



# The Innovative Enterprise Business Analyst

BY KATHLEEN B. (KITTY) HASS

## INTRODUCTION

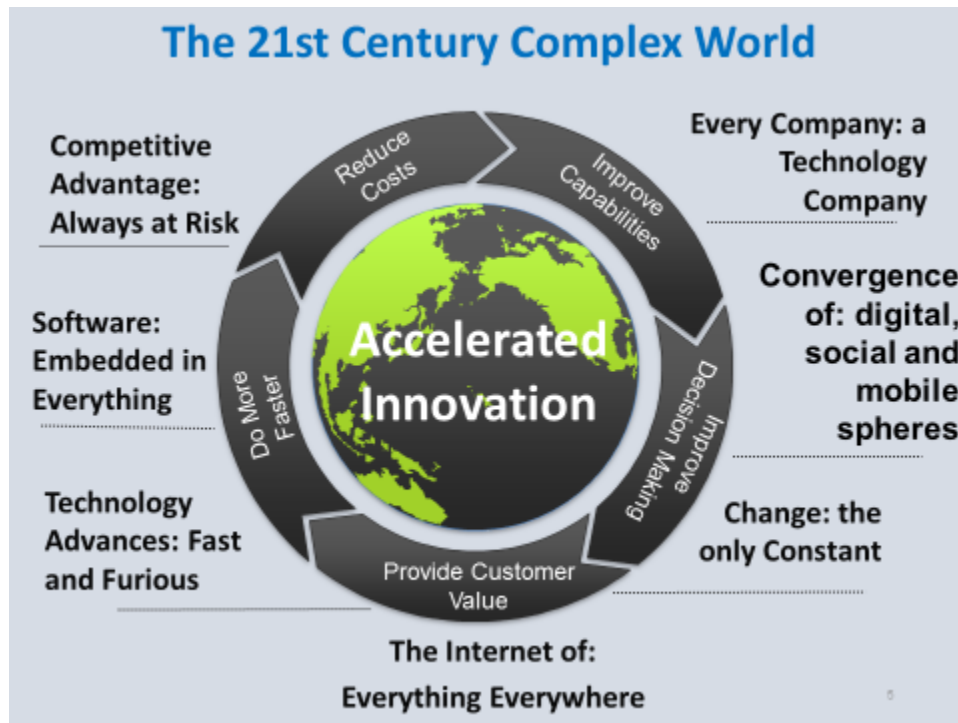
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The Business Analysis discipline is transforming itself in response to the 21<sup>st</sup> century realities: the Internet of everything is everywhere; change is the only constant, digital, social and mobile spheres have converged; every company needs to be a technology company; competitive advantage is always at risk; software is embedded in virtually every product and service; technology advances are fast and furious and unrelenting. In the midst of these challenges, we strive to reduce costs, do more with less, provide customer value, improve decision making, produce innovations, and advance internal capabilities.

In response to these challenges and to remain competitive, companies are continuously innovating to transform themselves and remain on the leading edge. EBAs are rising to the occasion to foster creativity and produce innovative products and services. Project-related requirements management skills are still needed. However, realizing that creativity is the #1 skill required to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, EBAs are continuously exploring their role in fostering collaboration and creativity. EBAs have discovered that deliberate design principles can be used to accelerate innovation of products and services. It is the EBA who is driving the convergence of the key disciplines required by organizations today: business, technology, and design. BAs everywhere are striving to:

1. Discover the magic of design thinking, and how it is being used in progressive organizations to develop breakthrough solutions to complex business problems.
2. Examine creativity-inducing tools and techniques used by facilitators everywhere for problem solving and decision making.
3. Consider how to augment structured facilitation techniques with investigation, experimentation, and creativity-inducing activities.
4. Learn how to reinvent their team facilitation model often to keep teams engaged in the innovation process, whether working on incremental enhancements or breakthrough technology.

