** by developing new offerings which provide value to current and potential new customers
2. **Compete in the future market:** by helping the company adapt to the offerings of competitors, market trends, and customer demands for future offerings.

So no matter what size your company is, and what your role is within that company, it is more vital than ever to have the capabilities to not only generate new ideas, but actually execute on them as real innovations.

This book will help you achieve that.

It contains an insight into the more detailed online training which Improvides has developed on the **3 Dimensions of Innovation**, and which is available at <https://www.udemy.com/3-dimensions-of-innovation/?couponCode=HighFive>

I know you'll find the book immensely valuable, and by the end you'll be thinking of how you can apply the lessons to your own business.

About Nick Skillicorn



I want to start by thanking you for getting this book. It shows we have a common interest in improving your capability to generate and execute ideas.

I started Improvides in 2013 in London after I had worked in Management Consulting for over 7 years, helping some of the world's biggest companies deliver hugely innovative programmes worth over \$10 billion. I always knew that I had the entrepreneurial spirit, so I wanted to combine my skills in improving business performance with my unique insight into how creativity works. You see, in addition to consulting, I also spent 4 years training people in theatre improvisation which is all about spontaneous idea generation.

So I decided to become an entrepreneur myself and started Improvides. What became quickly apparent was that a lot of the advice out there around innovation was of pretty low quality. A lot of these so called experts were telling companies that they could make them more innovative, whereas what they were

doing was actually just reciting examples of innovations from other companies, or holding a workshop on brainstorming techniques, or worse still, using existing management consulting work and claiming it was a fit for innovation. The result of this was that companies were being told about *innovation* as a concept without ever getting concrete advice on what they could do to improve their success rate.

So I set out to determine what was actually going to bring about the desired benefits within companies like yours. What were the required capabilities? And after ***thousands of hours*** of research and practical applications, I discovered the distinct sets of capabilities which are required to generate, execute and manage innovations in every type of company.

Those are the capabilities listed in this book, and as you assess where your company is against them, they will definitely help you succeed in your innovation efforts. Enjoy.



Nick Skillicorn

CEO & Founder – Improvides | www.improvides.com

What is Innovation?

There are a lot of definitions out there for what innovation is, but the one I find works best is very simple:

Innovation** is turning an **idea** into a **solution** that creates **value** to a **customer

Essentially, this is the process of innovating:



There's a couple of nuances that I want you to take in right now though:

- **Idea** into a **Solution**: Having an idea is only the first step. You actually need to execute on the idea in order for it to achieve anything
- **Value** to a **Customer**: This means that the ultimate goal of any innovation effort always needs to focus on improving the customer's experience. And this means that the solution you have produced is addressing an actual problem or challenge which they had, not just one

you imagine they've had. And the way that you provide it to the customer is how the customer can determine if it is valuable to them (which includes everything from quality, price, ease of use, availability etc).

Essentially, you need to provide a solution which your customers perceive as having value to them, **compared to all of the other options** available to them. For example:

1. Apple™ products are valued by their customers due to design and functionality compared to other mobile phones & computers
2. WalMart™ provides value by charging lower prices than competitors
3. Netflix™ video streaming makes it easier to watch TV & Film than getting a physical disk (or a thousand)
4. Intel™ processors provide higher performance than equivalent competitors

So with so many ways to innovate, why do so many companies still fail at their innovation efforts?

Why most companies fail at innovation

Turn on the TV, open a magazine or surf to a website, and you'll soon be bombarded by adverts for innovative new products or innovative new features, all trying to entice you to spend your money. It seems that nowadays people are saying that nearly everything is innovative if it is new. A quick internet search on "innovative products" will return some of these:



It appears that a company can claim that absolutely anything is innovative or an innovation if it is different from what they've previously produced, or just "better" in some way. According to that logic, the way to innovate is therefore to just generate lots of new products or offerings, right?

