

RSA

Lab

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**Move fast and fix
things: how to be a
public entrepreneur**

Are you a public entrepreneur?

The challenges of our time...

Pressure to move fast

Incessant technological and digital change is disrupting organisations across sectors, including the public sector.

Broken relationship

There is low public trust and high expectations of businesses and institutions creating pressure on them to be more purpose-driven and mission led.

Relentless competition

Traditional businesses now face relentless competition from challenger start-ups and the gig economy is reshaping work

Old mechanisms

Innovation is in high demand. Top-down change initiatives are now too slow to keep pace with change in a networked world. However innovation does not spread.

Critical to affecting real change in this new context is to move from a 'needs and hopes' based way of pursuing change to an opportunistic and adaptive way – the entrepreneurial route to change.

The Age of the Entrepreneur

Old power:
/əʊld paʊə/

1. Works like a currency. Held by few. Once gained, it is jealously guarded. It is closed, inaccessible, and leader-driven. It downloads, and it captures.

New power:
/nju paʊə/

1. Operates like a current. Made by many. It is open, participatory, and peer-driven. It uploads, and it distributes. Like water or electricity, it is most forceful when it surges. The goal with new power is not to hoard it, but to channel it.

New Power
How It's Changing The 21st Century
- And Why You Need To Know
Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms

OLD POWER VALUES

Managerialism, institutionalism, representative governance

Exclusivity, competition, authority, resource consolidation

Discretion, confidentiality, separation between private and public spheres

Professionalism, specialization

Long-term affiliation and loyalty, less overall participation

NEW POWER VALUES

Informal, opt-in decision making; self-organization; networked governance

Open source collaboration, crowd wisdom, sharing

Radical transparency

Do-it-ourselves, "maker culture"

Short-term, conditional affiliation; more overall participation

SOURCE JEREMY HEIMANS AND HENRY TIMMS

HBR.ORG

Innovation...

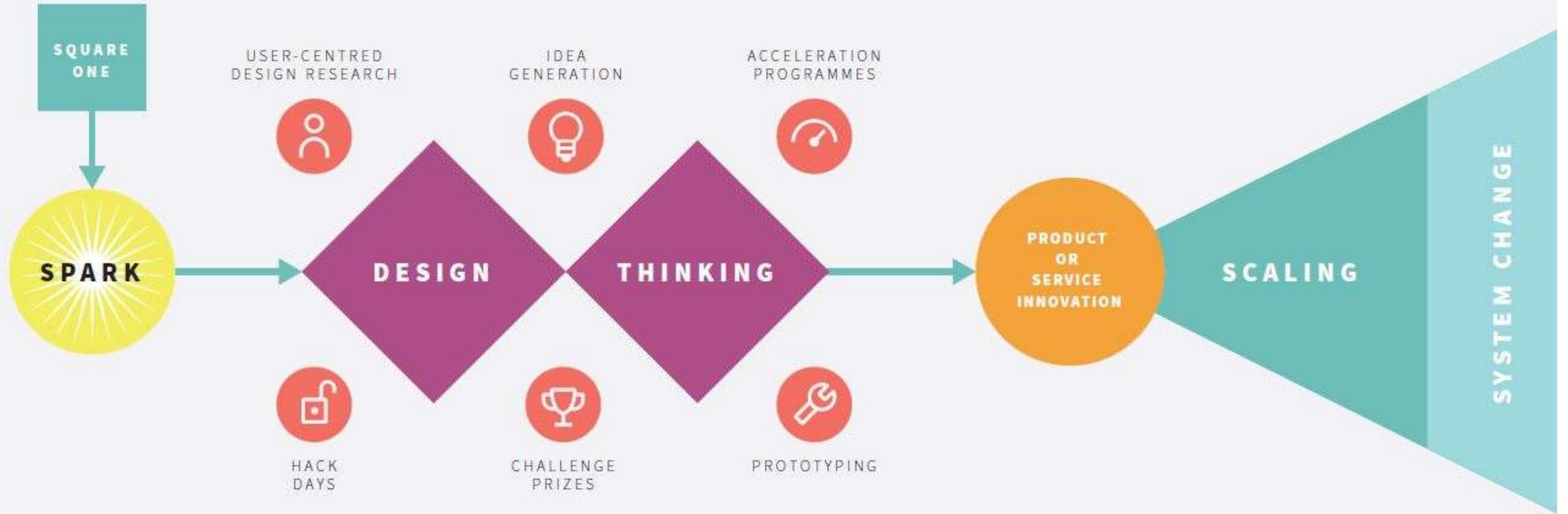
In Government

- Process Improvement
 - NHS Direct, Gov.uk, Policy Lab
- New ways of working
 - UX/User Voice, Digital Market Place, Agile methods

