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Beyond Features

How to listen to your customers and learn what they really need


Presentation at Agile 2009
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Innovation Games®: Innovation Through Understanding®

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We Want To Help You Realize

1. “Desirable features” depend on who uses the product and how they use it.
2. You need to be aware of the behavioral segments for your “users” so you can put features in context.
3. Big, expensive research isn’t the only way to find patterns; you can learn a lot by playing games and listening to people talk.



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How Are We Going to Do This?

- Know: Brief overview of the games
- Do: Play games
Discuss experience and results
- Have: These slides as a reference
www.innovationgames.com


<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1719437>

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About Lane Halley

- User Experience group at Liquidnet
 - Electronic trading for institutional investors
 - Product and service design
 - Internal and external tools
 - Integrated Agile/UX methods
- 20+ years in the SW development industry
 - Product Management, Marketing, Training, Account Management
 - Startups, application companies, web companies
 - Cooper Fellow (personas, Goal-Directed Design@)
 - www.cooper.com/journal
- Committed to Agile
 - Agile/UX workshops with Jeff Patton
 - Co-chair Agile 2009 UX stage




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About Luke Hohmann

- Founder/CEO of Enthiosys
 - Agile Product Management consulting
 - Customer needs, roadmaps, business model
 - Product management mentoring and training
- Agile product guy
 - VP Bus Dev (Aladdin), VP Eng &Product Dev't (Aurigin), VP Systems Eng (EDS Fleet Services)
 - Board of Agile Alliance
- Author, speaker, blogger
 - "Innovation Games"
 - "Beyond Software Architecture"
 - "Journey of the Software Professional"
 - agile PM blog at www.Enthiosys.com



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What Are Innovation Games®

Innovation Games® are **serious games** that solve a wide range of product strategy and management problems across the market lifecycle.

They can be played:

- with customers
- in-person or online
- within or across organizational units
- in single or multi-game formats



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What Makes Innovation Games® Unique?

- Relaxed, “collaboratively competitive” structure
 - encourages teamwork
 - Increases sharing of information
- Games utilize verbal, written, visual and non-verbal forms of communication which create rich, nuanced information.
- Strong foundations cognitive psychology & organizational behavior research.

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Organizing Innovation Games®

... then consider these games

These questions exist across the product-market lifecycle.

To understand...	Product Box	Buy a Feature	Me and My Shadow	Give Them A Hot Tub	Remember The Future	20/20 Vision	Speed Boat	Spider Web	Show And Tell	Start Your Day	The Apprentice	Prune The Product Tree
Customer Needs												
Requirements												
Product Usage												
Future Products												

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Forrester on Serious Games

Figure 1 Serious Games Span A Spectrum Of Uses

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Forrester Research has identified Enthiosys as a pioneer in serious gaming. “Serious gaming... can circumvent many of the traditional problems with product requirements, including collecting sufficient information across customers, partners, and internal stakeholders to make product decisions. Not only are the games relatively lightweight exercises, but they also use a lighter touch to resolve many debates over product decisions.”

Source: Forrester Research
It's Time To Take Games Seriously, Aug 19, 2008 Enthiosys 9

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Let's Play!

1. Organize into teams per your instructions
2. Play the games
3. Discuss: What did we learn?

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Discussion

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Innovation Game®: *Prune the Product Tree*



Goal:
Develop ideas for new products and services.

- Draw a graphic image of a tree to represent growth of the product/service.
- Add your current project portfolio / product roadmap as leaves and apples.
- 5 to 8 invited stakeholders are asked to shape the "growth" of your offering.
- Captures very rich information about perceptions of the future, timing of new concepts, and balance among delivered offerings

In-person

- Provides rich opportunity for "new" ideas

Online

- Captures data for sophisticated analysis of preferences

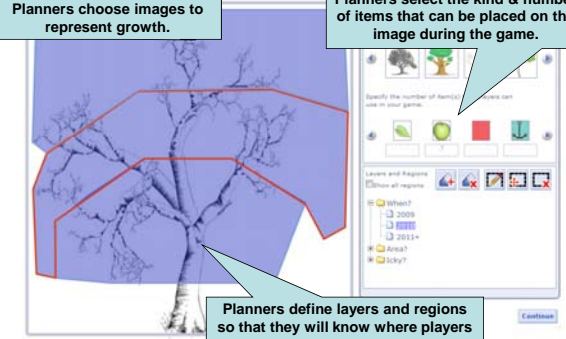
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Prune the Product Tree In Person



