

innov8rs

# The Innovator's Handbook

The Best & Latest in Corporate Innovation

2025

# Back to Basics

## **Now the dust of the innovation-labs-closing-spree is settling, and beyond the current hype of AI... what is truly, really, fundamentally our role as innovation function?**

It's again been an eventful year for most corporate innovation teams, in so many ways. From the many conversations we've had with our members over the last month, it's become clear that as innovation function, we are more than ever expected to deliver tangible value at the shortest term possible.

One might say, nothing new... hasn't that always been our mandate? But still, there's a renewed sense of focus, of clarity, and of urgency. This requires us to go back to the basics of innovation management.

**What is the value we can and should provide to our organizations?** Whether that's growth, transformation, change... What might be the best way to define innovation and sharpen our focus in the current context?

**What's the most effective way to deliver that value?** Yes, AI can help optimize our processes... but those processes should be solid in the first place. Too many initiatives still don't make it big enough to matter. What might be the best way to structure and "do" innovation?

**How to measure and showcase the value we create?** How come we're still struggling to get leadership buy-in and support from key functions, to do our work? We still have a long way to go to build confidence and credibility... How might we engage our stakeholders differently throughout the innovation process to show progress?

You'll find answers to these questions and more, much more, in the 2025 edition of *The Innovator's Handbook*. As always, we've captured takeaways from the many online and in-person sessions and conversations we've hosted over the last twelve months.

We've also added summaries of some of the best content from the web, and we're featuring a handful of members looking back at 2024, and forward to 2025.

Some chapters may validate you're on the right track. Others might offer you different ways to achieve objectives. And some might spark a fundamental re-think of your approach.

In any case, you will realize that other innovators are often facing similar challenges and fighting similar battles. That's why everything we do at Innov8rs is driven by our belief that it's crucial for any innovation professional to learn from and collaborate with peers from other companies and industries.

We hope the book will be helpful for you in achieving your 2025 objectives. For ongoing and personal support, consider joining our community, our learning programs and/or our conferences. More info on the following pages. Enjoy the read!



**Hans Balmaekers**  
Innov8rs.co  
hans@innov8rs.co

# Table of Contents

## 13 Leadership, Strategy & Organization

14 AI Is Eating the World: Time to Innovate for an AI-First World

16 How to Better Align Innovation with Strategy

19 Building Breakthrough Innovation Capabilities: A Framework for Strategic Innovation

22 The Illusion of Innovation: Why Innovation Fails and What We Can Do About It

25 Why Corporate Leaders Need a Mindset Shift for Growth

27 It Takes a Village to Innovate

30 Could Your Next Billion-Dollar Idea Be Stalled by Your Own Bureaucracy?

32 Stuck With Creating Growth Outside of the Core?

35 The 2025 Top Trends in Corporate Innovation

38 The Why, What, and How of an Innovation Management System (IMS)

43 The Case for ISO in Innovation

46 Crafting a Focused Growth Strategy

48 Innovating Smarter, Not Harder

50 Navigating Innovation: How Top Companies Structure Their Innovation Efforts

52 Innovation Within Reach: Balancing Growth and Cost Discipline in Times of Uncertainty

54 Can't Innovate Without a Mandate

59 The Emerging and Evolving Role of the Chief Innovation Officer

62 Back to Basics: From Rugby Fields to Value Creation in Product Development

64 Your First 100 Days on the Innovation Job (and Beyond): A Guide for New Leaders

66 The New ABCs of Innovation Leadership: Architect, Bridger, Catalyst

68 Nurturing Innovation: The Crucial Role of Intermediaries

70 How Insecure Managers Stifle Innovation and How to Overcome It

72 Avoiding Harm in Technology Innovation: A Framework for Responsible Advancement

74 Building the Future: The Evolution of Innovation

76 Inside lululemon's Innovation Engine: How a Unique Structure Drives Success

79 Disruptive Collaboration: How Goodyear is Reinventing Itself for the Future

82 Shaping the Future of Supply Chains

84 Building your AI Strategy: From Optimization to Innovation

- 87 Fast, Cheap, and Weird
- 91 AI as a Catalyst for Human-Centric Innovation: Empowering Leaders to Drive Impact
- 94 From Theory to Practice: How Telefónica is Harnessing AI to Transform Innovation
- 99 Governance & Portfolio Management**
- 100 The Innovation Finance Mindset: Aligning Innovation and Finance for Sustainable Growth
- 102 The Science of Predicting ROI in Early-Stage Innovation
- 104 Innovation Funding: Keep Your Options Open
- 107 Can Innovation Speak the Language of Finance?
- 111 Upping the Odds of Venture Success with Portfolio Management & Governance
- 114 Mastering New Growth through Corporate Venture Governance
- 116 Proving the Value of Innovation
- 118 Spin-Out, Spin-In: How Venture Building Can Transform Corporate Innovation Funding
- 121 Innovative Strategies for Effective R&D Budgeting
- 123 Innovation Accounting: Essential for Every Business
- 125 Mastering Portfolio Management to Drive Innovation Strategy Execution
- 127 Keeping Innovative Projects Aligned with Strategy
- 129 Why Blaming the CFO Is Too Simple: The Complex Story Behind Innovation Cuts at Walmart, GM, and Intel
- 133 Creating Ambidextrous Organizations for Growth
- 135 Building an Innovation Unit from Scratch: Key Insights from BCP Bank
- 140 Foresight, Business Design & Venture Building**
- 141 The Death of the Double Diamond and the Emergence of the AI-Powered Stingray Model
- 143 Prototyping New Businesses: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly
- 145 How CEOs are Turning Corporate Venture Building into Outsize Growth
- 148 The Big Reset for Corporate Venture Building—Long Live Investment Building
- 153 Driving De-Risked Growth through a Validated Process
- 156 Hypothesis-Driven Corporate Innovation: The Search for People in Pain
- 159 Looking Beyond the Consumer
- 161 AI Will Change How You Innovate—Here's What You Need to Know

