How to Out-Innovate the Competition

Featuring Stephen Shapiro,
Author of Best Practices Are Stupid: 40 Ways to Out-Innovate the Competition
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Introduction and Materials Required

Introduction

Welcome to the Linkage broadcast, *How to Out-Innovate the Competition*. This broadcast from Linkage’s Thought Leader Series features Stephen Shapiro, President and CEO of 24/7Innovation and author of innovation philosophy books like *24/7 Innovation* and *The Little Book of BIG Innovation Ideas*. As Mr. Shapiro shares in his latest book, *Best Practices Are Stupid: 40 Ways to Out-Innovate the Competition*, “the key to innovating *successfully* involves innovating *efficiently,*” and that is why it’s time to let go of best practices and out-innovate the competition.

One concept stands out as a constant for today’s successful organizations — innovation. The need to be innovative is no longer a strategy that you can implement part-time. Innovation can no longer be spearheaded by one person or one team. Innovation must be part of your organization’s culture if you want to gain the advantage that keeps you ahead of everyone else. You may even be thinking that your organization already has an innovation mind-set. But, what if everything you’re doing to build a culture of innovation is wrong?

Innovation, like any meaningful strategy, only works when applied in an effective and results-oriented way. In *Best Practices Are Stupid: 40 Ways to Out-Innovate the Competition*, Mr. Shapiro busts the many myths that surround innovation. His message is clear: innovation isn’t about the occasional new idea. Companies that are making a mark in today’s business environment make innovation a repeatable, sustainable, and profitable process. Your innovation efforts have to be focused and strategic in order to catapult your organization to the forefront of your target market. If you implement Mr. Shapiro’s strategies and techniques, soon your competition will be trying to catch up with you!

As Stephen Shapiro shares, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for innovation. His lessons are useful at an organizational level, at an individual level, or both. Your job, as a leader, is to use what works best for your unique situation. True innovators know that organizations who continue to rely on traditional innovation methods will ultimately fail. In today’s volatile and ever-changing business landscape you need an innovation strategy with a laser-focus that allows you to gain measurable results that positively impact the bottom line.

In this presentation, you will learn:

- Why you should hire people you don’t like. Bring the right mix of people to unleash your team’s full potential.
- To define challenges more clearly. If you ask better questions, you will get better answers.
- Why you don’t want to think outside the box. Instead of giving your employees a blank slate, provide them with well-defined parameters that will increase their creative output.
- Why failure is always an option. Looking at innovation as a series of experiments allows you to redefine failure and learn from your result.
These facilitator materials have been designed to support your organization’s participation in this broadcast with Stephen Shapiro. Use the materials before the broadcast to set the stage for the broadcast. Learn more about Mr. Shapiro, and what you can do to step away from the old models of innovation that are broken and inefficient, and move toward methods that produce results.

Mr. Shapiro will use the 90 minutes to provide some prepared material on the art of *How to Out-Innovate the Competition*, and what you can do to break out of the conventional innovation mold and create your own path to innovation success. Participants should use the materials during the broadcast to record their notes, ideas, questions, and insights. If you are viewing the broadcast live, you can submit participants’ questions directly to the speaker through the webcast viewing window, via email to leadership2012@linkageinc.com, or to follow the conversation online or to submit your questions/comments during a live broadcast using Twitter, please use the hash tag #LinkageInc.

Most importantly, use the materials after the broadcast to help reflect on ways to embrace the principles and implement the tools and techniques Mr. Shapiro outlines in his presentation on *How to Out-Innovate the Competition*. Apply the strategies to unlock your innovation potential and discover the key to the long-term growth you need to stay ahead of the competition.

This facilitator guide was developed to help facilitators make the most of the program with their audience or group. In this guide, you’ll find:

- Background material to help add richness to your discussions.
- Activities for a variety of group sizes and of varying leadership levels. Depending on your unique audience (and your own facilitation capabilities), you may wish to modify these activities to better meet the needs of your group(s).
- Facilitation tips and techniques that you may find useful as you prepare to facilitate the pre- and post-broadcast discussions.

Use this guide and its activities as they fit your needs. Before preparing for the broadcast, you will want to quickly preview this entire guide to determine how best to leverage the activities for your audience. Because this guide was designed for a variety of facilitation scenarios, it will likely include activities that may not exactly fit yours.

