

Bootstrapping Innovation Highlights

Toward High-Performing
People • Knowledge • Networks

While the opportunities, problems, and challenges we face keep increasing in complexity and urgency on a global scale, finding exponentially more powerful ways to collectively address important challenges is crucial. Organizations, initiatives, regions, and nations that kick into gear on this will likely surpass those that don't.

Bootstrapping Innovation™ is a strategy for getting ahead of this curve, increasing innovation capacity by continuously increasing Collective IQ. Five organizing principles offer unique insight, alignment and leverage for continuously expanding and accelerating results, with the potential for unprecedented gains in effectiveness, productivity, competitiveness, and triple-bottom-line success.

1. Engage Your Innovators

- Engage target customers and other key stakeholders in your innovation team and network.
- Map your improvement activities into ABC: (A) business as usual, (B) innovating how A work gets done, (C) innovating how B work gets done, to reveal hidden opportunities for engagement.
- Connect B and C activities in *networked improvement communities* for additional leverage.

2. Leverage Your Collective IQ

- Establish how your team/network will leverage its collective ingenuity and follow-through, beginning with shared values, vision, process, and enabling tools that are open and evolvable – this establishes the foundation for your *dynamic knowledge ecosystem*, your group brain.
- Drill down into “Collective IQ” as a capability to reveal additional points of leverage.

3. Focus on Capability

- Revisit your focus/horizon in terms of capability, e.g. “are we in the telegraph business or communications business?” – it’s about improving capability for your customer, and your teams/networks.
- For each desired capability, drill down to reveal hidden opportunities in human and tool innovation.

4. Accelerate Co-Evolution

- Be pro-active about accelerating the co-evolving the human and tool sides of the equation, fostering a symbiotic relationship between the two with a build-and-try pioneering attitude.
- Join with other networked improvement communities as partners in exploration and pilot trials.

5. Walk Your Talk to Bootstrap Results

- For those whose products/services are intended to leverage customers’ Collective IQ, walking your talk can yield a bonus multiplier effect like compounded interest. When you are your own best customer, every improvement you make to your work product will automatically increase your own Collective IQ – the essence of *bootstrapping*.
- The more your products/services contribute to increasing Collective IQ, the greater your potential to increase Collective IQ exponentially.
- In fact, placing special focus on innovating how people work collectively on important challenges is your point of greatest leverage.

You can apply any of these five accelerators to any project to improve innovation in that project. The idea is to start small and scale up. Forming or tapping into an innovation team to apply all five offers the greatest leverage. In any case, you can greatly extend your own team’s Collective IQ by networking with other pioneering teams and initiatives to explore and share results, branching out into something like an Innovation Neural Network™ infused with better and better practices and tools. See [Resources for Bootstrapping Innovation](#) for details.