

Insights and Recommendations From Public Survey



Background

Forest Opportunity Roadmap / Maine (FOR/Maine) is a unique cross-sector collaboration between industry, communities, government, education, and nonprofits which have come together to ensure that Maine strategically adapts and capitalizes on changing markets, to maintain our leading role in the global forest economy and support prosperity in our state.

The coalition was created with support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.



www.ForMaine.org



Background

Phase 1

The first phase of the initiative included the development of an industry roadmap with principles designed to guide the growth and diversification of Maine's forest economy. This roadmap included specific goals, strategies, and tactics identified for phase 2 work.

Phase 2

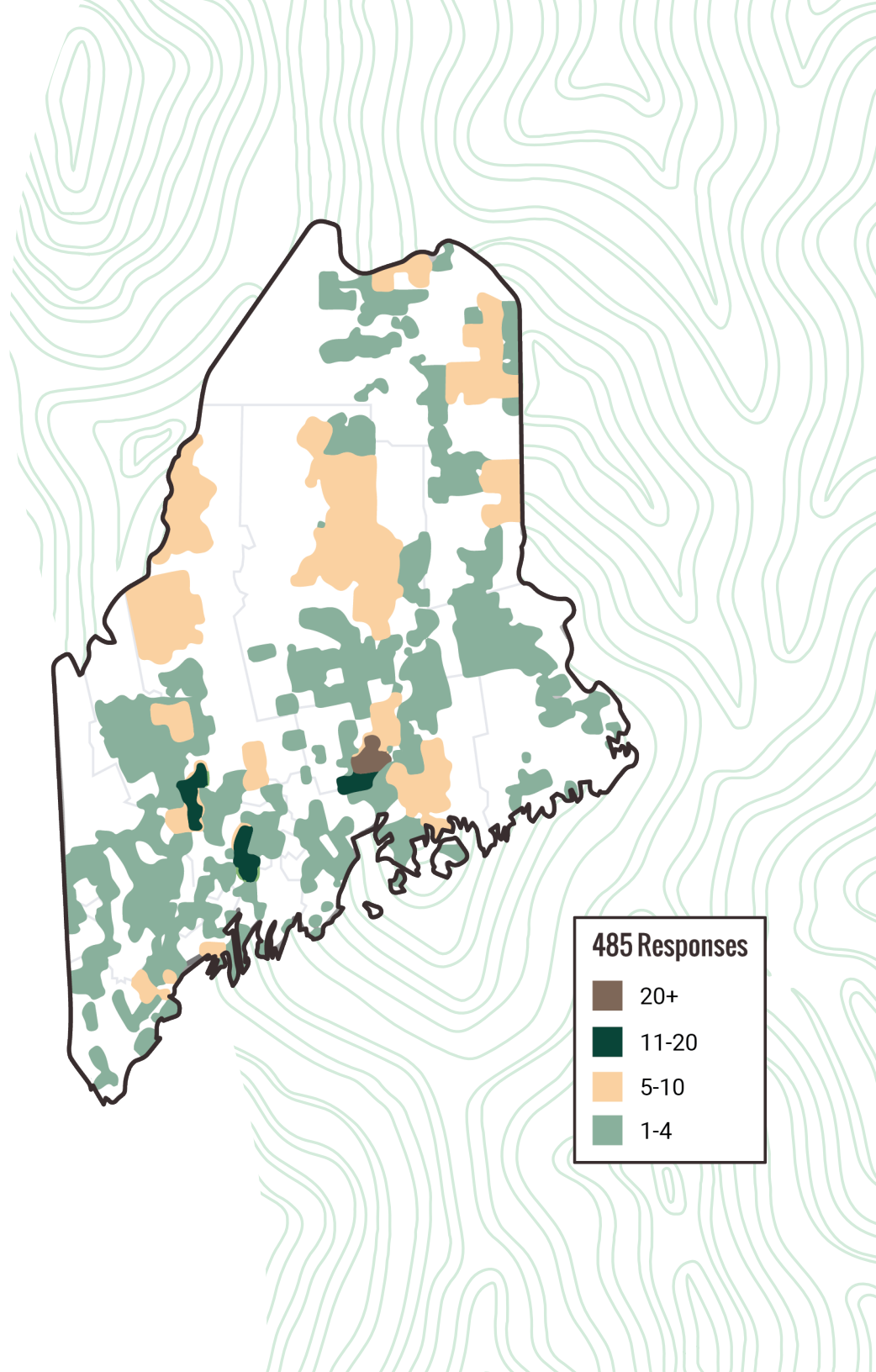
The second phase includes the development of a public communications strategy. This strategy is to be used to increase public awareness of innovation happening within the industry as well as increase future workforce development interests.