**Conventions**

The following conventions are used throughout this guide:

- **Materials** that are required will be listed in the left column. Directions are provided in the middle column. Space for your notes is provided on the right side of the page.
- **SAY**: The text following this direction is most effective if read verbatim. Note that most of the directions encourage you to use your own style and/or words.
- **ASK**: The text following this direction will usually have a question to ask, as well as suggested answers. The answers are provided to help you lead the discussion and/or to ensure that the critical points are drawn out from the participants.
Materials: Pre-Broadcast Activities

The following materials are required for the pre-broadcast presentation; you may wish to prepare the flip charts ahead of time.

- Agenda.
- Flip chart markers.
- Tape to post the flip chart pages.
- Flip chart stand and paper.
- Participant Guide (one set per participant).
- Name cards (optional depending on your setting).
- Pencils.

Instructions for receiving the broadcast or Extended View will be provided separately.

Materials: Broadcast Presentation

Other than the materials listed previously for the pre-broadcast presentation, there are no additional materials required for this section if you are viewing the live broadcast. If you are viewing by Extended View via the Web, you will need the username and password as well as a web connection to access the broadcast.

Materials: Post-Broadcast Activities (Optional)

In addition to the materials listed previously, the following materials are required for the post-broadcast activities:

- Extra flip chart paper.
- Extra flip chart markers.
- Extra tape to post the flip chart pages.
Pre-Broadcast Activities
20-70 minutes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISUALS/MATERIALS</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
<td>15-30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>WELCOME</strong> participants to the special broadcast in the Linkage <em>Thought Leader Series</em> featuring Stephen Shapiro.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>INTRODUCE</strong> yourself. WRITE your name and title on a flip chart.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong> the focus of the pre-broadcast program. <strong>SAY:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Participating in today’s broadcast gives you the opportunity to hear from Stephen Shapiro, President and CEO of 24/7 Innovation, author, and one of today’s foremost authorities on innovation culture, collaboration, and open innovation.</td>
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<td>• Mr. Shapiro will share insights from his latest book, <em>Best Practices Are Stupid: 40 Ways to Out-Innovate the Competition</em>.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stephen Shapiro’s counterintuitive, yet proven innovation strategies, will boost innovation in your organization; making it repeatable, sustainable, and the core of your company's culture.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• As Mr. Shapiro will share, “Innovation is the key to long-term growth. Although many companies are enamored with utilizing best practices…duplicating what others are already doing relegates you to a continuous game of catch-up. Following in the footsteps of others is the fastest way to irrelevancy. Instead, create your own path.”</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>REVIEW</strong> the Program Agenda (as a slide, flip chart, or handout):</td>
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<td>• Pre-Broadcast Activities (optional).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Presentation/Q&amp;A with Stephen Shapiro (90 minutes).</td>
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<td>• Post-Broadcast Activities (optional).</td>
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Note: The timing can be expanded or limited depending on how much discussion you wish to allow.
5. **EXPLAIN** the workshop ground rules:
   - Be committed to learning.
   - Be a critical thinker.
   - Listen actively and without passing judgment.
   - Respect and uphold confidentiality.

6. **EXPLAIN** general “housekeeping” (breaks, facility information, etc.).

7. **REFER** participants to the flip chart with the statement: “Innovation emerges when people are allowed to give free rein to their creative talents within a set of simple rules.” – Stephen Shapiro.

**DIRECT** participants to introduce themselves to a person they do not know and to ask the other participant the following questions:

- What is your name?
- What is your job/title?
- Why do so many leaders’ attempts to boost innovation fall short? How can a leader in today’s super-competitive environment take innovation from a reactive process to the heart of their organization’s culture?

8. **ASK** participants to share their thoughts while keeping the tone of the conversation focused on these points:

- Innovation that is reactionary and discrete will not take your organization to the next level. To be successful, innovation must be repeatable, sustainable, and efficient.

- “Innovation is not about new products, new processes, new services, new business models, or even new ideas. It is about staying one step ahead of your competition.”

- Be deliberate with innovation efforts. Understand your business and what will improve it. Harness the energies of the organization and innovate in a more focused manner.

9. **TRANSITION** to Optional Pre-Broadcast Reading and Activity or to Question Generation.

