COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

Essentials

FOR SOLVING TOUGH PROBLEMS

CoCreative™

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Collaborative Innovation Essentials: For Solving Tough Problems

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What is Collaborative Innovation?

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A Values-Based Approach to helping people who don't know each other and often don't like each other solve complex problems together

A Pragmatic Process with phases and steps to help guide your network's work toward systemic change

A Set of Practical Tools and Methods that help establish genuine safety, trust, and engagement

A Set of Dynamic Patterns to monitor and manage to ensure success

A Fundamental Belief that people can and will solve big problems when they have effective processes, tools, methods and support

What Collaborative Innovation is NOT

A Prescription that You Should Follow to the Letter. Use your own judgment, experience, intuition, and curiosity to guide your work and, most importantly, decide with your Network and Design Team how to shape the way forward together,

A Predictable, Linear Process. Even though our roadmap is presented in a linear fashion, remember than the map is not the territory and complex systems change is evolving, iterative, and highly dynamic. You can't predict what will happen but you can asses what you've done, where you are now, and what might make sense to do next.

Where did Collaborative Innovation Come From?

Collaborative Innovation is a highly integral approach to change. It provides a way to align people around a powerful shared intent, connect the change system, understand the target system we are working to change, and to engage whole people in catalyzing that change in very tangible and practical ways. To do that requires that we draw on many disciplines.

The heart of Collaborative Innovation lies in the work of Susan Davis, a social entrepreneur who developed the "Key Initiator Network" approach and who used it to launch a number of high-impact networks, including several focused on growing impact investing, increasing the number of women in senior leadership roles in corporations, and growing the global supply of solar energy. Susan is the true visionary behind this work and made the connection between multi-stakeholder collaboration and social innovation long before it became the trend it is today.

Susan's approach was further developed in partnership with Alisa Gravitz at Green America, who complemented Susan's more intuitive approach with her process design expertise.

CoCreative has developed the approach into a teachable process model and has integrated theory, concepts, and methods from 26 disciplines to further develop Collaborative Innovation into a comprehensive, highly adaptable, and accessible approach to complex change.

For more information on the disciplines we've drawn from, see the article "The Elephant of Complex Systems Change" in the Blog section of our website at wearecocreative.com.

When is Collaborative Innovation Most Helpful?

Several conditions point to Collaborative Innovation being an effective approach:

- The challenge is complex and systemic in nature, and no one person has a significant view on the whole problem space;
- No single organization (or sector) has the capacity or resources to solve the problem alone;
- Stakeholders have highly divergent worldviews and frameworks for defining the problem;
- The change system (that we need in order to change the larger system) is incoherent, unorganized, and lacks a common agenda and ways of working together;
- The constraints that the problem is subject to and the resources needed to solve it are dynamic and change over time;
- There is some level of anticipation among key stakeholders that new, more integrative forms of value could emerge from changing market conditions in the private sector, or new policy could emerge from shifting political contexts;
- Previous attempts to convene conventional stakeholder groups have failed to produce rapid and aligned action among diverse stakeholders.

6 Key Reasons to Use Collaborative Innovation

Why	How	What
It's Effective	By getting the whole system in the room to develop a shared goal and strategic approach, we create the right set of interventions for what's needed now.	▪ **Solar Circle is on track to bring solar to 50% of U.S. energy supply by 2050 (on track for 2025)** through policy development, industry coordination, research, and launching new companies
It's Efficient	Because many players contribute their time, expertise, energy and resources, the cost of systemic change is lower than with traditional program approaches.	▪ **Solar Circle** spent $700,000 over 11 years, where funders would have spent $10-20 million for the same impact ▪ **Better Paper** has spent $650,000 over 7 years where funders would have spent $4 million+
It's Resilient	▪ The changes deliver **meaning and value** for individual stakeholders and the whole system ▪ They are **embedded** into cultural values and the economic analysis ▪ The change they create gets **institutionalized**	
It's Adaptable	▪ The **focus** can (and will) change over time as situation evolves ▪ The **scope and scale** can be narrow or broad, small to massive ▪ The **"change targets"** change as the situation evolves ▪ The **participants** shift as the situation evolves	

It Builds Momentum	Most of all, Collaborative Innovation, when done well, builds powerful momentum in the change system, and draws more resources, power, and energy to the work. By generating greater dissatisfaction with the current state of the system and "throwing a better party," we attract the larger system to join us in the work!
It Builds Ownership	Doing the work together, in real time, in a way that draws on everyone's unique experience, knowledge, and skills builds true ownership, so there's less selling to others to engage them in the work. Since we all made it, we all own it.

How Collaborative Innovation is Different

"Collaboration as Usual"	Collaborative Innovation Approach
Begin with what everyone can agree to	Start with a powerful goal
"Open Door" Policy	Be highly selective in choosing participants
Get the "decision-makers" in the room	Get the whole system in the room
Work, and then present the work to stakeholders	Work in real time (with everyone in the room)
Keep pushing for alignment and pushing back resistance	Leverage the underlying political and cultural tensions
Focus on programs that the decision-makers believe will be most effective	Build empathy and insights about what people are really experiencing
Just give people the info they need to fulfill their role	Build a collective view of the whole system
Conduct research and data analysis and present it	Make sense of the system together
Only make the solution after you've made the decisions	Prototype early and often

Related Article: "It's Not Collaboration as Usual..."
(http://www.wearecocreative.com/different)

Solar Circle Highlights

Year	Focus/Accomplishment
2003	**Goal: 50% of energy by 2050 (solar < 0.001%)**
2004-2005	Research/Metrics: what scale & success look like
2005-2006	Media/messaging – industry & policy education
2006-2008	Policy alignment; industry groups
2008-2009	Solar silicon facilities
2010-2011	Investment capacity
2011-2012	Storage/efficiency integration
2013-2015	Grid management/pricing systems to support continued growth
2015	**Google: 50% solar by 2025; MIT 50% solar by 2050**

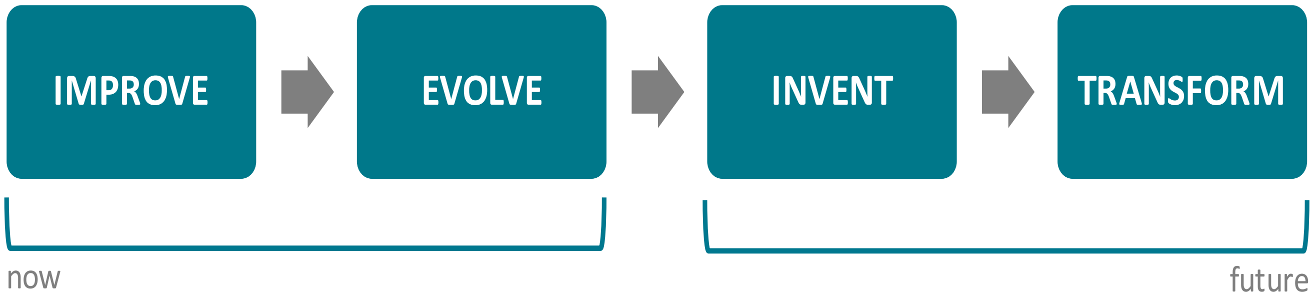
5 Types of Collaborative Innovation Networks

Having developed and supported many different types of Innovation Networks working from the community level to the global level on a whole range of issues, we've noticed that there are basically 5 archetypes of networks:

1. **Social Issue Networks** focus on a social or environmental outcome that isn't market-driven, such as closing gaps in grade-level reading or kindergarten readiness, ending homelessness or addiction, or cleaning up a watershed.
2. **Value Chain Networks** focus on developing new markets or growing markets for existing solutions, like growing local food systems, a healthcare workforce, or job opportunities in a certain area. Solar Circle, for example, which has been advancing strategies to grow value chains globally for solar photovoltaics since 2002.
3. **Supply Chain Networks** focus on labor or environmental challenges in commercial supply chains, such as ensuring livelihoods for producers or eliminating harm to workers.
4. **Sector-Based Networks** are focused on achieving a goal in a specific sector, like engaging healthcare or educational institutions in investing in inclusive community economic development.
5. **Social Venture Strategy Networks** are short-lived networks that we build solely for the purpose of developing a powerful income and impact strategy for a social venture, such as the Human Rights Measurement Initiative. Once the strategy is developed and the venture if up and running, these ad hoc networks dissolve. (Learn more about our Collaborative Strategy approach on our website.)

A CoCreative Approach

4 Levels of Innovation

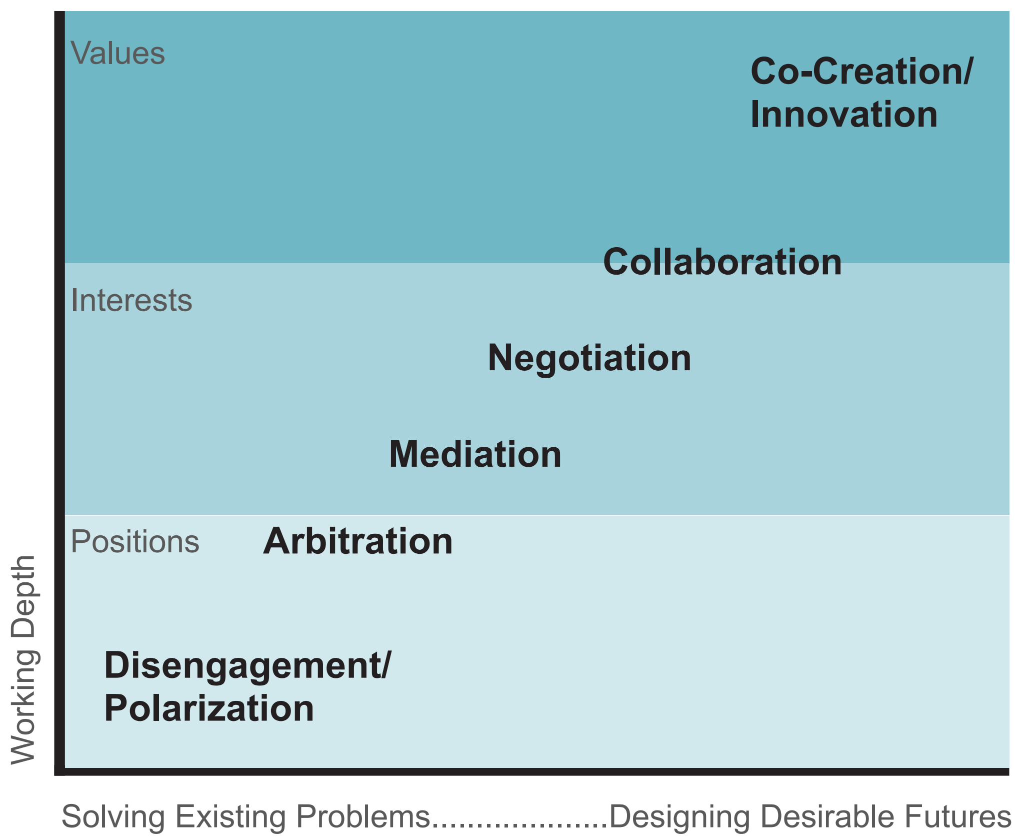


Conventional Approaches
Big tent
Incremental change
Improving existing forms of value

Collaborative Innovation Approach
Leading transformation
Systemic change
Inventing new forms of value

(Four Levels of Innovation is based on the work of Cheskin Research)

Moving to CoCreation



5 Levels of Engagement

1. What's our intent? 2. Where are we now? 3. Where do we need to be? 4. What's necessary to achieve the change we seek?

		Now (existing forms)		Future (new forms)	
	Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**
Impact on system	Understand	Improve[1]	Evolve[1]	Invent[1]	Transform[1]
Use of power[2]	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower (sharing power)
Engagement method	One-way Communication	Arbitration or Direction (someone else decides)	Mediation/Negotiation	Collaboration/Interest-based negotiations/Design	Co-creation/Co-design
"My" experience	I was updated on the work	I gave my input into the work	I gave my input and it's clear that it was considered in the design	I know that my interests are helping to shape the design because I'm at the table	My interests helped shape the vision that's driving all the work
Often appropriate for		Shared Problems	Shared Concerns	Shared Interests	Shared Future
		Resolving conflict (e.g. over a shared resource)	Finding a more agreeable resolution to the focal problem	Designing a win-win solution to a complex shared problem	Co-designing and realizing the shared future we want to create together
Challenges	Making sure the communications "land" and are meaningful	Getting people to agree that the problem is a problem and that it's their problem too	Setting aside favored solutions to allow genuine collaboration	Building genuine empathy and interest in building the capacity of the whole community	Getting people to efficiently and effectively work together from a shared intent

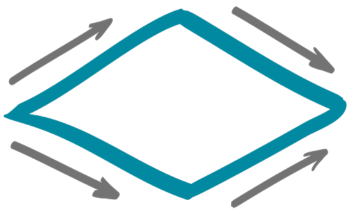
[1] Levels of innovation from Cheskin Research
[2] From the International Association for Public Participation (IAP^2)

6 Phases of Collaborative Innovation

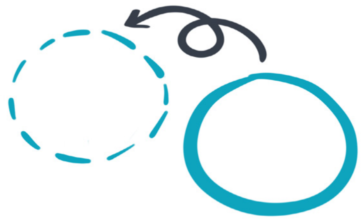
CoCreative has developed a co-design approach to driving transformational change in complex systems. Our practice of collaboration innovation follow six general phases of work designed to establish specific conditions for success.

Phase	Conditions
Aligning around a shared intent	The participants are operating from a powerful goal and a shared analysis of what things need to change
Connecting the change system	The change system is well-defined, organized and engaged
Learning about the system we intend to change	Everyone has a shared understanding of the whole system they are working to change, and the experience of people within that system
Designing the interventions	We have a working set of interventions that will powerfully shift the system toward our goal
Making the solutions	We have moved from initiative concepts and prototypes to pilots to full-scale initiatives
Scaling the solutions	The group and the larger system are advancing multiple solutions on multiple levels in the real world

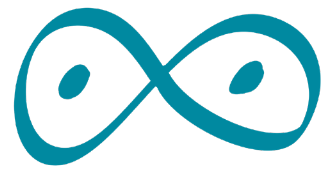
6 Patterns in Collaborative Innovation



Diverging & Converging
It's helpful to be clear and intentional about moving through cycles of divergence and convergences when leading collaboration innovation. There are times when you want to open the network up to greater possibilities, expand the analysis, and generate more ideas. At other times, you need to narrow the scope, focus the analysis and choose which priorities to take forward. Be aware of your own biases and focus on what the group needs at the time.



Checking Back
Checking Back refers to regularly returning to earlier parts of the work to ensure that our current activities are aligned with our network's purpose. In collaborative innovation, this means regularly checking back on the network's Intent (*Is this still the best expression of our shared intent?*), Analysis (*Have we learned new things that should inform our analysis?*), and even composition (*Do we have the people we need to do this work?*).



Leveraging Tensions
Participants in any complex change initiative invariably experience tensions around positions that seem mutually exclusive. These can be sources of polarization and stuckness if allowed to play out covertly.

By framing these tensions as positive assets and helping the group get the best of both values (like the best of action AND learning) your network will collaborate more deeply and design better, more resilient solutions.

Spiraling
Spiraling the goals, analysis, shifts, and potential solutions is a way to increase engagement AND create better thinking and solutions at the same time. Spiraling begins when one person shares her thinking with another person, and adjusts that thinking so they have something that works for both of them. Then these two people engage 4 more people, those people engage 4 others, and so on. Eventually, the analysis and thinking is even shared by people outside the network in the broader community or sector.

The Design Process
Innovation is often perceived as a neat and orderly process, but it's actually messy and unpredictable. It's helpful for participants to understand that design-led innovation will not be a linear process that goes straight from problem to solution. It will feel messy and unclear at times, especially when they are full of insights with no clear path forward, but the strategy and solutions will emerge in time.

(based on The Design Squiggle by Damien Newman at Central Office of Design)

Working Concurrently
People often assume that work in networks needs to happen in a linear, sequential way or that everyone needs have a say in all parts of the work. That not only slows down the work, it's less productive and less engaging for participants, and it can silence diverse voices. Instead, we use methods like silent brainstorming, forming separate teams around network initiatives, and having multiple teams prototype the same solution then drawing the best features from across the diverse prototypes.

I. Aligning Shared Intent

Who is involved in this phase:

Program Team, sometimes an initial Design Team

What's being produced in this phase:

- ❑ Draft Intent Map: Working Goal, Focus & Frame, Success Criteria, Critical questions, Critical shifts, Hypotheses

Why it's important:

- We are grounded in our intent as we engage others in the work (which allows us to be more open and inquiring)
- We have downloaded our assumptions about how things are and need to be

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?

- Varies, but usually 2-4 sessions depending on how much research and iterating is needed

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?

- Program team creates the first iteration, then tests and develops in consultation with Design Team candidates

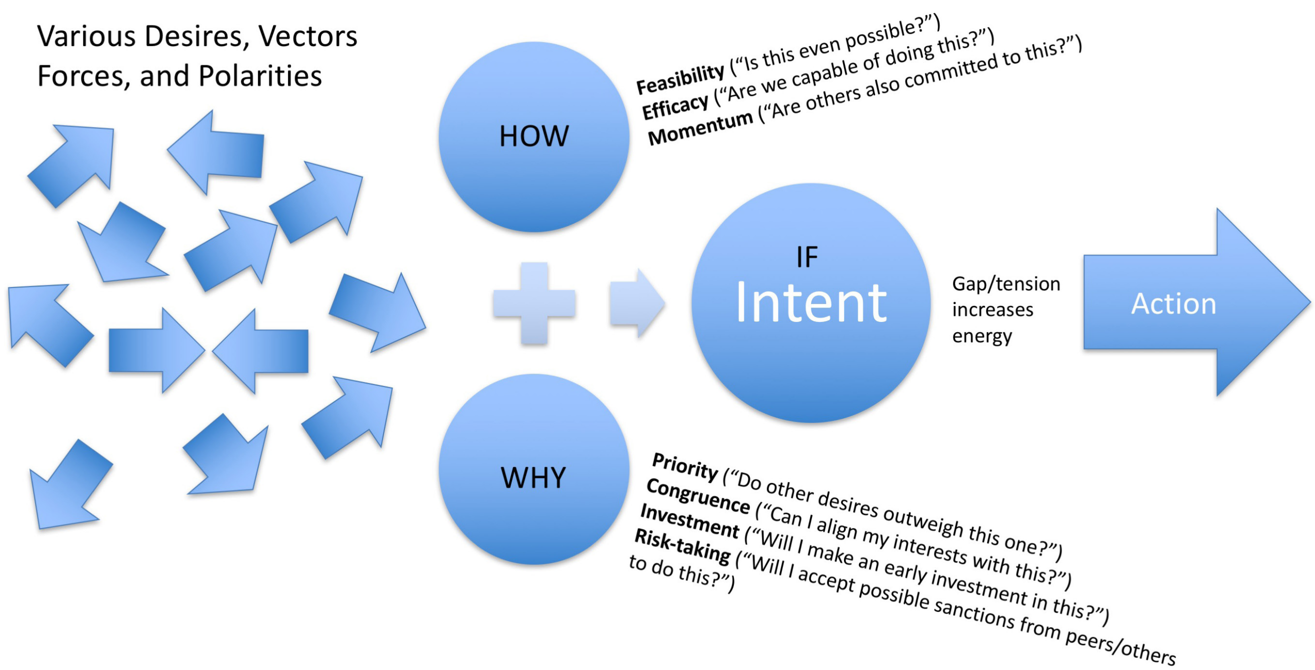
Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?

- In person, sometimes virtual for industry-level initiatives

Why is Shared Intent Important?

A clear and powerful shared intent is fundamental to the success of any collaboration. It keeps diverse stakeholders at the table despite their differences, generates energy and momentum to fuel the work, and establishes the focus for everyone to stay on track amidst competing distractions and political forces.

In any collaborative social innovation process, we begin by developing key elements of intent using the “Intent Map.” The elements include designing a powerful goal (beyond SMART), defining your focus and frame, identifying the critical shifts for real transformative work, and addressing critical questions to guide the intent forward. While most powerful in the early stages of an initiative, the Intent Map is used as the point of reference for the entire span of the collaboration from up-front design, mid-point check-ins, and later-stage evaluations. We describe key elements of intent below.



Drawing on the work of Malle, B. F., Moses, L. J., & Baldwin, D. A. (2001). Intentions and intentionality: Foundations of social cognition. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

6 Key Elements of Shared Intent

Working Goal(s)

Craft an initial goal that meets (as close as possible at this stage) the four elements on the following page.

Focus & Frame

Defining both the focus of your initiative and what goals, concerns or interests are in “frame” for your initiative helps increase engagement and alignment among diverse stakeholders.

Scope

Defining the scope of your initiative is critical to success. Too broad a scope and you’ll have far too much complexity and diversity of interests; too narrow of a scope and people won’t believe that the work will be meaningful and powerful enough to commit to.

Shifts

Setting out the critical shifts that you believe need to happen in the system you’re going to work to change helps to both reveal your assumptions and clarify your intent, both of which make your intent more clear and understandable to others.

Best Result

The question here is, “What will be the best outcome if you succeed in realizing your intent?” If the best outcome is meaningful, inspiring, and compelling, then the initiative is more likely to attract energy, momentum, and resources. If your best result is uninteresting and uninspiring, then it will likely fail to get real traction.

Worst Result

As compelling as the inspiring best result, defining the worst outcome if you DO NOT do your initiative can also be a galvanizing activity. In other words, if you do nothing and the most probable scenario is that, for example, people will fall into joblessness or addiction at unprecedented rates, that’s a pretty compelling reason for people to get behind the work.

Creating Powerful Goals

Many networks that we support have two types of goals: a MAST goal that is more metric-based and specific and an EPIC goal that is more poetic and lyrical. The two types of goals inspire people in different and complementary ways.

Elements of a MAST Goal

- **Meaningful** (it expresses our commitment in clear terms)
- **Audacious** (it's just this side of impossible)
- **Specific** (it's concrete enough that we can't wiggle around it)
- **Timebound** (it has a deadline, which galvanizes our intent)

Anatomy of a MAST Goal

Meaningful

Audacious

We guarantee that 100%
of third grade youth
will be reading at grade level
by 2023 in all DNATL schools.

Specific

Timebound

Elements of an EPIC Goal

- **Energizing** (it inspires and energizes us)
- **Poetic** (it has a transcendent quality)
- **Integral** (it expresses a complete vision of what we want)
- **Compassionate** (it expresses our love for others)

Example of an EPIC Goal

"We will restore balance to broken natural cycles
to benefit our land, air, water, and all living creatures."

Example of an Ineffective Goal

Improve third grade reading levels.

Why is the Right Goal Important?

Working for something larger than ourselves and our usual work brings powerful purpose and meaning into our lives, so a powerful goal is a strong attractor for people to join the work. A powerful goal:

- **Inspires and galvanizes commitment** (i.e. it's big enough for me to care and want to be a part of it).
- **Forces people to think and act at scale.** It doesn't allow people to rationalize activities that won't add up to impact.
- **Gets beyond single solutions** (e.g. "Just give me the funds and I'll get this done.")
- **Makes collaboration make sense** (i.e. we understand that one entity can't do it alone and many diverse organizations will have to come together to make it happen).
- **Points everyone in the same direction.** A powerful goal provides clarity of direction, and less herding of cats.

Only a truly transcendent goal will overcome stakeholders' differences and fears.

There is no "right" formula for a goal, however. The BEST goal for any given group is the one that viscerally inspires everyone to join and commit to the work. Focus & Frame

For any network we create, we have found a simple but powerful pattern that helps increase ownership and prevent unproductive conflict (as opposed to productive conflict, which we adore!). We call it "Focus & Frame."

What is the Focus and the Frame?

Imagine you take a photo of a friend. If you take the picture well (unless you're being artistically creative), your friend's face will be in focus. But in addition to your friend's face, you'll also see other things in the frame, maybe trees, a playground, or even a seedy bar. What's in the frame provides useful context around your friend and you understand more fully what was happening around your friend at the time. In fact, if all your photos of your friend lacked the contextual information in frame, those friend photos would get quite dull after a while.

In our approach to goal setting with groups, the Focus is the thing we're agreeing to, well, focus on and work explicitly to achieve. The Frame is where we place the other goals and concerns that we're agreeing to also track and pay attention to.

So let's say that you're bringing together a collaboration to increase graduation rates in your local community—and graduation rates is the issue that your primary funder and community leaders care most about. But other stakeholders keep insisting that the initiative really needs to prepare kids for college or career, and that a high school diploma might not do either of those.

How do you handle that conflict? Just decide yourself? Hack out a decision in which somebody will lose? Create a multi-faceted, complex goal with multiple metrics underneath it that might be difficult to organize and resource adequately?

One way to handle a challenge like that is to explain the concept of Focus & Frame and suggest something like this:

> "So our focus will be on hitting a graduation rate of 98%. We'll have both career prep and college readiness in our frame as we do that, so we don't neglect those concerns. And other times, as the graduation rates start to rise, we can decide to move one or both of these other objectives into focus."

Why is the Idea of Focus and Frame Useful?

1. It helps us move forward with an agreement that usually works for all,
2. It helps us avoid unintended impacts on related goals that aren't the group's current focus,
3. It helps us watch opportunistic solutions that will advance interests in both our Focus and our Frame,
4. It helps diffuse resistance and polarization before it even shows up in the room.

Example Focus & Frame

Focus	Frame
Eliminate worker exposures to hazardous chemicals in the global electronics supply chain.	Reduce environmental discharges of hazardous chemicals from electronics facilities.

Critical Shifts

We use the critical shifts tool all the time in our work. They are the best way we've found to help a group define the "problem spaces" in which we need to design solutions. By using the critical shift approach to clearly define the problem space rather than jumping right to making solutions, we get better, more powerful, and more appropriate and effective solutions. They also help clarify our intent and ground that intent in a specific and actionable shift we're trying to make happen out in the world.

A critical shift is simple to define and very powerful as a strategy tool, but takes real discipline to do well. People often mistake a critical shift as problem-solution statement.

A good shift is a statement with two parts: (1) A first statement that succinctly describes one specific part of that current strategic picture that isn't working right now, and (2) a second statement that succinctly describes how that part of the strategic picture should look in the future, if we're successful in our work.

Critical shifts can be about some part of an overall system or about specific people's experiences within that system. A system shift is typically written as a neutral statement. An experience shift is written in first person, usually starting with 'I,' 'My', 'We', or 'Our'.

An effective network will be working to make multiple shifts happen simultaneously, and when those shifts are added together, they should represent a whole picture of the systemic change strategy.

How They are Useful

5. Force stakeholders to agree on the problem before jumping to potential solutions.
6. Provide a strategic way to identify the most critical leverage points to maximize social return on investment.
7. Provide a clear problem-solving space to focus the development of solutions.
8. Help avoid favored solutions by focusing on the needs first.
9. Provide a basis to evaluate possible solutions over time, and avoid solutions that aren't paying off.

Experience Shifts...

- Arise from empathy interviews.
- Are current and future experience statements that begin with “I” because we want to identify with a real person’s (or persona’s) experience.
- Are statements of feeling and direct experience, not general statements about policies, systems, or cultural values and tendencies.
- May reflect the experience of people within different segments or groups (like doctors or patients or nurses).
- Are about motivations/behaviors of people that effect the way they move through the system.
- They humanize and ground what’s going on with people in the larger system.
- Are most powerful when there is a clear ‘customer’ for the work (e.g. people living on the street, people with diabetes, etc.) and we need to improve their situations specifically.

System Shifts...

- Arise from expert and system leader interviews.
- Are current and future statements about the state of things. They do not being with “I” because they aren’t someone’s experience. They describe what’s not working about a specific part of the current system and how we want that part to be working in the future.
- Concern things that are impacting the whole system, like policies, technology, or trends.
- They may impact the experience of certain people in that system (and correlate with an experience shift) but their full impact across the system can’t entirely be communicated in an experience shift.
- Are about structural elements such as policies, infrastructure, tech, financial, etc. that influence how the system works and the experiences that people are having.
- They communicate the breadth and scale of what’s going on in the system.
- Are most useful when there is a large complex system where the behaviors of many types of actors need to change and there may be multiple intervention points.

Most initiatives benefit from a mix of both types of shifts since they provide both the birds-eye view of the whole system (which gives strategic perspective and insight) and the view of people’s real experiences on the ground (which builds empathy and ensures that the impact touches real peoples’ lives.

Examples of Good & Bad Shift Statements

Current state	Future state
No local farms producing certain key food products	✗ Farms producing key products ✓ 8 key food products produced in our county

Teachers don’t have time to schedule more meetings	Teachers work longer hours Teachers can comfortably make the time for informal parent discussions

The good examples above provide much more focus and clarity. We can start to generate more concrete ideas and “get to work” on those shifts. But a statement like “Local farms are producing key products,” on the other hand, leaves us confused and kind of stuck (we’re just not sure what to do about it because it’s too vague).

In the teaching example, however, we see that someone has tried to insert their favored solution in there as the future state. That clearly doesn’t work because it stops any creative thinking and people just start debating whether we should expect teachers to work longer hours or not. However, in the good future state example, the statement makes us curious, as in, “Okay, how might we make that happen?”

So a good shift statement creates that invitation to start generating and designing ways to make the shift happen. A bad shift statement either confuses people or shuts down an effective brainstorming process.

Next time your group needs to solve a problem, have them first define the critical shift. Once they have a clean and compelling shift, have them generate ideas for how to make that shift happen. If you feel that open, engaged, generative energy, then you’ve got a shift that’s really working!

The Learning Agenda

Identifying Critical Questions

Critical questions are the things you most need to answer or understand in order to ensure that you're positioning your initiative for success. For example, with the issue of bank lending and climate, we needed to understand whether big banks were ready to come to the table around the climate challenge or they needed more prodding to address the issue (it turned out to be the latter).

Identifying your critical questions early on helps you focus your learning and determine which expert stakeholders might be most helpful to consult first.