Wrong. In reality the vast majority of new products released are complete failures. In fact, **96%** of new offerings released by over 2,000 of the world's top companies failed to make a return on investment (Doblin, 2013). That means that only 1 out of every 25 "innovations" actually made money for their companies.

How long could you stay in business if only 1 out of 25 of your new offerings made you any money?

You'd be bankrupt within a year if that was the case!

So what causes this high failure rate for companies? After analysing the myriad of factors which contribute to failure in innovation, it became clear that there are 4 fundamental reasons.

They are as follows:

Reason #1: Employees find it difficult to generate ideas

If you ask people in a corporate environment whether or not they are creative, chances are that the majority of them will tell you that they are not. Many people feel uncomfortable if you ask them to step outside of their comfort zone, which is why approximately 74% of people exhibit a fear of public speaking (National Institute of Mental Health, 2013).

The primary reason for this is that during our formative years as children, we are quickly taught through school (and then later in further education and the workplace) that in order to succeed you need to be able to give the **correct answer**. Most schools focus on teaching knowledge and skills, and evaluation of a student's success is based on tests which require correct answers to be produced.

This discourages creative thought processes where there may be a multitude of appropriate answers which could differ from the listed correct one, and as a result, children are taught that while creative thought may be fun or useful in non-serious activities like playing or the Arts (which are becoming less and

less important parts of the curriculum in many schools), what is needed in to succeed life is to be able to execute, rather than generate ideas.

Evidence supporting this comes from studies where students across age ranges were asked whether or not they were creative. On average, between the ages of 8 and 16, self-perception of personal creativity falls from 90% to less than 10% (Lehrer, 2012).

Table 1 Study of perceived creativity amongst school children

"Are you a creative person?"	2nd Grade	5th Grade	High school
Yes	90%	50%	5-10%
No	10%	50%	90-95%

This perception then continues into the workplace, where the perception is that the primary responsibility of an employee is to execute their tasks correctly and as told, especially if this is how performance is reviewed.

Another knock-on effect is that even if people have ideas, often they don't have confidence in them as they think the idea isn't "good enough" or "perfect". Many employees therefore do not feel comfortable bringing up an idea as they fear they will be judged for it not being good enough.

When solutions to new challenges are requested, the result is often ideas which are extremely similar to previous ones and not very original. Ultimately this leads to a lot of companies continuing along the status quo, unaware that there may be better ways to improve their offerings.

It doesn't however have to be like this. People's ability to generate ideas can be improved, no matter who they are. This dimension of innovation is called **People's creativity**, and we show the capabilities which can be improved in an upcoming chapter.

Reason #2: Not knowing what the customer wants

A lot of companies do have a lot of ideas. Even better, they have **the one amazing idea** which is going to revolutionise the world. One which is so innovative and astounding that it is going to make its owners millionaires.

Often companies, including huge corporations, startups or even individual inventors, spend years on perfecting the design before launching it onto the market. A few will succeed.

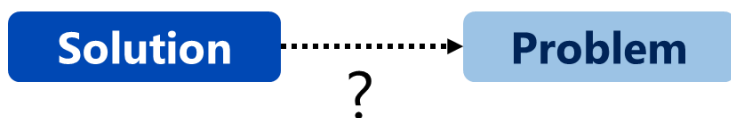
But most will be met be indifference and will fail to make any money.

The fundamental lesson boils down to the differences between having an **idea**, **invention** or **innovation**. Ideas are new concepts that haven't been actualised or made into something tangible. I like to say that ideas are priceless, since they may be turned into something immensely valuable when implemented but are worthless until then.

Inventions are ideas which have actually been made real, and to some degree shown to work as intended. We've all seen

inventions which aren't perfected yet. One of the best examples is a parachute designed by Franz Reichelt, who demonstrated it by jumping off the Eiffel Tower in 1912. *(Let's say he didn't survive to improve on the fact it didn't work...)*

The difference between inventions and innovations are that innovations directly address the challenges which a customer or user would have in a valuable way. They are solutions to a problem. Inventions are sometimes new things without a market which sees the value in them. In essence, they are a solution which are looking for a problem.



