Communicating the New

METHODS TO SHAPE AND ACCELERATE INNOVATION

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WILEY

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The Mission
and the Mess

Eighty-two-year-old Jim Bick was dying of cancer when he called up Andy Parham and asked him to come lead his business as CEO. Jim owned a number of companies in newspaper and radio. But he also owned a company called Bick Group that designed and built data centers for large enterprises. Bick was a client from Andy's days as a management consultant, but Andy couldn't imagine why Bick was calling on him to run his almost 50-year-old company. Moreover, Andy didn't know anything about Bick's business. Bick responded, "I'm not concerned about what you don't know. I'm hiring you for what I think you can do."

It turned out that Bick's business was in real trouble. Beginning as a local punch-card machine sales business in 1964, the company had evolved to become experts in the design, construction, and operation of data centers and had customers across the world. Data centers were core to an IT model that reigned for over 25 years, but massive changes in the IT world meant that the era of that model was coming to an end. By 2007, revenues were down 85 percent from 2001. The aging and ailing Bick knew the business was going to have to change once more, but this time he wouldn't be there to lead it. According to Andy, "Jim knew that we were about to have another big change in IT. I didn't know that at the time, but he knew it and he knew that the company was going to have to pivot again, and that pivot is cloud computing."

At the time of Bick's visit, Andy was a partner at VSA Partners, a leading communication design and branding firm. Andy was an experienced strategist who had built and led some pretty big client accounts at VSA. But he had never been a CEO before.

Andy took the job, and under his guidance the Bick Group shifted its business. It acquired Blue Mountain Labs, a company with high visibility in the new cloud computing industry. Blue Mountain Labs was a small but mighty competency that, if nurtured correctly, could bridge Bick Group to the future. The acquisition allowed Andy to craft something new and relevant: It allowed him to go to clients and say that Bick Group could place them in the cloud.

But Andy's shift in strategy generated a tsunami of challenges, internally and externally:

I've got a hundred employees that have been there forever. They know how to design, build and operate data centers. They know about power and cooling, and they know how to consult around power and cooling. And I'm telling them that I think that our customers are going to buy less and less of that because of this new disruptive technology, and we've got to change. And now they're worried about their future. I've got another segment of employees who need to get a lot more sophisticated about the story that they tell because they're going to be selling a lot higher up the organizational stack. They've been calling on data center managers and IT directors. They now need to call on CEOs and CFOs and make a business proposition, not a technology proposition.

So now, I have multiple communication challenges. One of them is the cloud has hit the peak of the hype cycle and people are sick of it, and yet right now it's just getting real. Another is that business executives don't know what we're talking about when we talk about a cloud-based future, so we've got to find a way to help them see it. A third is the people inside of my own company don't know what the hell we're doing, and they're scared about it because they don't know what their future holds.

Andy is a man on a mission I'll call creating The New. It might equally be called "reinventing your business" or "innovation" or "designing the next great thing." But those terms are specialized, and Andy's story is more universal. Andy's mission is to create something new, relevant, and desirable. And his challenge is to do so for a complex and competitive market, shaped by dynamic and unpredictable forces, and without clarity or precedent to draw from. We might call this "the mess." Does his story feel familiar? It should. Everyone who is called to create The New—and there are more of us every day—faces a mission of vital importance and a mess of increasing size. The mission to create The New is now recognized by businesses and governments across the globe as vital to economic survival. As a result, this mission has stature, it gets respect and attention, it's increasingly understood (at least at a structural level), and it gets resources in the form of funding and research.

The mess, on the other hand, is different story. There is little glory and a lot less guidance in the mess. The mess that accompanies The New is harder to define and describe—it is sometimes called a business problem or an industry condition, but such descriptions are too narrow. The mess also includes emerging customer behaviors, long-wave cultural changes, advances in science, and increasing transparency in everything we do. Typically, a mess is deemed a problem. But when creating The New, the mess is essential.

