



# everyday innovation

bringing meaning and  
purpose to innovation

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The ability to generate and sustain innovation has become an imperative for organizations as markets grow more global, open, and competitive, and customer expectations grow more diverse and demanding. In order for our world and the organizations in it to prosper, it is essential that everyone learn the skills to become active contributors toward innovation.

Organizations must commit to innovation as a key strategy for success and expect and support *everyone* in the organization to be an active contributor toward innovation. Our world demands a new perspective – a new brand – of innovation, one that is broader and more inclusive. Our world demands *Everyday Innovation*. This book provides a glimpse into its power and potential.

We hear a lot of talk about the importance of innovation, but too often people walk away not fully comprehending what it means, or how it relates to them, or how to make it actionable. Everyday Innovation brings meaning and purpose to innovation by specifically defining and branding innovation to your unique needs and goals. Everyday Innovation translates innovation into actionable terms through customizable plans that guide and enable you to meet and exceed your innovation goals. Everyday Innovation helps you view your world and your work through an “innovator’s lens” in order to create the outcomes and future you want.



This book provides an engaging, enlightening, and refreshing understanding of innovation with practical application for everyone. This book also serves as a gateway into the Everyday Innovation community, an international community of people who share a strong need for learning and collaboration, a passion for seeking and making connections, and a compelling desire to contribute towards making a positive impact on our world. Together we help facilitate connections and affinities that bridge the gaps between the seemingly unrelated. In doing so, we can expand the realm of possibility. It is when we share across communities, industries, countries, and cultures that the greatest wonders will occur and contribute toward the advancement of our world.

We've reached a critical crossroads in our collective history. We're worn out and recovering from the frustration, struggle, and loss that arrived in the aftermath of the Great Recession. If we ourselves haven't experienced it, we know peers, friends, or family who have experienced being laid-off, fired, or quitting a job in frustration. Those left behind struggle to take on what seems like an endless amount of additional responsibilities and "firefighting" caused by financial cutbacks.

Many of us have grown so accustomed to focusing on fighting fires that we have come to consider firefighting as the business we're in (and often this firefighting activity receives the most workplace attention, recognition, and reward). Our motivation and ability to generate new ideas and create new and better ways of doing things has all too often been confronted with the response of "just take care of this week's problems."

We have been in survival mode, both as individuals and organizations. But over time, our defensive stance has

*Many of us have grown so accustomed to focusing on fighting fires that we have come to consider firefighting as the business we're in.*

increasingly led to an organizational paralysis where fear reigns supreme, indecision and inaction rule, and "stay under the radar" is the modus operandi. This all-too-prevalent organizational condition encourages an anti-innovation environment reinforcing anti-innovation behavior. It can also lead to atrophy (definition: to waste away, whither, or deteriorate due to disease or lack of use, for example, muscular, intellectual, or innovation atrophy).

Meanwhile, as organizations shift from reactive to protective – and in some cases, paralyzed – the ability to innovate has never been more important. Years ago, Peter Drucker said, "Today's businesses, especially the large ones, simply will not survive in this period of rapid change and innovation unless they acquire entrepreneurial competence."

But it doesn't come down to industry or size; more recently, Scott Anthony said, "In today's world, innovation is not a choice. If you do not innovate, you are sowing the seeds of your own destruction [...] Success requires waking up every day and realizing that today's sources of competitive advantage will not be tomorrow's."

# OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHADOWS OF THE STORM CLOUDS

So as we emerge from the world's recent economic storms and assess the damage, it is critical that we break free from the fear that has driven us to become problem-obsessive firefighters, and acknowledge how our world has changed, understanding that we cannot return to our old ways. We cannot just fix our broken selves; we need a new mindset. We need a new lens through which to view our world and our work. We need to learn how to innovate every day.



The time is now to reframe your focus toward your organization's true purpose, to create the outcomes and future you want. Just take a minute to think about this in relation to your world, your work, and your everyday life; focus on what you want, not what you *don't* want. As Peter Drucker said, "The best way to predict your future is to create it." The time is now to pivot from a fear-driven, defensive position to a purposeful, opportunity-seeking position. This growth position is one that requires everyone within your organization to be an active contributor toward innovation.

The realities of our world now demand that innovation become a key strategy for all organizations (large, small, for-profit, nonprofit), a lens through which we view our world and our work, and a predominant mindset. Everyone needs to develop, refine, and practice their inherent capabilities to generate new ideas and to innovate.

Organizations must realign themselves to create a strong innovation orientation that supports and encourages new ideas and innovation from everyone within an organization. This is a scenario where new ideas and innovation are encouraged and supported at all levels, across all functions, across all disciplines, originating from every corner of an organization. Additionally, new ideas and innovation aren't limited to new product ideas, but also include new practices, processes, tools, and techniques.

Every department, every function, every center of excellence, and every person continuously views the world and their work through the lens of innovation and asks themselves, "How can I participate in the process of innovation? How can the processes I own be repositioned, redesigned, or changed to support innovation? How can I contribute to the Everyday Innovation cause?"

***"The P&G of five or six years ago depended on 8,000 scientists and engineers for the vast majority of innovation. The P&G we're trying to unleash today asks all 100,000 plus of us to be innovators."***

**A.G. Lafley, CEO,  
Proctor & Gamble**

While the value of innovation cannot be overstated, the mythology surrounding how it gets accomplished has been greatly exaggerated. Innovation has been romanticized to the point where many of us believe it is something beyond our ability. Most often, the stories we've read about innovations and innovators come to us wrapped in a great deal of mystery and mysticism. These myths make the act of innovation seem elevated and elusive, leading

## *Fear is the Enemy of Innovation*

*Fear, throughout history, has been used as a way to get people to behave in certain ways. It is a swift and potent motivator. Unfortunately, fear still plays a prominent role in many organizations today, and is still often used as a primary source of organizational energy and power. Sometimes, fear tactics are explicit (e.g., "Do what I say, or you're fired!"), and sometimes more subtle (e.g., "Please get this report in on time – remember what happened to Pat?"). The reality is that the Great Recession was not the cause of the fear-driven environments that often show up in our organizations, but it magnified the fear and made an already bad situation worse.*



*Although fear can be an effective tactic for accomplishing compliance and driving desired behaviors, it is a very ineffective tactic for fostering innovation. In fact, fear typically stifles and suppresses innovation, greatly inhibiting its potential. It actually takes a lot of energy and resources to generate and sustain a fear-driven environment that stifles innovation. The energy and power generated from an organization fueled by innovation is far more powerful than the energy generated from a fear-fueled organization.*

*Furthermore, the energy generated from having everyone engaged and contributing toward innovation and properly supported by innovation-minded organizations takes the form of positive motivation, engagement, collaboration, and productivity, in addition to the proliferation of new ideas and innovations that advance our world and our organizations.*

deliberate process. Innovators rarely stumble upon their results – they intentionally and skillfully create them.

We can pull from one of American history's most legendary innovators, Thomas Edison, to understand this point. He said, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration." Edison also said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

And, as Peter Drucker stated, "[...] Contrary to popular belief in the romance of invention and innovation, 'flashes

the public to perceive that the ability to innovate is a rare gift limited to an elite few geniuses – Leonardo da Vinci, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Steve Jobs.

