

INNOVATION CRAFTING – THE FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS INNOVATION?

CRAFITTI CONSULTING'S
(www.crafitti.com)

Thought Ignition Papers Series (TIPS) is a crystallization of our research, experiments and experiences to communicate those ideas that ignited deeper and fruitful thoughts which led to successful action. These are our vehicles to co-craft innovation with our clients

We define Innovation to be successful creation of needed change through ideas. This broad definition has “creation” as its key activity. When you are innovating the most prevalent form of activity that you will be involved in is “creation”. What will you be *creating*? You will be creating change. What change? The needed change. How will you create the needed change? It will be through ideas. What are ideas? Those thoughts that bring in genesis of change. How will you get those thoughts that brings in the genesis of change? Needed change, actually. What change is needed, when? That is the main question we need to answer.

Second question is, “How will we know which attempts to create the needed change through ideas will succeed?” The short answer is “we don’t know”. A more important answer is “we don’t need to know upfront”. *Our endeavour should be to make the attempt in creating needed change through ideas, successful.* A continuous question to be answered at every point in our innovation journey is, “what should we do now that will make the needed change possible?”.

The problems and challenges of innovation are that we tend to choose only those paths that we believe/perceive and upfront think that we know will be successful. In doing so, we reduce the innovation to a decision-making problem, i.e., of selection of a subset (usually one) of possible paths from a set of available paths. The problem is further exacerbated, as the set of paths that we must select from are usually those that have led to success in the past, based on certain criteria of success that are applied post-facto, i.e., applied after the attempts to create change through ideas yielded some form of change in some dimension. Usually, at the time of realization of change, we tend to forget those different false steps and failures we attempted or tried to create change that were either not needed or would not be valuable to the overall need. Innovation is a decision-making problem, i.e., choice selection, is partly true. The other part that is completely missed out and usually separated out from the decision-makers repertoire and scope of responsibilities – *innovation is choice creation problem as well.*

Of course, you would select those paths to creation of change, the needed change, that are most likely to give you maximum probability of success. The criteria for selecting those paths and ideas, though, require deeper understanding of the existing situation and need for specific change(s) either that **fulfils a need** or gives one an ability to **exploit an opportunity**. *The effort spent to deeply understand either is minimum or totally avoided. Innovation requires deep understanding and therefore comprehensive effort to reach a thorough understanding of the situation, need and opportunity.*

INNOVATION CRAFTING (IC)

Combining the ability to not only **make choices** but also create **new choices** at different points along the journey requires an approach that we call **Innovation Crafting**. Innovation Crafting is a systematic framework for **successfully creating needed change through ideas**.

It provides for methods, tools, principles and techniques for

1. Defining, understanding and surfacing the **needed change** in any scenario, situation, system, process or activity at any level – policy, strategy, operational or tactical
2. Generating goals, success criteria and key problems for generating ideas, i.e., thoughts that can bring in the genesis of needed change (which include solution directions to the problems as well)
3. Assistance in generating ideas, developing them into concepts and themes, and solutions to problems in fulfilling the need, creating the needed change and/or exploiting an opportunity. Typically the ideas will be not regular run of the mill, invariable we have seen original, inventive and unprecedented ideas emerging through these interactions
4. Assistance in explorations, experimentations and development of the solutions keeping the potential constraints and failure modes
5. Assistance in broad basing, socializing or marketing of the solutions

IC Phases - SOUL-ALVIS-CRAFT

As could be gleaned from the above there are three key phases of the IC framework

1. **Phase 1: UNDERSTANDING** In this phase we have four stages which we call See, Observe, Understand and Live (SOUL) – by following these four stages, one can reach metaphorically to the *soul of the system* to surface the needed change in complete, comprehensive and unambiguous (CCU) terms. A set of CCU need/opportunity/problem statements is the key goal and output of this phase.

2. **Phase 2: IDEATION** In this phase focus is on generating ideas to meet the output of phase 1. Here we use an **integrative thinking** that has five dimensions – **Analytical, Logical, Value, Inventive and Systems (ALVIS) Thinking**. Humans have developed analysis and logic through utilization of mental faculties over many eras. It has stood the test of time and especially for last few centuries it has given us deeper understanding of the world around us. The success of analytical and logical thinking however has given relatively less importance to other three dimensions of thinking that humans have developed- these are Value, Inventive and Systems thinking. The ALVIS thinking phase creates stronger solutions which has higher potential, value, inventiveness and utilizes multiple dimensions to explore the problem and generate ideas. The ideas need to be combined and constructed to build concepts, solutions and potential systems as ways to solve problems or meet needs or exploit opportunities keeping the goals in view.

