

INNOVATION IN THE ERA OF LOCKDOWN

George Krasadakis • The Innovation Mode • Nov 2020

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HOW THE PANDEMIC IS IMPACTING INNOVATION

Innovation is now seen as a luxury as most companies operate in a 'survival mode' [1]

1. The **collective mindset** is **disrupted**. People are stressed, as there is increased uncertainty and ambiguity.
2. We have limited access to typical **innovation 'symbols'** (e.g. innovation labs, prototyping facilities, collaboration spaces etc.)
3. Business leaders tend to believe that innovation is **less important** and/or not possible during such a prolonged crisis.



INNOVATION IS NOT ONLY FEASIBLE; IT IS THE WAY OUT.

Companies need to invest in innovation more than ever before – with the objective to:

1. Increase the **opportunity discovery** bandwidth. The world is changing - new opportunities are being shaped 'as we speak'. Having good reflexes to spot them early enough and react fast, essential.
2. Improve the **organizational 'state of mind'**. Innovation can strengthen the connection among employees and teams, it can fix the morale, the shared attitude.



WORK & INNOVATE FROM HOME

To adjust and empower the Innovation Function during times of crisis:

1. Increase its **availability**: Make it always-on
2. Increase its **flexibility**: Make it asynchronous
3. Make it **more meaningful**: Empower the link between innovation and the purpose of your organization
4. Increase its **bandwidth**: assess more innovation opportunities

These can be achieved by via 9 strategic innovation initiatives



1. BUILD A RICH INNOVATION PORTAL

Make innovation **available** & **accessible** to all. Build a digital home for all innovation-related resources:

1. Innovation **Context**: Your purpose, problems worth-solving, big ideas
2. Innovation **Calendar**: Current innovation activities and plans
3. Innovation **Toolkit**: tools, templates and services
4. Innovation **Knowledge**: training material; examples, stories
5. Innovation **Assets**: a demo space exposing notable innovation artefacts
6. A **'gateway'** to the 'community of innovators'



2. STRENGTHEN THE INNOVATION <> PURPOSE LINK

Make innovation real. Present innovation as *the means* to achieve a bold purpose.

1. Review your purpose; ensure it is still relevant
2. Explain how innovation can help to better serve this purpose
3. Create the Corporate Innovation Agenda
4. Make it visible – add it to the Innovation Portal



3. A BACKLOG OF PROBLEMS WORTH-SOLVING

Inspire people, energize the community of innovators

1. **Not only ideas:** Invite people to innovate, *also* by submitting problem statements
2. **Problems statements** as '**innovation assets**': regularly evaluate and prioritize them - based on the impact and the relevance to your strategy
3. **A Backlog of Problems:** make it visible via the Innovation Portal
4. Add '**problem submission**' to the *innovation gamification* scheme



4. AN ALWAYS-ON IDEAS CHANNEL

Increase the **inflow** of **ideas** while also raising their quality. To achieve that:

1. Make your ideation process **Always-on**: Encourage people to share any idea, at any time.
2. **Make it self-service**: a simple process > submit & discover ideas through the Innovation Portal.
3. **Provide a template for ideas**: Help people articulate their ideas, or product concepts and features.
4. **Provide ideation event templates**: Standardize the 'idea generation events'- e.g. brainstorming.
5. Initiate '**Lightweight Hackathons**' and ideation sessions



5. AN ALWAYS-ON DISCOVERY PANEL

Improve your **opportunity discovery** capability:
spot *more* high-potential ideas, *faster*.

1. Establish a **regular review process**: a panel with the right experts, to evaluate and prioritize problems and ideas; based on objective criteria
2. Create an **action plan**: A high-potential idea; then what? Forward them to the right teams/ stakeholders to take action, immediately.

Educate innovators.

1. Adopt an **educational attitude**: Provide *constructive feedback* to innovators; act as innovation mentors.



6. THE COMMUNITY OF INNOVATORS

Create a **force of innovation** from within— a core of enthusiasts who boost the culture of innovation

1. **Communicate** - *encourage* people to join, to contribute and learn
2. **Recognize** those *informal* innovation activities in *formal* performance reviews; and with your gamification program
3. **Visualize** the community – members, activity and achievements - via the Innovation Portal
4. **Empower** the community by providing additional autonomy and resources



7. PROTOTYPING & TESTING AS A SERVICE

Streamline the **Prototyping** and **Validation** function; hide complexities and offer it 'as a service'.

1. **Build a team**: a cross-functional team that knows *when* and *how* to *test* a concept – to make faster and better decisions.
2. **Establish** a **smart intake** process: not all ideas need to be prototype; help business users to submit valid requests.
3. **Connect** the **talent**: link the *prototyping service* with the community of innovators – to source specialized skills
4. **Communicate** and **promote** the 'prototyping services' via the Innovation Portal



8. MEASURE WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Set the right **pace** and **style** for **innovation**.
Make systematic measurements and react wisely.

