

Note: This is the text-only version of this week's lecture.

All media (i.e. videos, flash presentations, and PowerPoints) and learning activities (i.e. assigned readings, assignments, and discussions) are accessible only through the online course.

Week 4: User Research and User-Centered Design, Branding Innovation/Renovation and Channel Innovation

Week 4 Overview

Log in to the course to view video and alternative version.

Click the hyperlink below for a transcript of the video.

[Video Transcript](#)

Week 4 Introduction and Objectives

Successful new product or service innovation is the exception and not the norm. Part of the reason for the failure of new product or service innovation is the lack of a clear understanding of users' needs. In this lesson we will examine the importance of user research and user-centered design and their roles in ensuring new product or service success. We will also examine the importance of leveraging product platforms in meeting the needs of a variety of customers in existing and/or new markets.

Learning Objectives

After completing this week, you should be able to:

1. Explain the importance of user research and how to conduct it.
2. List the elements involved in product concept development, including user-centered research.
3. Recognize the appropriate use and application of product platforms and architecture, and how innovative companies leverage these concepts to gain new customers and/or reach new markets.

Week 4 Learning Activities

Learning Activity	Description	Due Date	Points/Weight
Reading 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the PDFs of Chapters 8 and 10 of the Crane textbook and Chapters 4,5, and 7 in the Meyer text. Read Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in the Meyer/Crane text. Article on the Innovation in Services Brand Innovation Slides Channel Innovation Slides 	Complete by end of Day 2	~
Lesson 1	User Research	Complete by end of Day 3	~
Lesson 2	User Research and Concept Development	Complete by end of Day 4	~
Lesson 3	Innovation in Services	Complete by end of Day 4	~
Case Study	Examine the 3M's Greptile Grip Technology case and answer the questions provided.	Complete by end of Day 7	10
Discussion 1	"Customer Immersion"	Post by end of Day 3, Respond by end of Day 5	5

Note: All assignments are to be submitted through the **Assignments** area of the course. Similarly, all discussions can be accessed in the **Discussions** area.

Week 4 Reading 1

- Read the PDFs of Chapters 8 and 10 of the Crane textbook. Access these chapters by clicking the links below:
- [Chapter 8](#)
- [Chapter 10](#)

Chapter 8 of the Crane text provides an overview of the marketing research process, including the successful use of qualitative research, including ethnography when planning and developing new innovative products and services. Chapter 10 provides an overview of the new product development process, including how to improve the success rates of new product or service innovations.

- Read Chapters 4, 5 and 7 of the Meyer textbook.
- Read Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in the Meyer/Crane text.
- After reading these chapters, please read [the article on the Innovation in Services](#) that deals with services innovation.
- [Brand Innovation Slides](#)
- [Channel Innovation Slides](#)

User Research

User research is critical when attempting to identify and evaluate opportunities for innovation. This presentation provides a good overview of the types of research methods available to you and provides examples of how good user research led to successful innovation.

Audio for this presentation will begin automatically; ensure that your speakers are turned on and the volume is adjusted. Navigate the presentation using the Next and Previous buttons.

Log in to the course to view presentation and alternative version.

Click the hyperlink below for the above presentation in PowerPoint format.

[User Research](#)

Click the hyperlink below for a transcript of this presentation.

[Transcript](#)

After this presentation, we are going to move on to test your understanding and application of the materials you have read in this week's lesson by having you complete the following case study.

User Research and Concept Development

This presentation provides a thick, rich description of how Honda used creative user research that led directly to the development of its innovative vehicle, the Honda Element. Notice how Honda immersed itself with its customers to develop the vehicle concept as well as how the research drove the design and manufacturing of the vehicle.

Audio for this presentation will begin automatically; ensure that your speakers are turned on and the volume is adjusted. Navigate the presentation using the Next and Previous buttons.

Log in to the course to view presentation and alternative version.

Click the hyperlink below for the above presentation in PowerPoint format.

[User Research and Concept Development](#)

Click the hyperlink below for a transcript of this presentation.

[Transcript](#)

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Innovation in Services (Page 1 of 2)

Many of you work in services companies, meaning you do not produce physical products but rather create and deliver intangible services to your customers. Some of these services may be tech-based. The following article provides a good overview of services innovation and the use of customer "readiness" research. More and more often, services firms are turning to lead users to help them better develop services that really meet the service customers' needs.

