

## Review: Innovation Tools for Change Agents 5-day training class

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As change management evolves, there is increasing evidence that world-class companies view improvement and innovation as mutually-supportive techniques for business development. It would seem to be wholly logical that a skillset which improves processes can also be applied to creating them, and vice versa.

Accordingly, onesixsigma.com attended BMG's **Innovation Tools for Change Agents** 5 day-class, which is designed for Six Sigma and Lean practitioners who want to augment their process improvement skills with process and product creation knowledge. Unlike "creativity" courses that focus only on idea generation and "design" courses that focus only on refining existing ideas, this Innovation course aims to teach students a complete four-step roadmap that takes them from problem identification through idea creation and on to implementation.

There was a good mix of practitioners and deployment leaders from the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, France, and Belgium present. The course was extremely interactive; simulations, break-out sessions, and student-led "teach backs" were part of the daily routine on each of the five days. As a capstone exercise students were broken into groups to work on two large innovation case studies, which included defining both the growth opportunities and innovation strategy for a company, as well as diving into some product, process, and business model innovations that could help the company achieve their organic growth targets and dominate their market places.

The course followed BMG's structured innovation methodology, *D4*, which comprises the phases of *Define, Discover, Develop* and *Demonstrate*. As a roadmap, *D4* helps practitioners identify unmet customer needs, generate ideas to fulfil those needs, analyse the most promising solutions, and pilot and test the end product/process. The result is that the participants are taught a solid, repeatable and predictable process for innovating new products, processes and business models.

During the course students learned techniques that would enable them look at a problem in nine different ways. *Random Stimulus* is a lateral thinking technique used to overcome psychological inertia and help innovation team generate out of the box thinking.

Other unique course topics included: *Area and Purpose Focus, Outcome Measures, KAI (Kirton-Adaption Innovation), Ideal Final Result, Resolving Contradictions, Imaginary Brainstorming, Word Picture Association, TILMAG, Six Thinking Hats, Morphological Matrix, Piloting and the TRIZ concepts of Ideal Final Result*.

This invigorating course is ideal for individuals and businesses who are looking to supplement an improvement skill set with tools for innovation.