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Prune the Product Tree -- Preparing



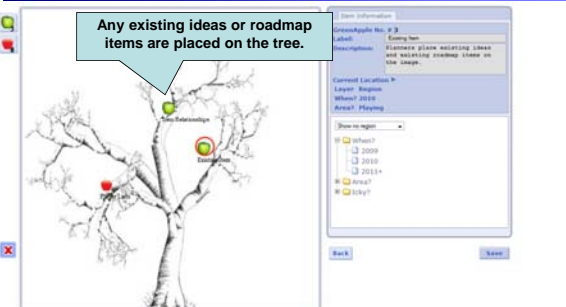
Planners choose images to represent growth.

Planners select the kind & number of items that can be placed on the image during the game.

Planners define layers and regions so that they will know where players are placing their ideas.

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Place Initial Items



Any existing ideas or roadmap items are placed on the tree.

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Many Ways to Play: Parties and Galas

	What is it?	Who plays?	Facilitated ?	Number of players?
Party	A "dinner party".	You select and control participants	Yes	5..8
Gala	An "open seating event"	Random participants based on a shared URL	No	9+

Dude, you sharded collaboration! (friend from Google)

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Thanks, please keep in touch!

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Reference:
A brief overview of all 12 games

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Product Box




Goal:
Identify the most exciting, sellable features.

Activity:
Ask your customers to imagine that they're selling your product at a tradeshow, retail outlet, or public market. Give them a few cardboard boxes and ask them to literally design a product box that they would buy. The box should have the key marketing slogans that they find interesting. When finished, pretend that you're a skeptical prospect and ask your customer to use their box to sell your product to you.

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Product Box In Action



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Speed Boat



Goal:
Identify what customers don't like (about your process or system).

Activity:
Draw a boat on a whiteboard or sheet of butcher paper. You'd like the boat to really move fast. Unfortunately, the boat has a few anchors holding it back. The boat is your system, and the features that your customers don't like are its anchors. Customers write what they don't like on an anchor. They can also estimate how much faster the boat would go when that anchor was cut. Estimates of speed are really estimates of pain.

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Start Your Day



Goal:
Understand how and when your customer uses your product.

Activity:
Ask your customer to describe the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly events that are related to their use of your product on pre-printed, poster-sized calendars or a simple timeline on poster paper. Ask them to describe events in time frames appropriate for your project. Special events that are unique to an industry or sector (like a conference), or days in which everything goes horribly wrong and they're looking for help. While they're doing this, be alert for how your product helps – or hinders – their day.

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Start Your Day In Action



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Buy a Feature




Goal:
Prioritize features.

Activity:
Create a list of features with an estimated cost. The cost can be development effort or actual cost you intend to charge for the feature. Customers buy features that they want.

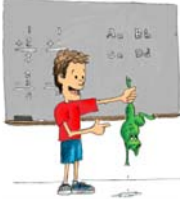
Features are priced high enough that no single customer can buy the features. This helps motivate customers to negotiate between themselves as to which features are most important. Observation of this negotiation provides great insight into what customers are willing to pay for.

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Show and Tell




Goal:
Identify the most important artifacts created by your product.


Activity:
Ask your customers to bring examples of artifacts created or modified by your product or service. Ask them to tell you why these artifacts are important, and when and how they're used.

Pay careful attention to anything that surprises you – artifacts you expected them to create or modify that they have ignored, artifacts that aren't used, or artifacts used in unexpected ways.

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Me and My Shadow




Goal:
Identify your customer's hidden needs.

Activity:
Shadow your customer while they use your product or service. Literally. Sit next to them and watch what they do. Periodically ask them "Why are you doing that?" and "What are you thinking?" Take along a camera or camcorder and record key activities. Ask for copies of important artifacts created or used by your customer while they are doing the work.

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Give Them A Hot Tub




Goal:
Use outrageous features to discover hidden breakthroughs.

