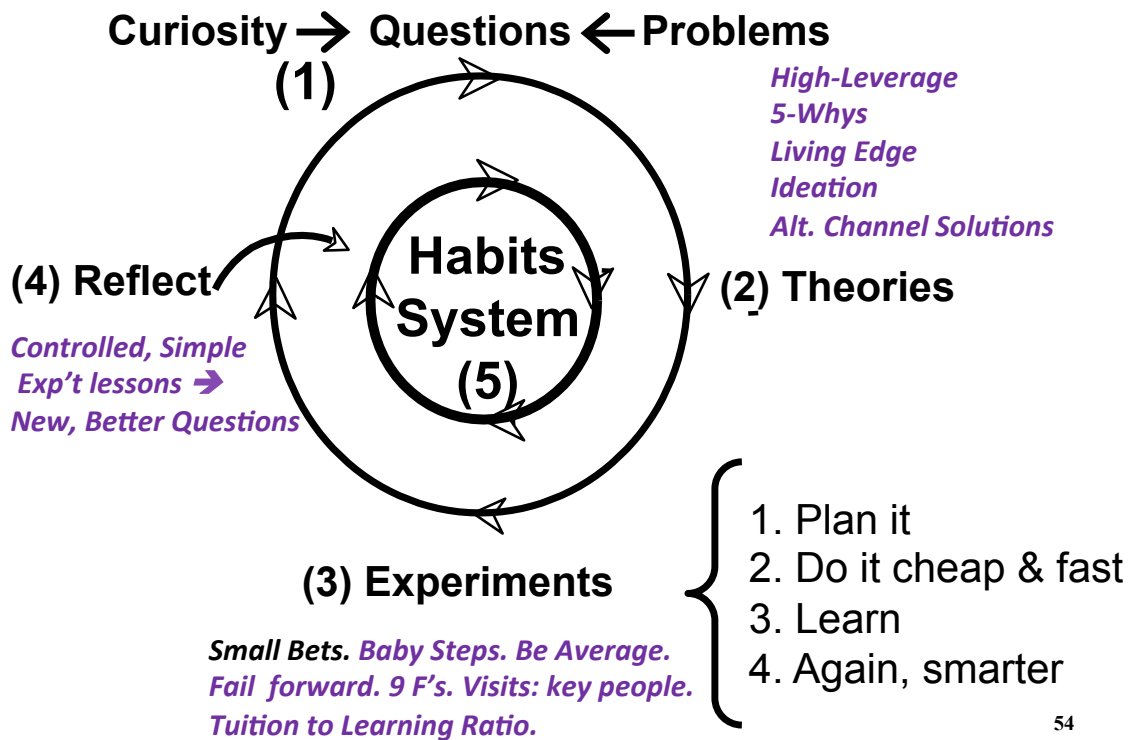


## Lesson #46: Wheel of Learning Innovation Meme (Again in more depth)

Slide

### #46: Wheel of Learning *Innovation Meme*



#### Answers to Video Questions

1. What is a “meme”?

**Answer:** It is a pop term for an idea that go from one brain to another in a quick, fast, even viral way.

**Longer Answer:** Popular advertising slogans or song phrases that everyone seems to know are examples of popular culture memes. Within your family, one or both of your parents may have been particularly repetitive about drilling into your head (as well as walking the talk) some aphorisms about: punctuality; money; preparedness; housekeeping standards; etc. These would be family memes. And, the founder of your company and/or the current CEO may have exhorted frequently the same success slogans that everyone should adhere to. These are company cultural memes that encapsulate, “the way things are done around here”.

