INNOVATION: YOUR LAST UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

IS YOUR COMPANY
TAKING ADVANTAGE
OF WHAT INNOVATION
CAN DO?

Making predictable, rapid progress whilst innovating is challenging for almost all companies and brands

Strategy Stasis

Translating vision into actionable opportunities

Disconnected Solutions

Failure to weave lasting value throughout the end-end consumer life-cycle

Investment Disfunction

Over committing to single solutions vs ecosystems. Investing too early or too late.

Short-termism

Inability to balance quick wins vs long-term lasting progress

Siloed Resources

Isolated disciplines, data, decision making, solutions and progress

Pilot Purgatory

Inability to move from pilots to full scale launch / scalability

Innovation can now be low-cost.

Not “big budget, big bet.”
It is “small evidence
before big investment.”

Boardroom thinking. Without the boardroom budget.

Innovation frameworks once reserved for big-company consulting, now made fast and accessible for your business.

AI upheaval is creating new opportunities across every business

New Market Adjacencies

Existing capabilities can now serve new customers, needs and categories

Emerging Customer Needs

New behaviours, anxieties and expectations are creating unmet demand

Reimagined Experiences

Services once too complex or costly can now be personalised at scale

New Economic Possibilities

AI is lowering the cost of creating, operating and delivering value

Expanded Ecosystems

New partnerships provide access to capabilities, data, audiences and distribution

New Revenue Models

Knowledge, data and services can become platforms, subscriptions and intelligent products

Introducing:

The

SoUnfair

Tools

VML

Tool 1:

Look Next Door

TIP 1

BABI Mapping:
Find growth around and inside your current business

BABI Mapping

Fill this in for your business

What value do we provide today?: (What are you doing that customers are paying for?)

Before us: (What customers struggle with before reaching us?)

After us: (What remains unresolved after using us?)

Beside us: (What else they buy to achieve the same wider goal?)

Inside us: (What capabilities or assets we could redeploy?)

Best adjacency to explore:

Output: "An adjacency we should explore is _______ because we already have _______."

FILLED EXAMPLE

Amazon becoming Amazon Marketplace: From selling products to enabling others to sell

Amazon had already built an online storefront, product catalogue, customer base and transaction system. Instead of stocking every product itself, it opened those capabilities to third-party sellers—expanding customer choice while creating a new platform business.

BABI Mapping

What value do we provide today?:	Books online
Before us	Customers have to search across physical bookstores to find the title they want.
After us	Customers still need other products—and may want used, rare or out-of-stock books that Amazon does not carry.
Beside us	Customers are buying from specialist retailers, independent booksellers and other online stores.
Inside us	We already have customer traffic, trusted product pages, a digital catalogue, ordering and payment infrastructure.

An adjacency we should explore is creating a Marketplace because we already have the logistics and e-commerce know-how.

Tool 2:

Borrow What Works

TIP 2

Borrow & Improve Generator: Borrow what works, localise it, improve it

B&I Generator

Fill this in for your business

Borrow:	(What proven idea, category or model do we admire?)
Audience:	(Who is underserved by the current version?)
Localise:	(What must change for our market, culture or channel?)
Improve:	(What can we make simpler, faster, cheaper, more trusted or more premium?)
Foot-in:	(What narrow segment or use case can we start with?)

Best opportunity / next move:

Output: “It is like ______, but for ______, improved through ______.”

FILLED EXAMPLE

Grab X Localised ride-hailing: From global model to Southeast Asian realities

Grab did not invent app-based ride-hailing. It adapted the model for fragmented markets, local taxis and motorbikes, cash-heavy behaviour, driver trust and city-by-city regulation—then expanded into payments, delivery and more local services.

What did Grab borrow and improve:

Borrow:	App-based ride-hailing: match riders and drivers with location, pricing and ratings.
Audience:	Southeast Asian commuters, taxi drivers and later motorbike users needing safer, easier transport.
Localise:	Support taxis, motorbikes, cash behaviour, local languages, city-specific rules and driver onboarding.
Improve:	More trusted booking, clearer pricing, driver identity, cashless options and wider daily services.
Foot-in:	Begin with transport pain points, then expand into adjacent everyday transactions.

It is like global ride-hailing, but for Southeast Asian everyday mobility, improved through local payments, trust and transport formats.

