

Fahrenheit 212

02 THE TEN TENETS OF TRANSFORMATION



Boiling Points
INNOVATION PERSPECTIVES

THE POINT: How you think about an innovation challenge determines how well you deliver game-changing ideas. Our 10 Tenets of Transformational Thinking may be practiced by anyone, in any industry, at any scale, any time. Farewell, light bulb myths. Hello, consistent performance.

THE TEN TENETS OF TRANSFORMATION

Transformational thinking is all too often thought of as a once-in-an-eon lightning strike moment. Banish this belief once and forever. In our innovation practice, we've found that with the right orientation, transformational thinking leaves the realm of serendipity and becomes a bona fide discipline, as repeatable and scalable as any other.

Commercializing transformational ambitions of course requires more than just coming up with the ideas. But in this chicken-and-egg game, you'll need those ideas first to get the support and resources you need to make it happen, and get famous for it.

To abet that pursuit, here are 10 ways Fahrenheit 212 practices the mental gymnastics we call Transformational Thinking. It's our approach to consistently generating game-changing ideas...

1 BUILD A HEALTHY DISRESPECT FOR PRESENT REALITY

Glory awaits those who successfully overturn the things we most take for granted. Why shouldn't every note of music I own go with me everywhere I go? Why can't alcohol taste as refreshing as water? Get stupid again. It's empowering. If you didn't know you were supposed to run inside when it rains, you'd discover great things.

2 MOVE THE CAMERA TO ANOTHER PART OF A ROOM

Practice the art of changing perspectives on a dime. With every new constituency considered, every new angle tried, your exploitable assets inventory grows exponentially. Look through the eyes of different consumer segments, your retailers, the guy driving your truck, your suppliers in Fujian Province and new things will come into view. If you're designing a car, know that even the bug about to get splattered on the windshield has a unique point of view that may unlock big ideas.

3 LOOK BACK ON THE PRESENT FROM THE FUTURE

Changing the world isn't about inching forward from where we are now, but about defining great destinations, and looking back from them to figure out what must be true to make them happen. If you're in technology, a few years is probably as far as you can credibly look back from; but in FMCG, thinking in five or ten-year leaps is not out of bounds. What could the world look like if today's opportunity were pursued with great velocity?

4 THINK IN JAZZ

Jazz musicians institutionalize the art of listening while playing. Picking up on other players' themes and reinterpreting them, sending a new provocation back to the first player that is then pushed again. Encouraging chain reactions exponentially increases human creativity. Choose jam session players from across your organization, outside your industry, beyond your comfort zone. Such cross-fertilization breeds a bigger, more joyful noise in market. And while some of your colleagues may be tempted to copy your competitors, the transformational approach is to treat it as inspiration to riff on in new directions.

5 LOOK FOR THE PROBLEM BEHIND THE PROBLEM

Ninety percent of the time, there is a much larger issue behind the challenge you're staring at all day. If you first define and solve that bigger one, the other problems will take care of themselves. If the thing that's costing you sleep is that 21-year-old guys don't love your product anymore, maybe your real problem is that you've got a huge, broadly applicable technology stuck in the small business of pleasing fickle 21-year-old guys. Opening that bigger market is the thing that will restore your share and your dreamtime.

6 SEEK THE ONE-DEGREE CHANGE THAT MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Heating water from F211 to F212 unleashes catalytic power. What happens when you muse on the minute? Oh, let's sell the computer before we make it. Let's sell coffee for five bucks a cup. Little changes spawn multi-billion dollar businesses.

7 PRACTICE THE ART OF COLLISION

The Reese's Peanut Butter Cup is a metaphor for life. What seems completely new is often just an unexpected combination of the familiar but previously disconnected. This is Innovation 101, but too often we forget, and think the one asset we have is the answer, rather than asking what we can bundle it with to transform its value.

8 POWER YOUR BRAIN WITH LAUGHTER

Landmark studies proved decades ago that people solve problems far more effectively when they're told it's no big deal and primed with Three Stooges movies than when they're grimly told to work carefully. There's science behind it. Laughter sends endorphins to our brain's lateral thinking areas. Sure, the world is going to hell in a bucket, but lighten up: you're more likely to land on a transformational idea.

9 READ UP ON HOWARD GARDNER'S OCTO-THINK

One-dimensional ideas are rarely transformational. They're easily replicated in a world where competitive response cycles shrink by the day. Harvard's Dr. Howard Gardner delineated eight ways people take in ideas, including verbally, visually, logically, musically, physically, emotionally, spatially and mathematically. Run like the spider using all eight legs. Your ideas will be a whole lot stickier.

10 THERE IS NO TENTH TENET

Less really is more. The simple idea beats its complicated, overcooked cousin every time.

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