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Hi. Everybody. Thanks for having me. My name is Nick Kittel, I'm a government performance and innovation coach. Sustain innovation is about building principals into your team that allow for you to build meaningful innovation into your programs. I want to run through some of the key principles that I help others understand, when it comes to building sustainable innovation. When we talk about how to do that, there are several principles that I usually help others understand. The first of these is asking why, why is the key to understanding the root cause of any issue? For those of you that have ever had Lean training, you know that asking why five times allows you to get down to the core of whatever issue you're trying to solve. The next thing we have to work on is creativity and perspective. The truth is that the creativity has been trained out of us. NASA ran a study that demonstrated that people lose their creativity over time. At five years old, 95 percent of us are creative geniuses. But by the time we become 30 years old, that number is less than five percent. So we have to help people understand what it takes to be creative and in just a minute, we'll walk through some of those techniques. We need to learn how to grow ideas better. The fact of the matter is we have a difficult time when it comes to better brainstorming. Here's how it usually works, I'd like you to show up at 8:00 AM on Monday and be infinitely creative and will solve a problem that's existed for 30 years in one hour. It sounds insane when I say it that way, but we have to learn how to be better at brainstorming and growing ideas, and we'll talk about that in just a second. Then we have to get better at piloting ideas. We have to take ideas and then learn how to build them into small pilot projects, so we can test a concept before we scale it up into larger and larger pilot programs, that allows us to go ahead and be effective when we implement new ideas without taking the serious risks of doing full scale implementations. Pilot projects are where the rubber meets the road. Team us is my management and leadership philosophy, I believe that the things that unite us are greater than the things that divide us, the opportunity for us to come together. It's how we lead when we don't have authority, but we need to lead with inspiration and invite others to be a part of our process. It's about that what unites us is greater than that which divides us, and the more people that are on our team us the better. Actionisms are about how we get ideas off the ground. How do you take that first step towards your brand new idea? What is it we can do to go ahead and unlock our abilities to get creativity implemented. Let's face it, there's nothing easy about innovation and if you're gonna make meaningful change, just know you will expect resistance along the way. Building your personal armor is what allows you to go ahead and do the difficult things you need to do in order to make innovation happen, because not everybody is going to be on board. Last but not least, we've to get better at selling our ideas. What is it that you can do to help communicate with others? Why your idea is so urgent that they need to act right now. Between these principles, asking why, learning how to be more creative, growing better ideas, between piloting our projects, building team us, getting action behind our ideas, building your personal armor and selling it. We have the fundamental building blocks to build great innovation into our programs. So let's dive in on this concept of creativity and perspective for a second. Why is creativity so crucial? Because it's been trained out of us, as I said, when you go through school, who has the right answers? Your teachers, when you're a little kid who has the right answers? Your parents, and once you get into the workplace, who has the right answers? Your boss, just kidding your boss probably doesn't. But at the same time, we've to get recognize that we're taught others have the right answers, this is called convergent thinking. Now when we're younger, we have what's called divergent thinking, which means we're capable of independent thought without worrying about the social consequences of the creativity of our ideas, but as we get older, we tend to have ideas that merge with others or play within social bounds, we've got to find a way to break out of that concept of convergent thinking and get back to that childlike wonder that comes with divergent thinking. That's how we build creativity back into what we do. Let me give you a few tips and techniques that you can use, to inject creativity back into your process. First of all, we have to recognize that creativity comes in waves. For any of you out there oldest, you know what I'm talking about. Creativity does not come on command, it's something that we have to spend time nurturing. Some of you are creative in the mornings, some of you are creative on your drive into work, some when you exercise, your creative wave is different and unique and it's different for every person. That's why when we put people in a room to brainstorm together on command, we're not honoring their creative processes. So it's important for us to recognize that, when you have a creative moment, you've got to ride that wave, and by the way, it doesn't come when you wanted to, it doesn't come every hour on command. When you have that moment, drop what you're doing, set aside the time to ride that creative wave for as long as you possibly can and you'll find yourself getting more and more creative and it will become easier and easier to do. Another one of my favorite techniques is taking it to the extremes. Start by asking your team extreme questions related to the problem or topic that you are trying to solve. For example, if you're trying to