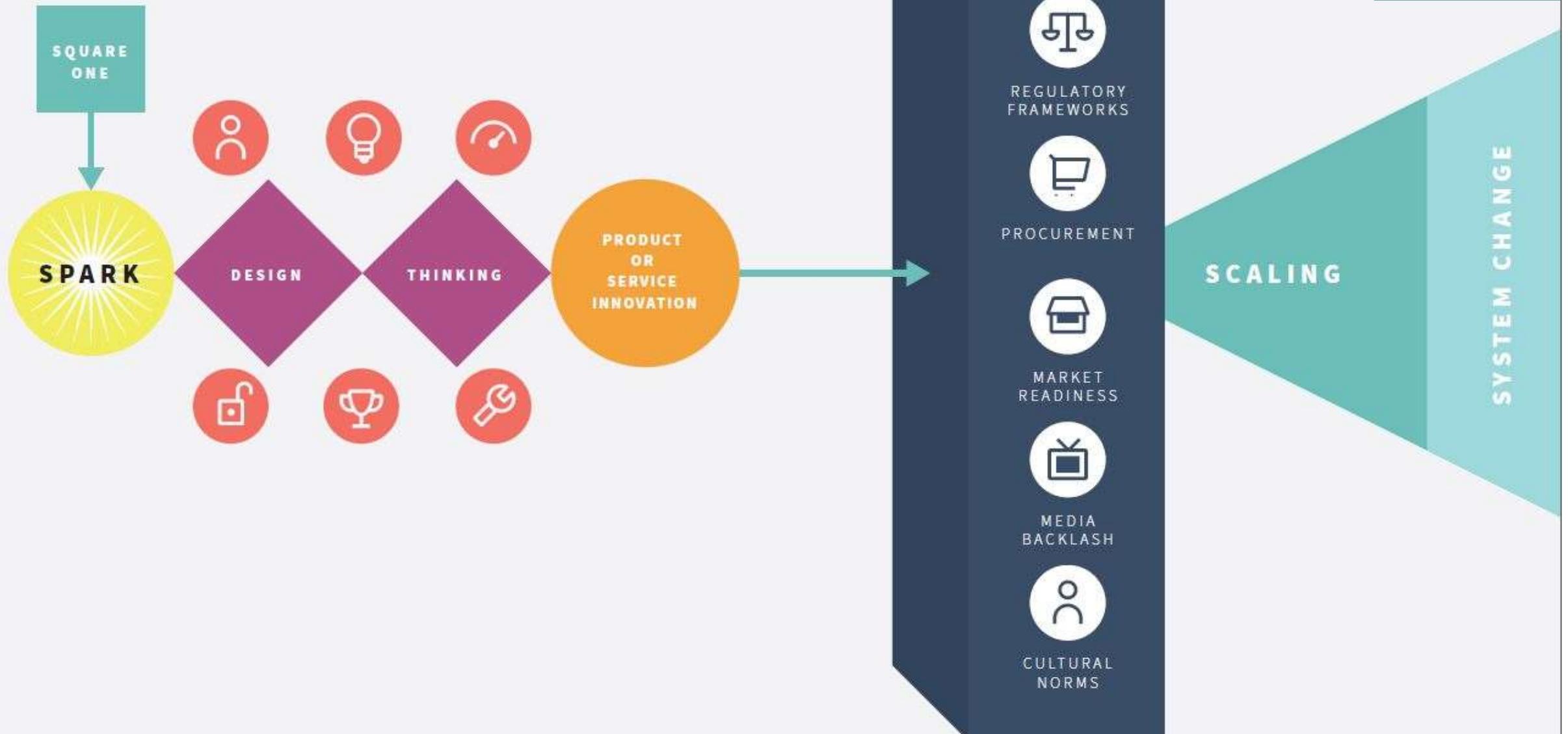
Through Government

- Solve problems, shape places, provide services
 - Market creation
 - Enterprise innovation
 - Pre-commercial procurement (eg SBRI, CivTech)
 - Mission-Orientated innovation
 - Tech for good
 - Challenge prizes

