

MAXIMIZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FRONT END OF INNOVATION A MORE HUMAN APPROACH TO INNOVATION RESEARCH

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StandPoint[®]
A MORE HUMAN APPROACH TO INNOVATION RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Successful innovation of consumer products and services relies on the ideas and feedback of real people. Each person has unique skills and abilities that can be leveraged in the innovation process from understanding needs and pain points, brainstorming, and building product concepts.

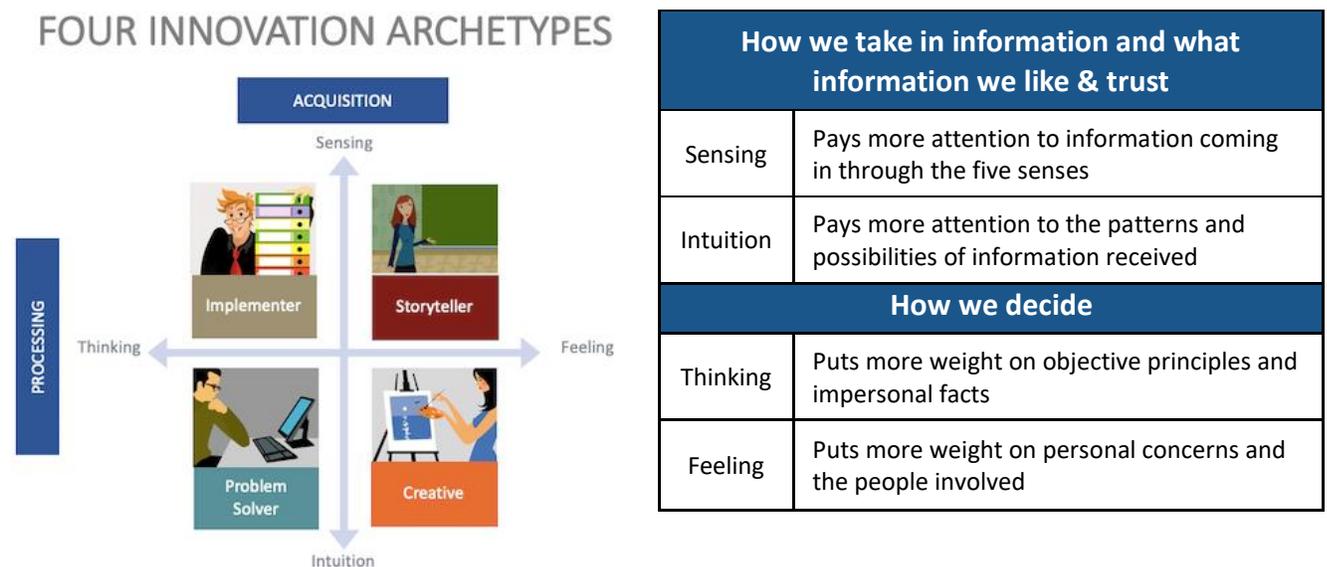
Particularly important are innovation archetypes. Understanding each archetype and how to leverage them during an innovation assignment can significantly improve engagement, achieve better insights, and deliver better results.