Forming Hypotheses

When we begin developing a new innovation network, we identify our current working hypotheses about the key barriers and emerging opportunities to achieving our goal (the working goal itself is also simply a draft and not set in stone). We test and refine these hypotheses during our stakeholder consultation process. Here are a few examples of possible hypotheses:

Working Hypotheses from Cocoa Farmer Livelihoods Network

1. Ensuring a sustainable cocoa supply requires that livelihoods for cocoa farmers improve to the point that it is a viable means through which to support a family.
2. Influencing government price-setting systems may be the highest-leverage intervention for increasing cocoa prices for farmers.
3. Influencing price setting systems requires greater transparency, international and brand support for the in-country price minimums defined, more efficient access to market, as well as increased participation of farmers in the price-setting process.
4. If farmers and governments in cocoa-producing nations were able to share in a larger percentage of the profits from the final chocolate product, increased incentive for high-quality would ultimately lead to both improved chocolate products and a more fair cocoa trade.
5. Increasing yields will not necessarily increase farmers' net incomes because the amount of input, such as fertilizer and hired laborers, also increases, and increased supply of a global commodity will naturally drive the price of the good down.

Examples of Poor Hypotheses (Cocoa Example)

1. "It will take many years to solve a problem this complex."

   Problem: It's predictive, untestable (until much later), and not useful because it provides no directional insight.
2. "Companies must take responsibility for solving this problem."

   Problem: It's obvious and alienating (since everyone must take responsibility), and there are more specific and nuanced hypotheses that have greater utility.

3. "The price setting mechanisms are dysfunctional."

   Problem: Too general to be useful. Good hypotheses should provide some directional insight, if true.

Worksheet: Develop 3 Hypotheses Related to Your Goal

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 3

Notes: Clarifications & Reflections

What stood out for me from the session so far?
What do I still need clarified?

II. Connecting the Change System

Who is involved in this phase:

Program Team, Design Team, and Interviews with System Leaders

What's being produced in this phase:

- ❑ Design Team, v1
- ❑ Interview Guide and any reference materials
- ❑ Insights Document
- ❑ Updated Intent Map
- ❑ List of candidates for the Network

Why it's important:

- We have identified and begun to engage the "Change System" on an individual basis
- We have a more robust and compelling Working Goal
- We have an analysis of what's impacting the issue and will likely impact goal achievement

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?

- 2-8 months, depending on complexity of the challenge, Design Team alignment, number of stakeholders, and capacity of the Program and Design Teams
- Depending on the pace of work, Program and Design Teams meet every 1-3 weeks to share highlights of interviews, updated Intent Map, and develop Insights Document

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?

- One-to-one interviews (more "high stakes" interviews might use two interviewers)
- Design Team meetings

Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?

- Interviews and meetings are virtual or in-person depending on geographic scale. Place-based work is in-person as much as possible. State, National or International initiatives are almost entirely virtual until the convening, though Design Teams may meet in person prior

Designing an Effective Innovation Network

Collaborative Innovator Attributes

The Network is a change system that's carefully cultivated from the larger system we are working to change (the "target system"). To advance the work quickly and powerfully, we seek out high-leverage stakeholders who are well-positioned to drive innovation and influence others in the system. These Collaborative Innovators have the following characteristics, each of which represents a key tension between two seemingly opposing values.

Optimal Network Participant Characteristics

It is ideal to have participants in Innovation Networks who are:

1. **Held in high regard by their peers** (both inside their companies and among their constituents, industry peers, professional community, etc.). This is because the group has far greater leverage when it's comprised of influential stakeholders who are admired for their integrity.
2. **Highly knowledgeable in their subject areas.** Networks reflect top experts across the given system or value chain.
3. **Action-oriented thinkers.** Conventional working groups are often full of thinkers who don't act quickly, or vice versa. Collaborative Innovators are able to do analysis and take action in rapid iterative cycles, allowing the network to develop and test system interventions within months, not years.
4. **Able to represent their institution's involvement.** Each participant has personal motivations for participating in the group, yet many represent organizations with interests, priorities, and concerns. The team makes sure that individuals are capable of aligning their organization behind the goals and activities of the working group, and continually monitors "background pressures" on participants.
5. **Willing to collaborate.** Participants are able to creatively and continually integrate their personal and organizational interests with the large social objectives of the group, designing new opportunities for deep alignment and shared value.

Deciding which Organizations to Invite to the Network

- They represent the experience, needs, and interests of a key stakeholder group.
- They represent an important perspective that has been neglected in the network.
- They can bring influence and weight to the network.
- They can bring unique and important assets to the work.

Remember: Do not invite people to the convening of the network unless you and the Design Team WANT them in the network!

Creative Tensions behind the Optimal Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Tension	Supports…
Held in high regard by their peers	Passion & Competence	…influence through authentic leadership. The group has far greater leverage when it's comprised of high influence stakeholders who are admired for their passion for the mission and their proven track records as effective leaders.
Highly knowledgeable in their subject areas.	Expertise & Beginner's Mind	…fresh perspectives on challenges and opportunities, with rapid validation of analysis and possible system interventions. Beginner's mind is inherent in innovation networks since no one understands the whole systems when they are complex.
Action-oriented thinkers.	Analytical & Action-oriented	…smart, rapid innovations. Avoid designing networks that are full of thinkers who don't act quickly, or vice versa. Collaborative Innovators are able to do analysis and take action in rapid iterative cycles, helping us develop and test strategies within months rather than years.
Able to represent their institution's involvement.	Individual interests & Institutional interests	…system-wide alignment and momentum. Each participant is a whole person with his or her personal motivations for participating in the network, yet they often represent an organization with its own interests, priorities, and concerns. Leaders who can align their own organizations behind the goal and activities of the network will advance the work most effectively.
Willing to collaborate.	Self-interest & Common good	…dynamic creation of shared value. If you've ever been on a team or committee with someone who simply couldn't collaborate effectively, this may be self-evident. Collaborative Innovators are able to creatively and continually integrate their personal and organizational interests with the large societal benefits being pursued by the group, creating new forms of shared value.

And as a group, a strong network has these key attributes:

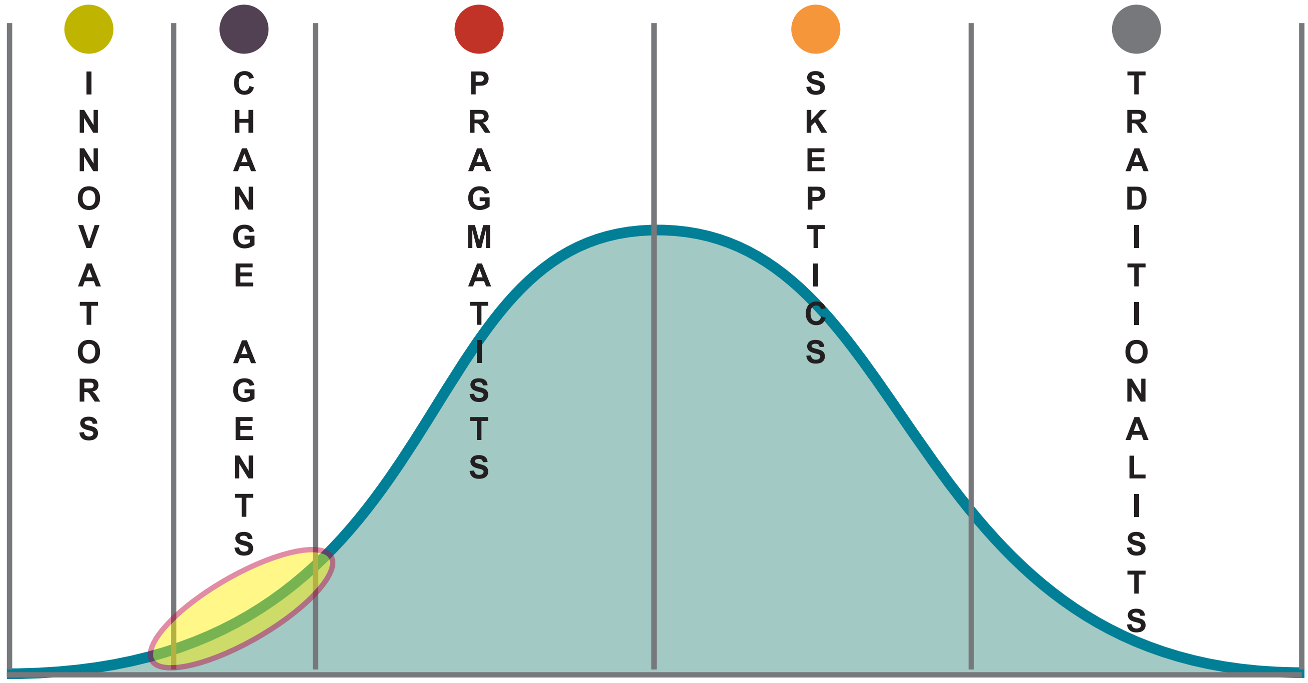
Characteristic	Tension	Supports…
90% of participants are 100% committed to the goal; 10% are skeptical but open to learning	Commitment & Skepticism	…informed momentum. This mix allows us to create strong momentum in the belief that the goal is possible while also forcing the group to test its basic assumptions along the way.
Represents the whole system	The Parts & The Whole	…whole system solutions that work for individual actors in the system. Any effective solution set needs to work for both the system as a whole and for the subsystems or it's not sustainable. By designing with the whole system in the room, we get better, more resilient solutions, greater alignment, and greater resources over time. That's why we have folks from business, civil society, government, and other key stakeholders in the system.
Has a mix of working and thinking styles	Alignment & Diversity	…people who think in different ways bring more perspective and more options to the group, driving more effective innovation.
Has a few "unusual suspects"	Insider knowledge & Outside perspective	…subject matter expertise complemented with fresh thinking, ideas and wisdom from others. These "unusual suspect" participants can be people and organizations from other supply chains or systems that may have dealt with similar issues or may be creative thinkers who are interested in solving the challenge.
Has both "content" experts and "context" experts	The Voice of Expertise & the Voice of Experience	...a network with strong analysis of the system and a deep empathy with the real lived experiences of the people whose experience most needs to change.

Selecting and Inviting Network Participants

To identify and select participants to invite to an Innovation Network, backbone staff employ a process like this:

1. Identify and interview prospective participants
2. Determine which interviewees to recommend to Design Team as participants.
3. Vet the prospective participants with the Design Team
4. Invite prospective participants to attend the convening
5. Finalize the participants' commitment (and negotiate participation fees, if any)

Seeking Change Agents



Innovators like to operate at–or beyond–the cutting edge. They love learning and playing with new concepts and testing new ideas, even if they're not entirely feasible or reasonable. They are true believers in possibility.

Unfortunately, because they tend to pursue "crazy" ideas and use uncommon language, they often fail to convince a significant number of other people to take up their proposals.

In Collaborative Innovation, we often draw on the ideas of innovators and include some in each network.

Change Agents see what the Innovators are playing with and find the tremendous value hidden inside. They are able to translate and package the innovation so it's of more interest (and seems more feasible) to everyone else.

Change Agents dominate in Collaborative Innovation because innovation networks are all about uncovering innovations and figuring out how to scale them!

Pragmatists want to know that the innovation has practical or commercial value. They don't appreciate risk but are willing to take some in order to achieve their financial or practical interests. Innovators make them uncomfortable because those crazy-sounding ideas seem really risky.

In Collaborative Innovation, we tend to have at least a handful of Pragmatists to keep the rest of the network honest about their assumptions and can help them figure out how to take the work to scale.

Skeptics are highly risk-averse and won't adopt an innovation until the Pragmatists do it first–and prove that it's viable and cost-effective. So they always take a wait-and-see approach to any major change.

We rarely have Skeptics in our networks because they are laggards in innovation, not leaders.

Traditionalists are those companies and people who will actively oppose your initiative, often because they are poised to lose status, power, or financial benefits if you succeed.

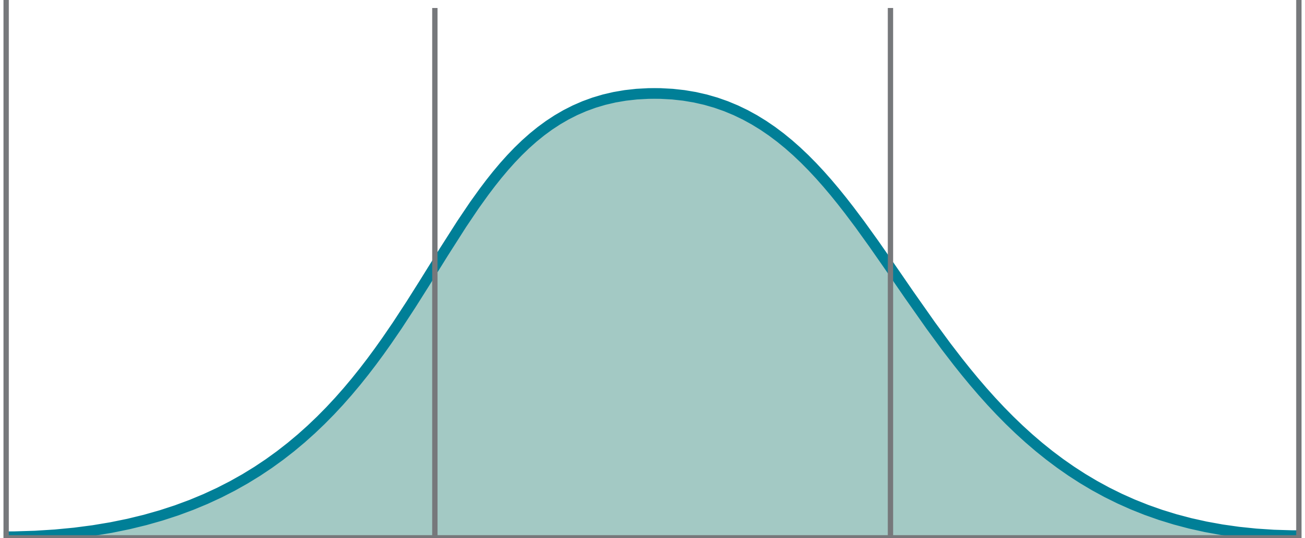
We don't worry about these folks and we definitely don't invite them into Innovation Networks!

= our optimal participant

Based on the "Diffusion of Innovation" model developed by Everett Rogers

Three Stances Toward Change

HIGH................................. Perceived Opportunity .... LOW
LOW..Perceived Risk .... HIGH



Values-driven

Meaningful

Diversity

Whole System Approach

What's needed

What's desirable

Disruption

Work back from where we need to be

Value-driven

Achievable

Efficiency

Specific Practices

What people will adopt

What's feasible

Incrementalism

Work from where things are

Power-driven

Undesirable

Traditional actors who are comfortable with or benefit from the way things are. They respond to threats to the status quo and suggest tweaks to the system, but usually seek to undermine efforts at transformation.

Inviting Participants to Join the Network

1. **Joining the Network is by invitation only.** (Thoughtful Exclusivity)
2. **They are being invited for specific reasons,** for example because they:
   - are committed to the goal of the Network (Passion),
   - have a lot to contribute to the Network from their segment of the system (Expertise),
   - have support from their organization for participating meaningfully (Sponsorship),
   - are collaborative leaders and influencers in the sector (Authority).
3. **There is a time commitment involved**, depending on which roles they take on.
4. **If applicable, there is a sliding scale fee for joining** that is based on organizational revenue (share the fee info).
5. **There are numerous benefits in participating** (select the ones most relevant to the person/organization to whom you are speaking)
6. **The fees are used for specific functions**, including:
   - Two in-person meetings a year,
   - Strategy development and facilitated leadership for the Network,
   - Facilitation of initiatives in between meetings,
   - Subsidized participants (for key stakeholders, like farmers, low-income participants, and/or academics, who don't have funding to participate),
   - Some initial research.

Working with Motivation and Rationale

Rationale: How people rationalize an organizational case for joining the network.

You want to understand the organization's priorities and drivers and help the leader shape the internal argument for participation.

Motivation: Why people REALLY want to personally join the network!

You want to attract them to join by appealing to their motivations in both overt and subtle ways.

Some Common Motivations

1. **Working with Other Participants.** People are heavily attracted by different things but many participants most value being in the room with people and organizations they respect, want to be associated with, and/or can learn from.
2. **A Convincing Approach.** People want to be confident of success, and know that their time will be valued and used effectively. By giving examples of how this approach has made real impact in other areas, you increase attraction to participating.
3. **Purposeful Work.** People want to be involved in work that's meaningful and big, but opportunities to really do this are rare. You are offering people the opportunity to bring greater purpose and meaning to their lives and their work.
4. **YOU.** Yes, you can be an attractor! Talk about what brought you to this work, why you believe it's important, and why you're excited about it. Just be careful to do this in the context of other attractors (or in response to their statements) so that it's really about them and their interests, not you.

The Design Team

In addition to the participant attributes and design team functions we describe above, we also seek to have a mix of "gifts" represented in the design team for an innovation network:

- **Connector:** Someone who knows many people across the system.
- **Attractor:** Someone whom others want to be in the room with.
- **Visionary:** Someone who will push the design team and the network to move with speed and scale, and to stay focused on their big goal.
- **Subject matter expert:** Someone who's an expert on the challenge or issue being addressed in the work.
- **Backbone representative:** A person (or two) to represent the organization and team who are supporting the work of the network.

Worksheet: Sketch Your Design Team

Potential Design Team Members

Name	Org	Sector	Why?

Overview of Network Roles

DESIGN TEAM

Primary Role
Shepherds the network's development and strategy.

Contributions
Hold project intent, oversee initiatives, engage other stakeholders, act as sounding board for process designs, shepherd initiative strategy

Traps
Taking core responsibility away from the network itself, being too directive OR not directive enough with network, acting like a "Steering Committee"

Who's Needed
Key influencers with servant-leader mindsets who are respected for their integrity, connected to the issue, and have proven collaboration abilities, with key roles of maven, connector, and salesperson

Commitment
4-6 people at 6-8 hrs/mo who participate in bi-monthly and/or in-person meetings to lead network through work

Leadership
Two co-chairs at 8-10 hours/month, preferably from different sectors, who convene Design Team meetings, shape agendas, prep initiative strategy, and coordinate with Backbone staff as needed
(2 additional hrs/mo)

NETWORK

Primary Role
Analyzes, prioritizes, innovates solutions

Contributions
Provides analysis, insight, and feedback on key shifts, ideas, concepts and prototypes to maximize impact of the initiative

Traps
Waiting for strategy leadership from the backbone team and/or design team, not integrating network duties into regular work

Who's Needed
A diverse group that represents the varying perspectives held by the larger community on the issue/challenge, and is willing to work together to make progress

Commitment
Two annual 1.5-day meetings to develop shared intent, analysis, and solutions, plus serving on an initiative team

Leadership
The Design Team is the leadership entity for the Network.

Advisers
Experts and other resources who are not in the Network itself but have offered to serve as resources to support the work
(unlimited-internal and/or external)

INITIATIVE TEAMS

Primary Role
Scale up "on-the ground" solutions

Contributions
Co-designs, tests, refines and scales solutions based on shared metrics, and Networks' analysis around strategic intent and key shifts

Traps
Not solving for the team's mandate from the network, waiting for backbone team to make work happen, getting caught in analysis mode

Who's Needed
Network participants who have a passion for the specific shift and/or solution that the team is working on; they develop, test, and refine a specific initiative (e.g. a new service)

Commitment
4-6 groups of 6-15 members at avg. 3 hrs/mo in calls and work sessions (where they work intensively for 3-4 hrs to develop concepts)

Leadership
Initiative Team Chairs convene and manage each Initiative Team to produce analysis; communicate and coordinate with staff and other groups as needed.
(1 person per team at 2 additional hrs/mo)

BACKBONE ORG

Primary Role
Design and facilitate network engagement

Contributions
Run the design team; provide strategic framing, leadership, analysis and research; lead resource planning; lead overall programs to objectives

Traps
Treating the overall network as just a program; not scoping the work carefully and explicitly, not leverage the network's assets, taking more responsibility than the network does

Who's Needed
Independent organization that has a connection to the issue/challenge but is respected by diverse parties; must have strong organizational base and servant-leader mindset

Commitment
1 senior-level co-chair from backbone organization to serve on network design team

PROGRAM TEAM

Primary Role
Support the work of the network

Contributions
Planning and resourcing initiatives appropriately, engaging other stakeholders to advance the work, coordinating with other initiatives

Traps
Not scoping the work carefully and explicitly with the network, not leverage the network's connections and resources, taking more responsibility than the participants do

Who's Needed
Strong project management skills, willingness and ability to create alignment across competing interests, advances narratives that increase meaning & engagement

Commitment
1 FT Initiative Manager (can be contracted); 1 FT Initiative Coordinator; 1-3 hrs/mo from comms; 1-3 hrs/mo from L&E

Leadership
A full-time initiative director runs Design Team meetings, shepherds backbone resources and stakeholder engagement, and coordinates implementation of strategy (often supported by a coordinator, other staff members and outside process consultants)

WHOLE COMMUNITY

Primary Role
Hold the network accountable to the community and its real needs

Contributions
Experience, expertise (as guests) and aspirations

Traps
Expectations of process exceed capacity and commitment of the community, community members wait for "them" to take leadership on the issue of concern

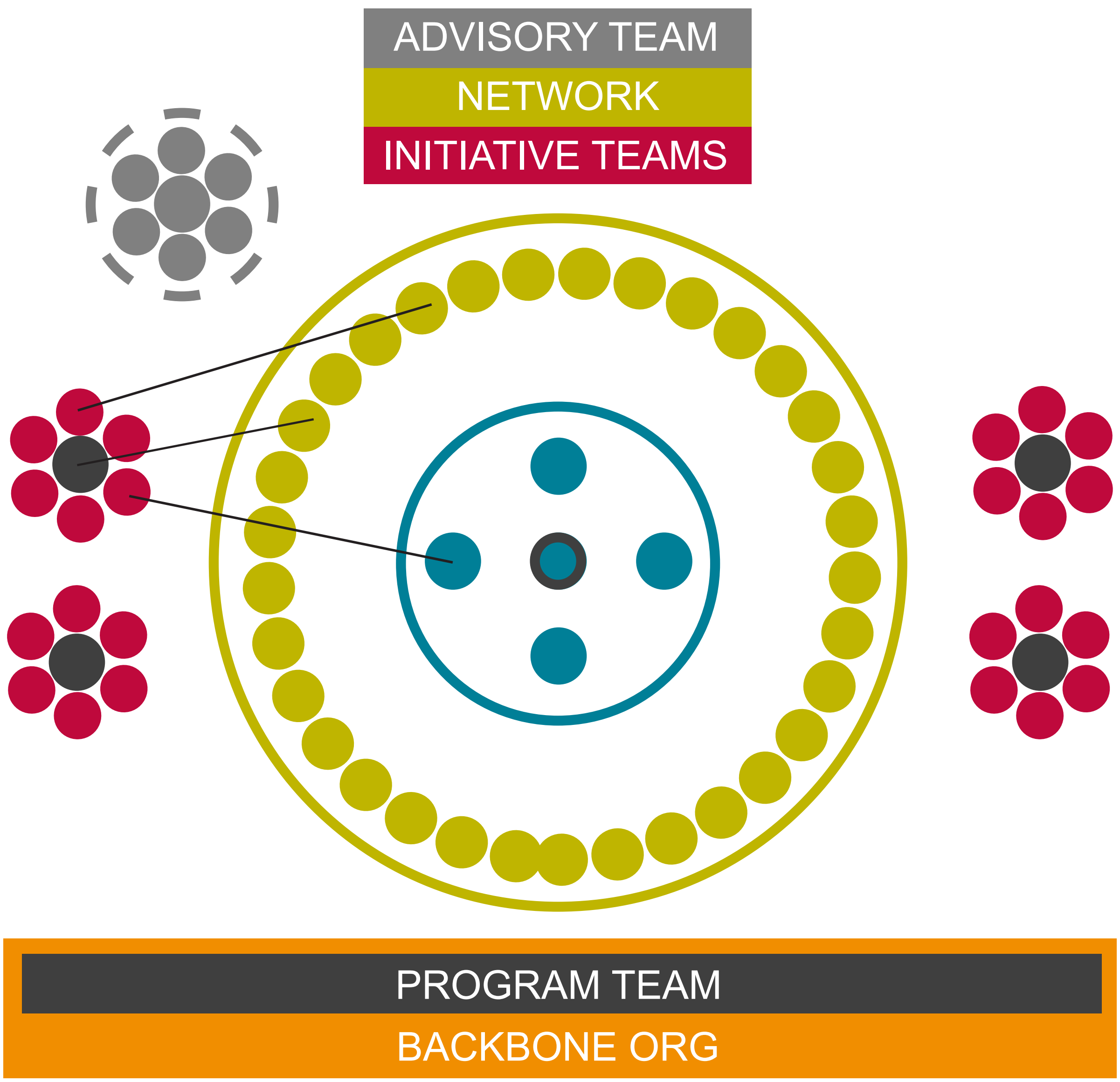
Who's Needed
Whoever shows up

Network Structure

The graphic below shows how the Backbone Organization provides broad support to the network, primarily through the direct support of the Program Team but also providing other services like communications, evaluation, design, etc. The Program Team members, who are employed by the Backbone Organization, support the Design Team, Network, and Initiative Teams.

Initiative Teams are comprised of Network members (and, occasionally, non-Network members). As the graphic implies, not all Network participants participate directly in Initiative Teams (in fact, as many as half may not be), but they do contribute to the prioritization, analysis, testing, and evaluation of the initiatives.

Finally, some Networks have Advisory Teams comprised of key experts and or community members who provide additional insight and advice to the Network



Network Role Details: Design Team

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS

Primary Role

Unlike a traditional steering committee, the Design Team shepherds rather than decides the network's development and strategy. They advise on network meeting design (especially desired meeting outcomes), provide guidance on network structure and recruitment, and also help alert the Program Team to potential barriers and how to address them.

Responsibilities

Be leaders, influencers, and connectors in the Innovation Network

- Act as spokespeople and ambassadors for the Network
- Inspire and motivate other participants by modeling engaged behavior
- Decide purpose and outcomes for Network meetings
- Act as leaders at Network Meetings, reiterating the intent of the network and helping to clear up any confusion around direction/strategy/content

Develop and hold Network structure, priorities and intent

- Draft the initial scope, focus, and working goals of the Innovation Network
- Develop the initial governance and operating procedures for the Network
- Co-determine priorities with the Program Team for moving the work forward between Network meetings
- Foster breakthroughs and push speed, scale, and innovation in the work of the Network

Engage other stakeholders

- Decide which stakeholders should be invited into the Network
- Help recruit other stakeholders into the network

- Leverage professional/personal connections to engage other potential Network supporters and advisers

Oversee initiatives

- Give direction to Initiative Teams and ensure necessary coordination across them
- Participate in a leadership and/or advisory capacity in the Initiative Teams once they are formed

Shepherd Network strategy

- Shape and confirm ongoing strategy emerging from the Network itself
- Provide cross Network insights and identifying new work where gaps exist
- Help test assumptions and plans, acting as the primary sounding board for the Program Team

Size

4-6 people, but sometimes more in a larger or complex network. Usually not sure than 8 people.

Commitment

6-8 hrs/mo participation in bi-monthly and/or in-person meetings to lead network through work

Leadership

Two co-chairs at 8-10 hours/month, preferably from different sectors, who convene Design Team meetings, shape agendas, prep initiative strategy, and coordinate with Program Team as needed *(2 additional hrs/mo)*

Interactions

Works in tandem with the Program Team (who provides the day-to-day support) to guide the work of the network

Network Role Details: Network

NETWORK PARTICIPANTS

Primary Role
Provides the intent, learning, analysis, priorities, and initiatives to achieve powerful impact

Responsibilities
- Participate in the bi-annual Network Meetings
- Participate in 1-2 Initiative Teams where they have energy and can make meaningful contributions
- Conduct research within, or compile information from, their organizations to share with the Initiative Team and/or Network
- Contribute participation fees or in-kind support (if appropriate for the specific network)

Commitment
Two annual 1.5 to 2-day meetings to develop shared intent, analysis, and solutions, plus serving on an initiative team

Size
35-50 people from across the focal system (community, supply chain, or sector), maybe more depending on the nature of the network, but rarely fewer

Leadership
The Design Team is the leadership body for the Network

Interactions
All the Design Team and Initiative Team participants are typically members of the Network, although Initiatives Groups occasionally draw in outside participants (e.g. people who don't have time to fully participate in the Network but have strong expertise to contribute to a specific initiative)

Network Role Details: Initiative Chairs

INITIATIVE TEAM CHAIRS

Primary Role

Convene and manage an Initiative Team to define their critical shift and developing, refining and testing solutions; communicate and coordinate with Program Team staff and other Initiative Teams as needed

Responsibilities

- Work with Network Director or member of Program Team who's working with the Initiative Team to shepherd the Initiative Team's strategy
- Set the agenda for Initiative Team meetings/calls in collaboration with the Network Director or Program Team member
- Facilitate the meetings with the support of a Program Team member (although the Program Team member might do this instead)
- Determines strategy for the Initiative Team in collaboration with the Network Director or Program Team member
- Determines additional resources and research needs for the Initiative Team in collaboration with the Program Team
- Participates in regular calls with the Network Director or Program Team member
- Participate in a quarterly meeting will the other Initiative Team chairs to coordinate and align work as needed
- Present the work of the Initiative Team at Network meetings
- Participate in all Initiative Team meetings

Role Considerations

- The exact role that the Initiative Team Chair will play will somewhat depends upon who is in the Initiative Team and what the Initiative Team is working on. It also depends on who is available to be the Initiative Team chair and what his or her time and leadership abilities allow.
- The Initiative Team chair role can range across a spectrum of involvement and leadership from being an advisor on one end to being an active facilitator and leader on the other. The Network Director explores the options with those participants who are being invited to be Initiative Team chairs and together they agree on what role the chair will play.
- Initiative Team chair roles can also change over time. As an initiative plan becomes more developed (with milestones and deliverables) the Chair may want to take on more responsibilities and leadership. The Network Director should check in with Initiative Team chairs several times a year to see how the chair is doing and if they would like to change their roles in anyway.