The Survey

To assist in gaining insights from statewide audience, an online survey was developed. The survey received 485 responses from around the state of Maine.

- The online survey consisted of both quantitative and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were designed for the participant to provide information as to why they answered the way they did.
- Questions were designed to capture information regarding three attributes:
 - Reputation
 - Optimism
 - Awareness
- Questions were both direct and nuanced in that one question pertained to more than one attribute
- The answers received are being used as a framework for developing priorities and tactics of the communication plan.
- The results also offer a benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of the strategies and tactics at a future date.



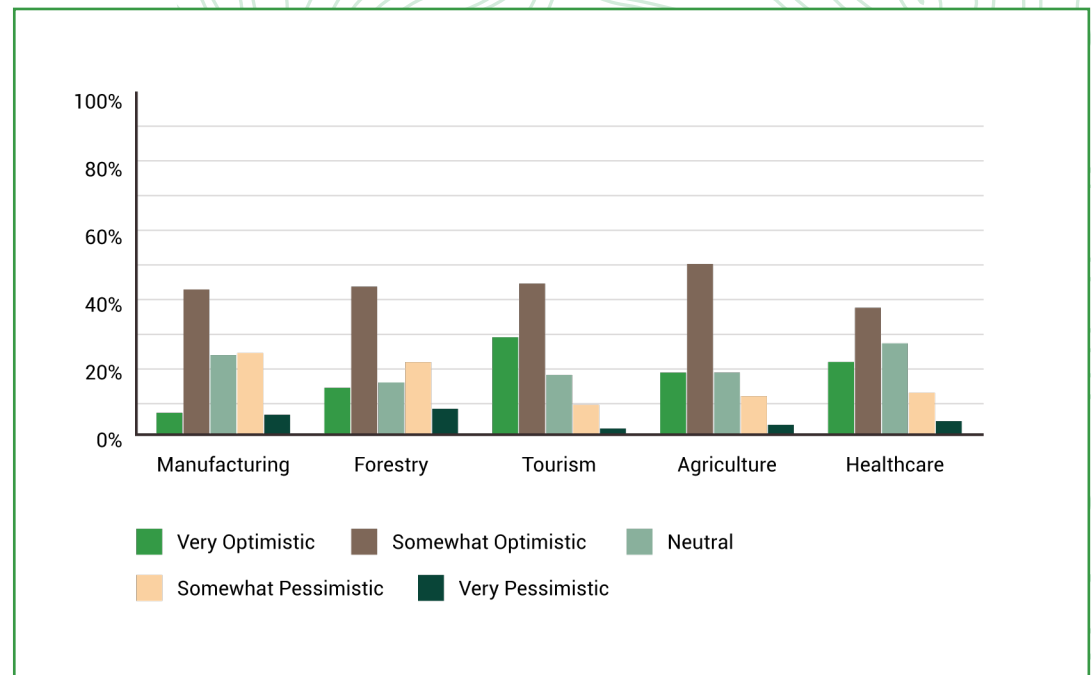
Insights

- Industries that have invested in telling their story and are public facing enjoy a higher level of optimism in general than does Forest Products. Tourism received the highest percentage of optimistic responses followed by Agriculture. Tourism has a constant public presence. Agriculture has benefited from a national movement of consumers seeking more transparency about the people, product, and processes of their food. However, in respondents under the age of 34, Forestry tied with Tourism as the industries with the highest level of optimism.