We then add to the mystique, and to our intimidation, of innovation with stories likening innovation to "eureka!" moments, such as being hit in the head with an apple. This thinking, in turn, leads us to believe that innovations are unusual events that happen more often by accident and which are mostly out of our control.

We might point to examples such as James Wright's accidental discovery of the material that became Silly Putty as he was trying to invent a synthetic rubber. Or 3M's Spencer Silver's accidental discovery of the weak adhesive that led to Post-It Notes as he was trying to invent an extra-strong adhesive. Of course even these examples become wrapped in a bit of legend and folklore as they are passed on as remarkable stories through the years.

For example, we would never say that Alexander Graham Bell accidentally invented the telephone. Or that Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak accidentally built the personal computer. Or that George Gershwin accidentally composed Rhapsody in Blue. To be sure, accidental discoveries happen, but innovation is a

of genius' are uncommonly rare. What is worse, I know of not one 'flash of genius' that turned into an innovation. They all remained brilliant ideas." While happy accidents are discoveries we always look for, innovation is undoubtedly an intentional process – a process in which everyone should participate, every day.

Another myth of innovation is the idea that it is directly linked to a high degree of risk-taking. This faulty premise makes innovation sound more like gambling than a deliberate and productive work activity. People then add to this misguided thinking by promoting the idea that we merely need to "unleash our creativity" in order to innovate, rather than deliberately scanning for new opportunities, skillfully generating new ideas, and purposefully learning how to bring those new ideas to life. **These are capabilities everyone can learn and improve upon with practice and experience.**

The stories associated with innovators and their innovations have led us to think of innovation only in terms of those transformational game-changers such as the iPad, the light bulb, Post-It Notes, or the latest smartphone. This thinking has reinforced the idea that innovation is beyond our capabilities.



Innovations are not always big, grand, and game-changing. Innovations can range from the small and incremental to the large and transformational. All types of innovations are important and all contribute to Everyday Innovation.

### *Everyday Innovation Story*

*A custodian working at a restaurant which is part of a multibillion-dollar organization has developed a strong sense for what customers who eat there need and expect. He feels it is part of his job to help create a great customer experience.*

*He observes the kitchen staff filling french fry containers to capacity, yet watches as fries regularly end up in the garbage cans he is responsible for emptying. He often overhears customers mention that while the food is good, it is just too much for one sitting. In addition, he finds he is spending much of his time emptying trash cans, and the culprit is invariably people throwing away fries. All the time spent emptying trash cans limits the time he can spend on his other duties.*

*He brings an idea to his boss: could the servers reduce the portion of fries scooped into the containers by just one ounce? His boss appreciates the idea and tries it out. Almost immediately, the number of fries being thrown out is reduced, and customers don't notice the reduction in their containers. Compliments about cleanliness are now overheard and shared in customer satisfaction surveys, as the custodian is no longer tied to simply emptying out garbage cans. Finally, the time it takes the custodian to properly clean the restaurant is significantly reduced. This idea is soon standardized across the hundreds of restaurants across the company worldwide. At the end of the year, Finance reports a savings of several million dollars per year in food costs, with no loss of customer satisfaction.*



# EVERYDAY INNOVATION DEFINED

Helen Keller wrote:

*The world is moved along not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.*

In relation to the Everyday Innovation approach, these words speak to the importance of getting everyone involved in innovation and the belief that all contributions – small to transformational – not only add value but

***“Innovation is ‘the’ imperative of today’s times. We all have to learn to be comfortable with change so we can do the job that awaits us in the next few years [...] We all have to be innovators [...] The innovation potential is in all of us.”***

**Scott Anthony, Managing Partner, Innosight**

are crucial to our advancement. Yes, there is great value in the mighty shoves of game-changing breakthrough innovations, but there is also tremendous power in the aggregate of smaller, incremental innovations.

It is worth noting that Keller did not say it **would be nice** to have the world moved along by the tiny pushes of each honest worker. Rather, she said the world **is** moved along in this way. Getting everyone involved in innovation is a necessity.

Everyday Innovation occurs when everyone in an organization is actively and continuously supported, encouraged, and contributing toward the generation and implementation of new ideas and innovation of all types, from small to transformational, to improve our organizations and our world.

The term *every* has three meanings that represent three fundamental components of Everyday Innovation:

- (1) Involving everyone in innovation;
- (2) Valuing every type of innovation, from small to transformational; and
- (3) Having an innovation mindset at every moment.

***Everyday Innovation demands the inclusion of everyone:***

- ∴ Everyone is involved, contributing to innovation, and speaking the language of innovation. All people, not just so-called geniuses, are participating in and contributing toward innovation. Innovation activities extend far beyond the R&D department to include virtually every employee, at every level, in every function, in every region.
- ∴ There is a strategic and intentional inclusion of a diversity of views, backgrounds, functions, and expertise to increase and broaden the probability, results, and impact of innovation.
- ∴ Everyone is collectively looking for associational connections and connecting the dots between seemingly unrelated ideas, knowledge, or areas of expertise (the solution to a problem in the finance department in Brazil might reside in the mind of a welder in France).

## ***The 3 Meanings of Every:***

- ***Every one***
- ***Every type***
- ***Every moment***

***Everyone is contributing to innovation. Every type of innovation is valued. Every moment is an opportunity for innovation.***



- ‡ Innovations that are currently viewed as inconceivable today are attainable through the efforts of innovation-minded performers.
- ‡ Growing networks of innovation “listening posts” are established, with the ability to capture opportunities and new ideas everywhere.
- ‡ A large pool of experienced innovators across the organization is cultivated, because everyone is gaining experience in the innovation process.

*Everyday Innovation demands the inclusion of **every type***

- ‡ Incremental innovations are encouraged, valued, and rewarded, as are the bigger breakthrough innovations, as well as everything in between.
- ‡ Innovation capabilities are scalable, and there is a direct correlation between the ability to do smaller, incremental innovation work and transformational innovation work.
- ‡ Innovation is not only a focus for new products and services, but also for internal processes, tools, and techniques.
- ‡ Smaller innovations can have a ripple effect that turns into organization-level practice.



*Everyday Innovation demands the inclusion of **every moment***

- ‡ Innovation is not a part-time activity, but rather a full-time responsibility and a lens through which the current world (and everything in it) is viewed continuously. Problems, decisions, customer concerns, priorities, events, and goals are viewed through this innovation lens.
- ‡ Idea generation and innovation is a continuous and routine part of everyday work.
- ‡ The focus is predominantly on a creating mindset rather than a problem-solving mindset, because creating new knowledge advances an organization forward while problem-solving only returns an organization to a previous state.
- ‡ Through the focused pursuit of creating desired outcomes, problems become increasingly irrelevant.
- ‡ People are continuously listening to and observing the world around them, and encouraged to see innovation as a normal and routine part of their jobs.

## The Three Meanings of Every

## Why?

### ***Everyone is contributing to innovation***

Including diverse perspectives will uncover far better ideas. We can't depend only on a select few departments for innovation in order to be successful; higher forms of innovation require more people, and therefore you need more people with innovation skills.

### ***Every type of innovation is valued***

Innovation is scalable. The same principles apply to incremental innovation as well as breakthrough innovation. Our world is moved by smaller pushes as well as mighty shoves. Leveraging small innovations may also create a ripple effect that can result in larger breakthroughs. Build the skills of innovation and create momentum.

