



Notes on the Role of Leadership and Language in Regenerating Organizations

innovation

lots of talk about “innovation”

... all organizations want to be more innovative

... because they want to be successful

...and they think innovation is the key.

innovation

today we will explore
these questions:

- what is innovation?
- how do we get it?
- when do we need it?

innovation

- **what is innovation?**
- how do we get it?
- when do we need it?

innovation

innovation is
an **insight** that
inspires **change**
that creates **value**.

innovation

value

innovation is not simply
...an idea
...an invention
...an improvement
...creativity.

change

insight

convention convention

innovation

innovation

value

...is an evolutionary process

...can be modeled cybernetically—
goals + feedback + actions

...can be usefully expressed as a
“concept map”

insight
change
convention convention

Our

innovation

is

to

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innovation

requires

preparation

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o

Journal

innovation

requires

preparation

(immersion)

2020

Journal

JOHN

innovation

requires

(a bit of luck)

preparation

(immersion)

COO

ES+

(a bit of luck)

preparation

(immersion)

aids

insight (seeing opportunity)

ity)

comes from

individuals

community₁

agrees on & is shaped by

convention₁

maintains relationship to

context₁

(environment)

may fail to recognize

pose long-term threats to any

pressure (external)
decay (internal)

ins!

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inevitably lead to

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is imbalance in relations among

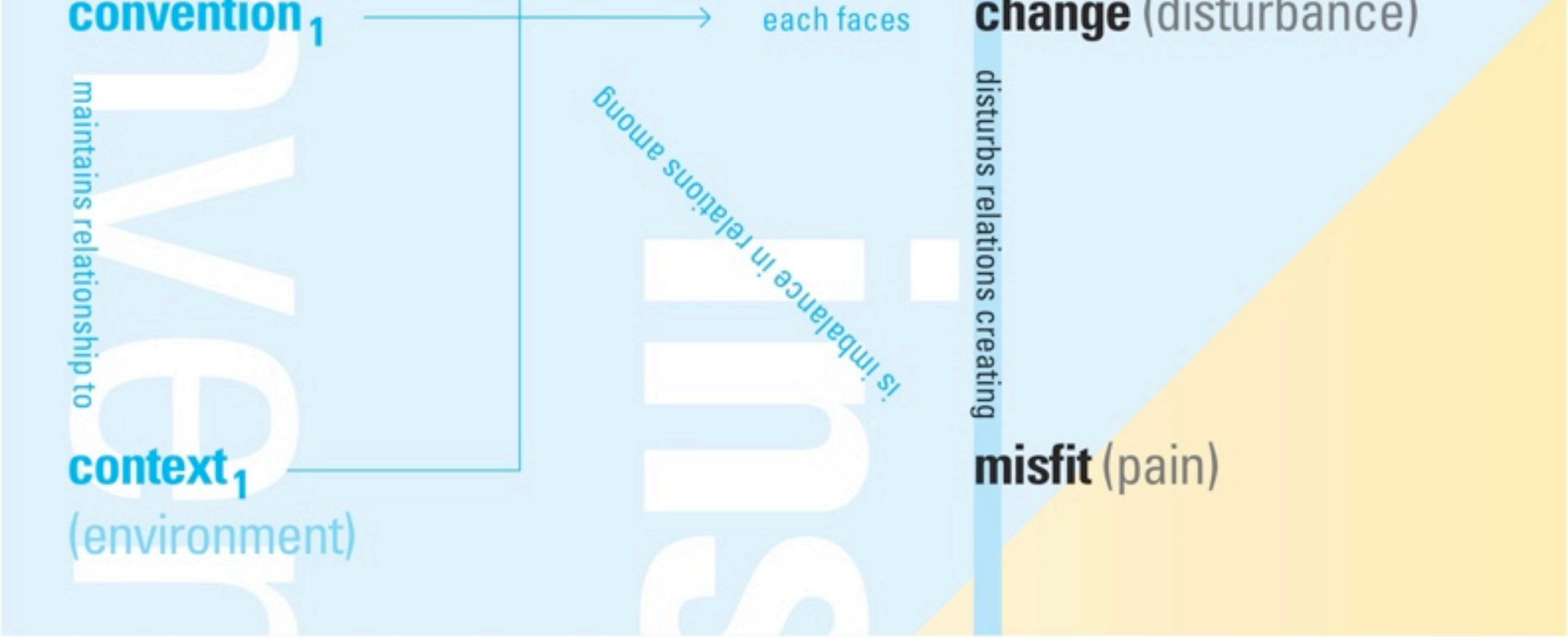
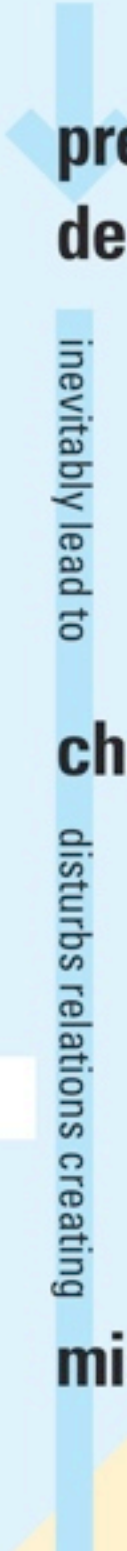
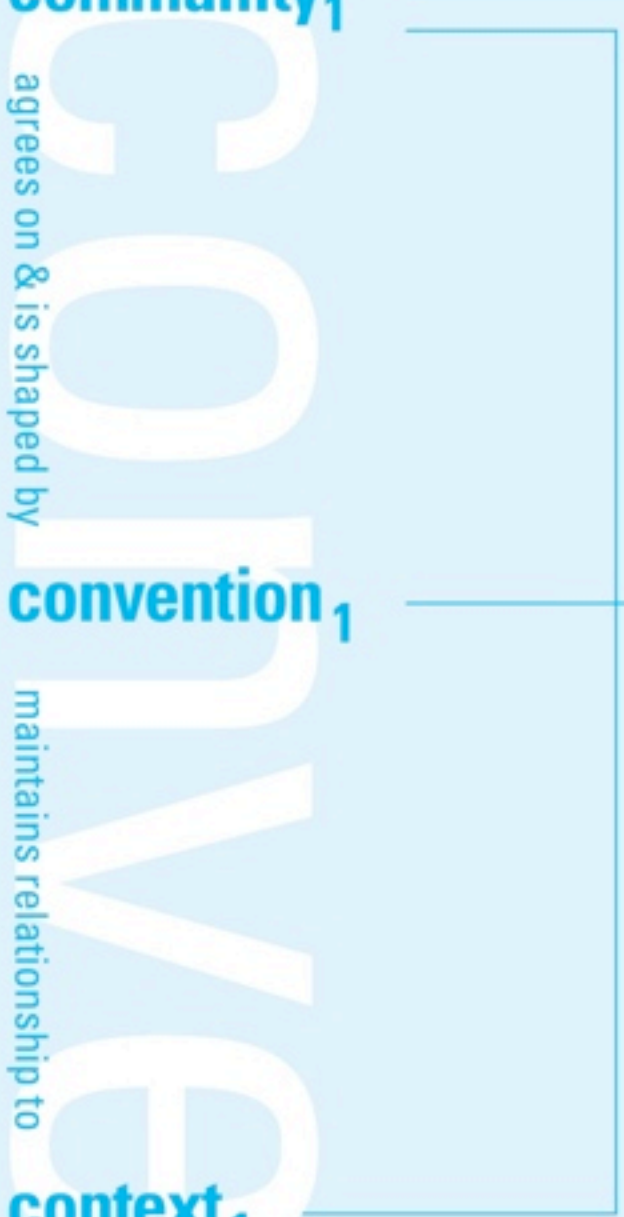
pressure (external)
decay (internal)

