From my readings and thinking about new product development, product life cycle issues and developing points of differentiation, I have combined two ideas into a way of thinking about all of this.

There is some work by a Chicago agency on the subject of innovation and they call it the Ten Types of Innovation. From their work we can try to create innovations that create customer value and POD’s in many areas of the business. For instance, Amazon created a profit model for the Kindle that gave us inexpensive tablets, at cost, and then we could buy what we wanted, books, music, etc. ZARA’s created a new network structure and process to give us fast fashion. Google created new systems to give us “free” search which their model created advertising revenues and commerce opportunities. Apple changed the way we buys/distribute music with iTunes. Consumers are engaged in a social interaction at Starbucks. Coke later this year will give us at-home production of our own favorite soda. Oreo’s now come in a re-sealable bag. DELL customizes every computer they sell and has not parts laying around but rather builds to order. Microsoft has such a powerful brand that they are coming out with their own line of hardware, the Surface. So innovation can be found or developed in many different way, not just something we call product innovation.

How did all these ideas come about? One way to create new ideas and innovation is to use the concept of **design thinking**. Much has been written about design thinking but for me, in my attempt to simplify the idea, it comes down to four questions;

**What is? What if? What WOWs? What’s feasible?**

So now, if we conceptually take each innovation area described above, and ask the four questions, we just might find some POD’s, some areas to innovate, some ways to prevent the decline that is inevitable with the life of any product.

**What Is?** What exists now? What is valued in the marketplace? By whom? What does this do and why is it wanted by customers? **What IF?** What is we changed things? What if we changed the way things are done? Can we change lives? Can we create new value? Consider “pains, gains, and tasks” ? Can we appeal to new customer groups? **What WOWs?** Will this change lives? Will this add great value? And finally, **What Is Feasible?** Can we make it … at a price that is affordable.

In addition, consider the aspect of doing something digital or changing to digital…a digital overlay as well.

Want to add a third layer to this. Consider as you think about the What Is … how can you relieve a pain, add gain, or help take care of a task for the customer. These are the elements of the VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS.

OK, now on to the chart! Create your own great innovation think chart.

Innovation Think Chart

**What IS? What IF? What WOWs? What’s feasible?**

**Innovation Type**

Profit Model

Network/Process

Product Design/Systems

Product Performance

Services

Packaging

Channels

Brand

Consumer Engagement

Customer Experience