### ***Every moment is an opportunity for innovation***

Innovation can't be scheduled. You can't merely "carve out" time for innovation. We need to continuously view our world and work through a lens of innovation.

Everyday Innovation brings a flexible discipline and purposeful focus to innovation, rather than expecting innovation to happen by itself or by leaving it to random chance; all the inspirational pep talks in the world

***“Defending yesterday, that is, not innovating, is far more risky than making tomorrow.”***

won't lead to an Everyday Innovation organization. Everyday Innovation represents a systematic approach for building innovation capabilities and focuses on the capabilities of both the *people* and the *organization*.

**Peter Drucker, management consultant, author, educator**

That last statement is important to note, because all too often, all of the talk about innovation fails to sufficiently address the organizational capabilities necessary to encourage, expect, reward, and drive innovation. After all, that tends to be the hard stuff. It is much easier to invest in creativity training for people to satisfy organizational objectives around innovation. But what is the result? What is the outcome? We should not expect too much return from our investment toward innovation if that investment is limited only to building *people's capabilities* without a commitment and investment toward building the *organizational capabilities* that support and fuel innovation. Many organizations continue to be designed and hierarchically managed on legacy principles, and not only don't they foster or fuel innovation, *they stifle it*.

***Most organizations are not designed to innovate, and you shouldn't expect an organization to do what it is not designed to do.***

Most organizations are not designed to innovate, and you shouldn't expect an organization to do what it is not designed to do.

Our world now demands that innovation be an ordinary aspect of our everyday work, for everyone. With everyone involved and contributing, along with proper organizational support, this ordinary aspect of our everyday work leads to extraordinary results.

## **THE POWER OF EVERYDAY INNOVATION**

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*Seventy percent [of 500 executives surveyed] ranked innovation among their top five priorities, and 18 percent put it at the head of the list.*

*The vast majority of executives, 93 percent, continue to regard their company's long-term success to be dependent on its ability to innovate but, at the same time, less than one out of five (18 percent) believe their own innovation strategy is delivering a competitive advantage.*

*Only 34 percent [of executives] believe their company has a well-defined innovation strategy.*

*Organizations that have a holistic, formal system in place for innovation report better outcomes and higher levels of satisfaction from their innovation investment.*

Wouter Koetzier and Adi Alon, manager directors, Accenture

Everyday Innovation isn't merely a means to protect your survival. Our world now demands far more. Perhaps it used to be good enough to adapt and survive, but not anymore. "Seven Habits," standardization, and Six Sigma have been surpassed by the demand for the creation of new. Everyday Innovation provides a systematic approach for creating the outcomes and future you want.



### **Everyday Innovation:**

- ⋮ **brings meaning and purpose to innovation** by defining and branding innovation specific to your needs and goals.
- ⋮ **translates innovation into actionable terms** through customizable plans that guide and enable you to meet and exceed your innovation goals.
- ⋮ helps you view your world and your work through an innovator's lens to **create the outcomes and future you want.**
- ⋮ focuses on generating both larger, breakthrough innovations as well as the everyday smaller innovations throughout an organization that, when measured in the aggregate, can have enormous impact and value. These everyday innovations can also have a ripple effect that leads to breakthrough innovations. Further, **innovation capabilities are scalable; there is a direct correlation between the ability to do incremental innovation work and the bigger breakthrough innovation work.** The underlying skillsets and principles are the same for both. As an analogy: pilots who now fly the most sophisticated and complex jumbo jets didn't begin their careers flying these bigger planes. Rather, they learned to fly in small trainers such as a Cessna or Piper Cub, because the fundamental skills sets and

principles of flight are the same. These fundamental skills are scalable and prerequisite.

- ∴ builds deep knowledge and capabilities around:
  - core innovation skills (e.g., collaborating, listening, asking good questions, learning agility, associational thinking).
  - the tools of innovation (e.g., collaboration tools, ideas management systems, knowledge bases).
  - specific, targeted innovation opportunity domains (areas of focus) where new ideas and innovations would have a strategic, positive impact on the organization.
- ∴ strategically provides organizational support to encourage, reinforce, and sustain innovation:
  - *Leadership* (e.g., engaged and meaningful coaching and feedback, soliciting input, actively encouraging new ideas, setting innovation goals, encouraging collaboration, promoting more than one right answer or solution; doesn't fuel and reward a "firefighting"-obsessive environment).
    - *Infrastructure* processes and tools (e.g. collaboration platforms, knowledge bases, ideas management, measurement and reporting around innovation).
    - *Talent management* processes (e.g., performance management, compensation and rewards, talent acquisition, and career development that support innovation).
  - *Culture* (e.g., low fear, reinforcing empowerment, encouraging continuous learning, facilitating collaboration across and *outside* the organization, being committed to seeking and engaging a diversity of perspectives).
- ∴ asks everyone in the organization to assess the processes they own and everything they do and answer the question, "How can I transform the work I do to support innovation?"
- ∴ positions innovation as a learnable skill and as a routine and normal part of doing work in which *everyone* in an organization should participate (rather than as a rare occurrence that happens by accident or by an elite few "geniuses").
- ∴ generates numerous new ideas and innovations at every opportunity, every day.
- ∴ creates an individual "brand" of innovation for each organization that leverages its unique traditions, strengths, and strategic assets.
- ∴ taps into everyone's natural, inherent desire to create new things that may have been suppressed or unsupported in an organization.
- ∴ builds easy-to-access knowledge repositories (in multiple forms) of ideas, tips, stories, information, and articles for stimulating innovation.
- ∴ helps to create organizations and environments aligned to the needs and demands of our new world and attracts today's and tomorrow's top performers from all generations.
- ∴ leads to a view of our world and work (issues, decisions, and priorities) through an "innovator's lens," continuously seeking new opportunities and creating desired outcomes, rather than a "firefighting," problem-removal focus. The firefighting focus that dominates so many organizations, is most often a never-ending exercise that expends a lot of effort, energy, and resources. This mentality reinforces a short-term view and a victim mindset, yet does nothing to advance the organization. At best, it merely eliminates a problem to return things to their previous state. More often, it leads to an organization full

***Everyday Innovation positions innovation as a learnable skill and as a routine and normal part of doing work.***

***Simply put, focus on where you want to go (the future you want and need to create), not where you don't want to go (removal of problems).***

of people, at all levels, feeling like victims. And that's the furthest thing from a healthy and productive organization, let alone an Everyday Innovation organization. Unfortunately, this mindset is reflected in all too many organizations today.

## ARC MODEL: THE INNOVATOR'S LENS

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Innovation, like any skill, can be learned and developed with practice and proper organizational support. In order to effectively drive Everyday Innovation, there are two sets of capabilities that must be developed: people and organizational.



One of the core People Capabilities for Everyday Innovation is the skill of viewing the world and our work through an “innovator’s lens.” The ARC Model represents this lens, which is focused on **creating**.

Everyday Innovators develop the skill of regularly viewing circumstances, events, problems, and situations through a lens that reflects a creating mindset, rather than a problem-solving mindset. With a creating mindset, we can understand the current situation, establish and maintain a view of the desired outcome we want to create, and then connect to a wide range and a diversity of ideas to achieve the desired outcome.

