

# Innovative Thinking in Uncertain Times

Bend YP  
June 9, 2020

# Welcome & Agenda

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## **Innovation Now?**

- Why the time is right
- Why it will be hard

## **Innovative Thinking Defined (and Debunked)**

- Cognitive Skills
- Behavior Skills

## **Getting Started**

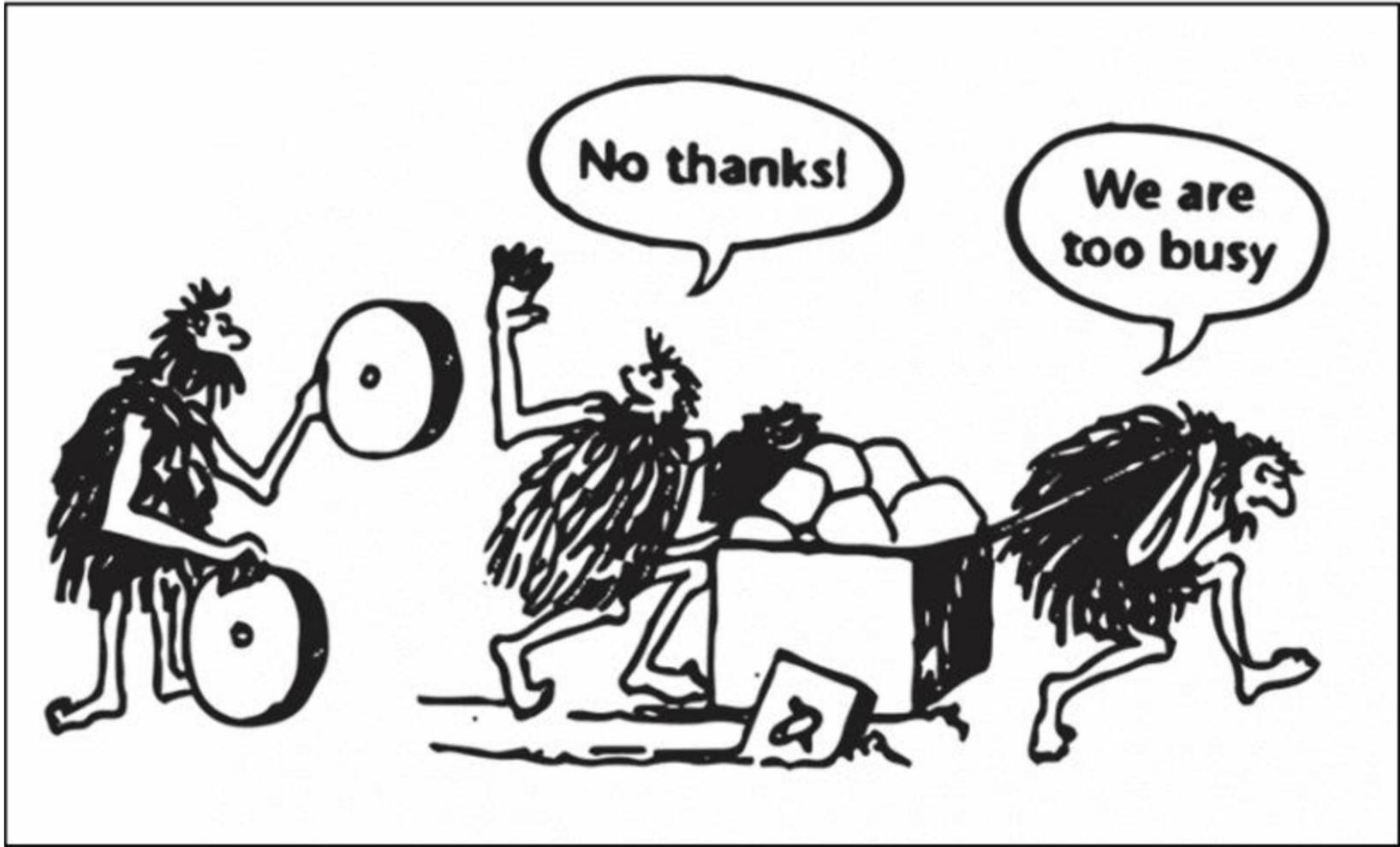
- Clear your Mindset
- Start with What You Know is True
- Invite ALL your Stakeholders into the room

