



The Innovator's Accelerator

A groundbreaking online experience to teach innovation skills

The Innovator's Accelerator program utilizes a mix of interactive content, real-world examples and team projects to increase the user's innovative skills. And once the core skills are learned, the program teaches participants how to apply the skills with their team and make real change in their organization.

The Program consists of 24-30 contact hours and includes state-of-the-art content, including:

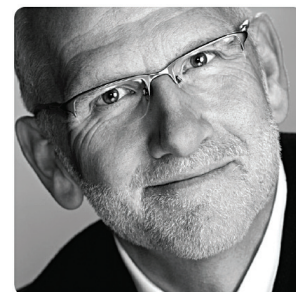
- Engaging instructional videos from Professors Clayton Christensen (Harvard Business School), Jeff Dyer (Wharton) and Hal Gregersen (INSEAD)
- Real-world examples of innovative companies and individuals brought to life through documentary-style videos
- Faculty-facilitated discussion of key concepts in the course
- Team project assignments—based on the company's actual challenges and opportunities, when applicable—to reinforce skills
- Visual snapshots of user progression with the Skills Tracker and, Impact Meter.
- Optional bonus activities to further build the individual's five innovation skills



Clayton Christensen



Jeff Dyer



Hal Gregersen

Program Module Summary

The program is divided into 6 modules, each focusing on an actionable innovation skill, and contains a total of 19 individual lessons.

1) Innovation in Context

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Study: McDonald's

Takeaways:

- There are three types of innovation: growth, sustaining, and efficiency. A successful company needs all three.
- Innovation occurs at two levels: individual and organizational.
- In order for innovation to thrive, we must have innovative individuals within an innovative organization.
- Innovation can be learned.

2) Your Innovation Potential: The 5 Skills

Lecturer: Jeff Dyer

Case Study: Under Armour

Takeaways:

- Creativity is one-third genetic and two-thirds learned.
- People have more creative capacity than they think.
- There are 5 skills necessary to developing more innovative ideas: questioning, observing, networking, experimenting, and associating.

3) Understanding the Customer's Job to Be Done

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Study: High Tech High School

Takeaways:

- In order to innovate we must understand why people buy products.
- If companies want to be innovative they must focus not on the customer, but on the job the customer is trying to get done.
- High Tech High School in San Diego has been very successful teaching at-risk students because they recognize what motivates their students: feeling successful every day.

4) Questioning Skills

Lecturer: Hal Gregersen

Case Studies: Polaroid, Jet Blue, Evernote

Takeaways:

- Innovators spend more time asking questions than giving answers.
- Asking questions that are provocative or disruptive can lead to innovation.
- Provocative questions challenge the status quo and evoke emotion.
- Taking just a few minutes to write down questions about a problem can uncover answers never imagined.

5) Creating New Markets with Growth Innovation

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Study: Square

Takeaways:

- A growth innovation is an offering that, when first introduced, is complex, expensive, and used by only a few people and then transforms into a solution that is affordable, simple, convenient, and can be used by many.
- Growth innovation is the engine of excitement within companies.

6) Observing Skills

Lecturer: Hal Gregersen

Case Study: Proctor and Gamble

Takeaways:

- Observation means paying close attention in order to gain insights.
- Successful innovators make observations with an eye toward answering a question.
- Observations often yield surprising insights and answers that wouldn't be accessible otherwise.

7) Networking Skills

Lecturer: Jeff Dyer

Case Study: Salesforce

Takeaways:

- Networking for innovation is about networking for ideas.
- People of different ages, incomes, races, and professions will give unique perspectives when solving problems.
- To build a bigger network: be intriguing and don't be afraid of rejection; tap experts in the field; attend networking events; and form personal networking groups.

8) Maintaining Success with Sustaining Innovation

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Studies: Sony, EMI, Online Learning

Takeaways:

- Sustaining innovations allow companies to extend success by making better products they can sell to their current customers for better profits.
- New companies shouldn't focus on sustaining innovation because it benefits the existing leaders in the industry at the new company's expense.

9) Experimenting Skills

Lecturer: Hal Gregersen

Case Study: Nordstrom

Takeaways:

- Experimenting can take many forms: trying something different, taking something apart, conducting an experiment, making a prototype.
- Asking the question "Is there any connection..." is the essence of experimentation.

10) Displacing the Leaders with Efficiency Innovation

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Studies: Mini Mills, Target

Takeaways:

- Efficiency innovations enable newcomers to an industry to displace the established leaders by creating a lower-cost business model.
- Efficiency innovations start in the low end of a market and move up.
- In order to survive when efficiency innovation hits the market, the established leaders have to set up a completely different business unit and give it a charge to "kill the parent."

11) Associating Skills

Lecturer: Jeff Dyer

Case Study: Rent the Runway

Takeaways:

- Associating is the ability to connect things that haven't been connected before to solve problems in new and different ways.
- Einstein – "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. Combining ideas in new ways is the essential feature in productive thought."
- Questioning, observing, experimenting, and networking feed the ability to associate productively.