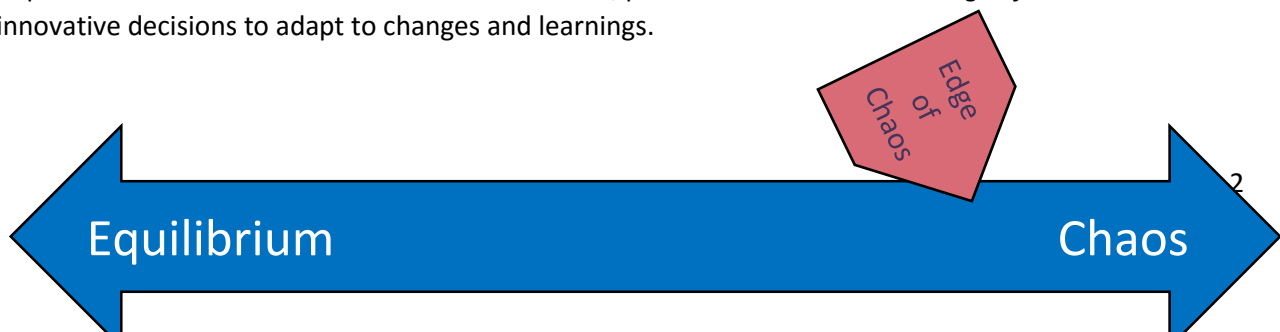
- Partner with the PM to work together to insure projects are launched to bring about innovative solutions, value to the customer, and wealth to the bottom line. Make decisions are made with the customer in mind. Seek out changes that add creativity and innovation to the solution design.



## THE RISE OF THE INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS ANALYST

I have written a lot about complexity. Complexity has a direct correlation to innovation. Complexity is everywhere: in our business practices, in our business partnerships, in our digital strategy, in our data and information management, in our projects, and in our effort to achieve business/technology optimization. CIOs are struggling to be able to not only manage, but to capitalize on complexity to bring about the innovations that result in competitive advantage.

The good news about complexity is that it breeds creativity. Complex systems are dynamic, always changing to adapt to transformations in the environment. Complex systems fluctuate between states of *equilibrium*, which leads to paralysis and ultimately death, to *chaos*, which leads dysfunction. It is important for EBAs to realize that the most creative, productive state is on the *edge of chaos* to make innovative decisions to adapt to changes and learnings.



So because EBAs care about creativity and innovation, they care about complexity. EBAs think holistically and therefore they realize that the average lifespan of a company listed in the S&P 500 index of leading US companies has decreased by more than 50 years in the last century, from 67 years in the 1920s to just 15 years today (Professor Richard Foster, Yale University<sup>i</sup>). What this means is that companies today must *innovate to survive*. Companies are complex systems, always adapting to changes in the economic, political, competitive and technological fluctuations. Therefore, project teams need to be adaptive, sometimes operating on the edge of chaos, to conceive of the most creative, innovative solutions. The days of the predominance of projects to enhance business-as-usual are ending, being replaced by transformational innovation. As EBAs work with the best minds in the company to design their transformation, they employ sophisticated design-centered creativity techniques to drive innovation.

## TRADITIONAL CREATIVITY-INDUCING PRACTICES

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Everyone is creative. Creativity is a skill that can be learned. The 21<sup>st</sup> century EBA is well positioned and quite proficient at bringing groups of experts together to conceive, test, refine and implement innovative solutions. The key is to get the right people in the room and create a safe environment.

*“The skill of generating innovations is largely the skill of putting old things together in a new way, or looking at a familiar idea from a novel perspective, or using what we know already to understand something new.”* Annie Murphy Paul, author, journalist, consultant and speaker who helps people understand how we learn and how we can do it better. (Her latest book, *How to Be Brilliant*, is forthcoming from Crown)

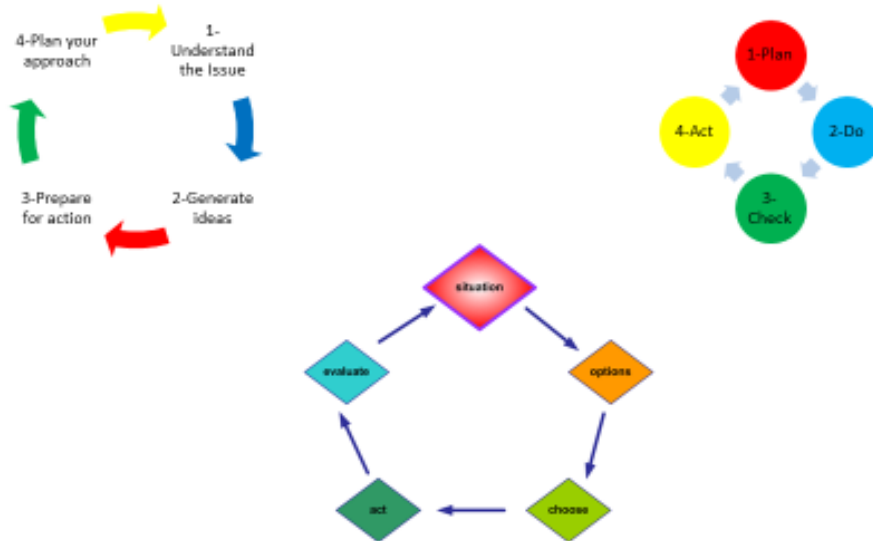
The EBA employs traditional and transformational practices to bring about innovation. Some of these practices are common place, some very new to the project scene. EBAs are accomplished facilitators. Skilled facilitation fosters creativity. Creativity-inducing tools and techniques make use of:

- Structured, problem-solving and decision-making methods, which primarily prompts activity in the left brain, and then
- Cleverly augmenting them with creativity through investigation, experimentation, and a little bit of chaos, using mostly the right brain.

### **Structured Decision Making and Problem Solving**

Problem solving can take many forms; but if you try to solve your problem without any structure, you may end up with a bigger problem.<sup>iii</sup> Businesses are familiar with and often use various problem solving structures, all of which all have similar components.

# Structured Decision Making/Problem Solving Tools Help



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## Creativity-Inducing Facilitation

EBA's understand that it is their responsibility to create that 'edge of chaos' environment among a small group of experts to arrive at the most innovative solution before launching a transformational project. The key is to make decisions quickly, test and experiment to continually improve the concept, and work iteratively in order to adapt to learnings and changes.

The process goes something like this - first create then innovate.

1. Create: divergent thinking
  - Generate Ideas
  - Combine, Refine
  - Invent, Originate, Imagine!
2. Innovate: convergent thinking
  - Analyze
  - Refine
  - Experiment
  - Decide!

## Creativity-Inducing Business Analysis



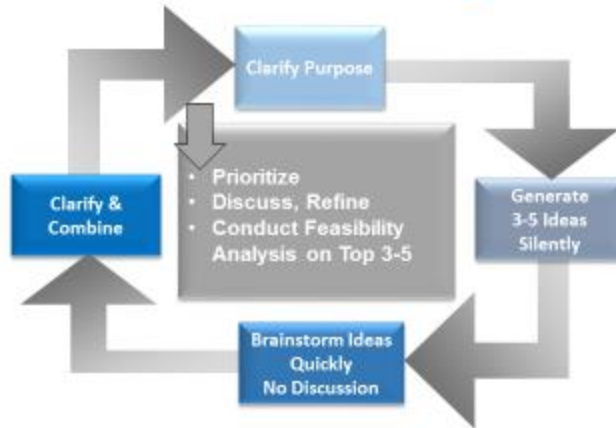
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### **Divergent Thinking: Create**

Use divergent thinking to create. Identify as many options as possible. Think “outside the organization” not just outside the box. Accept all options. Look for unusual possibilities, patterns, and combinations. Combine like ideas, build on each other’s ideas. Encourage participants to challenge each other, experiment, get crazy, be chaotic, and get *in the creative zone*.

There are many idea generation techniques; brainstorming and Idea Mapping are the most prevalent; brainstorming to identify as many ideas as possible; Idea Mapping to visualize the innovation. But beware. Sometimes brainstorming makes us think we are innovating when we really are just minimally changing the status quo. Sometimes it helps to get out of your environment. Insist on transformational innovation. One team told me they did their best work on a sailboat!