## **Innovation Practices**

- Opposable Thinking Sessions
- Convene a T Group
- Zoom In & Out
- Prioritize Time to Think
- Re-railing Tips

# Innovation now?

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# Why the time is right

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*“Re-engaging around the future can be a ‘moment that matters’ for employees.”*

Hubert Joly  
Exec Chairman & former CEO  
Best Buy  
Harvard Business Review 5/8/2020

## **Mobilized your team/colleagues**

- Thinking feels good!
- Taps into intrinsic motivators of contribution, participation, recognition
- Develops teaming and collaborative solutioning skills

## **Business and Mission (re) focus:**

- Brings focus back to business understanding and sense of purpose
- Primes the shift to future state
- Early adaptor advantage
- Less resistance from “status quo” defenders – the disruption has been done for us

# Why it will be hard

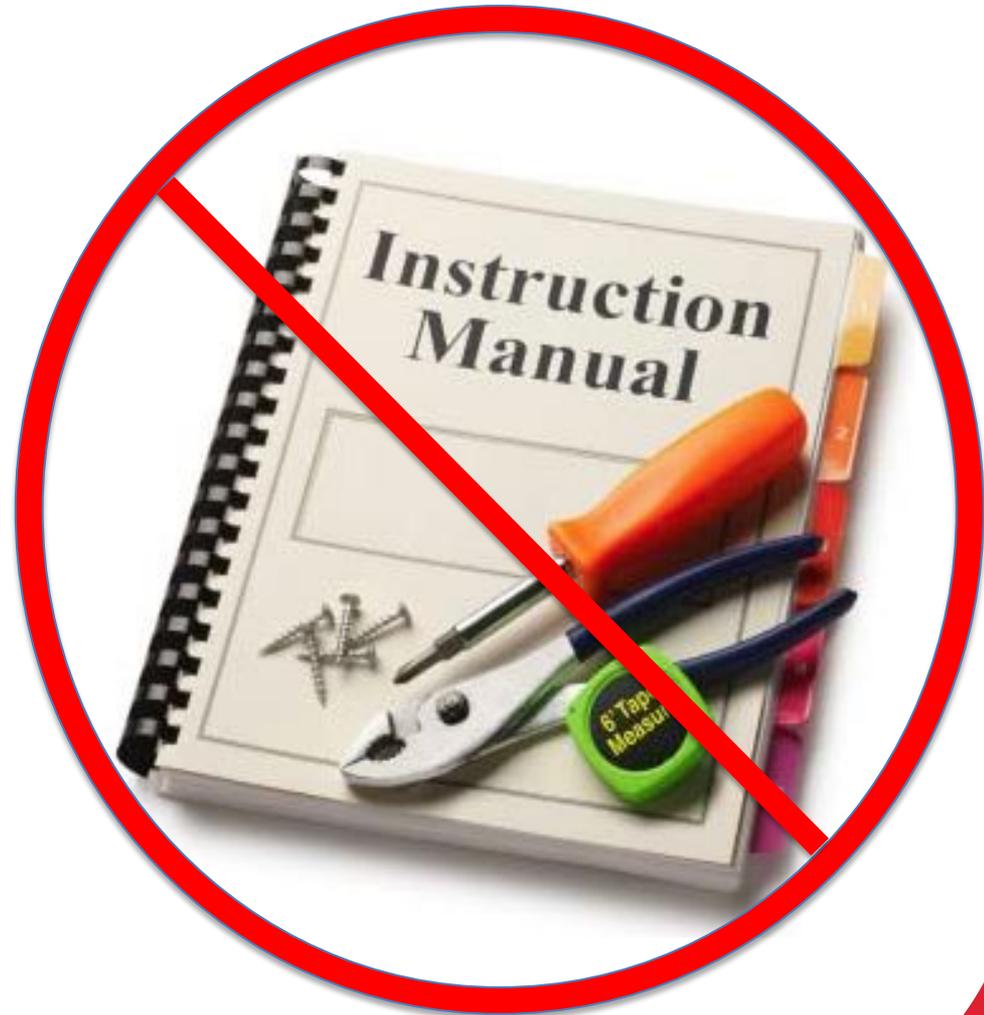
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By definition it is about leaning into uncertainty and we are all in relative states of overwhelm

Stress blocks creative thinking

Can be harder for natural planners/executors

AND.....