Commitment

2 hrs/mo, in addition to Initiative Team time

Size

1-2 people per Initiative Team (i.e. a chair or co-chairs)

Interactions

- Initiative Team chairs are active participants in their respective Initiative Team
- They are invited to be the Initiative Team chair by the Network Director

Network Role Details: Initiative Members

INITIATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Primary Role
Contribute to defining the Initiative Team's critical shift and developing, refining and testing solutions

Responsibilities
- Show up at Initiative Team meetings
- Take on special writing or solution development tasks between Initiative Team meetings
- Contribute to Initiative Team's analysis of what's happening in the system and what intervention would be most feasible & impactful
- Help garner additional resources for the Initiative Team
- Help present the work of the Initiative Team at Network meetings
- Help test solutions and gather and integrate feedback from members of the Network and the larger system or community
- Participate in all Initiative Team meetings

Commitment
Average 3-6 hrs/month for calls and subgroup work sessions (where they work intensively for 1-2 hrs to develop concepts)

Size
3-12 participants per Initiative Team

Interactions
- Initiative Team participants will work with other members of the Initiative Team in ad hoc subgroups to advance pieces of the work
- They also work with their own organizations to align and coordinate the organization's work with the emerging work of the Network

Other Types of Initiative Teams
Some networks also have Initiative Teams that are focused less on a Network initiative and more on peer-based learning and support for Network participants to advance work within their own organizations. We usually call these Peer Coaching Groups or Implementation Groups. Some Networks also have Research or Monitoring Initiative Teams that conduct or shepherd research that the Network needs to support its work and/or they monitor developments in the policy realm and report those to the rest of the Network.

Network Role Details: Backbone

BACKBONE ORG

PROGRAM TEAM

Primary Role

The Backbone is the organization (or, less often, multiple organizations) that provide strategic and administrative staff capacity to the Network. We refer to this staff capacity as the Program Team. The Program Team is primarily responsible for leading, facilitating, moving the work of the Network forward, especially in its early development. The Program Team focuses on making optimal use of participants' often limited time. As the work gains momentum and traction, participants and organizations typically commit more resources and time to the Network, so more of the work is eventually led by the Network Design Team and participants.

Responsibilities

Leading Stakeholder Recruitment & Engagement

- Identifying and recruiting Network participants
- Ensuring that Network participants are actively engaged in the work of the Network, that they understand their roles, and that they are having their needs met through the work
- Communicating with participants before, during, and after Network meetings
- Engaging with participants in Initiative Team meetings
- Sending information, updates, reports and other communicates to network participants
- Keeping track of and documenting information on the status of each participant as needed

Resourcing the Work

- Securing resources to support the Network and its work
- Garnering grants and government funding
- Securing member participation fees (where appropriate)

Shepherding Strategy Development for the Network & Initiative Teams

- Ensuring a clear critical shift for each Initiative Team
- Working with the Design Team to shape, document, and test the strategy of the Network

Supporting the Process

- Providing process design and facilitation for Network, Design Team, and Initiative Team meetings
- Helping participants develop clear priorities, plans, and roadmaps for their work together
- Providing project management services as needed to Initiative Teams
- Providing Network and Initiative Team meeting planning, preparation and logistics, and facilitation
- Creating a safe environment in which participants feel comfortable expressing themselves
- Ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and understood
- Take notes during Initiative Team and Network meetings for recording, theming, shaping, and summarizing the group's thinking
- Following up on commitments made by Design Team and Initiative Team members

Overseeing Learning & Research

- Shaping research and learning priorities with the Network, Initiative Teams, and Design Team
- Co-determining with participants how to resource the research
- Engaging experts and community members to contribute to the learning of the Network and Initiative Teams

Commitment

Either regular staff or, less often, a contracted position within the Backbone organization

Size

The size of the Program Team varies based on the scope of the Network, both programmatically and geographically. Most networks have a Network Director to lead the Network's work and a Network Manager or Coordinator to provide administrative and logistical support. Backbones also provide other resources such as program evaluation, communications, design, etc. Some Networks have many more staff with certain staff supporting specific Initiative Teams.

Interactions

A Network Director who works for the Backbone organization and reports to leadership of the Backbone leads the Program Team and is often supported by outside consultants during the Network development stage. The Network Director meets frequently with the Design Team chairs and at least monthly with the Network Design Team. The Network Director and other Program Staff will meet one-on-one with Network participants at least once a year, but many teams does one-on-ones after the biannual Network meetings, especially if the Network participants don't normally interact (e.g. if the network is national or global).

The Stakeholder Consultation Process

Two Views

The System View can look quite different than the Experiential View.

We must understand and work from both views to ensure that we change the system and the experience of people in that system.

We conduct **System Leader Interviews** with experts, leaders, elected officials and others to gain a 50,000 foot view on who's in the system we need to change, how their work and decisions impact the issue of concern, and what the forces are that are acting for and against change in that system. It's important to note, however, that system leader interviews also use empathy interview techniques because we also need to understand how these leaders are experiencing the system around them.

We conduct **Empathy Interviews** with people whose experiences most need to change (e.g. kids and their parents in an early childhood education initiative). Empathy interviews connect us to the view of the system from the outside, the way people are being impacted by the way the system is now, and what these people aspire to and value, so that we can move the system around them to change their experiences for the better.

System Leader Interviews

5 Reasons to Interview System Leaders

1. **Insight.** Develop a shared picture of the system, including what and who will most impact progress toward our goal.
2. **Strategy.** Collect insight on where the system is working well and where the most powerful intervention points may be.
3. **Engagement.** Identify and cultivate key leaders who will be needed to advance work.
4. **Goal Setting.** Test and refine the working goal to get to a goal that is powerful and resonates across the system.
5. **Downloading Leaders' Perceptions.** By learning what system leaders believe about the challenge, we see what insights will surprise them and disrupt their biases and assumptions.

A Limited View

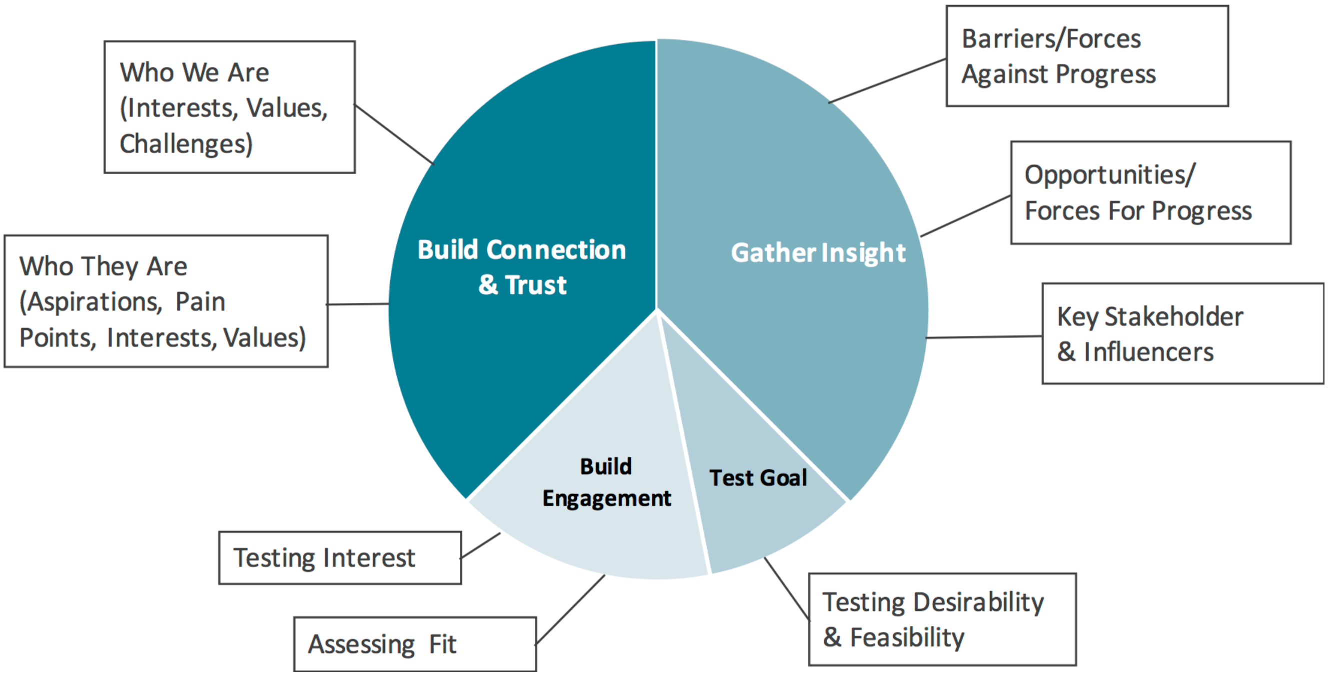
"As far as we can tell, the system went down because someone stepped on a crack in the sidewalk."

CartoonStock.com

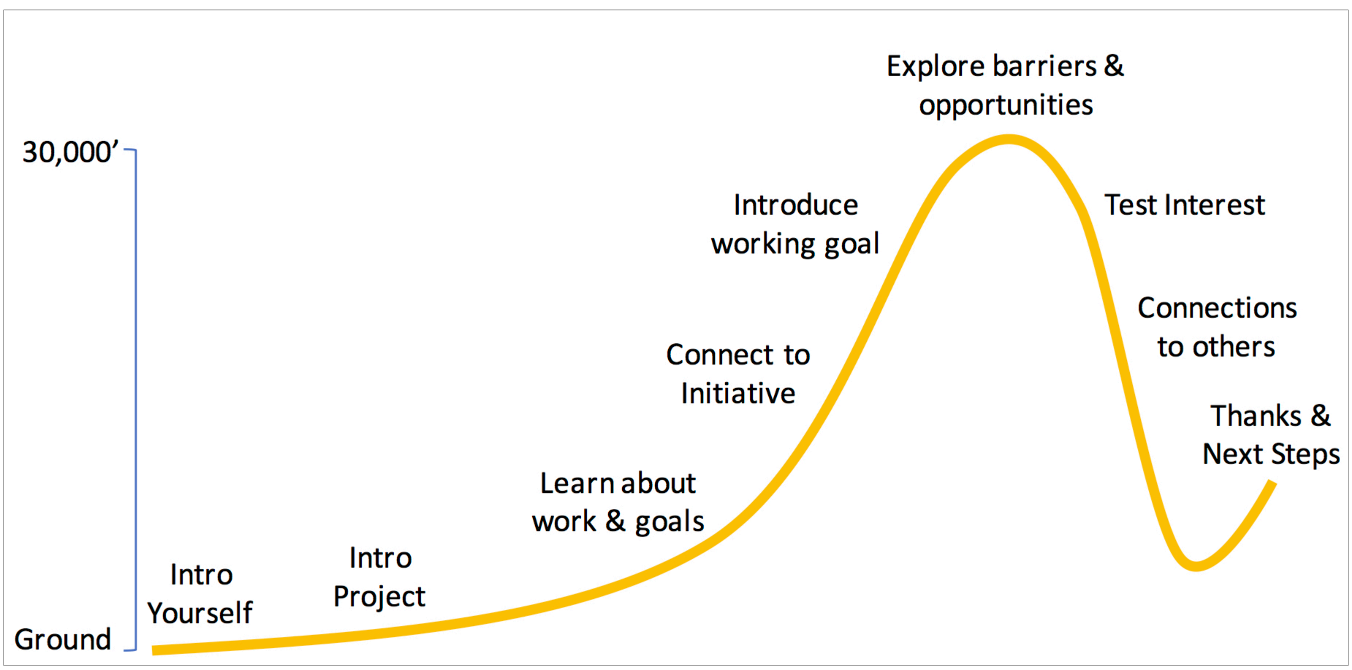
Things to Avoid in System Leader Interviews

- **Leading the Witness.** Avoid asserting your perspective on the problem or how to address it. You are there to inquire, listen, and learn, not correct or judge.
- **Pushing for Commitment.** These learning interviews should build interest and "pull" but shouldn't be used to sell participation.
- **Asserting Analysis and Solutions.** It's good to test emerging thinking and possibilities, but keep them as possibilities, not proposals or recommendations.

Objectives of a System Leader Interview



The Flow of a System Leader Interview



Asking Questions

1. Ask why (or “Say more.” or “What do you mean?”)
2. Summarize points, feed back, and test
3. Ask about previous efforts to address the problem or challenge
4. Explore forces for and against the goal
5. Don’t suggest answers to your own questions
6. Ask questions neutrally
7. Don’t ask binary questions
8. Hunt for the underlying interests, concerns, and values

Gathering Insights

1. Get clear about what you want to learn
2. Test the goal as a “what would it take to do this” proposition
3. Look for key motivations—why would they want to get involved?
4. Look for fears and frustrations—what concerns them most?
5. Look for new perspectives—what will change our assumptions?
6. Test thinking and possibilities

Engaging Them

1. When reaching out to get an interview, get them interested in what you’re planning and what you’ve learned that you can share.
2. Share your own interest in the work, and why you believe the work is needed.
3. Test the goal by introducing it, and then asking, “What do you believe it would take to achieve a goal like this? What would have to be true?”
4. Test for any concerns, negative experiences, or biases against collaboration, and contrast the Collaborative Innovation approach to indicate how this will be different. For example, if their past experience with collaboration has been that people talk a lot and no work gets done, talk about how we’ll work in real time in the room and prototype solutions quickly.
5. Test their interest in working on the goal, and collaborating with others to do so.
6. Ask them who else you should interview to better understand the landscape of barriers and opportunities around the goal, who might have concerns, resources, and/or ideas to share with you.

Things to Avoid

1. Avoid making assumptions about the person’s values, definitions of terms, and interests. Don’t assume or “project” your own biases onto the person. Instead, prompt them to tell you more or define what they mean.
2. Avoid making promises about what the network will or won’t do, or whether they’ll be invited to participate, UNLESS you feel 100% confident that the Design Team will agree.
3. Never introduce the goal by asking whether they like it or agree with it, or asking what they think of it.

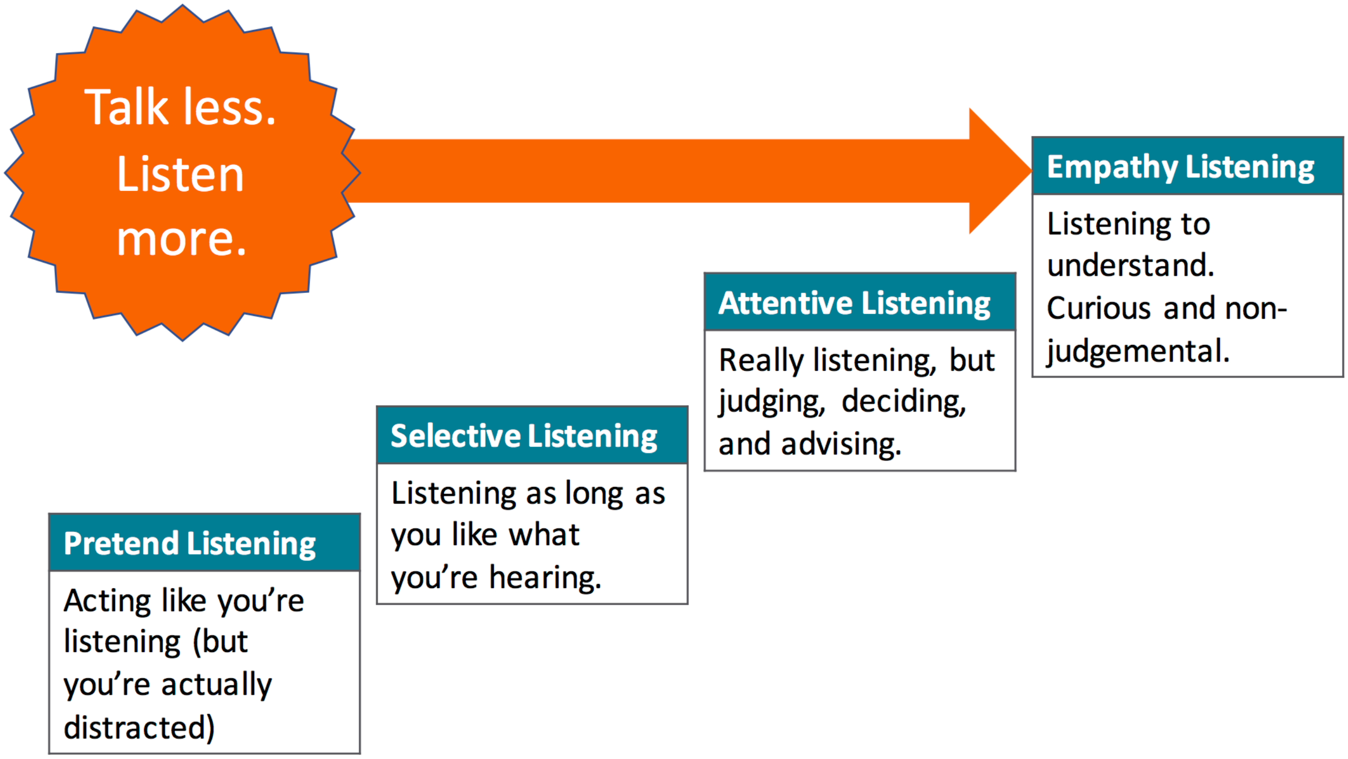
Empathy Interviews

3 Methods to Gain an Empathetic View

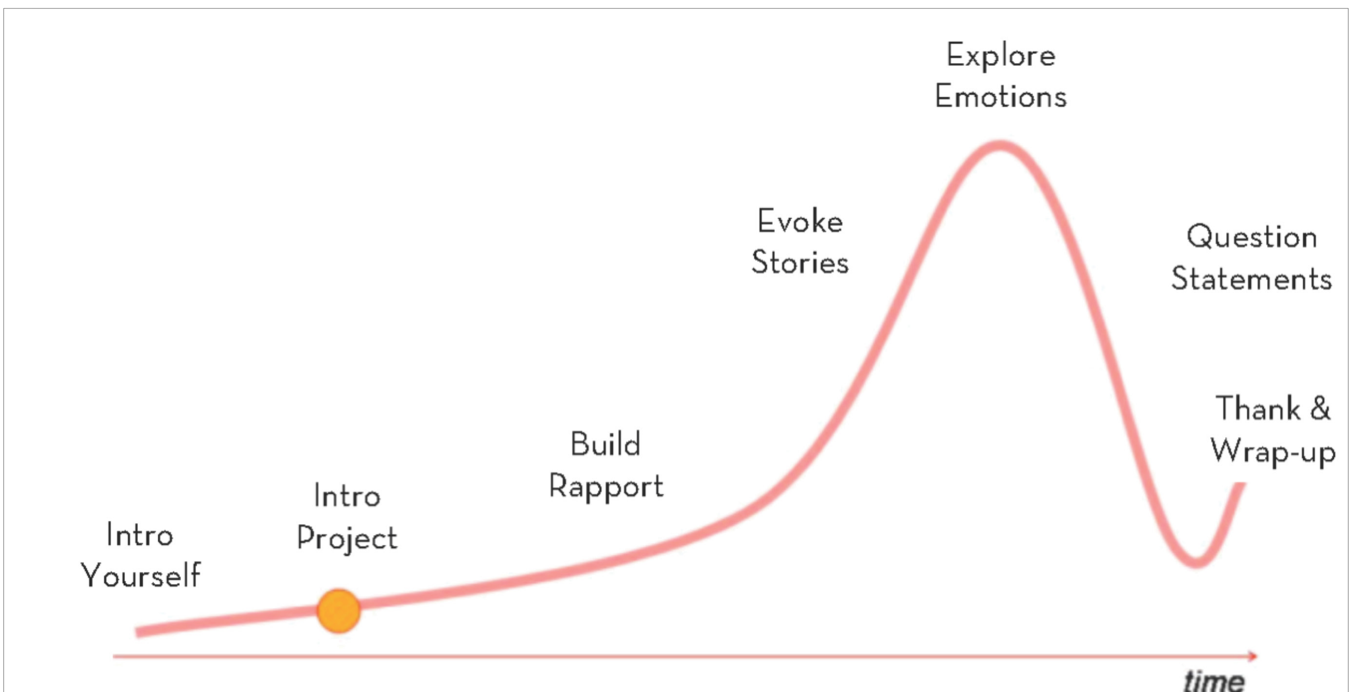
4 Reasons to do Empathy Interviews

1. **Insight.** Get a more accurate view of the real needs, values, behaviors, and aspirations of your stakeholders.
2. **Perspective.** Get out of your own head and experiences and gain new perspectives on both the problem and potential solutions.
3. **Grounding.** Ground your analysis and solution design in real human needs, not (just) theories and data.
4. **Trust.** Build trust through genuine inquiry and listening.

4 Levels of Listening



The Flow of an Empathy Interview



Stanford d.school. Visual adapted from Michael Barry, Point Forward

Asking Questions

1. “Say more...”
2. Never say “usually” when asking a question
3. Encourage stories (“Tell me about a time when you felt...”)
4. Don’t suggest answers to your questions
5. Ask questions neutrally
6. Ask about feelings
7. Don’t ask binary questions
8. Hunt for the powerful quote

Observing

1. Pay attention to nonverbal cues
2. Look for inconsistencies
3. Don’t be afraid of silence
4. Focus on their needs, not solutions
5. Make sure you’re prepared to capture notes
6. Pay attention to your own reactions
7. Be aware of your own reactions that may send a message about what’s acceptable or not

Key Practices

1. Lines of inquiry, not giant question lists
2. Open questions
3. Use silence and neutral encouragement
4. Be patient with silence
5. Focus on their needs, interests, and concerns, not solutions
6. Avoid leading questions or gestures

Reflection: Whom would you interview first using the empathy interview approach? Why?

Notes: Clarifications & Reflections

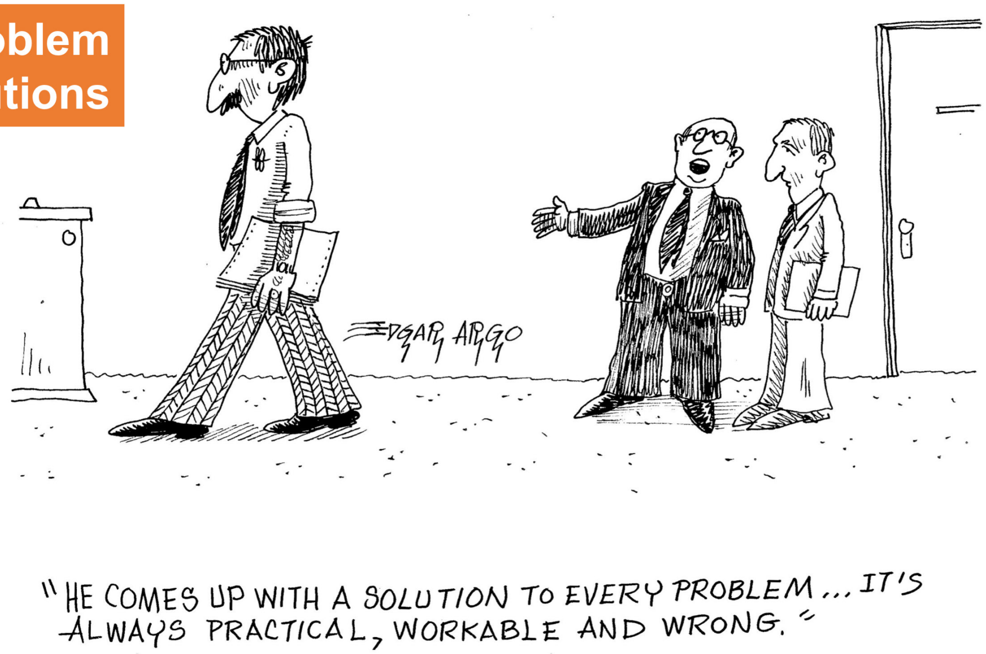
What stood out for me from the session so far?
What do I still need clarified?

Developing Insights from Interview Data

Why Develop Insights?

1. **Makes the Data Useful.** Raw interview data is messy and hard for people to make sense of in real time. Processing the data into thematic areas makes it easy to understand and use.
2. **Provides Focus.** Deriving key insights from reams of interview data will help people focus on the parts of the system that are most useful and relevant.
3. **Provides Direction.** Good insights imply some direction for the work. They help people see pathways for moving forward from the current state to a much better future state.

The Problem with Solutions



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Four Rules for Developing Powerful Insights

1. Define the Problem (don't solve it).

Clearly state what's currently going on in the system so people can agree on how parts of the system most need to be addressed BEFORE they start talking about solutions. (POSSIBLE solutions are okay though!)

Do not list solutions. Stakeholders will naturally share their opinions on how to fix a problem. But presenting solutions up front will create an "all-or-nothing" dynamic where everyone will start pushing—and fighting over—their favored solutions.

Helpful

Most farmers are interested in financial benefits, productivity, water, soil quality, and erosion prevention, even if they don't believe in climate change.

Not Helpful

We need John Deere, Monsanto, and the farming community, Aviation (jet fuel from carbon farming), to come together in a coalition to influence Policy makers.

2. Clarify the Perspective.

Distinguish between what leaders and experts are saying about the system and what people are sharing about their experiences within that system.

Capture both the System and Experience views of the system. Change requires understanding both the “whole system” perspective and the ground-level experiences of key stakeholders in the system.

Expert View Example

“Global US-based food companies have a big influence on production by international sources.”

Empathic View Example

Consumer: “I’m confused by all the certifications on food labels. I don’t know which one to trust, and I frankly don’t feel like putting in the effort to sort it all out.”

3. Be Clear & Concise.

Ensure that each piece of insight is clear and simple.

Ensure each Statement is Distinct. Avoid paragraphs of comments that touch on several points that actually belong in different places. Instead, break up separate points and place them in appropriate clusters.

Edit Statements as Needed. We don’t attribute these statements to the stakeholders directly so we can edit for clarity and simplicity.

Don’t overgeneralize. Use “some” or “many” whenever referring to population rather then generalizing. For example, not “Farmers believe X,” but “Some farmers believe X.”

4. Be Objective.

Turn assertions and opinions into statements about the system. Indicate whether some, most or all stakeholders shared that perspective.

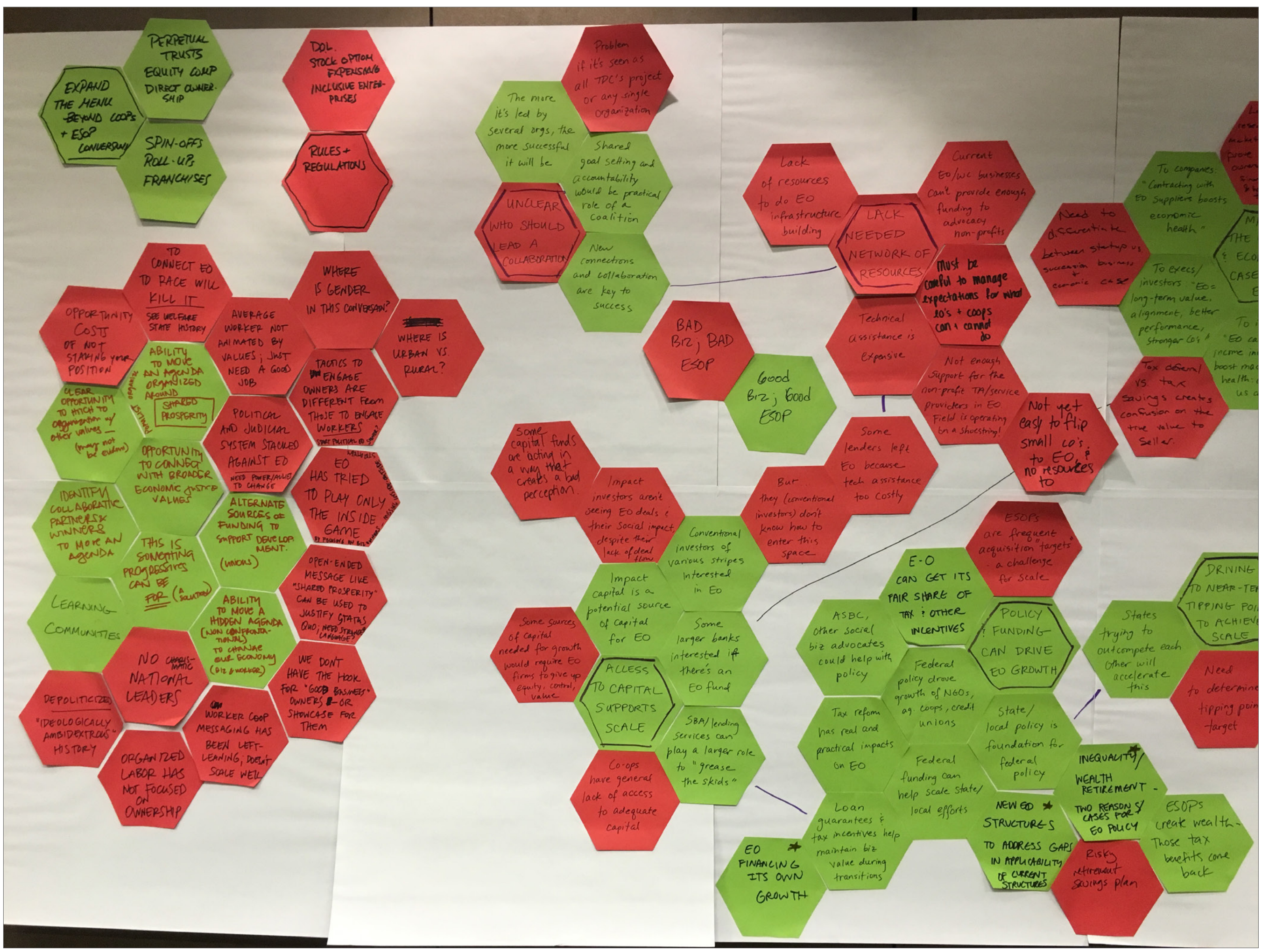
Avoid opinions and assertions. Turn assertions into possibilities or statements of a potential need. For example, not “We need to” but “Doing X might be effective.”