THE FOUR ARECHTYPES

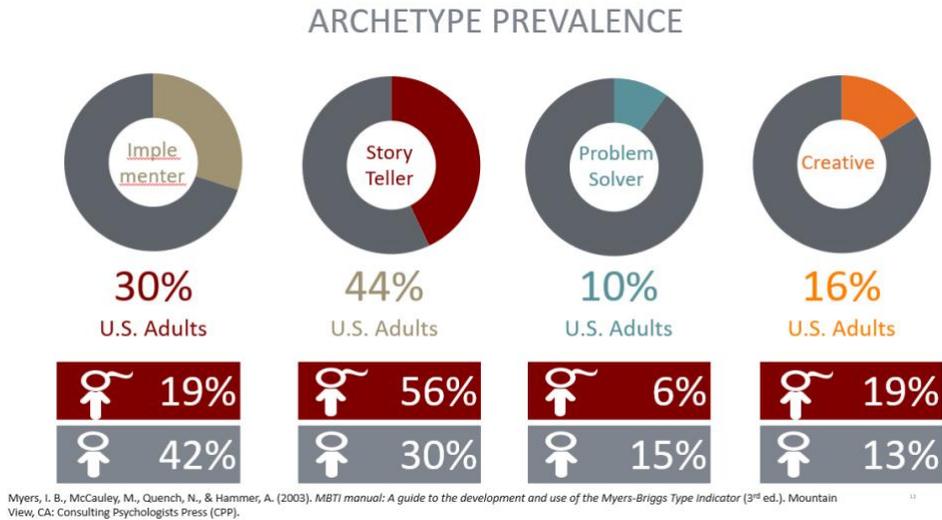
The science of archetypes is based on the work of Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who founded analytical psychology. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of extraversion and introversion and behavioral archetypes. His work has been influential in psychiatry and in the study of religion, philosophy, archeology, anthropology, literature, and related fields. He was a prolific writer; many of his works were not published until after his death.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a popular psychometric instrument, was developed from Jung's theory of psychological types. There are several adaptations of the MBTI including our assessment, TeamBuilder. (<http://teambuilder standpointgroup.com>)

TeamBuilder classifies each person into one of four archetypes: Implementer, Storyteller, Problem Solver, and Creative. Archetypes are determined by determining two things: how you acquire information (senses vs. intuition) and how you process information (impersonal vs. personal considerations).



In the U.S., Storytellers are the dominant archetype because nearly 6 in 10 women share that characteristic. Among men, Implementers are the dominant archetype. Combined, Problem Solvers and Creatives make up around a quarter of the U.S. adult population.



Key differences between the archetypes are summarized below.

THE FOUR TEAMBUILDER™ ARCHETYPES

<h4>IMPLEMENTER</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detail – oriented ○ Linear thinker ○ Organized ○ Fact-driven 	<h4>STORYTELLER</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sociable ○ Experiential ○ Emotional ○ Motivated to help others solve problems ○ Skilled at facilitation, mediation and articulation 
<h4>PROBLEM SOLVER</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analytical ○ Synthesizer of information ○ Logical ○ Seeker of alternate solutions ○ Thrives on complex challenges 	<h4>CREATIVE</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Insightful ○ Imaginative ○ Global thinker ○ Makes new connections easily ○ Naturally curious ○ Skilled at generating new solutions 

Each archetype also has specific needs in a research engagement. Meeting these needs is critical to maximizing overall effectiveness.

NEEDS IN TEAMS	IMPLEMENTERS	STORYTELLER	CREATIVE	PROBLEM SOLVERS
Warmth and Rapport				
Structure / Agenda				
Interaction / Group Work				
Fast Pace				
Think Time				
Flexibility				
Clear Directions				
Context / Big Picture				
Sensory Involvement / Tangible				
Right / Wrong Answers				
Aesthetics of Materials				
Personal Connection				

And, there are specific activities where each archetype excels. This information is used to ensure the activities we use during a research engagement are optimal.

