

# Ethical Innovation Lab

Build mission and purpose into your company and products



Companies, teams and individuals need a mission and purpose to thrive today. And it's anything but easy to determine the right path – ethical, evil, or somewhere in between. Consider this dicey scenario: what to do when your co-founder goes rogue and fabricates a story about a prior investment to dupe new funders? Or this one, ripped from recent headlines: how to respond if you're a scooter-sharing startup founder and a glitch in your software results in a spate of injuries as riders are pitched off their rides into traffic? Jonathan Littman and Susanna Camp challenge participants to dive into these and other thorny dilemmas, in this timely Ethical Innovation Workshop.

Finding your core mission and making the right ethical choices isn't something you can teach in the abstract. A principled value system only truly emerges in context, through actions or, more commonly, reactions. You can think of this code of conduct as a kind of back-of-mind lens through which decisions are filtered. Straight from the front lines of tech, this workshop kicks off with a dynamic lecture, providing students a solid grounding in the academic framework of ethics and technology. The lab then challenges participants with engaging scenarios to address the technical, financial, and social aspects of running a company. Students brainstorm creative solutions to these dilemmas, and devise their own products and services to pitch to the group. The subject is timely. There's a growing call for companies to hire chief ethics officers. Google released its first public set of ethical technology principles just last year. Facebook only recently formally launched an ethics program with a public investment. Increasingly, the people and companies with the technological or scientific ability to create new products or innovations are controlling policy decisions that affect human safety and society. Individuals, corporations, and regulators need to ensure that accountable, transparent, ethical practices in technology are baked into platforms from the beginning.

**Participants** will discuss how policymakers can design policies that protect citizens from the unethical use of their data by shifting tech company incentives. Designers can create products that support customers' wellbeing instead of companies' bottom lines. The media can help to address ethical innovation by calling it out. Students and employees can hold institutions and corporations accountable by working together on inclusive, ethical innovation.

The lab engages participants in two fast-paced, structured brainstorms to discover the identifying principles of ethical and unethical innovation, as well as the gray area between. Then we introduce them to “ethical scorecards” in various categories, a means of evaluating ethics. They are then challenged to respond to specific ethical scenarios and devise solutions. Finally, they put all this knowledge into action by prototyping a mission-based, purpose-led company or product – or play the Devil's Advocate, and conjure up an unethical company. The lab has an academic foundation, and references materials from public policy groups and university programs. Examples include the Center for Human Technology, which works to preserve healthy uses of human attention to avoid addiction, social isolation, misinformation, and political polarization, and Stanford's Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, whose mission is to advance AI research, education, policy, and practice to improve the human condition. All participants receive a detailed suggested reading list of complementary academic articles and books, as well as timely relevant articles from the tech press.



## SAMPLE SCHEDULE



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9:00 - 9:30	General overview and lecture on unethical company's technologies.
9:30 - 9:50	Brainstorm in teams and reflect on the core signs and elements of unethical companies and technologies.
9:50 - 10:20	Exploration/lecture on mission and purpose-based ethical companies.
10:20 - 10:40	Brainstorm and reflect on the core signs and elements of ethical companies and technologies.
10:40 - 11:20	Ethical Innovation Scorecard Challenge Game. Teams pick from a deck and then respond to ethical scenarios in specific verticals - Social Media, Mobility/Transportation, Health/Medicine, etc. - from the perspective of Finance, Culture or Environment. Teams present their strategy back to the group.
11:20 - 12:00	Teams brainstorm and present on a company/product that is either ethical, gray or unethical. Share takeaways.



**Jonathan Littman's** bestselling books with IDEO have sold 750,000 copies worldwide and been published in 20 languages. Jonathan is an expert on innovation, tech ecosystems, startup culture and entrepreneurship. An adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco, he delivers keynotes and leads innovation and design thinking labs for executives and MBA candidates from 15 countries from Europe, China, and Latin America. Jonathan is the creator of SmartUp.life, an online innovation hub that publishes case studies about entrepreneurship and innovation, and Start20X, an online tool

to gauge the talents and readiness of startups and growing enterprises. **Susanna Camp** is an editor and journalist specializing in emerging technology and business trends. She is the Editor-in-Chief of SmartUp.life, Editorial Strategist for Women In Product, and a superconnector in the tech ecosystem of San Francisco. Susanna was an early team leader at *Wired* magazine, where she led the creation of one of the first online communities, and has also worked on the staff of *Macworld*, *PCWorld*, and *Outside* magazines. Entrepreneurs in Residence at Schoolab, an international incubator and consultancy, Jonathan and Susanna are currently collaborating on a new book on global entrepreneurship, *The Entrepreneur's Faces*. Jonathan and Susanna are building innovation and entrepreneurship programs for executives, startups and students worldwide.

[▶ Check out the Ethical Innovation Lab Video!](#)



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NARRATIVE

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