Kairos

Managing innovation

Innovation creates new sources of customer satisfaction.

Most of our work is operational. And most operational work involves problem-solving. Operational work – functional, maintenance work – keeps our organization going. At its best, it develops into a cycle of continuous improvement, maintaining and enhancing existing processes and systems.

But some problems can't be solved. And some problems present opportunities to innovate. These problems and challenges require a different kind of thinking. We need to innovate.

Innovation brings its own challenges. It takes us into unknown territory. And it involves risk: there's no guarantee that any new ideas we discover will translate into workable or profitable solutions.

We tend to think about creating new solutions only in two situations. Either we are *forced* to look for something new, or we *choose* to do so. A crisis may precipitate a burst of creativity; but crises are not usually the best time to develop new ideas. The best time to innovate is when we *decide* to leave the cycle of operational work and deliberately enter the innovative cycle.

In this program, we take the journey from operational work into innovation work. We explore, discover, develop and validate new ideas. And, with luck, we bring something back into our operational work that will make a real difference and add real value.

5 core take-aways:

- Analyse problems and understand your preferred problem-solving style
- Identify opportunities to innovate
- Explore all the skills of the innovation cycle
- Map the innovation process
- Develop real solutions from real innovation challenges

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Course Objectives:

At the end of this program, you will be better able to:

- identify your preferred problem-solving style and become a more versatile problem-solver;
- understand and apply four levels of problem ownership;
- use a framework for categorizing, tackling and solving problems that draws on both rational and intuitive skills;
- develop a process for innovative problem-solving;
- generate innovative solutions to problems; and
- develop business cases for innovative ideas.

Beyond these training objectives, we hope to generate some real innovations that you can implement when you return to work.

Who should attend?

Operations staff who have the opportunity to implement new ideas within their area of responsibility.

Training Methodology

This 4-module workshop covers the broad landscape of innovation and offers tools and techniques to navigate it.

All our work is based on real examples derived from participants' own work. We use no case studies: participants themselves will identify problems that might present opportunities to innovate in their own field. We shall work on these problems during the workshop. We explore a range of tools and techniques to develop creativity and generate feasible solutions.

The workshop uses a wide variety of teaching techniques, including lecture, individual and group exercises, questionnaires, games and puzzles.

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Managing innovation: programme outline

MODULE ONE: What it means to innovate

First things first. Why do we need to innovate? And why does innovation require a different kind of thinking from operational thinking?

How do we know that we have a problem? How do we normally go about solving problems? Can our natural problem-solving skills actually *create* problems for us?

A   **The need to innovate**
   i   mindsets and their dangers
   ii   operational thinking and innovative thinking
   iii   when is innovation appropriate?
B   **Defining the word 'problem'**
   i   stuckness and its symptoms
   ii   solutions as ways of becoming unstuck
C   **Welcome to your brain**
   i   understanding how we understand
   ii   intuitive problem-solving and how it works
   iii   rational problem solving and its characteristics
D   **What's your problem-solving style?**
   i   four problem-solving styles
   ii   becoming a more versatile problem-solver

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MODULE TWO: Becoming a more creative problem-solver

In this module, we investigate two methods of categorizing problems and meet four problem types. We explore ways of transforming problems from one type to another, and define what it means to tackle a problem as an innovation challenge. We also develop a powerful model for understanding problem ownership and identify opportunities to innovate in our work.

A **Categorizing problems**
i presented and constructed problems
ii well structured and ill structured problems
iii four types of problem
B **Owning the problem**
i who owns the problem?
ii from blame to commitment: do we want to innovate?
C **Finding opportunities to innovate**
i 'How to': defining an innovation opportunity
ii shifting perspective

MODULE THREE: Finding innovative solutions

Creative thinking isn't unusual or difficult. We simply tend not to do it very often. But innovation depends on our ability to think creatively. In this session, we explore how.

B **The anatomy of creativity**
i some models of creative thinking
ii finding the sources of your creativity
C **Using creative thinking to innovate**
i innovation in three stages
ii idea generation: the heart of creative thinking
iii metaphor, reversal and the intermediate impossible
iv building feasibility into innovative solutions
D **The tools of creativity**
i lateral thinking: metaphor and analogy
ii reversal: assumptions and intermediate impossibles

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MODULE FOUR: Developing and presenting innovative solutions

In any organization, new ideas are born drowning. If you want your new idea to survive, you will need to transform it into a feasible business proposition. In this session, we develop business cases for our ideas and test them out.

A   **Building the business case**
    i   identifying the customer benefit
    ii   the business case checklist
    iii   identifying stakeholders, sponsors and allies
C   **Selling the solution**
    i   making the presentation
    ii   challenging assumptions and objectives
    iii   strengthening the case