

Spreading Innovations

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Factors Affecting Spread: The Point of No Return

“The part of the diffusion curve from about 10 percent to 20 percent adoption is the key. After that, it is often impossible to stop further diffusion, even if you wanted to.”

Rogers, 1995

Factors Affecting Spread: Adopter Categories

1. Innovators (2.5%)
2. Early Adopters (13.5%) - The Key
3. Early Majority (34%)
4. Late Majority (34%)
5. “Laggards” (15%)

How to identify them?

- **Innovators:**
 - Loners
 - Social support group is out of state
 - A bit strange
 - Not a lot of influence on local others
- **Opinion Leaders/Early adopters:**
 - More educated and open to new things
 - Higher social status and respect
 - Run larger organizations and more resources
 - Careful risk takers
 - High social connectedness

How to identify them?

- **Early Majority:**
 - Interact frequently with peers (important)
 - Don't hold leadership positions
 - Less resources than late majority (less to lose)
 - More empathy
 - Think long and hard before adopting
- **Late Majority:**
 - Skeptical; wait till most others have adopted
 - They join because of peer pressure
 - Have more resources and more to lose
 - More dogmatic and less empathetic

How to identify them

- “Laggards”:
 - Protectors of the status quo
 - Distrust science
 - Listen to them (to understand flaws)
 - Have little opinion leadership
 - Isolated from peers except laggards
 - Won’t adopt if uncertainty exists
 - Don’t try to convince them

Target Groups

- Who needs to be convinced?
- Need different strategy and tactics for each.
- But each group still has opinion leaders, etc.

Enlisting Crusaders

- Identify “Early Adopter/Opinion Leader” **Sites**
- Identify the Early Adopter/Opinion **Leaders** at those sites
 - Who is willing to try this?
 - Who has passion for this cause?
- Begin by sending them articles, audiotapes, books, etc.

Enlisting Crusaders (cont.)

- Need a *change agent*; one with a lot in common w target group.
- Support the Opinion Leaders and Early Adopters
- After the initial site or two, bring several up at once: Create a “support group”

Communication Channels: Its personal contact!

*The opinion leaders (“Early Adopters”)
talk one-on-one with
other Early Adopters,
and Early Majority people.*

Factors affecting spread:

Ability to reinvent.

What are the few key non-negotiable elements of the innovation?

The key ingredients.

Those are what need to be pushed!

Factors Affecting Spread:

- Relative Advantage
- Compatibility
- Observability
- Complexity
- Trialability

Relative Advantages

- Benefits to both customers and staff
 - *Immediately* obvious to both!
 - Data and *stories*
 - Emphasize the cost of *not* doing it!
- **What is the business case?**
- Change surrounding systems; make it in their best interest.

Compatibility

- Minimize disrupting the current System.
- Can it become part of the current system?
- Look for the compatible aspects.
- Adopt the more compatible elements first.
- Make it compatible (e.g. use their report format)

Observability

- *Demonstrations:*
 - Develop a CD
 - Create a website
 - Do a web or pod cast
- *Site-visits*
- Help them *pilot test* the innovation

Complexity

- Describe innovation simply: no jargon
- Start small; have them try one part.
- Rapid cycle test?
- Keep measurement simple.
- Collect stories as well as data.
- Display results: graphs (quantitative); video (qualitative)
- No large binders

Trialability

- Call your projects “pilots” so each site recognizes they can reinvent.
- Mentor those trying the innovation: bring them to an earlier pilot site to learn.
- Set up “hands-on” experience.