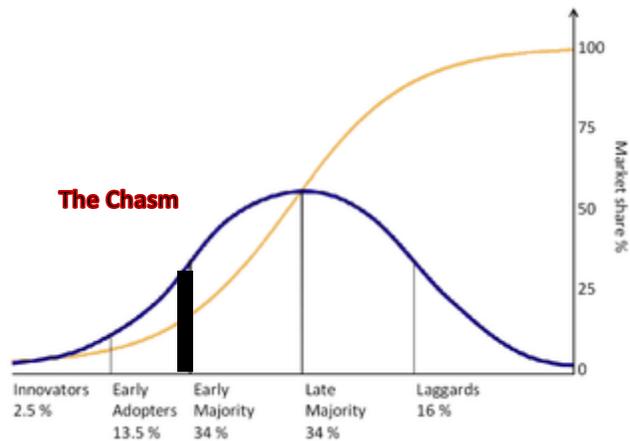


Crossing the Chasm, Using the Top 5 Perceived Attributes of Innovation

By Jack Byers



We have all heard and used the terms early adopter, innovators, and early market, but do you know why they are essential, how they are interconnected and how to use them for success?

The genius behind the adoption curve and its ramifications is Everett Rogers. Everett received a Ph.D. in Rural Sociology from Iowa State University in 1957. He published *The Diffusion of Innovations* in 1962.

For the Record – Why do I care? What is the problem we trying to solve?

How to quickly achieve adoption of an innovation by a group? The innovation can be an idea, a product, or a service, and the group can range from venture capitalists, a review board, a selection committee, or a market. Adoption is the crossing of the chasm into the early majority or an award.

Introduction

Adopter categories refer to the buyer's personality and how they align on the adoption curve; what maturity and tangible strength levels of evidence they require to buy?

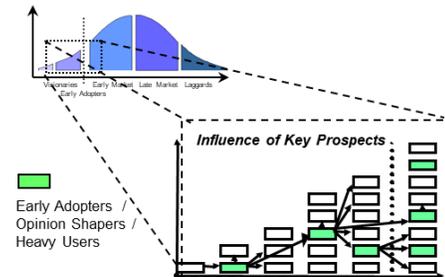
Once we understand the relative strength levels required, we then move to the perceived attributes or properties of the innovation. Everet uses the word perceived because the value of your innovation is primarily subjective in the early days while becoming more objective over time. These innovation properties will be our focus because they represent the best ways to prove and personalize our value proposition to different thinkers across the adopter categories. So we now know the strength of evidence required by category and the type of evidence most valued by individuals in the market. The faster we capture and strengthen our proof, the sooner you break into the early majority and begin building market share dominance.

The Early 3 Adopter Categories, the Chasm, and the Development of the 5 Perceived Attributes of Innovation

Let's begin with the innovator, then work our way through the early adopter and early majority. Entrepreneurs love the innovator because they are venturesome, have imagination, understand and apply complex technical knowledge, deal with a high degree of uncertainty, and control substantial financial resources. They can see and appreciate the innovation and can afford to take a chance; they thrive at the "imagine if you will" stage. Working with the innovator is a time of experiment and discovery, one of the most rewarding and exciting stages of the journey. The number one priority is learning and documenting everything from improving the product to

framing its perceived attributes, such as describing its ease of use and measuring its value.

The Early Adopter community is our springboard to success and the secret to Crossing the Chasm. An early adopter is interesting, but early adopter opinion shapers, and heavy users, are the people to get us to the other side of the chasm.



Early adopters require evidence, not a lot but some tangible proof of your value proposition. First-level evidence that makes the story more solid. While the innovator is conceptual, the early adopter wants to see and hear of your success. Opinion shapers take pride in their reputation in their community as visionary. Once they are convinced, early adopters are motivated to move out fast to give their company a differential advantage in the market and enhance their standing in the community. They are the trusted advisors within their peer group. Their peers respect them, and they know that to maintain a central opinion shaper position in the system, they must make judicious innovation decisions.

At the early adopter stage, the innovation and its attributes begin to solidify and become market-worthy. The early adopter stage is where you craft the 'whole product.' It is morphing from a great idea into a tangible high-value total solution.

Finally, you are preparing to transition from early adopter to the big show—the big test ahead, crossing the chasm from the early adopter into the early majority.

The boundary between the early adopter and early majority was made famous by Geoffrey Moore in his book 'Crossing the Chasm.' As explained in the book, many products and companies fail to transition and die, while others waste years caught in the chasm before achieving a breakout. The reason for failure at this point is the lack of understanding of the differences between the early adopter and early majority adopter categories and strengthening the five perceived attributes of innovations to the level needed by the early majority adopter.

We drop the notion of perceived at the crossing the chasm stage because we have enough proof for the early majority adopter. Our communications contain solid evidence to support marketing statements, and things move from subjective to objective. But we cannot drop our guard; the five attributes remain the center of focus on early market entry with an eye on early market dominance.

So with a baseline understanding of the adopter categories and developing the five attributes, let's move to what they are and why they are so important in solving the rate of adoption challenges. **(Up Next: The Top 5 Perceived Attributes of Innovations and Their Effect on Rate of Adoption)**