Fast Track to Innovation

5 Proven Points to Jumpstart Innovation
What’s Your Idea of Innovation?

For some, innovation means developing something today that was barely conceivable yesterday, like hailing a ride in a self-driving vehicle. It grabs headlines and gets people talking.

In others, innovation means optimizing an old process to run more efficiently, like streamlining a 6-hour software test cycle down to 45 minutes.

Your business and development workflows will determine the innovation processes you’ll use. But as a developer, you know that you can’t force innovation. But maybe, there are some new approaches that may help you get the creative juices flowing.
Tapping into Innovation Experts · This eBook contains inside perspectives shared by three prominent innovators: Andreas Gal, Ryan Peterson, and Mike Ogrinz. Read the best tips and takeaways recommended by these visionary developers to kick start innovation and maintain your competitive edge.

5 Proven Points to Jumpstart Innovation

ROI analysis isn’t always easy in innovation efforts, but if you think about it creatively enough, you can measure anything.

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Think and do things outside of your box.

Innovation isn’t difference for the sake of difference. But alternate perspectives can certainly light creative fires or be a great source of new and varied thought streams. Elicit help or brainstorm power from those you don’t normally consult with: artists, creative directors, operations personnel. They will provide you with different points of view and inputs than those you would usually get and your project may go in some exciting new directions.
Empathize with your customers.

Most of your customers or end users don’t look at problems through the lens of developer tools and APIs, the way you do. You can fix a few problems for them, but if you want to truly innovate, then supplement your technical skills with more business-specific insight into those problems. Don’t start with technology and try to figure out where to apply it; start with the customer’s pain-point.
Use innovation to build your brand.

Every company needs to stand out from the competition and as a developer you play a vital role in driving differentiation. By continuing to innovate, you provide a powerful platform to build brand and create loyalty. Whether it’s better, faster service or a completely new offering, your innovation efforts move the brand needle.

Always find something to measure.
Identify your two percent and innovate there.

Look for sparks of innovation in the least likely places. If you spend 98% of your time writing code, dive into the other two percent for nuggets of genius. Things like getting higher performance or more efficiency, a different twist on UI... they may appear less interesting at first, but may bear the fruit of innovation.

Find snippets of innovation along the way rather than concentrate on ‘The Big Idea’.
Find the Golden Triangle.

Hackathons have sprung up as an unstructured, resource-rich means of bringing developers together to innovate. But why restrict hackathons to just engineers? Extend your hackathon team to include colleagues and friends from Design and Business.

Then, take it a step further and attend hackathons with your customers for a quick, deep dive into innovation. Working together out of the office and away from structure is artificial, but it has the potential to lead to both a closer relationship and a batch of new ideas.

If you want to get something done, condense it into a 24-hour hackathon with an outcome, a deadline and your own Golden Triangle of business, design and engineering.
Your Turn – How Will You Innovate from Here?

Continuing to innovate can be like trying to grab water. Always remember, innovation has the best chance of thriving when it (1) incorporates others, because new and fresh perspectives help spawn new and different ideas, (2) focuses on solving real-world problems instead of merely trying out new technologies and tools, and (3) when it isn’t forced—because there’s no simple, deliberate process for achieving innovation.

Some innovations are as simple as doing old things more efficiently; others catch entire industries by surprise. In both cases, the seeds of innovation are in the way you lay the foundation for curiosity to flourish—the process of creating a new mindset to find something remarkable.

Ideas and innovation are very different things. You need the mental freedom to have an idea, but innovation is the ability to translate it into reality.
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