Andy's mission (and his mess) is big and bold and a little intimidating, but it isn't unique. Andy's industry may be different from yours, and his budget may have more zeros, but his predicament is common enough. Andy is new to the job and to the level of responsibility and accountability. He's got a vision and a plan, but his organization can't see it yet. He's got a viable proposition for clients, with a promising trajectory, but it points to very different and as-yet unproven future. And he's connecting his proposition to a new information economy that is still emerging and so is hard to describe to others.

What makes Andy a little bit different—and ahead of other leaders—is that he saw his business problems as also being communication problems. So what he did next was equally uncommon: He hired a writer and a designer.

This is an old-school firm—they do things the way they do things. Even in our new company, the technology guys were used to putting together hundred-page PowerPoints with all these graphs and all this stuff. Nobody knew what they were saying. So I put them in a room with my designer and my writer, and I told them, "You will not deliver one thing to the client without it going through the filter of these two guys." They looked at me as if I had six heads, [and] told me they've always done it this way. They said, "OK, Andy, you're going to make it pretty." And I said, "I'm not talking about making it pretty. I'm talking about a level of polish and professionalism that inspires confidence and makes us look bigger than we are. And I'm talking about a level of communication clarity, that doesn't come through in this, which makes us look smarter and more trustworthy to lead through a complex challenge." I made these technology guys sit in the room and explain it enough times in enough ways for my two guys to understand it and be able to write it down themselves. And when it's written down, it is **completely** *different from the way that my technology guys were communicating it. Now I have them embedded on all the teams and everybody knows that there is no deliverable that goes out unless it goes through them. Period.*

Andy is on to something big—creating The New and communicating The New are inseparable endeavors. His belief that communication is not about making things pretty but is a strategic tool to manage complexity, to make the unfamiliar more comprehensible, to build alignment and to inspire confidence—in short, to manage the mess—suggests he's a little bit ahead on an important learning curve, a curve that most organizations have yet to even recognize.

CHALLENGES OF COMMUNICTING THE NEW

One of the biggest challenges in creating The New is to make it understandable to others and, not incidentally, to oneself. The challenge of clarifying new discoveries or concepts to organizational stakeholders—many of whom were not part of the development phase—is a notorious gap in the internal adoption and implementation of new ideas.

As Andy's story suggests, communicating The New is not one problem but a class of problems. I'd like to call out three in particular, each a part of the challenge, but each meaningfully different in nature and, therefore, in solution.

The complex

I distinguish the "complex new" from other forms of The New by its multidimensional nature. Public policy issues are a good example because they address a multiplicity of constituents, resources, circumstances, and existing laws in creating a new solution. The "complex new" is tough to explain to others because it involves a large number of factors that are connected and interrelated, and together they combine to describe

the context for action. Andy's cloud computing proposition is fundamentally complex to his clients, less because of the technology involved than because of the broader transformations the cloud is enabling: big data, personal information economies, and mobile apps that transform the power relationship between consumers and producers.

The unfamiliar

The truly new is a tough proposition in its own right. How to explain something that is out of the range of conventional reference, or for which there are few precursors? Massive technology infrastructure projects—electrification, television, and the Internet—all defied popular imagination at the time. The core challenge of the "unfamiliar new" is helping others see new concepts with fresh eyes and from the perspective of the future, not in the context of the past and through the lens of what they already know.

The still-fuzzy

Ideas remain in motion for much longer than we'd like to admit, and the challenge of describing something unfinished or unstable is the case of the "fuzzy new." The inherent instability around emerging ideas is perhaps no surprise—just ask any startup that has experienced the path through multiple business models and products. But the surrounding forces necessary to shape these ideas are also areas in constant flux—consumer trends, emerging markets, scientific advances. The truly new has to anticipate what's next and what might matter in the future, and that means building on areas of life that are inherently in motion. In these cases, The New is a fuzzy image on an even fuzzier background.

Anyone testing out the logic of these definitions will quickly conclude that most new propositions are some combination of two or all of these. Andy's challenge, in fact, is all three—complex, unfamiliar, and still emerging. If we conceive of communicating The New as many problems, each involving many people—new team members, implementers, decision makers, etc.—and occurring throughout the course of a project, we can no longer consider it a trivial challenge to tackle at the end of a project. To succeed, we need to factor into our development processes the reality that communicating The New is an ongoing work stream, not an afterthought—and one that requires its own mindset, unique skill set, and specific tools.

