

# The New Idea Adoption Game



SUPPLEJACK™

# What does this tool do for you?

This tool helps you understand what your idea means to potential customers.

A new idea is exciting because it opens us to better ways to do things, to greater benefits, and perhaps to completely new opportunities. Learning what others can value about your idea helps you understand **why** they want it, **what** it needs to do for them and **how** it must work.

## When should you use this tool?

Use this tool before you start a project to help you see the full value of your idea.

## What problem does it address?

The problem with new ideas is typically that others don't see the idea as you do!

The real problem is **what the idea means** to different people. Early adopters see a new idea as a potential adventure, while late adopters see it as a risk.

Understanding what an idea means then shows you how to develop it into a product or service with higher value and lower risk.

This tool helps you express your idea and focus your development project on an idea that means higher value and lower risk to you and your future customers.

# What do you need to know?

## About new ideas

An new idea differs from what's available in your market or industry at the present time. New ideas spread in two ways:

- People talk and write about them, and the ideas evolve as the language people use to express them evolves. This is called 'diffusion'.
- People apply them to products and services, and again, the ideas evolve as this happens. This is called 'adoption'.

Diffusion can happens very quickly, so it's common for people to talk about adopting for a long time before they actually do it.

## About diffusion and adoption

The delay to adopting defines the type of adopter,

1. Inventors – who first had the idea
2. Early adopters – the first, small, adventurous group of trend-setters
3. Early majority – the first, mass-market group of trend followers
4. Late majority – the later, mass-market group of trend followers
5. Laggards – the most risk-averse and least trend-sensitive

# What do you do?

## ① Take on a role

Each person is given an adopter role (see role cards). Each then plays their role as realistically as they can given your market!

## ② Diffuse and negotiate

The game starts with the inventor describing a new idea in a simple phrase or sentence. He/ she then circulates until he meets an Early Adopter. They negotiate the meaning of the idea until the Early Adopter can happily adopt. This is repeated until the Inventor has negotiated with all the Early Adopters, the Early Adopters with all the Early Majority, and so on. The game ends when the Laggards have adopted.

## ③ Adopt

Players can discuss the idea with anyone. But a player can only adopt by negotiating with a player in the adopter group before. They negotiate over the idea's meaning as they interpret it (defined by their roles). Adoption happens when they both accept the would-be adopter's new meaning.

## ④ Review

After each game, players summarise what the idea (once negotiated) meant for their role. Each role then presents their version in turn. Then all step out of their roles and discuss the implications for developing the idea further.

# How might you do it?

## Working on each step

- Give each player their role card and a negotiation card (see overleaf)
- Have 1 - 3 Inventors. Have about twice as many Early and Late Majority players (in similar numbers) as Early Adopters and Laggards (in similar numbers).
- Briefly document the results.

## Give yourself time

Allow 30+ minutes for each game, and a similar time for discussing implications.

## Work together

If you can, include a range of people in the game and ask them to draw on their expertise during the discussion afterwards.

## Use everyone's ideas

Make sure everyone can talk freely and that would-be adopters can negotiate easily with others who have adopted. Encourage gentle challenging and debate during negotiation.

## Relax and have fun

Do relax and have fun. The best results come when people get fully into their roles!

1

## Inventor

- Be an enthusiastic visionary
- Negotiate with Early Adopters only
- Negotiate to keep the idea as close to your version as possible
- When all Early Adopters have adopted, your role is over

2

## Early Adopter

- Be an energetic, adventurous risk-taker and trend-setter
- Negotiate with Innovators and Early Majority only
- Negotiate to make the idea smarter and more exciting and fun
- When all Early Majority players have adopted, your role is over

3

## Early Majority

- Be an image-conscious trend-follower
- Negotiate Early Adopters and Late Majority only
- Negotiate to make the idea more fashionable and notice-worthy
- When all Late Majority players have adopted, your role is over

4

## Late Majority

- Be the conservative trend-diluter
- Negotiate the idea with Early Majority and Laggards only
- Negotiate to make the idea very basic, convenient and practical.
- When all Laggards have adopted, your role is over

5

## Laggard

- Be the trend-killer – resist change
- Negotiate with Late Majority only
- Negotiate to make the idea the same as what you have already
- When you have adopted, your role is over. When all Laggards have adopted, the game is over.

## How to negotiate

Here's a guide to start you negotiating

1. Already adopted: 'In my, view the idea is ...'
2. Would-be adopter: 'If the idea was changed to be ..., would you accept that?'
3. Already adopted:
  - 'Yes, I accept that.' OR
  - 'No, but I would accept that if the change was...'

# What is an example of the results?

A housing products company had some new ideas it wanted to explore.

We set up a group of twenty people, mixing staff with trusted customers and suppliers.

We then ran three New Idea Adoption games, one for each idea. After each game we discussed the implications for product development and summarised comments on a whiteboard.

All three ideas changed dramatically from the Inventor (our client) through Early Adopters to the Early Majority. Each grew simpler from then on.

During discussion it was clear that two of the ideas could not be progressed in any practical form.

As a result, the company prioritised one idea for potential development, knowing the key meanings, language and features it needed to attract Early Adopters on launch.

The game also showed the likely marketing and product features to build it over the longer term (to attract and hold later adopter groups).

## A gentle disclaimer

This example is based on work facilitated by Supplejack and outlines successful use of a tool. We want you to enjoy similar success.

We are thankful you've downloaded this tool. But we cannot take account of your specific needs, your context nor the ways you apply it. As a result, Supplejack cannot accept liability for your use of this tool or its effects.

We do recommend you use this tool with respect, competence and imagination. If you are unsure how it might best work, we suggest you hold a practice session with staff. You might also contract a professional facilitator or contact Supplejack directly.

Please help us by providing feedback about this tool. You can do this by completing this brief, 6-question Survey ([http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Supplejack\\_Tools](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Supplejack_Tools)) or by contacting us directly.

Thanks for your interest!

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