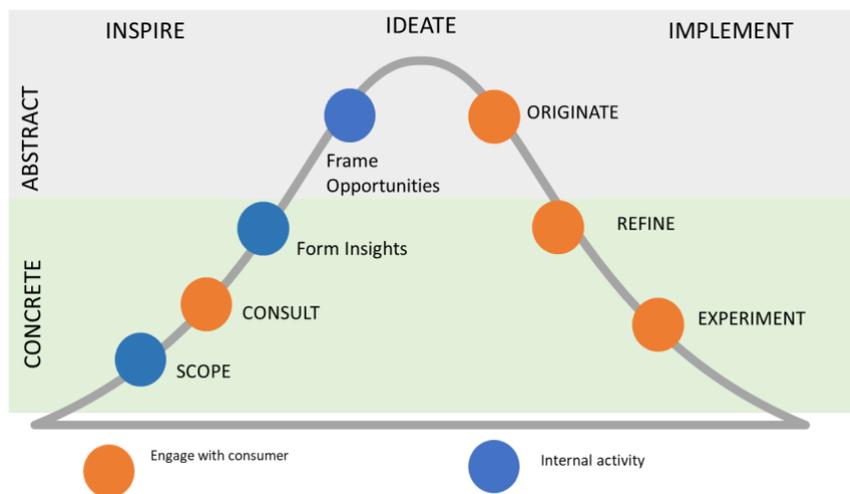
Implementer	Storyteller	Problem Solver	Creative
Apply	Connect	Analyze	Associate
Carry Out	Empathize	Brainstorm Causes	Brainstorm Solutions / Ideas
Categorize	Encourage	Classify	Capture Gist (Headline)
Compile	Establish Rapport	Compare	Envision
Demonstrate	Express Feelings	Contrast	Generate
Describe Precisely	Facilitate Interaction	Critique	Imagine
Distinguish	Help / Guide	Debate	Interpret Meaning
Fix	Include	Evaluate	Read Subtle Cues in Body Language and Expression
Implement	Make Peace	Forecast	See the Big Picture
Know	Mitigate	Judge	Think Metaphorically
Manage	Paraphrase	Plan	Visualize
Monitor	Offer Support	Research	
Observe in Detail	Respond	Outline	
Orchestrate	Read People	Synthesize	
Report	Share	Strategize	
Sequence	Work in Groups		

ARCHETYPES IN THE FEI

When working with research participants in Front End of Innovation (FEI) assignments, we use our TeamBuilder assessment to assign individuals to the best task.

To explain this, let's first examine a typical framework for managing the FEI.

The first step is proper scoping—that is, understanding what is inbounds and out-of-bounds. Parameters such as the industry of study, research participants, learning objectives, and more are determined in advance.



An integral part of innovation is understanding customer needs and pain points, which is done during the CONSULT phase (as indicated on the above graphic.) This is a very concrete exercise that entails interviews, focus groups, and ethnographies. A skilled interviewer can guide study participants to articulate what's on their mind and uncover the underlying beliefs and motivations that drive a person's behavior. Sometimes, even the most skilled interviewers find this difficult to achieve. Not everyone is good at digging this deep.

During the CONSULT phase, we show a strong preference for the Storyteller because they are hard-wired to better express individual needs and pain points than their counterparts. Because they make up 44% of the adult population, they are relatively easy to enroll in studies.

After the CONSULT phase, the project team uses the feedback to generate the insights and frame the opportunities. These are increasingly abstract activities and often done without the help of the consumer.

Frequently, the consumer is re-engaged for ideation. Referred to as ORIGINATE in the above graphic, ideation is designed to generate new solutions for the consumer needs and pain points discovered in the CONSULT phase. In these sessions, we strive to limit participation to the Creatives and Problem Solvers, as they are generative thinkers and quite comfortable with the abstract exercise. The rhythm

they establish during ideation can be amazing to watch: The Creative usually lobs the “wild idea” and the Problem Solver responds with “and here’s how we can do this.”

During concept building and refinement (REFINE), the Problem Solver and the Implementer are at their best. The Problem Solver is very good at bridging the gap between the abstract and concrete. When working together, the Implementer is adept at taking the original ideas from the Problem Solver and working through the concrete details especially the size, the shape, and the precise language to describe the concept.