Objective statements can be neutral, positive or negative. It is important to write statements that clearly indicate whether the insights is an opportunity (+), challenge (-), or a neutral force that might influence the work either way ( ). The best way to do this it to create a column next to the insights and mark each statement whether with a +, -, or blank for neutral.

6 Steps for Developing Effective Insights

1. **Capture all your interview notes using a survey tool. Use a spreadsheet to track the status of your outreach and interviews.**
2. **Summarize the 3 key insights** from an interview immediately after completing the interview. (You'll thank us for this suggestion later!)
3. **Clean up the insights from your interviews.** Follow the 5 rules for developing powerful insights on the previous two pages.
4. **Group the insights by thematic area.** Print out the insights, cut them into separate points, and start to cluster them based on parts of the system, value chain, stakeholder group, or issue areas. Place the statement where its implications lie, not based on who said it.
5. **Make a short narrative in each cluster, with a sense of "directionality" and narratives.** In each group, develop a flow of insights that paints a picture about what's happening in that area, almost like the outline of a report. Start with neutral statements, then move to positives, and then negatives (since these prompt thinking about things we can fix).
6. **Use specifics for definition and color,** but keep the narrative at the 30,000 foot level.

Example: Insight Clusters



Convening the Network

Who is involved in this phase:

- Program Team and Design Team are designing the Convening event
- Convening Attendees (who are likely to be Network participants) are showing up

What's being produced in this phase:

- ❑ A change system with a coherent identity and commitment to proceed with the work
- ❑ An identified set of creative tensions for the group to leverage moving forward
- ❑ A positive, healthy, engaged dynamic in the nascent Network

Why it's important:

- People are in the room together and committing to the work
- They are seeing the whole system together for the first time
- The participants are seeing others engaging in learning and committing to the work
- Everyone sees how complex the issue is and why it requires collaboration

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?

- Happens in 2 days if possible, but usually over 3 separate events for place-based work

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?

- In the convening, the network participants are working together in real time to do the following three sections: Learning about the System, Designing Interventions, and Making Solutions

Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?

- Convening events are always in person, with everyone together in the same space (often with smaller spaces for break-out group work)

Extending Invitations

Once you're certain that a stakeholder is a good fit for the network, extend formal invitations to attend the network convening. Talk with them about how the network will work, who else will participate, and that it will be a significant investment of time, but that the work is important and timely. If needed, contract with potentially difficult participants (i.e. folks whom you need in the network, but who may show up in unhelpful ways), about how you need them to show up and participate to be helpful to the collaboration.

The Four Agendas

Changing whole systems requires engaging whole people. That means engaging people's heads, hearts, hands, and spirits to advance the work together.

As you design any Network meetings, consider where the group needs to deepen its work across these four agendas and plan each session to deliver an optimal mix of:

1. **Aligning (spirit).** Are they aligned around a clear goal, shift, and/or strategy? If not, then the other agendas won't matter. That said, we just need the goal, shift and strategy to be "good enough" for meaningful work to happen, and we'll test and refine them as the work goes forward.
2. **Connecting (heart).** Are they personally connected to each other, have real empathy for people in the system, and to why the work is truly important to people?
3. **Learning (head).** Do they have a clear understanding of the problem and the dynamics that are contributing to that problem, and do they understand what the criteria of successful solutions or strategies are?
4. **Making (hands).** Are they making tangible work products or strategic plans that embody their best thinking, drive more specific and focused learning, and result in tangible interventions in the system?

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"The meeting's at 10. I'll send you a copy of the agenda, the hidden agenda and your personal agenda."

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The Purpose of the First Network Meetings

The Purpose of the Launch Meeting(s)

The launch meeting of a network is designed to move from the interview insights to actual initiative concepts. It is also designed to build momentum to take the work forward by having participants experience a fast-paced, meaningful way of working across their differences.

With networks that draw people from long distances, the launch meeting typically takes place over two days. For local networks, where it can be difficult to get people to commit that much time in one session, we spread the elements of the launch meeting outlined below across several events. The closer the events are together in time, however, the better.

For networks that intend to work in very complex systems where the scope of work is unclear and we don't have a strong sense of the intervention points, we often hold an initial "Learning & Strategy Design Session" before the formal launch meeting for the network. We use these sessions to test and refine key hypothesis about scope, focus, frame, and strategy before doing the big, formal (and higher risk) launch event. We sometimes refer to these as a "Founders Meeting," which sounds a bit more cool.

Designing the Launch Meeting

Every meeting, especially the launch meeting for your collaboration, should have a clearly-defined meeting purpose and meeting outcomes. We develop the design of any meeting through these steps:

1. Test, refine, and confirm the meeting purpose and outcomes with the Design Team before you get too deep into designing the session.
2. Based on the purpose and outcomes, draft a simple Flow of the session, with times and one line for each part of the meeting (like a simple agenda).
3. Once the flow looks good (to your internal team and the Design Team), then develop a full Runsheet
4. Once the Runsheet is finalized, draft and distribute the final Agenda to participants.

The Launch Meeting(s)

Example Session Design: Health Anchor Mission Convening

Event	Date & Time	Location
Dinner	Monday, December 12, 2016 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (dinner included)	Fig & Olive DC, 934 Palmer Alley NW, Washington, DC 20001
Convening	Tuesday December 13, 2016 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM (breakfast at 7:30)	Kaiser Permanente Center for Total Health, 700 2nd Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002

Working Goal

U.S. health systems adopt inclusive economic anchor strategies, in areas such as hiring, purchasing and investing, as standard policy and practice and tightly integrate these activities into governance, clinical and operational leadership functions.

Proposed Meeting Purpose

To get strong commitment from participants to join a Learning & Action Network to support healthcare leaders in advancing anchor missions in their organizations.

Proposed Meeting Outcomes

Connecting	We have a strong start on building trusting and productive connections across participants based on shared values and intent. We have begun visioning how a collaboration can complement and enhance our work. We have explored who else needs to be brought in to this emerging initiative.
Aligning	We have a shared strategic focus (i.e. on advancing economic anchor strategies) and frames (e.g. other non-traditional levers). We have experienced how the collaborative learning and action approach can quicken and deepen the learning, action, and impact of all participants, so they can make an informed choice about moving forward with working in this way. We have shared intent to move forward with an ongoing COP and general commitment to resourcing it.
Learning	We have a compelling and useful shared understanding of the system and human dynamics, and a sense of the key leverage points for advancing the concept and practice of anchor missions. We have begun to draft a shared learning agenda, with identified gaps in our current knowledge as a group.
Making	We have an initial set of powerful insights about how to advance the anchor mission at the organizational, community and sector levels. We have commitments to immediate next steps, including who else to engage and how to capture and share learning and decisions.

Day 1 Session

Time	Item	
CONNECTING AROUND SHARED VALUES		
5:00	Reception & Networking	Everyone!
6:00	Welcome The importance of this convening Why we're here	Tyler Norris, Kaiser Permanente Ted Howard, The Democracy Collaborative Barb Petee, ProMedica Michellene Davis, RWJBH Dave Zuckerman, The Democracy Collaborative
6:10	Introductions & Share values	Maren Maier, CoCreative & Everyone!
7:00 DINNER		
Highlights of Topic Discussion		Russ Gaskin, CoCreative
8:20	Cue up next day	Russ Gaskin, CoCreative

Day 2 Session

Time	Item	
7:30 BREAKFAST AVAILABLE		
SESSION GOALS & AGENDA		
8:00	Welcome Our hopes for today	Tyler Norris, Kaiser Permanente Ted Howard, The Democracy Collaborative
8:10	Orient to a different (and fast!) approach Logistics: agenda, housekeeping Context and guidelines	Dave Zuckerman, The Democracy Collaborative Russ Gaskin, CoCreative
ALIGNING AROUND SHARED INTENT		
8:20	Confirm shared intent Confirm shared language Confirm focus	Russ & Dave
8:40	Share Stories: 4 examples of anchor mission strategies	Russ & Dave Healthcare Leader Storytellers
LEARNING FROM INTERVIEW INSIGHTS		
9:30	Unpack system analysis and interview insights	Maren Maier, CoCreative Russ
10:30 BREAK		
10:45	Finalize system map	Maren
ALIGNING ON CRITICAL SHIFTS		

11:05	Agree on initial set of critical shifts	Russ
12:00 GRAB LUNCH		
MAKING SOLUTIONS		
12:30	Generate ideas to make shifts happen	Maren
1:00	Filter ideation list to top ideas	Maren
1:15	Test ideas with the whole group	Russ
1:45	Test and refine concepts	Maren
1:45 BREAK		
ALIGNING TOP SOLUTIONS		
2:00	Pitch final concepts	Russ
2:30	Choose top concepts	Russ
2:45	Assess results	Russ
DECISION ON ONGOING COLLABORATION		
3:00	Frame up the question of HOW to proceed	Ted and Dave
3:05	Moving forward	Russ
MAPPING OUR WAY FORWARD		
3:20	Mapping the way forward	Russ
3:40	Wrap up/Debrief ID immediate next steps	Maren
3:55	Closing	Ted and Tyler
4:00	Close	

Creating the Conditions for Collaboration

Practical Meeting Considerations

1. **Natural light**, which helps keep energy levels up.
2. Low-Tech. Avoid people joining the meeting remotely and avoid PowerPoint. Instead, have people work with paper, post-its, worksheets–and their brains.
3. **Wall space** for hanging materials (and tape-able walls). Not the vinyl wallpaper that seems oddly resistant to all forms of tape.
4. **Room for the network to sit in a circle**—yes, a circle. Trust yourself and make it happen.
5. **AV**. We try to avoid them but presentations are sometimes the best way to share information.
6. **Good acoustics**, with warm sound, low background noise and as few trash trucks as possible.
7. **Quasi-comfortable chairs**—not too painful but not chairs that encourage sleep either.
8. **A good variety of healthy snacks and foods**, addressing potential sensitivities.
9. **Access to the thermostat** (or someone who knows how to use it!).
10. **Use a visual release if you want** to take photos to use later to promote the network or the backbone organization.
11. **Others**?

Anticipating 4 Key Questions

Creating a space in which people will work together effectively in a meeting means ensuring that participants have meaningful ways to understand four critical questions:

1. **Why am I here?** Is my difference welcome here?
2. **Who are you?** Can I trust you? Are our values in alignment?
3. **What are we doing together?** Why is this important?
4. **How will we work together effectively?** How can we ensure that this won't fall apart?

Typical Elements in Meeting Opening

1. **Welcome:** Begin to establish why we are here and who's in the room.
2. **Why we are here:** Provide a greater shared purpose for why we're in the room together.
3. **Who's in the room and why:** Establish why this particular set of people is the right group for the work.
4. **Introductions:** Help everyone know more about who's who, and why they might be here.
5. **Tour of the Work:** Help everyone understand how their work at this meeting fits into the larger flow of the Network's work. Share with them:
    a. How this group got started
    b. What's happened up to today
    c. What we're doing at this meeting, and
    d. How that's feeding into what's happening next (assuming we agree on this)
6. **Guidelines, Context and Confidentiality Agreements for our work together:** Establishes some of the core agreements that will help ensure that we'll work effectively together, and names some of the values tensions so people understand that we are paying attention to each value.

Example Introduction Prompts

- What is one gift you bring to our work together today?
- What's one thing you love about your community?
- Why did you choose to spend your work-life time the way you did/do?
- Finish the sentence "Call me when..."
- Share a short story of a time you took a risk based on your values.
- What is one value you live by that instructs your life and decisions?
- One thing that you really love about our planet.
- What's your basic philosophy in a tweet?

Agreements

Here are meeting agreements that we typically suggest:

- **Be spicy & brief!**
- **All take leadership** (e.g. for putting concerns, issues on the table).
- **Act from generosity**; it will take more than our collective self-interests to succeed.
- **Welcome disagreement, without being disagreeable.**
- **Keep confidentiality.** (See specifics below.)
- **Don't worry about time, but support the schedule.**
- **Be present**; this is an active process.
- **Write legibly!!** We need to be able to read your insights.
- **We will reenergize you if needed!**

Other Meeting Tools

We often post sheets around the room with the names, “Learning & Research Agenda,” “Future Topics List,” and “Idea Store” to capture items to process later. We avoid “Parking Lot” because people often have experienced that as the place where topics go to die.

Tensions

At the initial network meetings, we walk through a list of the tensions that are likely to arise during the meeting, so people can relax (since we’re clearly paying attention to these). A typical list will include these standard tensions as well as some that are unique to the network and its work (which emerged from the stakeholder interviews). Naming the tensions up front “normalizes” them as part of leveraging our differences, not a sign that things aren’t working.

- Focusing on the work & Building relationships
- Taking action & Taking time with learning/analysis
- Going Broad & Going Deep
- Short-term focus & Long-term focus
- Introversion & Extraversion
- Data-driven & Intuitive
- Quick wins & Systemic change
- Working with what’s emerging & Defining the future state
- Changing institutional policies and practices & Changing the whole system
- Addressing structural dimensions of change & Addressing cultural dimensions of change

Confidentiality Agreements

A clear common understanding around confidentiality establishes boundaries so people know what’s safe to share in this room, or not. Here are the confidentiality terms typically used in networks that we support:

> *Participants are free to share information received in network meetings, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker may be revealed without express permission from that individual.*
>
> *If you want specific information to be held in confidence by network participants and not shared outside the network, please ask for the information “to stay in this room.”*
>
> *If you want to attribute information or a statement to a specific participant, you must get express permission from that participant before doing so.*

Sample Anti-trust Guidelines

This sample set of guidelines is provided by CoCreative for illustrative purposes only. You could seek legal counsel if you believe that your Collaborative Innovation initiative may need to ensure compliance with anti-trust laws and regulations.

In all Innovation Network operations and activities, you must avoid any discussions or conduct that might violate the antitrust laws or even raise the appearance of impropriety. Intent to violate the antitrust laws is not a prerequisite to prosecution. You can be found liable for unintentional, inadvertent and accidental acts, comments or conduct. Each individual participant and attendee at any Innovation Network meeting is responsible for knowing the contents of the Antitrust Guidelines, and for complying with the Antitrust Guidelines. Copies of the Antitrust Guidelines will be available at all meetings, or, if applicable, may be immediately emailed to anyone participating telephonically.

1. Each meeting shall be conducted using a written agenda and accurate minutes of each meeting shall be prepared, expeditiously sent to the participants, and approved at the next meeting.
2. Do not discuss with other participant companies at any time, including public and private meetings and social events:
   - your company's prices for products or services, or prices charged by your competitors;
   - costs, discounts, allowances, pricing methods, cost data, terms of sale, profit margins,
   - the price of a specific product or the inputs to such product, e.g. components or raw materials, or anything else that might affect prices;
   - the resale prices your customers should charge for products you sell them;
   - allocating markets, customers, territories or products with your competitors;
   - limiting production;
   - whether or not to deal with any other company;
   - any special contractual arrangements; and
   - any competitively sensitive information concerning your own company or a competitor's company.
3. Do not stay at a meeting or any other gathering or on a conference call if such discussions are taking place. If a participant has a reservation concerning remarks or discussion at a meeting, officially state the reservation. If the discussion is not terminated or resolved satisfactorily, the concerned participant should leave the meeting. Make sure your departure is noted for the record.
4. Do not engage in any communication or create any documents or records that might be misinterpreted to suggest that your company condones or is involved in anticompetitive behavior.
5. Do not use this forum for the purpose of bringing about or attempting to bring about any understanding or agreement, written or oral, formal or informal, express or implied, between and among competitors regarding their prices, terms or conditions of sale, distribution, volume of production, product development or introduction plans, territories, customers, or credit terms.
6. There shall be no discussion, communication, agreement or disclosure among participants that are actual or potential competitors that may result in an artificial manipulation of market adoption of specifications, standards or guidelines under development by the Innovation Network. For avoidance of doubt, this guideline does not prohibit discussions regarding legitimate market needs.
7. Each Participant is obligated and expected to exercise its independent business judgment in pricing its services or products, dealing with its customers and suppliers, and choosing the markets in which it will compete.

8. In connection with your participation in the Innovation Network, do not enter into any agreement or understanding among yourself and other participants to refrain, or to encourage others to refrain, from purchasing any raw materials, product, equipment, services, or other supplies from any supplier or vendor, or from dealing with any supplier or vendor.
9. In connection with your participation in the Innovation Network, do not attempt to prevent any person from gaining access to any market or customer for goods and services, or attempt to prevent any person from obtaining a supply of goods or services or otherwise purchasing goods or services freely in the market.
10. No party shall be excluded from the Innovation Network for an anti-competitive reason.
11. These Guidelines shall be promulgated to all participants and all participants shall abide by these Guidelines.
12. Do consult with counsel on any antitrust matters, especially regarding documents that touch on sensitive antitrust subjects such as pricing, bids, allocation of customers or territories, boycotts, tying arrangements and the like.

Worksheet: What Causes Resistance & Polarization in Change Initiatives?

Write one cause per post-it, based on your own experience.
(We'll share the collective insights from the group after the training.)

12 Tools to Foster Momentum

Here are ten simple methods that help keep groups moving fast and focused on meaningful work, not unproductive dialog and debate.

1. Put How before If

Sometimes, making a commitment to solving a complex problem is intimidating or even threatening to members of a group. Often, however, what really scares people is the unknown (after all, most of us prefer the devil we know to the devil we don't). To overcome these fears of commitment, we invite groups into thought experiments in which we explore possible solutions without asking for any commitments at all. Rather than first dealing with the question of IF we should do something, we first thoroughly explore–through storyboarding, roadmaps, backcasting and other techniques–HOW we would do it. Often, by the time we've completed our thought experiment around the question of how we might do something, many people in the room are ready to move forward on it.

2. Sketching

Consider an artist starting a landscape painting. Does she begin the painting by filling out some detailed part of a scene? Unlikely. Instead, she'll use a light color to lay out the overall scene, and once that looks satisfactory, she'll then start to add layers with finer and finer detail. When working with others, we sometimes get bogged down in the details of an analysis or possible solution before everyone even understands the basic concept of what we're discussing. To avoid this, we talk about "sketching" the idea, "not filling in the details yet, but "getting the concept down." We'll have someone create a diagram of the idea on a flipchart or maybe have a team present the general concept in a 2-minute pitch to the rest of the network. Once we have agreement that an idea is even worth taking forward, we'll then start to fill in more detail.

A terrific way to sketch is to have participants silently generate post-its, then put them up on a shared sheet or wall, clustering as they go, and then organize their thinking together.

3. Yes, And

People often assume that the best way to improve an idea is to critique it and point out its problems ("Yeah, that's a good idea BUT…" or "No, we can't do that because…"). The theory seems to be that if we can fix the problems with the idea, then it might work, or that any idea with problems isn't worth developing anyway. Unfortunately, ideas are fragile things and they die easily. The surest way to get to better ideas is through improv—by taking a promising concept and building on it by having people add to it, evolving and refining it until they're excited by it. The idea that results may be quite different than the one we started with (as is often the case in improv).

4. Satisfying Pieces of Work (aka "Good Enough?")

In working groups, the perfect is often the enemy of the good. Groups have a strange tendency at times to work an analysis or idea to death, sometimes even beyond the point where they've reached vehement agreement about the idea. While it's important for a group to achieve its general objective, but when the conversation and work keeps going after that point, the group's energy decreases rather than increases. Find the point where a satisfying piece of work has been completed by the group and bring that part of the process to a conclusion by acknowledging the good work that's been done and identifying next steps. Concluding (and celebrating) that piece of work and moving on will make the group's energy available for whatever's coming next.

5. Propositions

Leaders and facilitators of multistakeholder work are often hesitant to make proposals to the network. This is understandable—after all, the participants will ideally come up with its own analysis and ideas through their work together. However, bridging from data to analysis to shifts to ideas can be tough for groups. Here's one way to grease the skids of innovation: Rather than waiting for the group to come up with an analysis or create a great strategy, try testing out a possibility by making a "proposition" to the group. For example, if the group has several ideas and is having a hard time choosing one, just propose working on one for now. That proposal creates a reference point for the group. They may decide to reject your idea but at least they've moved forward their thinking together, and the reasons they didn't like that proposal can further clarify their thinking about what proposal will work.

6. Questions Over Answers

Developed by our friend Patricia DiVecchio, the *Asking the Next Right Question* technique keeps groups moving fast by focusing on finding the right questions before we struggle with finding answers. When a small team presents a possible solution to a large group, we ask the larger group to ask questions but the team is only allowed to capture the questions, not answer them (clarifying questions excepted). Invariably, the team finds that 2-3 of the questions provide fresh insight that helps them refine their solution on their own, which builds ownership.

This technique avoids a host of problems with the conventional Q&A approach: (1) the desire of the team members to look smart and competent so they make up their answers on the spot, (2) the sense of having answered and resolved a question so the team doesn't consider it further, and (3) the larger group taking away "responsibility" from the team for struggling with the hard questions themselves.

7. Versioning

Sometimes, decisions can seem like all-or-nothing propositions, which increases participants' sense of risk ("If I don't get my way now, it's all over!"). Putting versions on analysis and even the goal of the network can remind people that everything is subject to change by the group, which keeps everyone open to learning and adapting the work as they move forward. This in turn lowers the stakes, since everyone knows that they can change the work at some point in the future if the current assumptions and approach aren't working.

8. How Might We Questions

A common question in design thinking is "How might we…" and the question is particularly useful at moving people from either-or mode into creative action mode. For example, when someone points out that we can't get a poverty alleviation solution through customs in a given country because of corruption, we can turn that barrier into a problem-solving question by asking “How might we get this into the country reliably?”

9. Prototyping to Generate Design Principles

When people start listing the reasons a prototype won’t work, consider it a gift. We can turn those critiques (and the reason people like the idea) into a working set of design principles that can inform the design of even better prototypes. Then once we have an idea that meets the shared principles that we’ve developed together, we’ll be that much more aligned behind the idea. That’s also why we prototype early and often in Collaborative Innovation—it’s to learn what will work, what we like, what we don’t like, and why—so that we can get to a solution we can all support that much faster!

10. Fast Feedback

Feedback on prototypes and concepts can become an agonizing process if it’s not focused and contained. We follow a process of: (1) A spicy and brief presentation, (2) other members of the team adding any missed points, (3) clarifying questions from the rest of the network. We then ask people giving feedback to write one item per post-its (using Sharpies on 3x3” Post-its) and responding to three questions:

1. One thing you LIKE about the concept or prototype.
2. One thing you might ADD or CHANGE.
3. One thing that the group might want to TEST or LEARN next.

11. The Minimum Valuable Product

Agile software developers, who use a “design-as-you-go” approach to software development, employ a concept called the Minimum Viable Product. This is the simplest version of an app or program that delivered real value to the user.

In Collaborative Innovation, we use the concept we call Minimum *Valuable* Product to refer to a work product that has real value even if it’s not the final solution that the group intends to produce. As Initiative Teams produce work products that are designed to get you toward your ultimate goal, help them consider how their interim work products can also have real value right away. Be aware that Initiative Teams can work on more than one product; they don’t have to be bound to just one. They can work on two or more solutions in parallel or in series.

12. Design Reviews

As you refine the concept and move from prototype to pilot, conduct 30%, 60%, 90% done design reviews to keep Initiative Teams focused on their next milestone rather than the final perfected product.

TIP: Whatever the group is doing, keep checking to ensure that they are planning work that will have impact and work at scale! Sometimes, the work product can become the work so always ensure that the group is clear about how their work products are advancing their larger strategy.

Creative Tensions in Collaborative Innovation

While we draw freely on concepts and methods from design thinking, systems thinking, entrepreneurship, and group dynamics in our working groups, one of the underlying elements throughout the work is identifying and leveraging "Creative Tensions" (which we internally refer to as "Polarities").

To lead Collaborative Innovation most effectively, we need to be able to leverage the powerful tensions that arise naturally in this work, such as the tension between *what I want* and *what others want* from the work of the group. We leverage these tensions when selecting our network participants and in designing the ongoing management and work of the group itself.

What Tensions Must be Well-Managed in this Work?

Leaders of collaborative innovation, whether program directors, facilitators, or members of a Design Team, are what we call "Facilitative Leaders." They work from a personal passion for a greater purpose and yet are entirely committed to find solutions that work for all.

A key facet of a strong Facilitative Leader is the ability to dynamically leverage a number of core creative tensions that emerge when people come together to solve tough problems, such as the following:

Tension	How and why to leverage it
Humility & Confidence	Listening deeply and authentically for what you don't understand is important to deepening trust and learning, while asserting your own goals, plans, and interests provides clarity for others. You might also call this tension Inquiry & Advocacy.
Self-interest & Common Good	Networks accomplish little if the participants work only from their own personal or organizational interests. At the same time, they will contribute less time, money, and resources if the work is only altruistic. We constantly align the self-interest of participants with our shared purpose around advancing a greater common good. We do this by asking each participant to operate from the "Principle of Generosity" and by continually connecting the group to the greater purpose of the work.
Individual interests & Institutional interests	Each participant is a whole human being with his or her personal reasons for participating in the network. Most participants in our networks also represent an organization with its own interests, priorities, and constraints. We work up front to make sure that we have someone capable of aligning their own organizations behind the goal and activities of the network, and we continually monitor the "background pressures" on participants from their organizations and how we can support them in aligning organizational and network interests.

Focus on task & Focus on relationship	On calls and in meetings, we spend time both advancing the work AND building deeper, more meaningful connections among participants.
Visionary & Grounded	It's very helpful for Networks to both focus on the practical tasks that need to get done and continually link these back to the greater purpose they are working to achieve. This means ensuring that there's real meaning and a clear purpose in each and every bit of work that everyone is performing.
Action orientation & Planning focus	Be sure to keep momentum through continuous action and progress toward the goal and to also plan well to make the action as productive and high-impact as possible.
Pushing entrepreneur & Patient partner	The key initiators of the group (e.g. the design team, program director, and initiative team chairs) should work with patient understanding from where their peers are, while at the same time pushing them to take greater risks in working toward the greater purpose.
Working Individually, in Small Groups & in Large groups	When groups form, they often try to perform all their work as a whole group. Instead, we encourage our Networks and Initiative Teams[2] to define chunks of work that 2-3 people will "own." These small groups work up a concept and bring it back to the whole group for feedback, and then the small groups use the feedback from the large group or the whole network to refine their thinking and strategy. The Network as a whole is a good place to ensure overall shared intent and alignment, assess the overall strategy, setting priorities, critique the specific analysis or proposed solutions emerging from Initiative Teams, provide encouragement, and generate insights, ideas and resources. Initiative Teams are good for framing up a specific problem, developing concept solutions into working prototypes, piloting solutions in the real world, and refining the analysis and solutions over time. Individuals or pairs are good at what we call "refining and pre-processing work: refining analysis and/or concepts to test with the Initiative Teams or the whole Network, or editing statements or documents to bring back to the larger groups.
Simplicity & Deep understanding	It's important to keep things simple (e.g. goals, plans, and roles) so that people can hold what's happening in their heads. Our objective is that participants wakes up each morning with one simple goal at the top of their minds. At the same time, we also do "Deep Dives" to help all stakeholders really understand a key issue much more thoroughly so we can design more robust solutions together.

Being intuitive & Being analytical/ data-driven	We naturally get a mix of thinking styles in any network, but we also design processes to draw on both intuitive and analytical thinking styles. Our process designers need to pay attention to creating the conditions for both to emerge in a group. Our cycle often begins with helping the group develop an intuitive understanding of the whole problem or solution, which we then break down and analyze piece by piece.
Fostering unity & Encouraging debate	Our motto: “Differentiate before we integrate.” Every person needs to know that his or her wisdom and perspective is both understood and honored before that person can fully offer the same to others. We create space to address differences, especially the deepest differences, and to leverage those differences as drivers of innovation.
Highest leverage actions & easily sellable actions	We work to build “the market’s” appetite for the high-leverage solutions but in the end we must be able to “sell” the work to other stakeholders. Most constituents will only support a new solution if they believe it’s truly feasible, so we do a lot of prototyping of ideas. By focusing more on HOW to accomplish something together rather than asking for decisions on IF we’ll do it, we build support rather than asking for it.

Yes, a LOT of good tensions show up in this work! We don’t carry all of these around in our heads all the time and in practice only a few of the tensions in the list above will be in focus at any given time (though all of them are present at some level all the time). What’s important as a network leader is to identify them and help the group leverage them well over time.

Our “Leveraging Conflict for Innovation” course will help you learn to see, map, assess, and leverage creative tensions like these to foster much deeper empathy, trust, and collaboration among stakeholders.

Post-Launch Meeting Activities

Solving the “Monday Morning” Problem

Our friend Laura Weiss, who founded the service design practice at IDEO, is obsessed with solving the Monday Morning Problem--that is, you have a terrific meeting experience but then everyone returns to their regular jobs on Monday morning, with no clear plans for moving the work of the network forward. We offer a simple rule of thumb: Before ending any meeting, identify and write up 3 clear and immediate next steps that need to happen right after the meeting to ensure that everyone has momentum for taking the word forward on Monday morning!

Following up After Meetings

We typically will send an “appreciation email” soon after the meeting, thanking everyone for bringing their wisdom, experience, and commitment to the work, and noting a few key next steps. We then produce a meeting report (written to be quickly and easily reviewed) that shares the key breakthroughs, decisions, and next steps from the meeting. After the first convening and once a year after that, we follow up a meeting with a one-to-one call with each stakeholder to learn about their experiences in the network, identify any concerns or issues they may have, gather their insights and ideas, and determine how to more deeply engage them in the work.