inevitably lead to

change (disturbance)

disturbs relations creating

misfit (pain)



convention₁

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context₁
(environment)

each faces

change (disturbance)

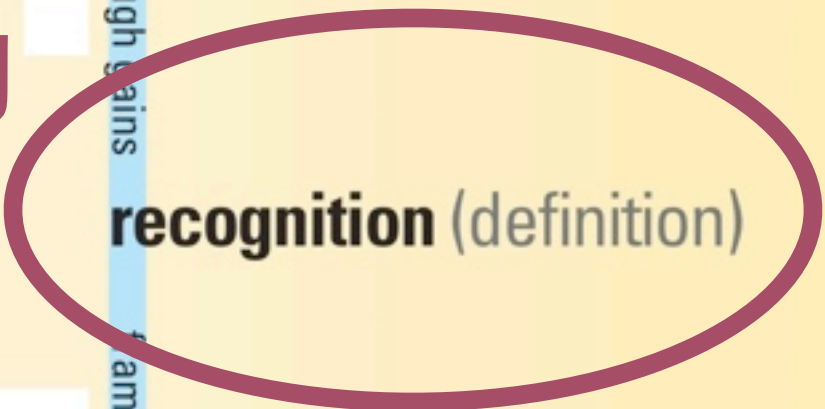
disturbs relations creating

misfit (pain)

that is large enough gains

recognition (definition)

sensing



Conventionalisatio

convention₁

maintains relationship to

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(environment)

to any

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to

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recognition (definition)

frames

Definition

relationship to
context₁
(environment)

