

The Outthinker Process



A Strategic and Innovative Thinking Process

Innovation rarely happens by accident, especially once an organization or team is executing. We tend to think that it's a magical property that leaders and teams either have or will always lack. But as Kaihan Krippendorff's work shows, the traits and behaviors for innovation can be cultivated through a purposeful process using proven principles and stratagems. The Outthinker Process equips leaders and their teams with a practical, repeatable method to develop and adjust an innovative strategy that helps them outthink and outperform their competition.

In times of change, the ability to see innovative strategic options becomes critical for continued success. Leaders are divided into two groups: those flexible enough to embrace new perspectives (“outthinkers”) and those who work within old points of view (“thinkers”). The success of your company and your career depends to a great extent on your ability to shift your paradigm and inspire others to do the same.

This program draws on the study of hundreds of history's most innovative strategic thinkers and competitive companies from Wal-Mart and GE to Google and Apple. It shows that businesses can unlock breakthrough growth when a team collaborates to make seemingly minor innovative choices — “fourth options.” These options make it difficult for competitors to respond effectively.

During this one-and-a-half-day program, participants first work through a business case to master the process, habits, and core tools. Participants then deepen their skill by applying what they have learned to a real-life, immediate business challenge. By immediately practicing what they learn, participants build their comfort level by designing innovative strategies, thinking intuitively in ways that help them see breakthrough solutions to every-day business problems, and solving real-time problems.

Program Topics

- The Fourth Option®
- The five habits of the innovative strategist
- The Eight Ps: eight dimensions along which innovative companies unleash innovation
- Thirty-six strategic questions that unlock breakthrough business ideas
- Helping your team collaboratively reach strategic clarity

Learning Objectives

- You will learn and gain command over a set of strategic and innovative thinking tools
- You will have experience applying these tools to real problems
- You will be ready to apply these tools to problems you face every day
- You will work on a current initiative or problem to come up with “fourth options” to solve it

The Outthinker Process has participants work through seemingly simple strategic and innovation tools (IDEAS) to define a creative strategy:

1. **Imagine:** Explore key environmental and competitive factors, defining a long-term ideal vision, and agreeing on a clear strategic question.
2. **Dissect:** Break down the problem you are trying to solve to find new points of leverage.
3. **Expand:** Use “strategic narratives” and examples from other industries to inspire new and innovative potential strategies.
4. **Analyze:** Rapidly select the most disruptive strategic options, avoiding the common pitfall of killing off “crazy” ideas too early.
5. **Sell:** Wrap the resulting strategy in a compelling framework that builds support.

Flexibility in Application and Outcomes

The Outthinker Process enables Innovative and Strategic Thinking in two ways:

1. It provides a practical structure to unleash innovation at multiple levels in your organization.
2. It solves real-time strategic issues.

Target Audience

Outthinker is designed for the following:

1. Senior Level and Intact Teams who must address strategic problems and turn opportunities into competitive advantages.
2. Any individual who will benefit from learning and applying strategic thinking and innovation skills in his/her role.

Two Examples

Creating a discipline of innovation and strategy:

A high-tech firm needed to develop its top Director-level population by focusing on a core competency of “strategy execution.” While not directly charged with setting corporate strategy, this population had to be skillful in developing a “strategy that supported the strategy.” Global sessions of The Outthinker Process were conducted in Europe, Asia, and several North American locations during which participants focused on a current strategic challenge and generated an array of “Fourth Option” solutions. Individuals then partnered with their cohorts and coaches to hone the ideas and come up with “winning moves.” This process supported the Chief Strategy Officer’s corporate directive by providing practical innovation tools and expertise much deeper in the organization, which positively impacted corporate strategy.

Creating an innovative and strategic plan for a current business challenge:

The top team of a business unit was struggling with how to maintain the rapid growth it had enjoyed over the past three years. They needed a new three-year growth strategy but knew that if they adopted a traditional top-down approach — in which the CEO and top reports develop the strategy behind closed doors — they risked

adopting an uninspired strategy in which few beyond the board room felt committed to. In contrast to this, they identified 100 high-performing managers and pulled them from all key divisions to participate in the Outthinker Process. During the session, small teams thought through the growth challenge and developed new ideas to realize their goals. The effort was supported with coaching through which participants refined their presentations. The final stage was to conduct a strategy review during which groups pitched their plans to top management. The process ultimately resulted in ten innovative plans interwoven into a holistic growth strategy, linking every customer segment, product, and support group. More importantly 100 influential managers throughout the company understood and were committed to the plan because they had created it.

Customization Options

Companies and industries have unique dynamics that shape what becomes the “Fourth Option.” BlessingWhite can customize your process in the following ways:

1. Customize your playbook: select the five stratagems most relevant to your situation.
2. Customize the examples: research and incorporate 5-10 short examples related to your industry and/or situation.
3. Customize the case: develop a customized case (like Tesla) for your specific situation/ goals.
4. Create competitor playbooks: analyze and incorporate the playbooks of your competitors/peers to have participants think from the competitors’ perspectives.

“Using the [Outthinker] process created an entirely different way of solving business problems. It was as though someone suddenly opened the floodgate; there was a whole new flow of ideas and energy.”
- Fortune 500 Country Manager

“I take the strategic thinking tool-kit [from The Outthinker Process] everywhere I go. It helps me get my team to look at issues from a more strategic perspective.”
- Fortune 500 Customer Service Manager