1 THE LINEAR FALLACY



2 INNOVATION HITS BARRIER TO CHANGE



3 THE SYSTEM IMMUNE RESPONSE



Immunity to change

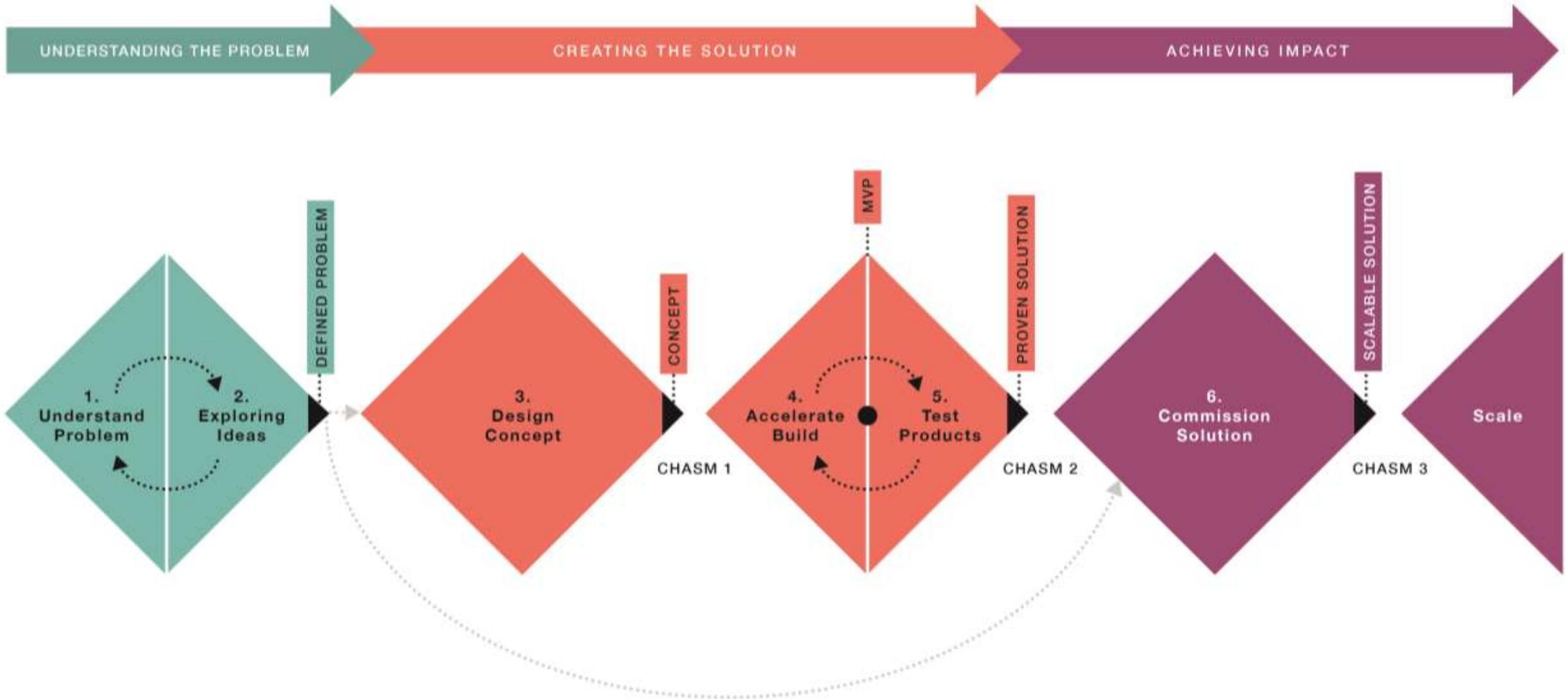
Table 1: Forces acting as blockers to procurement practitioners