Messaging Suggestions: Look to tie Maine's privately owned forest to public access and recreational activities. When possible, highlight the symbiotic relationship between responsible public use and land-owners who recognize the value of these activities in the community and the economy.

Survey Question

How do you feel about the growth opportunities for the following industries in Maine over the next 10 years?



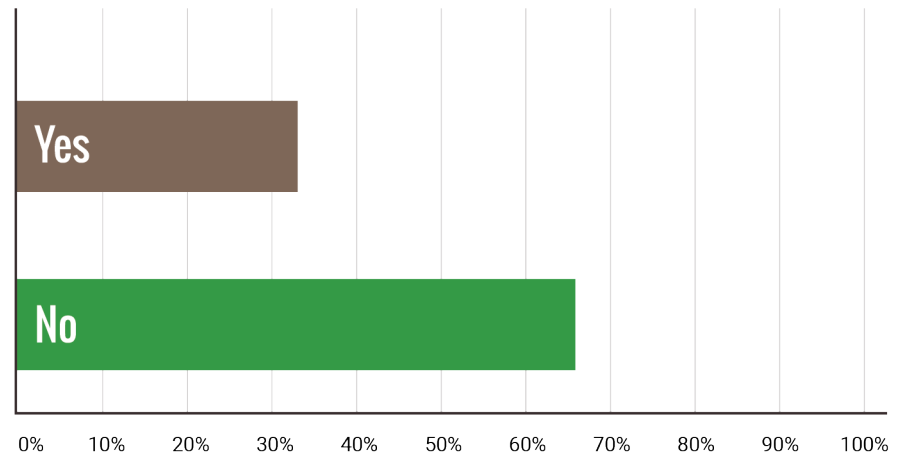
Insights

- Nanocellulose as a term was recognized by only one third of total respondents. However, in respondents younger than 44, that awareness nearly doubled.

Messaging Suggestions: Utilize tools such as infographics, videos, and text to simplify messaging around nanocellulose; use relatable references to help the public understand not only the solutions being created but what products around them already benefit from the use of nanocellulose.

Survey Question

In the last 12 months, have you read, watched or heard a news story regarding 'nanocellulose?'