WHAT'S IN OUR WAY? THREE COMMUNICATION MYTHS

Why don't more executives act like Andy and prioritize communication in their development processes? Why don't they hire writers and designers to work with their teams? Some do. But their conceptions of when, where, and how to engage communication are typically informed by conventional wisdom that doesn't account for creating The New. In fact, such conventional wisdom is badly out of date. For the sake of simplicity, I've boiled it down to three ideas that are rarely questioned, always present, *and no longer work*.

Communication myth 1: Simplification is the answer

One of the biggest challenges in creating The New is making it understandable to others. We are given a lot of advice about how to do this: the elevator pitch (get it down to two minutes), the Hollywood pitch ("X meets Y," to put it in familiar terms), the journalist's five Ws (compress key facts into a single positioning statement). But any entrepreneur who has had to use them will tell you that *reductionist approaches trivialize rich, nuanced ideas*. They strip ideas of what makes them special. And once you pull the wings off a butterfly, to paraphrase designer Massimo Vignelli, all you have is a bug.

Judd Morgenstern, an entrepreneur in New York's startup incubator, General Assembly, lives in a world where simplification is mandatory:

Every VC guy or investor says they want a new, innovative idea, but they ask you to describe this new, innovative idea in terms of something that already exists. A common pitch format is the X meets Y for Z format: describing your company in terms of a combination of other companies. So you're something like WebMD meets like ZocDoc for new mothers. At best, you come out describing your company as a kind of hybrid mash-up of two existing companies. And at worst the investors say, "yeah, we've already heard this one hundred times" or, "somebody already does that." And you're thinking, "Of course somebody already does that, I just told you two companies that are kind of like it because you asked me to."

The X meets Y formula is what I'd call a guaranteed near-miss: It can get people in the conceptual ballpark, but will ultimately fail because it focuses people on what's similar, instead of what's different and noteworthy.

Information guru Richard Saul Wurman says the worst way to manage complexity is throw out all the hard parts. Complex, potent ideas, such as the iPod/iTunes platform, simply don't reduce well. So if we can figure out how to convey a rich powerful idea, without trivializing its underlying nature or, as innovation consultant Larry Keeley puts it, "stripping it down to a caricature," we will have done something pretty powerful.

Communication myth 2: Packaging and selling are the objective

In most organizations, communication is conceived of as the grand finale, something that comes at the end of the project to promote the ideas and make them attractive to decision makers. This presumes that you have an idea, and that your idea is fully formed, but simply not packaged yet. In this context, communication provides the packaging and focuses on persuasion: gaining influence over "the audience," securing their compliance, and eliciting the desired behavior. Packaging and persuasion as the end state is the conception that the mass culture has always been aware of, and for which it has looked to creative people such as designers and advertisers. It is the

driver behind communication-for-business books designed to "transform audiences," "drive action," "connect, persuade, and triumph," and "help ideas survive" (*Resonate* by Nancy Duarte, *Presentation Design for Impact* by Andrew Abela, *Tell to Win* by Peter Guber, and *Made to Stick* by the Heath brothers, respectively).

Packaging and selling don't work well in the context of creating The New because they don't address the pressing need to treat all legitimate stakeholders as participants. When you look at people as targets to be sold to, or as hurdles to get past, you can't focus on building important relationships, and so can't spark the organizational change and commitment required to implement The New.

Creators of The New need the active participation and enthusiasm of the people who are going to be problem solving those ideas months from now. As Lextant CEO Chris Rockwell notes, "Ownership is a big part of what we're trying to create here. If we throw the insights over the wall, if they haven't had a chance to hear it firsthand or be immersed in it throughout the process, then there's less ownership for it and there's less advocacy for it. If our clients don't own it and advocate it within their walls, those insights will whither and die, and old ways of thinking and behaving can re-emerge."

