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An Innovation Framework for a New Future

Given the level of disruption caused by COVID-19, many businesses are going to need a robust innovation framework in order to support effective innovation and adapt to the new normal.

Innovation is a competitive imperative for all businesses, not just start-ups and large corporates. This means that owner-operated businesses and SMEs generally, need to find a way to engage in ongoing innovation.

An ideal solution for SMEs to manage disruption and maximise long-term success, is to develop their innovation competencies by adopting a practical innovation framework. That is, a framework that focusses on securing solutions within the bounds of what:

- People (the users of an innovation) truly need or desire, at a deeper rational and emotional level
- Is technically feasible for the business to achieve
- Is economically viable/profitable for the business to produce



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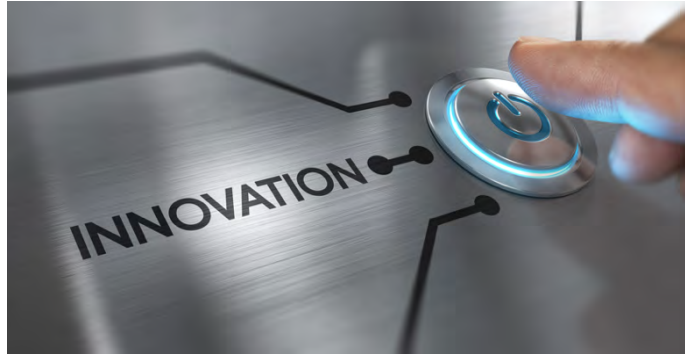
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Three Critical Questions

Regardless of whether the user is internal to the business or an external party (such as a customer), you need an innovation framework that allows you to address the questions:

- Do we know our user(s)?
- Do we understand the real needs of our users?
- Can we meet those needs (technically and cost-effectively)?



That is, a structured approach to solution development that encourages a mindset of curiosity and discovery within the context of the business's strategic direction so that you can:

- Focus on the intended users of the innovation, their needs and desires (and avoid assuming they simply replicate your values, beliefs and needs)
- Ensure that your innovation efforts are focused on solving the right problem(s) and avoid the temptation to make assumptions about critical aspects of the problem your innovation is seeking to solve
- Focus on the viability and feasibility of your innovation efforts (keeping them grounded in the practical constraints you operate within)
- Promote the cognitive flexibility needed to adapt to a variety of challenges
- Empower creativity and encourage experimentation and learning without making unfounded assumptions or jumping straight into solution mode

Benefits of an Innovation Framework

When applied correctly, an innovation framework offers a disciplined approach that powers:

- Value creation
- Meaningful differentiation that contributes to your competitive advantage

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- Innovation capability
- Strategic management of your business
- Maximum success

Fortitude's User-Driven Innovation Framework

Fortitude's User-Driven Innovation Framework is illustrated at the end of the blog and consists of four major components that seek to:

- Establish the prerequisites needed for efficient and effective innovation activity
- Explore the problem the innovation opportunity aims to address, to build understanding and ensure you solve the right problem
- Ensure you take the right approach to explore the range of potential solutions and to arrive at the most suitable solution in an efficient and effective manner
- Capture the commercial value by taking the solution to market, encouraging adoption and driving demand

Each major component of the Fortitude User-Driven Innovation Framework incorporates the concepts of divergent and convergent thinking where the:

- Divergent thinking process seeks to generate creative ideas by exploring many possibilities (a process that relies heavily on intuition and creativity)
- Convergent thinking process seeks to test and evaluate the possibilities generated during the divergent thinking process, to narrow and refine the field of options to those most promising (a process that relies on more traditional analytical thinking)

In the framework, the diamond shapes of each phase depict these concepts. The expanding lines represent divergent thinking as they move away from the central nodes. The contracting lines depict the concept of convergent thinking as they move towards the central nodes.

Each expansion and contraction represents a separate phase in the User-Driven Innovation Framework.

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In addition to the four phases involved with the User-Driven Innovation Framework, the core practices of empathy, prototyping, and experimentation underpin the process.

These practices are not discrete steps in the process, but foundation practices that are applied throughout the User-Driven Innovation.