III. Learning about the System

Who is involved in this phase:
- All Convening attendees

What's being produced in this phase:
- ❑ A ratified Working Goal
- ❑ A "complete" and validated System Map

Why it's important:
- People agree on what they are working to accomplish
- They agree on what's happening the system that might impact their Goal
- They have agreed on the problems before they start advancing solutions

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?
- In a single mapping session, which is part of the Convening event

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?
1. The Program Team begins the session with a working System Map on the wall
2. The whole Network reviews the map together, adding, removing, changing or refining elements as needed
3. The Network members identify and prioritize the top Critical Shifts based on the map and their collective knowledge

Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?
- In person, in a room with a wall large enough to hold the system map

Why Map the System?

It's a FAST way for everyone involved in your initiative to:

1. See the **whole landscape of actors and forces** around the person closest to the pain, including those that aren't immediately obvious from the user perspective
2. Identify the forces that are **blocking the change we seek**
3. Identify **strategic leverage points** that can help catalyze the change most powerfully
4. Learn **who else's experience** is important to understand and shift
5. Have **everyone contribute** to both analysis and solutions

To rapidly and sustainably change a real person's experience, we need to change the system around that person.

Mapping helps us see the elements in the system and the dynamics among those elements, so we can strategically intervene.

Which Method to Use?

For most local initiative working on social issues like foster care, addiction, literacy or homelessness, **Force Field Mapping** is the fastest and simplest approach but **Constellation Mapping**, while more complex, will yield richer analysis (and ultimately richer strategy).

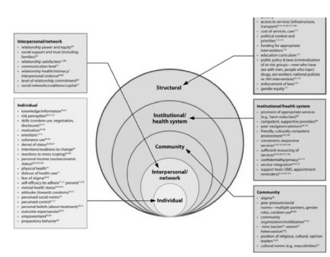
If your initiative involves develop a pipeline or value chain (like a career pipeline or industry supply chain), then the **Value Chain Mapping** method works best.

Key Factors Mapping is an ideal method when a group seems really stuck. It can be done in real time and gets a lot of insight on the table fast about what key issues in the system might be getting in the way of progress.

Other Options

At right are two more methods. You can find more information about these online or call us to learn when and how these might be useful.

Key Influencer Mapping



5 Levels Mapping

4 Steps for Successful Mapping

1. Use powerful goals that focus the inquiry
2. Get the right people in the room—those who represent the diversity of experiences within the system, and can bring resources and/or perspective
3. Choose the most appropriate method to map the specific type of system
4. Define the critical shifts that need to happen

Force Field Mapping

Key Factors Mapping

Method: Force Field Mapping

FORCE FIELD MAPPING

WHAT A simple but effective method for quickly identifying the forces for or against a change, and prioritizing actions that will have the greatest impact.

WHEN This method is especially helpful when the success of your initiative depends on certain people (e.g. doctors or people with diabetes) changing their behaviors. However, it's also effective at quickly capturing general forces that need to be addressed (such as limited availability of information on diabetes).

MATERIALS

Markers
(for the facilitator)
Post-its, if desired
Blank wall or Flipchart

WHO This method is useful when the participants are familiar with the interests and concerns of those people who are influencing ultimate success of the work. In a diabetes example, this might include case workers, doctors, nurses, and patients who want to help other patients.

HOW To do this, write the group's challenge at the top of a flip chart page. Then, create two columns below that, and label the columns Forces For and Forces Against.

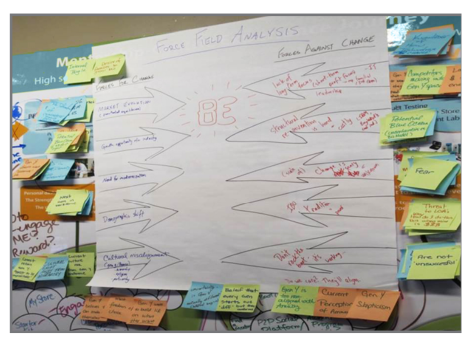
Instructions to participants:

1. We're going to quickly generate as many items as we can under each of these two columns:
   Under Forces For, we'll list all the factors that are contributing to make this change happen or that attract people to adopt a new behavior.
   Under Forces Against, we'll list all the factors that are preventing the change from happening or people from adopting a new behavior.
2. [After they've populated each column]. Now let's identify the 3 strongest forces in the *Forces For* column (those that seem to exert the most influence) and then do the same in the *Forces Against* column.
3. Now let's look at each of the six strongest forces and, starting with the first force, we'll generate 3 specific strategies for strengthen or weaken the forces to change the force field. [Make sure that each strategy is as specific as possible.

WHY Benefits of Force Field Analysis:

- It's a fast way to get a full view of why things seem stuck or why a person isn't changing his or her behavior.
- Provides a starting analysis for developing and prioritizing actions that are likely to move thing forward.
- The results are specific and can be refined and tested with other stakeholders as you move forward.

WHAT'S NEXT We often use the results of a force field analysis to prototype some solutions or interventions. By testing those prototypes and seeing how they work (or don't work), we learn more about whether our force field analysis might be missing something important or is inaccurate in some other way, so we can refine it over time through testing.



The force field concept was first described by psychologist Kurt Lewin in a 1943 article titled "The Field at a Given Time."

Method: Constellation Mapping

CONSTELLATION MAPPING

WHAT This is a sophisticated method for building shared insight into the dynamics around a given challenge, identifying possible solution pathways, and engaging stakeholders in contributing resources to the solutions.

WHEN This method is especially helpful when you need people to thoroughly understand a complex challenge together, generate practical pathways to action, AND build genuine commitment to working together, all at the same time.

MATERIALS

Hexagon-shaped notes from thinkingtools.net (red, blue, and green)
Sharpie markers (one for each participant)

WHO This method works well for groups of up to 30 people working on issues that are complex and not well defined. Participants should represent a diversity of perspectives on the challenges and be able to commit resources to addressing the challenge.

HOW Instructions to participants:

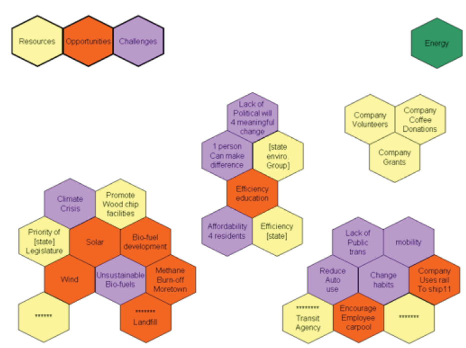
1. We're going to quickly generate as many items as we can related to this issue. There are three types:
   Challenges are problems related to the issue (write these on red notes),
   Opportunities are potentially positive outcomes of addressing the issue (write these on green),
   Resources are things you can leverage directly or indirectly to positively impact the issue (on blue).
2. Write one item per note—legibly!
3. Each item must somehow relate to the focus issue, each item must be specific (use concrete examples where possible), and each participant can create an unlimited number of items—the more, the better.

After people have written lots of items, tell them to generate two more items each and then post all of them on the wall. It's okay if they start to connect related items as they post, but they shouldn't go too deep yet.

After the participants have posted all their items, take a short break and then gather everyone near the wall. Make sure everyone can see the notes well and then invite them to start connecting elements. Read items aloud as you connect them together. (The hexagon-shaped notes fit neatly together into patterns.)

WHY Benefits of Constellation Mapping:

- Each person's distinct perspective and information becomes part of the whole picture.
- Items often come together to produce insights that no individual participant would have seen.
- As people connect problems with resources and opportunities, the connections point to possible "solution paths" that can address the problem multi-dimensionally.
- People begin to see the relationship among various elements and understand the dynamics of the problem.
- The process of connecting items that everyone generated builds shared understanding and commitment.



WHAT'S NEXT Use the output to seed a storyboarding process, where the group creates possible stories about what's happening now and what the desired future looks like, and then uses storytelling to chart how this group might make that future happen.

Method: Key Factors Mapping

KEY FACTORS MAPPING

WHAT This is a simple but effective method for quickly identifying the factors that have the most influence on addressing a given challenge.

WHEN This method is especially helpful when things aren't moving forward and there seem to be underlying issues that hold things back. The process helps push a group to think harder about what's really holding back progress.

WHO A diverse group of stakeholders who care about solving the challenge, especially if they seem to bring diverging perspectives on how to do it.

MATERIALS

Medium Post-it notes (two colors)

Sharpie markers (one for each participant)

Large wall of paper or whitebard, 6x6'

HOW To do this, draw a 1-foot circle in the center of the large sheet of paper.

Write the group's challenge in that circle. Then, draw another circle that's as large as possible on your paper, and another that's in between these two circles. [See example below. Note that this exercise can be done with or without post-its.]

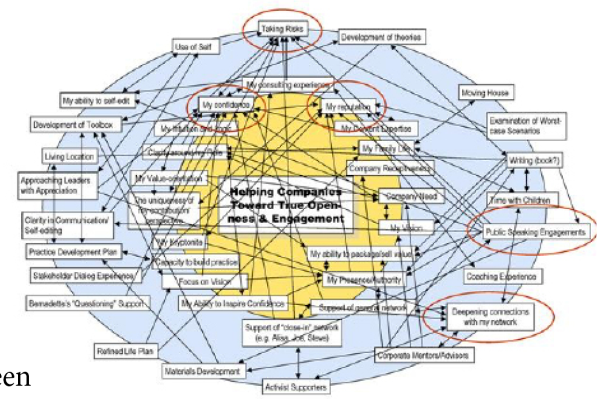
Instructions to participants:

1. I've put our challenge in the center of this page. Do we all agree that this is what we're working on?
2. Now, in this middle circle, I want you to generate post-its for anything that will impact us addressing our challenge. These might be things that will help us achieve it or hold us back from that. Go!
3. [You might need to group post-its into themes where people have generated similar items. Do this next.
4. Now in the outer circle, I want you to put down anything that impacts the elements in the middle circle.
5. Now, as a group, let's start connecting any element that impacts another element. We'll draw a line between any two elements where one element seems to impact the other.

At this point, a few elements will start to emerge as the ones that are most influencing other elements (because they have the most lines connected to them). You can check with the group whether that seems accurate and then work on specific strategies for addressing these key factors.

WHY Benefits of Key Factors Analysis:

- It's a very fast way to identify the factors that seem to have the most impact, and might be powerful places to focus intervention strategies.
- It helps a group put everything on the table and view it all together as factors to consider.
- You can include any type of factor, including policies, practices, institutions, or political issues.



WHAT'S NEXT The key factors are often things that have been under the table or unaddressed, so it is helpful to help the group talk through why that factor is having such a big impact (usually a negative impact) on their ability to address the challenge. Good facilitation can help them uncover some unstated assumptions, beliefs, biases, or political dynamics that have been holding back progress.

Method: Value Chain Mapping

VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS

WHAT A method for uncovering disconnects or disincentives for delivering better outcomes across a value chain.

WHEN This method usually applies when a better product or service needs to be delivered to consumers, citizens, or institutions (e.g. healthier school food).

WHO This method is most effective when the participants represent the various "players" along the value chain, because we ultimately need to learn how to design things so that everyone gets a good deal.

MATERIALS

Medium Post-it notes
(green and yellow)
Extra-large Post-it notes
from thinkingtools.net
Sharpie markers
(one for each participant)
Long wall or paper

HOW Start by writing a working goal at the top of the sheet of paper. Then use the extra-large post-its to identify key players along the value chain–these might include farmers, processors, distributors, importers, food service companies, schools, or other groups depending on your situation. Note that it's often most efficient to have a "scribe" to write contributions from the group on post-its.The post-its are more legible and the facilitator can summarize the discussion quickly for the notetaker.

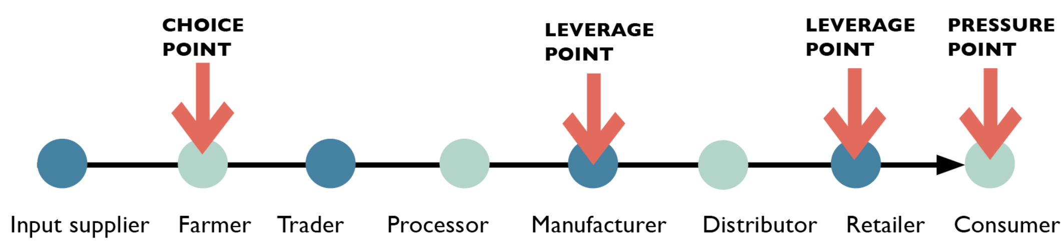
Instructions to participants:

1. Let's start with key players at the beginning of this value chain (e.g., with farmers). As we move toward our goal, what, if anything might be a barrier for these folks? [Capture these on yellow post-its.]
2. Now, what solutions, resources, or opportunities might help reduce these barriers (e.g., for farmers)?
3. [After the group has done these for each key player] Looking across the whole value chain, where do things seem to be most stuck?
4. Okay, so value chains work most effectively when there are clear "signals" from the demand side to the supply side. How well are those signals coming across here? What can we do to strengthen them?

WHY Benefits of Value Chain Mapping:

- It's a very focused way to think about the value that each player involved in delivering better outcomes is receiving, and how to improve the value proposition for them.
- The results are specific and can be refined and tested with other stakeholders as you move forward.

WHAT'S NEXT Using the value chain map, we can identify the critical actors who represent key leverage points and whose current and desired experience we need to better understand in order to deliver a better solution, and then focus on how to make a better value proposition for them.



(SYSTEM: FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN)

Notes: Clarifications & Reflections

What stood out for me from the session so far?
What do I still need to be clarified?

IV. Designing Interventions

Who is involved in this phase:

- All Convening attendees

What's being produced in this phase:

- ❑ Agreed-upon Critical Shifts
- ❑ A portfolio of Ideas for how to make each shift happen
- ❑ A set of top Ideas to develop into Initiatives (Concepts+Prototypes) in the next step

Why it's important:

- People agree on what areas of the System most need to be addressed first
- They have generated a diverse and compelling portfolio of Ideas based on their best thinking

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?

- In a structured ideation session, which might be part of a single Convening or the second meeting in a Convening series of meetings

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?

1. The Network agrees on the top Critical Shifts
2. They generate ideas for making each Shift happen

Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?

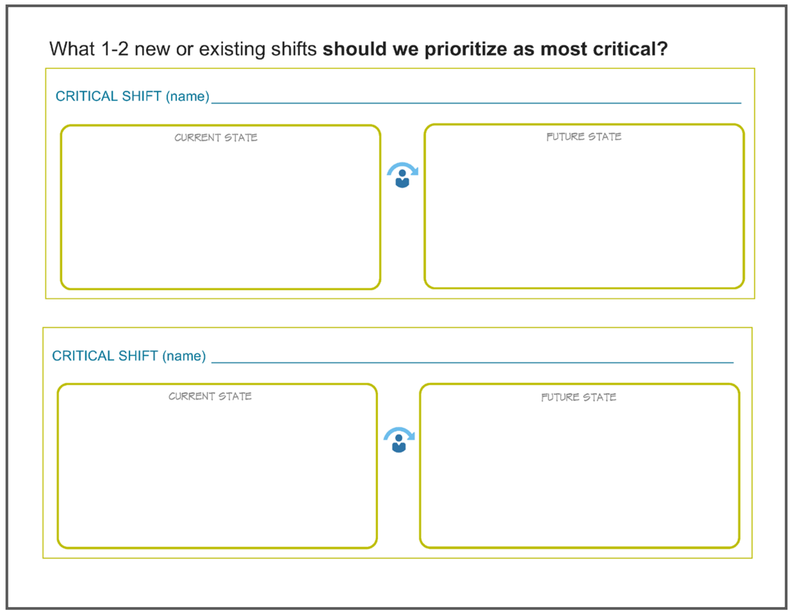
- In a large room or break-out rooms, with space to work and present and prioritize the ideas

Generating and Prioritizing Critical Shifts

Based on the system map the group has refined together, we then ask people to identify the critical shifts that would, if they happened, most powerfully move the system toward our goal

We've used two primary methods for generating and prioritizing Critical Shifts. *Note that we will often give the participants a list of critical shifts that the Design Team has already developed based on the interviews.*

Method 1: Generate & Consolidate



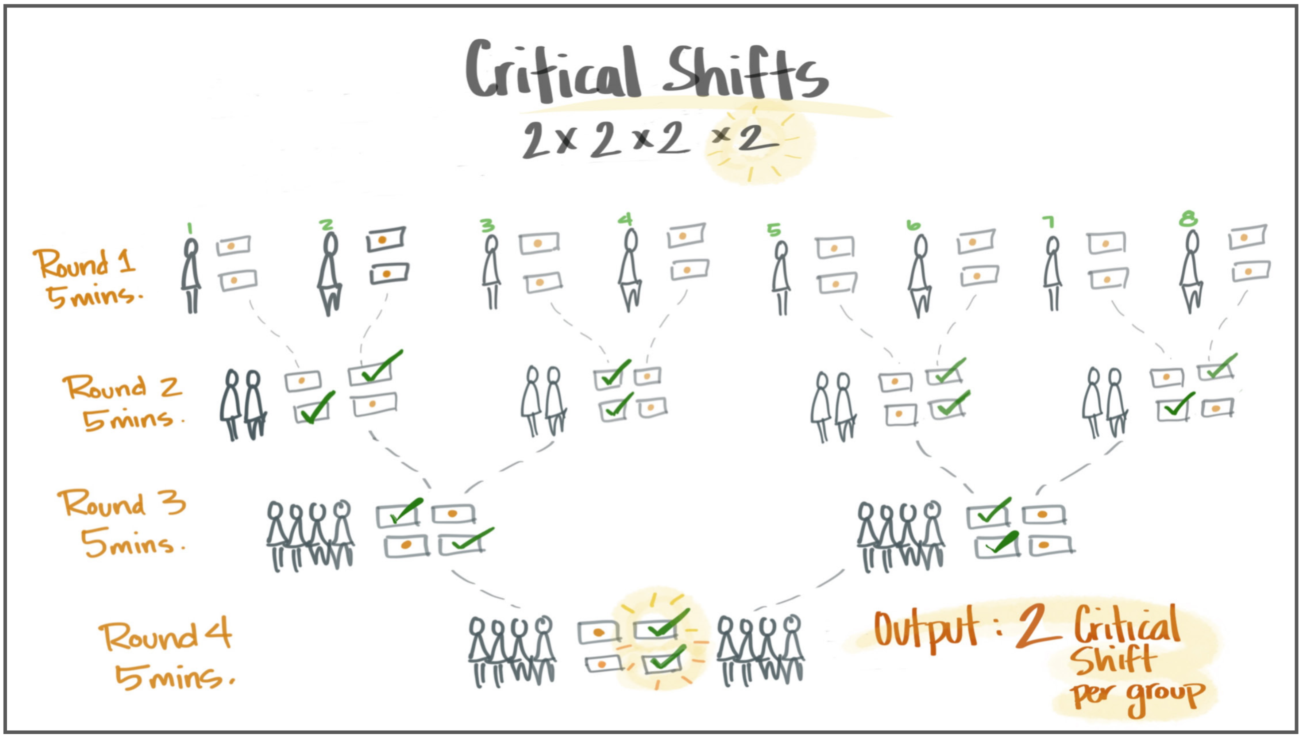
1. Create groups of three participants.
2. Give each group a critical shifts worksheet (like the simple worksheet at right).
3. Tell them to draw out two critical shifts from the system map (or from the Design Team's list of shifts) that they believe would, if they were to happen, most powerfully move the system toward our goal.
4. Gather everyone together and ask one team to share just one of their shifts.
5. Ask the rest of the groups if they have any shifts that are similar to the one just shared, and cluster these together.
6. Have the next group share just one of their shifts, and so on.
7. One you have all the shifts on the wall, in clusters, have the group review the set (as you walk through it) and ask (1) if anything is missing from the set, and (2) if any of the shifts need to be refined or cleaned up.
8. Once the group has confirmed the set, give voting dots (typically 4) to each participant and have everyone vote for their top shifts, using the votes however they want.
9. Review the results of the voting and choose the top 3-5 shifts to develop strategies around. More than 5 shifts is typically too much to take to the next step.

Method 2: Brackets (2x2x2x2)

1. Give each individual 5 minutes to identify the two most critical shifts, using the worksheet, that they believe would most powerfully move the system toward our goal. These can be shifts that that person develops and/or shifts from the Design Team-generated list.
2. Have participants form pairs and take 10 minutes to agree on their two most critical shifts as a pair.
3. Have each pair join another pair to form a group of four and take 10 minutes to agree on their two most critical shifts as a group.
4. Have each group of four join

another group of four to form a group of eight and take 15 minutes to agree on their two most critical shifts as a whole group. (We suggest having a facilitator support each group of eight to agree on their top two shifts, and avoid combining shifts in order to reach consensus.)

5. Ask each group of eight to chart their top critical shift on 12x12 post-it, and post that up on our "bank" of system shifts
6. Review the bank of shifts as whole group and possibly use voting dots to cull the list down if there are more than 5-6. (Even if the Backbone organization can only support 4 Initiative Teams, you may want to allow the group to move forward with 5-6 Critical Shifts and develop Initiative Concepts around those, and then prioritize among those Concepts rather than limiting the group to just 4 Critical Shifts.)



Tips for Generating & Prioritizing Critical Shifts

1. Make sure each participant has a worksheet and a Sharpie marker.
2. Make sure groups don't combine or water down shifts to create a "Frankenstein's monster" shift that people can agree to but is too complex to work with.
3. Use a bell or timer to move to the next step in the process.
4. Maybe play music during this exercise to stimulate peoples' thinking.
5. Suggest the following criteria for choosing the Critical Shifts:
   - ❑ What shift will advance our goal most powerfully?
   - ❑ What shift, if we solved it first, would enable other shifts to happen more powerfully and/or easily?
   - ❑ Which shifts would NOT happen without a network like this to move them forward?

Examples of Critical Strategic Shifts

The following table shows actual shifts generated by the participants in the 50x50 network, a collaboration working to grow employee-ownership in the U.S.

Note that each shift is labeled for easy reference (as the group discusses them).

Name	Current state	Future state
Public Companies	No framework currently exists for employee ownership in publicly traded companies (there is no publicly traded company with an ESOP that holds more than 3% of company stock).	A clear framework exists for employee ownership in publicly traded companies. It is common for public companies to have more than 5% of stock in an employee ownership plan.
Employee-Ownership Field	The employee ownership field lacks a common strategy and feels fragmented.	The employee ownership field includes diverse views, moving forward strategically together on issues like policy and messaging.
Succession	Employee ownership is the tool of last resort in business owner succession planning.	Employee ownership is the #1 succession planning option for business owners.
Partnerships	The employee ownership field lacks sufficient strategic partnerships and alliances.	The employee ownership field has broad and deep alliances with important national movements.
Awareness	There is a lack of awareness and misconceptions about employee ownership, and the field cannot yet communicate its value to various stakeholders including business owners and employees.	Everybody knows about and thinks highly of employee ownership. It connects deeply with key stakeholders.

Generating Ideas for Solutions

Once we have a working set of shifts, how do we come up with initiatives (programs, projects, interventions, policies, services, etc.) that will make each shift happen?

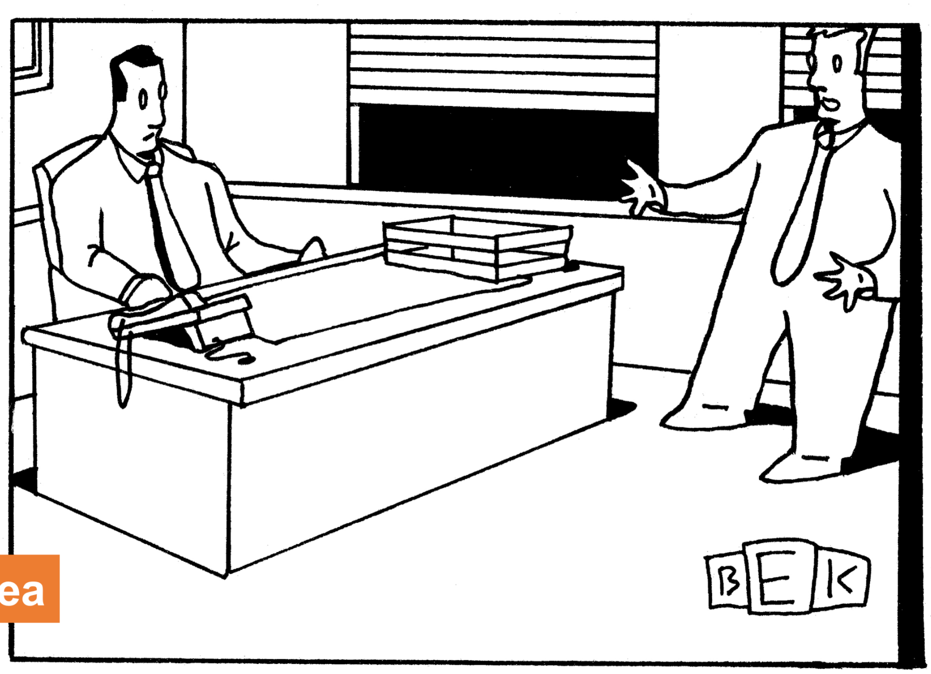
We make them up using old-fashioned (and some newfangled) ideation techniques.

Form small groups around the top critical shifts, based on people's interest. Give the groups instructions for the brainstorming method to use and the number of ideas they need to generate (plus any other instructions), and then set them loose!

Four Reasons to Brainstorm Well

1. **More Ideas.** The more good ideas we can draw from, the more likely we'll move beyond favored solutions.
2. **Better Ideas.** Effective brainstorming generates ideas that are more specific, impactful, and compelling.
3. **Opens Up Thinking.** Helps us consider the problem and potential solutions in new ways.
4. **Expands Energy.** Generates energy from creative engagement and builds energy for the work ahead.

A Bad Idea



"I think you'll like this idea—it's sort of 'dull' meets 'inoffensive.'"

Bruce Eric Kaplan
The New Yorker Collection
The Cartoon Bank

4 Barriers to Good Brainstorming

1. **Rabbit Holes.** Don't get bogged down in discussion. Only discuss an idea enough to help clarify it, and no more.
2. **Group Think.** Break away from the pattern of generating more of the same types of ideas, or just adding variations of a single central idea.
3. **Perfectionism & Critique.** Ideas are fragile things and they die easily. Adding to an idea produces much better output than tearing it apart.
4. **Being Safe.** The most compelling ideas are specific and provocative. Avoid trying to make your ideas appealing by keeping them general and unspecific.

An Idea is…	An Idea is not…
a concrete action (programs, services, initiatives, etc.) that can be take toward a specific outcome.	**a statement about an issue, or a declaration or assertion about a challenge or opportunity.**
Example: "Get more architects elected to public office to ensure a 'seat at the table' on public design decisions."	*Example: "Architects need to have a seat at the table on public design decisions."*

5 Tips for Better Brainstorming

1. **Appoint a facilitator/timekeeper.** Clearly define roles. Agree on one person in the group to lead the brainstorming, and keep the group on time.
2. **Use Quiet Time.** No matter what technique you use, it's helpful to offer participants 2 minutes of quiet time to generate ideas on their own, and then share them as a group and generate more.
3. **Stand up & move fast.** Have the group stand up around a flipchart on an easel or against the wall. Standing up keeps the energy flowing, helps people think on their toes and move fast to yield powerful results in the least amount of time.
4. **Follow the 'yes, and' principle.** Have groups respond with 'yes, and' instead of 'yes, but'. The surest way to get to better ideas is through improv—by taking a promising concept and building on it.
5. **As the group generates ideas, have the groups cluster similar ideas together,** or even combine them into one idea to "clean up" the idea pool before having groups choose their top idea.

4 Better Brainstorming Methods

BRAINSTORMING IN A BOX

Used extensively by CoCreative's partner firm ThinkPlace, this method is often more productive than conventional open-ended brainstorming because it applies more constraints on ideas, not fewer. If your group is looking for quick wins, for example, try a variation on these instructions for Brainstorming in a Box: "Working in groups of 3, you have 10 minutes to generate 10 high-quality ideas. Every idea must:

1. Be "prototype-able" within 6 months
2. Have a measurable impact
3. Make a BIG difference
4. Require NO resources beyond what we have

BRAINWRITING

Developed in the last 1960's by Bernd Rohrbach, brainwriting is a simple technique to engage all participants more fully in the brainstorming process. Brainwriting has the benefits of quiet reflection while also building on others' ideas, which can produce better-quality ideas for groups with many introverts or non-professionals.

Here's our version: Begin with each participant or small groups of participants in front of flip chart paper on the wall. Have everyone silently add their ideas to the sheet in front of them. After a few minutes, have the individual or small groups shift to the next sheet, read the ideas there, and add to these. After 10 to 15 minutes, walk the whole group around the room, and have the group "harvest" their favorite ideas from the long lists.

CONSTELLATION MAPPING

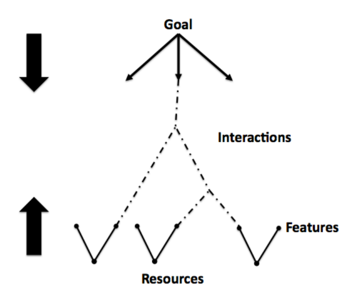
Developed by CoCreative, this process is a powerful way to analyze a problem and generate feasible solutions simultaneously. The technique uses three colors of Post-it notes (we like the large hexagonal notes from Thinkingtools.net). While considering the challenge at hand, each participant writes down one item per note:

- Each red note should have a specific *Problem* related to the larger challenge,
- Each green note should have a specific *Opportunity* for addressing the issue are put on green notes,
- Each blue note should have a specific *Resource* that the participant can mobilize to positively affect the issue.

Each participant generates as many of each type of note as possible and posts it on the wall. Once people have posted all their resources, problems and opportunities, we then start to connect the notes into clusters.

BRAINSWARMING

Developed by Dr. Tony McCaffrey, this simple technique appeals to different thinking styles and creates very feasible ideas by connecting problems to solutions. Write a goal or problem at the top of a large sheet, then write the major resources available to meet these problems at the bottom, and then invite participants to add ideas for tackling the problem from either end, making relevant connections between problems and resources as you go.