(a bit of luck)
preparation
(immersion)

innovation

requires

aids

insight (seeing opportunity)

creating
misfit (pain)

that is large enough gains

recognition (definition)

frames possibilities for

relationship to
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obsessing

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insight (seeing opportunity)

must be shared through

articulation (prototyping)

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innovation

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aids

insight (seeing opportunity)

must be shared through

articulation (prototyping)

must be proved through

demonstration (testing)

innovate

share

Change

demonstration (testing)

rough
reduces risk, encouraging

adoption (counter-change)

vention

vention

more
obsessing

rough
demonstration (testing)

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change

vention

more
obsessing

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reforms relations creating

fit (gain)

change

Stage

demonstration (testing)

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vention

innovation

requires

preparation

(immersion)

aids

insight (seeing opportunity)

comes from

individuals

drive

convention

for
must be shared through

articulation (prototyping)

must be proved through

demonstration (testing)

reduces risk, encouraging

adoption (counter-change)

reforms relations creating

fit (gain)



is reflected as increased

value

change

value

beliefs

may lead to

actions

may lead to

artifacts

all deliver

value

is a measure of propensity for

innovation

value

change

insight

convention  innovation convention

innovation

- what is innovation?
- **how do we get it?**
- when do we need it?

innovation

most “innovation strategies”
are vague suggestions:

- be open-minded
- encourage diversity
- learn to trust each other
- encourage experimentation
- forgive mistakes.

innovation

how do we increase the likelihood of innovation?

- encourage obsession
- focus on a specific problem
- choose participants carefully
- pay attention to language.

Notes on the
Role of
Leadership
and Language
in Regenerating
Organizations

An organization is its language.

Ultimately,
an organization consists of conversations:
who talks to whom, about what.

Conversation leads to agreement.
Agreement leads to transaction.

Narrowing language increases efficiency.

Organizations create their own internal language to solve specific problems.

This language serves as a kind of shorthand: Managers use it every day, knowing they will be clearly understood.

Over time, this internal language grows increasingly specialized — and narrow.

Past language limits future vision.

Managers understand the organization's past behavior.
But this knowledge,
and the language that accompanies it,
limit their vision
of the organization's potential future state.

Using the language of the past,
managers may try to provide a vision for the future.
But it is an old future —
a memory of what the future could be.

Managers may strive for fundamental change,
but their language prevents them from achieving it.

Expanding language increases opportunity.

The conversations necessary
for generating new opportunities
come from outside the system.

For an organization to survive,
it must be able to acquire
new, relevant language domains.

To regenerate, an organization creates a new **language**.

To support an organization's future viability, effective decision makers actively introduce change into the system.

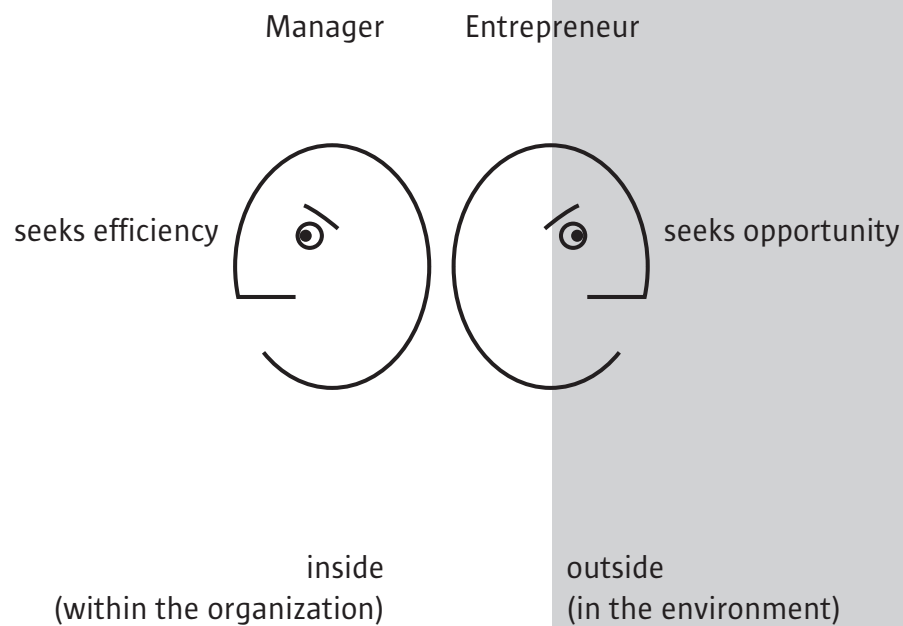
They do so by generating new language that appropriate groups in the organization come to understand and embrace.

This new language does not overtly challenge the pre-existing, efficient system, but rather creates new distinctions and supportive relationships.