*There is a profound difference between problem-solving and creating. Problem-solving is taking action to have something go away – the problems. Creating is taking action to have something come into being – the creation.*

*The problem-solvers propose elaborate schemes to define the problem, generate alternative solutions, and put the best solution into practice. If this process is successful, you might eliminate the problem. Then what you have is the absence of the problem you are solving. But what you do not have is the presence of a result you want to create.*

*The greatest leaders and statesmen in history have not been problem-solvers. They have been builders. They have been creators. Even in times of great conflict, such as war and depression, they have taken action to bring into being the society they envisioned. Two shining examples of statesmen creators were Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. They did not simply try to bring relief to their constituencies. They were able to use the times they lived in as a foundation for building a future they wanted.*

Robert Fritz, consultant and author

Although innovators do acknowledge and seek to understand the problems they encounter (in other words, there is no attempt to deny that problems are REAL), they reframe these problems within a broader context instead of making problems their center of focus. Innovators place problems in their peripheral view; they are still recognized, monitored, and kept within the field of vision, but problems are *not* placed front and center to be used to as the primary driver of decision-making and planning. **Innovators are not tethered to their problems.**

When new drivers are taught how to recover when skidding on ice, as they're sliding in the direction of an obstacle such as a tree, they are told to **focus on where they want to go, not where they don't want to**



**go** (the tree). While in a skid, drivers need to quickly mobilize their energy, skills, and body motions toward the desired outcome. Focusing on the tree (the problem) will only increase stress, panic, and fear, which may or may not result in missing the tree. Even if they are successful at missing the tree, their “problem-focused-maneuvers” may result in something worse, such as steering off a cliff or into oncoming traffic.

When Everyday Innovators “ARC” (by practicing the ARC Model), they focus on the process of creating and do the following:

- ∴ **ACKNOWLEDGE** the current state of circumstances – including problems, issues, and pain points – but don’t limit their view to negative aspects of the current state. That is, they also acknowledge strengths, what’s going well, and the positive aspects of the current state.
- ∴ **REFRAME** the current state in terms of a higher purpose and the desired outcomes they seek to create.
- ∴ Develop **CONNECTIONS** to a diversity of perspectives through people, data, experiences, and analogies aligned or analogous to the desired outcomes.

*Focusing on problems may succeed in getting you where you don’t want to go, but typically it won’t help you get where you want to go. In fact, focusing on problems and the elimination of what you don’t want, distracts you from getting to where you want to go.*

## ACKNOWLEDGE

One of the key attributes of Everyday Innovators is their skillful ability to clearly understand and acknowledge what is currently happening around them. They are adept at defining and understanding the problems and circumstances that they (and their organizations) face. Keen observers and listeners, they often ask themselves the following questions:

- ∴ *Who are the different stakeholders who can help define the current situation and state the desired outcomes?*
- ∴ *What behaviors can be seen and observed in this situation?*
- ∴ *What is happening that shouldn’t be happening, or what is not happening that should be happening?*
- ∴ *What impact, effect, or ripple effect is the current state having on me? On the organization?*
- ∴ *Who is benefiting and who is being harmed?*
- ∴ *What are the current measures that are being tracked and impacted?*

The Everyday Innovator approach when **acknowledging** does not differ in any significant way from the traditional approach used by a problem-solver. Both approaches begin by clearly understanding the current situation (i.e., problems, issues, goals). The key in Everyday Innovation, however, is not stopping at this point by focusing *only* on the current state.

## REFRAME

Everyday Innovators see a distinction between creating and problem-solving. Rather than continuing to obsess

over the current state, and the problems therein, innovators reframe it in the context of where they *want* to go – the desired outcomes. **They don't allow themselves to be tethered to any particular set of problems and circumstances, maintaining focus on their desired outcomes.**

### *Everyday Innovation Story*

*A mother is baking her son's favorite brownies for an important Boy Scout meeting. The long-time family recipe results in delicious, gooey brownies that, when cut, unfortunately end up uneven and crumbling.*

*The crumbling and jagged edges of the brownies are unacceptable to the boy's mother, but many attempts to address the problems have failed – changing the type of cutting utensils, coating the knife with non-stick spray, altering her cutting motions, and even modifying the family recipe.*

*Instead of focusing on the problem, she instead begins to focus on the attributes of the desired brownie "outcomes" she wants to create. These include even, smooth edges, bite-sized portions, and preserving the family recipe. With these attributes in mind, she ends up repurposing an old mini-muffin tin she had long put away. Not only do the brownies look great, but they longer need to be cut at all.*

When reframing, Everyday Innovators seek answers to these types of questions:

- ‡ *What higher purpose or desired outcomes can be applied to the behaviors I am seeing?*
- ‡ *What ultimate purpose or desired outcomes are these behaviors intended to attain?*
- ‡ *What are we (or the people we are supporting or serving) ultimately trying to create?*
- ‡ *Living in their shoes, what outcomes do we want to create?*
- ‡ *(Because desired outcomes are often nested within a more general desired outcome) What next-level desired outcomes are people trying to create that resulted in these behaviors?*
- ‡ *What outcomes are they trying to create for themselves?*
- ‡ *If they (or we together) created a desired experience, what would it look like?*

It is important to note that ARCing is an iterative process, and when it comes to **reframing**, there may be a few iterations needed in order to refine and clearly define the desired outcomes.

## CONNECT

Once the current state has been reframed in terms of desired outcomes, Everyday Innovators begin to **connect**. Connections can be made to a diversity of people, ideas, experiences, solutions, and stories that are related or analogous in some way to their desired outcome. This might mean connecting to friends, peers, experts, colleagues, or to data, research, articles, books, or other sources of ideas.

Innovators know that oftentimes there are relevant solutions that may not, on the surface, appear related, but which can be leveraged to support the outcomes they are trying to create. They tap into their associational thinking skills to find ideas hiding in plain sight. For example, they might realize that the tissue of a newly discovered underwater sea plant in the Indian Ocean might be useful in the treatment of a certain types of cancer. The Everyday Innovator seeks



