HARVARD
Online

Innovation Strategy: Tools and Frameworks for Business

Syllabus

Innovation is more than generating ideas: it's a way of thinking and working that transforms challenges into opportunities. This course integrates foundational principles of innovation with insights from leading innovators across industries and provides opportunities to develop and practice crucial skills so you can cultivate an innovation mindset in your career and life. By the end of the course, you will not only understand the principles of innovation, but you'll be equipped to practice them in ways that create lasting impact.

Modules		Case Studies	Takeaways	Key Exercises
Module 1	**Opportunity Finding: Design Research**	• Green Chemistry • Innova Schools	• High-value opportunities often stem from needs people cannot readily articulate. • Once a true need is surfaced, it is hard to ignore.	• Use the innovation pyramid to evaluate opportunities. • Use research techniques to uncover customer needs. • Find the root of customer problems to identify more valuable solutions.
Module 2	**Ideation**	• Green Chemistry • Last Mile Money • Target: Good & Gather	• Innovators use targeted strategies to surface new ideas rather than waiting for inspiration to strike. • Brainstorming and ideation are more effective when using structured processes and developing a creative context.	• Apply brainstorming techniques to unlock more creative ideas and use generative AI as an ideation partner. • Identify opportunities for collaborative innovation and co-creation. • Use downselection to choose the most promising ideas.
Module 3	**De-risking Ideas: Prototyping**	• Green Chemistry • Innova School • Target: Good & Gather	• Prototyping clarifies problem framing and provokes new solution paths. • Iterative user testing reduces technical/market risk and increases perceived value.	• Cultivate a prototyping mindset. • Explore different prototyping methods for products and services on a small and large scale. • Use feedback and iteration to de-risk an idea.
Module 4	**Capturing Value: Business Modeling**	• Blockbuster, Netflix, and Hulu • Jaza Duka • Starface	• Diffusion speed and scale of a novel idea hinge on business–model viability. • Sometimes innovation is the business model transforming non-monetary value into capital.	• Use the business model canvas to evaluate different business models for products and services. • Explore different revenue streams for a product or service. • Adapt a business model to changing market conditions.

© Copyright 2025. President and Fellows of Harvard College. All Rights Reserved.

Modules		Case Studies	Takeaways	Key Exercises
Module 5	**Futuring: Strategy & Storytelling**	• Aviva • Becca • Starface	• Strategic foresight creates early-mover advantage and can open new categories/markets. • Emerging trends of today signal the high-value businesses of tomorrow.	• Analyze current trends to uncover early-advantage signals. • Integrate signals to envision potential futures. • Prepare your organization for a variety of future plans and outcomes.
Module 6	**Implementation: Going to Market**	• Last Mile Money • San Jose • Starface	• Innovation succeeds when disciplined implementation moves concepts to market. • Innovators need to be prepared to make feedback-driven iterations of their ideas, solutions, and products, sometimes requiring a significant pivot. • Innovation is possible across all sectors, private and public, with the appropriate tools, incentives, and mindsets.	• Identify and overcome barriers to real-world adoption. • Evaluate go-to-market strategies. • Explore ways to innovate in a large company. • Develop an innovation roadmap to prioritize projects for implementation.

Learning requirements: In order to earn a credential from Harvard Online and Harvard Business School Online, participants must thoughtfully complete all six modules, including satisfactory completion of the associated quizzes, by the stated deadlines.

© Copyright 2025. President and Fellows of Harvard College. All Rights Reserved.