Click the hyperlink below to view the related article.

[Developing successful technology-based services: the issue of identifying and involving innovative users](#)

In addition to this article, the following page features a presentation that discusses innovation in services.

Innovation in Services (Page 2 of 2)

While new physical products are categorized in various ways in your readings, ways to categorize new services can be relatively ignored. This presentation shows how new services can be categorized in terms of their innovativeness. Importantly, they demonstrate that totally new services can create entirely new markets and this type of innovation can be the most profitable for the service firm.

Audio for this presentation will begin automatically; ensure that your speakers are turned on and the volume is adjusted. Navigate the presentation using the Next and Previous buttons.

Log in to the course to view presentation and alternative version.

Click the hyperlink below for the above presentation in PowerPoint format.

[Innovation in Services](#)

Click the hyperlink below for a transcript of this presentation.

[Transcript](#)

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Final Project Reminder

This is a reminder that the Enterprise Growth Plan Project is due by the end of next week. You should be nearing completion of the project at this point. Don't forget to access the Final Project Discussion for any last-minute guidance and suggestions.

Refer back to the Enterprise Growth Plan Project Overview in the course overview for more information on the project.

Week 4 Case Study: 3M's Greptile Grip Technology Case (Submit by end of Day 7) Point Value: 10

This case study will challenge you to apply what you have learned about understanding user needs, product concept development, user-centered design, and the use of product platforms and architecture to reach new customers and new markets. In this case you will explore 3M's Greptile Grip Technology.

Follow the instructions in the presentation below to begin viewing the case.

[3M's Greptile Grip Technology Flash Presentation](#)

Click the hyperlink below for the text version of the above case.

[3M's Greptile Grip Technology Case](#)

Case Questions

1. What other applications do you envision for the Greptile technology *within* the sports and leisure market? (5 points)
2. What new market applications (outside of sports and leisure) do you envision for the Greptile grip technology? Justify why you think these new market applications are warranted. (5 points)

Submission Instructions

- Compose your answers to the case question as a **MS Word document (Arial, 11 pt, 1.5 spacing)**. Your submission must be **2 to 3 pages** in length.

Write and submit your case study response via the Turnitin drop box located in the Assignments area of the course.

Week 4 Discussion 1: Customer Immersion

Post by Day 3

Respond by Day 5

Point Value: 5

Discuss the importance of customer immersion or "spending a day in the life of a customer" as it pertains to developing successful innovation solutions for such customers.

1. Limit your answer to 500 words.
2. Respond to at least two posts of your classmates, evaluating their responses to promote active discussion.

Week 4 Summary

In these lessons we have discussed the important role user research plays in the innovation game. Honda, for example, used very creative user research (user-centered) to design its new Element automobile. The Honda Element example demonstrates the need to engage the customer or potential customer and dive deep in terms of understanding both the customers' perceived and latent needs early in the product concept development stage. This user research is then used by part of the user-centered design process. We also saw how Moen used very creative ethnography to ensure its new Revolution showerhead would be a winner in the marketplace.

Successful new product or service innovation, sadly, is still the exception and not the rule. We often create new products and services and hope a market will materialize. Remember the discussion question in Week One about "building a better mousetrap?" Unfortunately, maybe the customer does not want a better mousetrap; maybe they do not want mice in the first place? It is imperative to partner with the customer to create effective new products and services. And, this works in most cases. However, for truly radical or disruptive innovations, the existing customer may be of little help. The concept may be beyond their imagination or the customers cannot articulate their needs for such innovation. Yet, firms that can create truly new innovation may develop entirely new markets. Therefore, one has to know when to partner with the customer and when to move forward without much initial assistance from the customer, depending on the nature of the innovation.

Also, innovative firms do not simply think in terms of single or isolated new products. They tend to look at ways to leverage product platforms and architectures. In other words, they build into the new concepts a variety of possible customers or markets to serve. Again, look at 3M's Greptile Grip technology. There is a built-in platform here that enables 3M to move beyond simple sports gloves.

In the end, many firms place their hopes for enterprise growth behind new products or services, as opposed to other available options. But, it is not easy to achieve enterprise growth by focusing single-mindedly on new products or services only. However, if new products or services are part of the portfolio of enterprise growth options, chances of success are improved through creative user research and user-centered design efforts.