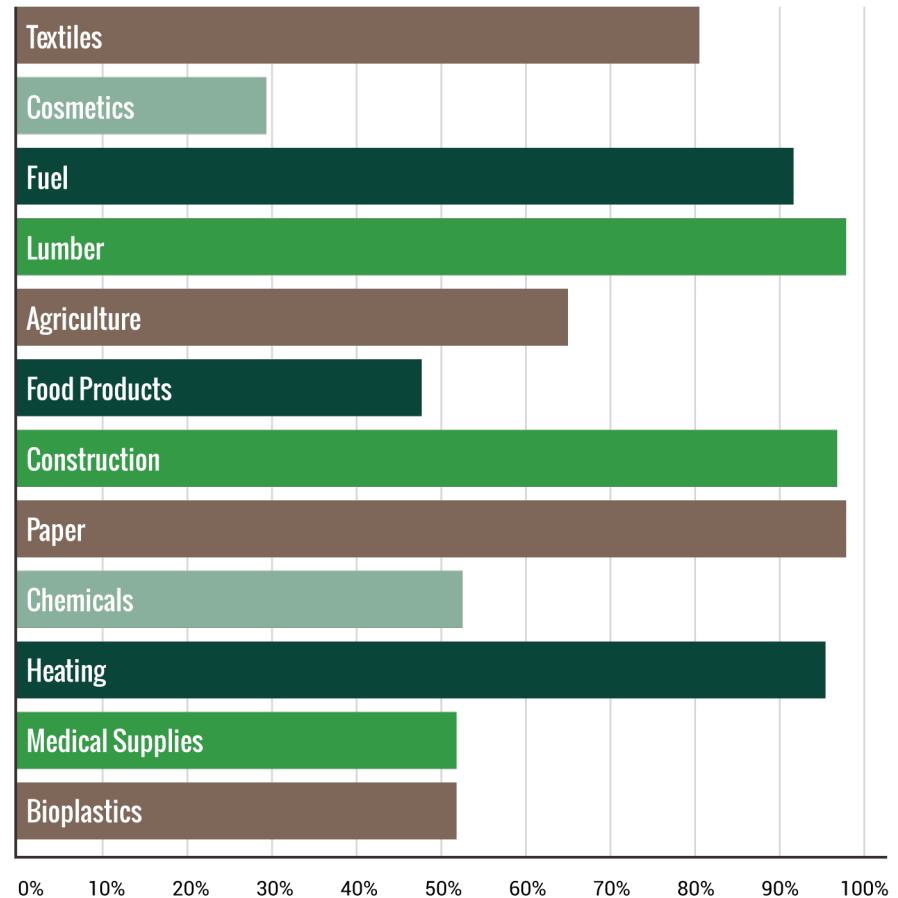
Insights

- Awareness of what would be considered traditional uses of wood fibers was recognized and heard of by an overwhelming majority of the respondents. The wood fiber uses that would be considered more non-traditional and part of the growing global bioeconomy were recognized by far less respondents. Wood fibers used for Cosmetics, Food Products, Chemicals, Medical and Bio Plastics were recognized by no more than 50% of the respondents. Those numbers decreased significantly in respondents under the age of 44.

Messaging Suggestions: Highlight Maine businesses already using fiber in their innovation; Utilize tools such as infographics, videos, and text to simplify messaging around Nanocellulose; Use relatable references to help the public understand not only the solutions being created but what products around them already benefit from the use of nanocellulose.

Survey Question

Wood fibers can be used in a variety of ways. Check all that you have heard of.



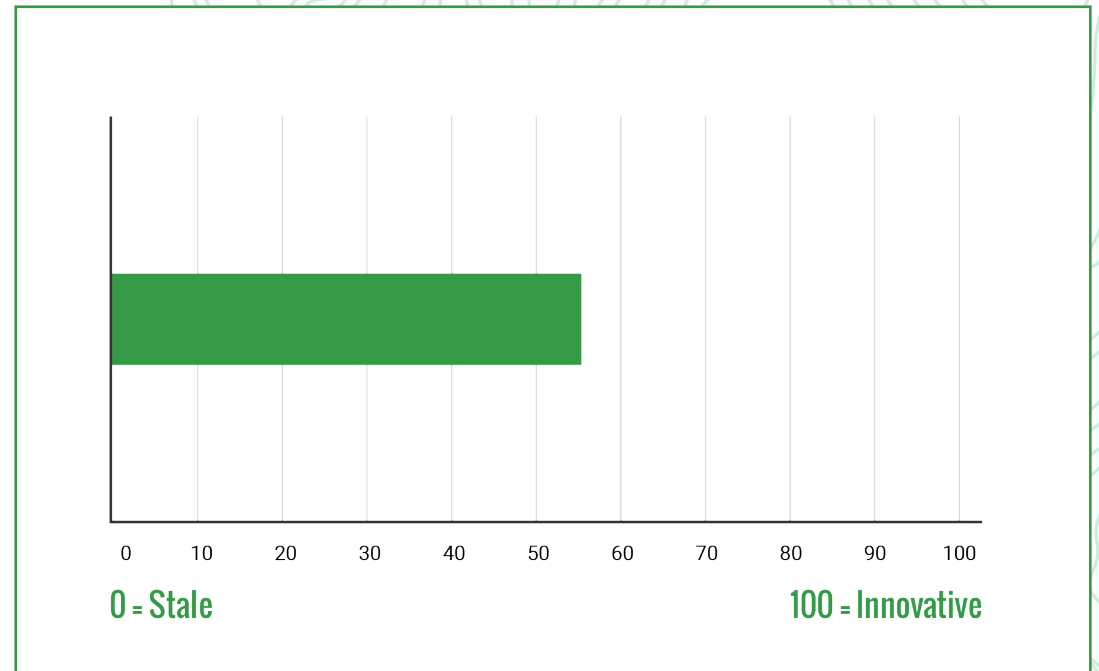
Insights

- Opinions were neutral from the majority of respondents regarding the industry's attitude as a whole towards growth and innovation.