Communication myth 3: Delivering and transferring are the means

Here we come to the real root of the problem: Communication is trapped in a transfer model. In most organizations, communication means *delivering* findings and *presenting* ideas. It is about transferring knowledge to stakeholders at the end of a project, as concepts seek funding or move to implementation. This model puts communication after the development of The New, rather than making it an integral part of creating The New. The transfer model is the ultimate misfire because it frames communication as an event, rather than a process.

"The problem with conventional presentations is that they are a complete 'lean back' experience. It's all about being an audience member," says Dev Patnaik, CEO of Jump Associates. "Mats Lederhausen, who was at McDonald's for years, gave me a quote that I use over and over: 'It is far easier to act yourself into a new way of thinking than it is to think your way into a new way of acting.' If you really want to get executives to buy into your project, you need to get them to co-create the information. Creating sessions in which executives make something and then come to their own conclusions (hopefully conclusions you agree with), is essential."

This trifecta of communication myths—simplify, package, and transfer—may have been well suited to a different set of conditions. Maybe. But they generate blind spots and unproductive behaviors when you need to communicate something new. "Persuasion" requires proof. It causes us to lead with process and facts instead of stories and knowledge. The lack of immediate relevance to participants feels like a waste of their time. The transfer imperative compels us to be exhaustive, swelling presentations to 150 slides, when probably no more than 5 are relevant to any particular individual in the room. The simplification formulas lead to imprecise

language and undue abstraction, both of which cause new ideas to sound indistinct and make them easy to misinterpret and dismiss.

Plenty of ideas go unfunded because they don't deserve investment. But the floors of corporations everywhere are also littered with promising concepts that failed because the communication began too late, stakeholders were not personally invested, and those ideas were described using communication tools of the past, optimized for discrete products launched at discrete times and for a few powerful audience members. These are different times, and we need a different mindset and more effective toolset to communicate The New.

RECONCEIVING THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

How we ultimately communicate our ideas—both to clients and to end users—is 90 percent of the job.

— Michael Winnick, Partner, Gravity Tank

How might we define the new context in order to understand the new role for communication? In my interviews with practitioners who make their living creating The New—innovation consultants, entrepreneurs, design planners, and research directors—they report an interesting shift in conditions. Project leaders now engage with an expanding number of stakeholders, more of whom are asking for near-constant participation in order to absorb general methodology and stay close to the project. Team members are now often on multiple projects, rotating in and out as their expertise is required. And as the imperative to innovate grows, organizations are now placing multiple bets, funding many projects and innovation teams simultaneously, creating internal competition for attention and resources.

For a practitioner, these shifts put a new premium on communication *throughout* the process—not only at scheduled moments or presentations. Project leaders must now connect to more people, most of whom have limited context, but who need to be included at multiple moments in the creation process. They also must ensure that the larger working team is invested in/committed to the work early and in meaningful ways. Last, if they want the project to succeed, they need to be mindful of the organization as a whole, not just the immediate working team. In this context, communication has become collaborative, pervasive, and central to the success of the project. In the situations and conditions described by practitioners, we are seeing new and critical missions for communication.

Communication mission 1: Create all-in, not buy-in

Gravity Tank's Michael Winnick observes that "a lot of people talk about senior executive *buy-in*, but I think in big companies you need senior executive *all-in*. It's the difference between an executive that tacitly approves something versus one that's driving it. Amazon's Jeff Bezos is all in—he's the guy scrutinizing the products,

working the product designers. He's very engaged in everything. In hierarchical organizations, *all-in* is a pre-condition for serious innovation, serious change." Michael's point is that we are aiming low when we shoot for acceptance, because acceptance is a weak commitment that can be withdrawn quickly and easily. Intel's Tony Salvador has said, "Innovation is violence," meaning that by its nature innovation is tough and disruptive to everyday people in organizations. If he's right, then we need more than buy-in; we need leaders to fully join our idea—to be involved in integrating it—not merely to accept it. If the idea is big enough and bold enough to disrupt the standard order of things, then "buy in" is no longer enough. It has to be all-in.

