



WOMEN IN GAMING & HOSPITALITY
International Scholarship

Leading Innovative Change

UC BERKELEY EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

COMPLETED BY WENDY LI

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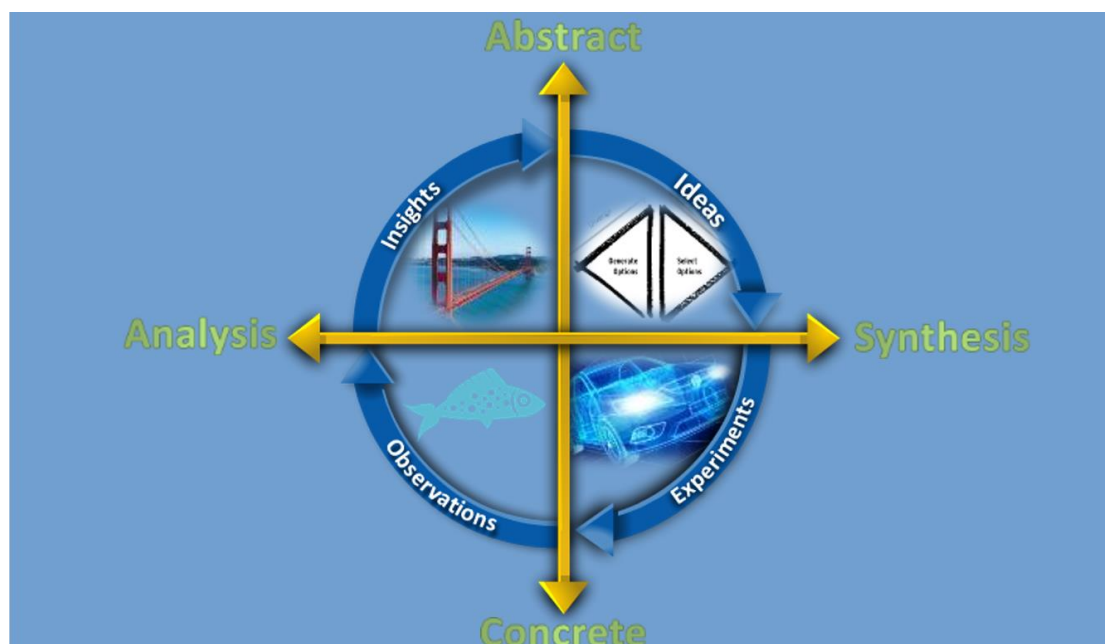
To continue being a leader in any industry requires ongoing change and evolution. From new technologies to new processes and systems, in our industry, whether they are casino management programmes, Host Responsibility measures, product optimisation tools, F&B POS solutions, or hotel management programmes, I have been a part of some exciting advancements and innovative changes in the past 12 years. Change is often viewed as interruption, but a well led and successfully implemented change can make a powerful transformation to a business.

Over the six-week course of Leading Innovation Change, a number of modules were covered including the process of innovation, building an innovation toolkit, designing experiments, and cultivating a culture of innovation. I thoroughly enjoyed the learning experience and have added many tools to my toolbox. Below are my key takeaways from each module.

Module 1 of the program taught me the **value of innovation in organisations**, the **process of innovation**, the **importance of observations** and how to conduct **Ethnographic Interviews**.

As part of the course, we were asked to identify an organisational challenge or opportunity to address and follow the steps of defining the customer segment, conducting interviews, analysing customer needs, extracting insights, formulating a new idea and designing an initial experiment to test assumptions underlying the idea. My chosen subject was to look at long-term sustainability of customer growth in land-based casinos, with the focus to explore the types of entertainment the younger demographic is seeking. I conducted five interviews with five exiting SkyCity Hamilton customers, who represented a diverse range of backgrounds. During the process, I had the opportunity to practice some new techniques on how to unlock the interviewee's world, such as, no pre-conceived views (empty the brain) and asking open, emotional and future-orientated questions.

The Berkeley Innovation Process includes a four-part model: Observation, Insights, Ideas and Experiments, which is a process of diverging (generate options) and converging (select options).



In **Module 2**, I learnt how to develop **Customer Empathy Maps** and **Customer Profiles**. Empathy Mapping was a great tool in helping me organise the data obtained during the interviews into a coherent portrait of each customer, I then generated Customer Profiles to extract commonalities and trends, in order to identify their true wants, needs, and pain points. Here are some examples of my findings, which I believe are applicable to the industry:

What are customers seeking from a land-based casino and why they visit?