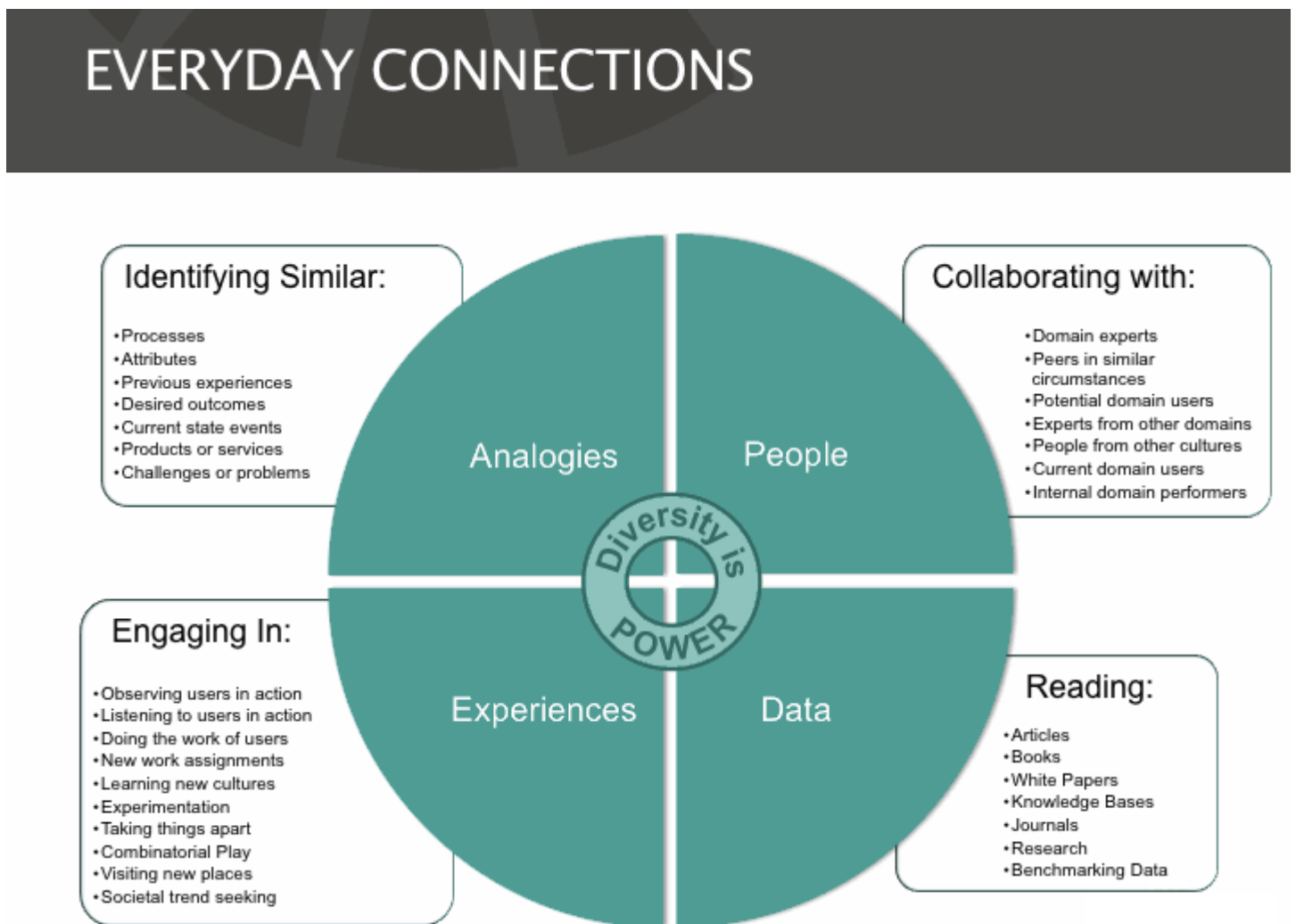


to make these types of connections. Questions they might ask include:

- ⋮ *What can I directly experience that will help me better understand the current state or the desired outcomes?*
- ⋮ *What data can I access to spark ideas related to my desired outcomes?*
- ⋮ *Who can I connect with for ideas related to my desired outcome (e.g., experts, peers, professional networks)?*
- ⋮ *Are there ideas, solutions, or experiences that are similar or analogous to my desired outcomes, even though on the surface they may appear unrelated?*

As previously mentioned, ARC is an iterative process. The art of ARC is that those who are expert at innovation can Acknowledge, Reframe, and Connect almost simultaneously. With practice and experience, this process becomes instinctive and natural.

Making everyday connections is essential for generating new ideas and innovations. The graphic below represents the four kinds of connections often made by Everyday Innovators to ensure they obtain a diversity of input, opinions, and perspectives from a variety of sources.



### ***Diversity is Power***

*One of the foundational principles of Everyday Innovation is that diversity is power. The value of the outcomes we create will expand as we actively seek opportunities to connect with a diversity of perspectives. Leveraging the broad diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and opinions in our world can help us think of effective ways to acknowledge our current state, including the stakeholders we need to consider.*

*In addition, when reframing our current state, we want to connect with others' ideas and perspectives to help refine and clarify our desired outcomes. The ARC Model is an essential People Capability for becoming an Everyday Innovation organization. However, in addition to ARC and other People Capabilities that must be developed, there are also "Organizational Capabilities" that must be developed. And this is the role of the BASIS Method. The BASIS Method builds both the People and the Organizational Capabilities essential for driving Everyday Innovation.*

## **BRINGING MEANING AND PURPOSE TO INNOVATION**

The BASIS Method is a systematic approach for generating and sustaining Everyday Innovation. It brings meaning and purpose to innovation by specifically defining and branding innovation to an organization's unique needs and goals. BASIS makes innovation actionable by providing customizable plans that lead to the development

***The BASIS Method is a systematic approach for generating and sustaining Everyday Innovation.***

of the People and Organizational Capabilities needed to generate new ideas and innovation from all levels and all functions, from everyone, every day.

The BASIS Method reflects not only a powerful strategic approach for driving Everyday Innovation, it also contains powerful, practical tools and templates that support the approach. Further, the BASIS Method is intentionally flexible and can scale to meet your unique needs. It is

strategically designed to meet you where you are – whatever your current state – and to help you put to work whatever you have to work with, in order to start accomplishing quick, visible Everyday Innovation results.

There are five phases of the BASIS Method:



This book summarizes the five phases of the BASIS Method, beginning with the following graphic:

# The BASIS Method

Bringing meaning and purpose to innovation



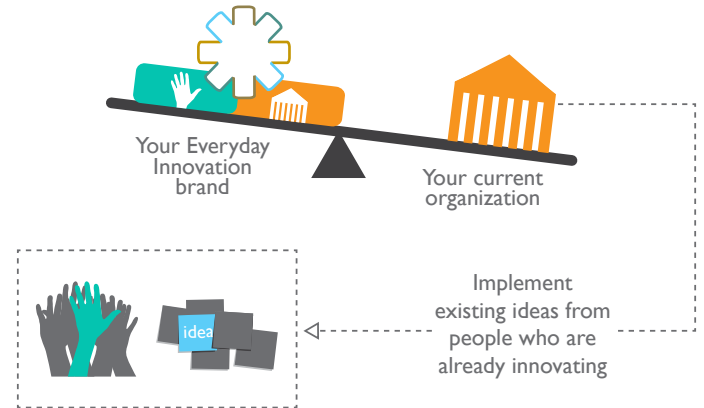
## BRAND

Build commitment around what innovating every day should look like for your organization.



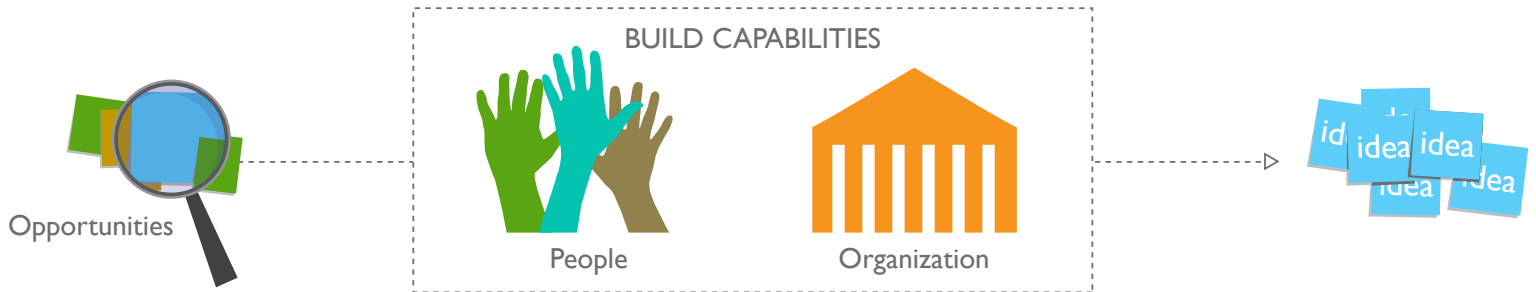
## ASSESS

Review the current state of your organization, measured against your brand of Everyday Innovation.