# Innovative Thinking Defined (and Debunked)

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Creatively solving challenging problems

- making connections across seemingly unrelated fields, problems or ideas
- associating – cognitive process of make sense of and synthesize novel connections
- can be novel, new *and* incremental
- can be an idea for an enterprise or NFP start up, it can also be a new process or a product
- best done inclusively, collaboratively, diversely

It is NOT a single big-bang brilliant idea

# Innovative Thinking Skills: Cognitive

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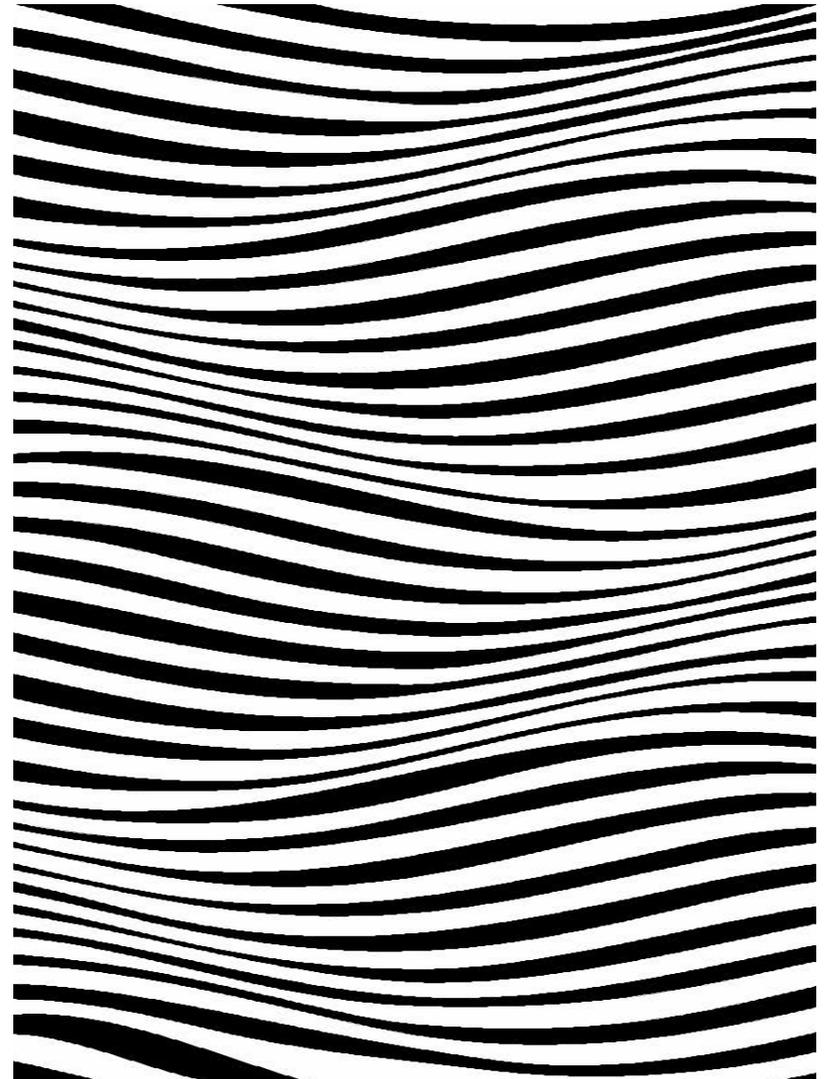
## Creating new Cognitive Patterns:

The process of associating =

Setting the conditions for grasping  
for different things and bringing  
them together

Connecting the Unconnected

Making sense of and synthesize  
novel connections



# Innovative Thinking Skills: Discovery Behaviors

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Supporting Cognitive Skills

Engage in Discovery Activities

**1) Questioning** : High Q/A ratio = questions (Q) not only outnumber answers (A) but are valued as highly as good answers.

**2) Observing** : Carefully watch the world around you to gain insights and ideas for new ways of doing things – customers, products, services, technologies, social movements

[www.innovatorsdna.com](http://www.innovatorsdna.com) Self Assessment and Development Guide

# Innovative Thinking Skills: Discovery Behaviors

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Supporting Cognitive Skills

Engage in Discovery Activities

**3) Idea networking** : Actively searching for new ideas by talking to people who may offer radically different views  
This is different than social or resource networking.

**4) Experimenting:** Trying out new stuff, piloting new ideas. Exploring intellectually and experientially.

[www.innovatorsdna.com](http://www.innovatorsdna.com) Self Assessment and Development Guide



# Getting Started: Clear your Mindset

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What if ?? > What just happened ??