3. **Phase 3: CRAFT** In this phase there are stronger points of failures. As typically the solution creators are not necessarily a good salesmen or marketer of their solutions. This phase requires the solutions to be broad based, marketed and sold to potential users or consumers of the change. It also requires tinkering or adaptation of the solutions to the specific needs of individual users. CRAFT involves – **Communicate, Relate, Allow for experimentation, Follow-up and Turn-Around** stages.

Innovation Co-Crafter – SIMPLETON-SCIENTIST-SAINT

Innovation Crafting requires a person or a team to operate in the above three phases in a unique way. Also, the mindset, skills and tools needed at each phase are different and as such requires a set of activities that are different in each phase.

The three mindsets

1. SIMPLETON in Phase 1: UNDERSTANDING In this phase the operating phrase is “*I don’t know*”. An open mind of a pure and simple novice who is keen to learn without any preconceived notion of the ground truth is the required state of mind. A child like curiosity, innocence and ability to question the basic assumptions and axioms requires an “Alice in the wonderland” mindset.

2. SCIENTIST in Phase 2: IDEATION In this phase the simpleton needs to become a scientist. He/she need to hypothesise, create experiments and explorations, and design usage stories by exploring all 5 dimensions of thinking – the ALVIS thinking thereby combining the analytical with inventive and abstract thinking with value thinking. Its systematic exploration of “whole brain/mind” to generate ideas that can stand the test of time and of course create the needed change in the most robust manner.

3. SAINT in Phase 3: CRAFT In this phase the simpleton who graduated to be Scientist need to transform into a Saint of the system that he/she created. He needs to preach and enable others to adapt-to and adopt the solution that has emerged and yet he/she need to know when to retract his/her own ego of being the creator. This is the phase where the needed change attempt potentially becomes the Innovation – successful creation of change through ideas.

Paths to Innovation – Five Innovation Project Types

In our explorations, experiments and engagements through the Innovation Crafting (IC) framework, we have found five distinct paths and starting points to innovation. Correspondingly, the framework adapts to the 5 paths and 5 different starting points

The five paths and corresponding Innovation Projects are

1. Imagination – The innovation project is called **Imagine the Next**. A uniquely human capability to imagine a reality that doesn’t exist but the capability to reach the reality is manifested. This is a SciFi-IT project (Science Fiction it, Scenario Gaming, and Thought experiments)

2. Transformation – An existing system operates on certain principles and fundamentals, If fundamentals change the system need to be transformed to new forms need to emerge. The **System Change/Transformation projects** are focussed on changing the system in some way and sometimes in a fundamental way. This may also involve using an existing invention as described in a Patent to change the system.

3. Problem Solving – Innovation can happen through identification of problem and of course attempting to solve those problems. We have described five different type of problems, routine, non-routine, inventive, paradoxes and wicked problems. Correspondingly, the IC framework utilises the specific approaches to solve the specific type of problem. Problem solving projects can be quick innovation projects or structured innovation projects.

4. Customer/User Insight – Many times the user/customer invokes solutions by sheer use of a product or service in different ways than what was it originally designed for. Sometimes it may be a unarticulated need that becomes the path to innovation. The IC framework is applied to such **Customer Insight Projects** to fulfil the hidden or unarticulated needs of the user.

This TIP is deliberately written in pure text form and all diagrams and visuals are stripped off so that the reader can read and focus on the words and message. We look forward to working with you. Innovation is hard work! Lets take a DIP !

5. Technology and Business Foresight – The 5th path to innovation of course is the foresight about new technology and how it will impact the existing systems, products or services. The TBF projects requires a wide explorations of technology trends and their change impact assessments.

Learning to Innovate – The Deliberate Innovation Practice (The DIP)

We have seen and now proven that Innovation can be a skill that anyone can learn, Just like any other domain/skill. However, it requires clear articulation of process and a framework. The innovation Crafting Framework fulfils that requirement. Second part of the learning to innovation is to practice to innovate. This requires what we call **Deliberate Innovate Practice (DIP)**. The term deliberate innovation practice appears

to be an oxymoron. However, we have seen the transformation of mere User of Innovation Crafters into practitioners, facilitators and innovation co-crafters.

The DIP is a systematic structure and process for self- and coached practice to learning to innovate – that is to create needed change through ideas, successfully.

The DIP Starts with a 2 days training in a workshop mode that exposes the user to the tools and structure of IC framework including the requirements of being a simpleton, scientist and saint. Also, the techniques of SOUL, ALVIS and CRAFT are exposed in a workshop setting.

On the 3rd day, each small team selects one of the innovation projects types that are based on 5 paths of innovation. The DIP starts with the execution of these projects in time bound manner. The evolution of the user from a random, serendipitous thinking human to an innovation co-crafter is a proven result of combining IC with DIP through SOUL-ALVIS-CRAFT ! **We look forward to taking the DIP along with you on Crafting Innovation Together!**

About the Author



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