

# **Eight I's of Infinite Innovation**

by Braden Kelley



Posted on [August 26, 2012](#) by [Braden Kelley](#)

Some authors talk about successful innovation being the sum of idea plus execution, others talk about the importance of insight and its role in driving the creation of ideas that will be meaningful to customers, and even fewer about the role of inspiration in uncovering potential insight. But [innovation is all about value](#) and each of the definitions, frameworks, and models out there only tell part of the story of successful innovation.

To achieve sustainable success at innovation, you must work to embed a repeatable process and way of thinking within your organization, and this is why it is important to have a simple [common language](#) and guiding framework of infinite innovation that all employees can easily grasp. If innovation becomes too complex, or seems too difficult then people will stop pursuing it, or supporting it.

Some organizations try to achieve this simplicity, or to make the pursuit of innovation seem more attainable, by viewing innovation as a project-driven activity. But, a project approach to innovation will prevent it from ever becoming a way of life in your organization. Instead you must work to position innovation as something infinite, a pillar of the organization, something with its own quest for excellence – a professional practice to be committed to.

So, if we take a lot of the best practices of innovation excellence and mix them together with a few new ingredients, the result is a simple framework organizations can use to guide their sustainable pursuit of innovation – the **Eight I's of Infinite Innovation**. This new framework anchors what is a very collaborative process. Here is the framework and some of the many points organizations must consider during each stage of the continuous process:

## 1. Inspiration

- Employees are constantly navigating an ever changing world both in their home context, and as they travel the world for business or pleasure, or even across various web pages in the browser of their PC, tablet, or smartphone.
- What do they see as they move through the world that inspires them and possibly the innovation efforts of the company?
- What do they see technology making possible soon that wasn't possible before?
- The first time through we are looking for inspiration around what to do, the second time through we are looking to be inspired around how to do it.
- What inspiration do we find in the ideas that are selected for their implementation, illumination and/or installation?

## 2. Investigation

- What can we learn from the various pieces of inspiration that employees come across?
- How do the isolated elements of inspiration collect and connect? Or do they?
- What customer insights are hidden in these pieces of inspiration?
- What jobs-to-be-done are most underserved and are worth digging deeper on?
- Which unmet customer needs that we see are worth trying to address?
- Which are the most promising opportunities, and which might be the most profitable?

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**"comprehensive"**

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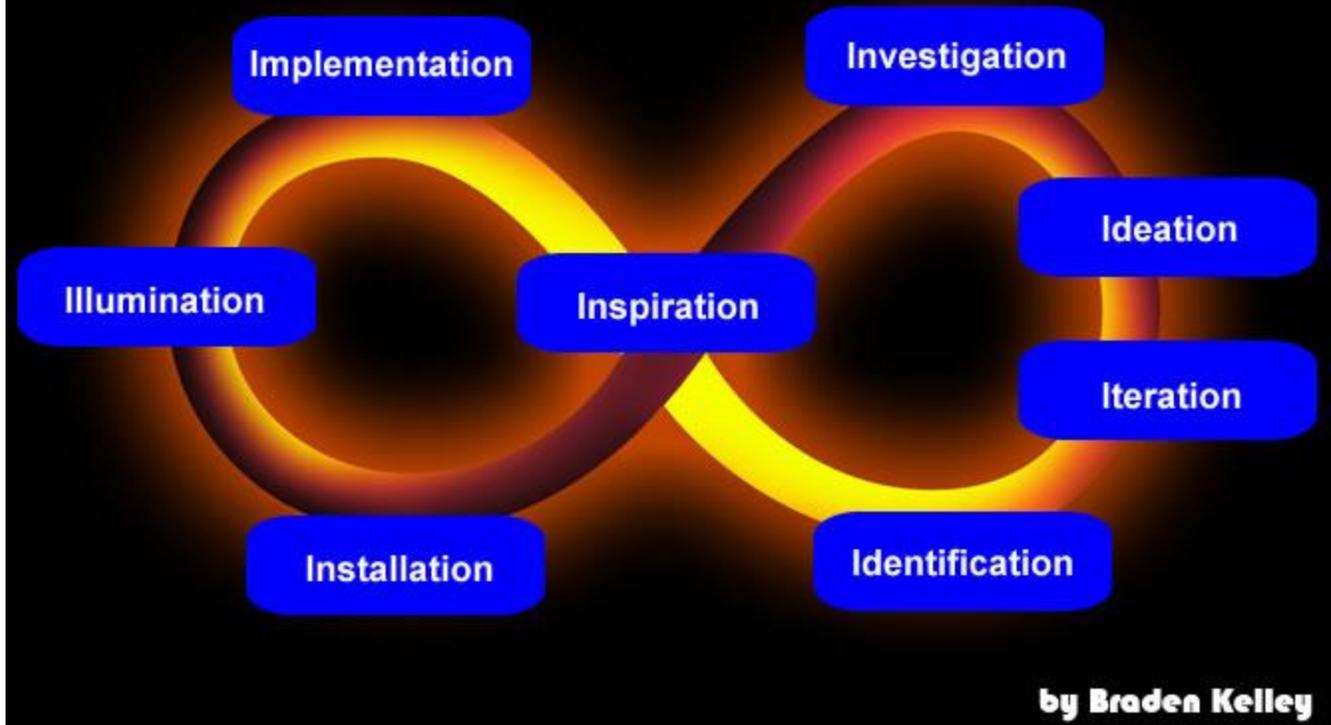
## 3. Ideation

- We don't want to just get lots of ideas, we want to get lots of good ideas
- Insights and inspiration from first two stages increase relevance and depth of the ideas
- We must give people a way of sharing their ideas in a way that feels safe for them
- How can we best integrate online and offline ideation methods?
- How well have we communicated the kinds of innovation we seek?
- Have we trained our employees in a variety of creativity methods?