Force	Description
Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Regulation that prevents or enables action (State Aid regulations for example, were often quoted – or misquoted – as a reason why government cannot act as an entrepreneur)
Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Rules that are inflexible and prevent innovation⊗ Rules that are flexible and can be tested
Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Custom and practice – how we do things around here⊗ Priorities and trade-offs (e.g. balancing budget as top priority)⊗ Exposure to innovation
Media	Media headlines were confirmed in our stakeholder interviews and workshop sessions as a primary driver of fear. The perceived catastrophic public outcry, and the repercussions that come from it.
Reprisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Fear of failing on statutory responsibilities⊗ Fear of failing on targets –not delivering on time and budget⊗ Fear of mistakes, negative results and extensive governance⊗ Fear of being accountable for the failure of others⊗ Fear of criticism – from the frontline to the boardroom⊗ Fear of being punished or fired⊗ Fear of change – prefer to be unhappy and secure than happy and insecure (loss aversion)⊗ Fear of the complexity or scale of implementation
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Lack of awareness of technology capability⊗ Gap between promise of technology and reality⊗ Data protection (GDPR in the UK)⊗ Legacy systems capability to absorb innovation⊗ Security

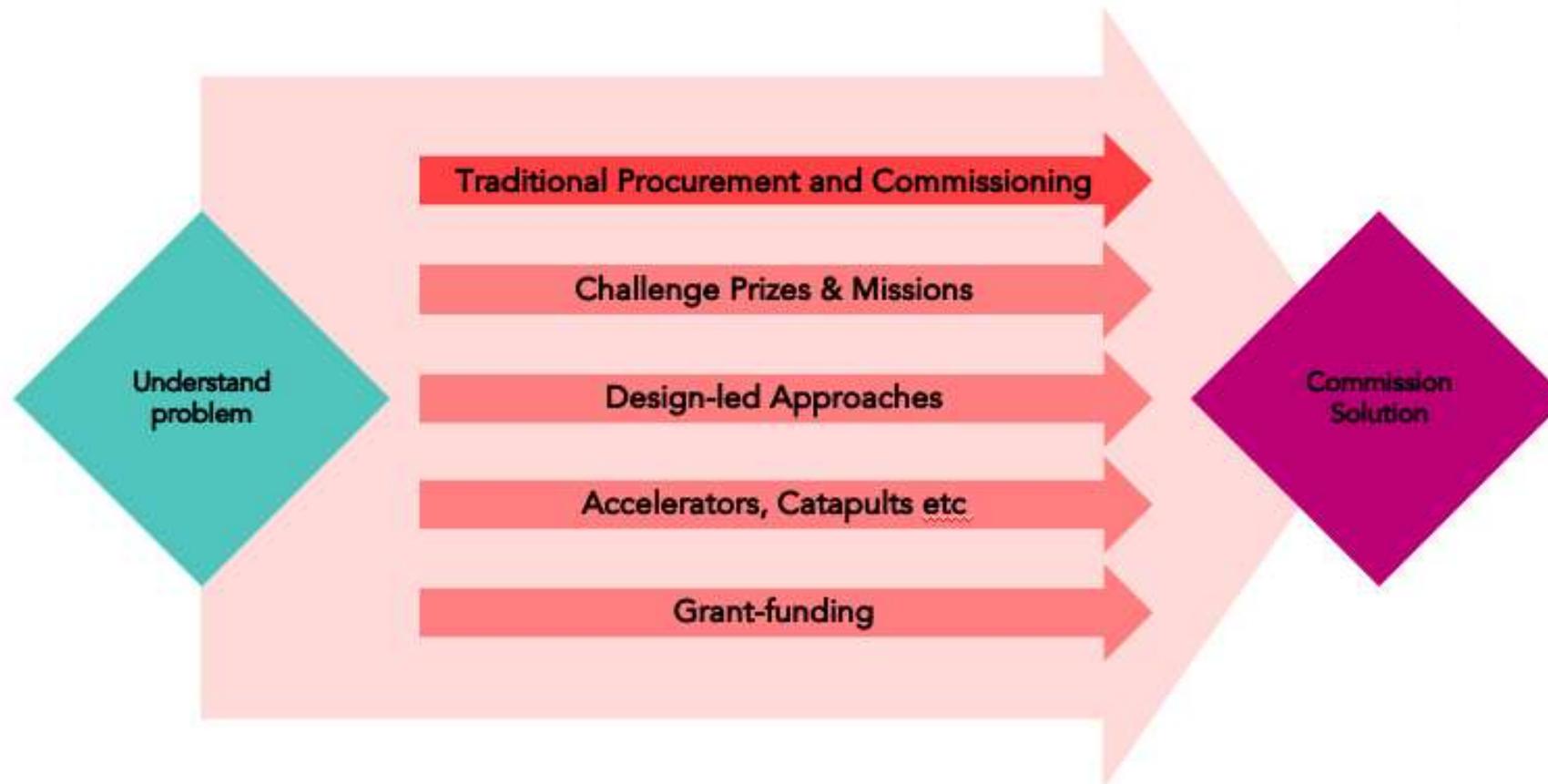
4 FINDING WAYS AROUND THE SYSTEM