One of the issues is that the inventors of these "bad" inventions often either don't realise there is not a market for their product, overestimate the size of the market, the resources required to address the market's needs or competition which they can't overcome. However, one of the most dangerous reasons these entrepreneurs often continue on a path when they are getting no traction is they are blinded by the value they place on 'their own' product which nobody else does. Because they think it was a good idea, they expect other people to see it in the same way.

Companies often also confuse the value which their offering provides to **the company** rather than the value to **the customer**. A company may be developing a product for reasons which are internally important, such as to enter a new market, appeal to a new demographic, or drive internal efficiencies. Here is an important point I want you to remember:

Customers do not care about the value an offering provides to the company producing it. Customers care about whether an offering solves one of their challenges or provides them a better experience. That is it!

The way to address this situation is to investigate what is important to the customer before designing a solution. And the best way to do this is to find out what is **implicitly** happening, in how the customer uses your current products, those of competitors, or even if there is a challenge which nobody had thought about yet.

The **3 Dimensions of Innovation** training gives you and your team the skills to do that, reducing the risk of your offerings not being valued by your customers.

Reason #3: Project teams fail to execute on the innovation projects

As I previously noted, 96% of all innovation projects fail. This is an astonishingly high rate. The reasons for failure are also complex and varied. Some of the major contributors to failure include:

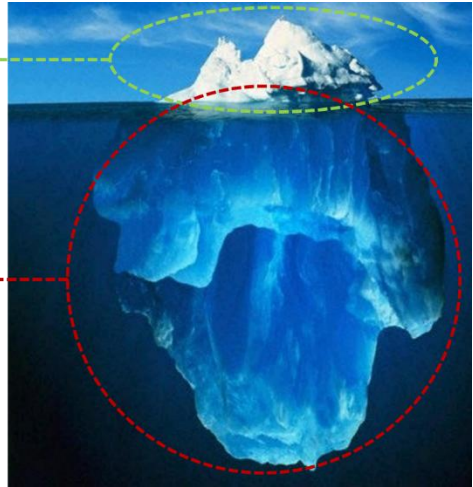
1. Lack of clear **goals** for the project
2. Lack of clarity about how the innovation contributes to the company **strategy**
3. Poor project management skills to **manage progress** and potentially kill underperforming projects
4. Trying to use **standard project management methodologies** which are inappropriate for innovation programmes
5. Lack of **resources** and / or **time**
6. Lack of diversity in the **complementary skills** of the innovation team members
7. Too much focus on **product updates**
8. Many others, discussed in detail in the **3 Dimensions of Innovation** training series

But the primary reason for teams failing in their innovation efforts is not one of generating ideas, but of **executing** those ideas.

Idea
Visible at start

Execution

- Invisible at start
- Effort required
- Experimenting and refining idea



Thomas Edison once noted that ***success is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration***. And that man knew a thing or two about what it takes to get teams to produce innovations continuously. Far from being the lone genius which everyone remembers, he was in fact a pioneer in bringing together diverse sets of people from different backgrounds and who had complementary skills at his Menlo Park research laboratory. Everyone remembers him experimenting relentlessly to perfect the lightbulb. What not many people know is that his team also developed the storage battery, and that they experimented on **50,000 designs**, each numbered and catalogued (Michael J. Gelb, 2007).

Most innovation project teams may spend months or even years working on a project without knowing if what they are producing is actually going to be of value to their customer.

Other times, ideas which have the potential to become disruptive and market-changing innovations are dismissed at too-early a stage before they have had the chance to be refined or tested.

There is also no single “best practice” system to manage innovation projects which will work at every company, since every company and the teams which make it up are unique. Therefore, rather than just copy a methodology which has worked at another company, it’s more important to understand what reasons made it successful and apply those lessons to your unique circumstances.

The capabilities which enable the right teams to effectively execute innovation projects are covered in the dimension called **Teamwork, Techniques and Tools**, and we show the capabilities which can be improved in an upcoming chapter.