Selecting and Prioritizing Ideas

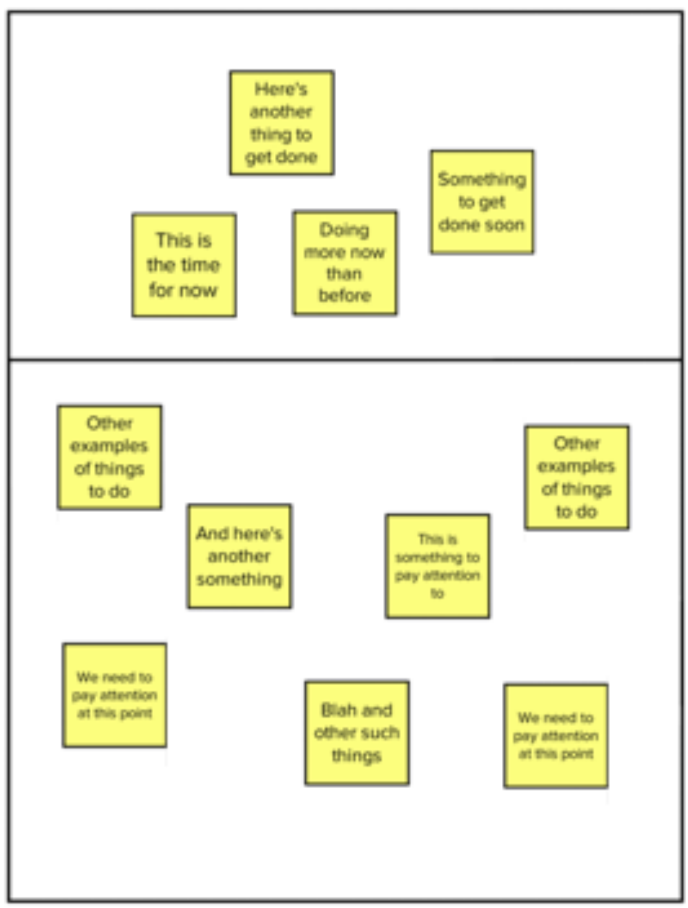
1. **Voting.** The simplest way to choose the top idea is for each group to vote and then see if the members of their group consent to the top vote-getting idea.
2. **Selecting.** “Above the Line” is a fast way to easily select the highest-value ideas.
3. **Impact-Feasibility Matrix.** Put “Impact” on the horizontal axis and “Feasibility” on the vertical axis. Choose the top 10 ideas (on post-its) from the pool. First order the ideas 1-10 along the Impact axis, with no two ideas at the same point. Then move them upwards to their feasibility level, testing with the group.
4. **Going Rogue.** If someone really loves an idea, however, and the rest of the group doesn’t, we sometimes create groundrules for “going rogue.” This usually means that a person can go off and develop out his/her idea but will only have 2 minutes to share it with the network to gauge the other participants’ interest in the rogue idea.

Voting

The simplest way to choose the top idea is for the group members to vote on them and then see if the members of their group consent to the top vote-getting idea.

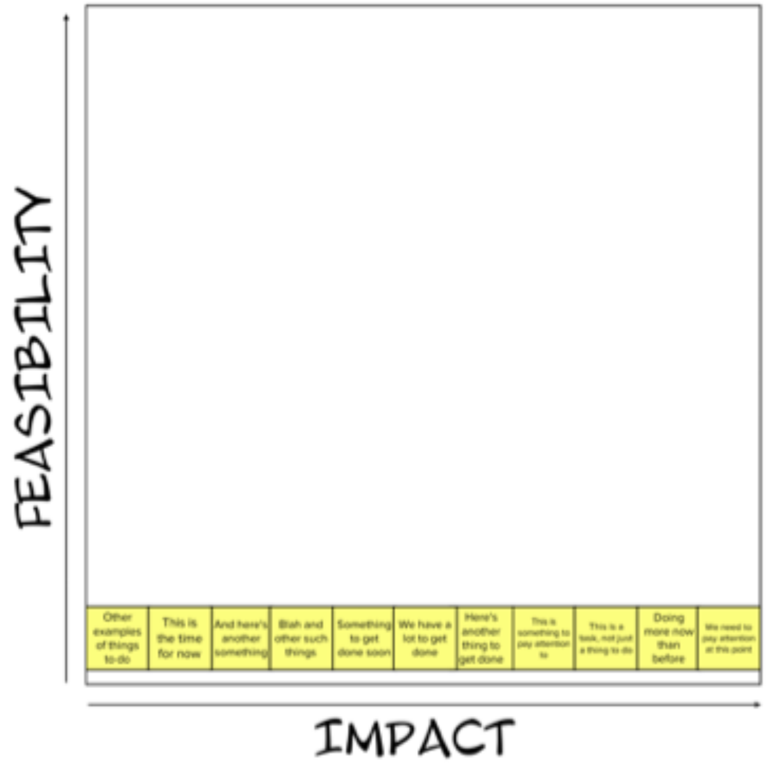
Selecting: Above the Line Method

1. Reiterative the shift that the group is working on together.
2. Agree on a working timeframe. This particularly helps with the assessment of feasibility. We typically use 2-3 years.
3. Draw on horizontal line about 1/3 of the way from the top of a piece of flip chart paper.
4. Generate many ideas on post-its for how you might to make a shift happen. If people generate ideas silently (a great way to engage introverts), have them put each idea on a post-it and the cluster the same ideas together as you put them up. As you collect and cluster ideas, put them UNDER the horizontal line.
5. Review the ideas and make sure that everyone understands each idea well enough to consider it.
6. Ask people to move any idea or idea cluster above them line if they believe it is powerful and promising. As they move it, ask them to share their thinking with the rest of the group. Keep doing this until you have all the favored ideas



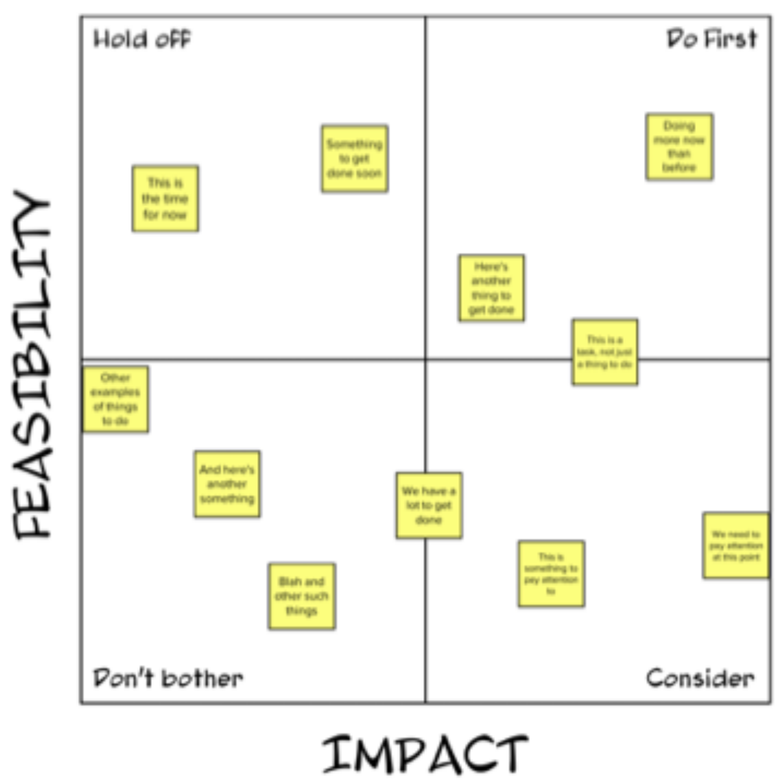
above the line.

7. Check with the group whether peop
(“our top ideas”) and below the line
8. You can now use the Impact-Feasib



Impact-Feasibility Matrix

9. Use this method to assess ideas for how to make a critical shift happen most effectively and efficiently.
10. Reiterative the shift that the group is working on together.
11. Agree on a working timeframe. This particularly helps with the assessment of feasibility. We typically use 2-3 years.
12. Generate many ideas on post-its for how you might to make a shift happen. If people generate ideas silently (a great way to engage introverts), have them put each idea on a post-it and the cluster the same ideas together as you put them up.
13. Review the ideas and make sure that everyone understands each idea well enough to consider it.
14. Cull that pool of ideas down to maybe 10-12 (by, for example, simple having people “bring forward” their favorite ideas).
15. Place those ideas in a single line along the Impact axis. This forces the group to agree on the relative impact of each idea, making the shared analysis more clear and simple.
16. Now have the group move each idea along the Feasibility axis based on their shared analysis of what it will take to develop, test, implement, and scale that idea.
17. Finally, draw two lines to bisect the grid. This makes it easier to talk about groups or categories of ideas. The following image shows one way to classify ideas in the 2x2 matrix.



V. Making Solutions

Who is involved in this phase:

- All Convening attendees

What's being produced in this phase:

- ❑ A Concept document describing the top Ideas
- ❑ A Prototype of a key work product for each top Idea

Why it's important:

- They have a strong set of Concepts that are concrete, powerful and achievable
- They have a strong set of Prototypes that make the work real and minimize confusion and uncertainty about what they are going to actually advance as a Network.

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?

- They draft the Concepts and Prototypes a single work session, which might be part of a single Convening or the second meeting in a Convening series of meetings
- We often have them draft a Concept first, then develop a Prototype and refine both based on feedback from the rest of the Network

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?

1. The Network confirms the top Ideas
2. We form teams around those Ideas
3. Each team uses a Concept Worksheet to flesh out the Idea into an actual Initiative
4. Each team presents its Concept to the Network and gets feedback and Prototype ideas
5. Each team develops a Prototype of a key work product related to the Concept
6. The teams present the Prototypes for feedback
7. Each team has more time to integrate feedback into their work

Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?

- In a large room or break-out rooms, with space to work and present the work

Making the Ideas Real

Once you have chosen the top ideas from across the critical shift groups, it's time to get real. We next have the teams of participants who generated and prioritized our top ideas develop their ideas into fuller concepts using a Project Concept worksheet (see an example on the following page).

We often have groups also prototype some key work product that will make the idea tangible and concrete. If we're pressed for time, we will just have groups develop a project concept in the launch meeting and then do prototyping later (in an in-person or virtual meeting of their Initiative Team).

Project concepts, along with prototypes, help to reduce uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguity and they build momentum by making the work real and understandable by all.

Give groups 45 minutes to draft the project concept and another 45 minutes to make a prototype, with a round of feedback in between to give feedback on the concept and decide on what work product to prototype. After a final round of feedback, give the Initiative Team time to process and prioritize their feedback and plan next steps.

Generating Initiative Concepts

1. Form groups to generate the concepts. Each participant can work in only one group.
2. Tell each group to designate a facilitator/timekeeper and presenter before doing anything else. (We often provide the facilitator.)
3. Inform them that they will develop their idea into a compelling concept that their presenter will pitch (or "sell") to the rest of the network.
4. Advise them to work individually at first to allow everyone, especially the introverts and intuitive thinkers, to develop their thinking individually first, and then work in the whole group. We often give them post-its and Sharpies to generate content for the various parts of the project concept worksheet individually and then put those on the worksheet and then sort, cluster, and consolidate their post-its on the worksheet.
5. Give each team member a small worksheet for their individual reflection and a poster-size worksheet, which they will use in their pitch to the rest of the room.
6. Give them 2-3 minutes to pitch their concept to the whole group, with up to 10 minutes for feedback from the rest of the group.

We often gather the feedback silently using post-its and then have the Initiative Teams sort, cluster, and report back in the second round what feedback they gathered and how they integrated it into their concepts.

Initiative Concept Worksheets

PROJECT CONCEPT

CONCEPT NAME

TEAM MEMBERS

DESCRIBE HOW THE CONCEPT WORKS

WHOM DO WE NEED TO SUCCEED?

NON-PROFIT

PRIVATE SECTOR

PUBLIC SECTOR

OTHERS

WHAT KEY SHIFT WILL THE CONCEPT CONTRIBUTE TO?

CURRENT STATE

FUTURE STATE

KEY METRICS:
HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

ALTERNATIVES (BETTER, EASIER, FASTER)

BIGGEST CHALLENGES AND HOW TO ADDRESS

KEY RESOURCE NEEDS

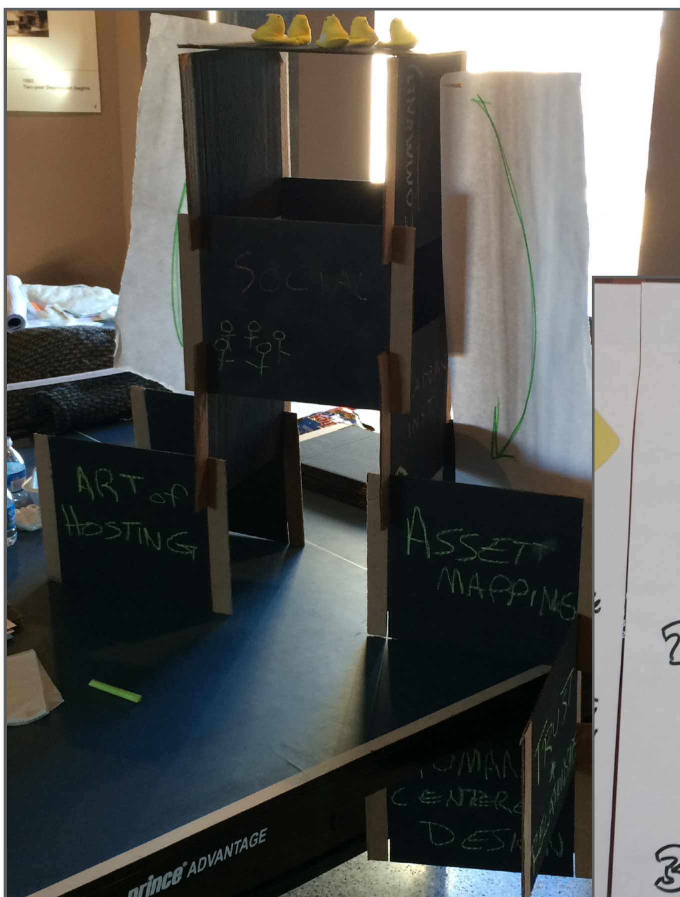
FIRST STEPS (DATE AND TASK)

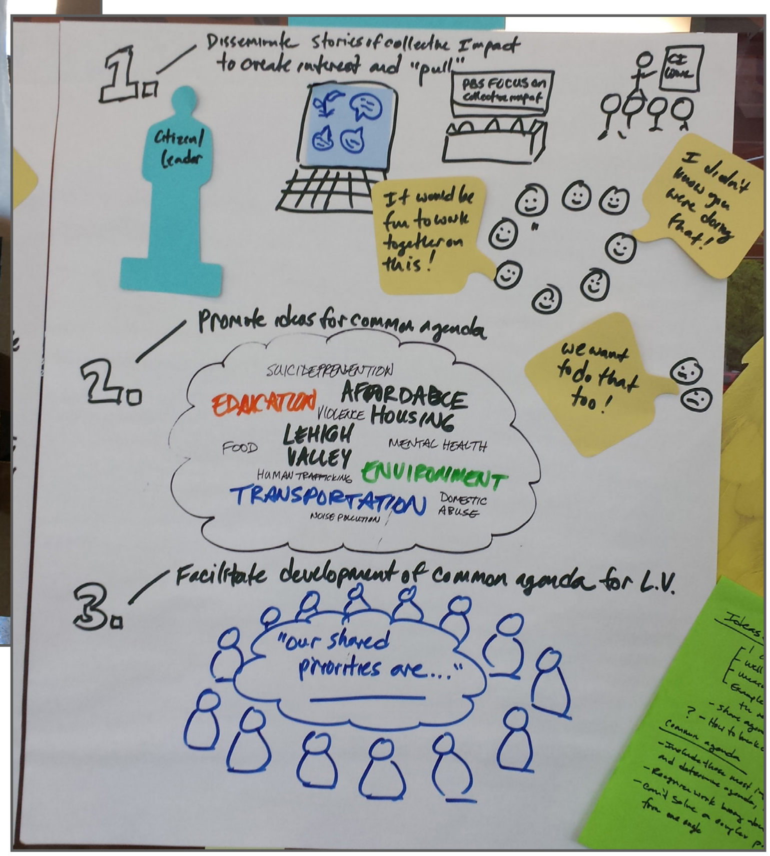
6 Ways to Build Prototypes

We focus on prototyping services here rather than products since most networks won't develop products to advance their initiatives.

1. **Build a working example** using Legos, KNEX construction kits, Lincoln Logs, or pipe cleaners.
2. **Make pretend materials** with paper, tape, scissors and markers.
3. **Make a giant brochure** using flipchart paper.
4. **Create an interactive scene** with peeps (with signs) or Little People (Fisher Price).
5. **Produce a skit or scene** using cardboard materials.
6. **Create a Journey Map** (on whiteboard or paper) using storyboards to illustrate how a key stakeholder's experience if our solution were in place.
7. Draft a Maturity Model, that shows the 3-5 levels that a group, facility, or community would evolve through to move toward our ultimate goal.

Two Prototype Examples:





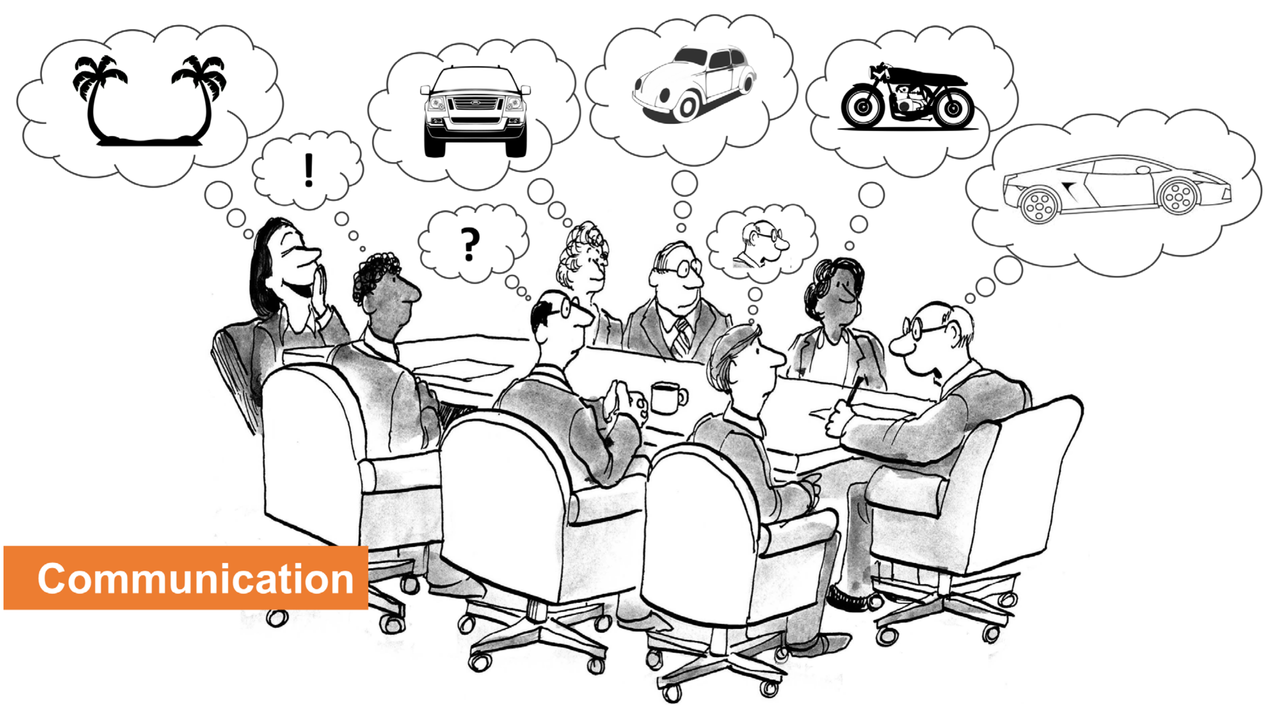
Prototyping to Learn

Prototyping early is not about making solutions; it's about learning. You are creating a model of the possible product, service, tool, or intervention so you can "try it out," learn why it may or may not work, and therefore learn more about what's really needed in the final solution. As you prototype, you can refine your design criteria that will guide you in designing the ultimate, workable solution.

That means that a critical question in early prototyping is: What do we most need to learn now? You are seeking to understand, for example, whether a service like the one you envision is going to be seen as a valid solution by key stakeholders. If it's not, you throw out that prototyping (and maybe even the idea behind it), rough up another approach, and try it again!

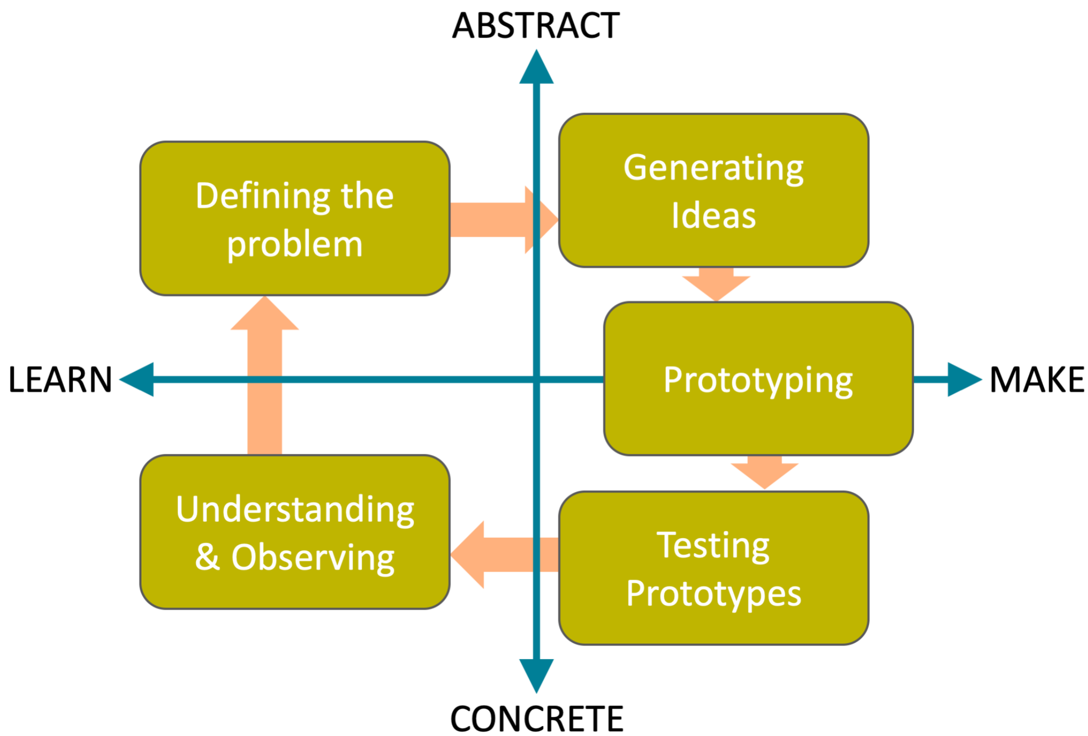
6 Reasons to Prototype

1. **Improve Shared Understanding.** Helps ensure that everyone involved is working from the same picture of the problem and solution.
2. **Minimize Risk.** Helps reduce risk from missed requirements and expectations, and minimizes cost overruns.
3. **Build Buy-In.** Most stakeholders are more likely to support concrete and clear solutions than abstract ideas or concepts.
4. **Improve Decision-making.** Helps make decisions faster and more clearly.
5. **Deepen Learning.** Contributes to grounded, focused learning about the real needs and requirements for the solution.
6. **Test Feasibility and Desirability** with key stakeholders before investing further.
7. **Build Support for Your Solution.** People tend to support solutions that are real and tangible, not imaginary.



Communication

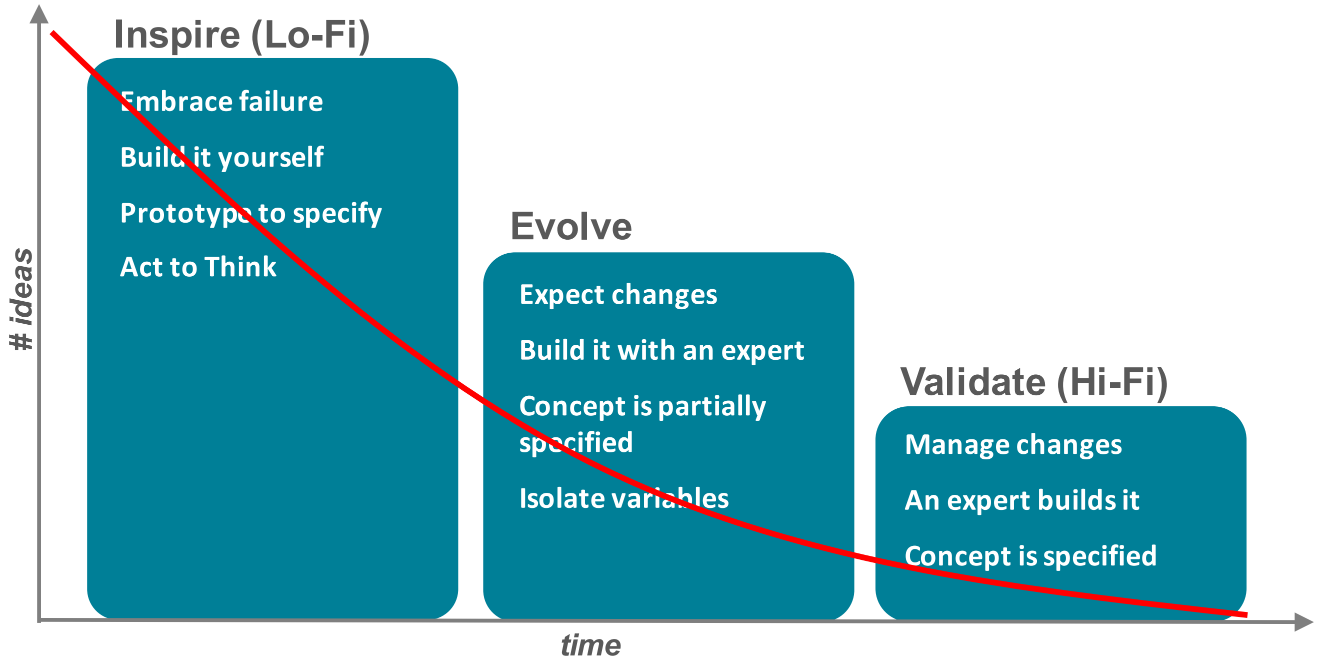
The Prototyping Cycle

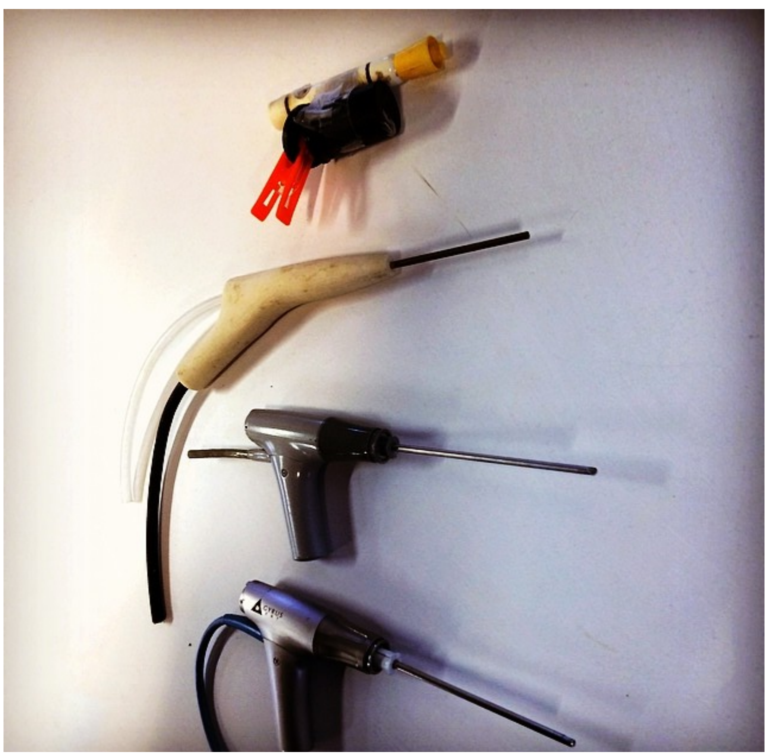


Get Tangible, Fast

Rough	Rapid	Right
Good enough, any materials, no emotional attachment	Iterate many options quickly, efficient and cheap, instant feedback	Be clear on what you want to learn, focus on high risk areas

Align Technique with Purpose





Inspire (Lo-Fi)

Evolve

Validate (Hi-Fi)

Production

What Prototyping is NOT

A Plan to Do Something
"Here's what we're going to do…"

A Plan to Make Something
"We would develop a survey that would do X, Y, and Z."

A Discussion of Possibilities
"The policy platform would be something that…"

DON'T PLAN IT.
DON'T DISCUSS IT.
DON'T TALK ABOUT IT.
MAKE IT.

Talking About the Thing
"Here's a PowerPoint deck. On this slide, we would have this…"

Pitching Concepts

Each Initiative Team, whether it's presenting its concept or a prototype, should prepare their presenter to pitch their work to the rest of the Network. The pitch should be pithy, interesting, and engaging (more like a sales pitch than a description).

That will often require creating some time before the pitch session to allow the presenters some time to prepare their pitches. It's worth the extra time to help make the pitches more powerful and compelling!

Give each presenter just 2 MINUTES (3 if you're feeling generous) to pitch the group's concept!

Pitches can include:

- A spicy name for your concept
- Why it's needed
- How it works (a brief description)
- Who might be involved
- What resources it might require

Testing & Getting Feedback

We don't just pitch our solutions for no reason, obviously. We do it because we want to test our thinking with others and get feedback on it!

Whether testing a prototype, a project concept, or both, feedback is your friend. You are really your hypothesis that the solution you've drafted is powerful, compelling, and feasible. Feedback from others is the data you use to determine whether you have a workable hypothesis or you need to return to the drawing board.

How do you get useful feedback?

