



# Applying a Human-Centric Framework to Accelerate Innovation



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Analyst

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# Selling energy drinks to a naysayer





**Real innovation sells meaning  
not just products**

# Agenda

**01** | **Introducing the Human-Centric Innovation Model**

**02** | Practical guide to human-centric innovation

**03** | Key takeaways

# Innovation starts with people

Align teams around real buyer needs before solutions

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**Human-centric innovation starts by defining unmet human needs before building solutions.**

- Define opportunities upstream before technological commitments
- Prioritize buyer-based market timing
- Center insights, innovation, and GTM on needs



# The Lux Human-Centric Innovation Model



## Inspire

Discover and define opportunities that are technically possible and culturally resonant.



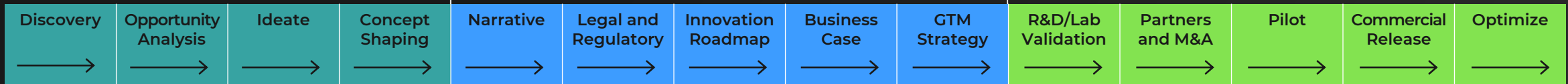
## Illuminate

Build organizational belief, alignment, and a clear business case for innovation.

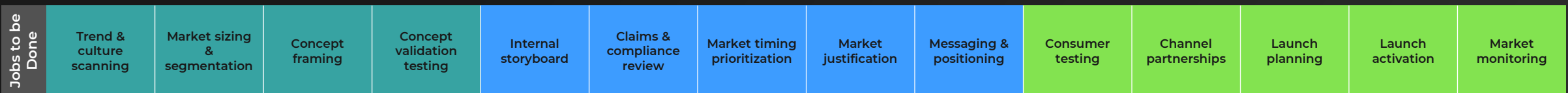


## Ignite

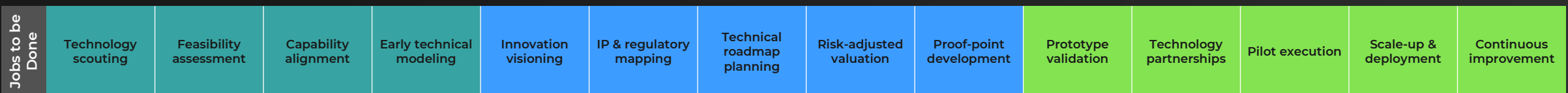
Bring ideas to life through validation, piloting, and commercial launch.