Disruption has been do FOR us >  
Disruption has been TO us

Untether from today: NO timeline.  
Open mind to art of possibility.

Expect to learn and iterate >  
Not “do” and conclude.

Visionary > Exact  
Impressionist painting > Photograph

# Getting Started: What do you know to be true (but no more)

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What is our  
**purpose?**

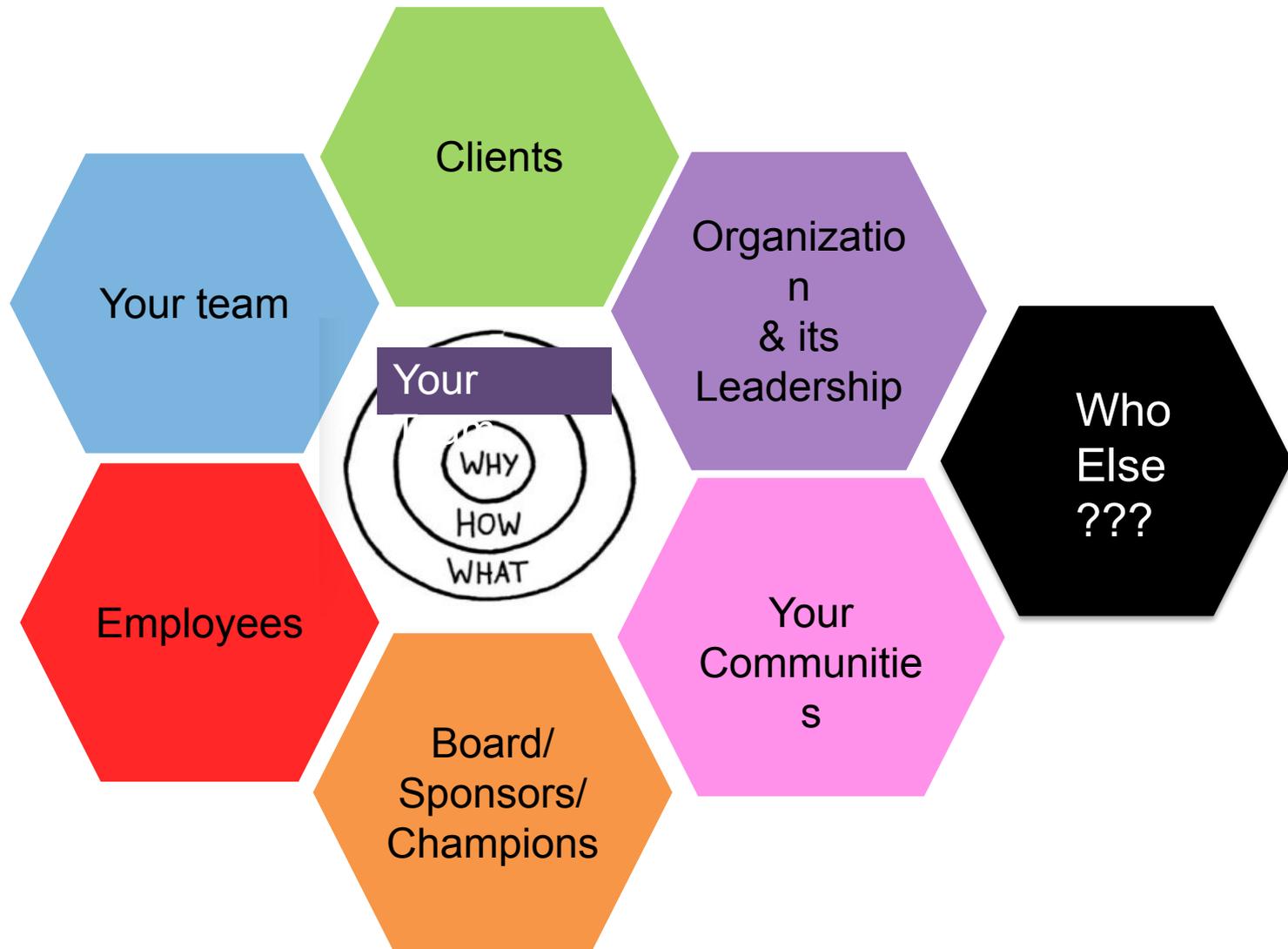
What are our **core  
competencies?**

Who is our  
**customer?**



# Getting Started: Invite ALL your Stakeholders in the Room

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# Innovation Practices: Opposable Thinking Sessions

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Create odd couples, triplets or quadruplets to spark associational thinking

What if we combined this with that?