1. After a presenter pitches a concept or prototype, give the other participants a few minutes to ask any clarifying questions. Remind everyone that the Initiative Team literally just drafted this idea so they're unlikely to be able to answer too many clarifying questions! Also be careful that the clarifying questions don't evolve into a feedback or discussion session.
2. Use good feedback prompts. Three prompts we use are:
    a. One thing you **LIKE** about what was presented.
    b. One thing you might **ADD** or **CHANGE**.
    c. One thing you believe the group might need to **TEST** or **LEARN** next.
3. Ask reviewers to write their feedback points, one per post-it, using Sharpies and writing legibly.
4. Have them silently post their feedback points on a flipchart page that has sections labeled LIKE, ADD OR CHANGE, and TEST OR LEARN. If you're pressed for time, just have the participants post their feedback points silently on the flipchart page. If you have more time, ask reviewers to share a few feedback points verbally and then have everyone post their points silently.
5. Have the reviewers give a round of applause for the presenter.

Be sure to give the Initiative Teams time after the feedback session to review the feedback and prioritize the feedback points that they want to work on first.

VI. Scaling Solutions

Who is involved in this phase:

- All Network members, with strong Program and Design Team support

What's being produced in this phase:

- ❑ A Roadmap of the work going forward
- ❑ Agreement to advance the work together
- ❑ A structure and process for organizing the work of the Network and Initiative Teams
- ❑ A clear Strategy, comprised of the 3-5 primary Initiatives
- ❑ A funding model and plan for resourcing the work

Why it's important:

- We address the "Monday Morning Problem" with a clear, concrete plan for how the work will proceed
- We have a Strategy Map that connects the work of the Network into a coherent change approach

When it happens (e.g. how long, meetings, frequency)?

- As the final step in the ideation and prototyping session, which might be part of a single Convening or the second meeting in a Convening series of meetings

How the work gets done in this phase (what meetings, etc.)?

1. We "backcast" a Roadmap together against our goal
2. The Design and Program Teams draft a Strategy Map
3. The Roadmap and Strategy Map are tested and refined in a Network meeting

Where the work happens (in-person meetings, virtual meetings, etc.)?

- In a large room with the entire Network (although individual Initiative Teams may also develop more tactical roadmaps for their Initiatives)

Typical Flow of the First Two Years

Month 1	Gather initial team (this might be 2-3 people from an initiating organization or even an initial Design Team) to draft the shared intent (use the Intent Map for this), including the MAST Working Goal, Focus & Frame, and Working Shifts. Some groups will also draft hypothesis at this point to test with stakeholders, to start developing the learning agenda.
	Begin developing interview materials, including the interview guide and the reference sheet with the Working Goal, Focus & Frame, Shifts, and possibly hypotheses.
	Develop a list of potential interview candidates.
Month 3	Begin stakeholder interviews, starting with the "friendlies" – those stakeholder who are likely to be supportive of your work and will help you test your assumptions and thinking with friendly critique.
	Begin to pull insights from interviews as you go. We often gather interview results using a survey tool and use a shared document to begin to consolidate, theme, and refine the insights (key statistics, barriers, resources, key tensions, and opportunities).
Months 4-8	Expand your interviews to riskier stakeholders, including conducting empathy interviews with those closest to the pain or negative impact (e.g. a person experiencing addiction if you intend to work on opioid addiction) or those whose decisions will most impact the outcomes (e.g. business owners if you intend to work on growing employee ownership).
	Assuming you're seeing real interest in a network-type collaboration, schedule the Network Launch session and begin sending "save the date" emails to stakeholders you know you want/need in the room. *If you're unsure about readiness for a Network, consider conducting a Learning & Strategy Design Session instead, in which 12-18 key stakeholders will work through the insights to initiative concepts to secure their engagement in the network and help recruit other stakeholders to a formal Network Launch.*
Month 9	Hold the Network Launch event, in which you'll refine and ratify the Intent, unpack the System Map, prioritize critical shifts, and draft Initiatives using Initiative Concept Worksheets and, possibly, Prototypes.
Month 10	Once you've formally launched your network and you have 4-6 initiatives, the Initiative Teams develop those initiatives and prototype products over the coming six months, getting ready to present fleshed-out concepts (or even pilot plans) at the second Network meeting.
	Initiative Teams begin their work by convening, refining and confirming their Critical Shifts, developing workplans to move to a pilot of their solution, and defining the initial Work Products they need to develop.

	The Design Team works with the Initiative Groups to identify and recruit other stakeholders needed for the work and ensure that we're not creating redundancies among the various initiatives. Based on the working set of Initiatives, the Design Team might now begin drafting a Strategic Blueprint that integrates the Initiatives into a single strategic picture of the work.
Month 16	The Network's second meeting usually happens 6 months after the Network Launch and has strong "Learning & Making" focus. By the second meeting, Initiative Teams will have done early testing with key stakeholders and some may some well-developed solutions. Whatever their stage of development, all the Initiative Teams present their work to the rest of the network, get feedback on them, and refine their initiatives and work products in working sessions. Learning is done through field trips and "Deep Dive" sessions in which they see emerging solutions in action and learn together about a key topic the entire Network needs to understand to advance the work. At this meeting, we also reaffirm the network's shared intent (Aligning) and deepening connections among participants (Connecting). We may also discuss any public identity and communications plans for the network (because until the Network decides to be public, it doesn't have a public presence).
Month 17	Initiative Teams continue to develop and refine their initiative and move toward testing their solutions with external stakeholders. Some will start formal pilots of their solutions.
Month 22	By the third Network meeting, we often have 2-4 pilot-ready initiatives so we develop plans and get commitments for certain participants to pilot the initiatives in their organizations, supply chains, or communities. We also assess the entire set of initiatives and develop a more concrete strategic framework for how all the initiatives fit together, identify any gaps in the work, and coordinate as needed.
Month 23+	We continue the innovation process by testing the work and progress against the Network's Intent, confirming the working set of Critical Shifts, developing new Shifts and Initiatives as needed, and moving toward scaling the emerging solutions in the real world.

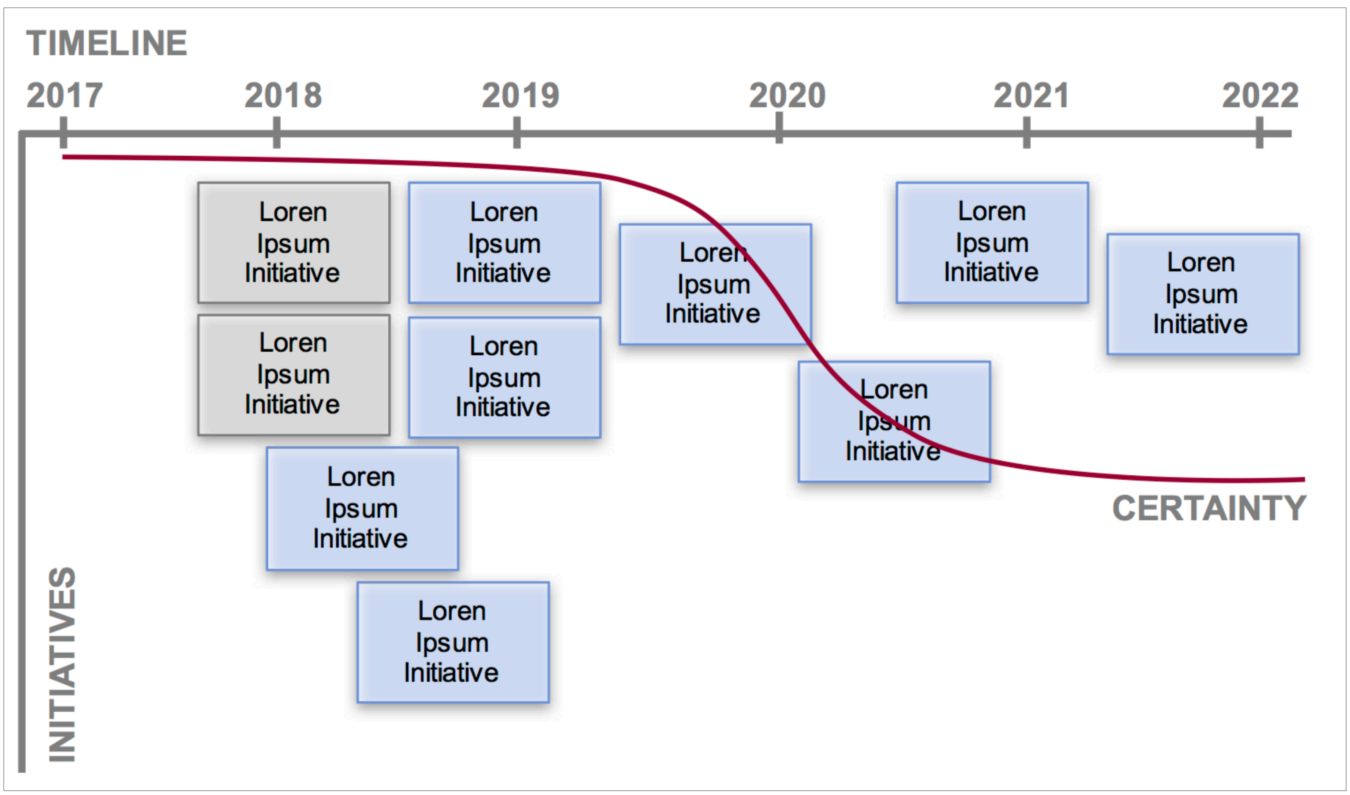
Backcasting a Roadmap

Good collaborative strategy is emergent (we allow it to develop and adapt based on new learning) and integrated (there is a set of solutions to solve for different issues at different levels and along the spectrum from near-term to long-term.

Once we have a group of working concepts to comprise our solution set, we can “backcast” a strategic roadmap. Put up a long sheet of paper, write today’s date on the left and the date and future goal on the right, then populate the map with the streams of work” for bringing each concept initiative to the pilot stage and ultimately to deployment. Then have participants evaluate what’s missing or not addressed in this strategic roadmap.

We don’t do backcasting of the Network’s work in the Launch Meeting. We usually do it at the second or event third Network meetings. However, Initiative Teams can do backcasting for their individual work early because it’s a terrific way to define their initial priorities and plans.

Here’s a simple example that just shows when each new initiative would come on line over a 5-year period. Other roadmaps are much more detailed and contain many posts with steps and stages of work.



8 Elements of Good Strategy

As you develop, refine and assess the network's strategy for driving change, here are some elements to consider.

DISTINCTIVE

Is a strong fit for our network versus other efforts in this space.

Is outward-facing, engaging and creates strong "pull" toward our work.

Adds unique value to existing efforts.

Can only be accomplished by a network, not by one organization or partnership.

VIABLE

We can fully resource the strategy, ideally outside our base budget.

We can deliver the strategy through our extended network.

Delivers early results and quick wins with efficient use of resources.

We've minimized the likelihood of failure or unintended consequences.

MEANINGFUL

Will produce real outcomes that are important to our constituents.

Builds credibility, interest and collaboration where needed with our allies (corporate, NGO, public sector, other)

HUMAN-SCALE

Focused on shifting the experiences of the real people who are most harmed by the current system.

Grounded in empathetic understanding of the values and needs of everyone in the system of concern.

Clear about how each stakeholder can contribute to the larger strategy and work.

INTEGRATED

Comprised of a holistic set of solutions that work together to magnify impact.

Defines solution pathways from near-term to long-term.

Aligned with our network's unique assets, connections, and identity.

Addresses both internal developmental needs and external conditions.

AUDACIOUS

The overarching objective is big enough that it excites and motivates all our key stakeholders.

The goals are specific and timebound, forcing us to think and act at scale.

Offers a scale of vision and impact that will attract more partners and supporters.

Defines a clear future state from which we can backcast strong strategic pathways.

ADAPTIVE

Is a living plan that's actively being worked and evolved as we learn more and as the context shifts.

Hypotheses about cause and effect relationships are testable so we can test our theories of change.

Defines a learning agenda to improve and refine the strategy over time.

SYSTEMIC

Can produce cascading effects–a chain reaction of positive results.

Will shift dominant mindsets, paradigms, and frameworks.

Builds a platform and a change system to foster systemic change over time.

Our approach to strategy development over time is systematic and has structures and processes for deepening our learning and adaptation.

7 Ways the Network Can Work

Innovation Networks are powerful social innovation incubators. They analyze the system over time and generate creative interventions to shift the system toward their goal.

The innovations that emerge are diverse and are taken forward in many ways, at many levels, from informal peer-to-peer collaborations to big network-wide initiatives. We often review the following “channels for change” with network participants to prompt creative thinking about the many ways to advance the strategy and work of the network.

INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Just learning more about the system’s needs and dynamics from our collective intelligence and insight helps us each be better change agents back in our own agencies, organizations and companies.

COLLABORATIONS

Collaborations emerge spontaneously as we learn about one another’s work. These can be one-to-one, partnerships, or new ventures among individual participants or groups of participants.

NETWORK INITIATIVE TEAMS

Initiative Teams are created and implemented through “member power” with staff and logistics support from the backbone organization, and may leverage additional funding for bigger projects from funders, company foundations, or agencies.

WHOLE NETWORK PROJECTS

Certain large or complex initiatives may be developed and implemented as projects involving the whole network with staff and logistics support from the backbone organization, with project funding from other parties.

SPIN-OFFS OF THE NETWORK

Especially large initiatives may evolve into a separate network with its own design team, a new partnership, or a new organization or business venture that is formally spun off from the main network.

THROUGH OTHER GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Certain initiatives are important to foster but may not a good fit for the particular working group (for political or other reasons). The working group can “frame up” these initiatives and hand them off to other groups.

INFLUENCING THE LARGER SYSTEM

Just the existence of a collaboration starts to shift the narrative in the system you’re working to change. When others know that many influential people are working together toward a big goal, it makes them pay attention to the issue you’re working on, and even influences them to take action toward the goal—even when they are not part of the network or directly part of an initiative of the network.

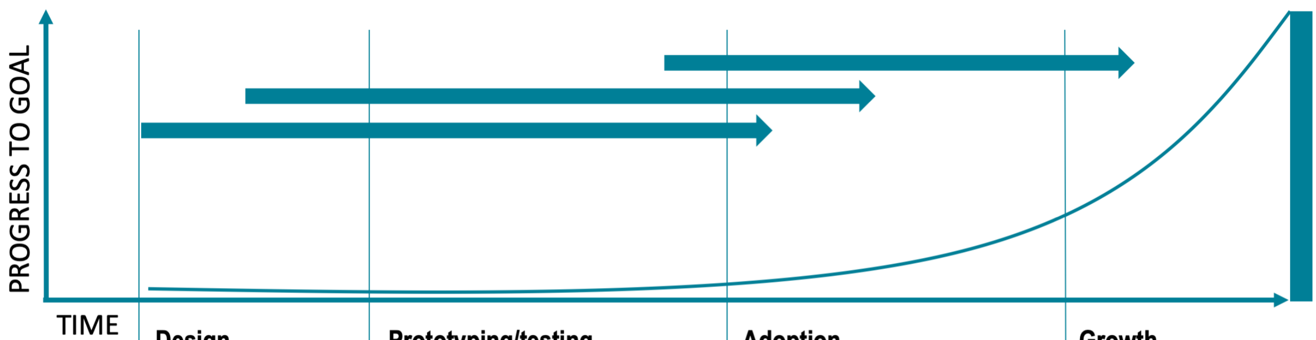
The Innovation Pipeline: Resourcing Stages

Solutions should move systematically through stages of development (assuming they prove out and aren't set aside for some reason). As this table indicates, as the solutions are tested and refined, they require (and usually attract) more dedicated resources to bring them to scale as they prove out.

Stage 1: Idea Pool	Stage 2: Emerging Concepts	Stage 3: Developing Concepts	Stage 4: Emerging Solutions	Stage 5: Working Solutions
The pool of ideas around each priority shift that show promise but haven't yet been prioritized. **Decisions:** • Which ideas are the cheapest, faster, most powerful way to make each shift happen? • Which ideas have the optimal mix of impact and feasibility? • Which ideas, if successful, would enable other ideas to happen more readily?	**Ideas that have been developed into working concepts, & are tested through "desktop reviews."** **Decisions**: • Are there others to develop and assess against these? • Which will we prototype? • Of those we prototype, which will we resource with time & funding?	**Concepts being developed through formal support of participants and the backbone team.** **Decisions:** • Do we continue with all of these, or set any aside? • How do we get some/all funded so we can take on development of more Emerging Concepts?	**Concepts that are proving out as viable solutions and have initial dedicated funding and staff.** **Decisions:** • How do we fully fund these? • Are these solutions viable in the real world? • Where will the solutions reside institutionally?	**Solutions that are moving to scale and are largely independent of need for the Network support.** **Decisions:** • How fast can we get more initiatives fully funded and launched to create more capacity for Emerging Solutions?

The Innovation Pipeline: Developmental Phases

This graph offers another view on the innovation pipeline, showing the growth of adoption of the solution and stages of development, from early design concepts to growth.



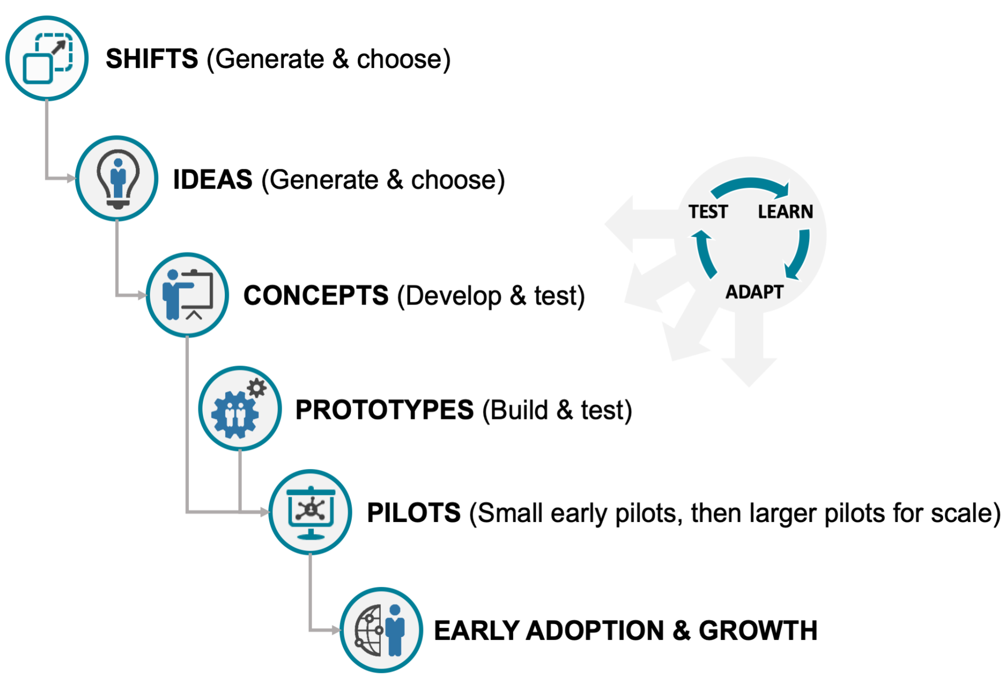
Design
- Goal setting
- Research
- Interviews
- System mapping
- Define design criteria
- Assess readiness

Prototyping/testing
- Design system interventions & supports
- Identify pilot participants
- Determine initial priorities
- Establish pilot projects
- Collect data
- Revise/review using data and feedback

Adoption
- Identify & share initiative pilot outcomes.
- Promote program participation
- Engage demand side
- Collect data on implementation and outcomes

Growth
- Scale program
- Share program parameters with industry players
- Collect data on implementation and outcomes
- Share and promote initiative outcomes

Finally, here is the full view of the innovation process, from shifts to early adoption and growth of the solution.



Best Practices for Getting Work Done in Networks

1. **Ensure that all participants have meaningful roles in the work.** Check-in on a regular basis with each participant to ensure that they are getting what they need to make their participation meaningful, and find ways to connect them even more meaningfully into the work.
2. **Ensure that the Design team is shepherding process and strategy.** Ensure that the Design Team continues to deepen its leadership of the thinking and the process of the Network, and to push the thinking and aspirations of the group forward in order to avoid loss of momentum and growth.
3. **Ensure that each Initiative Team has clear and meaningful work, priorities, roles, and processes.** Ensure that each team has clear shifts that they are working to make happen and they always know what solution(s) they are working to create at any given time. Avoid loss of momentum from circular discussion or trying to "get it right."
4. **Ensure that the Backbone Team is executing on clearly-defined priorities** that are determined by the Network, and they are prioritizing engagement and support of Network participants.
5. **Use the whole Network or Initiative Team for big reflection and decisions**, like testing ideas, testing scope/boundaries, vetting ideas, expanding perspective and learning, clarifying focus and scope, reacting to proposals and defining design principles.
6. **Use pairs and individuals for editing and refining activities**, like preprocessing thinking, developing proposals, and refining/editing/converging ideas.

Building a Culture of Accountability

1. **Start building a culture of accountability before the first meeting.** When you are talking with people who might join a network, confirm that they can commit the time and resources needed for success.
2. **When people commit to work in a meeting, follow up with them and remind them.** Immediately establish a pattern of people delivering on their commitments so that this becomes part of the group's norms. When you call and email them to make sure they will deliver that document on Tuesday, it sends a clear message that they are being held accountable for their commitments. And when people see others delivering on their commitments, they will do the same. Do whatever you need to do—early and often—to ensure that they deliver on time and to spec.
3. **Don't focus updates on what has not been done.** If someone hasn't done something they committed to do, just ask for a firm commitment to a new delivery date and specify to whom they will send the deliverable. Then follow up with them afterward to reconfirm. Don't spend the group's time on what didn't get done.
4. **Use the round robin method.** Have one person work on a product and send it to the next one when they're done, and so on. This creates a chain of accountability for people to get the work done so the next person can do his or her work.
5. **When people deliver, celebrate it!**
6. **If the group members fall into a pattern of not doing what they say they're going to do, raise this with the group.** For example, "I'm noticing a pattern of us committing to do

things before the next meeting and not doing them. I'm concerned that this will impair our work together. Do you all share this concern?"

Remember that deep accountability emerges only when people feel like they are contributing meaningfully to meaningful work. Don't expect engagement and accountability from people who are being asked to contribute in marginal or transactional ways.

Continuous Learning & Strengthening the Work

1. **Ensure that learning & feedback loops are in place and working.** Information should be flowing from the Design Team to the Network (and vice versa) and from the Network to the larger system (and vice versa). This can be through a discussion group, network newsletter, regular online meetings, etc.
2. **Monitor the context.** Ensure that you have participants who are good at monitoring the industry or community, and who keep their ears to the ground for new developments and thinking. These people should have a formal role of reporting back what they're learning to the design team.
3. **Prioritize and plan effective Deep Dives**, which are technical, cultural, policy or other types of issues that the Network needs to understand better in order to determine the most strategic interventions.
4. **Set aside time with the Network to evaluate their assumptions, analysis and Working Goal** (e.g. What's going on out there and are we working on the right critical shifts?) in the first two meetings and maybe every third meeting after that.
5. **Set aside time for the Network to assess and adapt the solution set**, possibly in each meeting.
6. **Continually work to refine the Network's set of qualitative and quantitative assessment measures.**

Typical Funding Models

Stage 1: Exploration & Initial Design

Seed funding from private donors, leader companies, or foundations

Stage 2: Operational Network

Operating costs covered by companies, foundations, participants

Stage 3: Network Initiatives

May be funded by donors, foundations, participants, government agencies

Benefits to Participants

- Efficiencies
- Shared resources
- Efficient solutioning
- Scale faster
- Build common capacity, tools, impact
- Vertical collaboration
- Market intelligence
- Vetting organizational strategy
- Strategic learning
- Thought leadership
- Strategic advances
- Staff support
- Leadership development
- Advice and support
- Robust analysis
- New opportunities
- Network building
- Brand/organizational leadership on issues

#1 Benefit: Being a part of something meaningful and BIG!

Collaborative Innovation Networks FAQ

What does participation require from participants?

Innovation Networks typically have two in-person, whole-group meetings each year that last 1.5 - 2 days. At any given time, a group will have between 4 and 6 initiatives in development, testing, or deployment and expansion. These are run primarily by Initiative Team members, with support, advice, and facilitation as needed from consultants and backbone staff.

How long do these Innovation Networks operate?

That's up to the group. Solar Circle is still going strong after 17 years and still deploying high-impact market interventions to grow solar. Community Capital worked for only 2 years to achieve its goal and then dissolved. Though some of the participants of that group have changed over the years, the level of innovation is still extraordinarily high.

What about public identity and communications?

Place-based networks are often public whether they want to be or not, but national and international networks have more control over their public identities. Solar Circle has operated by choice without any public identity because they believe it was a more effective way to advance their work. We typically default to no public identity for a new network unless or until the participants decide otherwise. Networks will often form an ad hoc *Communications & Public Identity* team to work through these issues and propose policies and language to the larger network. Clearly, any communications and public identity decisions by the network should be driven primarily by the network's overall change strategy.

Reflections: Progress with Your Selected Initiative

Where have the plans for your Initiative become more clear?

Where are the plans for your Initiative still unclear or uncertain?

What is next for your Initiative?

Notes: Clarifications & Reflections from our Time Together

What are some key insights I gained from this workshop?

In what way am I thinking differently about how to approach complex change?

Where might I still be confused or unclear?

What might I do differently in my work now that I know about this approach? Why?

About CoCreative

CoCreative helps people who don't know each other (and often don't even like each other) **solve complex problems together**.

We work across sectors and industries, **in public policy, development, energy, food, and education**, building trusting partnerships to design innovative and resilient solutions.

We integrate methods from **design thinking**, **systems thinking** and **group dynamics**.

We are designers, strategists, and facilitators who help people come together and solve complex problems. We are passionate but patient, methodical yet creative. We are coaches, advisors, partners, and team members all at once.

We are specialists in collaboration and getting things done, especially the tough stuff. We bring the questions, frameworks, tools and skills to help leaders bring people together to help you solve your community's toughest, most intractable challenges. More importantly, we give all that we know (literally) and build others' capacity to lead change on the tough challenges too.

Learn more at www.cocreativeconsulting.com.

Appendices

Empathy Interview Guide Template

Explicit Outcomes

1. Develop an empathetic view into the current and desired experiences of potential users of our innovation.
2. Complement our 30,000-foot systems view with a view from the ground, so that we have a full view for designing a game-changing innovation that will work for real people.

Implicit Outcomes

1. Build interest in what we're doing among potential supporters and participants.
2. Develop a sense that this system is being created with a strong purpose of serving the real needs of leaders in the community.

Setting up the Interview

- ❑ Quiet but comfortable place. Find a place to hold the interview that is quiet and comfortable to minimize distraction and to allow the interviewee to speak freely.
- ❑ Interviewing in pairs. Empathy interviews require focus and attention since you are following the stories and experience that the person is sharing with you. If you can, have a staff person accompany you to take notes.
- ❑ Send overview email. Send an email introducing yourself (if needed) and describe the reason you want to interview the person. Include the permission form and say that you can both sign the form at the interview.
- ❑ Permission form. Sign the attached permission form with the person you're interviewing. This form serves both legal purposes and to ensure that the people we interview clearly understand how we will use the information they share. While this may seem very formal, it can actually create a greater sense of safety for people and support them in sharing more of the experiences with you.

Conducting the Interview

Note-taking. You may take notes using the template below or use your own notepaper.

Seating. If you interview in a pair, avoid sitting on either side of the interviewee.

Flow. This document is only a guide. Please ask whatever questions will help produce the most valuable insight into the person's experience around our desired outcomes above.

- ❑ **Bring this interview guide** (in print or electronically).
- ❑ **Bring a printed copy of the permission form.**

Interview Flow:

1. **Introduce yourself.** *"Hi, I'm…and I'm working with a group of community leaders to X."*	
2. **Introduce the project.** *"A number of local organizations, including _________ and ________, have come together to X. To do that, we first want to learn about people's real experiences with this issue to ensure that what we create will meet the real needs of real people leading work across our community."*	
3. **Build rapport.** [Add some personal note as well to set a comfortable tone for the interview – maybe something about their connection with this work or you are looking forward to learning about the work they are doing, etc.]	
4. **Evoke stories.**	
Starter questions: *"What are you working on right now?"* *"How's that going?"*	
Big challenge question: *"What's your biggest challenge right now related to X?"*	
"What has helped you feel that you could be successful in tackling that issue?"	
"What struggles have you had in addressing this issue?"	
Focusing question: *"What's your greatest hope right now for X?"*	
5. **Explore emotions.** As the person talks about his or her experience, pay attention to things that have high emotional content and ask more about those. *"You said that your work on this issue is frustrating. Why?*	
6. **Question statements.** Consider what the person has shared with you and try to get deeper insight. For example, *"You mentioned the challenges of working with people from different backgrounds. Say more about that…"*	
7. **Closing question:** *If you could make one thing work better in getting others to help solve this problem, what would that be?"*	
8. **Other folks we should interview.** *"Could you suggest another person we might want to interview in this process?"*	

Thank you and wrap up. "Thank you so much for your time. This has been really helpful. Do you have any questions for me? Here's what happens next: The members of our team are going to take the results from these interviews and use them to develop a prototype of X. If you're willing, we'd like to test that prototype out with you in a meeting on <date>. Would you be interested in participating in that and giving us some feedback on what we've come up with at that point? ❑ *Yes* ❑ *No*

Recording Insights:

Who are they and what do they do?	
Key Motivations What drives the person to do what they do?	
What do they use? What does they use to get things done? What do they need/want? What workarounds do they use?	
Points of pain What did they talk negatively about? What did they think and feel?	
Points of satisfaction What did they talk positively about? What did they think and feel?	
Key insights/ messages What did we observe that was of significance/ surprising during our interview?	

Post Interview Steps

1. Send an email thanking the person.
2. Summarize the insights from the interview as soon as you can afterwards and send out in an email to X.
3. Keep a copy of your notes for yourself (for now, as a backup).