### Marketing



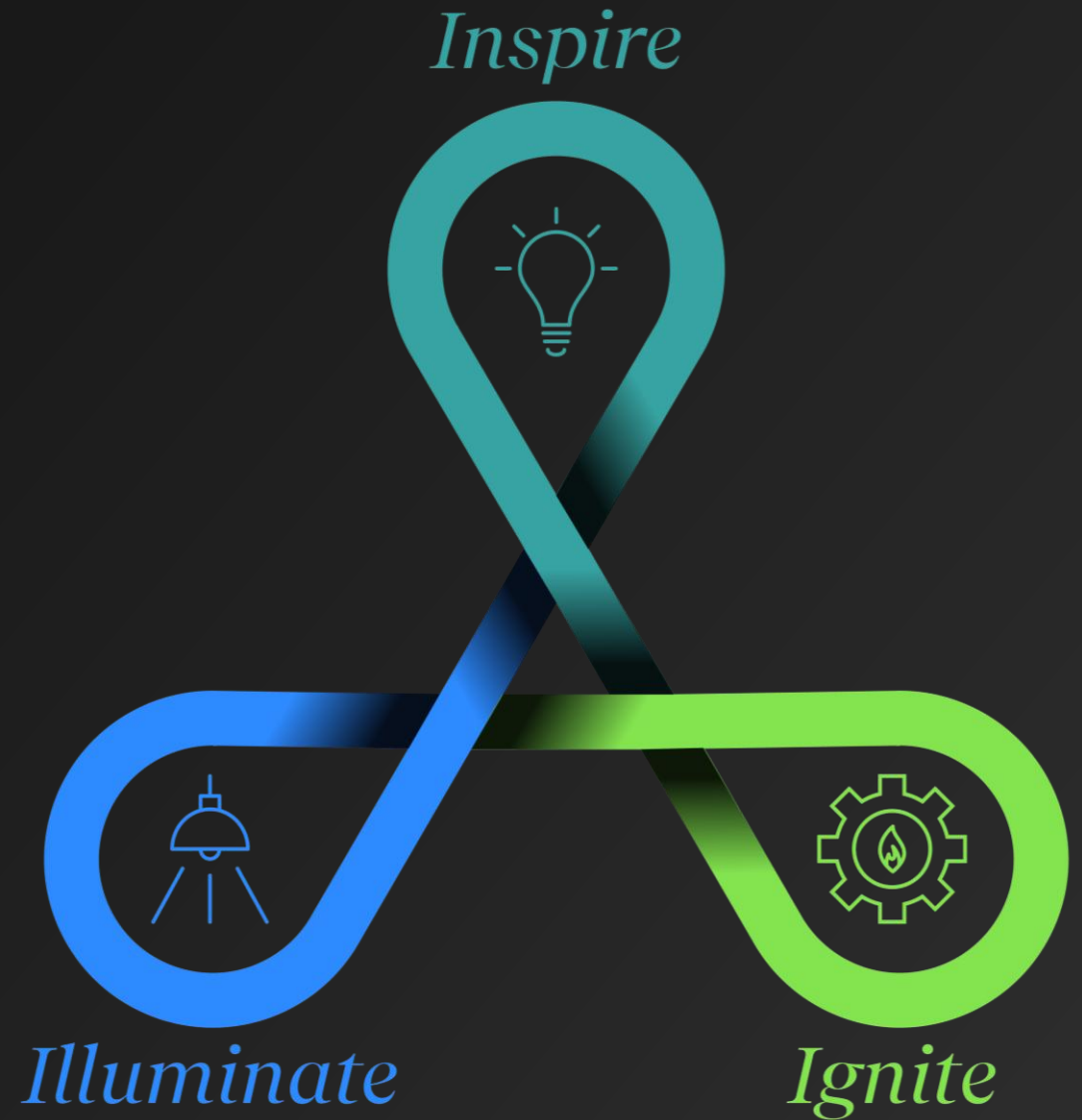
### Innovation



# Innovation is a learning system

Innovation gets stronger when teams learn and adapt continuously, not just move linearly from gate to gate.

- Run market, business, and technical validation in parallel.
- Feed pilot, testing, and launch learnings back into discovery.
- Replace rigid gates with checkpoints for reflection and recalibration.





# Why this framework outperforms others

The Human-Centric Innovation Model improves innovation outcomes by connecting technical progress to and human readiness.

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**Human-centric innovation reduces the risk of building something that is technically right but commercially wrong.**

- Connects technical maturity to customer desirability and commercial viability.
- Aligns R&D, insights, marketing, and business teams earlier.
- Increases agility through parallel workflows, feedback loops, and faster learning.





# Agenda

**01** | Introducing the Human-Centric Innovation Model

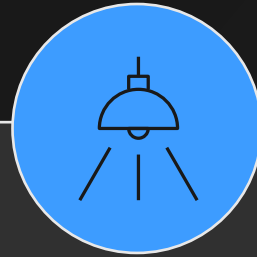
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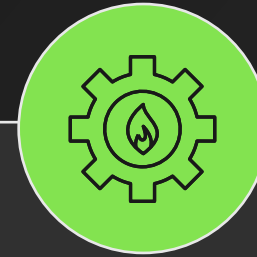
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## Inspire

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Define opportunities that are technically possible and culturally resonant.

This is where innovation begins, guided not by internal capabilities but by unmet human needs and shifting market realities.



# Inspire

## Activity-Based Stages



### Discovery



Identify new demand spaces, finding technologies that create opportunities or signal risk.



### Opportunity analysis



Gauge magnitude and timing of market potential, isolating and prioritizing buyer audience needs.