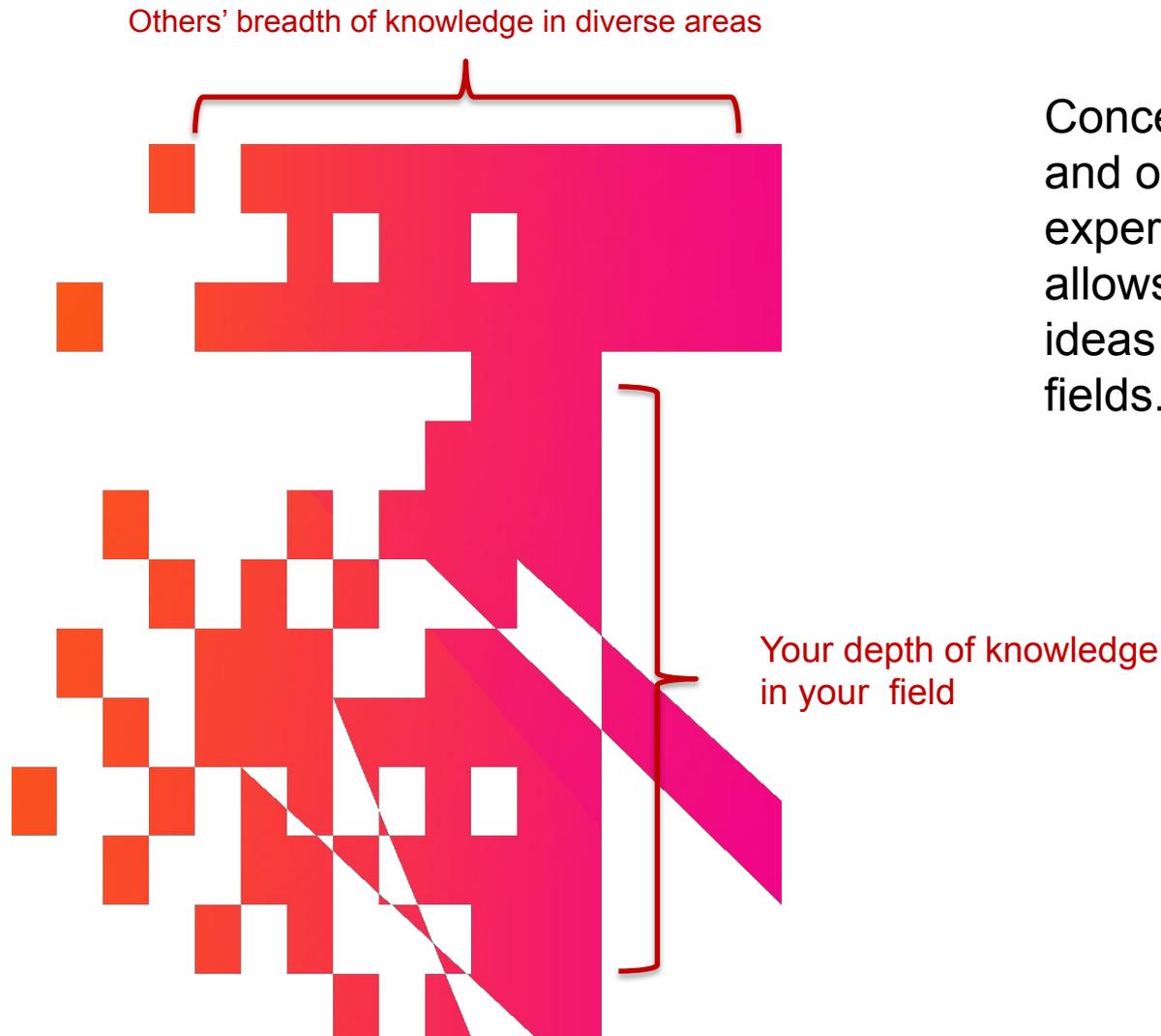
What would happen if this met that and that?

Or, what else????



# Innovation Practices: Convene a “T” Group

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Concept = your depth and other's breadth of expertise/experience allows you to import ideas from other fields.

