**Foundations of Innovation**

Curriculum for Spring 2021

Room TBD, Columbia Business School

Instructor: Professor Melanie Brucks

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**TA**: TBD

**Course Description**

The ability to innovate plays a pivotal role in the growth and success of many areas of business. In this course, we tackle the challenge of bringing to market elegant and efficient solutions to important customer needs. This challenge is relevant whether you work for a startup or a large company, whether you sell products or services, or whether your customers are individual consumers or companies. Throughout the course, we will provide methodologies, strategies, and tools (such as design thinking and iterative prototyping) structured around the basic steps of the innovation process:

1. Problem Identification
2. Idea Generation
3. Design
4. Prototyping and Testing
5. Launch

This class focuses on customer-centric innovation. The tools we cover come from the world of corporate innovation but can be applicable to entrepreneurs. After all, at the end of the day, you will be dealing with customers regardless of your company’s size.

**Objectives**

1. Strengthen your individual and collaborative capabilities to identify customer needs using a multimethod approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data analysis.
2. Provide a framework to help you to construct sound concept hypotheses and a develop a prototype that allows for meaningful feedback in a real-world environment.
3. Help you translate broadly defined opportunities into actionable innovation possibilities and recommendations for client organizations.

**Project**

In this class, you will actively learn about the innovation process by developing a new product/service! A set of projects will be offered by companies on the first day. You will select your project (and form teams of 4 to 6 students) based on company presentations. Representatives from the company will attend your final presentations at the end of the course.

**Grading**

Class Participation (35%)

Case/Reading Questions (15%)

Project Assignments (15%)

Final Project (35%)

**Outline**

**Pre-Class Preparation**

**Individual Assignment:** Read about company projects; submit Bugaboo case answers

**Week 1: Underlying Need Identification (Week of Jan 11)**

Class overview, introduction to project

Bugaboo Case (observational research)

**Group Assignment**: submit your group names (must be at least 5 members, no more than 6); line up at least one interview

**Week 2: Underlying Need Identification (Week of Jan 25)**

Design thinking workshop (w/ Guest Speaker Adam Royalty) & Interview Techniques

*In-class group work*: collecting observations

**Individual Assignment**: collect observations, submit individual empathy map

**Week 3: Underlying Need Identification (Week of Feb 1)**

*In-class group work*: making group empathy map

Suzy (market research tool) presentation & how to ask questions

**Group Assignment**: submit group empathy map

**Individual Assignment:** Blue ocean and Job to Be Done reading questions

**Week 4: Underlying Need Identification (Week of Feb 8)**

Market segmentation/differentiation

Blue Ocean Strategy

Guest Speaker: Identifying Diverse Consumer Needs

**Group Assignment**: submit four identified problems

**Individual Assignment:** submit Ideation Technique answers

**Week 5: Ideation (Week of Feb 15)**

Ideation strategies

*In-class group work*: apply these strategies to project

**Individual Assignment:** submit Template reading answers

**Week 6: Ideation (Week of Feb 22)**

Ideation templates

*In-class group work*: apply these strategies to project

**Group Assignment**: submit at least eight ideas

**Week 7: Evaluation (Week of Mar 8)**

Idea selection

*In-class group work*: select two ideas

**Individual Assignment**: submit VerTerra case answers

**Week 8: Development (Week of March 15)**

Prototyping workshop

Solution Validation + Concept Testing

*In-class group work*: prototyping solution for project

**Weeks 9: Evaluation and Design (Week of March 22)**

Guest Speaker: Innovating During COVID-19

Business model canvas and positioning statement

*In-class group work*: work on positioning statement & concept testing

**Group Assignment**: submit two positioning statements

**Week 10: Evaluation & Design (Week of March 29)**

Schedule a meeting with me

*In-class group work*: work on prototype & validation

**Week 11: Launch and Presentation Prep (Week of April 5)**

Nontraditional marketing

*In-class group work*: work on presentation

**Week 12: Presentation (Week of April 12)**

Presentations with clients

**Group Assignment**: submit annotated slide deck

**Individual Assignments**

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| **Due On** | **For Week** | **Assignment** |
| Jan 10 (Before first day of class) | 1 | Read project briefs; Bugaboo Case Answers |
| January 31 | 3 | Individual empathy map |
| Feb 7 | 4 | Blue Ocean and Job to Be Done Reading Response |
| Feb 14 | 5 | Ideation Technique Answers |
| Feb 21 | 6 | Template Reading Response |
| March 14 | 8 | VerTerra Case Answers |

**Group Assignments**

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| --- | --- |
| **Due On** | **Assignment** |
| Jan 13th  | Determine your project & group (submit group names) |
| Feb 7 | Submit group empathy map |
| Feb 14 | Submit four identified problems |
| Feb 26 | Submit eight ideas |
| March 28 | Submit two positioning statements &Schedule a meeting with me |
| April 15 | Annotated slide deck |

**List of Readings**

Week 1:

* Levav, Jonathan, and Olivier Toubia (2008), “Bugaboo International,” Columbia CaseWorks.
* Yohn, Densie L. (2019), “Why Great Innovation Needs Great Marketing,” Harvard Business Review.

Week 2:

* Kolko, John (2015), “Design Thinking Comes of Age,” Harvard Business Review.

Week 4:

* Christensen, Clayton M., Scott Cook, and Taddy Hall (2005), “Marketing Malpractice: The Cause and the Cure,” Harvard Business Review.
* Kim, W. Chan, and Renée Mauborgne (2004), “Blue Ocean Strategy,” Harvard Business Review.

Week 5:

* Grant, Adam “The Daily Show’s Secret to Creativity” (2018), <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/creative-burstiness-at-the-daily-show/id1346314086?i=1000405268582&mt=2>
* https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/boost-creativity-brainstorm-embarrassment

Week 6:

* Goldenberg, Jacob, Roni Horowitz, Amnon Levav, and David Mazursky (2003), “Finding your Innovation Sweet Spot,” Harvard Business Review.

Week 7:

* <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/why-your-best-idea-may-be-your-second-favorite>
* https://www.fastcompany.com/3057239/why-managers-squash-great-creative-ideas-and-bet-on-bad-ones

Week 8:

* Toubia, Olivier, “Columbia Business School Case: VerTerra.”

Week 10:

* Penenberg, Adam, Clive (2011), “NeuroFocus Uses Neuromarketing To Hack Your Brain,” Fast Company.