### Ideate



Understand how white space aligns to existing capabilities and strategy, uncovering any blind spots.



### Concept shaping



Validate the concept through theoretical sketches and qualitative research (proof of concept).

# Netflix original programming

Original programming push began with a clear read on unmet viewer demand.

Netflix identified a market need and prioritized an audience problem, opening a new opportunity space beyond its core licensing business.

- Demand for always-available content to binge watch.
- Made originals to meet specific needs and create strategic value.

## LUX TAKE

Using a human-centered approach, Netflix responded to unmet viewer demand, not to an internal ambition to become a studio. That is the logic of Inspire: Start with the human problem, then define the opportunity around it.



NETFLIX



# Virtual Anthropologist: Discover opportunities

With the Virtual Anthropologist you can:

- Identify unmet needs and hard-to-resolve tensions in existing spaces.
- Home in on the underlying emotional needs behind functional problems.
- Ideate and shape concepts interactively and in real time with a rich store of consumer data.

"what are consumers top unmet needs around functional ingredients and how can juice help meet those needs?"  
US | February 2026

Compare to...

### Themes, Underlying Symbolism & Key Insights

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>THEME:<br/><b>Simple clean label</b></p> <p>UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:<br/><b>Asserting personal health through ingredient simplicity</b></p> <p>KEY INSIGHT:<br/>Consumers prefer juices with few, recognizable ingredients and no artificial preservatives. Clean-label claims make functional additions feel safer and more convenient.</p> <p>"If it's got short ingredient lists and no preservatives I'm sold"</p> | <p>THEME:<br/><b>Know where it comes from</b></p> <p>UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:<br/><b>Claiming ethical and sensory trust through origins</b></p> <p>KEY INSIGHT:<br/>Shoppers want transparent sourcing and processing for fruit and added ingredients. Single-origin or clear processing notes reduce suspicion about flavor and quality.</p> <p>"Show me where the fruit came from and how you processed it and I'll buy it"</p> | <p>THEME:<br/><b>Immunity in a sip</b></p> <p>UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:<br/><b>Managing seasonal health with simple rituals</b></p> <p>KEY INSIGHT:<br/>Buyers want small daily doses of vitamin C, zinc, and antioxidants in a familiar juice form. Clear claims about immune ingredients make juice a preferred quick ritual.</p> <p>"A daily juice shot with vit C and zinc would replace my supplements"</p>            |
| <p>THEME:<br/><b>Low sugar control</b></p> <p>UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:<br/><b>Maintaining metabolic control without missing out</b></p> <p>KEY INSIGHT:<br/>Consumers worry about sugar spikes from juice. They want low-sugar or monk fruit options that still taste fruity and clearly support blood sugar control.</p> <p>"Love juice but hate the sugar hit; can we get monk fruit versions please"</p>               | <p>THEME:<br/><b>Flavor first masking</b></p> <p>UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:<br/><b>Protecting everyday pleasure while getting benefits</b></p> <p>KEY INSIGHT:<br/>People will choose functional juices only if added ingredients are taste-neutral. Masking off-notes with natural flavors matters more than listing every additive.</p> <p>"If it tastes great I don't care what's in it as long as it doesn't taste weird"</p>   | <p>THEME:<br/><b>Easy protein boost</b></p> <p>UNDERLYING SYMBOLISM:<br/><b>Simplifying daily strength routines</b></p> <p>KEY INSIGHT:<br/>Consumers want a convenient, tasty way to a measurable protein to their day without a shake ritual. Juice that clearly states protein grams and mixes well fills that gap.</p> <p>"I need a sipable protein fix that actually lists grams and doesn't taste like chalk"</p> |

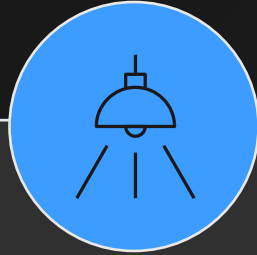


**Inspire works best when we widen the lens beyond familiar categories to connect with consumer needs.**



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# *Illuminate*

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Build organizational momentum through narrative.

At its core, Illuminate is about alignment — helping the organization understand the “why,” “what,” and “how” behind an innovation effort.