decide on a new service, ask yourself the question, what if we only had to serve one person with the service? How would we build it?. By doing that, chances are you're constructing a concept that is great customer service. Now beyond that, ask yourself the opposite question, what if we had to serve a 100 000 people with this idea, how would we build the service then? By asking these extreme questions, we start to create bookends for the realm of possibility, allowing us to operate inside a creative space that pushes the boundaries of opportunity as opposed to being stuck with the convergent thinking that we were talking about. Another one of my favorite techniques is one that I call force connections. It's where we take an idea or a problem statement, and we force connections with a completely random object. The only rule is the object that you're forcing an association with has to be completely

random. For example, let's say we wanted to talk about how to make airlines safe during this pandemic. Well we might take a random object such as this ChapStick, and forced connections. What's true about making an airline safe during this pandemic that's also true about ChapStick? Well, we need to provide a certain amount of protection. It's contained so we only have a certain amount of space that we need to deal with when we come to this as well as when it comes to dealing with airlines, dealing with COVID. We need to find ways to make sure that everybody's got a certain amount of personal protection. Those are some random associations that we could do between a ChapStick, and an airline. Now we also do the opposite with that. We would take this ChapStick and say, what's not true about this ChapStick that would be true about an airline needing to operate in the middle of this pandemic? One is, we have a lot of ChapStick. We may not have the ability to have that safety measure, or protocol on a plane. Another thing is that I can take this with me and provides the amount of protection that I need. Is that true for the same things that we're dealing with on planes, or are there special circumstances that we need to deal with? Again, the only goal here is to force our brains into different thinking patterns. By taking a random object and associating it with something that you are working on, you'll find brand new creative wavelengths and push yourself outside the bounds of what is normal thinking. That's what we're looking for in order to inject creativity into our teams. One of the other techniques we can use is to use our senses. Most people think that we have five senses, but Aristotle is the one that put out that idea that's how old it is. In fact, we have 22 senses and some say even more, but how many do you use when you brainstorm? Typically, it's one or two. Maybe sight, maybe sound, but the fact is we have 22 senses, so why not use other senses in your creativity processes? For example, our sense of smell is one of our strongest associations with memories. You can use this as part of your technique, or consider other senses such as time. When you're spending time with your friends on the weekend, how fast does time go? Then, when you're standing in line at the DMV, how long does time last? Consider how you might make something more fun in order to reduce the amount of time that it feels like somebody is waiting for something. By using or injecting other senses into our creativity process, we allow ourselves to explore spaces that we haven't explored in a long time and address other things that we don't typically address. Another one of my favorite techniques is to choose what to leave out. The fact of the matter is everything is buzzing and beeping and chirping at us these days. We're not meant to handle that amount of information. That's why we have the attention span of less than a goldfish. No kidding, a goldfish has an attention span of eight seconds, and we as humans have one of seven seconds. That's in large part due to the fact that we have more information coming at us than ever before. It inhibits our creativity process. So choosing to leave out information not only allows us to move faster and in a more creative direction, but prevents paralysis by analysis. Well, that's great neck, but how do we actually brainstorm and make it worthwhile? I want to run through some of my favorite brainstorming techniques with you so that you can harness the creativity, and innovation of your employees. The first of the techniques I want to talk about is a concept called flower versus weed. When a plant comes out of the ground, if you were to ask somebody who's just looking at it as it barely sprouts, whether that's a flower, or whether that's a weed, fact of the matter is they probably wouldn't be able to tell you, but if you give it a little more time, say another week or two, it becomes immediately obvious which that is, a flower versus a weed. Ideas are the exact same way. You don't know when you hear an idea, whether it's a good idea, or a bad idea. So we have to take time to grow ideas for longer so that we can determine whether something's a flower, or whether something is a weed. There was a case in the Netherlands a few years back where litter was occurring in an affluent neighborhood. So they do what they do as government and they put together a task force and they ask people, what ideas do you have to end the litter problem. What they came up with were ideas like, what if we doubled the fine? What if we made it fun to throw away trash, and a whole variety of ideas? Now the idea of throwing away trash and making it fun to do was initially laughed out of the room, and where they landed after the first meeting was to double the fine. But the truth is, doubling the fine did virtually nothing. Because the people who were littering didn't have a sense of civic responsibility, so it did not solve