Manager and Entrepreneur.

The Manager is responsible for improving the organization's present-day performance.

The Entrepreneur does not concern herself with present-day business.



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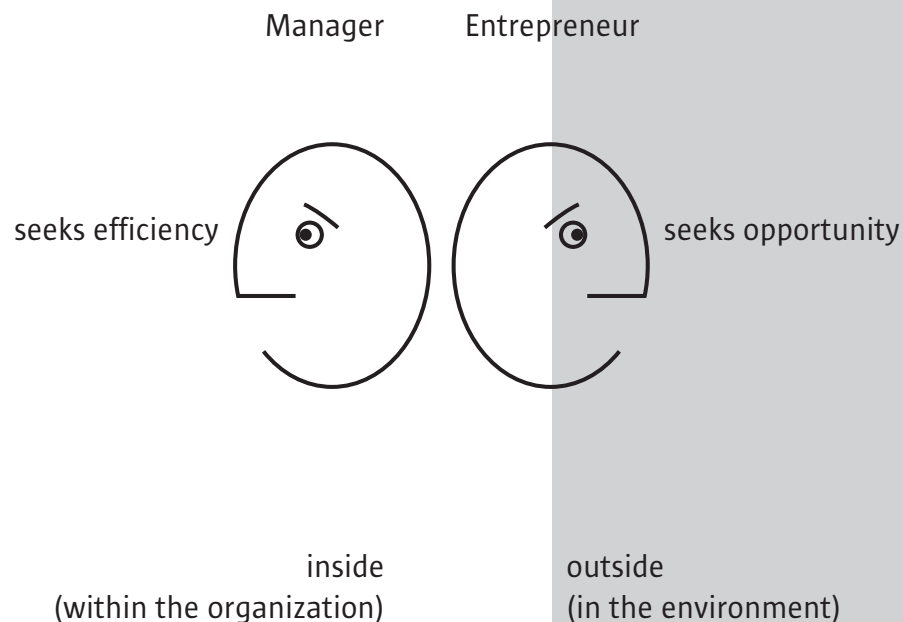
The Entrepreneur does not concern herself with present-day business.

Managers' reaction to Entrepreneurs' language:

“Don't distract me with future problems.”

“That's a waste of time.”

“Stop taking resources away from what's important.”



Manager and Entrepreneur.

The Manager is responsible for improving the organization's present-day performance.

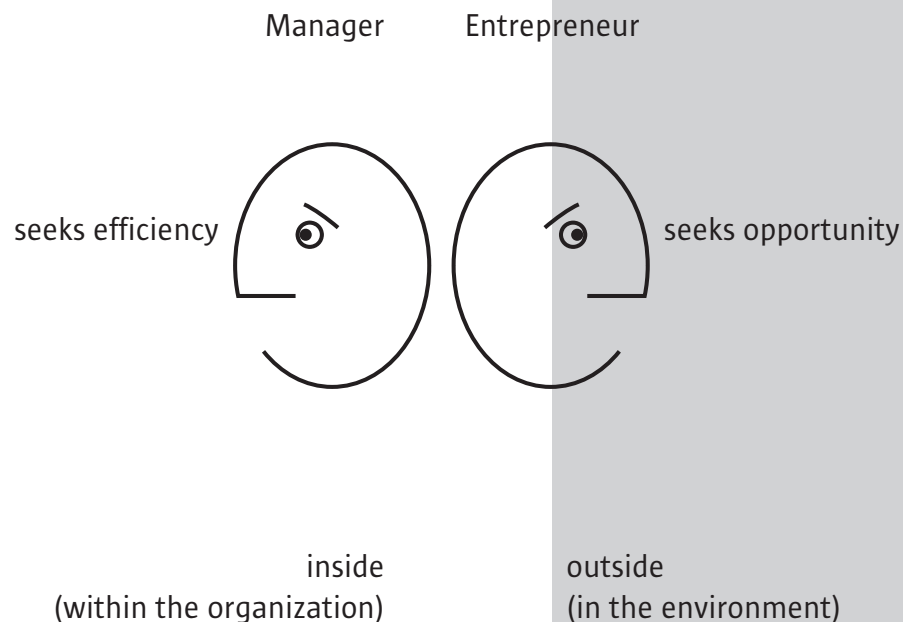
The Entrepreneur does not concern herself with present-day business.

Entrepreneurs' reaction to Managers' language:

“You are stuck in the past.”

“What you want to do is no longer relevant.”

“Stop taking resources away from what's important.”



Manager and Entrepreneur.

The Manager is responsible for improving the organization's present-day performance.