Communication mission 2: Build a common basis of judgment

Cross-disciplinary, collaborative work requires that teams have a shared conceptual model from which to proceed effectively. The lack of an effective shared model can derail a project early. This is a painful possibility in every creative effort that seasoned practitioners work hard to address. Consider this common scenario from Shelley Evenson, referencing her time as chief experience strategist at Scient:

In the past, we'd have a kickoff meeting, we'd formalize, we'd write down all sorts of things on flip charts. We had different people speaking different languages: business strategists, developers, designers, etc. Three weeks later we'd come back together and, while everyone had done stuff, one team thought the other team was going to do X and the other team did Y, and so on. There was no common ground. So we started creating what we called Territory Maps at the kickoff—visual representations of the project that include constituents and big themes. The territory map created that common ground and common language from the beginning. It's really critical to be able to leave a meeting saying that no matter what perspective we have, we agree on this thing.

For more on Shelley's Territory Maps, see the "Thinking with Our Eyes" section in the next chapter.

Many practitioners, such as Steve Portigal of Portigal Consulting, rely on *shared experiences* to create that common ground: "Even if we don't yet have conclusive models from, say, the research phase, we create shared experiences to generate shared vocabulary and shared interpretations. A shared conceptual model comes from a shared experience. It's essential now, and our clients demand it . . . no one should be surprised at what you are revealing in that final meeting." Design strategist and IA Collaborative co-founder Kathleen Brandenburg has also opted for shared experience in her company's development model because she's seen the transformative effect: "If you experience it yourself, you're in it, you know what's happening is real. That's why we bring our clients into the research phase. We will never go into the field again without our clients. That's not happening."

For an idea to maintain its coherence as it moves through an organization, its owners need to understand where it comes from, why it is what it is, and why it is not something else. When the time comes to brand, package, engineer, or sell The New, specialists in those areas require a deep connection to the conceptual model to do their job. Otherwise, they have little choice but to rely on conventional category practices and what they already know. This means that a potentially groundbreaking laundry concept will be packaged to look and sound like the category—complete with a sunburst and vague language about outdoor fresh scent—unless those downstream specialists share in some part of the creation experience. The only way to prevent a fallback to the familiar is to involve these potential collaborators early on, and to create powerful, shared experiences to forge a common basis of judgment going forward.

Communication mission 3: Build belief and conviction

"You can be smart and you can know a lot and you can tell a great story. But at the end of the day, somebody's got to have the courage—not just the authority, but the courage—to say 'yes' and put a bunch of money on the line." These are the words of Steve Leeke, a former director of Motorola New Enterprises, talking about the difficulty of getting a risk-averse organization to invest in an unproven future. "The guys who run these companies in billion dollar slices have to be the ones to give a damn, and it has to matter to them. You can't force that. You can't just sit down and explain it to them. It has to be genuine. [Former Motorola CEO] Chris Galvin once asked me over lunch, what experiences do I have to take these business heads through, for them to understand this? And I didn't get it at the time. I didn't really appreciate how profound a statement that was."

Michael Winnick does appreciate and respect this idea, and he calls it *building belief*: "In innovation-oriented work, it's not so much about proving or disproving. It is about getting people to believe things. And belief is different than proof. Belief is about taking leaps or developing a sense of intuition about what's next or asking, 'Why should I do something bold when there are an enormous number of really valid reasons not to do anything at all?'"

Facts alone can't mobilize an organization. There needs to be belief. Belief is the foundation for conviction, and conviction is what it takes to commit to a future that may look half as profitable as the present. As Conifer Research's Ben Jacobson says, "Yes, there's got to be a mission out there, there has to be a calling—but where does that come from? It doesn't come from an MBA asking if that idea can provide a $100 million worth of incremental revenue. If your company thinks that that's credible and realistic and wants to filter every possible idea through that, I think you've got a long way to go. Personally, I think it's hard to know a $100 million idea when you see one."

Winnick continues, "If you believe that belief comes from experiences, from doing things—from actually bothering to do the fieldwork as opposed to hearing someone tell you about it, or from playing with a prototype as opposed to having someone do that for you and report back on it—that's very difficult, because senior executives don't typically do that stuff." No, they don't. And while no one I spoke with had a ready answer, they agree on this: Belief and conviction are mission critical for big, ambitious ideas to succeed, and direct experiences are a powerful means to achieve that.