Note: These introductory activities are not in the participant guide.
How to Out-Innovate the Competition

Stephen Shapiro

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| Optional: Pre-Broadcast Reading | 10-20 minutes | Note: Depending on the time you have for pre-broadcast discussion, you may wish to provide the participant guide ahead of time and ask participants to complete this reading before coming to the broadcast.

1. The following reading will help prepare participants more fully for the broadcast. The reading provides an overview of Stephen Shapiro’s powerful approach to innovation. Only companies that successfully and repeatedly innovate will survive and thrive in today’s volatile marketplace.

   - **READ** from the participant guide: Innovation is tricky. Today’s organizations cannot afford to ignore the importance of standing out in a crowd, of pushing the limits to stay ahead of the competition. Innovators are the leaders that people talk about, the leaders that make a difference and take their organizations from today into tomorrow — before anyone else does. The tricky part of innovation is avoiding the old strategies that many organizations employ around innovation. As the saying goes, “if you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.” It’s safe to say that organizations that out-innovate their competition don’t accept the status quo. They push the limits and find new ways to deliver what people want — not just once, but again and again. Innovation is not something you implement as a reaction to what others are doing; innovation must be an integral part of your organization’s culture. In *Best Practices Are Stupid*, Stephen Shapiro will teach you that “nonstop innovation is attainable and vital to building a high-performing team, improving the bottom line, and staying ahead of the pack.”

Implementing a culture of innovation requires change — and change is hard. Creating an innovation culture requires you to change not only the way you think about innovation, but change how you innovate. It’s a tough challenge, but Stephen Shapiro’s strategies, concepts, and techniques will enable you to take your innovation efforts to the next level. You can’t survive in today’s challenging business environment unless you commit to consistently staying ahead of the competition through innovation. What are you
How to Out-Innovate the Competition

Stephen Shapiro

The Linkage Thought Leader Series 8

waiting for? It’s time to breathe new life into your innovation thinking and practice. It’s time to be the company that everyone else is talking about!

2. **ASK** participants to read (or review, if you provided this material as pre-course work) the Introduction and Basic Premise on pages 8 – 11 in their participant guide.

3. After a few minutes, ask participants to share their thoughts about innovating the way they innovate. Lead the discussion making the following points:
   - Too many organizations continue to cling to the “tried and true” beliefs about innovation that is neither innovative, nor effective. To stay relevant, organizations need to shift their mindset around innovation.
   - Innovation is about the ability to constantly change and adapt. To stay ahead of the competition, you must view innovation as a continuous, never-ending process — not a one-time event.
   - You can’t expect your people to be creative and innovative thinkers until you bring innovation to the forefront of your business.
   - Five key components are required for successful long-term innovation: process, strategy, measures, people, and technology.

4. **SUMMARIZE** key points from the discussion, pointing out that as a leader you are responsible for driving your innovation efforts in a way that is successful and efficient. Stephen Shapiro’s lessons and strategies will teach you how to step outside the norm and out-innovate your competition.

5. **TRANSITION** to Optional Pre-Broadcast Activity or to Question Generation.

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<td>Optional: Pre-Broadcast Activity</td>
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1. The following activity will provide participants with food for thought as they prepare for the broadcast:
   - **READ** from the participant guide: As Stephen
Shapiro points out, there is no one-size-fits-all innovation strategy for today’s organizations. If you are paying any attention to companies who successfully stay ahead of the competition, you know that having an innovation strategy is critical — and you most likely have your own. If you are like most organizations, your innovation efforts may be more of a process and less of a culture. You define a problem or challenge, assemble a team to research the issue, and then use any one of many different methods to come up with an innovative solution. But how often does this lead to successful innovation? It’s time to look at your organization and ask: “How do you approach innovation?”

The self-assessment that follows will help you determine your current approach to innovation. By taking an honest look at where you are at, you can apply the tips and techniques from Stephen Shapiro’s presentation to boost innovation in your organization and make it repeatable, sustainable, and a profitable process at the heart of your company’s culture.

2. **ASK** participants to come up with a list of problems, challenges, or opportunities their organization is facing. Use the space provided to develop a list. They should use as much or as little detail as necessary to help set the stage for their innovation strategy. For this activity, only focus on one item from the list, but the remaining items may be used in additional activities in the guide as well as something to build on when they return to the job.

