



PLAYING-TO-WIN

STRATEGIC CHOICE-MAKING

What *is* strategy? The best definition on the planet is the one offered by Roger Martin: “Strategy is an integrated cascade of choices that uniquely positions a player in its space to create sustainable advantage.”

That cascade consists of five key questions:

- *What is our winning aspiration?*
- *Where will we play?*
- *How will we win?*
- *What capabilities do we need?*
- *What management systems are required?*

Participants learn not only how to integrate answers to these deceptively simple questions in an innovative way, but also how to reverse engineer the logic with strategy’s “magic” question—*what must be true?*—the answers to which identify critical assumptions.

Participants will learn and gain facility with the *Playing-to-Win* Canvas, my proprietary visual tool designed in collaboration with, and approved by, Roger Martin.

Training format: 1/2- day or 1-day



DESIGN THINKING

HUMAN-CENTERED INNOVATION

Design Thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that allows non-designers to use the designer’s creative tools and methods to match human needs with what is conceptually feasible and what a sound strategy can convert into true value.

The ultimate goal of Design Thinking is to embed a simple and sustainable innovation method across the entire organization, enabling a companywide culture of constant creativity and collaboration.

Similar to the way it’s taught at Stanford’s D School, our Design Thinking is an experiential and immersive “crash course,” enabling participants to focus on solving a real-world problem, thus experiencing the entire design thinking process:

- **Needs Identification** — *gaining empathy for users and framing problems from the customer’s p.o.v.*
- **Concept Ideation** — *meeting user needs creatively*
- **Lean Iteration** — *simple, fast and frugal testing of prototype solutions*

Training format: 1/2-day or 1-day

MATTHEW MAY



CAPABILITIES TRAINING

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LEAN THINKING

TOYOTA-BASED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Irrespective of whether it refers to manufacturing or entrepreneurship, the word *lean* in business has a simple meaning: the absence of waste.

Lean has a single goal: make more room for what truly matters by eliminating what doesn’t. It’s a different, subtractive way of thinking. That’s why so many companies can’t get lean, no matter what they do.

Nearly a decade of working closely with Toyota—the birthplace of lean—taught us the right way. And it’s what makes our Lean Thinking unique: it’s *authentic*.

Lean Thinking is applicable to everything from internal process redesign to new product development and entrepreneurial startup.

Lean Thinking participants learn to simplify workflows using Toyota’s process improvement, *kaizen*, and lean testing methods. They experience lean principles in action through an official Toyota Production System (TPS) simulation, and engage in an exercise designed to identify real-world issues and opportunities to employ Lean Thinking.

Training format: 1/2-day or 1-day



BUSINESS DESIGN

STRATEGY + DESIGN + LEAN

One of our most popular courses, Business Design is essentially a blend of the three most relevant and powerful frameworks in business today:

Playing-to-Win

Participants learn to craft a winning aspiration, build a strategy, reverse engineer it, and construct initial strategic tests.

Design Thinking

Participants learn how to gain user empathy, properly frame problems, conceptualize solutions, build effective prototypes, and design user tests.

Lean Thinking

Participants learn to simplify workflows using Toyota’s process improvement, *kaizen*, and lean testing methods through the official Toyota Production System simulation.

If you need to get a critical mass of people up to speed in a hurry, consider our Business Design course.

Training format: 1-day



STRATEGY SUMMITS

PLAYING TO WIN

All too often, a new strategy ends up looking a lot like the old strategy. That's because conventional strategy development begins with analyzing existing options rather than generating new possibilities.

Strategy Summits break with convention by employing the *Play-to-Win* strategy framework, which centers on producing a multitude of possibilities surrounding two tightly bound choices: *where to play* and *how to win*.

The process begins with identifying the most pressing strategic issue, which is then reframed as at least two mutually exclusive high-level alternatives. From there, multiple where-to-play/how-to-win possibilities are produced, clustered and culled to arrive at the most attractive strategic themes, each of which is then fully developed into an integrated cascade of choices.

The logic of each strategy is reverse engineered to determine conditions for success. The final deliverable is a portfolio containing at least two unique strategies, complete with a first strategic test of validity.

All Strategy Summits are tailored for timing, but are generally delivered in a sequestered 2-day format.



INNOVATION SPRINTS

CONCEPT TO VALUE

There's no shortage of good ideas, and the half-life of an idea is shrinking rapidly. If you can't get a tangible version of your concept into the hands of potential users quickly, someone else will.

Enter innovation Sprints, accelerated creative sessions designed to turn a new product/service concept into to a viable working prototype validated through testing with real users in the shortest possible time.

Innovation Sprints revolve around an iterative 3-step cycle of *guess-test-learn*.

Guess is focused on identifying and prioritizing an idea's riskiest assumptions and producing falsifiable hypotheses.

Test is focused on constructing a low fidelity prototype and devising a simple, fast, and frugal experiment to capture measurable human response to the idea.

Learn is focused on comparing experimental results with expectations, then deciding whether to reiterate, pivot to a new direction, or abandon the effort.