Reason #4: The company culture discourages innovative behaviour

If you ask any company leader whether or not they believe that being innovative is a value of the company, the vast majority of them would answer “Yes”. What many of them do not realise is that a lot of standard management activities actually prevent innovative behaviour taking place.

As previously noted, if employees feel that their performance is measured on them completing the work they have been assigned, then their focus will be on productivity rather than improving the company’s offerings.

Additionally, companies with strict management hierarchies also introduce multiple levels at which ideas or potential innovation projects can be shut down. Organisational structures which separate teams into various divisions, especially if they are physically separated, are also decreasing the company’s ability to share ideas, knowledge of what is valuable to the customer, or insights and contexts on what is happening in the market and what could be improved.

Many company leaders and managers have been trained to think of innovation as an extremely risky process, where the outcomes are unknown and the chance of failure is very high. Business schools especially teach people how to reduce risk, improve management structure and how to reduce under-performance. As this style of management takes hold in a company as it matures, it often leads to companies focusing more inwardly on what needs to change, rather than outwardly into how their offerings fit into the market.

Table 2 Motivating forces of innovation in entrepreneurial and mature companies

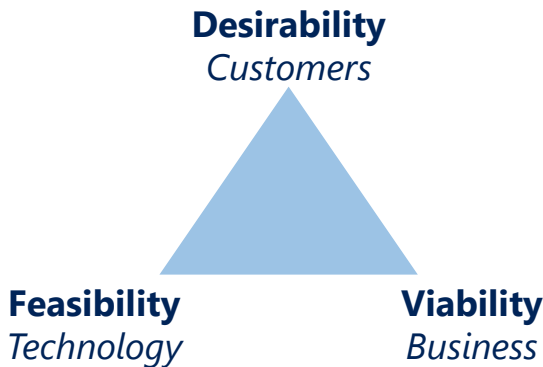
	Entrepreneurial companies	"Mature" companies
Major decision maker	Owner, Founder	Executive management team
Reports to	Themselves	Shareholders & Board of Directors
Primary driving force	Growing the company	Profitability
Preferred method of change	Improving the offerings	Improving efficiency
Timeline to measure success of changes	Medium / Long term (5 years +)	Short term (1 – 3 years)
Desire to spend available capital on innovation	High	Low

Now, that's not to say that mature companies do not invest in innovation. However, what they do invest in is likely to be what they view as less risky. This is why such a large proportion of potentially good ideas are dismissed by managers, who instead focus investments in incremental changes to the current offerings rather than innovations which are less predictable but could really add value to customers.

It doesn't need to be this way. In the dimension of **Organisational Support**, I list out all of the capabilities which the people leading a company can enhance to not only enable more ideas and innovations within their firm, but for these to be the ones which are most likely to bring success to the company.

Criteria for successful innovations

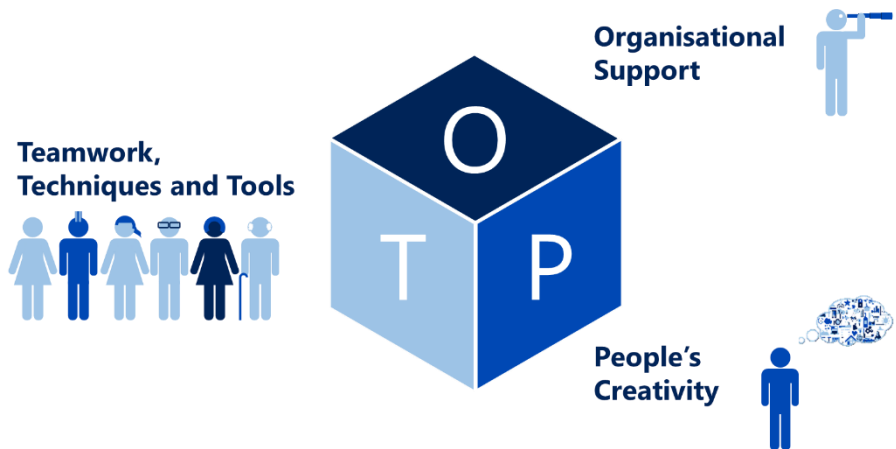
Ultimately, for an innovation to be successful, it needs to meet three criteria.