3. Using the list just created, **INSTRUCT** participants to select one problem, challenge, or opportunity that they would like to focus on. Using this choice, answer the following questions around how they would approach an innovative solution to this problem, challenge, or opportunity:

   - **Q#1:** What are you currently doing to address this problem/challenge/opportunity?
   - **Q#2:** What approach would you take to innovate a solution to this problem/challenge/opportunity?
**Q#3**: What approach would you take to generate ideas? Who would be involved, and to what extent? How would you capture any ideas?

**Q#4**: What measurements would you employ around your innovation efforts? What kinds of measures would you use? How would you measure less tangible values, such as adaptability?

**Q#5**: How do you relate innovation to overall business outcomes and results?

4. Give participants sufficient time to complete or review the activity.

5. After about 15 minutes call attention back to yourself; ask participants to share their thoughts on the activity. Lead the discussion while making the following points:

- Even the most well-intentioned leaders — in their attempts to boost innovation — are inadvertently destroying it.

- How often do your innovation efforts lead to successful innovation? It may be time to innovate the way you innovate.

- Too often organizations stay locked in conventional ways to approach innovation. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for innovation, but staying the course is not the answer. It’s time to change how you think about innovation, and find new ways to innovate that will keep you ahead of the competition.

6. **TRANSITION** to Question Generation.

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<th><strong>Question Generation</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>NOTE</strong>: This section is only applicable if you are viewing the broadcast live.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>EXPLAIN</strong> that in this broadcast Stephen Shapiro will spend a portion of the broadcast responding to questions. As such, it is critical that participants submit questions. Encourage participants to make the most of the opportunity to interact with the presenter.</td>
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| 3. **ASK** participants to identify (in pairs or small groups) at
least three questions they have for Mr. Shapiro.

4. **RECORD** questions on a flip chart. Identify any redundancies and generate a list of questions for submission.

**NOTE:** As facilitator, you should collect these questions and submit them to Linkage on behalf of your group using one of the following methods:

- Webcast viewing window.
- Email: leadership2012@linkageinc.com.
- Twitter: Use the hash tag #LinkageInc.

5. Encourage participants to submit any additional questions they would like answered either before or during the broadcast. They can write their questions on the second to last page of their participant guide and provide the page to you during the broadcast.

6. **TRANSITION** to **Introduction to Broadcast.**
Broadcast
95 minutes

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<td>Introduction to Broadcast</td>
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1. **INTRODUCE** the title of the broadcast, *How to Out-Innovate the Competition*, featuring Stephen Shapiro, President and CEO of 24/7 Innovation, author, and one of today’s foremost authorities on innovation culture, collaboration, and open innovation.

2. **EXPLAIN** the focus and highlights of the program:
   - Mr. Shapiro will use his knowledge and experience to show us:
     - Why you should hire people you don’t like. Bring the right mix of people to unleash your team’s full potential.
     - How to define challenges more clearly. If you ask better questions, you will get better answers.
     - Why you don’t want to think outside the box. Instead of giving your employees a blank slate, provide them with well-defined parameters that will increase their creative output.
     - Why failure is always an option. Looking at innovation as a series of experiments allows you to redefine failure and learn from your result.

3. **EXPLAIN** methods for being an active participant:
   - Listen actively to Mr. Shapiro’s presentation. As you listen to his key points, think about how you can apply the skills and strategies shared to innovate your innovation efforts.
   - Should you wish to take notes, there is space provided beginning on page 17 in your participant guide.

Broadcast Presentation and Q&A 90 minutes

1. **MONITOR** the room throughout the broadcast.

   Make note of themes that you want to emphasize or
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<td>reinforce after the broadcast.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. When the broadcast has ended, remind participants to complete and submit the Broadcast Evaluation Form found on the last page of their guide.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. <strong>TRANSITION</strong> to <strong>Post-Broadcast Activities</strong>.</td>
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### Post-Broadcast Activities (Optional)

**Suggested:** 2 hours 55 min. – 3 hours 35 min.

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<td>Introduction to Post-Broadcast Program</td>
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1. **EXPLAIN** that the Post-Broadcast Program will allow participants to:
   - Review the highlights of the broadcast.
   - Discuss the key learning and applications with colleagues.
   - Use the learning from the broadcast for personal action planning.

