Collaborative Innovation Reference Framework

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Reducing Innovation's mysteries

For some firms innovation is incredibly rewarding, for many others it remains at best an unfulfilled promise. Why does innovation present such a stark choice, often fraught with difficulties for many, yet so simple and successful for the few?

Is innovation such a mystery? We believe innovation can be demystified through a careful evaluation of innovation models and frameworks. This evaluation requires taking time to deconstruct the relationship between innovation efforts and corporate functions or capabilities such as corporate strategy, existing skills and knowledge and internal processes. Our goal is to create a common, collaborative innovation framework that any firm can adopt, eliminating some of the mystique that surrounds innovation.

Presented here is a set of innovation models that considers many of the factors necessary for innovation success. We want to encourage debate and constructive criticism for these models so they evolve and consistently improve. As these models become more open, more public and more accessible, we are certain the mystique around innovation will decrease and innovation success will increase for the many, not just the few.

The anticipated end goal is to create a common innovation model or framework that accelerates acceptance, reduces mystery, constant rework and simplifies innovation efforts. Innovation is dynamic. Opening this set of models allows for it to be constantly improved for all to benefit - this is our stated aim in publishing these models.

Recommended Solution

The authors both share a view that innovation should be demystified to realize its full potential. Innovation remains still today a cottage industry, with many competing methods, approaches and models. This makes choosing an approach difficult and dangerous for corporate innovators. Innovation is often untaken without due consideration for the many strategies that need to be considered, the implications based on these choices, and the effect on people and processes it impacts. Carefully considered, these attributes can accelerate innovation. However, few firms start an

innovation process understanding the interrelationships which leads to difficulties and innovation barriers.

The solution we suggest is based on an iterative set of models that allows anyone who approaches an innovation challenge or opportunity to "peel the onion" and understand the important "layers" of an innovation opportunity. Once those layers are exposed and understood, we present an innovation framework that consists of five key factors. In our opinion, a successful innovation effort must consider each of the five factors, which will be described shortly. Finally, we examine a number of innovation "types": Open innovation, Business model innovation, Needs-based innovation, etc in context of the innovation framework. Examining innovation "types" within this framework clarifies the effort required to innovate successfully.

Our Goals

We submit this model as a starting point to deconstruct how innovation works and to encourage a "common" innovation model across all geographies, industries and markets. Developing a common innovation model and approach reduces confusion and simplifies innovation work. We believe we can remove a lot of the mystique around innovation and help accelerate its adoption and implementation by firms everywhere if we can agree on basic models and principles.

Further, we hope to spark a debate about innovation and the mystery that often surrounds it. Does innovation have to be difficult? Are so many different methods, models and approaches necessary?

The Three Models:

The models we propose start from the most abstract viewpoint and quickly dives into specific details. We have developed three key presentations which unveil the approach, and they must be viewed in a specific order.

The first, **Innovation Business Architecture**, starts by "peeling" the innovation onion. We recommend starting at the strategic level, and working down through several other "layers", including people and processes. The goal of this first model is to deconstruct the important drivers and influencers which will direct innovation activities. This deconstruction will suggest an innovation framework.

The second presentation, **Core Innovation Reference Framework**, builds on the first presentation by using the deconstructed model to identify five "areas" of focus for innovation success: Strategic Context; Trajectories, Discovery and Insight; Systematic innovation Process; Go to Market; and Enabling and Scalable Infrastructure. These five "areas" of focus for innovation detail how the firm sets strategy (Strategic Context) for innovation, how it gathers insights and trends (Trajectories), how it prepares products for the market (Go to Market), how it enables and scales innovation activities internally and externally and how it conducts systemic innovation activities consistently.

The third presentation, **Examination of Innovation Types**, examines a range of innovation "types" within the context of the innovation framework defined in the Core Innovation Reference Framework deck. We have broken these up into two decks for absorbing the significant detail provided within each type to 'value' the often subtle differences in applying the different type to your organization. Using the framework we can establish which focus areas are critical for innovation success in the different innovation types. For example, we can see that Needs-based innovation relies on Trajectories, Discovery and Insight for success because of the importance placed on customer needs. Investigating the innovation "types" within the framework provides more detailed and careful examination of the actual work involved when innovating using that "type" or approach.

Benefits and key takeaways:

We believe that creating a common innovation model or framework will have a number of benefits, for innovation practitioners, for companies and for innovators. It can become the common reference point to build from. It can be used repeatedly to refresh and validate changes in thinking.

For a corporate innovator or practitioner, a common innovation model provides a clear starting point for innovation, developed and validated by a number of innovation experts. This common model accelerates acceptance internally and reduces the work necessary to clarify and implement an innovation approach. The model also demonstrates what factors must be considered when innovating, which helps define the investments and constituents involved.

For a company considering an innovation initiative or program, a common innovation model removes uncertainty around innovation, provides more clarity, and helps establish the parameters of the effort. It highlights the areas of the business impacted by an innovation effort, and dives specifically into the needs and

requirements by innovation "type". A common model also eliminates the confusion caused by competing consultants, theories and philosophies.

For innovation consultants, a common innovation model creates more business since clients can articulate their needs more easily through a common innovation model. Reducing confusion and uncertainty more firms will conduct more innovation work more frequently, leading to more business and more innovation. Work moves from process to outcomes, giving better returns.

In effect we believe a common innovation model spawns a virtuous cycle of more innovation in more firms based on this common understanding. What we offer here is not a complete finished picture but an emerging 'common' guide we feel would benefit all involved in innovation success.

Next Steps

We ask that you review and carefully consider the different PowerPoint presentations and think through the innovation approach we've documented. As you consider these models, please recommend updates, edits or additions to the model, with special focus on the Core Innovation Reference Framework and the Examination of Innovation Types. You are encouraged to send your feedback, updates or enhancements to any part of the model to:

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We will publish updates to the model and we encourage active discussion and commentary on the Collaborative Innovation Reference Framework at the dedicated Wiki: http://cirf.pbworks.com

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