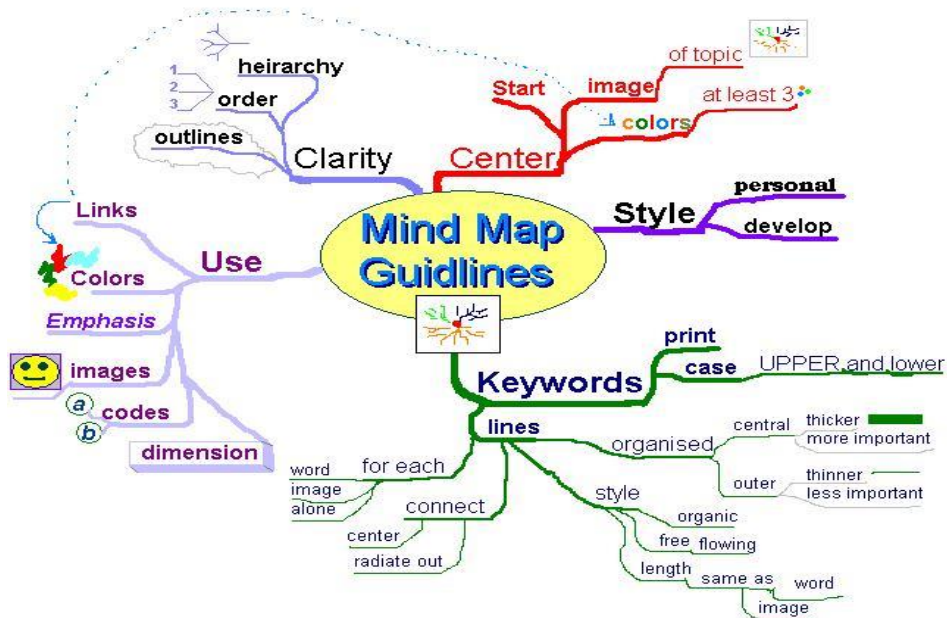
# Brainstorming



Brainstorming is limited by organizational constraints when in a conference room. Need to get into the field to understand the customer experience.

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Once multiple ideas have been generated, step back and build on like ideas, refine, improve. Then visualize brainstormed ideas using a colorful diagram. Build rich pictures. Great visualization techniques use both the right and left brain, clarify thinking, save time, foster ability to organize, communicate, remember, and innovate.



## Convergent Thinking: Decide

It is possible that the group is having so much fun that it wants to keep experimenting and creating. But at some point, the EBA needs to determine the moment to decide on the approach to take to move the company forward. First, refine and prioritize the list of ideas. Then determine the feasibility of all high-priority options. Analyze the feasible options, and then decide on the most feasible, least cost, fastest time to market, and most customer-centric ideas. For the most feasible options get physical and visualize by building prototype, mockups, models, story boards, stick figures.

Remember, all facilitation is consensus building. Take the time you need to be truly collaborative, participative, unifying and synergistic. The most important factor is to get the right people in the room. People who are of varying expertise, who love to work collaboratively in ambiguous environments to arrive at places that are unknown and promising.

## THE NEXT LEVEL: TRANSFORMATIONAL DESIGNED-CENTERED INNOVATION

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The EBA fulfills many strategic roles, essentially putting her finger in the dike for the many areas that have been woefully inadequate in organizations today, from business relationship manager to internal strategic consultant to innovator. Design-driven companies outperform the S&P 500. By *228% over ten years!* The most innovative companies in the world share one thing in common. They use design as an integrative resource to innovate more efficiently and successfully. Yet many businesses don't make it a priority to invest in design - often because the value of design is hard to measure and define as a business strategy.<sup>iv</sup> So, EBAs are filling the gap and bringing design principles into their business requirements and solution design processes.

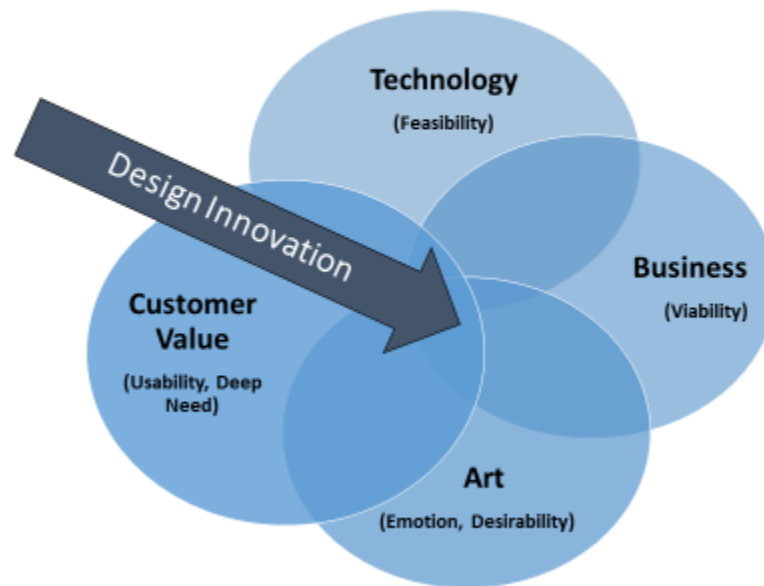
*"Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success."* —Tim Brown, president and CEO of award-winning global design firm that takes a human-centered, design-based approach to helping organizations in the public and private sectors innovate and grow and member of the Mayo Clinic Innovation Advisory Council.<sup>v</sup>

So what's the big deal about design thinking? It combines *empathy* for the context of a problem, *creativity* in the generation of insights and solutions, and *rationality* in analyzing and fitting various solutions to the company's context (Tom and Dave Kelley, in their book *Creative Confidence*)<sup>vi</sup>. Design thinking is converging disciplines to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. When driving innovation in the face of complexity, design thinking unites three essential disciplines: technology, business, and art. It focuses fiercely on customer value.

