Becoming an

Innovator

Discovering better, cheaper
business solutions
through fresh thinking

Becoming an Innovator

You can learn to innovate. It is possible and while there is no "innovation process", there are techniques, tools and strategies you can use. These techniques are straightforward enough that they can be integrated into your development process to make you more creative, and to look at problems in a more productive way. Innovation is not an additional task, it is part of what you do.

"Innovation is trying to figure out a way to do something better than it's ever been done before."
— David Neeleman, founder and CEO JetBlue

Innovation is not the same as invention. Most innovations reuse existing elements or ideas by recombining them in innovative ways. Even the prolific Thomas Edison invented very little—most of his innovations, including the light bulb, X-rays and the phonograph, were recombinations of existing ideas and technologies. Similarly, most of the elements you need for your next innovation are available to you now. You just have to know where to find them and how to recombine them.

The objective of your innovation is to find a better fit between your business and your processes, systems, products and services. An innovative solution is one that costs no more—it usually costs less—and makes innovative use of existing processes and technology. Innovation means looking at the problem in a different way to find the solutions that evade conventional requirements techniques.

"Part of the challenge of innovation is coming up with the problem to solve, not just its solution" — Scott Berkun.

Making you a (better) innovator

We cannot claim that this course will turn you into another Thomas Edison or Leonardo da Vinci. However, we can say that you will learn enough innovation techniques to generate better business solutions, ones that work more harmoniously in its business environment, and generate less change requests.

"We need creativity in order to break free from the temporary structures that have been set up by a particular sequence of experience." — Edward de Bono

Becoming more innovative is mainly down to changing the way you look at problems, and seeing solutions in unrelated fields. The techniques in this course are all things that you can do without embarrassment—to be creative it is not necessary to wear silly hats or sit on the floor of special rooms. Instead, practical techniques such as constraint removal are done by looking at the problem space in a different way, one that lets you see the assumed restrictions on solutions, and experimenting with what happens when you change or overcome the constraint.

This course gives you techniques for having practical, workable ideas. Guaranteed.

Who is this for?

The seminar is intended for product managers, business analysts, their clients and other stakeholders involved in gathering requirements for the new system or process. It is also suitable for others who should be innovators—those who have responsibility to ensure that their organisation's products, processes, services and systems are relevant and competitive.

"Suzanne Robertson of the Atlantic Systems Guild ran a Creativity Workshop for a joint British/French project to develop requirements for an airport departure management system; it was highly effective in capturing and exploring new ideas and in building the project team."

Why this course?

We don't play games. We get on with the business of teaching you practical innovation techniques, ones that you can put to work right away. The course is based on techniques that have been successful in the field—each technique has made a significant impact on an organisation's systems and processes. Your instructor has done this in the real world.

> *"Excellent course, very well run, with each section flowing well into the next. Provided the information I need to be able to apply effectively."* — John Rae, Senior Business Analyst, IAG.

The two days you spend with us will challenge you, and change the way you look at business problems and systems. This course is about using innovation to improve your business processes, your software systems, and the service or products you provide to your customers.

What will I learn?

Getting started — Introducing the idea that anyone can be innovative if they use the right thinking techniques and approaches.

Innovation grounding — We set out the fundamentals of innovation, and take a look forward to some of the techniques you will use. You are introduced to examples of innovative business practice and draw lessons from them.

Removing constraints — Constraints are restrictions imposed on the problem space. For example, you have to send an invoice to your customer, or you must approve expense claims before paying them. However, when closely examined, some constraints are able to be removed, or changed, with startlingly innovative results.

Innovation triggers — These are things that business analysts should pay attention to when innovating for new systems and processes. For example the Connectivity trigger means keeping your customers connected to your business through an "information umbilical cord"; the Participation trigger is about how you make your customers involve themselves in your business. We look at these and other innovation triggers.

Ideas brokers & recombination — Being an Ideas Broker means collecting processes, ideas and technology that can be combined in an innovative way to make a new service, product or system. Most of the raw material for innovation is available to you right now, it just needs to be seen with an innovative eye.

Storyboards and scenarios — Storyboards are a creative technique used to explore possible future scenarios by showing how the eventual user could interact with the system or product. Storyboards and scenarios are a particularly business-friendly way of illustrating your innovations.

Other innovation techniques — Having extra creativity tools in your toolbox is never wasted. We look at Combination, the simple idea of combining two things to make something better; Weakness into Strength, to take the weakest part of the process and turn it to an advantage; how to use Analogies to find an innovation by similarity; Brainstorming; Incubation; Prototyping and others.

Innovation and your organisation
Here in the final session we relate the course to your own workplace, and discuss how to apply these techniques in your work environment. We look at where in the development life-cycle it is most appropriate to innovate, as well as the organisational barriers to innovation, and how they can be overcome.

Beyond brainstorming

These are practical innovation techniques that have been used in many situations to provide new and exciting ways to solve problems. We teach the techniques by explaining them and then having you apply them in workshops to realistic problems. At all stages, we encourage you to discuss with your instructor how they can be applied to your own work.

"Overall, the course was very useful and had little overlap with other courses that I have attended."
— Norbert Raymond, Analysis Practice Lead, Westpac.

Your Instructor

James Robertson

James is a consultant, teacher, author and practitioner of innovation. He is co-author of the best-selling *Mastering the Requirements Process, Second Edition*. He also co-founded the *Volere* approach to requirements engineering. His most recent book is *Adrenaline Junkies and Template Zombies: Understanding Patterns of Project Behavior,* written with fellow principals of The Atlantic Systems Guild (Tom DeMarco, Peter Hruschka, Tim Lister, Steve McMenamin, Suzanne Robertson), a London and New York think tank known for its research into new systems engineering techniques. James travels between his home in London, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, where his requirements seminars play to packed houses. In his first career he was an architect. He would like his next career to allow more time for fly fishing.

"The Innovation seminar run by James Robertson for 100 of our clients was a resounding success. The hands on workshops brought the subject to life. Participants were delighted with the focus on immediately integrating innovation into their own roles and organisations." — Chris Rupp, General Manager SOPHIST GmbH, Germany