

# Focus on the Experiment

# Background

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse”

Henry Ford

# Danger!

Many people have said that true innovations rarely come from asking customers what they want

It implies that innovators are somehow smarter than their customers

# Focus on the Customer

The reality is that innovation comes from a very deep understanding of your customers, their problems, their needs – both expressed and unexpressed

# Innovation via Market Research

Can traditional research techniques deliver product innovation?

In the sports and fashion industries this is not the case

Innovation comes from a “problem solving” mindset – often solving problems consumers are not aware of

# Understanding Customers

In our case this means:

- working day in day out with athletes and sportspeople
- developing elite level product for elite performers
- Constantly searching for performance improvement



University of Oregon Archives

# Custom Directional Traction

Starting Point in 2003 – The Problems:

How do we get professional golfers to wear plastic spikes rather than metal?

Can we create a shoe whose grip is better than metal spikes and that can be customised to different conditions?

Can a shoe help your game?

At this point customisable clubs were hitting the market for the first time



# Padraig Harrington



Padraig was the catalyst and guinea pig

He set the expectations demanding a better product

If it works for him it will work for you!



# The End Result

## The World's First Game Improvement Golf Shoe!

A shoe that helps you hit the ball further  
and more consistently



# How?

Constant experimentation and innovation:

Broad principles were clear from the outset,  
building on previous developments

A new cleat was developed in conjunction  
with a supplier

The development prototypes were thoroughly  
tested by our biomechanics team and  
Padraig

# How?

As we got into the testing Padraig subjectively indicated that he was getting a better result – initially based on balance and grip

We then verified this in the lab

# Marketable Concept

The next challenge is to take this innovation and translate it into a marketable concept

“More Grip Let it Rip”

“The Power Comes from the feet”

insert film

# Industry Changing!

Before 2005 nobody spoke about “performance”  
golf shoes

In 2005 Hi-Tec launched CDT

In 2006 adidas launched the Tour 360

In 2007 Nike jump on the bandwagon

# Case Study – 4:SYS

## The Problems:

Business – relaunch the brand distinctively into the most technically competitive category – Running

Consumer – speak to a wider trend to simplification and minimalism – barefoot?



# Starting Point

Can we develop a shoe that helps the foot work more naturally, rather than artificially correcting it?

Most technical running shoes have numerous plastic inserts to help control the movement of the foot and lower leg

Cushioning solves one problem, but creates another

# End Result

A simpler, lighter shoe, that corrects over pronation more effectively than conventional shoes

A shoe that delivers a faster footstrike – the foot is on the ground for 5 milliseconds less  
(= 35 seconds over 10km)

insert film 2

# Key Conclusions

Product innovation is a result of:

Constant dialogue with all stakeholders

consumers

retailers

sales agents

manufacturers

Interpretation of data from various sources

e.g. nanotechnology waterproofing