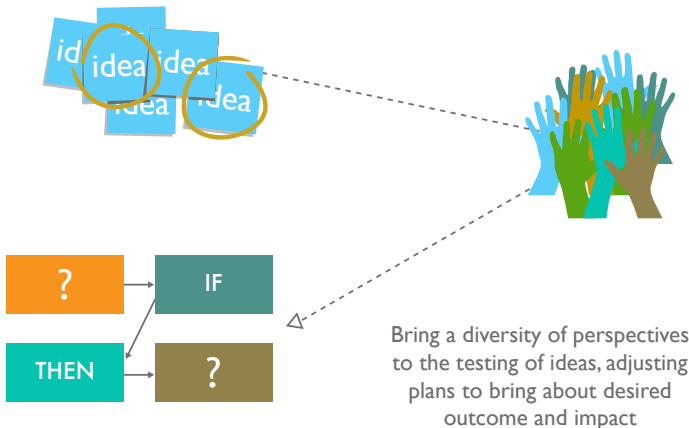
## SPARK

Build the capabilities of people and the organization to generate ideas around targeted, high-value opportunities.



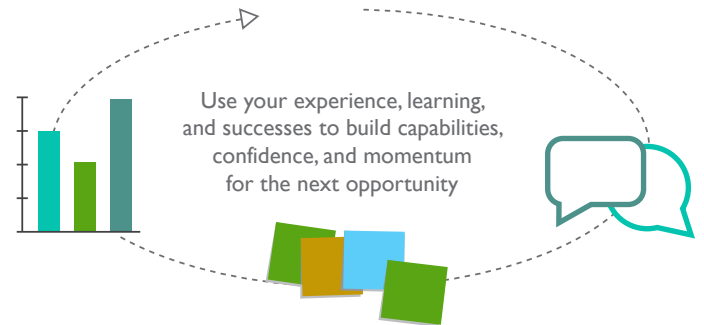
## IMPLEMENT

Select the best ideas and then bring innovations to life.



## SUSTAIN

Keep the momentum going by measuring, sharing, and leveraging your progress.



# THE BASIS METHOD

## BRAND

The Brand phase serves as your guiding beacon – the ultimate destination – when building an Everyday Innovation organization. It defines what *your* organization will look like when it fully becomes an Everyday Innovation organization. Therefore, the Brand phase should build upon your organization’s unique purpose, history, traditions, strategic assets, and collective know-how. The Brand phase contains three elements:

1. Your unique Everyday Innovation definition
2. A People Profile documenting desired People Capabilities
3. An Organization Profile documenting desired Organizational Capabilities



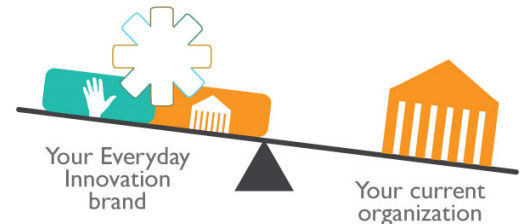
Generally there are three steps to developing your Brand:

1. Review your organization’s ultimate purpose, strategic goals, culture and traditions, and strategic assets and know-how that make it different from competitors
2. Create a series of definitions for what Everyday Innovation means for your organization
3. Develop Organization and People Profiles that identify the specific capabilities needed to realize your Everyday Innovation definition

## ASSESS

Once you’ve set the guidepost for your innovation efforts by defining your Brand, it’s time to assess the extent to which your organization is currently aligned to and can support your Everyday Innovation Brand. Essentially, when you finish the Assess phase you will have:

- ⋮ executed a data-gathering strategy to determine how far along your organization is to achieving your Brand of Everyday Innovation.
- ⋮ simultaneously gathered some information along the way to quickly build confidence, excitement, and commitment to Everyday Innovation, including a list of:
  - potential knowledge areas or domains where new ideas and innovations are needed.
  - potential “quick hit” ideas (low-hanging fruit) that can be implemented immediately.
  - some of the people in the organization who are already innovating.



There are a number of ways that you can compare your organization to your defined Brand. You can also assess at a department or team level. The key point to remember is that the Assess phase helps you understand where your organization (or team) stands against your Everyday Innovation Brand definition, and where you are in relation to where you want and need to be.

The Assess phase provides for the harvesting of quick hits for immediate positive impact. Early in the Everyday Innovation process, it is likely that there are people already generating new ideas and innovations within the organization. They often persist despite a lack of specific support by the organization. Many of their ideas are implemented locally with no process for leveraging them to the broader organization. Many people may have

great ideas that could be implemented tomorrow, but have simply never been asked to express them.

*Many people may have great ideas that could be implemented tomorrow, but have simply never been asked to express them.*

It is worth noting that an idea is not considered an innovation until it has been implemented and is demonstrating some level of positive impact. It will be important to gather both ideas and innovations as potential quick hits. In the Assess phase, unimplemented ideas will be gathered for potential implementation, while innovations will be considered for potential expansion to other parts of the organization.

Quick hit opportunities will surface early and often as you proceed through the BASIS Method. There is great value in harvesting localized ideas and innovations and leveraging them more broadly throughout an organization. Further, it is important to demonstrate positive impact as quickly as possible in order to build excitement and momentum around Everyday Innovation.

During the Assess phase, you'll also begin compiling a list of potential high-value Innovation Opportunity Domains (IODs). An IOD is an area of focus where the organization needs a lot of new ideas and innovations. IODs help define the general boundaries of focus around these opportunity areas that the organization feels are in need of further exploration and development. These are areas of focus that, if properly exploited, could make a significant difference in truly setting the organization apart.



With innovation the question often arises, “Where do we begin? Where should the organization focus its idea-generating energy and limited resources? Are all ideas created equal?” Although we want lots of ideas from lots of people within the organization, we don’t want idea generation to be completely arbitrary and random. That’s where IODs bring meaningful and purposeful focus to innovation efforts, playing a valuable role in the strategic, smart, and systematic approach for driving innovation.

## **SPARK**

At its most basic level, the purpose of the Spark phase is to design and put in place the appropriate programs, structures, processes, and solutions to build the capabilities of both people and the organization to foster idea generation within a targeted Innovation Opportunity Domain (IOD). In short, the Spark phase is about generating ideas! However, as previously noted, an idea is not considered an innovation until it has been implemented and is demonstrating some level of positive impact. So, we need to take a strategic and focused approach to foster idea generation that will lead to innovation. We do that by building the capabilities of people and the organization, focusing on a targeted, high-value IOD.