the problem at all. Now three weeks later, they had to come back together again because no progress had been made, and so they dusted off the ideas that they had heard. One of those being, what if we made it fun for people to throw away trash? But this time they got serious about exploring that idea. They built trash cans with a lid that when you lifted it up, played a simple joke, a fun joke, and so who came to the parks? The kids. Who came with them? The parents. So now you had the kids, and the parents in the parks, and the public spaces which mean litter went down. The way they were able to do this was by taking an idea that initially seemed like a weed, and they developed it into a flower. So don't be too hasty, or too quick to judge an idea when you hear it because you never know which is a flower, and which is a weed. Another one of the most important things we can do when brainstorming is something I call sun versus rain. Sun stands for suspend, understand, and nurture. Rain stands for react, assume, and insist. During a brainstorming process, we need more sun and less rain. How does it work? Well, first of all, when you hear an idea that makes you react, you need to suspend. You need to take a two minute timeout and start to process why is it your feeling this way about this idea? Then instead of assuming certain things, what we want to do is understand how it works. We ask clarifying questions to help understand, to make sure we fully understand where somebody is coming from. Then we don't insist that this is the way we've always done it, or that's not the way we do it here, we nurture and build on somebody's idea instead of saying but we say and. By doing those things we can suspend, understand, and nurture great ideas instead of allowing our reactions, and our assumptions, and our insistence to kill off creativity. At the end of the day, the facilitator for any brainstorming process is part of the key to your

success. Many people try and look for a facilitator in their own work teams, and if you have access to one that's great. By default, people tend to use the boss who I would say almost should never be the one with the pen. When we think about it, look to your entire organization to find the people that not only demand respect but command it as well. Those people are going to be much more effective in helping you move great ideas forward. The other advantage of finding somebody outside your work team as your creative facilitator, is that they're not beholden to the politics of your work team. They're able to help push through ideas and they're going to call you on things that don't make sense. An outside facilitator is a great way to make sure that you're harnessing and hearing the ideas of your employees in your team. Some of the rules I use for brainstorming include things like, live at the edges. Which means if you're a quiet person, please speak up and if you're a loud person, please shut up. We have to understand that respect is a right. You shouldn't have to say it, but you always need to say it. The other option is vote with your feet, if you don't want to be here, I don't want you here. Feel free to leave the room, and sometimes people do, and that's okay. We want to make sure everybody is respected in the process, and it's not the same for everybody. But we do need rules around how we're going to facilitate and how we're going to brainstorm, especially with larger groups or larger audiences. The other thing is voices are like spices, sometimes you need a very little amount of a spice in order for it to make a big impact, and sometimes you need a heck of a lot more. It's incumbent upon us as we brainstorm to make sure that the voices are being heard in the right amounts. Our brainstorming process as we typically hold it favor or value people who are loud, extroverts. They don't favor or value those who were quieter, those who are more thoughtful, or those who are predisposed to finding problems in an idea. But we can value those people. Just remember, voices are like spices, so you have to be careful how much to introduce into your brainstorming process. One of the things that we can do is to take a break that allows us to value everybody in the process. Let me tell you how that works. We hold one session, one brainstorming session in one week, and then we come back put one week between that, and come back the next week. The reason we do this is it allows us to go ahead and have our own creative waves. We talked about that. You're creative, not on command, but when you feel creative. Maybe you're creative when you drive, maybe you're creative when you're running. By putting you in a room and saying we have to solve a problem in an hour, we're not respecting anybody's creative process. If we ask people to think about this idea during the course of their week, they may have that creative brainwave during some other part of the week that they can then inject or suggest into the process. They can submit ideas during the course of that week to the facilitator to be added in to next week's discussion. What this also allows us to do, is to hear voices that are sometimes marginalized in the way that we typically hold brainstorming processes. For example, the quiet person may feel uncomfortable speaking up in a room full of people, well now they have an outlet to submit their ideas to the facilitator. The thoughtful person may need times to consider information that they heard in the program during the day. Once they consider that information, they may have the light bulb go off, and they can submit their ideas. By allowing the quiet people and the thoughtful people to submit ideas, we have a better cadre of ideas to be able to choose from, a better portfolio of ideas to choose from. Next week we come back and we review all of the ideas that came in that week. Now everybody's