## 4. Iteration

- No idea emerges fully formed, so we must give people a tool that allows them to contribute ideas in a way that others can build on them and help uncover the potential fatal flaws of ideas so that they can be overcome
- We must prototype ideas and conduct experiments to validate assumptions and test potential stumbling blocks or unknowns to get learnings that we can use to make the idea and its prototype stronger
- Are we instrumenting for learning as we conduct each experiment?

# Eight I's of Infinite Innovation



## 5. Identification

- In what ways do we make it difficult for customers to unlock the potential value from this potentially innovative solution?
- What are the biggest potential barriers to adoption?
- What changes do we need to make from a financing, marketing, design, or sales perspective to make it easier for customers to access the value of this new solution?
- Which ideas are we best positioned to develop and bring to market?
- What resources do we lack to realize the promise of each idea?
- Based on all of the experiments, data, and markets, which ideas should we select?

You'll see in the framework that things loop back through inspiration again before proceeding to implementation. There are two main reasons why. First, if employees aren't inspired by the ideas that you've selected to commercialize and some of the potential implementation issues you've identified, then you either have selected the wrong ideas or you've got the wrong employees. Second, at this intersection you might want to loop back through the first five stages through an implementation lens before actually starting to implement your ideas OR you may unlock a lot of inspiration and input from a wider internal audience to bring into the implementation stage.

## 6. Implementation

- What are the most effective and efficient ways to make, market, and sell this new solution?
- How long will it take us to develop the solution?
- Do we have access to the resources we will need to produce the solution?
- Are we strong in the channels of distribution that are most suitable for delivering this solution?

## 7. Illumination

- Is the need for the solution obvious to potential customers?
- Are we launching a new solution into an existing product or service category or are we creating a new category?
- Does this new solution fit under our existing brand umbrella and represent something that potential customers will trust us to sell to them?
- How much value translation do we need to do for potential customers to help them understand how this new solution fits into their lives and is a must-have?
- Do we need to merely explain this potential innovation to customers because it anchors to something that they already understand, or do we need to educate them on the value that it will add to their lives?

## 8. Installation

- How do we best make this new solution an accepted part of everyday life for a large number of people?
- How do we remove access barriers to make it easy as possible for people to adopt this new solution, and even tell their friends about it?
- How do we instrument for learning during the installation process to feedback new customer learnings back into the process for potential updates to the solution?

## Conclusion

The **Eight I's of Infinite Innovation** framework is designed to be a continuous learning process, one without end as the outputs of one round become inputs for the next round. It's also a relatively new guiding framework for organizations to use, so if you have thoughts on how to make it even better, please let me know in the comments. The framework is also ideally suited to power a wave of new organizational transformations that are coming as an increasing number of organizations (including Hallmark) begin to move from a product-centered organizational structure to a customer needs-centered organizational structure. The power of this new approach is that it focuses the organization on delivering the solutions that customers need as their needs continue to change, instead of focusing only on how to make a particular product (or set of products) better.

So, as you move from the project approach that is preventing innovation from ever becoming a way of life in your organization, consider using the **Eight I's of Infinite Innovation** to influence your organization's mindset and to anchor your common language of innovation. The framework is great for guiding conversations, making your innovation outputs that much stronger, and will contribute to your quest for innovation excellence – so give it a try.

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Braden Kelley is a popular [innovation speaker](#), embeds innovation across the organization with innovation training, and builds [B2B pull marketing strategies](#) that drive increased revenue, visibility and inbound sales leads. He is currently advising an early-stage fashion startup making [jewelry for your hair](#) and is the author of [Stoking Your Innovation Bonfire](#) from John Wiley & Sons. He tweets from [@innovate](#).

# Braden's Message

A sought-after public speaker, Braden makes innovation and marketing insights accessible for audiences. At the same time, Braden challenges audiences to question their assumptions about what it takes to successfully innovate, and creates dynamic, engaging interactions with attendees.

## Braden's Presentations

Braden can speak on a wide range of innovation and marketing topics including:

- His book – *Stoking Your Innovation Bonfire* (from John Wiley & Sons)
- Building a Social Business Architecture
- Creating Continuous Innovation
- Open Innovation and Social Media
- Using Pull Marketing to Grow Your Business

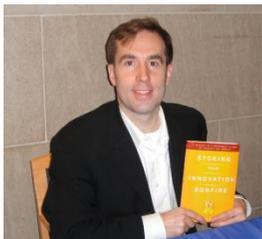
Formats:

- Keynote Speeches – usually sixty to ninety minutes in duration
- Workshops (Public or Private) – From a half-day to three-days in duration
- Executive Briefings – usually two to four hours in duration

## Testimonials

*"You got terrific feedback from the attendees... We really hope to have you speak at a future event!"*

--- Pippa Callaghan, Event Producer, Connecting Group

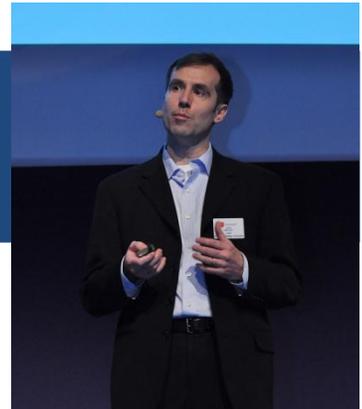


*"You were one of our top-rated presenters, and your presentation was mentioned frequently as most useful and of highest value during the summit."*

--- Jonathan Bahe, Managing Director, Design Futures Council

*"Braden is a very good speaker who can transmit key messages with clarity and originality. I wish the best to Braden in the future!"*

--- Nathalie Hublet, Media Manager, UBA



## Speaking Clients