Activity:
Write several features on note cards, one feature per card. Include several completely outrageous features. If you're making a portable MP3 player, try adding features like "heats coffee", "cracks concrete" or "conditions dog hair". If you're making a system that manages payroll, try adding features like "plans family reunions" or "refinishes wooden floors". If you're building an office building, add a hot tub in the lobby. Observe what happens with a customer uncovers one of these outrageous features.

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20/20 Vision




Goal:
Prioritize features.

Activity:
When you're getting fitted for glasses, your optometrist will often ask you to compare between two potential lenses by alternately showing each of them. Start by writing one feature each on large index cards. Shuffle the pile and put them face down. Take the first one from the top and put it on the wall. Take the next one and ask your customers if it is more or less important than the one on the wall. Place it above or below, depending on its relative importance. Repeat this with all of your feature cards.

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The Apprentice




Goal:
Create empathy for the customer experience.

Activity:
Ask your engineers and product developers to perform the "work" of the system that they are building. If they're building a new data entry system, have them do the work of the current data entry operators. If they're building workflow management software for furniture delivery people, have them deliver furniture. If they're building a system to analyze vehicle performance data, ask them to change the oil in the car. They gain knowledge of the customer experience and some degree of empathy for the real problem that your customer is trying to solve.

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Remember the Future



Goal:
Understand your customer's definition of success.

Activity:
Hand each of your customers a few pieces of paper. Ask them to imagine that it is sometime in the future and that they've been using your product almost continuously between now and that future date (month, year, whatever). Then ask them to write down exactly what your product will have done to make them happy or successful or rich or safe or secure or art – choose what works best for your product. Key point – ask "What will the system have done?" not "What should the system do?"


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**Reference:
Example Innovation Game Projects**

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Case Study: Wyse Technologies


Innovation Game(s): Spider Web **Team:** 1 Facilitator, 5 Observers

Problem/Opportunity: Wyse was seeking new and creative ways to interact and gather feedback from their customers during their semi-annual customer advisory board meetings.

Engagement: Enthiosys was contracted to help design and facilitate an interactive session using appropriate Innovation Game techniques that would deliver the type of product information being sought by senior management. Working closely with the Wyse team Enthiosys was able to help select the appropriate Innovation Game that would produce the desired result and provided recommendations regarding event planning, preparation and materials needed to facilitate the session. On the day of the event, an Enthiosys consultant facilitated the session after which the consultant provided suggestions to the team for how best to capture and process the feedback and results that were produced.

Results: The client received a wealth of rich, useful feedback that enabled them to quickly make key strategic and product level decisions and also provided them with additional information that could be leveraged for future product planning, development and marketing purposes.

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Case Study: Qualcomm (QWBS)

Innovation Game(s): Spider Web, Product Box, Start Your Day

Team: 1 Facilitator / Multiple Qualcomm observers

Problem/Opportunity: Lacked voice of the customer research programs

Engagement(s): Enthiosys has worked with Qualcomm to design and facilitate several Innovation Game sessions at industry conferences and internal customer meetings. During these sessions we've used a number of games to gain insights regarding issues such as marketing, requirements management and corporate strategy. Initially Enthiosys worked closely with their event and product teams to help select the appropriate Games, provide event planning recommendations, support event preparation and conduct post event summary and analyses. Qualcomm has since been able to take over much of the planning and post processing activities while still using Enthiosys for Game selection, customization and facilitation.

Results: The use of Innovation Games has led to numerous enhancements to existing products, the discovery and adoption of new marketing messages and most recently the creation of a new software platform that is considered a key component of their long term product strategy.

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Case Study: Aladdin Knowledge Systems



Innovation Game(s): Speed Boat, Buy a Feature

Team: 1 Facilitator / Multiple Aladdin observers

Problem/Opportunity: Required customer input to product roadmaps

Engagement(s): Starting in December of 2005 Enthiosys has worked with Aladdin to design and facilitate several Innovation Game sessions as part of their quarterly Security Council meetings. Enthiosys has worked closely with Aladdin's event and product teams to help select the appropriate Games, provide event planning recommendations, facilitate the games and conduct post event summary and analyses. To date we've conducted two Innovation Game sessions with a continued commitment to use Innovation Games through the rest of 2006.

Results: Based on the feedback Aladdin received from the first Innovation Game session in December, they've taken action on two new initiatives;

1. The creation of a developer portal
2. A series of educational programs to address customer's complaints about a lack of information on how to use their product.

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