**Activity 1: Self-Reflection and Discussion**

1. This activity is general in nature and relevant for most audiences.
2. **DIRECT** participants to turn to their guides.
3. **ASK** participants to share their key learning and take-aways from the broadcast and Q&A portion by asking the following questions, and discussing as appropriate:

   **Q#1:** What in Stephen Shapiro’s presentation struck a special chord with you? Why?

   **Q#2:** Reflect on what you have learned about how to innovate *successfully* and *efficiently*. How will you apply Mr. Shapiro’s strategies to improve the innovation efforts of your organization? What steps can you take to create a culture of innovation that keeps your organization ahead of the competition?

   **Q#3:** In today’s ultra-competitive business environment, the ability to innovate is critical. Innovation can’t be a one-time event or even a capability. Today’s successful companies live in an environment where innovation is a system — an environment where innovation is embedded in everything they do. As Stephen Shapiro explains, “With embedded innovation, people innovate to deal not only with ‘problems or challenges’ that are presented to them but with everything they do. They
continuous, even radically, improve their products, processes, and organization. This creates exponential and ongoing value.” What will you do to implement innovation as a system in your organization?

**Q#4:** What are YOUR leadership lessons? As a leader, you have the ability to shape how your people embrace innovation. What can you do to encourage your people to think creatively? How can you lead in a way that motivates people to go beyond their jobs and do the unexpected? Be specific!

**Teaching Points:**

- It’s time to innovate innovation. It is not enough to merely run the same old brainstorming exercises or use the tired, uninspiring suggestion box. Use Stephen Shapiro’s alternative strategies to better fuel constructive creativity.

- There are times when you don’t want to re-invent, but following someone else’s best practice may be the wrong move. Best practices are not useful for defining your differentiating capabilities.

- Innovation is not about playing catch-up. It’s about finding “new and creative ways of staying ahead of the competition.”

4. Go to the next chosen activity or the Final Activity: Action Planning.
Activity 2: Expertise is the Enemy of Innovation

1. This activity is general in nature and relevant for most audiences.
2. **READ** the information on page 25 in the participant guide:

   Imagine you are called to jury duty for a high-profile case that — due to media attention — you are reasonably familiar with. Take it a step further and imagine you are extremely familiar with the circumstances, even an expert on all facets of the case. Could you be objective and put your expertise aside to make a decision? Could you consider the information and think about it in a different way? You might think so, but the reality is when you demonstrate expertise in any area, you are less likely to be able to think about it in a different way. This natural tendency is the enemy of innovation.

   This may sound like a bleak prediction for you and your organization, but as Stephen Shapiro points out, there is a way to overcome this obstacle: open innovation. “Open innovation is an innovation process where you engage people outside your organization to help solve challenges”…and there are great examples of this in the business world. Let’s take a look.

3. **ASK** participants to read the excerpt from *Best Practices Are Stupid* on pages 25 – 26 in their participant guide. Give participants sufficient time to complete the reading.

4. **READ** the activity instructions on page 27 in the participant guide:

   Consider the problems, challenges, and opportunities you face as an organization. How often have you invited people from outside your area of expertise into the conversation around solutions? Is it typically your strategy to include only those who are familiar with your issues and share the same background and experience? As the examples shared by Mr. Shapiro illustrate, expertise can be the enemy of innovation. It’s time to turn your innovation strategy on its head.
For this activity, return to your list of problems, challenges, and opportunities from your Pre-Broadcast Activity on page 12. Choose another that you would like to work on and write it in the space provided.

Working with other participants, form groups with people from different disciplines, backgrounds, and expertise. In the event the larger group is made up of people from the same discipline, background, and expertise, attempt to work with others that you do not normally work with on a regular basis. You want your group to be as diverse as possible for this activity.

Share your issue with the others in your group and solicit their ideas for a solution. Use their expertise in a different line of business or area of expertise to inspire some breakthrough thinking. Capture the ideas shared in the space provided on pages 27 and 28 as you work together to innovate a solution to your problem/challenge/opportunity. Take turns until every member of the group has had the opportunity to share their problem/challenge/opportunity and gather input from the diverse members of the group.