- Looking for work life balance
- A place to relax and unwind
- Spend time with friends and partners
- Would like to be wowed and feel special
- Played online, but likes the glitz and glamour of a land-based casino
- A place with the 'feel good' factor and happy people
- Like the experience nature of a land-based casino – fun and escape from the real world
- Looking for service, friendliness and cleanliness
- Looking for game diversity and interactive table dealers
- Tend to play on games they are familiar with
- Good live entertainment

What customers would like to see more of?

- More interactive staff
- Consistency in personalised customer service
- More entertainment, cater for different demographic at different times (i.e. more a night club feel on weekends)
- More facilities and entertainment for non-gamer friends/partners
- Cashless options
- More interactive promotions – add to the unique experience
- More spot prizes on tables similar to online gaming promotions (i.e. Roulette winning number prize)

In **Module 3**, we were shown how to put together a **Value Proposition Canvas** and **Business Model Canvas** to help create ideas. The Business Model Canvas includes Customer Segments, Value Propositions, Key Activities, Key Recourse, Key Partners, Channels, Cost Structure and Revenue streams.

This is an exercise that I plan to do with my team in future strategy and brainstorming sessions. It is a good way to evaluate how we are currently providing value to SkyCity customers; how all current products and services build our value proposition; and how those products and services alleviate customer pain points and create customer gains.

Module 4 is the **Experiment Design** phase. We were asked to come up with a small-scale experiment to begin the process of testing the viability of our idea. Trying an idea out on a small scale not only helps businesses adjust an idea for maximum impact, it helps provide assurance that the idea adequately addresses the need identified, before investing large amounts of time, energy, and money in pursuit of that idea. The goal is to find a way

to make the solution tangible so customers can experience and provide feedback. Given the time constraints of the course, participants were being asked to design the experiment and not to conducting it. I am looking forward to sharing this with my team and working on the execution phase with support from other stakeholders.

Module 5 is about creating a story, **how to communicate change** and utilise the **Story Framework** to put together the “Pitch”. I was able to reflect on my innovation journey to date and bring key pieces from the previous modules together into a summary to create a basic story framework. This framework helped me form the foundation of an engaging narrative and an informative presentation that I am excited to share with key stakeholders.

In the **final module**, we learnt the role of culture, **culture as a tool** and to **cultivate a culture of innovation**. My key “takeaways” from this module are:

A culture will form in a team and an organisation. The question is whether it is one that helps or hinders the organisation’s ability to execute strategic objectives. As a leader, it is my responsibility to cultivate an effective culture. Organisational culture is too important to leave to chance. Leading through culture requires creating the context in which people are encouraged and empowered to do their very best.

Tools for forming, strengthening and changing an organisational culture:

- Recruiting and selecting people who fit the culture you’re trying to create,
- Training and developing people initially and through their careers,
- Rewarding and recognising people to create a vivid picture of what success looks like,
- Leading intentionally and visibly to help people learn to make strategically relevant, tough trade-offs. Signal to others what is important.

Culture “works” when it is consistent, coherent and comprehensive. Attributes of successful role models are to give people rapid feedback accompanied by consistent and comprehensive rewards; make sure that successful role models are easy to spot; recognize people publicly for strategic success.

What I will do differently is be more deliberate and practice using these tools to ensure that I am leveraging my culture to inspire and enable my team to achieve its most important strategic objectives.

I would like to once again express my sincere appreciation to WGHA for this amazing opportunity. I have developed a real passion for the Gaming and Hospitality industry, and it’s my desire to continue to learn, grow and make a difference. I am very proud to have completed the Berkeley University of California Leading Innovative Change program. I am looking forward to being able to put into practice and share with my team what I have learnt from this program.

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EXECUTIVE EDUCATION



This is to confirm that

Weilin (Wendy) Li

has successfully completed

Leading Innovative Change

October, 25 - December 05, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Rielly".

Mike Rielly, Chief Executive Officer

Berkeley Executive
Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann E. Harrison".

Dean, Haas School of Business

BerkeleyHaas

ISSUED DATE
December 12, 2021

CERTIFICATE ID
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