

Bringing disruption and innovation to the IIBA's BA Professional Day



Published on Linked In on October 27, 2016

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/bringing-disruption-innovation-iibas-ba-professional-day-hobday>

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It was wonderful to be able to present at the IIBA Australia Chapter BA Professional Day last week at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre. I covered one of my favourite topics – Remaining relevant in a world of digital disruption and innovation.

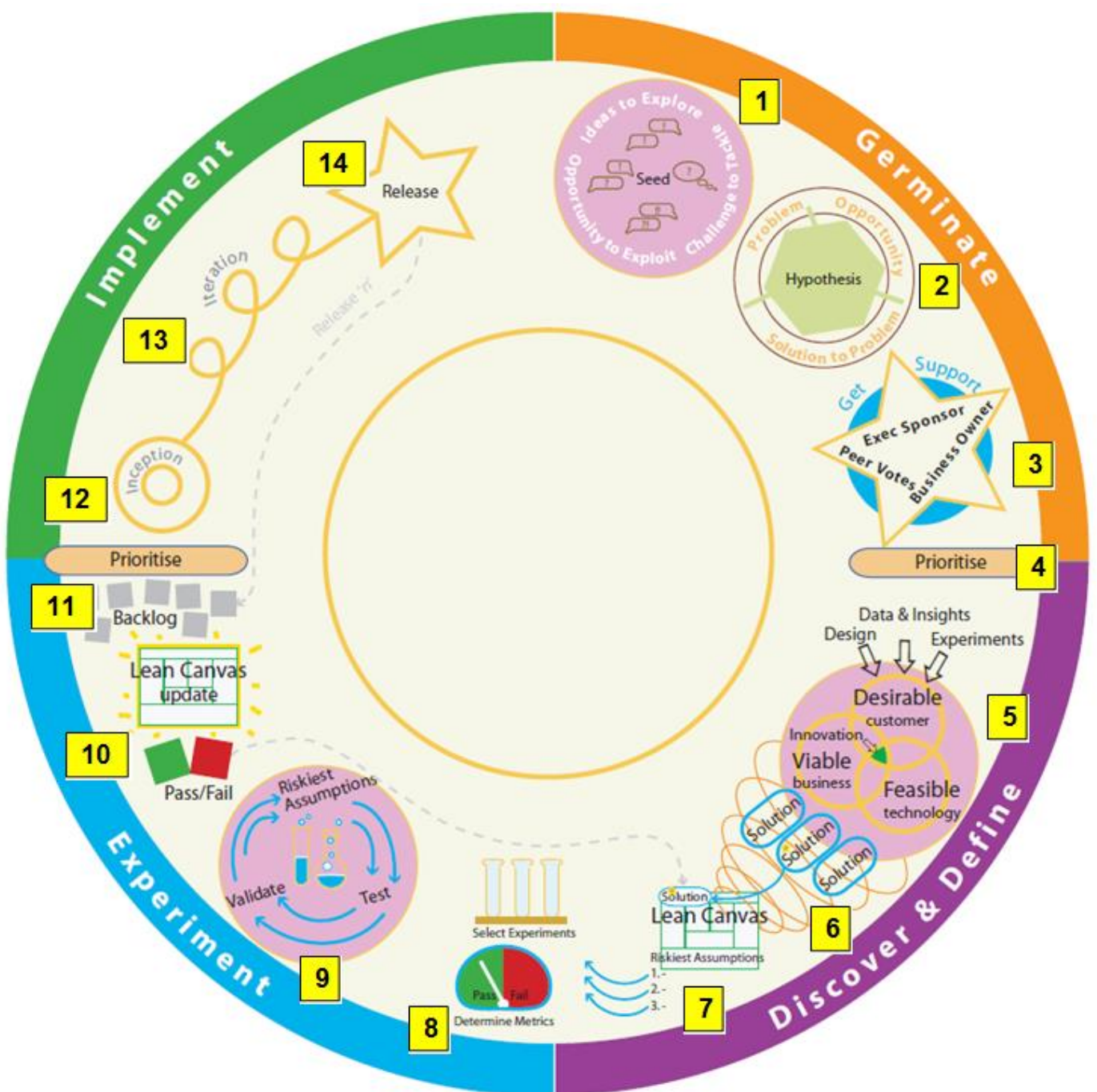
I met some great people and was inspired by our conversations and the other presentations I sat in on throughout the day. Sonia McDonald's passion for Leadership was infectious. Damian Wilson's session on critical thinking was thought provoking, and Glenn Brule not only had a great session title, "The fox and the grapes", but his delivery was like watching live theatre.