Tool 3:

Don’t Build Alone

TIP 3

Partner Equation:
Grow faster by combining strengths instead of building alone

Partner Equation

Fill this in for your business

Opportunity: (What could we offer together that is hard to offer alone?)

We bring: (Customers, brand, product, trust, distribution, data, space?)

We lack: (Technology, expertise, access, credibility, capital, operations?)

They bring: (Who already has the missing capability?)

Win-win: (What do we gain, what do they gain, what does the customer gain?)

Best partnership move:

Output: “We bring _____, they bring _____, together we can offer _____.”

FILLED EXAMPLE

Oatly X Coffee-shop channel:
From grocery product to barista-endorsed behaviour

Oatly grew by partnering with coffee shops and baristas who could put oat milk directly into a daily coffee habit. The channel gave customers trial, credibility and a new use case without Oatly needing to own cafés.

Partner Equation

Opportunity: Make oat milk a credible everyday dairy alternative inside coffee culture.

We bring: A differentiated oat product, distinctive brand voice and a better non-dairy coffee story.

We lack: Daily product trial, expert recommendation and access to customers at the exact usage moment.

They bring: Barista trust, existing footfall, menu influence and immediate product demonstration.

Win-win: Cafés gain a better menu option; Oatly gains trial; customers get a creamy dairy-free coffee.

Best partnership move:

We bring a standout oat product, cafés bring daily coffee trial, together we can make oat milk part of the coffee ritual.

Tool 4:

Prove it
Before You Make It

TIP 4

Cheapest Credible Test: Prove demand before you produce

Cheapest Test

Fill this in for your business

Idea:	(What are we considering launching?)
Risk:	(This idea only works if customers do what?)
Proof:	(Attention, sign-up, booking, deposit, pre-order, payment, repeat?)
Test:	(What is the cheapest credible way to create that proof?)
Threshold:	(What result earns the next investment?)

Best opportunity / next move:

Output: "We will test _____ with _____ and continue if _____."

FILLED EXAMPLE

Liquid Death → Brand pull before full production: From canned water idea to cultural signal

Before building the full beverage business, Liquid Death used a provocative low-budget video and social content to test whether people would care about water branded like entertainment. It proved attention first—then turned stronger signals into product, retail and repeat purchase.

Cheapest Credible Test

Idea	Canned water with the attitude of beer, punk and heavy-metal culture.
Risk	People will notice, share and want commodity water if the brand feels culturally entertaining.
Proof	Views and followers prove attention; sign-ups and orders create stronger demand evidence.
Test	Launch a simple concept film/social campaign before committing to full-scale production.
Threshold	Continue only if attention becomes qualified interest, investor/retailer conversations or orders.

We will test brand pull with provocative content and continue if attention turns into followers, sign-ups and commercial conversations.

Tool 5:

Scale On Signals

TIP 5

Evidence Gate:
Scale only when signals earn the next dollar

Evidence Gate

Fill this in for your business

Experiment: (What small test or pilot are we running?)

Interest: (What signal shows customers care?)

Commitment: (What signal shows customers will act or pay?)

Business: (What signal shows we can deliver with viable economics?)

Decision: (What conditions mean stop, adjust or scale?)

Best opportunity / next move:

Output: "Stop if _____, adjust if _____, scale if _____."

FILLED EXAMPLE

The SHEIN Way: Test-and-repeat scaling.
From guessing demand to reading live signals

SHEIN popularised a test-and-repeat model: launch many styles in small batches, read digital signals like clicks, add-to-cart and early sales, then reorder winners and drop weak performers. The SME lesson is to scale only what real customers prove they want.

Evidence Gate

Experiment	Release a small batch of new styles or variants instead of committing to full seasonal inventory.
Interest	Views, saves, shares, click-throughs and add-to-cart show what customers notice.
Commitment	Early sell-through, restock requests, waitlists and completed orders show real demand.
Business	Reorder lead time, gross margin, return rate and markdown risk show whether scaling is viable.
Decision	Drop weak styles, tweak design/price/sizing, and reorder winners only when demand and margin clear the gate.

Stop if early sell-through is weak, adjust if interest is high but conversion is low, scale if orders, margins and reorders are strong.

Need a deeper dive?
Try the specially trained:

SoUnfair

AI Tool: