CSL Process Phase: Synthesizing

Project Framing	**Focusing, Learning**	**Synthesizing**
Corporate Startup Canvas to guide idea development	Building MAPs Customer Discovery Iterative Validation	Pitching Innovation to the C-Suite

Questions...

You should rarely, if ever, be surprised
by a question during an executive presentation on innovation,
or any topic, for that matter.

Same goes for VC/investor presentations.

You may not have all the answers,
but you should have a path to get there.

Pitching Innovation to the C-Suite

One of the most common complaints of corporate
entrepreneurs is being blindsided by questions
from outside their areas of expertise.

Even well-prepared corporate entrepreneurs have higher-stakes conversations than
traditional startup CEOs with stakeholders coming from narrower perspectives.

The C-Suite Canvas walks you through a hypothetical set of executives and what they
care about to help better prepare corporate entrepreneurs.

Three Key Communication Challenges

Defending Ideas in the Early Stages

Corporate entrepreneurs are "on the clock" and have defend ideas early to people with the ability to kill the startup, sometimes as early as Day 1.
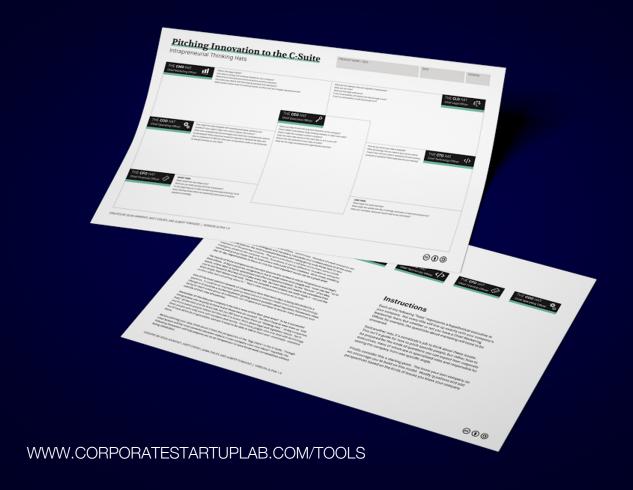
Lower Tolerance for Error

Gaps in knowledge or bad exchanges with the few important people (usually 5 or less) who control budgets can influence whether the project gets supported or killed. This is different for traditional entrepreneurs who can move onto other VCs.

More Breadth Required

Corporate entrepreneurs will face scrutiny from many disciplines and projects can be de-railed by key influencers with specialty areas of focus.

The Solution:

C-Suite Canvas

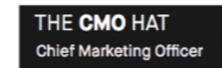# Think From Different Perspectives

C-Suite Canvas is a starting point, a checklist to make sure you've covered your bases before walking into a high-stakes meeting or water-cooler conversation.

- Track iterations and progressions of an idea
- Recognize gaps in the plan that need to be addressed
- Know who you are speaking with and generally understand their POV and if they are a friend or foe

Know Your Audience

THE **CEO** HAT
Chief Executive Officer

THE **CMO** HAT
Chief Marketing Officer

THE **CLO** HAT
Chief Legal Officer

THE **CTO** HAT
Chief Technology Officer

THE **CFO** HAT
Chief Financial Officer

THE **COO** HAT
Chief Operating Officer

Pitching Innovation to the C-Suite
Intrapreneurial Thinking Hats

THE CMO HAT
Chief Marketing Officer

What's the target market?
How does it overlap with existing markets for your company?
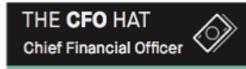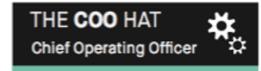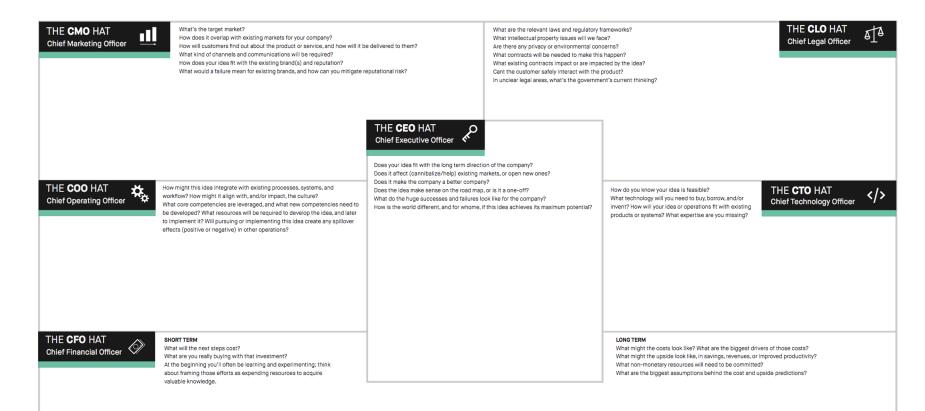How will customers find out about the product or service, and how will it be delivered to them?
What kind of channels and communications will be required?
How does your idea fit with the existing brand(s) and reputation?
What would a failure mean for existing brands, and how can you mitigate reputational risk?