The following was part of the material I presented. The end-to-end approach to innovation (from seed to release) resembles the Scientific Method that's been around for centuries. Overlay a bit of lean, design thinking, and agile, together with some commercial considerations, and you have yourself a robust

approach for taking seeds for innovation through to real products, services, and experiences.

Keep in mind though, it's not about the number of seeds you can get through to implementation. It's about how much of the low value stuff you filter out as early as possible that defines success – kind of like panning for gold.

Innovation - from Seed to Release



1. It starts with capturing that seed for innovation. For example, ideas to explore, challenges to tackle, or opportunities to exploit.
2. Take the seed (e.g. problem, opportunity, or a solution to a problem) and create a hypothesis. (We believe that...[something]. We'll know this to be true when we see...[metrics]). This format allows others to understand and discuss it. But don't jump to solution without knowing the problem you're trying to solve.
3. Share the idea and get support ...A few peer votes, a business owner, and an executive sponsor. You can use a digital ideas repository, but it can just be as simple as a pin board or whiteboard. Innovation's about ideas layered upon ideas – so value the conversations that take place as part of this phase.
4. The idea now moves from something you can progress on your own (as an 'idea owner') to requiring a commitment of time and a few people to get involved. There may be more ideas in the organisation than can be progressed at the same time. So it's time to prioritise – this should take into account the organisation's internal and external environments, and align to its strategy and priorities. Sometimes the question, "Where will we realise the most value, the quickest?" can help get the prioritisation conversation going.
5. Use the information readily available. The intersection of desirability, feasibility, and viability, is where innovation happens. Rather than what we may classically do, which is work out what's viable and feasible, then see if it's desirable... With Design Thinking we start with understanding what's desirable. This means it's not about a business case built from one executive's unfounded idea for example, where nobody even questions what customers think.
6. The materials start to bulk up... There's probably a few solutions starting to form... Yep, you're allowed to start thinking about solutions

now. And you'll have identified a preferred one. It's time to clearly articulate where things are at by spinning it all down into a Lean Canvas.

7. A Lean Canvas... a one-pager covering problem, solution, customer, key metrics ...and noting your riskiest assumptions. Only go as deep as your 'showstoppers' though. If there's an assumption that wouldn't stop things from progressing, then don't get caught up testing it yet – this isn't the stage for comprehensive product testing.

8. Of the assumptions that you want to test, select some experiments. For example, you might choose A/B Testing to experiment. A/B Testing may be used to compare a couple of web pages by showing two variants (i.e. A and B) to similar users and gauging which one's more popular. Another example is 'Wizard of Oz' experiments. Named after the Hollywood movie character, the test offers the user something that seems very polished. In reality, the front end / user interface may be quite polished but the back end processes are not hooked up or are very manual in nature. This makes it a cheaper way to see how many people will use the front end before spending money on developing the 'back office' infrastructure, procedures and systems. Once you've determined the experiment(s), decide upon the metrics for determining pass/fail (e.g. how many users click a page, or how many sales are made in a month's trial period).

9. Run the tests. Bear in mind that they're ideally, simple, quick, cheap, and the result helps you understand whether you should progress things, change/tweak, or discontinue.

10. Assess results – and either update the Lean Canvas with learnings and move it to the backlog for implementation or consider revisiting other solutions e.g. continue, pause, pivot, stop.

11. Groom the backlog and prioritise for implementation.

12. Begin the implementation phase with an Inception. Outputs will typically include high level requirements, visual design, tech approach, and release plan... Ideally after finishing Inception you proceed straight into your development iterations. This is because the value of Inception outputs will degrade with time.

13. Iterate through development of the solution for implementation (using an agile methodology and mindset).

14. Release the solution and if there's more to be done, line up another release in the backlog to be assessed for priority alongside new ideas and subsequent releases of other initiatives.