5. **DIRECT** participants to begin the activity on pages 27 and 28 in the participant guide.

6. **ASK** participants to share their thoughts on the insights revealed in this activity. **DIRECT** the discussion to include at least one insight from each group.

7. Go to the next chosen activity or the Final Activity: Action Planning.
Activity 3: Hire People You Don’t Like

1. This activity is designed for leaders and executives.

2. **READ** the information on page 29 in the participant guide:

   Stephen Shapiro’s tip #26 may have you scratching your head — hire people you don’t like? It might sound like a recipe for conflict and stalemate. In reality, in situations involving high-difficulty tasks, teams consisting of diverse personalities and styles consistently perform more effectively. As Mr. Shapiro tells us, “This makes sense if you really think about it. Innovation demands a diversity of perspectives, disciplines and personalities. Having a group of people who think the same way only produces more of the same.” Having people on your team who get along well may seem easier, but it will rarely lead to new and innovative ideas.”

   We naturally gravitate toward people who are like us. Think about the people you work with who have your same style and like to do things the way you do. They make you feel comfortable, tend to agree with you, and working together is effortless. But do they challenge you? Do they push you to think differently? Probably not — and therein lies the issue. When you work with a team of people who are similar in background, expertise, or personality, your innovation efforts will suffer.

   In order to create a culture of innovation within your organization, you need to assess the innovative style of each member of your team. Are you working with a team of people who all think the way you do? Do they agree quickly and get things done, yet rarely think creatively or find innovation breakthroughs? If the answer is yes, it’s time to challenge yourself to hire people you don’t like; people who can help you become more effective and innovative. Remember Stephen Shapiro’s insightful mantra, “The person you like the least, is the person you need most.”

   On the following pages you will find an **Innovation Style Quiz** for you to take to help assess your innovation style.

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Note: If you choose to use Stephen Shapiro’s **Personality Poker®** in lieu of the **Innovation Style Quiz**, you will need to go to [http://personalitypokerbook.com/](http://personalitypokerbook.com/) for instructions on purchasing the materials and facilitating the activity.
3. For an even more accurate assessment of yourself and your team, Stephen Shapiro has developed the *Personality Poker®* card game. As Mr. Shapiro shares, “The key to high performing innovation teams is to make sure that each individual is ‘playing to their strong suit’ while the organization as a whole is ‘playing with a full deck.’ You need to make sure you have all of the innovation styles fully addressed in your organization.”

*Personality Poker®* is based on the principles that enable teams to achieve a more consistent and repeatable performance. *Personality Poker®* can help you ensure that:

- Everyone is in their optimal position.
- Everyone understands that their role is crucial.

Everyone knows the exact function they need to perform.

Take an in-depth look at the individuals on your team and play *Personality Poker®* to spur innovation and optimize growth in your organization. Use specially designed cards and Stephen Shapiro’s cutting-edge techniques to identify people’s personality “hand,” which reveals where they really belong in their organization, and how they can maximize their contribution. For more information visit [http://personalitypokerbook.com/](http://personalitypokerbook.com/).

4. **READ** the activity instructions on page 30 in the participant guide:

In this activity, you will take the *Innovation Style Quiz* to help you identify the right people for your innovation team. The assessment and score key will help you quickly assess your innovation style. For each row, rank the words from the most like you to least like you, where 1 represents most like you and 4 represents least like you. For example, if you are very adventurous but not goal-oriented, you might rank the first row: intellectual 3, adventurous 1, goal-oriented 4, cheerleader 2.

An additional *Innovation Style Quiz* can be found on page 32 of your guide. You can make copies as needed for each person on your team. The snapshot you create of your team’s innovation style will help you determine if your team has the right mix of innovation.
5. **DIRECT** participants to take the Innovation Style Quiz and determine their results using the information in the participant guide on page 31.

To score, add the columns. The column with the *lowest* score is your innovation style.

- If column A is the lowest, you are analytical and are driven by facts.
- If column B is the lowest, you like to generate creative ideas and engage in new experiences.
- If column C is the lowest, you prefer plans and actions.
- If column D is the lowest, your focus is on people.

Those from columns A and C are often called “left-brained” and are typically “dot” thinkers (looking at the attributes of a problem and generating solutions from there). They are great at challenging ideas and helping to drive toward solutions that are implementable and will add value. The risk is that these individuals can stifle innovation by overchallenging during the divergent stages of innovation.