Messaging Suggestions: Share stories of Maine companies doing business with international markets; share stories of global issues being solved with efforts related to wood fibers replacing fossil fuels, utilize photography to show regeneration and responsible harvesting and management methods.

Survey Question

The Maine forest products industry attitude towards growth is:



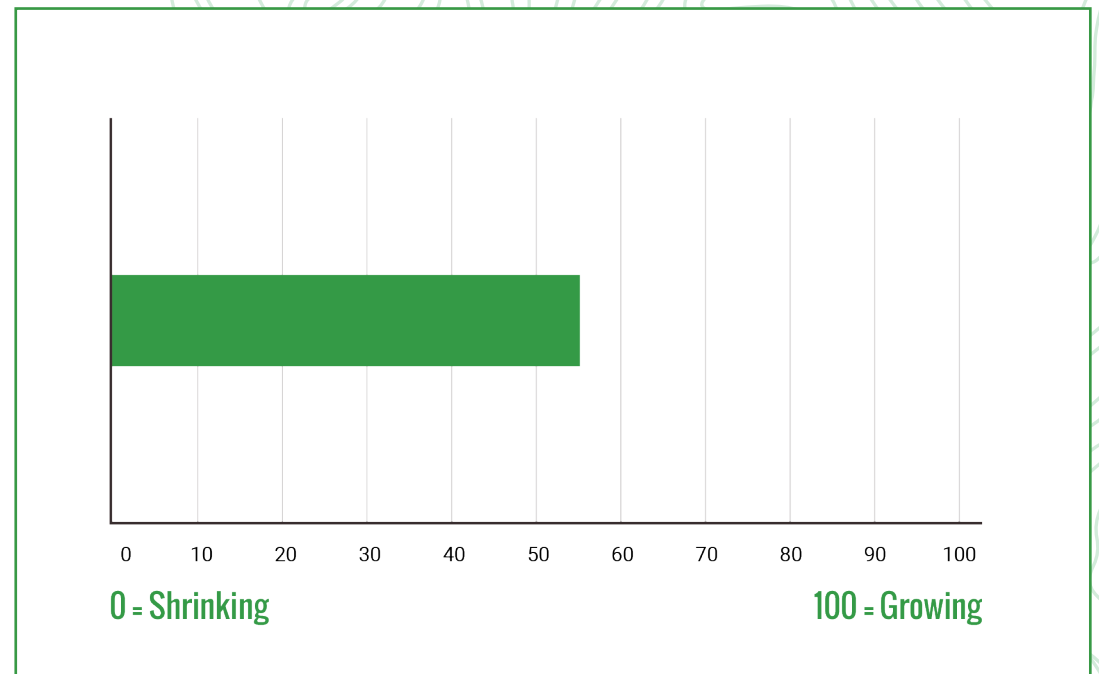
Insights

- A majority of respondents understand the beneficial financial impact Forest Products have on the state of Maine's economy. However, a majority of respondents were unclear as to whether the industry's economic impact was in growth or decline.

Messaging Suggestions: Share stories of Maine companies doing business with international markets; share stories of global issues being solved with efforts related to wood fibers replacing fossil fuels; simplify messaging around the term 'bioeconomy' with relatable, everyday references.

