

ALPHA

INNOVATION

CHARTING NEW PATHS  
AND SHAPING TOMORROW

LET'S TRANSCEND  
LET'S TRANSCEND  
LET'S TRANSCEND

ESTABLISHED  
PATTERNS

CONVENTIONAL  
STRATEGIES

TRADITIONAL  
APPROACHES

THE LIMITS OF  
OUR IMAGINATION

HELLO  
AND WELCOME TO THE REALM  
OF POSSIBILITIES.

Let's lift the fog surrounding your company's innovation potential! Together, we'll pinpoint the most promising path for you to follow, identify future opportunities and explore ways to leverage them.

INTO  
UNCHARTERED  
TERRITORIES

INTO THE  
UNKNOWN AND  
ITS ABUNDANT  
POSSIBILITIES

INTO THE FUTURE

AND VENTURE  
AND VENTURE  
AND VENTURE

## ALPHA INNOVATION: STARTING FROM SQUARE ONE

As the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Alpha represents beginnings – the first step of a journey to something completely new. It represents an unwritten chapter, a blank page – an invitation to radical change. This is the very reason our innovation method is called Alpha Innovation.

We developed Alpha Innovation together with various companies, the Polytechnic University of Milan and the Centre for Family Business Management at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, guided by the concept of front-end innovation.

As you set out on this journey, you find yourself enveloped in a thick fog, a bewildering haze that, while initially disorienting, conceals immense potential. When nothing is clear and all options remain open, you are free to follow several lines of thought and consider all the possibilities – even those that may (currently) seem beyond your imagination.

This is exactly where Alpha Innovation comes in: we eliminate ambiguity and steer your company through the fog of possibilities to the path of concrete opportunities. With our structured and systematic approach, Alpha Innovation serves as a beacon. A springboard for ideas. An incubator for decision-making.

## THREE STEPS:

Our innovation management team guides your company through the process in three steps:

1. Discover Opportunities: identify and understand unimagined possibilities.
2. Create Ideas: develop radically new ideas.
3. Make Decisions: commit to a sustainable way forward.

We employ systematic tools and leverage a vast network of around 1,200 experts at NOI Techpark. We supplement their knowledge by bringing external specialists into the project as needed.

## TECH OPPORTUNITIES, NEEDS OF PEOPLE, NEEDS OF NATURE

Our vision is anchored in foresight – always with reference to your unique company: what opportunities will future technologies present? What needs will people have in five, ten or even more years? And what does nature need to ensure the survival of our planet? This approach gives us the impetus we need to take the first step. This is where Alpha Innovation begins.

### FRONT END INNOVATION AND FUZZY FRONT END

**Front End Innovation** is a dynamic process where future opportunities and needs are identified, and ideas are developed before the classic product development process begins.

US economist Peter Koen suggests that the start of the innovation process inevitably feels ‘fuzzy’. People can and should pursue different avenues of thought at this ‘**Fuzzy Front End**’.



## MEGATRENDS AND MACROTRENDS, OPPORTUNITY AREAS, DIRECTIONS, SIGNALS

**Megatrends** are long-term, global trend clusters that unfold over several decades and can reshape entire societies. They encompass technological, social and economic shifts.

**Macrotrends** are distinct, targeted segments of megatrends, usually covering 5 to 15 years.

**Opportunity Areas** are areas where a company identifies the greatest opportunities and development potential for future innovations. They are company-specific and usually consist of (partial) elements of several macrotrends.

**Signals** are how we refer to micro-trends. They are indicators that a certain aspect of a macrotrend could become more important in the future. They can emerge from innovative solutions and activities of start-ups or technology companies, patent applications or research results.

**Innovation Directions** are formulated from signals that are similar, occur frequently within a short period of time and point in a certain direction. These directions allow companies to draw concrete conclusions from the recorded signals.

# 1

## DISCOVER OPPORTUNITIES

### NAVIGATIONAL AID

When our vision is unclear, a radar system can help us locate our target. The Alpha Innovation Radar does just that: during a collaborative workshop, we assess your company's innovation profile along with its challenges, needs and potential for the future, which allows us to identify your unique opportunity areas for innovation (Opportunity Areas).

Within these opportunity areas, we go in search of signals. By categorising these signals on our radar, we derive potential innovation directions for your company.

The subsequent Alpha Innovation Radar workshop focuses on screening, evaluating and selecting these innovation directions.

The most viable options are subsequently subjected to an in-depth analysis from which realistic and appealing scenarios are developed.