# *Illuminate*

## Activity-Based Stages



### Narrative



Craft the story that your key internal stakeholders get behind and believe in.



### Legal & Regulatory



Asses regulatory and policy risks and understand IP and NDA needs and any potential legal boundaries.



### Roadmap



Devise organic or inorganic paths for activating the innovation (product and messaging) vision.



### Business Case



Make a strong justification for investments in innovation for growth.



### GTM Strategy



Devise the campaign, marketing, and sales strategies.

# Microsoft adaptive controllers

Redefining ROI to show accessibility as a growth and innovation opportunity.

Teams built the case for adaptive controllers by treating accessibility as a human and business opportunity.

- Framed value beyond short-term sales, including reach, brand leadership, and stronger ecosystem relevance.
- Positioned inclusive design as core to Xbox's mission of making gaming accessible to more people.

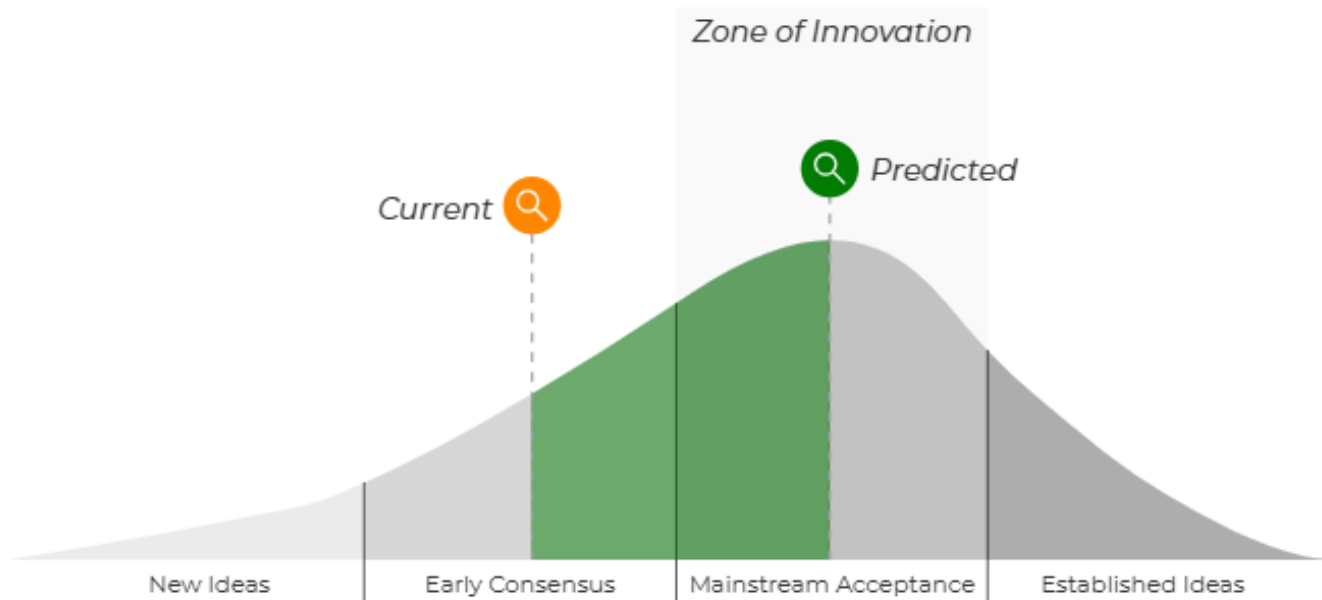
## LUX TAKE

Microsoft turned a human need into an internal story teams could support. It expanded ROI to include market reach, brand meaning, and a more emotionally resonant strategy.



Microsoft

# Cultural maturity is designed to align teams



## LUX TAKE

Cultural maturity tells you when an idea is likely to hit mainstream, optimizing go-to market strategy, and offers a perfect alignment metric to champion an internal idea and empower the narrative.