voice is being heard in this process. What I know is that the idea that you think is a great idea in week 1 is almost never the idea that you end up choosing in week 2, once people have a time to be creative and we respect their process. When we come in for that second week, the facilitator adds the new ideas into the conversation. Then we begin to go through a process of exploring and then narrowing those ideas down to some that are more actionable. Lots of times I'll use voting stickers, although there's a number of different ways to get there. But at this point, we want to consolidate ideas and start to narrow the focus so that we can start to put meaningful action behind those ideas. Once we have three, typically three to five ideas, we break out into teams and start to explore those. The idea is to build the idea and then break the idea and then build the idea again. This allows those people that see problems with the idea to be a part of the process in a constructive way. When we have an idea, the team should focus on how do we build this to make it the best idea possible? If we're doing that on several different ideas at the same time, we're starting to build in great concepts. Then we break the idea. Intentionally, go through the process of talking about why won't this idea work? What's wrong with this idea? What political obstacles, what financial obstacles, what makes it impossible for this idea to work? Really put your effort into that. Then we go back and we build again, allowing ourselves to address those comments that might prevent us from being successful. That way, people who feel like there's a problem with the concept, have the chance to have their voice heard and we have a chance to address what their issues are. That allows us to go through a process. If you need to go through that process multiple times, build-break, build-break. It may be that during that process one or two of those ideas drop off the list and that's okay. But then we just worry about building the other ideas up. After we go through this build and break process, we ask folks to fall in love with the idea. Even if it wasn't your idea, we want you to fall in love with it. What is it you love about this idea? How can you support the team? By virtue of the fact that everybody has been involved in the creative process, we've now heard the voices of those that are extroverted, those that are introverted, those that are thoughtful, and those that are dismissive of the idea. Now we've built them into the process. Hopefully, we're able to gain support and have everybody fall in love with the idea that we created. At a minimum, at least we'll know who is going to actively oppose the idea and be able to talk with them separately about how they might sit on the sidelines for this one so that we can take the idea forward. But, at least you know where everybody's coming from. Once everybody falls in love with this brilliant idea that you've come up with, you've got to get momentum. Momentum is key in innovation. It's about building little wins

into bigger wins. Think about the smallest, quickest win you can get your hands on as as team. It may just be scheduling the next event or coming up with a team name. Those may be the little small wins that you can get right now. But people want to be on teams that have momentum. It's important for us to get those small wins so they can lead to those bigger wins so that everybody feels like this process is moving forward full-speed ahead. That's how we get more and more people involved in our innovation efforts. But like I said, once we have a great idea, we've got to pilot it. We've got to try out and find out whether it works in the real world, and not every idea does. A pilot culture or a culture that's willing to try out pilot projects for new ideas is one that values trying. That is a culture that has the capacity to innovate. That's what pilot programs are about, building a culture that tries. To do a pilot program, we scale it down into its smallest components. What's the smallest size I can do a program that's related to my idea and learn meaningful, valuable lessons. Once I've had a chance to test it for the shortest possible time in the shortest possible environment, then I can scale up or down an idea as I learn lessons. But the goal is to iterate rapidly. Very similar to what it is we've been learning about in the course already. But we've got to be able to scale these ideas up in rapid fashion. The way to do that is to try the idea out, learn lessons, pivot and iterate quickly, and then build on that idea and expand the pilot project. It's okay, some of these innovation projects won't work. Just remember, honesty is your best currency when it comes to building meaningful innovation. These are some of the tools and techniques that I've learned through actually doing innovation in large-scale environments. It's incredibly important that we learn how to brainstorm better. We need to build the creativity and perspective back into our processes. We're building in that change mindset that allows us to deal with the risk of the way we've always done it. What we're doing is learning how to rapidly change and iterate similar to what we learned in Agile Mindsets. We've got to be able to take techniques, expand our creative process, build in great brainstorming, and then get action behind her ideas. If we can do this, we build in the growth mindset to our organization that allows us to build super creative ideas and actually create meaningful results by implementing creativity, which is the core of great innovation. I just want to say thanks for being a participant in this course. Thanks for expanding your mindset, your knowledge. I want to say thanks to Oksana for having me today. It was my honor to be with you and I hope this allows you to expand your creative processes.