



Innovation guide

# A model approach for genuine innovation

Innovation and Technology  
Special Interest Group

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Smart decisions. Lasting value.

# Innovation is not just about Technological change, it involves new ways of thinking.

## Introduction

The pace of business life is speeding up. More information is available, which increases the competition in the market. In this context, the demands placed on those providing professional services increases and innovation is a requirement, not an option.

According to the findings of a year of work by the Crowe Global Innovation and Technology group, the will to innovate is clearly present in most cases, but a proper strategic approach and pro-innovation culture is needed.

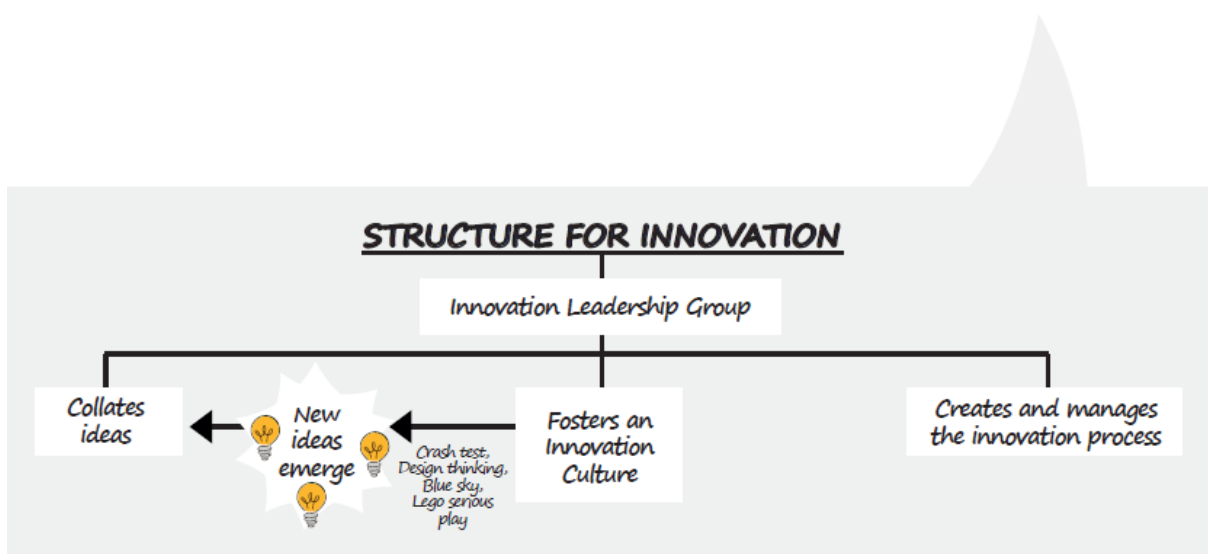
There are countless examples of technological changes which have enabled new services and new ways of working over the last two decades, but we need to be clear that innovation is not just about technological change, it involves new ways of thinking.

## The innovation strategy

A structure for Innovation Using the word “structure” does not imply following a bureaucratic structure but requires the responsibility of all those involved in the innovation process to coordinate and drive that process forward.

It is important to avoid duplication of efforts and to value the synergies between different ideas. All this requires suitable individuals from various parts of the firms to be linked together in a network dedicated to innovation.

A simple but effective structure for innovation for the individual member firms is suggested in the following diagram.



# We need to foster a pro-innovation culture.

## Innovation Culture

A first stage to make the structure work, is to foster a pro-innovation culture where individuals feel capable of putting forward new ideas into a 'Why?' 'What if?' basis. There are three things which we need to do to start developing that:

1. To communicate clearly and consistently over a lengthy period (years) to all who work for a firm, the value of innovation, its benefits, and the downside of not doing this.
2. To remove the barriers to innovation while reassuring some that we will adopt a reasonable, sensible and practical approach to making changes.

3. To take the appropriate actions, that strategically 'nudge' the individuals into a creative mood. Creating that culture includes, but is not limited to:
  - a) Designing exercises for identifying problems, finding solutions and thinking creatively,
  - b) Creating the spaces for devoting time and efforts to enable a culture of 'anybody has good ideas',
  - c) Training our people in entrepreneurial techniques, to ensure the intrapreneurs we retain in our firms are not prevented by unconscious messages to thrive and free their talent.

Professional services firms are designed to run processes smoothly, remain skeptical and focus on quality and efficiency. Disruption comes from a very different angle, characterized by creating new methods, thinking differently as the norm and enjoying trying and failing.

The process of becoming innovative is not straightforward either at individual or at group level; it requires creating the spaces and incentives to flow creatively, take risks and move from the idea to the prototype quickly.

There are very powerful intervention tools to put ideas to grow, such as design thinking workshops, brainstorming sessions and other techniques that foster business-oriented creativity. Also, design thinking is becoming the norm for the most creative companies\*.