Working with Complexity



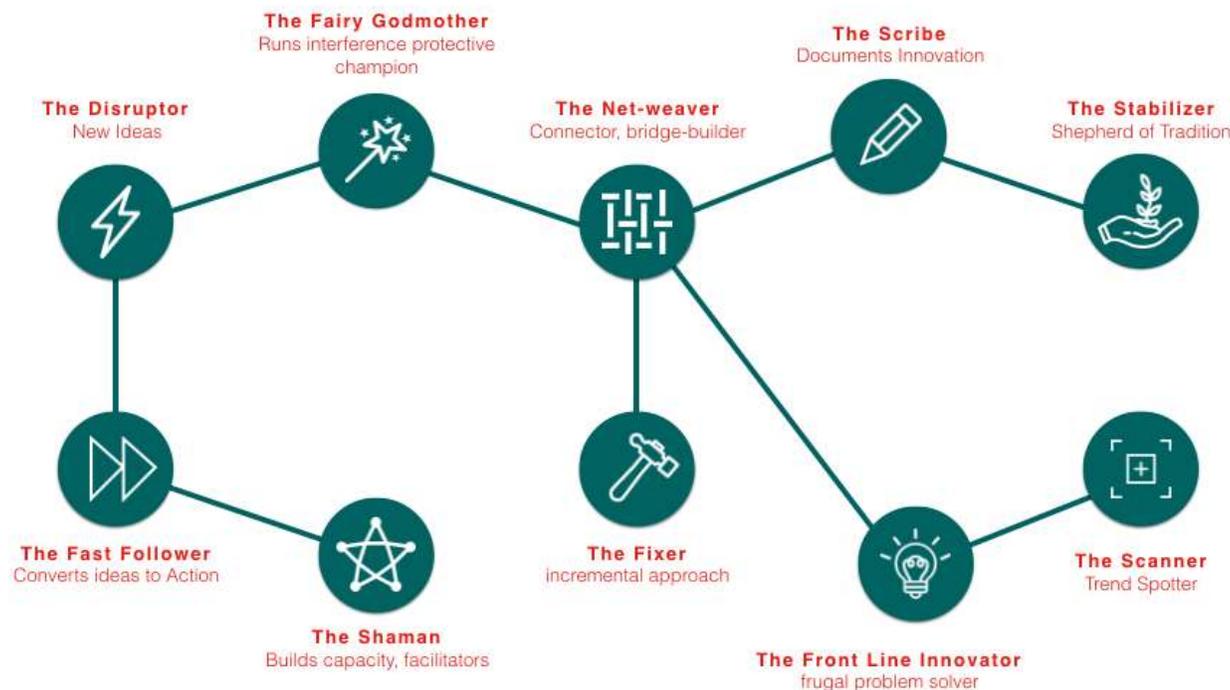
Which route to a solution?



There is no existing analysis of when to deploy each group of methods for maximum impact; they are all used as 'one shot' exercises.

Seven steps to an entrepreneurial culture

1. Understand the wider system
2. Identify incentives
3. Anticipate immunity to change
4. Understand power
5. Create Safe/Fail environments
6. Encourage flexible mindsets
7. Practice agility



The public entrepreneur creates outcomes that citizens value

They know how to develop a rich understanding of the issue in all its complexity and bring the entrepreneurial mindset to tackle it.

In doing so they act as a broker, collaborator, re-framer of problems, surfacer of ideas, champion of what works, challenger of the status quo, navigator of barriers to change...

...they are aware of the inherent tensions between making a case for, and facilitating, change whilst simultaneously making a case for, and delivering, stability.

Critical to affecting real change in this new context is to move from a 'needs and hopes' based way of pursuing change to an opportunistic and adaptive way – the entrepreneurial route to change.

Discussion



What examples can you share of public entrepreneurship?

- What are the main barriers and challenges to working in this way?
 - How are you managing to overcome these barriers?
- What are the skillset and mindset of the public entrepreneur?



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<https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2018/07/how-to-be-a-public-entrepreneur>