- **Desirability** is whether or not your customers perceive the value in it
- **Viability** is whether it meets company aims, which should include contributions toward profit, values and strategy
- **Feasibility** is whether or not it is possible to produce the offering with current technology / resources, or what capabilities need to be developed to make it viable

The 3 Dimensions of Innovation

In order to consistently develop successful innovations on an ongoing basis, a company needs to have capabilities across 3 Dimensions, associated with the people in the company and what they are responsible for:



1. **People's Creativity:** The capabilities which allow individuals to generate a large number of relevant, original and high quality ideas
2. **Teamwork, Techniques and Tools:** The capabilities which teams need to evaluate, refine, experiment on and execute those ideas

3. **Organisational Support:** How and organisation leads, enables and manages innovation

Companies which have strength in the capabilities within these dimensions will be able to produce innovations on an ongoing basis, with a lower level of risk and offerings focussed on what is going to make the biggest difference to the customer.

So what are the capabilities within each of the Dimensions?

Note: *The online training on the 3 Dimensions of Innovation goes into significantly more detail into each of the capabilities, and provides you information of how you can improve each of them within yourself and your team.*

Get an instant discount on the training for all your team members using the link <https://www.udemy.com/3-dimensions-of-innovation/?couponCode=HighFive>

People's Creativity

Contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as right-brained “creative” people and left brained “analytical” people (Skillicorn, Debunking the left-brain right-brain myth, 2013). Everyone uses all of their brain, and has the capability to improve their creativity, no matter what their age or background is. By developing the following capabilities, everyone in your organisation can improve their creativity.

Capabilities

- 1. Know your Brain:** Using the latest research in neuroscience, it is clear that the brain generates ideas in two ways: Convergent thinking and divergent thinking. Understanding what triggers these states enables people to either generate new ideas or refine existing ones (Walsh, 2011).
- 2. Work Process:** Generating an idea isn't the end of the process. It takes time for a person to use their creativity to refine it. Most great artists had a work process which enabled them to produce great work (Belsky, 2010).
- 3. Distractions, Interruptions and Flow:** In today's *always-on* world, distractions surround us. Interruptions limit the brain's ability to generate ideas (Glei, 2013). By managing distractions, you can make ideas flow.

4. **Framing the Challenge (Limitations):** *Blue sky thinking* where every idea is a good idea actually harms creativity. The ideas which will have the most impact actually come when people understand the limitations within which the idea has to fit.
5. **Variety & New Experiences:** This not only gives the mind more content on which to develop ideas, but it also strengthens the brain's ability to form new associations between disparate information (which creates ideas)
6. **Content & Knowledge:** All ideas are built on associations between memories, context and knowledge. Having a larger foundation of varied content enables you to generate more unique and original ideas (Walsh, 2011).
7. **"Yes-And" Collaboration:** A unique way for two or more people to build on each other's ideas, enabling them both to generate better ideas, faster.
8. **Improvisation:** Training in improvisation can make you able to generate ideas on any subject spontaneously, relying less on memories and better able to form associations between disparate concepts. It is also the ultimate mental fitness training, as it can help you control the part of the brain which prevents ideas becoming visible (Limb, 2008).
9. **Speed:** The average number of ideas most people can come up with is approximately 4 per minute (Michael J. Gelb, 2007). With the right training, this can be raised more than 5x to over 20 per minute.