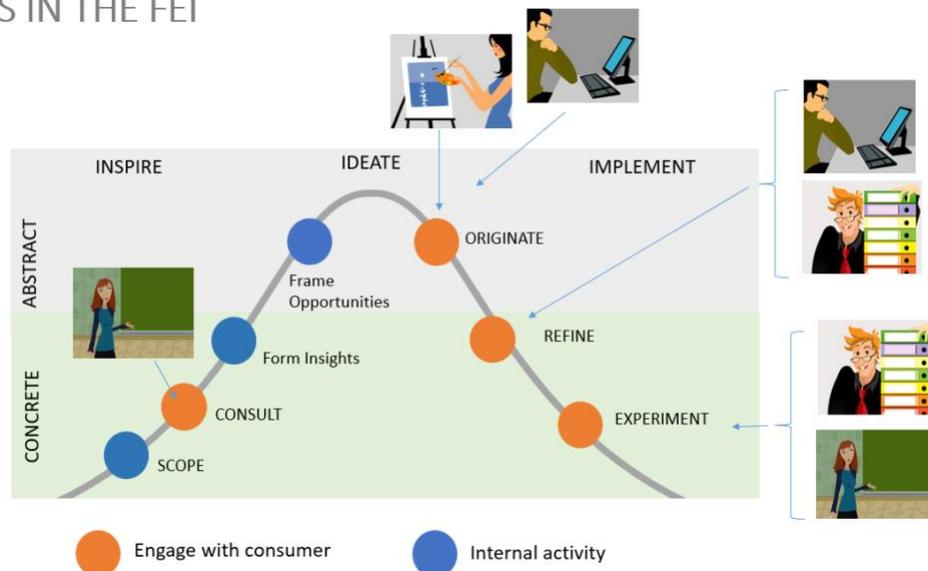
The last phase (EXPERIMENT) involves testing a minimally viable product or prototype. As a completely concrete exercise, we involve the Implementers and Storytellers. Because they largely take in information via their senses, they are the best equipped to articulate how a physical product will (or will not) incorporate into their lives.

For most organizations the last step often involves concept testing. While this approach is good at narrowing options, the approach’s lack of concreteness is its biggest failing. If you do the math, nearly three-quarters of the adult population are highly-sensory thinkers and testing written concepts is a purely abstract exercise. The argument can be made that in traditional concept testing we are asking a lot of people to comprehend a potential new solution that is counter to how they prefer to take in information.

As a result, our rule of thumb is to make the last step in the FEI as concrete as possible. In our view, having people interact with a 3D representation (even if it is made of pipe cleaners and popsicle sticks) in tandem with a written concept is a far better practice.

As discussed throughout, when we engage consumers throughout a FEI assignment, we show preference for particular archetypes because they are the best for the task at hand. In the following graphic, we overlap where to incorporate each archetype.