Survey Question

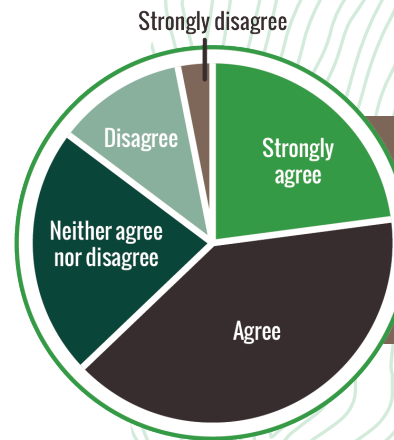
The value of Maine forest products industry's economic impact is:



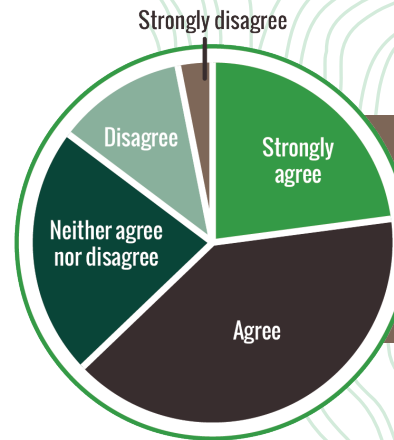
Insights

- A majority of respondents agree that timberland owners and professional loggers use sustainable harvesting and management practices, feel good about the industry as a whole, and would highly recommend Maine students consider a career in Forest Products.

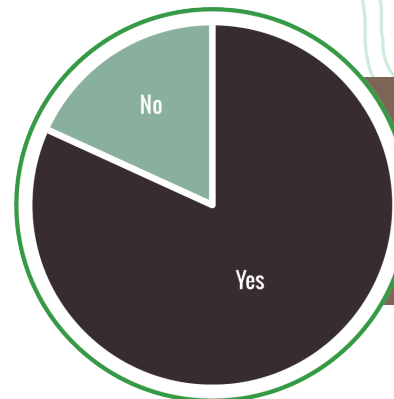
Messaging Suggestions: Highlight younger workers in the field; Tie skills such as engineering, math, and various sciences to work being done in forestry today; When possible, highlight the symbiotic relationship between responsible public use and land-owners who recognize the value of these activities in the community and the economy; Share stories of global issues being solved with efforts related to wood fibers replacing fossil fuels.



Professional logging contractors in Maine use responsible and sustainable harvesting practices.



Timberland owners in Maine use responsible and sustainable harvesting management practices.



Would you recommend Maine students consider a career in a forest-related occupation?

Key Takeaway

Reputation - High

Optimism - Medium

Awareness - Low

Despite recent years' underlying simmer of negative news within Maine's forestry industry, our survey results show Mainers have a strong, positive outlook of Maine's forests and related industry. However, research also points to a general lack of depth of understanding of the industry's new and ever-growing innovations. By working to strengthen the awareness of the industry's innovative and exciting future growth, connecting those efforts to issues of global concern, and by highlighting the ways forestry is more than just logging, we can create a strong enticement for future employment within Maine's upcoming workforce, as well as attract new career minded employees from outside the state.



Core Messages

- 1. Versatility** - Wood is a sustainable, renewable resource. Wood is versatile. Forest products help achieve economic and environmental goals, wildlife benefits, recreation and tourism.
- 2. Opportunity** - We are building the future of Maine's forest products industry. Forest products represents a career path where skills can be used for greater good and purpose; Careers in the forest economy are rewarding, growing, and in-demand.
- 3. Global Impact** - Maine has an important role to play in the global bioeconomy. Maine's forest products industry is highly interconnected and interdependent. A strong forests products industry supports vibrant Maine communities.



Themes to Consider

1. **Relatability** - aligning the new innovations with everyday scenarios and problems to help those unfamiliar with the technical details better understand how the innovation impacts their life.
2. **Diversity** - using photos and videos to show a wide range of ethnic and gender professionals in forestry.
3. **Imagination** - going beyond what's being done to include the possibilities of where research can go.
4. **Global reach** - integrating examples of how Maine's talent and resources result in solutions to problems around the world.
5. **Mission** - multiple studies show Generation Z tend to worry that their skills will be underutilized and that their work may not be meaningful. Showing how forestry innovations impact larger social issues will help align purpose with the work.
6. **Simplicity** - keeping messaging simple and straightforward will help make it easier for more people to understand innovative concepts quicker.

