



Stimulus Mining Fundamentals

Share discoveries with your team by
1) entering on InnovationEngineeringLabs.com or
2) by building a Stimulus Spark Deck

MARKET Mining: Using information about direct / indirect competitors, and internal / supply chain assets to spark ideas and fresh thinking.

Borrowing Brilliance - Explore how direct / indirect competitors in other CITIES, STATES, and COUNTRIES make, package and market similar products and services.

Stay Ahead of the Competition - Search for the latest patents & trademarks filed by your competition. Search for the latest news articles, press releases, interviews, etc. from or about your competition.

Benchmarking

External

- Advantages we have versus competition.
- Disadvantages we have versus competition.
- What new product would most “scare” competition?

Internal

- Unused resources or excess capabilities that we have.
- What customer/market is the most profitable to us?

Tour your Operations / Production Process & ask...

- *What do we do that you are the most proud of?*
- *What do we do differently than our competition - and WHY do we do it this way?*
- *What raw materials, people, and processes are we the most picky about?*

Supply Chain Mining

Talk with your Suppliers and Suppliers' Suppliers...

- *What makes them great?*
- *What do we get that's different than others?*
- *What should we be telling our customers about what they provide?*
 - If cost was not an issue - what could they do to help us make our process more reliable?
 - What is the tradeoff of cost versus quality?

Get Your Hands Dirty

- See, Feel and Experience your competitor's offerings
- Learn about and experience Next Door Neighbor Industries / Categories
- Consider other ways customers receive the end effect that your product promises

Reflect

- *What products/services are seeing unexpected success?*
- *What customers are growing faster than expected?*
- *What markets are growing faster than expected?*

Translate discoveries into sparks! Post a summary of your finding plus an idea starter at InnovationEngineeringLabs.com. Include links, files, photos, videos, etc.

FUTURE Mining: Using trends and predictions about the Future to spark ideas and fresh thinking.

Next 12 Month Market Gossip

Talk to supplier sales people, trade association staff and your own technical and sales staff.

- *What changes might occur with competition, customers, and/or raw materials?*
- *What is likely to be the next big shift?*
- *What markets are likely to grow in the next year?*

Explore Trend Forecasters for ideas and insights

Ted.com TrendWatching.com Futurist.com Wired.com/wired/scenarios GOOGLE, "Trends in [industry]"

Connect with Lead Users

What frustrates you with current offerings? What do you wish you had? What's New?

Read about or imagine possible or predicted MEGA SHIFTS related or unrelated to your industry

- Possible or Predicted MEGA SHIFTS in Demographics
- Possible or Predicted MEGA SHIFTS in Laws, Regulations
- Possible or Predicted MEGA SHIFTS in Societal, Cultural, or Customer Behavior
- Possible or Predicted MEGA SHIFTS in Technology

For each Mega Shift...

1. Consider the possible **CONSEQUENCES** of that shift occurring in the future.
2. Consider the **OPPORTUNITIES** for innovation should that shift occur.

Explore Future Scenarios and the repercussions for your organization and your industry at large:

Optimistic Scenario - Things will be much better because...

Innovation Scenario - An innovation is introduced into our industry and it causes...

Pessimistic Scenario - Things will be much worse because...

Transformation Scenario - Something spectacularly good happens...

Anticipating the Future: Answer yourself and/or interview thought leaders in your company / industry.

- *What market segments do you see becoming much bigger over the next 5 years?*
- *Where do you see technology in your industry going 5 years or 10 years from now?*
- *What regulatory, raw material and other operational challenges do you see in the next 5 to 10 years?*
- *What companies seem to be the most vulnerable in your opinion?*

Track Trends: Go to www.Google.com/trends

- Enter various ways of describing : 1) What you do, 2) What benefit you promise, or 3) What problem you solve. Separate the options with a comma.
- Review what words people most search for.

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PATENT Mining: Using existing patents and inventions to spark ideas and fresh thinking.

Search at InnovationEngineeringLabs.com, Patent ROI page, Patent Search database

- Free Patents
- Flea Market Patents
- Active Patents

Search at freepatentsonline.com or google.com/patents

Search cutting edge technology at University or Federal Lab Tech Transfer websites

Use Deconstruction to help guide your search -

- Consider searching for the components of your product / service individually
- Consider problems to solve and/or benefits you hope to offer
- Consider the bigger picture environment that your product / service fits in to and innovate “around” it
- Consider technology from end to end; design, procurement, production, sales, delivery, use, reuse, disposal, recycle

Connect parts and pieces of the inventions into a total solution.

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WISDOM Mining: Using academic research to spark ideas and fresh thinking.

Reflect

- *What don't we know?*
- *What stumps us?*
- *What do we debate but don't know for sure?*
- *What science questions could we search for latest learning?*
- *What business & psychology questions could we search?*

Search at www.InnovationEngineeringLabs.com - Tools - Stimulus Mining section - Academic Search

Search at www.scholar.google.com Google Bing dogpile.com ask.com

Read Name, Abstract, Background ---- Cross Reference Citations for More Info

Connect, call, or e-mail experts for further contacts and perspective.

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INSIGHT Mining: Using the voice of the customer to spark ideas and fresh thinking.

Digital Dig

- Find comments and opinions related to your company & industry from social media, blogs and review sites, surveys, comment cards, or suggestions previously collected
- Find data about your customers and possible customers' behavior, demographics, psychographics

Connect with Current Customers: Talk to Current Customers asking them....

- *What are we doing that you'd like us to stop doing? Ask why to dig for root cause issues.*
- *What would like us to start doing? Ask why to dig for root cause issues.*
- *What could make us easier to do business with? Ask why to dig for root cause issues.*
- *What's next?*

Discover Non-Customer Perceptions: Talk with Non-Customers and ask their perceptions. HONOR their PERCEPTIONS - Don't Debate them!

- Ask Positive Perceptions about our offering versus others.
- Ask Negative Perceptions about our offering versus others.

Interview Possible Customers: Talk with those who could become customers

- *What do you like about ___ (category, product/service, process)___? Ask why to dig for root cause issues.*
- *What do you dislike about ___ (category, product/service, process)___? Ask why to dig for root cause issues.*
- *What would be such a WOW that you'd be willing to pay more money for or completely change your behavior for if it was available?*

Observe customers in the act of purchasing / using your offerings or competitive offerings.

- *Watch for "frustrations" and "work arounds"*
- *Watch for how they "adapt", "use", and "misuse"*
- *Consider their attitude and perception around their experience*

Conduct a Quantitative Survey - IE Labs, Merwyn Rapid Research, Insight Mining

- Using IE Labs, run an Idea Starter Survey to gauge interest in a collection of raw ideas
- Using IE Labs, run a Problem Survey to quantify the importance and frequency of problems customers encounter

Customer Service Dig

Connect with your front line sales people or customer service department and ask...

- *What gets customers the most excited?*
- *What motivates customers to switch to our offering?*
- *What customers/markets are small today but could be bigger soon?*

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Reflection What did you learn?