# Innovation Practices: Zoom In & Out

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- 1) Zoom in: Dive Deep into the details to understand the nuances of your business/mission (i.e.- client experience)
- 2) Zoom out: Fly high to see how that detail fits into the bigger picture.
- 3) Thinking “laterally:” The movement between in-out often makes for new associations.
- 4) What do you learn?

# Innovation Practices: Prioritize Time to Think

Innovative entrepreneurs spend 50% of their time in Discovery Behaviors.

## The Innovator's DNA

Clayton M. Christenson,  
Jeff Dyer,  
Hal Gregersen

“Everything we do depends for its quality on the thinking we do first.”

Time to Think  
Nancy Kline



# Tips for “Re-railing” an Innovation Session

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- “Either/or” 3X ? Both are wrong! Together ask: *“What else? “How else?”*
- Unlock limiting thinking: *“If things could be exactly right for you in this situation, how would they have to change?”*
- Behind blame is a request. So *what’s your request?*

# Innovative Thinking = Your Leadership Lab

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Builds comfort with uncertainty and ambiguity

Creates Learning cultures – fail with discipline – learn - course correct

Encourages a willingness to experiment

Engages employees as part of the solution Fosters collaboration and psychological safety.

Promotes Inclusion and Diversity

Thinking feels good!



# To keep the conversation going!

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# Cindy Levine Group

## About Cindy

Cindy is a certified Executive Coach and Talent Advisor who partners with organizations to build leadership capacity relevant for today's complex world. As executive coach, Cindy promotes C-level and high potential leaders to become high impact contributors and self-sustaining leaders – Innovators, Collaborators, Adaptors, Engagers; Self-Aware, Present. As advisor, she works with organizations to implement strategic and cultural change, build organizational and operating capacity, and strengthen teams.

Cindy brings to her coaching and advisory relationships 'C suite' leadership and operating experience developed in a successful twenty-five year career transforming dynamic financial service businesses in start-up, turnaround, growth and M&A situations. As Chief Operating Officer (COO) for JPMorgan US Private and high profile Investment Banking businesses, Cindy earned a reputation for innovating change, motivating teams and achieving results. Cindy's clients appreciate her management and operating credibility across both client-facing and internal functions. She has a track record of coaching leaders to build self-awareness and leadership skills so they can align strategy, talent and operations for maximum business impact.

A champion for emerging leaders, Cindy is completing a study that looks at how Gen Y women define leadership and how companies can maximize the impact of these future leaders. As Adjunct Faculty, she taught Values Based Leadership in a Women & Leadership certification program at Antioch University of Santa Barbara (AUSB) from 2013-15.

She cares deeply about social entrepreneurs and leverages her operating background and coaching to help them scale their enterprises and build leadership capacity through fellow-based programs like Acumen Fund, Echoing Green, Draper Richard Kaplan, Mulago Foundation. She serves on the Board of Directors of VisionSpring, a pioneering social enterprise providing access of affordable eyeglasses to the working poor globally.

Cindy holds a Masters in Economics Development from John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and a Bachelors of Arts from Mount Holyoke College. She holds a PCC accreditation by the International Coach Federation and completed her coaching certification and a Master Coach Program at the Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara. She is certified in the Hogan and EQi assessment tools. She lives in Bend, Oregon and New York City with her husband.

## Representative Clients

### Private Sector (Entrepreneurial and Corporate)

ABC	ESPN
AIG	MetLife
Ann Inc.	NY Life Investments
AXA	New York Stock Exchange
Bechtel Corp.	OnDeck (FinTech)
Birchbox	Pfizer
Burberry USA	Ross Retail
Deckers Brands	Royal Bank of Canada
Deloitte	Standard & Poor's
Ernst & Young	Univision

### Social Impact Funds, Enterprises and NGOs

Acumen Fund  
Echoing Green  
Draper Richards Foundation  
Mulago Foundation  
Global Health Solutions  
Hot Bread Kitchen  
One Acre Fund  
Pro Mujer  
Spark MicroGrant  
STIR Education  
VisionSpring

### Non-Profits/Education

Antioch University of Santa Barbara  
Breast Cancer Research Foundation  
Consumer Reports  
Fordham University School of Business  
Kelly School of Business (Univ. of Indiana)  
Museum of Arts and Design  
Planned Parenthood Federation  
Visiting Nurse Services of New York