THE CLO HAT
Chief Legal Officer

What are the relevant laws and regulatory frameworks?
What intellectual property issues will we face?
Are there any privacy or environmental concerns?
What contracts will be needed to make this happen?
What existing contracts impact or are impacted by the idea?
Cant the customer safely interact with the product?
In unclear legal areas, what's the government's current thinking?

THE CEO HAT
Chief Executive Officer

Does your idea fit with the long term direction of the company?
Does it affect (cannibalize/help) existing markets, or open new ones?
Does it make the company a better company?
Does the idea make sense on the road map, or is it a one-off?
What do the huge successes and failures look like for the company?
How is the world different, and for whome, if this idea achieves its maximum potential?

THE COO HAT
Chief Operating Officer

How might this idea integrate with existing processes, systems, and workflow? How might it align with, and/or impact, the culture?
What core competencies are leveraged, and what new competencies need to be developed? What resources will be required to develop the idea, and later to implement it? Will pursuing or implementing this idea create any spillover effects (positive or negative) in other operations?

THE CTO HAT
Chief Technology Officer

How do you know your idea is feasible?
What technology will you need to buy, borrow, and/or invent? How will your idea or operations fit with existing products or systems? What expertise are you missing?

THE CFO HAT
Chief Financial Officer

SHORT TERM
What will the next steps cost?
What are you really buying with that investment?
At the beginning you'll often be learning and experimenting; think about framing those efforts as expending resources to acquire valuable knowledge.

LONG TERM
What might the costs look like? What are the biggest drivers of those costs?
What might the upside look like, in savings, revenues, or improved productivity?
What non-monetary resources will need to be committed?
What are the biggest assumptions behind the cost and upside predictions?

Pitching Innovation to the C-Suite
Intrapreneurial Thinking Hats

THE CEO HAT — Chief Executive Officer

THE CMO HAT — Chief Marketing Officer

THE CLO HAT — Chief Legal Officer

THE CTO HAT — Chief Technology Officer

THE CFO HAT — Chief Financial Officer

THE COO HAT — Chief Operating Officer

It's said that an entrepreneur must "wear a lot of hats," and it's true. Founders of small companies are managers and salespeople, strategists and marketers, visionaries and numbers people all at the same time. As time goes on, the most successful founders start taking giving away those hats to new employees of the growing company. They get a salesforce, a full time accountant, some middle managers, whatever the company needs. Sometimes, it can be difficult for founders to relinquish control and give up these hats, to trust others with a part of their creations. Other times, shedding day-to-day responsibilities to focus on only the most important issues can be a great relief.

The results of those entrepreneurial journeys become the context in which intrapreneurs must begin their efforts. At big companies, intrapreneurs live in world where most people only "wear one hat," so to speak, where labor is highly specialized and often compartmentalized. As the "founder" of an idea, you're not forced to fill every job and play every role. But new ideas still need to be considered from every angle. Walt Disney once said, "When we consider a new project, we really study it--not just the surface idea, but everything about it." That's what intrapreneurs need to do as well.

One of the most common laments of intrapreneurs from their early days is being blindsided by a question. It could be an engineer getting asked about a revenue model when pitching a technology change or it could be a marketing person getting asked a question about regulatory frameworks when trying to reach a new group of customers, but intrapraneurs will have to answer many questions from outside of their area of expertise.

Remember all the hats your company's founders wore at first then gave away? To be a successful intrapreneur, you're going to have to put those hats on yourself. You don't have to wear them as "role hats" all the time and do every job, but you DO have to wear them as "thinking hats." At big companies, you'll encounter people whose full time job it is to just think about legal and regulatory issues. You'll have people who only work with numbers and money. You'll have people who only deal with technology. You'll have all kinds of specialists, and you'll need to be able to talk to them and--eventually--convince them.

Before pitching your idea, think about it from the perspective of the "big chairs" in the C-Suite. Through what lenses will the most powerful decision-makers in your company view new ideas? Hopefully the following framework will help prepare you as an intrapreneur to have those early conversations without being blindsided.

Instructions

Each of the following "hats" represents a hypothetical executive in your company. Not every title will line up exactly with your company's leadership team, but whether or not you have a Chief Marketing Officer, for example, the questions about marketing will need to be answered.

Said another way, it's somebody's job to think about these issues. This isn't a guide for how to pitch specific people, but rather, how to be prepared for the kinds of questions you can expect from corporate executives, many of whom are in specialized roles and responsible for seeing the company from one specific angle.

Finally, consider this a starting point. You know your own company, so we encourage you to build on this model. Modify questions and add perspectives based on the kinds of issues you know your company

Using the C-Suite Canvas

Identify your executive audience

Familiarize yourself with the key stakeholders

Try to anticipate their expectations, what they are most concerned about, and how your business concept will impact them (positives and negatives)

Understand that they are looking for potential risks as well as benefits

Adaptations are encouraged

Add questions popular within your company or department/team

Some companies have explicit requirements for pitches

Add boxes for specific people -- like a direct superior

*Pre-sell your idea formally and informally
in advance of big presentations!*