



Accelerating adoption

(If you haven't yet done so, [read this piece](#) which explains key factors which can influence adoption and diffusion of innovation. It suggests a number of approaches you could use to help promote acceptance and 'buy-in' to new ideas).

Either:

If you were responsible for promoting innovation, how would you use this information to accelerate adoption and diffusion of:

- (a) Your innovation solution for which you already have a value proposition and emerging business model

Or

- (b) Improvement plans for a local service provider

Or

- (c) One of the following:

- A new crop variety in Indian farms
- A new laundry product for stain removal
- An electric car for use in cities
- A new home entertainment system which replaces the television set with an 'intelligent wallpaper'
- A new educational approach for teaching mathematics
- An internet-based travel booking site
- A new working method replacing manual stock control with computer-based tools
- A new cooking system which relies on the idea of particle acceleration used in body-scanners
- A surgical procedure which is entirely carried out by robots
- Mobile money transfer using cell phones
- Renting music instead of buying and owning tracks
- Energy-saving intelligent meters in the home

For whichever case you choose try and map the ‘innovation characteristics’ which adopters will see and score your innovation against these criteria using the framework below. What steps might you take in improving the content or presentation of your innovation to enhance its chances of being adopted?

How do people ‘see’ the innovation?

Different people perceive the characteristics of an innovation (the ‘message’) in different ways and this is a subjective judgment. Whether or not our innovation is the best new thing since the invention of sliced bread is not the issue – it is how others perceive it which matters. So it helps to understand the key dimensions or characteristics of an innovation and how we can manage and shape perceptions around it. This is what advertisers do in their attempts to persuade us to adopt new products or services.

Researcher [Everett Rogers](#) spent his life working on the question of why people adopt innovations and what affects that and his set of five influential characteristics is still a good starting point for thinking in this direction.

Influential factors in adoption	Explanation	Key checklist questions
Perceived relative advantage	How much better is the new thing than what it is going to replace? Sounds simple but remember, it is how people perceive it, not whether you can prove it on some objective measure. Think about how to present a story which highlights the benefits of using this innovation...	Do we have evidence to prove a difference in performance on some dimension? Can we emphasis those features in our presentation of the message?
Observability	How visible is the advantage compared to what people had before? This is the ‘seeing is believing’ effect – and it’s very powerful. Our challenge is to make the advantage visible	Can we show the benefits – seeing is believing? Can we make visible the advantages of our innovation?
Complexity/ Simplicity	How hard it the innovation to understand – people can be easily put off adopting something which they don’t understand.	Can we present our idea in simple form?

	That's why so much advertising stresses how simple the innovation on offer is – and our challenge is to highlight this aspect of our innovation.	Can we make the idea easy to understand and communicate?
Trialability	Can we break the risk of adoption down (this factor is sometimes called 'divisibility')? Rather than ask people for an 'all or nothing' decision can we allow them to try our innovation out, see if it works for them and then make a full commitment. It's the logic behind offering trial samples, test drives, freemium offers on software, etc.	Are there opportunities to 'test drive' the new idea before making a full commitment? How can we divide up the risk in adopting our idea – for example a trial version, a trial period? Can we engage users in co-developing a prototype so they can shape and try it and bring their ideas into its design?
Compatibility	How well does the new thing fit into our current world? For example, does it fit physically, does it challenge cultural values and norms, does it disrupt behaviour patterns or power relationships, etc.?	How well do we understand the context in which our innovation is going to fit? Can we work with users to help with this and to identify key features which would enhance compatibility? What can we do to adapt our innovation to suit the world into which it is going?

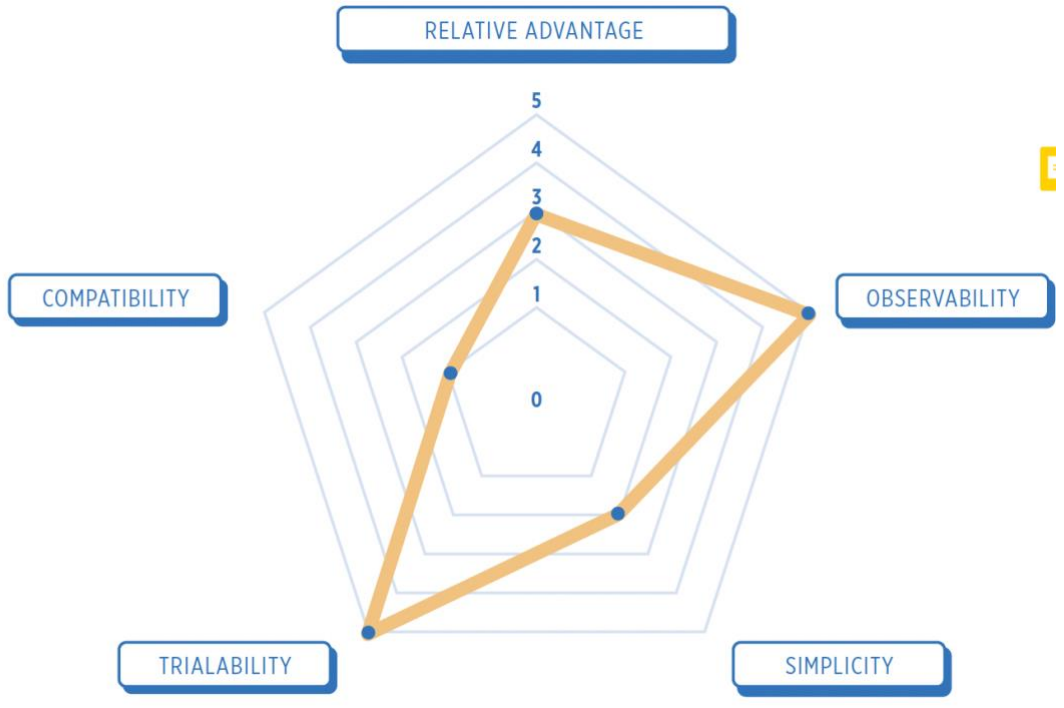


Try and plot your assessment of the way your solution stacks up against these on a simple 'spider' chart like this. Where are your strengths – and weaknesses? What might you do about it?

Here's a simple table and scoring scheme to help you:

Innovation characteristic	Score on the key checklist questions	1	2	3	4	5
	1= Not at all 2 = To a limited extent 3 = Satisfactory 4 = To a considerable extent					

	5 = Very well					
Perceived relative advantage	Do we have evidence to prove a difference in performance on some dimension?					
Observability	Can we show the benefits – seeing is believing? Can we make visible the advantages of our innovation?					
Complexity	Can we present our idea in simple form? Can we make the idea easy to understand and communicate?					
Trialability	Are there opportunities to ‘test drive’ the new idea before making a full commitment? Can we divide up the risk in adopting our idea – for example a trial version, a trial period? Can we engage users in co-developing a prototype so they can shape and try it and bring their ideas into its design?					
Compatibility	How well does the new thing fit into our target world? For example, does it fit physically, does it challenge cultural values and norms, does it disrupt behaviour patterns or power relationships, etc.?					



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