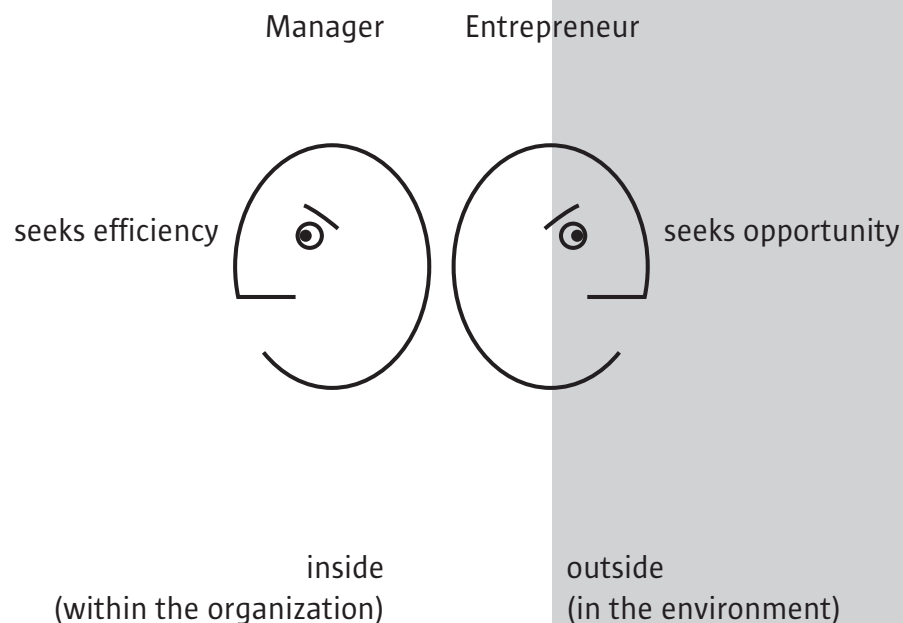
The Entrepreneur does not concern herself with present-day business.

But...

Managers and Entrepreneurs are both necessary for the long-term viability of an organization.

Managers' language improves quality, brings about efficiencies, and focuses on today.

Entrepreneurs' language increases variety, fosters insight, and focuses on tomorrow.



innovation

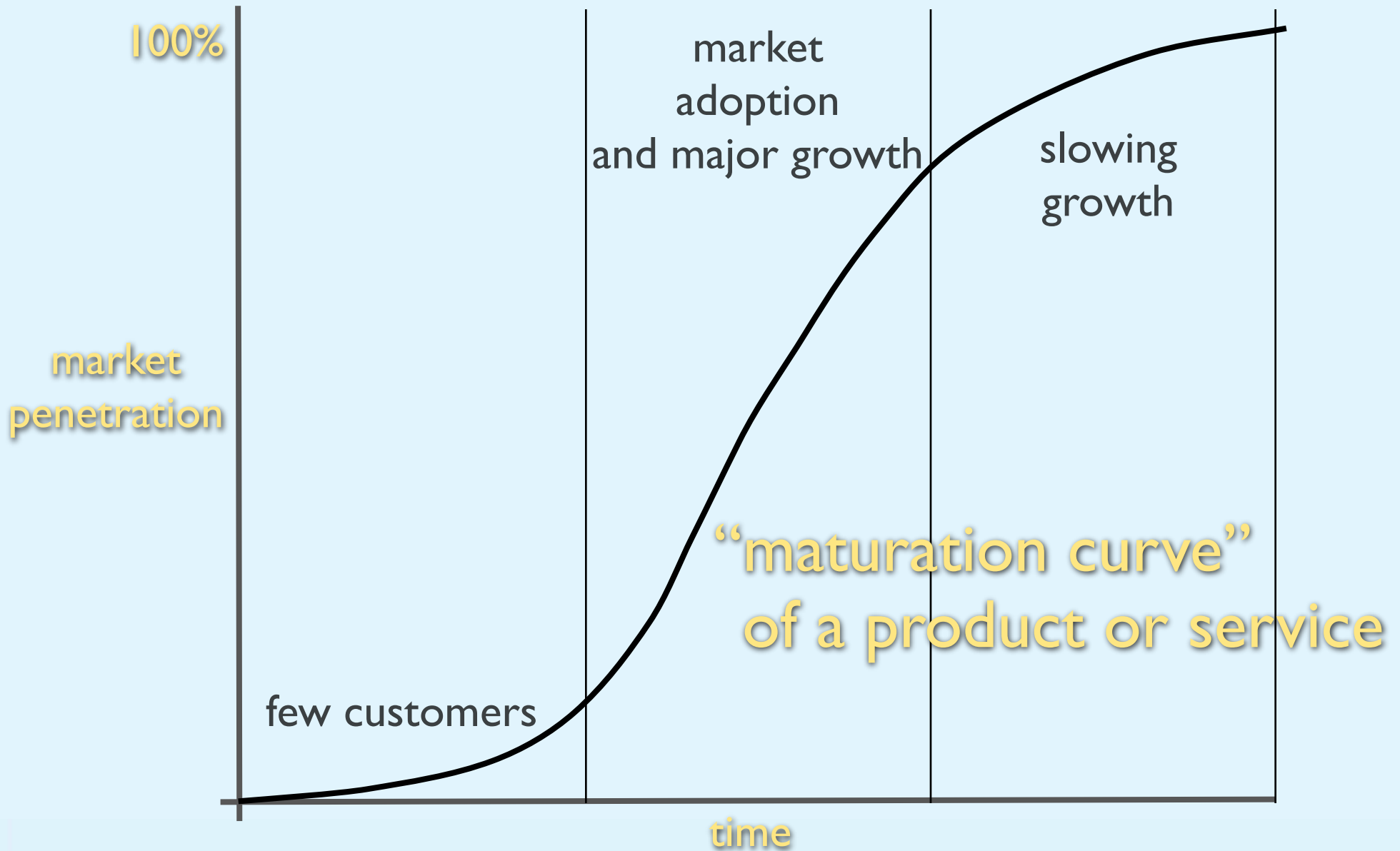
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innovation