An important aspect of sparking innovation around an IOD is to identify, design, and provide solutions and experiences to help people quickly gain the knowledge and skills that will allow them to consistently generate and formally contribute new ideas that become innovations. Although great new ideas can come from anyone at any time, research and experience have shown that as people build higher levels of knowledge and skills within an IOD, and as they begin to learn and apply the skills and tools of Everyday

Innovation, they can begin to more consistently generate the type and quality of new ideas that lead to significant positive impact. This means that an essential part of sparking an IOD is identifying solutions and experiences that will bring people up to the high levels of skills they need as quickly as possible.

For generating ideas that will then lead to innovations, people need to develop two kinds of capabilities:

**1. Core Innovation capabilities:**

- The ARC Model – The capability to view our world and our work through the innovator’s lens
- Supporting innovation capabilities such as dealing with ambiguity, observing, listening, associational thinking, and experimenting

**2. IOD technical skills and knowledge** where new ideas and innovations are needed



Just as important, people need ongoing support from the organization to encourage and sustain the generating of ideas and innovation. This organizational support can be placed into four categories:

- 1. Infrastructure** (e.g., collaboration platforms, knowledge bases, ideas management, and measurement and reporting around innovation)
- 2. Talent Management** (e.g., performance management, compensation and rewards, and talent acquisition and career development that support innovation)
- 3. Leadership** (e.g., engaged coaching and feedback, soliciting input, actively encouraging new ideas, setting innovation goals, encouraging collaboration, encouraging more than one solution, and not fueling a “firefighting”-obsessed environment)
- 4. Culture** (e.g., low in fear, reinforcing empowerment, encouraging continuous learning, encouraging and facilitating collaboration across and outside the organization, and being committed to encouraging and engaging a diversity of perspectives)

*Building the capabilities of both the people and the organization is like building a powerful and focused idea-generating machine.*

Building the capabilities of both the people and the organization in this strategic and systematic way is like building a powerful and focused idea-generating machine.

*Ideas Management Process and Tools:* An important Organizational Capability to be developed is the design of ideas management solutions and resources to help people capture, organize, and share their ideas with others for real-time feedback and refinement. Ideally, people will be able to access these tools (and the underlying process) on the go through mobile devices using cloud computing. Having the ability to capture and collaborate around ideas anytime, anywhere, through a variety of means is a hallmark of Everyday Innovation (e.g., using smart phone apps, voice recording, texting, photographing, drawing, instant messaging, and even good old email and face-to-face meetings). A good ideas management strategy and process will leverage *all* of these options.

The ideas management process should not only specify how early new ideas can be captured, nurtured, and



refined; it should also define how and when mature ideas should be submitted for review, as well as the criteria and process by which they will be vetted and ultimately approved by the organization for implementation. A robust ideas management process supports ideas from germination to implementation, and everything in between.

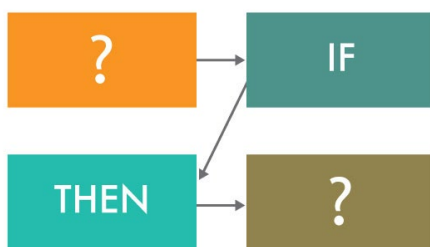
*Sponsorship:* One of the tenets of Everyday Innovation is that while people have a natural and inherent capability to create new things, the creation of an Everyday Innovation organization will not happen by itself. Because there will be many decisions that need to be made as the organization moves toward becoming an Everyday Innovation organization, having effective sponsorship and processes in place will be important. Sponsorship, for example, will be used to prioritize and select which IODs to cultivate. For this reason, we recommend the creation of an Everyday Innovation Sponsorship Team that owns the strategies, processes, resources, and approvals needed to support Everyday Innovation.



This team doesn't have to be complicated or complex. Do what makes sense for your organization and situation. The name of the Sponsorship Team, or the size of this group, are not what's important; it is the purpose and responsibilities of this team that are important. Another sponsorship responsibility is to establish and form Spark Teams that are responsible for cultivating the selected IODs. The Spark Team has direct accountability for designing the solutions and resources to build the capabilities of both the people and the organization supporting the IOD.

## IMPLEMENT

Through the strategic and focused idea generation process in the Spark phase, you will have a wealth of ideas for innovations related to an IOD. At this point, the Spark Team will be responsible for selecting which ideas to implement as innovation projects.



One of the best-known realities of innovation is that, in many cases, several of the initial assumptions about the innovation might be wrong. These assumptions might include who will find the innovation most useful, or perhaps what attributes of the innovation will be considered most valuable, or simply how the innovation will actually be used and applied in real life. Therefore, the initial implementation of the innovation must reflect this reality. It would be a mistake to fully implement the innovation to a broader audience without first testing these assumptions and without allowing for modifications to the innovation.

For this reason, it is recommended that a prototype of the innovation be implemented as a pilot to a representative subgroup from the target audience. This should be the job of an innovation project team responsible for overseeing the innovation project. This innovation project team should be relatively small at first, comprised of no more than about six people. As with the Sponsorship Team, this setup doesn't need to be overcomplicated.

The primary purpose of the pilot is not to test the impact of the innovation, but rather to test the assumptions on which the innovation was built. To do this, these assumptions must be explicitly listed and each systematically tested. Based on the results of the pilot, modifications can then be made before reintroducing the innovation



to another segment of the audience for further testing. The purpose of this process is to invest as little into the implementation as possible while learning a great deal along the way. Therefore, the plan must be designed to discover which assumptions are wrong, why they are wrong, and what resulting actions to take.

At its highest level, the implementation plan should include the following six steps:

1. Identify, define, and explicitly list all assumptions about the innovation
2. Develop a list of actions to implement the innovation that center on testing the assumptions
3. Implement an innovation prototype to target audience(s)
4. Gather and analyze data around assumptions
5. Make modifications and implement to a broader audience segment
6. Repeat iterations of steps 3 and 4 and until the project team and Sponsorship Team, are confident that the innovation is in its final form for full implementation



This is a good opportunity to highlight the value of creating an elevator pitch that effectively and concisely builds the case to gain support for Everyday Innovation and your specific Innovation Opportunity Domain (IOD) cultivation plans. Translating great ideas into innovations and driving Everyday Innovation in your organization will be something that requires most of you to win support from stakeholders, your bosses, peers, and potential innovators. They will need to know why it's important, what the focus of innovation will be, the value it offers to them, and the overall organization, as well as what their role might be.

Creating an elevator pitch for your innovation effort will help you think about the most important points that you should be making to your key audiences. Involving a diverse set of stakeholders and individuals in the process is important and will be critical to gaining support, excitement, and resources for your IOD cultivation plan and driving Everyday Innovation in your organization.