Participation Agreement

The interviewer is evaluating the design of a training and support system to help <organization> lead work on complex challenges across organizations and sectors. The purpose of the evaluation is to gather feedback from users that will help ensure that this system meets the real needs of community leaders.

We will gather information from the evaluation session by:

- observation and written/typed notes
- audio recording

We will use the information you give to guide the design of this training and support system. We agree that:

1. information you share will be kept in written form only with the team working to design the system
2. your personal details will be kept separately from the input you provide today
3. information you share will only be used for the purpose of designing the training and support system
4. information you share will be destroyed when it ceases to be of use in understanding and designing the training and support system

You agree and/or understand that:

- you may stop and/or leave the interview at any time
- you may ask questions at any time

I have read the above information carefully, understand and consent to participating in the session and the use of my information for the above purposes.

______________________ ______________

(Participant's signature) (Date)

______________________ ______________________

(Participant's name) (Participant's title)

______________________ ______________________

(Participant's organization) (Participant's email)

____

(Interviewer's name)

Expert Interview Guide Template

Desired Outcomes

1. Develop a clear understanding of the major barriers and opportunities we are likely to face in working to achieve our goal.
2. Develop a clear understanding of the current experiences of key influencers and decision-makers around this issue.
3. Discover what experiences stakeholders might want to have in the future around this issue.
4. Build interest in our analysis, goal, and collaborative approach. ("To ask is to intervene" - so we are aware that this is partly a marketing exercise, too… We are starting to shape people's impression of what we're doing - that's why we need to be framing this project in the same way and capture the reactions from people we talk to.)
5. Identify and vet possible network participants.
6. Collect recommendations for others whom we should consult in this process.

Preparing for the Interview

Before the Interview

When you obtain contact information of someone you may want to interview please enter this into a document of your interview candidates.

Ensure you are familiar with the interview questions. Customize them as needed to get to the most powerful insights from the specific person you're interviewing. Time constraints will likely prohibit the ability to address every question with every interviewee. Key questions are listed below in the Key Question Section. Try to address as many of these key questions as possible. Use the follow up questions in the Follow Up Question Section if there is time and interest.

Conducting the Interview

Note-taking. Please take notes in the pre-developed electronic template provided, so that information can be easily collected and tracked.

Flow. This interview guide is only a guide. Please pursue whatever line of questioning will help produce the most valuable insight around our desired outcomes above.

Demographic data. Please be sure to collect the demographic data (as outlined in the online template) because this information will be useful later for identifying Convening participants and feeding other programmatic initiatives.

Interview Introduction

Thank you for making the time to share your thoughts and insights on [issue or challenge].

[Add some personal note as well to set a comfortable tone for the interview – maybe something about their connection with this work or you are looking forward to learning about the work they are doing, etc.]

We would like to take notes on a laptop during this conversation. Is that okay with you?

Framing

Before we get started, I'd like to review what I'd like to cover in our conversation and check to see what else you might like to share or discuss.

First, I'd like to find out more about your organization, your role there, and what you're trying to solve or achieve in your work. [If you're talking to a business owner, "…and we'd like to ask you about how [issue] might affect your company." If you're talking to an economic development person, "…and learn how addressing this issue effectively might support your development goals."]

Then I'd like to get your reactions to some questions about how we and our partners might devise a strategy to address [this issue]. Is that okay?

Just to be clear, the information that you share with me may be included in a publicly available report but your responses will be pooled with all the other responses and won't be associated with you or your organization specifically. While we may generally refer to your comments without associating them with you, we will only quote you personally with your express permission.

Is there anything else you would like to cover in our time together? [Make note of any additional items, then ask if they have any initial comments or questions about the issue or our approach in general.]

Interview Questions:

Landscape questions: For System Leaders working on this issue

Who are they and what do they do?	
What does your business/organization do?	
What's your role there?	
What are your big goals right now? Why are these your priorities?	
What keeps you up at night or concerns you most in your work right now?	
What other organizations or individuals do you and your organization work with? Who are your partners and allies? How do you work with them?	
What's working and what's not?	
From where you sit, given your work, what is not working in efforts to address [this issue]?	
In your opinion, what efforts out there – policy advocacy, grassroots activism, campaigns, business initiatives, other – have been most effective at addressing this issue? What about that approach seemed particularly effective?	
What gaps do you see in current efforts to addressing [this issue]?	
Thanks. Now what role or roles could you *imagine* a potential cross-sector collaboration filling in solving [this problem] if we were able to develop the right expertise and capacity?	

Empathy Questions:

For End Users experiencing this issue (e.g. homeowners, business owners, the people whose choices or experiences we are most trying to affect)

Who are they and what do they do?	
Please tell me a bit about yourself and [your family and/or the people you work with].	
What other organizations or individuals do you and your organization work with? Who are your partners and allies? How do you work with them?	
What's working and what's not?	
Can you tell me a story or experience you've had related to this issue?	
Prompts: Tell me more… What was it about that experience that stands out to you? Say more about that… How did you feel about that? How did you interpret that?	
Have you talked to others about this issue? If so, can you share a bit about the nature of those conversations?	
Tell me more about how this issue has affected you/your family directly.	
If this issue were solved in a way that worked for you, what would be true? What would solving this look like for you?	
If this issue continues to worsen, what would that look like for you? How would you feel about that?	
I'd like you to picture this issue completely fixed and resolved 5 years from now. Please describe what that looks like. What might be going really well? What might some ongoing challenges be?	

Testing Hypotheses

<List any key working hypotheses that you want to test with this person. We often do this in an accompanying “Interview Information” sheet.>

Testing Working Goal

We’ve been thinking about a goal that could represent the potential for really solving X. That goals is XXX.

To give you a sense of context, currently the situation is that XXX.

What’s your initial reaction to that goal?	
From where you sit, what do you think would have to happen in order to meet that goal? How would people in your area need to change in order to achieve that?	

Partners, Leaders, Recommendations

In your work, who would you consider an opinion leader, someone who really influences you and your community?	
Would you be interested in collaborating on solving this issue somehow? If so, how might you envision working with us?	
Finally, who else should we be talking to as we explore the opportunities to address this issue?	

Post Interview Questions & Process

1. Send an email thanking the person
2. Summarize the results of the interview as soon as you can afterwards and send out in an email to the Design team. Let the team know if you think this person is a strong candidate for the working group/convening and if so, why (remember- we can only invite 20-40 people). Also mention what this person’s area of expertise is.
3. Keep a copy of your notes for yourself and put one in the shared document folder.

Example Insights

Clean Electronics Insights from Stakeholder Interviews

[- People polarized around Hazard vs Exposure]
[+ People understand it's a false choice]
[- We will be challenged to ID our best contribution]
[+ We will be challenged to ID our best contribution]
[+ It's a valuable framework for guiding our analysis]

[+ High interest in developing better chemicals]
[- Dev chemical alt's is complex & expensive]
[- The current process of fractured/uncoordinated]
[- No common language – Green? Safer? Alternative?]
[+ Can focus on chemical value chain]
[+ Identifying viable replacements can provide substantial social return on investment]
[+ Some replacement options are inexpensive and effective…]
[+ …but aren't widely used]

[Systems approach could deliver meaningful results…]
[…without significant increases in costs or burdens]
[+ 'Solution Sets' address multiple aspects, are flexible]

[+ Restriction/preferences lists proven effective in apparel]
[+ Restriction/preferences lists proven effective in automobile]
[- A lack of a shared standard across electronics companies]
[+ Could create a shared Restricted Substance List (RSL)]
[+ Could create a Materials Preference List (MPL)]

[+ Worker engagement is helpful to progress]
[- Worker engagement is difficult to fashion in China]
[- Worker engagement is key to some stakeholders]
[- Focus on engagement can be shifting of burden]
[- Diverse/competing worker interests of impact engagement]
[- Workers may not realize impacts on children]
[- Workers in most supplier countries can't organize effectively]
[- Does worker engagement require industry-level collaboration?]
[- Tension between worker engagement and upstream solutions]

[- Many stakeholders focused on other issues]
[+ Lots of tools developed (LCA, RSL, MPL, FMD]
[- Existing tools and frameworks have ardent supporters]
[- Existing tools and frameworks have ardent naysayers]

[- Need to reduce audit burdens]
[- Need to make audits more representative of actual factory conditions]
[- Inconsistency in brand requirements > justifying workarounds]
[- Auditing organizations mistake audit results with real-world success]

[+ Could get objective and accurate data on worker exposures]
[+ Some solutions already in use on an individual company basis]
[- Unclear how workers may response to this testing in various cultures]
[+ Unclear or how the approach could be manipulated or abused]

[- Suppliers reluctant to share confidential business info]
[- Little trust in the supply chain]
[- Interest in transparency gives way to proprietary concerns]
[- The lack of info-sharing/transparency barrier to innovation]
[+ Could use trusted third party to permit exchange of screens]

[- Likely to be cost involved in reaching our goal]
[- Funding mechanism of this cost is undeveloped]
[+ Issue is enough of a priority that brands will commit to solving it]
[- Brands “want greater sustainability but don’t want to pay more for it”]
[- Suppliers don’t have strong incentives to switch chemicals]
[+ Many agreed that if brands would pay for safety, others will help]
[- Added cost of many measures hard to rationalize in existing contracts]

[- Developing & scaling non-toxic alternatives can be costly]
[- Developing & scaling non-toxic alternatives can take time]
[- Unclear where and how chemical decisions are made]
[+ Visual map of chemical flow would help]
[+ Could show social/environmental impacts]

Specific Insight Themes across the Value Chain

Brand: Director

[+ Brand owners can influence chemical choices in supply chains]
[- Cost and how to distribute/rationalize is unclear]

Brand: Supply Chain Manager

[- Deeper tiers=Less influence of brands]
[+ Can make economic case for greener chemistry]
[- Documenting the chain of custody is challenging]
[- Hard to get tier 2 and lower suppliers in conversation]

Brand: Product Designer

[+ Product design can influence manufacturing impacts]
[- Design for health risk in tension with aesthetics/performance]

Chemical Supplier

[- 1st and 2nd tier suppliers decide on process chemicals]
[+ If brands will pay more, chemical suppliers come to table]
[- Chemical suppliers don't have clear role and signals]

Supplier Factory Owner/Director: Tiers 3+

[- The highest risk (and harm) lower in supply chain]

Supplier Factory Owner/Director: Tiers 1-2

[- Factory owners/directors may not know chemicals]
[- Suppliers believe they can't rationalize addt'l costs for this]
[- Suppliers reluctant to share confidential business info]
[- Multiplicity of varying codes/audits is big burden]
[- Linking chemical exposure & illness is complex]
[- Outsourcing impact can be a shell game]
[+ Automation may reduce worker exposure]
[- Automation may have hidden impacts]
[- Factory managers unaware/lacking good data]
[- Exposure standards set for 8-hour day, commonly exceeded]
[- High turnover among facility managers]
[- Suppliers not driven to connect worker health with work]
[- Worker awareness/knowledge often deficient]
[- Distinct lack of worker rights/voice in certain countries]
[- Many workers focused on more "present" concerns]

[- High worker turnover exacerbates lack of awareness]
[- High management turnover exacerbates lack of awareness]
[- Linking exposure and illness is complex for workers]
[- Clean room processes increase exposure and risk]

Retailer

[+ Large retailers may add effective pressure]

Cross-Chain

[- Can't treat different components the same]
[- Can't treat different chemicals as one issue]
[- Can't treat different processes as one issue]
[+ Factory sprints may be effective approach]
[- Even a large brand can't move a big supplier along]
[- Little investment in monitoring worker health systematically]
[- Not everyone is following full material disclosure]
[+ Could be framed as an environmental or "eco-efficiency" opp]
[+ Benefits of innovation based solutions]
[+ Benefits of developing business case for improved performance]

Government

[- Country EHS standards/laws may not be enforced]
[+ New/stronger laws and regs in some Asian countries]
[- Lack of transparency among Chinese gov and co's]
[- Local Chinese officials – strong influence and corruption]
[- Other pressing priorities for Chinese government right now]
[+ Some supplier country gov's more focused on enforcement]
[- No regulation for exposure to groups of chemicals]
[- No regulation for exposure to circulating exposure]
[+ Regulations and regulatory agencies can drive improvements]

NGO and Shareholder Advocates

[+ NGOs+social shareholders advocating on this issue]
[+ The Challenge has gained significant attention]

Standards Bodies & Solution Providers

[+ Can leverage CPA's Chemical Footprint & GreenScreen]

Institutional Purchasing

[+ US fed/other purchasing leaders expressing concern]

Another Sample Meeting Design

Meeting Purpose:
Deliver a refined version of the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) system, from data input interface to presentation interface and engage researchers in helping to move HRMI to pilot stage.

Meeting Outcomes:
Aligning: Increase alignment around the intent of HRMI
Connecting: Strong relationships and connections (including us to researchers)
Connecting: Agreement on how we'll work together (including other rights) from now til X
Learning: How this work might benefit & work for the researchers
Learning: How qual>quant conversion is often done
Learning: Learning about SERF measures
Making: Survey Instrument—content & design (x7)
Making: Selection framework for survey respondents
Making: List of potential countries & pilot respondents
Making: Defined measures, methodology & presentation

Other non-session steps
- ❑ Interview attendees before event
- ❑ Recruit virtual test group for input users and advocacy users

Tuesday, February 28
6-8 PM optional dinner

Wednesday, March 1

<table>
<tr><td>8:30a</td><td>Breakfast available</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS</td></tr>
<tr><td>9:00a</td><td>Welcome
Setting the context: Why we're here
What's happened so far, what we're doing in this session, what comes next</td></tr>
<tr><td>9:15a</td><td>Introductions
Name, org, what you do there
Call me when/if
One value that drives my work</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">CONTEXT, PURPOSE, AND OUTCOMES FOR OUR WORK TOGETHER THROUGH FRIDAY</td></tr>
</table>

9:45a	Our focus and frame for the work in this session: FOCUS: Pilot/FRAME: Operating How we'll work together in this session (first evaluating in context of peer group, and then also to self in time) Agreements for our work together (e.g. confidentiality, etc.)
10:00a	Defining the purpose and context of HRMI: WHAT this is The overarching PURPOSE WHY this is needed, how it will be used, and by whom (Define use cases) HOW it will generally work What it may mean for researchers The RISK of not doing this The guiding VALUES behind this work
10:30a	BREAK
10:40a	Check in on HRMI—questions, clarifications, concerns
11:00a	Make List: What we're making for two thematic areas: 1 empowerment right (Assembly) and 1 physical integrity right (torture)—why these, how prototyping and building out others relate. ☐ Survey Instrument—content & design (x2 for session, x7 for pilot, x? for operating version) ☐ Selection framework for survey respondents ☐ List of potential countries & pilot respondents ☐ Defined measures, methodology & presentation Clarify the various users that we need to design each made item for (e.g. researcher respondents, advocacy users)
PROTOTYPING ROUND 1	
11:15a	Prototype the presentation interface for Torture (we have a concept for them to react to and we provide design tools to do this).
12:30p	Lunch
1:15p	Review/refine edits to presentation interface, apply to Assembly to test interface
2:15p	Prototype the input interface Review initial concept from Chad Have small groups play with the input interface across both thematic areas (give country cases to try out: easy and difficult) Pull up on edits to input interface based on small group experiences Map inputs to presentation elements and identify gaps Edit and adapt input interface as needed
3:30p	Break
3:45p	Pull up changes to input interface, identifying TA variations where needed
LEAR LEARNING DEEP DIVE: HOW DATA CONVERSION WORKS	
4:15p	How qual>quant conversion is often done (Chad, Ryan, Danny)

4:50p	Preview next day
5:00p	Close

6-8 PM dinner

Thursday, March 2

8:30a	Breakfast available
9:00a	Welcome back Review of previous day Reflections on previous day, new questions, ideas, thoughts
LEARNING DEEP DIVE: HOW DATA CONVERSION WORKS (CONT.)	
9:30a	Dive deeper into data conversion and some examples from both TAs Cases in HRMI Questions and concerns about integrity of conversion process
10:30a	Break
USER TESTING	
10:40a	Testing with 3 input/presentation interface (test Torture) and 3 presentation interface users (test both Torture and Assembly) for one country (materials, instructions, observer notes template) Learning: Time taken, confusion, resistance, initial interest/willingness, etc.
11:45a	Debrief on data and learning from testing What changes does this imply for the input interface? the presentation interface? Any variations across TAs?
12:30p	Lunch
CALIBRATING DEPTH OF CONTENT	
1:15p	Where we are now, what we've decided, what we've learned
1:30	Correlation between how long it will take to input data and how much depth each profile can contain (what you've done +5 for multiple countries) Create 3 levels of depth framework (both presentation and input implications) How can we make it work at the deeper level? What level shall we assume?
PROTOTYPING ROUND 2	
2:00	Develop v2 of both interfaces, in context of decision about level Two groups, one working on input, one on presentation
2:30	Groups present to each other on Torture, get feedback, and check for impacts on other interface Feedback, including noting TA variables
2:50	Break
3:30	Groups finalize changes to interfaces
LEARNING DEEP DIVE: SERF SYSTEM	

4:00p	Learning about SERF measures (45 minutes) so that researchers can learn about these metrics and can see how they might start using them.
4:45	Preview of next morning's work
5:00	Close

6-8 PM dinner

Friday, March 3

8:30a	Breakfast
9:00a	Check-in: How are you? How are you feeling about our work together? What do you need today to make this a smashing success?
MOVING FORWARD ON COMMITMENTS	
9:30a	Ratify final working versions of interfaces
10:00a	Researcher engagement: For each country, X respondents who can fill out all 7 modules - How to maximize research respondent engagement - Selection framework for survey respondents - List of potential countries & pilot respondents Break?
11:00a	How we'll work together going forward Immediate next steps Seeking ongoing commitments to contribute meaningfully
11:45a	Check out, appreciations
Noon	Session close

Sample Runsheet

Clean Electronics Production Network Meeting 2

Runsheet | January 23-25 | US EPA Region 9, 75 Hawthorne St. San Francisco, CA

Proposed Meeting Purpose

The primary purpose of this meeting is to ramp up our initiatives for reducing and eliminating worker exposures in the electronics supply chain and get 1-2 of them ready to launch.

Proposed Meeting Outcomes

Learn	1. Learn from the chemicals management collaboration in the apparel and footwear industries through a “deep dive” with Linda Gallegos, Levi Strauss & Co., and Nate Sponsler, Director of the AFIRM Project (formerly Gap’s Chemicals Management lead) 2. Learn from John Warner of the Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry about the ways in which Green Chemistry can provide a path to transformational change in the electronics sector 3. New tools and resources developed by CEPN Initiative Teams 4. Build our prototyping abilities through an advanced prototyping workshop from design leader Laura Weiss
Decide	1. Evaluate, refine, and align our working portfolio of initiatives 2. Confirm initial priority chemicals target lists 3. Determine whether Initiative Teams can partner on pilot initiatives or should continue through the first phase of real world testing independently
Create	1. A clear roadmap for taking the work forward from this meeting, including both shorter term implementation steps and transformational goals 2. Next-phase workplans to successfully launch live pilots and demonstration projects in each of the core focus areas 3. A framework and plan for soliciting worker feedback on an ongoing basis
Connect	1. Deepen our shared commitment to transformational impact 2. Hear directly from workers what their experiences are and how our work might be most helpful to them 3. Make meaningful connections among participants to deepen trust and productive working relationships across the network

Day 1: Monday, January 23

Time	Flow/Intent	Lead	How	Materials
2:00-3:30 concurrent sessions	Orientation for new members and invited participants	AG SO/RG SO RG	Welcome AG ▪ Short reprise of supply chain ▪ Background, goals and initiatives of the working group ▪ Methodology of Innovation Networks – how we work	❑ IT Key Shifts/Status update - one pager ❑ CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION HIGH LEVEL FOR AGENDA
	IT Worktime		Working session – ITs consult on final presentation elements, identify preso leads, ready any final materials	
3:30 - 4:00 Networking Break				❑ Snacks
4:00 - 4:30	Welcome and set up	SO AG SO	▪ Welcome to EPA Region 9 Jeff Scott, Director of the Land Division, EPA's Pacific Southwest Office ▪ Welcome ▪ Introductions: Go-around of name, company, what you do there, what motivates you personally to work on this issue	❑ Nametags ❑ Flip chart: Elements of introductions

4:30 - 5:30	Landscape update on issues and trends	AG	Quick go around of insights, studies, company strategy, concerns from each member's unique place on the supply chain since last meeting. (2 minutes each – tight time keeping; our team go last and not go if we are running out of time; give people 1-3 minutes before we start to think about what they want to say). Setup: ▪ Initiative Teams, listen for news and information that might impact your group's work ▪ Note confidentiality and timing (Alisa will keep time) ▪ Give a few minutes to reflect/prepare before starting. Openers: ▪ Ken Geiser ▪ Bruce Klafter ▪ Art Fong: Update on council ▪ Lida Tan: On the ground in China Possible prompts: ▪ Big news and events ▪ What else is happening/emerging that we need to pay attention to? ▪ What recent events might change the conversation around worker exposures? ▪ What's happening in your part of the supply chain that's new or important? ▪ New ideas and connections ▪ Is the new admin changing priorities?	❑ Flipchart and markers to capture news items

5:30 - 6:15	Worker video	SO	[Sarah/Steve - manage CEREAL and ICRT contributions] What would you most like group to know? What do you most need from the group?	
6:15 - 6:30	Wrap up	AG	What stood out - what spoke to your heart response to worker video (keep emotion, not brainwork) [OMIT FROM AGENDA] Question for guidance - If we do all this and have wild success, will we be on track for solving the problem? Are we missing part of the picture, not considering scale, etc.?	❑ Photo Release
• 7:00 - 8:30 Dinner at XXX				
8:00	Set expectations for Tuesday meeting	AG	Quick preview of the following day, prompt start	

Day 2: Tuesday, January 24

Time	Flow/Intent	Lead	How	Materials
7:30	Get room ready	CEP Team	▪ Set up registration desk/area ▪ Post and distribute materials for morning ▪ Confirm room setup	❑ Put out nametags & pack-ets ❑ Contact list and network chart ❑ Status update doc from prev day
8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast (outside meeting room)				

8:30 - 9:00	Welcome and Agenda and Goals Review: Setting the Context	SO RG	Welcome, the importance of this work, new participants and guests Gather, super quick review of what this meeting is, why these people are in the room – getting entire system into the room, agenda review, introduction of supply chain ▪ Our working goal and scope ▪ Purpose of this meeting ▪ By looking across the entire value chain, identify the most important things that need to happen next (short and long-term) ▪ Work happens at several levels (clarify GA's role in each): ○ Individually: Learning here to be more effective in your own work ○ Small groups: Organically organizing partnerships ○ Initiative Teams: Talk about the work of the Initiative Teams, look for gaps, prioritize and extend ○ Whole Group: Big things we'll all do together ○ Partner/support other groups ▪ Brief overview of the two days. ○ Flow ○ What we brought forward from last meeting: Initiatives, Deep Dives on specific subjects ▪ Review agreements ▪ Read anti-trust rules and refer to sheet ▪ Reminder of our tools: Discussion & Research list ▪ Wifi, restrooms, anything else?	❑ Flow on the wall ❑ Working goal and scope: 'Eliminate, etc.' ❑ Discussion list ❑ Research List ❑ Wifi code ❑ 3x5 post-its ❑ Sharpies ❑ Initiative Teams signs around venue - work areas ❑ Agreements: ○ All take leadership ○ Principle of generosity ○ Disagree without being disagreeable. ○ Confidentiality—check out if not sure ○ Don't worry about time ○ Be present, this is an active process ○ Write legibly!! We need to be able to read your wisdom! ○ We will reenergize you if needed!

9:00 - 9:30	Who's in the Room?	SO		
9:30 - 10:30	Deep Dive: Learning from Apparel Industry Collaboration	SO AG	▪ Introduce guests - Linda Gallegos, Nate Sponsler ▪ Presentation and brief discussion on the key challenges around Zero Discharge project – both trust and collaboration and specific technical obstacles	
10:30 - 10:45 BREAK				
10:45 - 11:15	Review Key Shifts and Supply Chain Insights	RG	▪ Key supply chain insights from last time key shifts, and initiatives that the group prioritized (TOUR GUIDE) ▪ Insights or key shifts we decided to carry forward	❑ IT update sheet

11:15 -12:45	Context and Instructions for Initiative Concept Presentations Initiative Teams Presentations	RG/LW	▪ **Initiative Teams will present their work:** ○ What we want from the rest of the network today? ○ What our key shift is ○ What we've done ○ Where we are now ○ What we're doing next ○ Where we're getting stuck (if you are) ▪ **Timing: Fast paced!** ○ 10 mins for each group presentation ○ 10 mins feedback for each group x 4 groups ○ plus 10 minutes LIGHT overall reflection at the end ▪ **Everyone else, focus on what's helpful to the initiative Team—the owners of the initiative**: ○ First reaction: What stands out to you? ○ Responses (capture these on post-its) to IT priority questions ○ Any relevant resources? ▪ Feedback not to be answered or discussed. The Initiative Team captures and decides later what is useful for its work. ▪ Followed by reflections across all (last 10 min)	❑ Sharpie markers ❑ Post-its (3x3) ❑ Cardboard panels & chalk ❑ Story board paper & Post-it glue sticks ❑ Photo/video camera ❑ Flipcharts with focal questions from each group as feedback prompts ❑ Final products of each IT - distribute as IT wants with presentation
12:45 - 1:15 Lunch				
1:15 - 2:00	Advanced Prototyping Workshop	RG LW	▪ Introduce Laura Weiss as presenter ▪ Workshop ▪ Frame: Building on positive output of ITs - given where you are now (which is great) how do we use the prototyping process to improve/advance your work?	

2:00 -3:15	IG's work on next iteration of their work based on Laura's insights/ instructions	LW	▪ Directions for exercise - focus on enabling groups to work with feedback received earlier and their own previous insights to develop a plan for the next iteration and testing of prototypes ▪ Planning for work in a virtual environment ▪ Quick update from each group on outcomes of this work	
3:15 - 3:45 BREAK				
3:45 - 4:30	Refining our Action Plan	AG	▪ When you consider these initiatives as a set, what stands out to you? ▪ We'll talk more about priorities and allocation of resources and capacity later Prompts: ▪ What's missing (from the whole set of initiatives, or ▪ Are we taking on work that others might do better? ▪ Does each initiative create enough value/change that it's worth focusing more time on? ▪ If all these initiatives take off and work, what will things look like at that point?) ▪ Which initiatives are top priorities – need to happen before other initiatives can happen, or are most critical to happen now?	❑ Post-its. We'll bucket feed-back, ideas and resources into categories, like infra-structure, human capital, potential players/partners, etc.
4:30 - 5:15	Transformational Change Potential of Green Chemistry	SO JW	▪ Introduce John Warner and purpose of session ▪ 30 min preso 15 min Q&A	

5:15 - 5:30	Closing	RG	▪ What we've done, where we are now, what we'll do tomorrow ▪ Any gaps or missing issues that we need to capture and consider? ▪ Reflections on the day: How did it go, key learning, big surprises, etc. ▪ Evening plans and options	❑ Flipchart and markers to capture output
5:30	Adjourn		▪ Facilitator/co-chairs debrief	
6:30 - 8:30 Dinner at XXX				
8:00	Heads up!	AG	▪ Start time and first focus of morning	

Day 3: Wednesday, January 25

Time	Flow/Intent	Lead	How	Materials
8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast Available				
8:30 - 9:00	Gather + Review Results so far	AG SO AG	▪ Gather, get settled ▪ Check-in: 1 word about how you are this morning ▪ What we need by the end of today ▪ Quick overview of this morning, any logistics? ▪ Key themes and outcomes from yesterday ▪ PAUSE: Any new thoughts?	❑ Flow/agenda for day 2
9:00 – 9:45	Sharing additional tools and insights from IT work	RG	▪ High level review- cool IT products research and tools development: ○ Chemical Monitoring tech analysis (Tanvi) ○ Standardized Reporting template draft (Annie) ▪ Reflections on these work products—how to use, improve, points of coordination/integration	❑
9:45-10:30	Map of Quick Wins/ Transformational change	RG	▪ Map groups quick wins and transformational change tracks (together): Why we need both and how to pursue one without neglecting the other	❑ Polarity Map (Russ)

10:30 - 10:45 BREAK				
10:45 - 11:45	Initiative Team Work Session	RG	▪ IT Work session ○ Clarify QW and TC ○ Clarify next work on products ○ Clarify roles (co-chairs, subgroup responsibilities) ○ Set up schedule/milestones for next 6 months	
11:45 - 12:30	Updates & Assessment	RG	▪ IT Report outs: Share any updates, questions, new thinking or direction from ITs ▪ ((“If we do all these things the IG’s are working on now, are we on track with the speed, scale and impact we need to solve this problem? If not, what’s missing, and how might we need to think or act differently?”)) - raise if we see major gaps or too little ambition, etc in the overall work	
12:30 - 1:00	Philips presentation	SO	▪ Context: This is just an introduction and we could only get this time: Marcel will share some highlights of what they learned, how that changed their thinking, and Philips’ offer to collaborate on pilots ▪ Ask about interest in a future remote session to dive deeper in their learning and identify collaboration opportunities	❑ BAG LUNCH - get your lunch and take a seat

1:00 – 1:30	Firm up commitments/ process around initiatives	AG	Discussion: ▪ What did we learn at this meeting that needs to happen now? ▪ Do we have the right shifts and initiatives in play? Are there other possible initiatives we want to consider? ▪ What are the critical points of coordination among ITs? ▪ Commitments going forward from today: individual, Initiative Team, whole group
1:30 - 1:50	Wrap up/Debrief Plan Next Steps	RG	▪ What worked for you about the last two days? (popcorn) ▪ What might we improve from the process we've experienced here? (popcorn) ▪ What else stands out for you about our work together? (all) ▪ Date/location for next meeting
1:50 - 2:00	Closing	SO	▪ Reflections/appreciations
2:00	Debrief		▪ Facilitators and Design Team Huddle