2. Where on the Waypoint whale-curves should you be asking **Questions** and brainstorming for Ideas and **Theories** to focus on the most “**high-leverage**” opportunities?  
**Answer:** At the extremes of the whale curves: the super winners and losers.
3. **5-Why questions** are aimed at finding out what? (Most visible metrics like most profitable and unprofitable elements in your business are actually symptoms.)  
**Answer: The Root Cause(s)** for the more visible, superficial and/or downstream symptoms. Keep asking “why” until there are no more why’s, then you have arrived at the root cause.
4. What is a “**living edge**” (and the **dying edges of, for example, your customer portfolio**)?  
**Answer:** Companies (and niches of companies) that are growing well are the “living edge” opportunities. Companies (or niches) that are shrinking and closing are “dying edge”.
5. What is **ideation**?  
**Answer:** It’s a fancier and more thorough version of brainstorming. When you have a problem to solve, try to generate a lot of possible solutions first (ideation). Then from this list of “ideas” start doing some quick initial research to see if the ideas quickly get more or less interesting to pursue. The best way to have one great idea is to start with a lot of possible ideas.
6. Why is it good to have multiple ideas/theories for how you might solve a question?  
**Answer:** If you run with the first idea that pops into the group’s head, it is likely to be an old idea (fake-new) in new clothes or words. And, everyone quickly everyone becomes emotionally over-invested in it which prevents the group from ever finding True-New ideas that would/could be better.
7. Why should you look at how **other (especially retail consumer) channels** handle similar problems to yours (like small-dollar transactions)?  
**Answer:** Because they may have already solved the problem. Why reinvent the wheel? Steal ideas from other, bigger, higher-volume channels and adapt them to your own situation.
8. Since many of our theories/ideas are partially guesses, what can 5 to 10 minutes of talking with the right other people (typically 2 or more customers) do to the initial appeal of ideas?  
**Answer:** Quickly - increase, decrease or modify – the potential value of the idea. It is not uncommon, to visit with most progressive customers about “a hot new idea to solve a big customer problem” and find out: “the problem” is a symptom of an underlying root-cause that needs a very different solution for which the customer would value highly.
9. To move from theory to action and new learning, we will have to try **an experiment**. Experiments can be scary. What are guidelines for taking care of all of these concerns:
  - a. Never done it: risky **ANS:** Try a baby step with a most helpful customer.
  - b. Unskilled, not EXPERT at it: **ANS:** Don’t pretend to be an expert. Learn together.

- c. Will FAIL (or be far from expert/perfect): **ANS:** Make sure that the worst case costs are affordable, while the upside learning of how to move towards a valuable vision are worth the cost and the risk.
- d. Will cost MONEY: **ANS:** Do it as fast, small, simple and frugal as possible expecting “C” results.

10. Define what the **Tuition** (Failure-costs) **to** (Upside) **Learning Ratio** is?

**Answer:** The “tuition” is all of the costs that will occur whether the experiment is a total success or failure. The “learning” is what comes from trying something new and observing the outcomes and reactions. The ratio of Learning/Tuition should be easily a high multiple if the experiment is well: targeted, designed, executed and observed.

11. To insure that we do learn from every experiment, what two key factors must we design into the experiment?

**Answer:** Simplicity that focuses on one key controlled variable. If there are two or more variables, then can’t be sure which variables caused what exact effects.

More References on the “wheel of learning”:

- Article: [http://www.merrifield.com/articles/2\\_34.asp](http://www.merrifield.com/articles/2_34.asp)
- Exhibit: [http://www.merrifield.com/exhibits/Make\\_Lots\\_of\\_Good\\_Cheap\\_Mistakes.pdf](http://www.merrifield.com/exhibits/Make_Lots_of_Good_Cheap_Mistakes.pdf)
- YouTube clips: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4194AD05EB22FB50> clips: 28, 40-52
- Slide show: [http://www.merrifield.com/articles/Think\\_Big\\_Act\\_Small.pdf](http://www.merrifield.com/articles/Think_Big_Act_Small.pdf) (slide 13)

**Discussion Questions**

1. What are some Wheel-of-Learning experiments that your company has recently done or has underway? Based on this slide, how well thought out and designed do you think those experiments are?
2. What would it be like if every employee in your company were fluent with the Wheel and convinced that it must be pushed individually and collectively?
3. If #2’s supposition would be desirable, then how should the company go about making this MEME part of the company culture?

**Notes**

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