Your elevator pitch should, at a minimum, contain:

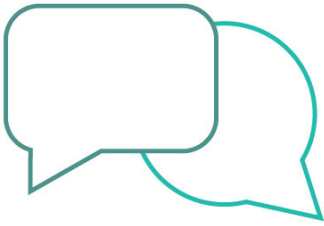
1. the value of innovation to your audience
2. the impact or benefit of the IOD
3. a description of how it can become a reality, or be implemented quickly

***Learning is a requirement of innovation, and an organization cannot sustain innovation without continuous learning.***

## **SUSTAIN**

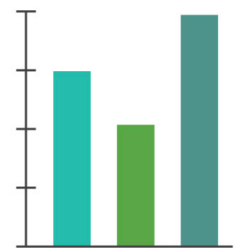
The Sustain phase begins by monitoring, measuring, and communicating the status of Everyday Innovation efforts. This is important for two reasons: it lets leadership and everyone in the organization know how well their investment is working, and it reinforces the need to keep them actively and visibly involved. The Sustain phase also brings credibility to the effort in order to continue creating champions and contributors of Everyday Innovation.

Innovation project teams will have responsibility for measuring and tracking progress on the innovation projects and ensuring that they are continuously communicating and collaborating internally and externally with those engaged in innovation activities, while the Sponsorship Team will have responsibility for monitoring and auditing the progress of building the overarching Everyday Innovation organization and realizing the Brand defined in the first phase of the BASIS Method. And remember that sponsorship should not be complex; the size and titles of the teams do not matter. Their purpose and responsibilities are what matter.



Learning is a requirement of innovation, and an organization cannot sustain innovation without continuous learning. It will be important to informally share what is working and not working to others both inside and outside of the organization, continuously and actively participating in collaborative sharing activities. Learning from others, avoiding their mistakes, or borrowing their great ideas can help ensure that Everyday Innovation is sustained in the organization.

As always, the power of Everyday Innovation comes from the inclusion and leveraging of a wide diversity of voices, opinions, and ideas from across the organization. Therefore, it will be important to involve as many different perspectives as possible, from multiple levels, across functions, businesses, and regions (if global).



### **Everyday Innovation Story**

*A special education teacher wishes to create for her students a learning environment that will build self-esteem and a sense of value to others and to the world.*

*She has an idea for a fundraiser project to benefit underprivileged members of the community. She has each student draw their favorite picture and personally initial their drawings. These drawings are then converted into pin-back, wearable buttons and sold to the other teachers in the building. The teachers, knowing who created each button by its initials, personally recognize each child with warm praise and a personal “thank you.”*

*The money raised is then used to purchase toys for the local children’s home, canned goods for the food bank and homeless shelter, and flowers for the nursing home. The project instills a feeling among the kids that they are contributing something of great value to others in a way that is personally rewarding, and fun at the same time.*

Because the goal of Everyday Innovation is to eventually have everyone in the organization participating and actively contributing toward innovation, it is essential that *everyone* is aware of the progress, successes, and impact of Everyday Innovation efforts and encouraged and inspired to contribute. An effective communication plan should include formal and informal means for celebrating Everyday Innovation successes early and often, as well as hard work and progress accomplished that might be labeled as failure, merely because it didn’t result in the end goal. People need to know that the organization values Everyday Innovation. One way to demonstrate this value is to take the time to celebrate the achievement of selected milestones throughout the process of creating the desired goals and outcomes. Milestones, along with marketing campaigns and other means to communicate in creative ways, will help reinforce the Brand, and increase excitement, energy, and contribution toward Everyday Innovation.

The BASIS Method (Brand, Assess, Spark, Implement, Sustain) reflects not only a powerful strategic approach for driving Everyday Innovation, it also contains

powerful, practical tools and templates the help you accomplish quick, visible Everyday Innovation results. To provide another sample from this comprehensive suite of tools and templates, refer to the BASIS Canvas Tool on the following page. This dynamic tool can be used to define innovation goals and desired outcomes and then bring focus and planning to those goals and outcomes in order to bring them to life.

**BRAND** Build commitment around what innovating every day should look like for your organization.

**ASSESS** Review the current state of your organization, measured against your brand of Everyday Innovation.

EVERYDAY INNOVATION DEFINITION

POTENTIAL INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY DOMAINS (IODs)

EXISTING IDEAS (low-hanging fruit)

PEOPLE PROFILE

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

PEOPLE ALREADY INNOVATING

**SPARK** Build the capabilities of people & the organization to generate ideas around targeted, high-value opportunities.

INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY DOMAIN (IOD)

PEOPLE CAPABILITIES  
INSTRUCTION | IMMERSION

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES  
INFRASTRUCTURE | TALENT MGT  
CULTURE | LEADERSHIP

IDEATION

**IMPLEMENT** Select the best ideas and then bring innovations to life.

**SUSTAIN** Keep the momentum going by measuring, sharing, and leveraging your progress.

SELECTED IDEAS

PROJECT NAME | TEAM MEMBERS | TIMELINE

MEASURING

LEARNING

SHARING

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# EVERYDAY INNOVATION STARTS TODAY

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So here we are at this critical crossroads in our history, when our world needs innovation like never before – a new brand of innovation – Everyday Innovation. Make decisions and take actions that lead you to the prosperous side of the future. Reframe your focus toward creating the outcomes and future you want. Just think about this in relation to your world, your work, and your everyday life; focus on what you want, not what you don't want.

Imagine the future that you could create as an Everyday Innovator. Imagine what your organization could do if you developed the power and potential of Everyday Innovators throughout your organization. Imagine the power and potential of your organization if it were to create an environment that supported Everyday Innovation (as opposed to stifling it, whether intentionally or unintentionally). What benefits and outcomes could be realized if everyone participated in the innovation process on an ongoing basis? Imagine the magnitude of the positive impact on our lives, our work, our organizations and our world.



Everyday starts today. Join the Everyday Innovation community. Together we generate and sustain innovation that contributes toward the advancement of our organizations, communities, and world.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND EIQ

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EiQ is a consulting firm dedicated to building the innovation capabilities of individuals, teams and organizations. Our strategic methods and tools are offered through customizable workshops, facilitated sessions, consulting, speaking engagements, and our global network ([www.eiqinnovation.com](http://www.eiqinnovation.com)).

We hear a lot of talk about the importance of innovation, but too often people walk away not fully comprehending what it means, or how it relates to them, or how to make it actionable. EiQ helps with this in three key ways: First, we bring meaning and purpose to innovation by specifically defining and branding innovation to an organization's unique needs and goals. Second, we make innovation actionable with a customized plan that guides and enables organizations to meet and exceed their innovation goals. Third, through our Everyday Innovation approach, we help organizations generate and leverage innovation from all levels and all functions, from everyone, every day.



Terry M. Farmer, Ph.D., is co-founder of EiQ. Terry has over 25 years of experience in the area of performance improvement, instructional design, organizational development, strategy, and innovation. He has held several leadership and executive-level positions within global Fortune 500 companies across multiple industries, including IBM, Ernst and Young, The Walt Disney Company, Rubbermaid Incorporated, Nationwide Insurance, and Eaton Corporation. Terry has a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Instructional Systems Technology from Indiana University.



Xavier Butte is co-founder of EiQ and has over 15 years of experience as a leader and strategic advisor focused on building individual and organizational performance capabilities. Xavier has held various leadership positions, including leading the Nationwide Performance Improvement Organization and the start-up of the Strategic Change Enablement function of the Business Transformation Office at Nationwide, also as Director of Performance and Technology at Nationwide. Xavier has a Master's degree from the Fisher College of Business and a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Communication from The Ohio State University.

Join the EiQ Everyday Innovation community at [www.eiqinnovation.com](http://www.eiqinnovation.com).

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