For the first time in the history of business management strategies, we are embracing principles of art and design. Design thinking...a methodology that imbues the full spectrum of innovation... a management strategy...a system that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match:

- Peoples' needs, with
- What is technologically feasible, and what
- A viable business can convert into consumer value and market opportunity.<sup>vii</sup>

## Converging Disciplines to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges



It is the EBA role that is picking up the mantle and driving innovation through design principles. Fundamental design principles include the following:

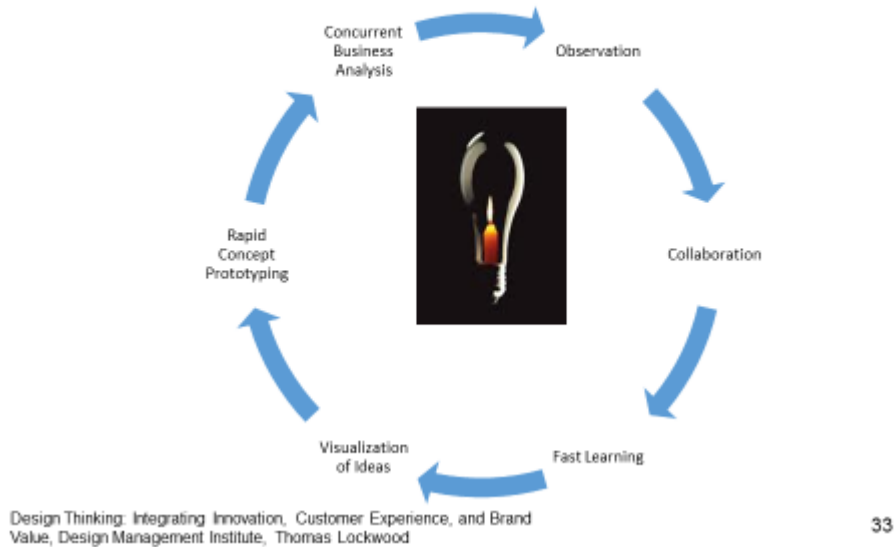
- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Diverse points of view
- Integrative thinking
- Cross-functional teams
- Iteration, Invention
- People-centered
- Deep user insights
- Visualization
- Solve wicked problems
- Creativity
- Efficiency, Efficacy

### **Design Thinking – a Customer-Centered approach to Innovation**

Design thinking is a human-centered innovation process that includes the basic elements that the EBA has in her toolbox. It is the EBA who is most primed to bring design-thinking methods to the business innovation process.



# Design Thinking: Human-Centered Innovation



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## The Genius of Design Thinking

The genius of design thinking is that it integrates innovation, a deep understanding of the customer experience, and business transformation. “Intuition counts heavily, experimentation happens fast, failures along the way are embraced as learning, business strategy is integrated, and more relevant solutions are produced.”<sup>viii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> *Can a company live forever?* Kim Gittleson BBC News, New York, 19 January 2012.  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-16611040>

<sup>ii</sup> *The Secret Skill Behind Being An Innovator*, Mar 26, 2014.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140326034851-84796303-the-secret-skill-behind-being-an-innovator>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.beyondlean.com/problem-solving.html>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.dmi.org/blogpost/1093220/182956/Design-Driven-Companies-Outperform-S-P-by-228-Over-Ten-Years--The-DMI-Design-Value-Index>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.ideo.com/about/>

<sup>vi</sup> Inspiration Lab, inspirationlab.org. <http://inspirationlab.org/story/5711#sthash.s2nfzgEd.dpuf>.  
<http://inspirationlab.org/story/5711>.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.ideo.com/people/tim-brown>

<sup>viii</sup> *Design Thinking: Integrating Innovation, Customer Experience, and Brand Value*, Thomas Lockwood, Design Management Institute