Those from columns B and D are often referred to as “right-brained” and are typically “line” thinkers, as they are masterful at connecting dots (innovative thinking comes from making connections). They are great at developing new concepts and engaging others in the process. The risk is that they may get lost in creativity for creativity’s sake, or worry too much about how others will feel, at the expense of powerful business solutions.

The innovation process goes from A to B to C to D. And, although every style plays some role in each step, each style is best suited to one step in particular:

- **Define the Challenge** — this is best performed by the data-driven A’s.
- **Generate Solutions** — the B’s can help develop creative solutions.
- **Plan and Execute** — the methodical and goal-oriented C’s will ensure progress.
- *Engage the Hearts and Minds* — the relationship-oriented D’s can rally employees and customers so that everyone buys in and implements the solutions.

Remember, each style is critical to the innovation process.

6. Give participant sufficient time to complete the activity.

**Teaching Points:**

- There is richness in diversity. Diverse perspectives, disciplines, and personalities can lead to new and innovative ideas.

- Research shows that in situations involving highdifficulty tasks, diverse groups consistently performed more effectively.

- Hiring people who share a lot in common may make for a more comfortable working environment, but it is not conducive to innovation. As Stephen Shapiro shares, “this penchant for working with like-minded peers makes for smoother operational efficiency; it is stunting organizations’ ability to effectively innovate.” When you hire people you don’t like…“the breakthroughs come faster. The results more valuable.”

7. Go to the next chosen activity or the Final Activity: Action Planning.
Activity 4: The Goldilocks Principle  30-40 minutes

1. This activity is general in nature and relevant for most audiences.

2. **READ** the information on page 33 in the participant guide:

   One of the most memorable characters from our childhood is Goldilocks — a young girl who stumbles upon an empty house belonging to a family of bears. After eating a bowl of porridge, she decides to go to sleep but struggles to find a bed that is “just right.” Organizations face a similar problem when defining the challenges they face. Stephen Shapiro tells us that when framing challenges, you must adhere to the Goldilocks Principle. Creative problem solving is at its best when challenges aren’t too big or too small. Instead, challenges need to be framed in a way that maximizes the likelihood of finding a solution. Perhaps entering a home inhabited by bears was risky, but Goldilocks slept soundly when she got it just right. As Stephen Shapiro shares, “If we adopt this same rigor when defining challenges, we too just might sleep a bit better at night, knowing a workable solution is just around the corner. So, remember: Goldilocks is a great way to innovate.”

3. **ASK** participants to read Stephen Shapiro’s article, *Ask a Different Question, Get a Different Answer* on pages 33 and 34 in their participant guide.

4. **EXPLAIN** the activity:

   For this activity, you will revisit your list of problems, challenges, and opportunities from the Pre-Broadcast Activity on page 12 of this guide. Choose one problem/challenge/opportunity from the list that you would like to work on and write it in the space provided.

   Now, imagine you are getting ready to meet with your team to present this issue and find a viable solution. How will you frame the problem/challenge/opportunity in a way that maximizes the likelihood of finding a workable solution? Remember, it can’t be too big (broad and abstract) or too small (overly specific). It needs to be “just right,” meaning more focused, more
practical, and more valuable. A critical step in trying to find solutions is to clearly define the challenge.

The questions you ask will also impact the solution. What questions could you ask to drive the conversation towards a viable solution? Knowing the right questions to ask — and asking them in the right way — takes effort and discipline. Too often individuals and organizations don’t invest the time framing better questions that lead to better information.

Consider these useful factors when framing questions:

- What are the leverage points for finding a solution? What is the one thing that has the greatest impact in delivering the desired result?

- Does your question imply a solution? What are you really looking to achieve? Frame the question so you consider other approaches.

- Does your question require a particular expertise? If so, re-frame it so that other domains of expertise offer solutions.

- Is your question overly complex? Find ways to deconstruct it into smaller and more solvable parts.

- Have you researched the facts your question involves? Too many questions are formulated on conjecture rather than on real data.

As you prepare to map out your approach, the following example from Best Practices Are Stupid clearly illustrates the importance of framing an issue and asking questions that are “just right.”

