

Seven Components of Business Development

1. *Realistic Vision* — Develop the Map to Reach Your Destination
2. *Viable Market Research* — Deliver Dozens of Market Evaluations Each Year
3. *Actionable Strategy*— Build Winning Approaches for Targets \$100K-\$100B
4. *Profitable Opportunity* — Identify Relevant Opportunities for Corporate Pipelines
5. *Effective Capture* — Shape Bids and Engage the Customers
6. *Winning Proposals* — Win 61% of our Bids for \$17B+ of Real Work
7. *Organizational Performance* — Build Healthy Companies and Create Strong Cultures. Use Our Proven Vizeon Assessment and Organizational Mentors.

Why Whitespace?

When I tell the story about the genesis of Whitespace Innovations, I have been asked many times “What makes your company unique?” This is a good place to summarize the answer to that seminal question. Indeed, what makes Whitespace Innovations unique in the field of business development consulting?

I have solved tough technical and business problems for forty years, starting back in my college days with the programming of (ancient) IBM-360 computers to conduct kinematic analysis of human motion, up through recent solutions to some thorny revenue and overhead problems for local business clients. I love tough problems. I particularly gravitate to those for which “people in the know” like to opine, “there are no solutions” or “it can’t be fixed.” From my experience, there is a solution to almost every problem. We just don’t see it.

Our difficulty in finding solutions to tough challenges usually lies in the fact that we tend to approach problems the same way every time we encounter them. We are creatures of habit, employing our “best practices” every chance we get. Most people—and almost all business “cultures”—become so “hide-bound” in their approach to problem solving that they exclude most of the potential solution space as they gravitate to what they know. It’s been said that insanity is defined as doing something over and over in the same way, but expecting a different result. That’s a good description of what happens in the problem-solving process of most experienced people and almost all businesses. So—the naysayers are right when they say “that problem can’t be solved.” At least, they can’t solve it in their standard way.

The key to solving tough problems lays not so much in brilliance as it does in process. Imagine a group of executives sitting around a boardroom table, struggling with a difficult business or personnel problem. One person after another proposes a solution, and the executive-in-charge listens, discharging some ideas to the trash bin, or considering others. At the end of a long meeting, they all throw up their hands, frustrated that they’re no closer to the solution than when they’d begun. Someone is tasked to form a tiger team and evaluate the issue further.

Imagine another group, led by a skilled facilitator, where the focus of the meeting was simply answering pointed questions. The facilitator

draws answers out of the group, seeking the core of the unsolvable problem, probing for the unspoken reservations and the “untouchable” solutions that have either failed in the past or are not allowed to be presented because of past resistance. The most common question in that meeting, usually posed by the facilitator, is “Why?”

The question-asking process leads the executives, or any other group, to “uncover all the rocks” and ask “why? or “why not?” for each facet of the problem, and for each solution that they propose. What groups often discover is that the problem was not so much unsolvable as it was intractable using old answers, old approaches, and old biases. New approaches and new answers were never given a chance to emerge and be tested “in the light of day” because “we don’t do it that way.”

As I have led groups for forty years through this “question-based” approach to problem solving and innovation, I have encountered a remarkable phenomenon that led to the naming of this business. The most common refrain I hear in one of these brainstorming and problem solving meetings is “I never thought of that!” The person who said it leans back in a chair, looking up at the ceiling, and relaxes, as if there were a mental “word balloon” above her that says “that wasn’t so hard.”

And it’s not hard. But it is uncomfortable. It’s uncomfortable to get out of our comfort zones and to think thoughts in new ways. For that reason, Whitespace Innovations was founded as a problem-solving tool designed to meet the needs of businesses and technology developers. The answer to almost every problem is written on your whiteboard today. You just don’t see it yet. The answer to your problem is in the “whitespace” of your balance sheet, your patent submission, your revenue forecast, or your technical paper. You just need some help, led by a skilled facilitator, to draw that answer out of the Whitespace and then drop it into your toolbox.

“I never thought of that.”

The answer you are looking for has been there all along, hiding in your Whitespace. Let us help you find it.

Remember, the key to solving tough problems lies not so much in brilliance as it does in process. Always start with the question “why?”