**Storytelling is leadership. Build the data,  
strategy, and emotional case together.**



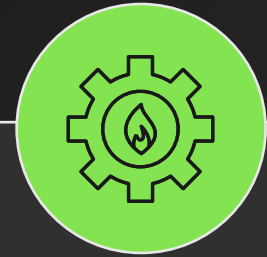
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# *Ignite*

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Move innovation from  
concept to market.

This is where theory becomes  
tangible, and strategy meets  
execution.



# *Ignite*

## Activity-Based Stages



R&D/lab  
validation



Test and validate  
the solution.



Partners and  
M&A



Search and select  
the right partner  
that brings the  
critical strengths  
you need.



Innovation  
Pilot



Develop  
prototypes and  
figure out how to  
scale the solution  
(minimally viable  
product).



Commercial  
release



Approve the final  
business plan,  
triggering  
successful product  
launch or  
technology  
deployment.



Optimize



Find ways to  
maximize growth  
into adjacencies or  
new markets via  
product updates  
or refreshed  
campaigns/  
promotions.

# Domino's end-to-end pizza turnaround

Domino's refreshed its core offering to optimize both product and communications.

Domino's strengthened brand performance through visible iteration and continuous learning.

- Used blunt customer feedback to improve the pizza and update the brand promise.
- Built advertising campaigns around showing customers the improvements, revitalizing public opinion.

## LUX TAKE

Iterative optimization made Domino's more relevant. The brand used consumer feedback to improve the offer, refresh its story, and strengthen results over time.





# Ongoing collaboration and monitoring

- We work with Lux experts across every stage of product launch life cycle
- Monitor consumer conversations monthly to track evolving needs and expectations
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams across Lux to translate insights into actions

## LUX TAKE

Companies that do ongoing research prove to be more resilience against external forces and more opportunistic when opportunities arise.





**Continuously reflecting, learning,  
and enhancing a product ensures a  
robust life cycle.**



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# Key Takeaways

1

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**Use discovery and opportunity analysis to understand the consumer before solutions are locked.**

Defining unmet needs, audience, and market space first helps teams quantify demand, prioritize buyer needs, and identify the human problem worth solving.

2

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**Turn insight into an internal narrative and business case that builds belief, aligns stakeholders, and secures investment.**

Here, insights makes the opportunity legible to the organization by shaping the story, strategic rationale, and decision framework others can rally behind.

3

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**Use ongoing monitoring of culture and customer feedback to optimize launches and feed learning into the next cycle.**

After launch, insights shifts from proving readiness to improving performance, using real-world response to refine execution and inform future opportunity discovery.

# Lux Client Action Items

1

## **Accelerate discovery with the Virtual Anthropologist.**

Use the Virtual Anthropologist to speed up discovery and opportunity analysis, helping teams surface unmet human needs, isolate buyer audiences, and pressure-test early opportunities.

2

## **Use our metrics to establish a shared innovation narrative.**

Use maturity, population, and other metrics to give innovation, insights, marketing, and business teams a common language for prioritization, internal alignment, and storytelling.

3

## **Understand how cultural readiness should impact timelines.**

Use our metrics to assess not just whether an opportunity is attractive, but whether it is ready, aligning technical progress with customer desirability and commercial viability.

4

## **Optimize by spotting cultural change before it becomes obvious.**

Work with our analyst team to identify early shifts in culture and market expectations so you can adapt messaging, refine launches, and feed new learning back into the next cycle.



# Thank you

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# About Lux

Lux Research fuels innovators to not only imagine what's possible in the future but also operationalize innovation success in the near term. We deliver research and advisory services to inspire, illuminate, and ignite innovative thinking that reshapes and grows businesses. Using quality data derived from primary research, fact-based analysis, and opinions that challenge traditional thinking, our experts focus on finding truly disruptive innovations that are also realistic and make good business sense.

The “Lux Take” is trusted by innovation leaders around the world, many of whom seek our advice directly before placing a bet on a startup or partner — our clients rely on Lux insights to make decisions that generate fantastic business outcomes. We pride ourselves on taking a rigorous, scientific approach to avoid the hype and generate unique perspectives and insights that innovation leaders can't live without.

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