\*For further references check the open source tools provided by Stanford University at: <https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources-collections/a-virtual-crash-course-in-design-thinking>

## Innovation Process

Having good ideas is crucial. But ideas should evolve from the initial excitement to cash flows, which takes time.

Consequently, a rational process is needed to increase the chances of success. It ensures that those who want to innovate are encouraged and those who might put up barriers to innovation are deterred.

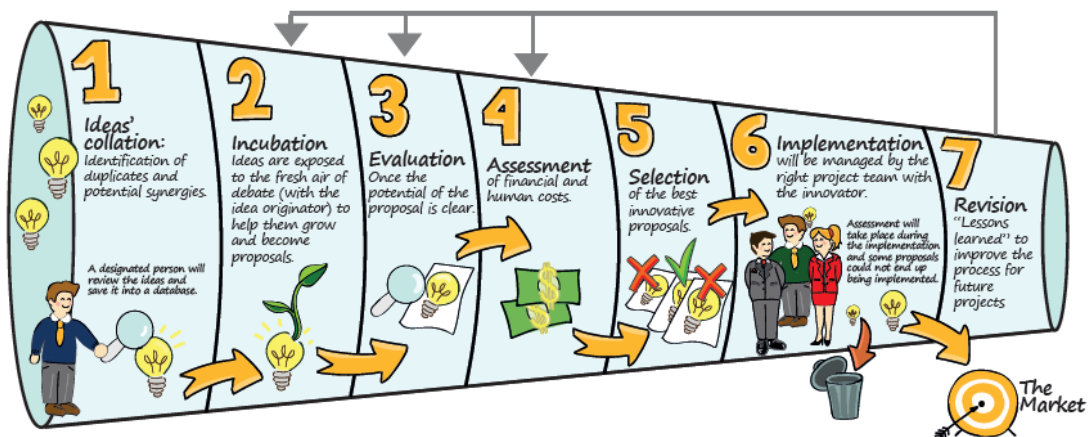
A process to achieve these goals has 7 stages: ideas' generation and collation, incubation, evaluation, assessment, selection, implementation and revision

Indeed, it is possible to over complicate this course. We should start with the simple process described above, which should be operated by a small Innovation Leadership Group.

It needs to be accepted that the Group will be responsible for each stage of the process and, at any one time, may well have ideas and proposals in all stages of completion.



## The Innovation Process



This process will help ideas become new products or services.



# Going beyond: Open innovation



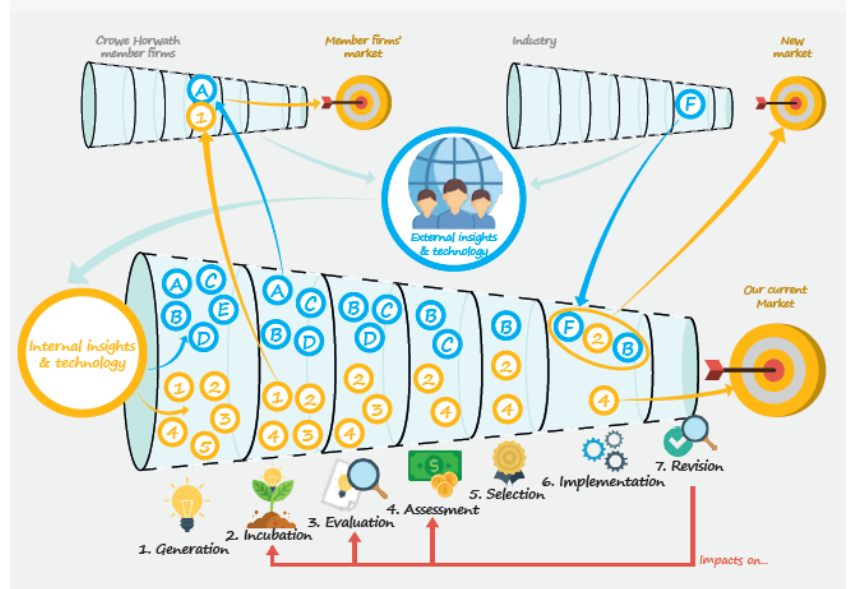
## Open Innovation Process

This is an extended concept that could improve the innovation process in a networked organization like ours. Open innovation allows the collaboration between Crowe member firms and the industry,

Collaboration between member firms and the industry can happen at any stage of the innovation process, leading to more ideas being developed. In the “closed innovation”, an idea would most likely fail because it would not have the means or the market size to thrive.

To make open innovation work, collaboration platforms must be developed to connect the firm’s pipelines, allowing the different “funnels” of innovation to dialogue between them.

## The Open Innovation Process



## Conclusion

Member firms will need to follow up and work regarding the process described above, as to have a similar approach which maximizes their own successful innovation and allows the collaboration when possible.

Member firms looking to implement these processes should liaise with the SIG to discuss their plans and find ways of collaboration both on the local, regional and global stage.



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