- 10. Breadth & Originality:** In order for ideas to be useful, they also need to display variety between each other and originality from what others produce. 100 ideas are not that useful if they are all just 100 different shades of red.
- 11. Confidence:** Ideas will never achieve anything if they are never revealed to the world. No matter if you're an extrovert or introvert, it is possible to build your confidence so that it is easy for you to share ideas. This is especially effective if combined with group trust (Skillicorn, Top 13 Reasons to try business improvisation, 2013).
- 12. Breaking through barriers:** Even the greatest artists sometimes get stuck. It is important to know what to do in these situations in order to get back on track as soon as possible.
- 13. Persistence and Dedication:** Nobody becomes a master of generating and refining ideas at their first attempt. The same happens with teams and companies. The more you work through tough situations and experiment, the easier it becomes to generate innovations later on (Satell, 2013).

Teamwork, Techniques and Tools

In order to execute on your ideas, you need the right team in place. In addition to that, those team members need the following capabilities to make sure your ideas actually make it to the market and delight customers.

Capabilities

- 1. Methodology:** Standard programme management lifecycles can actually harm a team's ability to execute innovations. But an Innovation Lifecycle methodology will guide your team members through the process of developing an innovation, while also reporting progress to leadership (Skillicorn, The Innovation Lifecycle, 2013).
- 2. Focus on Problem and solution:** Every action your team takes should consider whether it is actually addressing the challenge for the customer and enhancing the solution from their perspective.
- 3. Experimentation & Prototyping:** Fail early. Fail cheaply, Fail often. Experimentation on your offering should begin early to help rapidly refine it, by finding data and reasons for what actually improves the solution (Gregersen, 2011).
- 4. Feedback incorporation:** Asking customers if they "like" or are "satisfied" with the solution is getting feedback far too late. Getting feedback from trusted sources before

the product is launched provides you insights into what the customer finds valuable and avoids wasted effort.

- 5. Diversity in Team:** The team you put together need to complement each other's skills. This means not only having a mix of dreamers & doers, but different backgrounds, and mixing teams between projects to keep ideas flowing (Uzzi, 2005).
- 6. Evaluation:** Not all ideas are going to be good, but even the good ones need to be prioritised to make sure resources and time are being used most effectively. This is why determining the evaluation criteria for what innovation success looks like at the beginning is vital.
- 7. Work Environment:** The location and design of the work environment can have huge effects on how innovative the people working there can be. Everything from how distracting it is (Konnikova, 2014) to how it affects the brain's ability to generate ideas (MEYERS-LEVY, 2007) needs to be considered.
- 8. Resources:** Do your team members have the equipment, technology, facilities, budget and corporate support they need to develop, design, experiment and refine the innovations?
- 9. Tools:** In addition to the resources above, do the team members also have the tools and skills to make sure they are progressing, such as knowledge on how to collect the right information or templates to plan ahead.
- 10. Time available:** Not all innovations start as corporate strategies or come from ideation sessions. Some

companies enable their staff to use some work time to develop ideas they think would be useful to the company, like 3M allowing staff to spend 15% of their worktime on their own ideas.

11. Cross-Pollination: Often, solutions to difficult challenges come from unexpected sources, such as someone from outside the team providing insight into how an equivalent challenge was solved by another team, company or industry. Cross-pollinating ideas between teams, either through insight days or swapping team members can bring valuable new perspectives.

12. Brainstorming Effectively: Traditional brainstorming sessions are actually terrible at producing actionable ideas (Skillicorn, You're doing brainstorming all wrong, 2013). A lot of time is used that often doesn't deliver anything for the company. But when run effectively, these ideation sessions can produce huge numbers or refined ideas which actually address the challenge and meet the evaluation criteria.

13. Message and buy-in: Innovations will never get off the ground if they aren't supported by a relevant leader in the organisation. Getting the message of what the project aims to achieve right will facilitate getting buy-in for it right at the beginning stages.

Organisational Support

Companies which succeed at innovation in the long run know how to lead, manage and budget for a variety of innovations, and create a culture which enables innovative behaviour as a value.