**1.1 DEFINE  
OPPORTUNITY  
AREAS**

**1.2 GATHER  
SIGNALS**

**1.3 EVALUATE  
DIRECTIONS**

**1.4 DEVELOP  
SCENARIOS**

**2. CREATE IDEAS**

**3. MAKE DECISIONS**

## OPEN, INTERNATIONAL, FUTURE-ORIENTED: THE ALPHA INNOVATION CHALLENGE

The following three principles form the basis for the idea development stage of the Alpha Innovation Challenge:

### 1. Open Innovation

No tinkering behind closed doors. Breaking new ground means embracing new knowledge and new ways of thinking. We foster this by integrating a diverse group into our innovation teams. Depending on the subject, we include specialists as well as start-ups, students, designers, programmers and more.

### 2. Welcome World

Open innovation also means working beyond national borders and cultural differences. By leveraging a digital platform, we can involve innovators from around the globe.

### 3. Future User Focus

We agree with Henry Ford when he said: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." This is why we involve people in the innovation process who can think beyond the present, whose professional or research background places them in fields that may set new trends for their respective industries.

# 2

## CREATE IDEAS

### A SPRINGBOARD FOR IDEAS

After exploring the possibilities in the first step of the method, it is time to develop ideas. This requires creativity: during the Alpha Innovation Challenge, your innovation team develops one or more ideas for the selected scenarios and personas.

We start by defining the parameters: the subject area, format, partner companies or experts for possible collaboration, schedules and organisation. Then we roll up our sleeves and develop proposals and ideas, dismissing some, rethinking others and evaluating them. We select the most promising solutions and develop them further. At the end of this stage, we have a draft concept ready to be fleshed out and thoroughly tested in the third step of the Alpha Innovation Method.



1. DISCOVER OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 FRAME  
CONDITIONS

2.2 PREPARE THE  
CHALLENGE

2.3 IDEATE  
SOLUTIONS

2.4 DRAFT  
A CONCEPT

3. MAKE DECISIONS

THE ALPHA INNOVATION RADAR IS AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS FORMATS:

A **bespoke radar** in Insight format tailored specifically to your company, laying the groundwork for the Alpha Innovation Method.

A **pulse format** with regular updates, helping your company keep its finger on the pulse of the latest trends.

Need help determining which format is right for your company? Get in touch. Together, we will find out how to best support your company's innovation process.

# 3

## MAKE DECISIONS

### INCUBATOR FOR DECISION-MAKING

Finally, set the right course so that your Alpha Innovation Challenge results in meaningful and valuable development for your company in the medium term. The last step of the Alpha Innovation Method focuses on making informed, sustainable decisions.

This decision-making process is different to what you may be used to: profit, ROI and EBITDA are difficult to estimate at this stage, and we do not want to base decisions on hypotheses and promises. Consequently, we employ a novel approach:

1. The success of any innovation hinges on its ability to benefit customers. An innovation will only be successful if it generates clear added value for future users. Therefore, validation through future user tests is the starting point of the decision-making process.
2. We also focus on technical feasibility: an analysis of production processes, practicality and risks is carried out.
3. We wouldn't be NOI (Nature of Innovation) if nature and sustainability didn't play a big role in all we do: The benefits for nature and society are a central focus. If you have already developed a sustainability strategy for your company, the integrity analysis will be based on it. Alternatively, it will be guided by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. If criteria 1–3 are met, the innovation has great potential to be economically viable. By developing a business model, we assess the economic implications of the proposed Alpha Innovation.

Can your concept hold its own against all four decisive criteria? Congratulations! The path to radical innovation is open, and you can start bringing your concept to life.

1. DISCOVER OPPORTUNITIES

2. CREATE IDEAS

3.1 VALIDATE  
FUTURE USER  
VALUE

3.2 ANALYSE  
TECHNICAL  
FEASIBILITY

3.3 ENSURE  
INTEGRITY

3.4 EXPLORE  
BUSINESS  
VIABILITY

NOI TECHPARK  
SÜDTIROL/ALTO ADIGE

VIA A.-VOLTA-STRASSE 13/A  
I – 39100 BOZEN/BOLZANO

+39 0471/066 600  
INFO@NOI.BZ.IT  
WWW.NOI.BZ.IT

FOLLOW US:



## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

You may be asking yourself: is this method suitable for my company? Where do we stand – and where should we start? The Alpha Innovation Method offers various formats and access points. Let's discuss how we can optimally support your company's innovation process.

Send us a message at: [alpha-innovation@noi.bz.it](mailto:alpha-innovation@noi.bz.it)  
or give us a call at: +39 0471/066 632