1. How do people feel? Track the morale of employees and the general sentiment
2. How do people engage with innovation? Track the engagement with innovation activities, events or content
3. Do we have the right pace and style of innovation? Correlate data and infer the type of activities, events and the right frequency.
4. An innovation improvement cycle: Improve, measure impact, iterate.



9. **RETHINK** INNOVATION AS 'ALWAYS-ON'

Put **innovation at the core**. Welcome innovation activities at any time; *in or out of context*.

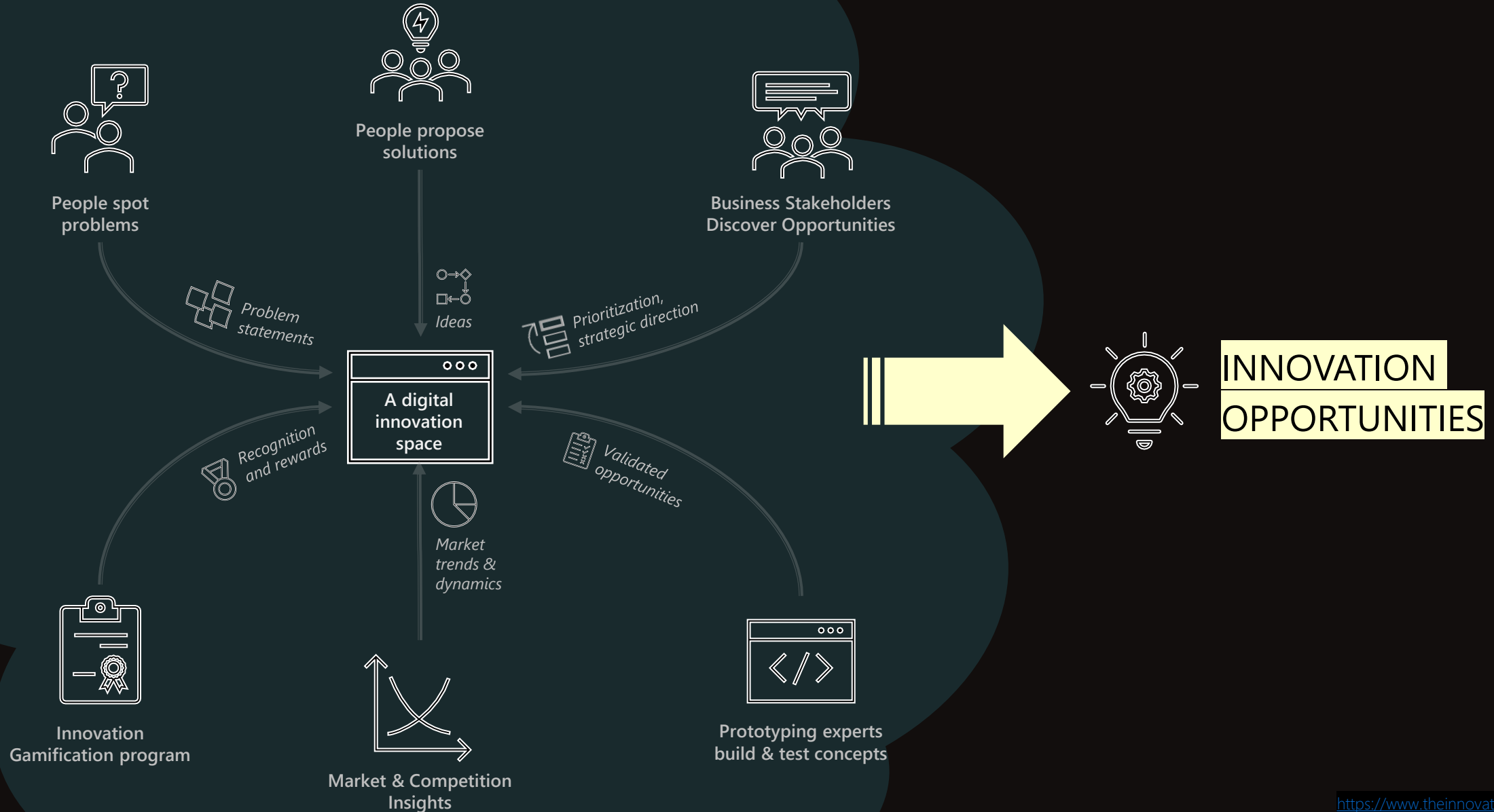
1. **Include innovation into your daily agenda.** Use every opportunity to mention innovation results, insights, activities, failures
2. **Listen to the market.** Establish a systematic connection– bring in competition insights, emerging trends, news and updates
3. **Reward & Celebrate.** Quantify innovation activity, use gamification principles to regularly identify and celebrate the top performers

Through your central point of reference: the innovation portal



'INNOVATING FROM HOME': A HUB FOR INNOVATION

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RECAP: THE INNOVATION FUNCTION AT TIMES OF CRISIS

Ensure that your **Innovation Function** is:

1. Always-on
2. Asynchronous
3. Purposeful
4. Has increased Bandwidth



Thank you!

Questions, comments,
feedback more than welcome!

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