
Disruptive Innovation Strategy Training Course: Threats, Response and Organisational Design

14 – 25 December 2026
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Disruptive innovation strategy is the subject of this two-week training course for directors, strategy heads and innovation leaders at a strategic level, ending in a disruption response plan for one business. Established organisations often see a new entrant clearly only after customers have started to move. The programme links threat scanning, response options, portfolio funding and organisational design, and each tool is applied to the participant's own market. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on disruptive innovation strategy to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Disruptive entrants rarely start where an incumbent is looking. They begin with customers the core business under-serves or ignores, and by the time the threat shows in revenue, choices are narrower and costlier. Leaders who read the early signals, fund uncertain ventures in stages and give them room to work can respond while the core business still has strength.

- Revenue at Risk: Is identified earlier as entrant signals are ranked by severity and speed.
- Innovation Spend Quality: Improves as funding is released in stages against evidence.
- Decision Cycle Time: Falls as response options and owners are agreed before a threat peaks.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Disruption theory Christensen: Explains why entrants with simpler offers can overtake leaders, and shapes the diagnosis in Sessions 1 to 3.
- Sustaining versus disruptive innovation: Separates improvements for existing customers from changes that reset the basis of competition, and frames Session 1.
- Low-end disruption and new-market disruption: Two distinct paths of entry, each studied with its own signals in Sessions 2 and 3.

Intended Participants

- Directors who answer to a board for the long-term position of a business.
- Strategy heads who set choices on markets, partners and investment.
- Innovation leaders who run new-venture and research portfolios.
- Business unit leaders whose core products face a cheaper or simpler substitute.
- Corporate development leads who screen partnerships and acquisitions.

Typical functions include strategy, corporate development, product and technology teams in banking, telecommunications, healthcare, media and industrial groups.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to distinguish sustaining from disruptive innovation using evidence from their own market.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose low-end and new-market disruption patterns in a live industry.
3. Participants will be able to prioritise entrant threats by severity and speed.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate response options, including defence, partnership and acquisition.
5. Participants will be able to construct a staged funding plan for uncertain ventures.
6. Participants will be able to justify an organisational design for a disruptive venture to a board.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Disruptive Innovation Strategy Scope and Disruption Theory

Which changes in an industry count as disruption, and which are only strong competition?

- Disruption Theory Christensen
- Sustaining Versus Disruptive Innovation
- Performance Trajectory Chart
- Industry Change Inventory
- Disruption Claim Test

Day 2: Low-End Disruption

How do entrants win overlooked customers with simpler offers and then move upward?

- Low-End Disruption Pattern
- Overshot Customer Map
- Cost Structure Comparison
- Entrant Margin Floor Analysis
- Upmarket Move Timeline

Day 3: New-Market Disruption

How do products reach people who were previously non-consumers, and why do incumbents miss them?

- New-Market Disruption Pattern
- Non-Consumption Scan
- Customer Job Statement
- Adjacent Use Case Log
- Early Adopter Signal Sheet



Day 4: Threat Scanning and Early Signals

Which weak signals deserve attention before revenue is affected?

- Signal Source Register
- Entrant Watch List
- Technology Readiness Grid
- Customer Switching Interviews
- Threat Severity Ranking

Day 5: Why Incumbents Respond Late

What inside a well-run organisation delays a sound response to a disruptive entrant?

- Resource Allocation Process Review
- Value Network Map
- Profit Model Conflict Check
- Decision Rule Audit
- Response Delay Case Study

Day 6: Response Options and Strategic Choice

Should the organisation defend, adapt, partner, acquire or ignore the entrant?

- Response Option Matrix
- Defend or Disrupt Decision Tree
- Partnership and Acquisition Screen
- Cannibalisation Estimate
- Scenario Stress Test

Day 7: Portfolio and Funding Choices

How is money divided between the core business and uncertain new ventures?

- Innovation Portfolio Map
- Staged Funding Gates
- Discovery-Driven Plan
- Venture Metrics Set
- Kill and Scale Criteria

Day 8: Organisational Design for Disruption

Where should a disruptive venture sit, and what should it be free to do differently?



- Separate Unit Charter
- Autonomy and Link Matrix
- Venture Team Profile
- Shared Asset Rules
- Governance Cadence Design

Day 9: Leading the Core Through Disruption

How do leaders protect current customers and staff while a new model is built?

- Core Business Protection Plan
- Leadership Message Map
- Talent Movement Plan
- Stakeholder Reaction Grid
- Resistance Diagnosis Sheet

Day 10: Applying the Tools to One Business

Do the signals, response, funding and design tools form one working disruption response plan?

- Applying the Session 4 Threat Severity Ranking
- Using the Session 6 Response Option Matrix
- Testing the Session 7 Staged Funding Gates
- Checking the Session 8 Separate Unit Charter
- Completing the Disruption Response Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a case analysis method built on anonymised market histories, entrant profiles, funding records and organisation charts from several sectors. Participants work in peer groups on their own markets, test each tool on a live question and receive written facilitator feedback on every exercise set.

- Suggested activity: Reading an industry history to separate sustaining moves from disruptive ones.
- Suggested activity: Ranking a watch list of entrants by severity and speed of advance.
- Suggested activity: Defending a staged funding request before a mock investment committee.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a disruption response plan for one business. It holds an entrant threat ranking, a response option matrix, a staged funding gate schedule, a separate unit charter and a leadership message map. The plan is used at work to brief the board, release funds against evidence and set up the venture team before the next planning round.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is disruptive innovation strategy suitable for leaders new to innovation work?

Yes. Disruptive innovation strategy assumes senior management experience and builds the theory, scanning, funding and design skills step by step, without technical prerequisites.

Which theory does disruptive innovation strategy rest on in this programme?

Disruptive innovation strategy here rests on Christensen's disruption theory, including the split between sustaining and disruptive innovation and the low-end and new-market paths.

How is the plan from disruptive innovation strategy used at work?

You use the disruption response plan to brief the board, rank entrant threats, release funds in stages, assign owners and set up the unit that will build the new offer.

How does disruptive innovation strategy differ from general innovation and growth training?

Disruptive innovation strategy centres on entrant threats, incumbent response and venture design, while general innovation and growth training centres on idea generation, market expansion and growth planning.