When a cell phone company wanted to improve customer service, instead of simply asking people how to improve the customer experience, the company analyzed call data and found that there were ten primary reasons why people dialed in to the call center. One of the most common reasons had to do with a specific billing issue. The solution? It was concluded that the best way to improve customer service in the call center had nothing to do with the call center itself. Instead, it involved a change in the tariffs associated with this particular issue. This one small change resulted in dramatically reduced call volumes and higher customer
satisfaction. The only way that this solution could have been found was by asking a more specific question backed up by data.

Use the space below to prepare for the meeting with your team. Map out how you will frame and present the problem/challenge/opportunity you face. How will you frame the issue? What are some “just right” questions you can ask? Use the tips and techniques suggested by Stephen Shapiro to maximize your team’s ability to find an innovative solution to your problem, challenge, or opportunity.

5. Give participants sufficient time to complete the activity.

6. **ASK** participants to share their thoughts on the insights revealed in this activity.

7. Go to the next chosen activity or the Final Activity: Action Planning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 5: How Can You Make the Impossible Possible?</th>
<th>40-50 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This activity is general in nature and relevant for most audiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>READ</strong> the information on page 37 in the participant guide:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you think of some of the world’s most innovative companies — Apple, Google, Amazon — does the word constraints come to mind? Probably not. The words impossible, impractical, or quit wouldn’t make the list either. Today’s innovation giants don’t let the impossible stop them from believing they can make something happen. They don’t let constraints — real or imagined — stop their innovation efforts.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The reality is that in many organizations finite resources and adherence to the status quo inhibit innovation. Due to our fear of tough constraints and possible failure, we surrender and fail to push the limits of our creative abilities. When you don’t attempt to make the impossible possible, you never realize your true potential. As Stephen Shapiro tells us, it doesn’t have to be this way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>ASK</strong> participants to read the excerpt from <em>Best Practices Are Stupid</em> on pages 37 – 38 in their participant guide. Give participants sufficient time to complete the reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>READ</strong> the activity instructions on page 39 in the participant guide:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For this activity, form pairs or small groups. Revisit your list of problems, challenges, and opportunities from the Pre-Broadcast Activity on page 12 of your guide. Choose another problem/challenge/opportunity from the list that you would like to work on and write it in the space provided.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Using Stephen Shapiro’s simple steps, work together to make the impossible possible. Capture the ideas shared in the space provided on pages 39 and 40 as you work together to stretch your thinking, and make the possible out of the impossible. Take turns until every member of the group has had the opportunity to share their
problem/challenge/opportunity and practice applying Stephen Shapiro’s five simple steps. Make the jump to the impossible (point C) and work from there. You may find you end up at the possible (point B): an innovative solution that puts you ahead of the competition.

5. Give the pairs/groups sufficient time to complete the activity.

6. **ASK** participants to share their thoughts on the insights revealed in this activity. **DIRECT** the discussion to include at least one insight from each pair/group.

7. Go to the Final Activity: Action Planning.
### Final Activity: Action Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong> from page 41 in the participant guide:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now is the time to get moving. Everything in today’s broadcast supports the need to take action and start implementing the lessons shared. Picture yourself six months from now. You’re reflecting with a sense of pride and satisfaction on how you are finding innovative solutions to the challenges and opportunities facing your organization. You’ve applied the innovation strategies shared by Stephen Shapiro to be more focused and efficient in your innovation efforts. How will you continue to develop a culture of innovation within your organization? What long-term benefits will your organization achieve as you out-innovate your competition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Back to the present. With the above goal set for six months from now, what intermediary steps do you need to take to reach that goal? <strong>DIRECT</strong> participants to individually complete page 41 in their participant guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>DISCUSS</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Optional: <strong>ASK</strong> for volunteers to share examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Program Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Thank participants for investing this time to discover that innovation isn’t just about generating occasional new ideas; it’s about staying consistently one step ahead of the competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Tell them to use the lessons shared by Stephen Shapiro to transform their innovation efforts from a reactive process into a system where innovation is embedded in everything they do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Encourage participants to question how they approach innovation. As Mr. Shapiro shares, “Innovation is not random. In fact, it emerges best when there is a structure to nurture it.” Be the leader who creates a culture of innovation in your organization.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>