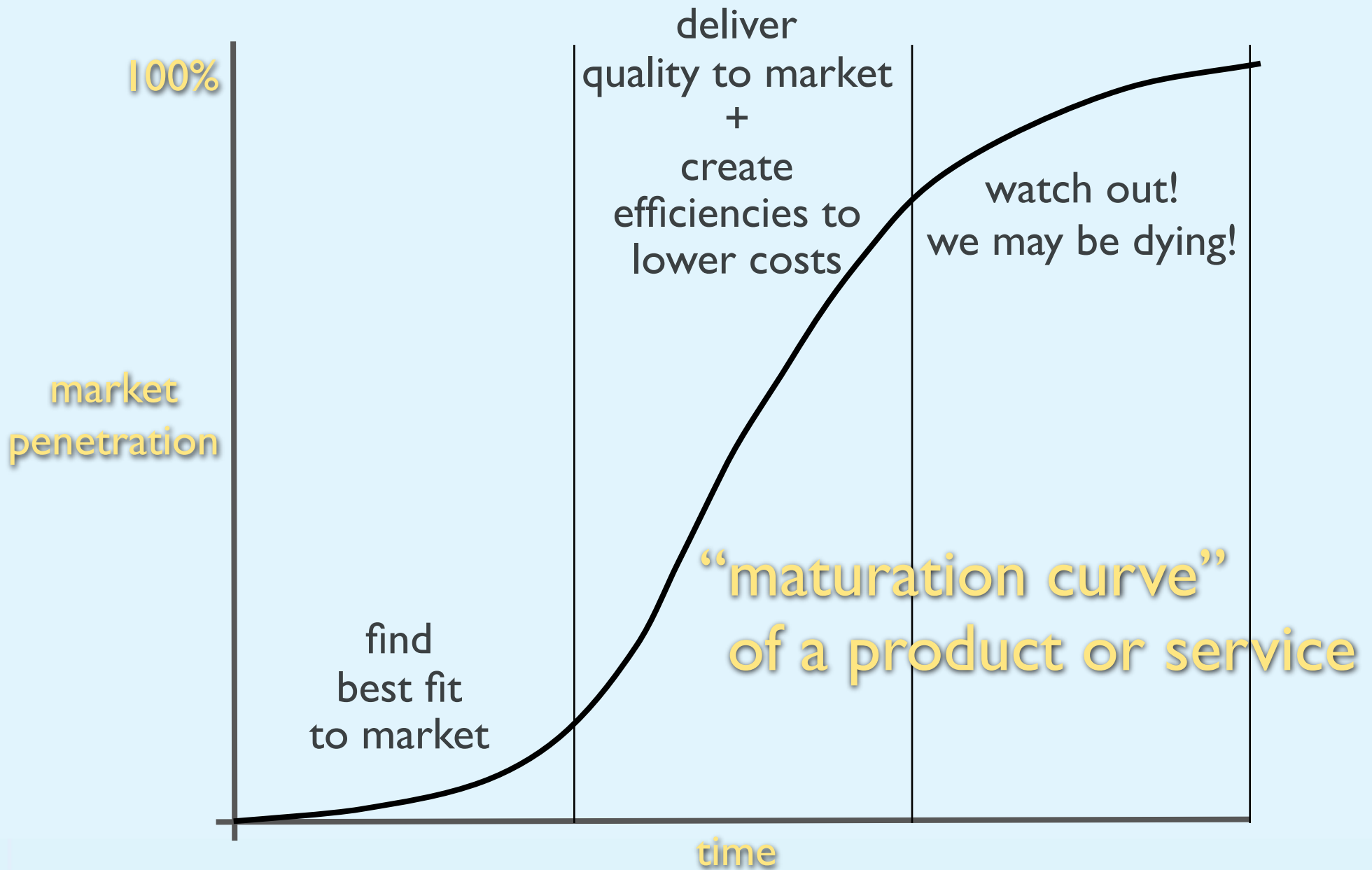
we need innovation when:

- the environment is changing
- competition is increasing
- something is wrong
(but we don't know what it is)
- we're reaching some limit
- we're reaching the end of a phase
or a cycle.

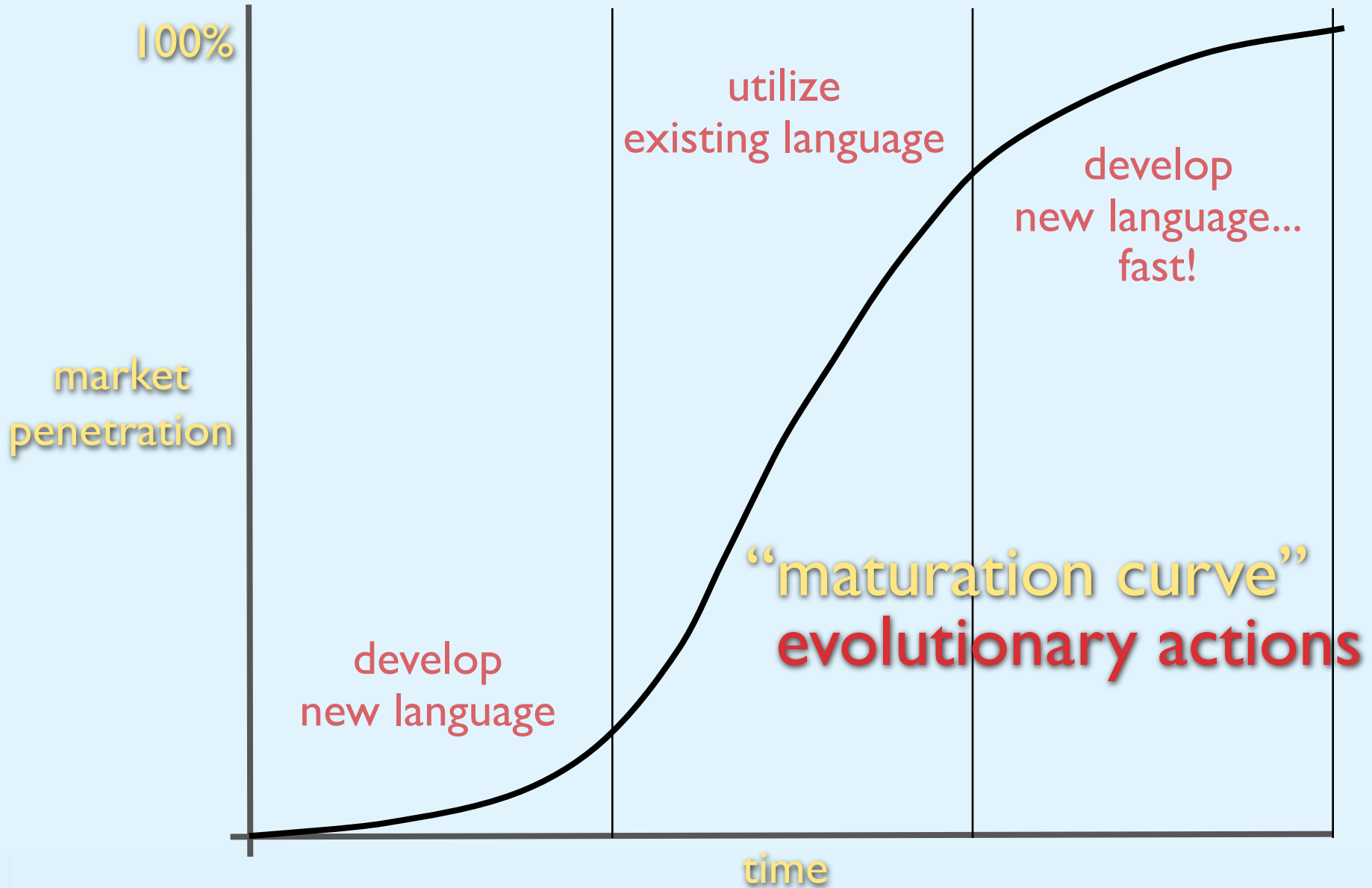
innovation



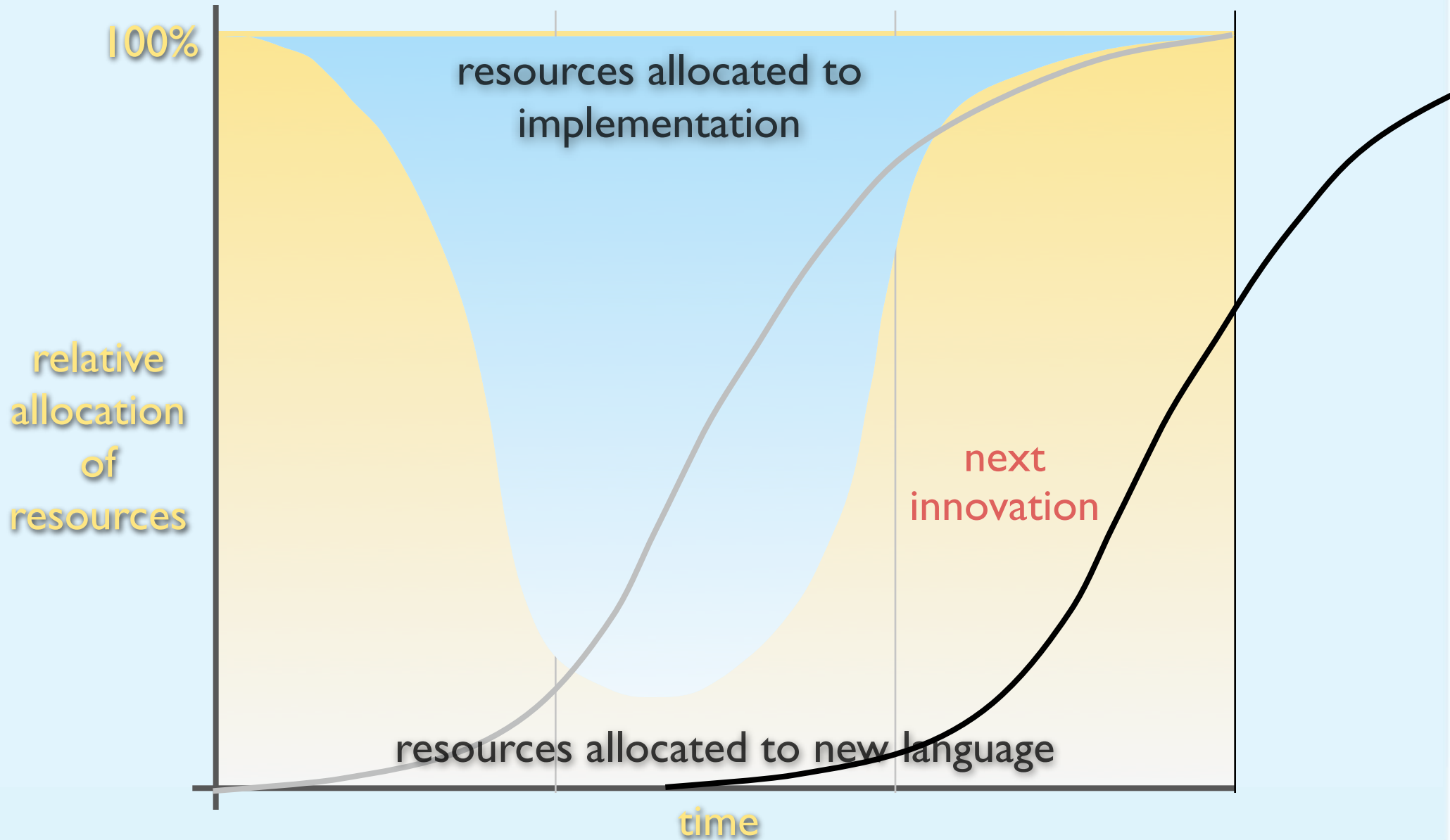
innovation



innovation



innovation



innovation

- what is innovation?
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innovation

how do we organize for innovation?

- design focusing problems very carefully
- select participants to collaborate on solving them
- protect the creation of new language.



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innovation

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| role in innovation is... | Inventor | Innovator |
| role in organization is... | Entrepreneur | Manager |
| focuses on... | insights | implementation |
| maximizes... | variety | quality |
| focuses on... | why + who | how + when |
| works with... | designers + thinkers | managers + doers |
| works to... | define purpose | execute plan |
| timing is... | uncertain | more certain |
| process... | unpredictable | more predictable |
| produces... | goal statements + boundaries | plan + resource allocation |
| success is... | convergence on goal + clarity of ideas | plan for delivery + tangible production |



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