SKILLS IN THE FEI



THE PEOPLE PARADOX

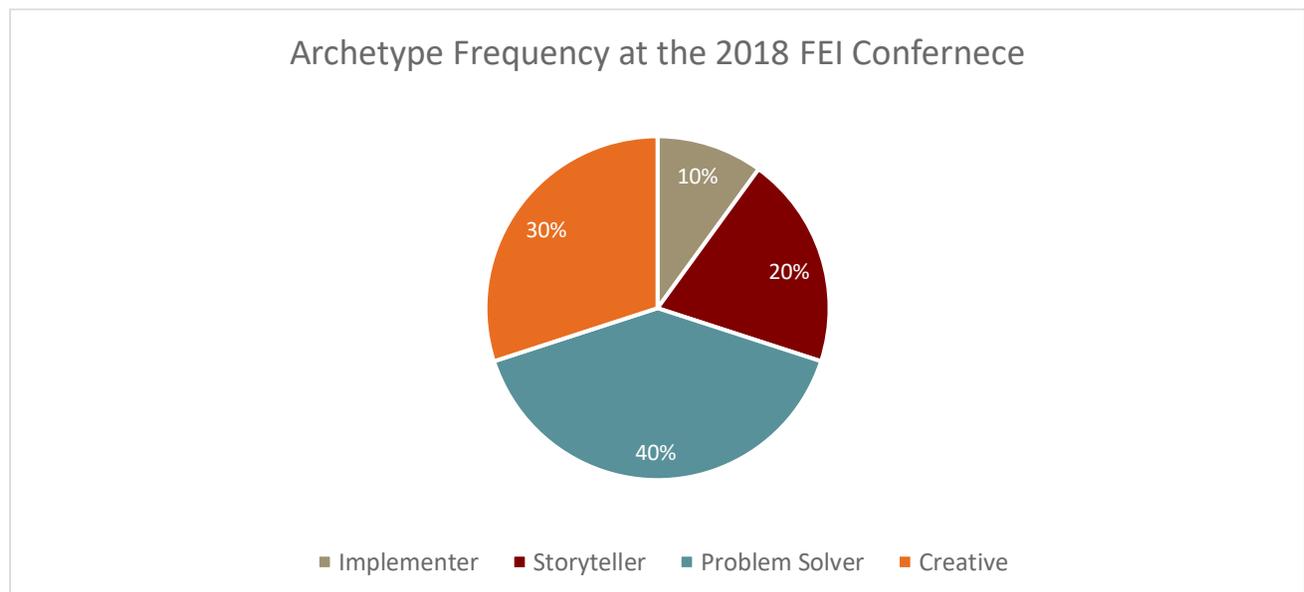
The discovery of insights requires an interaction between researcher and the research participant. This interaction can be done numerous ways such as interviews, focus groups, ethnographies and more. While the methods matter, it is the mastery of three essential skills that makes for a great researcher: active listening, observation, and empathy. Among the “giver of feedback” or the study participant, the goal should be to enable people to tell better stories, be creative, or help with solving problems.



As discussed earlier, these skills don’t come naturally to everyone.

Interestingly, we find that most people in innovation, marketing, insights, and research and development skew very heavily toward Problem Solvers and Creatives.

Case in point: at the 2018 Front-End-of-Innovation Conference, we administered our archetype assessment tool, TeamBuilder, to 89 delegates. There, 70% were classified as Problem Solvers + Creatives. If you recall, 75% of the general population are just the opposite: Implementers + Storytellers.



Here's the paradox: the skills needed to be an effective "receiver of feedback" don't come naturally to Problem Solvers and Creatives! As a rule of thumb, these two highly-intuitive archetypes are the weakest at active listening, observation, and empathy. The skills we need among our "givers of feedback" such as problem solving, creativity, and storytelling are in short supply.

This paradox is the reason that careful consideration is required for the people we engage in the FEI. The primary goal is to match the best-equipped consumers to the task at hand. Secondly, the research team must have the requisite skills to be good listeners and good observers.

It takes the feedback of real people for maximizing the effectiveness of your FEI assignment. When you can, pick consumers who are going to be best for the assignment at hand. For example, the Storytellers are the best equipped to articulate needs and pain points.

While the Creative is highly-empathic, the environment must be right for them to share their great new ideas. Problem Solvers are great at putting the pieces of the puzzle together. Together, however, they are in short supply and scalable solutions are needed to ensure we engage these archetypes in the innovation process.

The Implementer is the person who keeps things real. Use them to give you honest and direct feedback on how something will (or will not) fit into their lives.

While your process for completing your next FEI is important, we recommend that you pay careful consideration to the people involved.

For more information on how to achieve a more human approach to innovation research:

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ABOUT KIP CREEL & STANDPOINT



KIP CREEL is the president and founder of StandPoint. Kip has chief responsibility for business development and methodology and is the firm's overall research supervisor. Prior to founding StandPoint in 2002, Kip spent 8 years at another Atlanta-based market research firm in positions of increasing responsibility, including Director of Research and Vice President.

Previously, Kip worked for a division of Merck Pharmaceuticals, and InfoQuest, a clinical research organization, in analytical roles.

Kip is a thought leader in insight-driven innovation and is on the faculty for Stage-Gate® International and teaches marketing management in an executive education program affiliated with Texas A&M University.

Kip holds a BS in Microbiology and Statistics and an MBA in Hospital Administration from The University of Florida.