Communication mission 4: Move ideas through the organization

Whether you are part of an external consultancy or an internal innovation center, getting concepts to successfully move through the organization is often the biggest challenge. Kathleen Brandenburg puts it this way:

You can do the best work in the world—the best strategy, the smartest plan, the best design—and it can absolutely fail to progress into implementation if the people you're working with aren't able to communicate that work internally. So it's imperative to give them tools they can use not only to communicate the work but also to inspire others in their organization to champion it as well. Being a true collaborator means saying, "I'm not just doing the assignment, I'm going to help you carry it all the way through."

Heather Reavey at Continuum thinks carefully about how to draw others to work in the early stages:

In the strategy group I lead, our number one mission is to move things through the organization because we know that's the hard part. Ideally, an idea should move through the organization virally, and not require someone to pick it up and move it every day. So how can you transform a big idea or insight into a poster that's so appealing that people hang them up, and others start to ask about it? What other interesting artifacts might attract attention? At Continuum, this used to be something that came up after the ideas were formed. But now we start thinking about creating that connection right from the beginning of the project.

Heather and Kathleen are both saying that it's not enough to create a single communication experience delivered by you and your team. You need to give others tools *they* can use to communicate, to advance the organization's understanding.

Communication mission 5: Preempt the power of no

There are many opportunities to say no to The New. Anyone along the decision chain, from concept to rollout, can pull the plug or dig in his or her heels: too costly, too disruptive, too complicated, too, well, different. As Michael Winnick points out, in almost any organization it is both easier and safer to say no than it is to say yes. "This is why multi-stakeholder sessions early on are so critical," says Gravity Tank partner Martha Cotton, "and those sessions need to build empathy (with end-users), immersion (in both the reality and the potential of the situation) and engagement with the project and the team so that they understand and believe that something needs to occur."

Her point is also that oftentimes the issue isn't the idea at all—it's the lack of relationships with and among important stakeholders. Internal innovation centers are particularly susceptible to organizational rejection. As Heather Reavey notes:

A lot of our clients have started up innovation teams everywhere. In many cases these teams set themselves up to fail because they are different, often because they don't have the same accountabilities or metrics for their own work, and so they create antibodies throughout the whole organization. They can become this isolated group of people who are supposed to come

up with ideas, but the rest of the organization is not behind them. We spend a lot of time with those teams trying to get them to forge relationships, so that once they have the idea, that larger working team will actually do something with it.

Complexity? Novelty? Fuzziness? Relationships? Experiences? Belief? Conviction? Engagement? Is this still communication we're talking about?

Larry Keeley suspects that maybe it isn't, at least not conventionally so. "Maybe calling this communication trivializes it. So let's call it *moments that matter* in a progression from 'we're ignorant about a problem but we know it's important and we sense that it's different or acute' to 'wow, here's this incredibly amazing new platform capability that nobody in a focus group ever asked for, nobody ever understood or anticipated, but suddenly we can't live without.'"

Let's define the New Communication as a team's journey through "moments that matter." And let's state that this definition is a *necessary* response to changing conditions: Today we all operate in a highly collaborative business world, with rising stakes and increasing complexity. There is constant demand for innovation and development processes that must operate in the realm of speculation in order to anticipate what might be emerging in the near future. In this world, conventional communication techniques such as the 200-page PowerPoint and grand finale presentations no longer work. They don't prepare the organization to execute. Persuasion loses its power over time or when new data is introduced. The transfer model has always been suspect, but because creating The New requires collaboration, it may be particularly ineffective now. What we need a new mindset and a toolset to help us keep pace.

FIVE WAYS COMMUNICATION METHODS ACCELERATE INNNOVATION

Many creators of The New are paying attention to the growing body of methods and frameworks for managing innovation. Methods are essential to any planning process because they help manage complexity, ensure effective output, and, hopefully, help teams achieve something significant in a more disciplined and reliable way.