12) Business Model Innovation

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Study: ChotuKool

Takeaways:

- The only way for companies to evolve is to create new business models; companies that don't will eventually die.
- A business model is made up of a value proposition, resources to deliver the proposition, processes that define how the resources are put together, and a profit formula that determines what kind of value propositions a company can deliver.
- A corporation can evolve, even though the individual business units in it do not.

13) Inside the Innovative Organization: 3 Ps

Lecturer: Jeff Dyer

Case Studies: Google, Amazon

Takeaways:

- Innovative organizations are characterized by having a 3P framework: a mix of People, Processes, and Philosophies that encourage innovation.
- Innovative organizations often have leaders at the top who hire other innovators and encourage innovation throughout the company.
- Creative leadership is critical to an innovative organization.

14) People: Balancing Discovery and Delivery

Lecturer: Hal Gregersen

Case Study: Cirque du Soleil

Takeaways:

- Very few innovators are good at both innovation and execution.
- Organizations and teams within organizations need a balance of people with strong discovery skills and strong delivery skills.
- "Innovation that disrupts an industry is not an individual sport." Steve Jobs was incredibly innovative but he got fired from Apple in part because he didn't honor and respect the skills of the delivery-driven people within the company.
- Newer companies are driven by innovators while more established ones are driven by execution experts.
- The innovation premium is the amount above a company's intrinsic value the market adds for companies believed to be innovative.

15) Processes: Organizing for Innovation

Lecturer: Jeff Dyer

Case Study: Coinstar

Takeaways:

- The DNA of innovative companies mirrors that of innovative individuals.
- Innovative companies set processes that encourage the 5 discovery skills.
- Companies need processes for finding, training, and rewarding innovation.
- There are three principles to organizing for disruptive innovation:
 1. Small teams
 2. Diverse teams
 3. Autonomous teams

16) Philosophies: Strategies Are Not Eternal

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Study: Zahner

Takeaways:

- You don't have to get a strategy exactly right the first time, but you do need to support being able to adjust strategy as the landscape changes.
- Strategies will inevitably need to change over time. For example, in a technology offering, it's often right start with proprietary architecture and change to a modular architecture as the industry evolves.
- According to a HBS study, for of successful entrepreneurs, "the strategy that led to (their) success was completely different than the strategy that they intended to pursue."

17) Overcoming Financial Innovation Killers

Lecturer: Clay Christensen

Case Study: Proctor and Gamble

Takeaways:

- Many don't know how to measure the true value of innovation.
- Many decision-makers focus too much on metrics such as net present value, RONA, or rigid IRRs that underestimate the value of new ideas.
- The innovator's challenge is finding new ways of assessing this value.

18) Overcoming Non-Financial Innovation Killers

Lecturer: Jeff Dyer

Case Study: Twitter

Takeaways:

- When creating a culture of innovation be aware of innovation killers: no confidence or risk appetite from the top, no time, no rewards
- One way to think about the importance of innovation is with a simple question: Would this company still be in business in 10 years if it's doing the exactly same thing as it's doing now?

19) Leading Innovation

Lecturer: Hal Gregersen

Case Studies: Toyota, Esso Fuel

Takeaways:

- "We change organizations by changing individuals."
- There are three barriers to change: failure to notice a problem, failure to react, and failure to react fast enough.
- In order to get individuals to change, we need to show people why they need to change, give them the skills to change, and keep supporting them until the change is complete.

Debrief: Discussion Questions

As valuable as the content is in each lesson, an equally important part of the learning takes place during the post-lesson debrief. Program participants reflect on the material via curated online discussion forums to make what they're watching and learning in the course really sticks.

Here are some representative questions:

- Identify the functions or divisions in your workplace that are more or less tolerant of risk and analyze why.
- Polaroid was an innovative company, but it went bankrupt. What questions should they have been asking to prevent bankruptcy?
- If you were in a leadership position at Apple right now, what would you do to try and foster a new growth innovation?
- If you were starting a company today tasked with displacing a leader through an efficiency innovation, what industry or company would you choose to target and why? How would you approach the challenge?
- What assumptions around the entertainment rental market did Netflix break or transform with their launch? What assumptions did they break or transform by pivoting their offering away from DVD rental by mail and towards online streaming?

Team Innovation Projects

In addition to independent skill-building practice, hands-on innovation projects with small, 5-person teams give participants the chance to build their personal competency in the 5 innovation skills. Participants come together to solve real-world business problems; in a dedicated cohort, these problems can be specific to their own company. Team projects take about 11 hours over 6 weeks.

Teams may be distributed or co-located and may include people from one company in a dedicated peer cohort or multiple companies. The project provides a valuable opportunity to build collaboration abilities and connect with people from different domains or parts of the organization, reinforcing the 5 innovation skills.

Facilitator Guides

Participants are given explicit guidance in how to interact with their teams in the form of facilitator guides that cover preparation for team meetings, agendas with goals and outcomes, instructions for facilitating project work sessions, and follow-up items to sustain momentum throughout the course.

A learning experience for life

After the course is complete, participants will emerge with their own “innovation toolkit,” a compendium of ideas, insights and inspiration they’ve gathered along the way and saved into a personalized PDF they can reference anytime they need a refresher. Combined with what they’ve learned during the 6 weeks of the course, participants will be ready to put the skills they’ve mastered into practice within their organization.