Innovation Sprints are generally delivered in multi-day formats, and are tailored to fit the challenge.

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WORKSHOP SESSIONS

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CX JOURNEY MAPS

IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

One of the most critical areas of strategic focus for any organization is improving the customer experience.

Organizations that deliberately transform how they grow and innovate are able to do so because they think about the people on the receiving end of their decisions: customers. They earn the right to grow, and grow profitably, by enabling customers to achieve their desired outcomes and improving their lives.

Every activity is, and must be, focused on delighting customers, in order to drive long term value.

An important first step in any human-centered innovation effort is creating a good customer journey map: a visual representation of a typical experience over time as customers interact with your products, processes, and people. It includes mapping key jobs-to-be-done, touchpoints, painpoints, and emotions.

Once validated, a well-designed journey map provides insights that enable an enterprise to innovate around, and continuously improve the customer experience.

Customer journey mapping sessions are best delivered in multiple 1/2-day formats, followed by field testing.



KAIZEN EVENTS

OPERATIONAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Kaizen is the Japanese word referring to the continuous improvement methods popularized in the U.S. during WWII and later adopted by Japan during the post-war occupation.

Kaizen Events are an actionable component of Lean Thinking, with a focus on incremental improvement to key processes and workflows with the express intent of removing excess waste, overload, and inconsistency.

Kaizen Events start by setting compelling objectives. The work then turns to mapping the current situation, producing a visual depiction of value and waste. From there, problems get framed and analyzed, ideal outcomes defined, and potential solutions generated.

Experimental test plans are then developed, complete with timing, targets, and expected business gains.

Finally, the team prepares and presents a short pitch to the leader sponsoring the Kaizen Event.

Kaizen Events are generally delivered in 1- to 3-day formats, depending on process scope and complexity.



ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

GUIDANCE ON CORPORATE ADVANTAGE

Strategy means different things to different people. Some define strategy as a vision, some as a plan. Others define it as optimizing the status quo, or perhaps following best practices. Still others deny that strategy is possible, especially in times of great and rapid change.

We subscribe to the approach devised and taught to principal Matthew E. May by his esteemed colleague and mentor Roger Martin:

"Strategy is an integrated cascade of choices that uniquely positions a player in its market to create sustainable advantage and superior value relative to the competition."

Great firms don't choose to simply play. They choose to win. At the center of Roger Martin's strategy definition lie two key choices: *where to play* and *how to win*. These two tightly bound choices form the very core of any winning strategy, and are the two most critical questions in strategy formulation.

Which is why they form the heart of our approach to helping clients craft winning strategies.

Advisory services are based on a daily rate. Long-term retainer relationships reduce rates significantly.



INNOVATION STRATEGY

GUIDANCE ON PORTFOLIOS & PIPELINES

Creating future revenue streams is a much different endeavor than growing current ones. It requires the ability to consistently produce novel, useful concepts.

To be an innovative organization, you have to ask for innovation, assemble a group of talented people who are eager to do new things, and put them in an environment where innovation is expected.

It's that simple. And that hard.

What's needed is a repeatable innovation system that consistently and predictably guides creative concepts from inception to tangible commercial offer in alignment with the company's strategic goals.

Our proprietary *Strategic Innovation System*, or SIS, is an effective approach to systematic innovation. It consists of three key drivers: *Governance*, *Generation*, and *Go-to-Market*.

When installed and embedded in the organization, the result is a well-aligned, highly productive pipeline of innovation...a value-creating machine.

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COACHING | ADVISORY

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OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

GUIDANCE ON OPTIMIZING FOR AGILITY

Today, the rate of change in technological innovation is accelerating, reducing barriers to entry to existing markets as well as the development of new ones. Market leaders are losing their dominant positions at an increasing rate. Too often they simply speed up to run the race faster, only to lose in the end to a more nimble, agile opponent.

But there is a better way.

The challenge lies in transforming operations into a competitive advantage that fuels company growth, while maintaining the traditional operations focus on quality, reliability, efficiency and cost.

It can be done. Leading companies like Amgen, Disney, Intel, and Toyota are leveraging corporate operating groups to stay ahead of the innovation curve.

The key to operational innovation lies in the ability to optimize speed-to-market simultaneously with speed-in-market. In other words, creating a competitive advantage based on operational agility.

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GO-TO-MARKET

GUIDANCE ON VALUE DELIVERY

Good ideas are everywhere. It's the ones that position you to win that are rare.

Winning ideas have a few things in common. They achieve the maximum effect with minimum means. They provide compelling customer value, often by subtracting something from the current experience—generally something viewed as excessive, confusing, wasteful, unnatural, hazardous, hard to use, or ugly. And they break a pattern, a convention.

Some people call that disruptive. They're right.

But ideas, even ground-breaking disruptive ones, remain merely concepts until they are not only proven, but brought to market. Perhaps the most differentiating feature setting winners apart from the crowd is the ability to ensure that fresh ideas see the commercial light of day.

My go-to-market insight is based on my product and service launch experience with market leaders like Toyota, Intuit, Wells Fargo, and Edmunds.com.

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