

BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

Killer Questions That Spark Game-Changing Innovation

PHIL McKINNEY

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The Web site for this book is at www.BeyondTheObvious.com.

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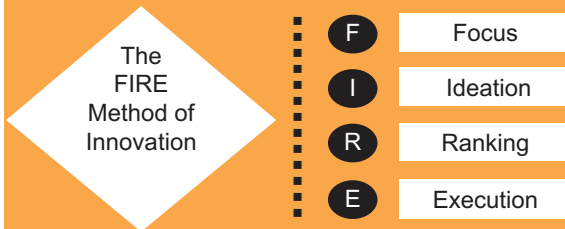
MAIN IDEA

Everyone wants to be innovative but whether you realize it or not, your world view is always shaped by your past experiences and what you believe works and what does not. In order to come up with fresh thinking, you've got to go beyond what you consider to be "obvious" and instead ask some killer questions.

The key to coming up with game changing and radical ideas is to discipline yourself to let go of your assumptions and re-visit the vital core questions which underpin everything you do:

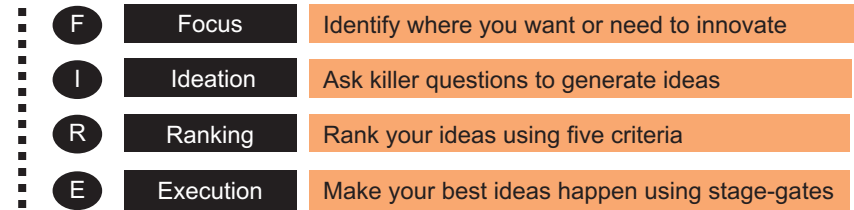
- Who are we and who is our customer?
- What do we actually do for our customers?
- Why do we do it the way we do?

A good methodology for generating ideas and turning them into fresh innovations is the FIRE methodology:



"Innovation isn't easy; it takes a lot of work and effort to come up with a radical new idea. This is actually a good thing. It means that the ability to innovate is a universal skill rather than an act of serendipity, and furthermore rather than luck, the most important thing you need to become an innovator is an organized and methodical way to generate, prioritize, and execute great ideas. My system is called the Killer Questions, and using it will give you a road map to do this. By asking the Killer Questions, you'll be able to create killer ideas with confidence and have faith that you've made the best decision about which ideas to throw your money, time, and effort into developing."

- Phil McKinney

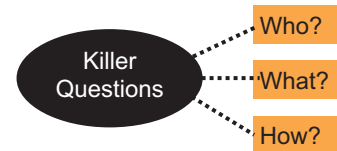


F – Focus – Identify where you want or need to innovate Page 2

Do a thorough but organized search of compelling ideas around which you can build your innovation. Use this search to make sure you don't ignore a critical area of discovery. In particular, try and be alert to how you can take existing technologies and ideas and apply them to new audiences and markets. Figure out where are the areas of greatest opportunity by asking WHO / WHAT/ HOW questions.

I – Ideation – Ask more killer questions to generate ideas Pages 3 - 5

Use the killer questions to focus on a specific facet of your organization, your customer or your product and challenge your assumptions about what you do and why. The three killer questions are:

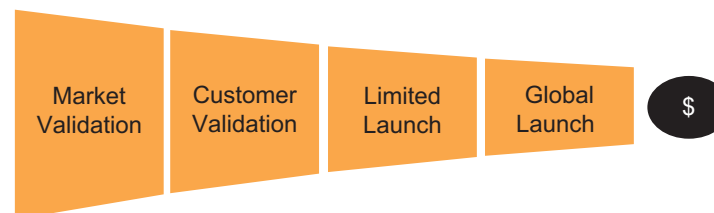


R – Ranking – Rank your ideas using five criteria Page 6

Once you've generated your ideas, you then have to winnow out those which have the potential to become worthwhile innovations. Rather than leaving this to senior managers to decide, ask questions. Determine which ideas will not only generate significant results but also which are best aligned with your core competencies and expertise. Get lots of different perspectives at work here, not just the CEO's opinion.

E – Execution – Make your best ideas happen using stage-gates Pages 7 - 8

Execution requires commitment, money and manpower. It's a risk but there's no point going through the FIRE process unless you do something worthwhile with the end result. Manage risk and get the naysayers under control by using a "gated funding system" – an idea has to successively pass four stage-gates before it gets additional resources and commitment. The four stage-gates are:



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