Capabilities

- 1. Vision & Strategy:** All innovation efforts need to align with the corporate strategy. This should be one of the ways to evaluate and prioritise the portfolio of projects.
- 2. Ten Types of Innovation:** In addition to Product improvements, there are a total of 10 Types of Innovation which companies can use to find gaps in the market and enhance their offering (Doblin, 2013).
- 3. Leadership & Sponsorship:** The people leading the company need to embody and demonstrate the values of innovation. This will give the rest of the company the confidence to put their maximum effort into it.
- 4. Developing a culture of innovation:** If employees fear the repercussions of suggesting a bad idea or failing an experiment while developing an innovation, nothing will ever change. A culture where these behaviours is not only tolerated by encouraged will reap huge rewards.
- 5. Reward vs Risk aversion:** Even if not all innovation projects return a profit, it is possible to reduce the risk profile of the innovation portfolio by finding the ideal

mix of short / medium / long term projects and incremental vs disruptive innovations. This will increase the chances of projects producing a reward.

- 6. Measuring and Rewarding Performance:** Companies not only need to measure how their staff are performing on innovation projects in a manner which goes beyond just hours worked and productivity, but how the company is performing in getting innovations which contribute to the bottom line.
- 7. Budget:** There is no such thing as a free lunch. While it may be free to generate ideas, they're worthless if you don't take action and turn them into innovations. This will take time and resources, and so the budget should work with the risk profiling to balance the portfolio of projects.
- 8. Bureaucracy:** Nothing kills momentum like red tape. Innovative organisations have the right balance between being able to measure progress on a project while enabling team members to use sound judgement on the ever-changing designs and experiments to refine the solution.
- 9. Training and New Experiences:** Employees need to be able to adapt and grow in order to have the context, knowledge and skills to develop innovations. Give them regular training in a variety of fields (not just their specialty) and see their performance evolve.
- 10. Company-wide Idea Generation:** There are a multitude of cloud solutions now which allow companies to get thousands of ideas to a challenge from all employees.

But in order for this to be more than a marketing stunt, there needs to be an accountable process in place for how those ideas are evaluated and developed further.

11. Open Innovation: More and more companies are now incorporating other experts into their innovation processes, like as crowdsourcing ideas for new products, getting experts from a variety of fields to develop solutions to difficult challenges, or working with suppliers, customers or research bodies to innovate together.

12. Innovation as a value: Innovation needs to be an intrinsic value of the company. This goes beyond being merely stating it in your mission statement, to considering how it fits into recruitment policies and asking difficult questions like would you let go of high-performing employees if they were actively preventing other innovation efforts?

13. Trends & Industry: A company needs to understand how their offering and list of innovation efforts fit into the wider industry. Keep asking "What if?" and "Why?". What are the trends of what consumers are demanding? What will they be demanding in 10 years? Which tiny startups are addressing the needs of your customers in a different way, and what would happen if they got a \$10 billion investment and suddenly became your biggest competitor?

How you can improve your capabilities

Now that you understand the capabilities required for ongoing Innovation success, I want you to ask yourself two essential questions, personally and from your company's perspective:

- *In which of these capabilities am I not performing at levels which really enhance my innovativeness?*
- *What will happen in the long run if I don't address those capabilities?*

The next step is to actually make the decision to improve your capabilities across the board. Firstly, our online training course on the **3 Dimensions of Innovation** will give you much more detail on specific steps you can take to see an immediate improvement in each of the 3 dimensions and their capabilities.

Buy the course using the link here, which gives you an instant discount, either just for yourself or in bulk for your entire team. It'll be the best investment you make in your team's performance this year: <https://www.udemy.com/3-dimensions-of-innovation/?couponCode=HighFive>

And if after that online training you want some specialist help into getting higher performance out of your team, then Improvides can help you. I provide workshops, speeches, coaching and training, all the way up to consulting engagements on innovation.

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I look forward to hearing about how you've applied these lessons and capabilities to your company, and wish you all the best in your journey. I hope to be there with you, and leave you with this quote to inspire you that no innovation challenge is too great, no matter how impossible it seems:

"We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organise and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win"

John F Kennedy - 05/25/1961

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