

People Powered Innovation

A fresh approach to change and reinvention—to generate great ideas and bring them to life



“The idea of capturing this moment around race and making sure that it means something is what I’ve lived for my whole life, an incredible opportunity.” - Rep. Karen Bass (Calif.)

An incredible opportunity lies ahead for local governments throughout the country. In the most recent election cycle, many communities voted for the most diverse group of individuals ever to have served as leaders. These newly elected voices speak to us about hope, about the future, using words like bridge-builder, inclusion, collaboration, listening to and hearing others, transparency, and reinvention.

The shift to a greater recognition of opportunities for change requires an acknowledgement of what we need to do next. Facing the most challenging times our country has seen in more than 100 years means we have to ask, “Will approaching these challenges in the ways we have always used, get us where we want to go?”

2020 put a spotlight on the need for change, big change—systemic change. New outcomes require new methods. Even buoyed with good intention, the approaches typically used are likely to provide

only incremental movement. Real, dynamic change can only happen when the people being asked to change are not just consulted, but are included as co-creators of the change.

Most people are not resistant to change. They resist *being changed*. Many communities today are uniquely positioned to consider using different approaches as they begin to imagine the future.

People Powered Innovation is a mindset, skillset, and toolset specifically created for multi-stakeholder groups that are in tension. It is a framework through which these stakeholders gather, listen to each other, investigate issues, and reimagine solutions through productive, mutually respectful dialogue. This produces not only tangible, actionable outcomes, but new and vibrant relationships. With this we have the ingredients to move into the future we most desire.

By using the People Powered Innovation (PPI) process, municipalities and community organizations can bring about the level of change necessary to “create the best possible city and the best possible environment where our residents can thrive.”

For example, citizens can use the PPI process to collaborate with community leaders and members of Public Safety groups to reinvent public safety in ways that work for all. The role of city and community leaders is to create the opportunities for all stakeholders to participate, to set the boundaries, and to fully participate in making change happen. Within the set boundaries, they and the other participants uncover their collective values, resources, dreams, and opportunities for change. The role of the People Powered Innovation Collaborative* is to supply tools and partner with leaders in shepherding these efforts.

As a not-for-profit organization, the People Powered Innovation Collaborative is chartered to “... elevate the ability and essential role of all organizations to create a world that works for all.” While this may be considered a lofty goal, it outlines the passion we hold for the work and the investment we make toward the success of the outcome.

Our process (PPI) is a different way for governments to look at how they do the work of governing. We invite you to dig deeper into what PPI is in the following descriptions of the approach.

On the next page, we compare the PPI approach to traditional approaches to change we’ve observed on past change engagements. Below, you will find a brief “what if,” regarding Public Safety and links to two examples of PPI at work.

In summary, what if we look at reinventing Public Safety, in a way that:

- Invites all stakeholders into the process as owners of the journey
- Allows participants to really hear each other
- Develops authentic relationships while simultaneously reinventing public safety.
- Identifies the resources and strengths of the community to co-create something of value.
- Creates a shared vision of how a public safety function in the city could look, how it would function, and the outcomes it would produce.
- Not just reimagines, but actually redesigns, the public safety structures, roles, policies, and practices that would bring the vision to life.
- Develops a roadmap in which every participant feels responsible for and commits to actions which, in totality, will take their community where it wants and needs to go.
- Does not replace existing efforts but rather complements and leverages them.

Below are links to the stories of two organizations who successfully undertook innovation journeys. These experiences are powerful examples of how the process can bring individuals together around a shared vision to produce long term results. Each case study is linked to an overview of the situation and a video in which they recount their journey.

CASE STUDY 1: *[“Using an Inclusive, Participative, Strengths-based Approach to Achieve Customer Service Excellence.”](https://www.executiveforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Case_Study_Caribbean_Grocery-2.pdf)* A Caribbean grocery gained a competitive advantage with improved customer service. (https://www.executiveforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Case_Study_Caribbean_Grocery-2.pdf)

CASE STUDY 2: *[“Building Collaboration, Cooperation and Innovation in an Industry Association.”](https://www.executiveforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Case_Study_Vision_Council-2.pdf)* The Vision Council developed a new public service health message and a highly-successful new organizational framework to carry the message forward. (https://www.executiveforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Case_Study_Vision_Council-2.pdf)

* PPIIC is the non-profit organization which developed this approach. The members conduct research on best practices in organizational reinvention and help organizations apply their findings both domestically and internationally.

COMPARISON OF APPROACHES

	What Is Often Done – Traditional Approach	People Powered Innovation
MINDSET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is to fix the problem. • Focus is on “why we can’t.” • Even though problems are seen as highly interconnected, we don’t know what to do with that complexity so we revert to what seemed to have worked in the past. • The role of designing innovations is best left to select committees and subject matter experts. • People are frequently seen as the problem, therefore punish them if they break the rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is to co-create the future we desire, not just fix yesterday’s problems. • Focus is on “how might we.” • Complexity can be managed by engaging all stakeholders in making sense of the situation and collaboratively designing potential systemic solutions using a few basic principles. • Everyone can be a designer and innovator in real time is with the right support from subject matter experts and simple tool sets. • Managing continuity is as important as creating positive innovation. • The system drives people’s behaviors. To change behaviors, change the system.
HOW and WHAT	<p>Diagnose the problems in the system, who is at fault, where the breakdowns are - then making recommendations to decision makers. Create detailed implementation plans that try to account for all eventualities.</p> <p>Focus is on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislative solutions (i.e., updated policies that are publicly supported but may treat only one part of the problem. For example, “no chokeholds” may have unintended consequences). 2. Training, culture change, and other human dynamics interventions. 	<p>Begin by discovering what’s worth preserving and the assets/strengths that exist with which you can build the future.</p> <p>Next, collectively imagine a better outcome for all stakeholders (a “wow” future). Then, design a draft set of changes (i.e., the innovations) that will bring the dream to life. Next, create and conduct some small “experiments” that will allow you to learn by trying things out in the field. Finally, improve your innovations and scale them up.</p> <p>Focus is on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles, decision rights, team composition, work processes, coordinating mechanisms, etc., that are intentionally designed to meet the needs and desires of those whom the service affects and those who provide it. <p>PLUS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enabling legislation to put the above in place. 3. Training, culture change, and other human dynamics interventions.
WHO	<p>Multiple committees, often lacking diverse voices, each working on their own small piece of the puzzle who must get approvals or commitment from multiple decision makers (e.g., unions, Councils, various management groups).</p>	<p>The “whole system” – all stakeholders, particularly the voices that are seldom heard, supported by subject matter experts.</p>

The People Powered Innovation Collaborative works to create and continually evolve a framework for radical innovation of business and operating models to resolve complex challenges and sustain people, planet, and prosperity.

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