- 164** Why Now? How Good Timing Makes Great Products
- 166** Proximity: The Future of Value Delivery
- 169** Creator-Led Brands: The New Frontier for Corporate Growth
- 172** How to Innovate Through Scarcity: Unleashing Growth in Turbulent Times
- 176** Key Takeaways From the 2024 Intrapreneurship Barometer
- 179** Driving Innovation at Speed: How Škoda Navigates the Future of Automotive Design
- 182** How to Generate New Revenue Streams with Corporate Venture Building
- 184** Venturing Beyond the Hype—How to Build Viable Ventures in a Down Market
- 187** How To Successfully Scale Corporate Ventures
- 194** **Open Innovation**
- 195** The Age of Hybridization and Results
- 197** Twenty Years of Open Innovation: Overcoming Internal Barriers for Success
- 198** Collaborative Innovation: Co-Developing with Start-ups
- 202** Structuring Corporate Venturing for Strategic Impact: a Corporate Venturing Framework
- 205** Impact of Venture Clienting: Building Strong Partnerships for Success
- 207** Challenge-Driven Innovation: A Guide to Unlocking Fresh Solutions
- 210** AI and the Future of Open Innovation: New Frontiers in Collaboration
- 212** The Zebra Story: Transforming Innovation at Zurich Insurance
- 215** Bacardi's Disruptive Innovation Journey
- 218** Challenging the Status Quo: A Peak Inside Maersk's CVC and Strategic Partnership Unit
- 221** Supercharging Corporate Innovation with Venture Clienting
- 223** Balancing Focus and Flexibility in Corporate-Startup Collaboration
- 225** Building Billion-Dollar Businesses: The LG Nova Approach
- 227** Innovating for Impact: Driving Startup Collaboration at P&G
- 229** Joining Forces to Drive Insurance Innovation Across Borders
- 234** **Sustainability & Climate**
- 235** The Five Elements of Sustainable Innovations to Win Over Reluctant Consumers
- 238** A Design-Driven Innovation Path to Sustainable Business Models

- 240** Building Resilience with Strategic Foresight: Decarbonization Scenarios for 2030
- 244** Sustainability as a Competitive Advantage: How to Turn Green Initiatives into Growth Opportunities
- 247** Innovation and Social Impact: the Future of Insurance
- 249** Building Bridges for Climate Neutrality: The Climate Lab Initiative
- 251 Innovation Culture & Capabilities**
- 252** Risk or Opportunity? Promoting Innovation in Your Organization
- 254** How to Hatch a Thriving Culture of Innovation
- 257** Innovation-Led Transformation: Unleashing the Power of Middle Managers
- 260** The Key Elements of Building a Thriving Innovative Culture
- 263** Making Innovation Everyone's Priority
- 266** The Future of R&D in a Brave New AI Era
- 268** Transforming Innovation in a Legacy Giant: Saint-Gobain's Journey to Sustainability and Agility
- 270** Scaling Innovation at Lufthansa Group: A Blueprint for Future-Proofing
- 273** Bridge the Culture Gap Between Venture Teams and the Mothership through Values Alignment
- 276** Driving the Shift with the Power of Intrapreneurship
- 278** Breaking Free from Corporate Gravity: Unleashing Creativity in Corporate Giants
- 280** Garage Thinking and the Mindset Virus
- 282** Building an "Everyone Innovation" Culture
- 286** Breaking Boundaries: Cultivating Innovation in Big Healthcare Organizations
- 288** Unleashing Innovation through Diversity: Lessons from a Decade of Intrapreneurship
- 292 Talent & Teams**
- 293** How Innovation Teams Can Build Internal Predictability To Thrive Through Uncertainty
- 296** The One Thing High Impact Product Teams Have In Common
- 299** Seeing With Different Eyes: How Neurodivergent Thinkers Drive Innovation
- 302** The 5 Conditions For High-Performing Innovation Teams
- 305** Good Teams vs. Bad Teams: Understanding Thinking Preferences

- 308** More Time, More Energy, More Focus
- 311** Top 10 Generative AI Tools for Innovation Teams
- 314** Preparing for the Human & AI Innovator Team
- 316** How to Keep Elephants Dancing: Talent and Teams in Venture Clienting
- 318** Creating Innovators, Not Just Innovations
- 321** How To Live Future Ready