Ultimately, the User-Driven Innovation Framework seeks to utilise the best of both the creative and the analytical aspects of thinking to overcome the inadequacies of either one approach.

If you would like to learn more about how you can apply the User-Driven Innovation Framework to your business, give the team at **Fortitude Business Consulting** a call on **1300 551 040**.

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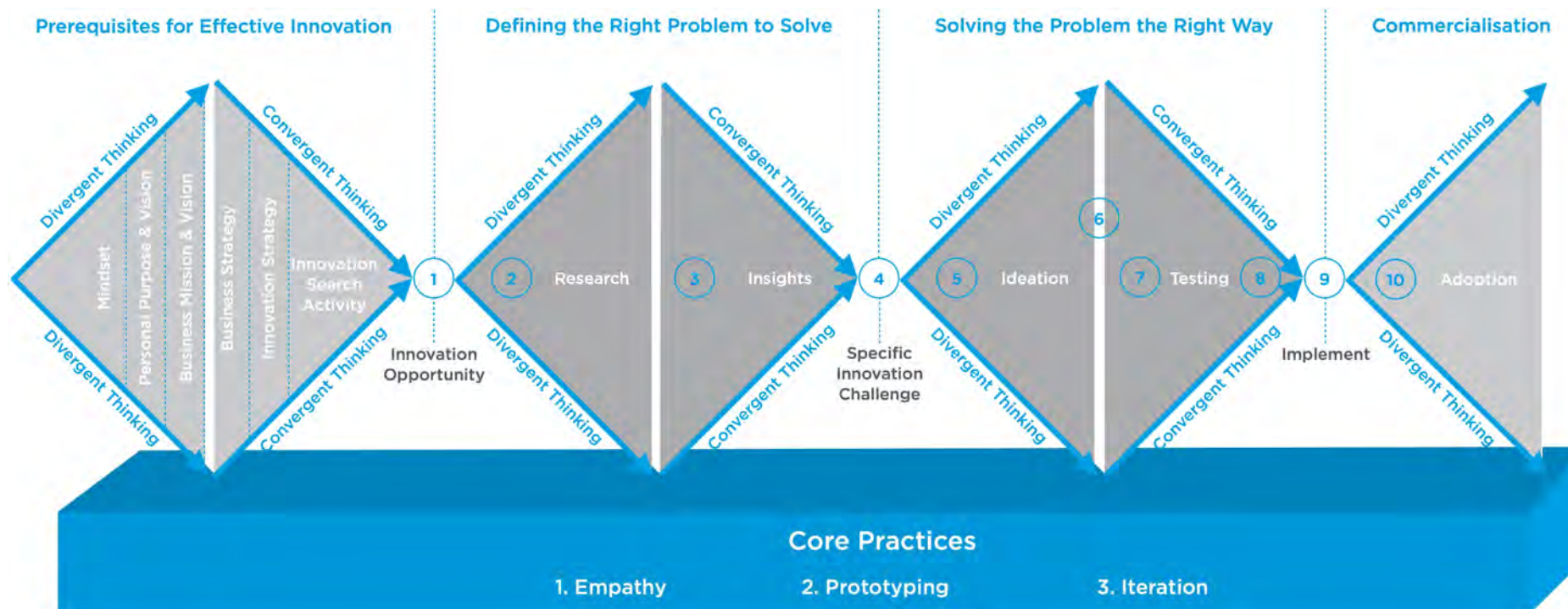
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- 1 Start with an innovation opportunity that aligns with your Business and Innovation Strategies
- 2 Conduct appropriate research into the nature of the problem to ensure you uncover its intricacies and true nature from the perspective of the user
- 3 Analyse the results of your research to make sure you understand the nature of the problem and build insights that matter to users

- 4 Articulate a clear and specific innovation challenge that will serve a meaningful user need (this may differ significantly from the original innovation opportunity identified)
- 5 Explore ideas for potential solutions to the innovation challenge
- 6 Short list the most promising ideas for evaluation

- 7 Test the most promising ideas
- 8 Select the preferred solution(s)
- 9 Implement it/them
- 10 Drive adoption and capture value

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