But among innovation management methods, what is missing is an equally considered and robust playbook for explaining that work—to ourselves, to our teammates, and to others—and for engaging others in its development. In this book, I present a general model that project leaders, entrepreneurs, or anyone involved in the creation of The New can use throughout a project. It's not a formula; tailor your choice of methods to fit the organizational style and the stakeholder tolerance for engagement. Nor is it magic; it won't help the poorly conceived become viable. But what it can do is provide guidance and a checklist to advance the process of creating The New. This model organizes methods and tactics culled from many disciplines—design, social science, education, linguistics, creativity, and journalism—to help individuals and teams find just the right communication practices for the challenges they face.

5 ways communication methods accelerate innovation

Content		+ Users	+ Engagement	
1 Finding the center	**2** Framing the work	**3** Targeting your constituents	**4** Introduce new thinking	**5** Expanding the conversation
Sharpen your thinking, Know what you know	*Define the new space, Develop a story device*	*Fit knowledge to key participants*	*Create emotional + intellectual experiences*	*Reach new constituents Help ideas "go viral"*
Models + frameworks	Metaphor	The communication plan	Exploration	Communication systems
Build-to-think prototypes	Stories	Mental model + orthodoxy assessment	Immersion	Performative presentations
Lists + open-ended writing	Mantras + catchphrases	Quad A diagnostic	Interaction	Demonstration artifacts
	Contrast	Organization as Culture framework	Application	
	Artifacts + images		Extension	

Because The New involves a series of messes, helping teams know what they know takes time. This is particularly challenging for projects with tight time frames. Often we *mostly* know what we think is important, yet in practical terms we are still wandering around the conceptual space trying to identify its center point. At this point, individuals and teams need help reaching two critical objectives: achieving clarity around the problem or the proposition, and building that all-important alignment in the larger working team. Tools and methods that address this situation are considered in Chapter 1, "Finding the Conceptual Center."

Teams also need help framing their thinking about The New in ways they and others can understand and remember. The objective is to do so in a way that creates a fresh mindset, so that the new proposition has focus, meaning, texture, and accessibility. Linguistic tools are simple to experiment with and don't require special skills to execute. Language is a potent tool that experts have studied for decades to better understand its power. This is a great place for creators of The New to learn more about that power. Tools that help teams consider how to use language more consciously and to greater effect in their endeavors are explored in Chapter 2, "Framing the Work."

In business schools it has become standard practice to train students in stakeholder interviews. Few other professions focus on how to size up the human beings who need to be invested in the project; even the MBA programs tend to favor functional assessments (What do people do and buy?) over holistic assessments (Who are they, and how do they live?). If one critical communication mission is to build belief and all-in, creators of The New have to cultivate deep curiosity and acute empathy for the people who will be engaged in that New over the long haul. Yes, this is extra work. But professionals in my executive education sessions who invest the extra couple of hours almost always come away with a renewed clarity and a better grasp of the political dynamics they will face. Tools and frameworks—borrowed from the social sciences—that help teams understand and engage others in The New are explored in Chapter 3, "Targeting Your Constituents."

Educational theory tells us that experience is a powerful teacher that creates both intellectual and emotional engagement with content. Experiences are a vital platform with which to engage stakeholders of all levels. For purposes of introducing The New, experiences must break with corporate convention and borrow from the best precedents in theater and education. A model for creating unconventional but

effective engagement—what I call the "design for experiences"—is at the core of Chapter 4, "Introduce New Thinking."

It's never too early to get insights into circulation, to build organizational empathy with end users, or to begin priming an organization for a change. The objective, as Heather Reavey characterizes it, is to help projects "go viral" inside the organization by creating a platform for stories and conversation. We need to draw attention to an initiative before synthesis is finished, laying early groundwork for what comes later. This requires a bit of design, maybe a bit of theater, to dramatize the work. These tools for getting the word out and creating widespread support for The New are the subject of Chapter 5, "Expand the Conversation."

Even though the chapters are arranged in a linear sequence, any tool in the toolkit might be useful at nearly any stage of your development process. In the work of creating The New, you will find yourself facing challenges such as finding the conceptual center or introducing new thinking to stakeholders at multiple points. The book is designed to help you find the inspiration and practical advice to better communicate, and create, your New as you encounter these challenges.