

Itensil's Rapid Innovation Method is the fast and easy way to create workflow-based "on demand" applications for Itensil's collaborative workflow SaaS.

Rapid because knowledge workers and teams build and deploy SaaS applications within the time and resource constraints of existing project activities.

Innovative because teams convert ideas into applications in a context that combines left-brain and right-brain work styles to produce repeatable results with creative freedom.

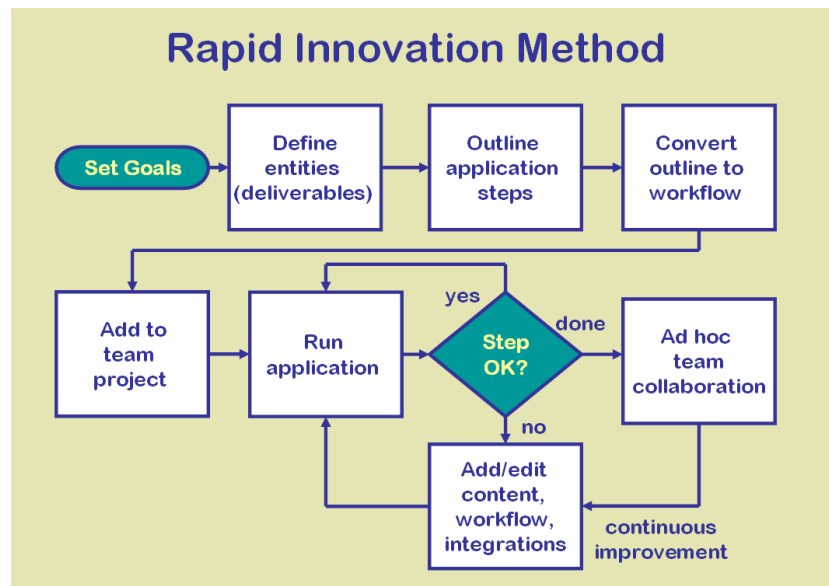
Key concepts

Discovery learning. Avoid the analysis / paralysis that can stifle progress by converting a work plan, checklist, "how to" article, brainstorm notes or procedure manual into executable workflow in minutes. Then refine your application iteratively, as you use it.

Creativity and repeatability convergence. Use an unstructured project space to exchange ideas informally. Then embed widgets to build, launch and manage reusable applications within the project context.

Interconnect workflows as an application. Create reusable workflows and interconnect them through a common data structure - called an entity – into an application that performs a business function. Extend the scope by adding new workflows. For example, a product management application begins with a market requirements workflow and adds customer testing and sales training to encompass the life cycle of a product.

Work online. A 100 percent web-based service provides all product features in a unified web browser interface. So there's nothing to install or maintain.



Best practices

The following guidelines are a roadmap for implementing recurring team business functions as Itensil collaborative workflow SaaS applications.

Create an application for a specific project requirement. Avoid creating a universal application that tries to accommodate every contingency in a business function. Develop your application within a specific project with real deliverables and schedules. Reuse and extend or modify your initial application on similar projects. A robust application will evolve with capabilities that are field tested in real world business situations.

Start with the entity foundation. An entity is an object that is created or changed by the workflow, but exists outside the workflow. For example, customers and products are common entities. The deliverables for your project are contents of an entity. The entities that your workflow references may exist in your Itensil user community, or you can create new ones.

Use Itensil's entity design tool to create a new entity, add new fields to an existing entity, or establish many-to-many relationships between records in separate entities. For example, a customer can purchase many products, and a product can have many customers.

Create forms to capture and display entity content – which can be data, attached documents or web links – and embed them in workflow step instructions.

Attach editable documents to entities as templates to capture work product. You can interact with any templated MS Excel spreadsheet cell directly from a form. Use the spreadsheet as a calculator. Enter data and display resulting cell values in a form or in a workflow business rule.

Keep workflow scope narrow. Don't create single, complex workflow with multiple paths to manage an entire application or an indeterminate number of deliverables – a product launch, for example. It will confuse users, be difficult to update and debug, and you can't possibly design for all the exceptions that occur in team-based activities.

Instead, create separate workflows for each deliverable. Make them self-contained for use in combination and in various applications. For example – conduct an interview, or create a product demo. Interconnect them through an entity called Product, and manage the product launch as a team project. This gives you the flexibility to run workflows as many times and whenever they are needed, and keep humans involved in managing workload and viewing progress.

Create an application step outline. List the individual steps required to achieve the final deliverable. Use a separate step for each role change, or for steps with a clear deliverable or milestone. Do not include steps for delivery or approval as these are managed automatically by Itensil. Where possible, copy and paste an existing document, even if it is not completely accurate. Your goal is to get into the workflow as quickly as possible, and refine your application from there.

Convert outline to workflow. Itensil's outline tool is capable of fully defining most workflows. These features are also available in the flowchart editor, so choose the specificity of your outline to suit your preference. If you include the 'approval' icon in selected outline steps, the workflow loops and decision are created automatically.

Knowledge content and web links included in the outline are placed in the workzone step instructions. So retain relevant content from your original source material in your outline, and edit it in the flowchart workzone editor as you run the application.

Provide project context. Create or select a project to provide a context for your team to test and refine your application. Attach the new workflow to the project.

Embed an entity status widget in the project page. Use it to launch workflows chained to specific entity records and display their status.

Run, revise, repeat. Use the iterative 'discovery learning' method to revise and extend your applications. Launch the workflow and toggle between Run and Design modes to make changes and test them immediately. When each step is complete, resume Run mode and advance the process to the next step. Roll back steps at any time to revise your test data or take alternate workflow paths.

Edit the workzone first. The workflow contains instruction pages called workzones. Workzones contain control buttons to advance to the next step, or to select alternate paths. For example, an approval step might contain two control buttons: accept and revise.

Write concise, clear instructions, use forms or editable templates for data capture, and provide links to essential documents. Use a link to the knowledge base – a searchable repository available to the entire user community – for examples and reference material to keep the workzone page uncluttered and actionable.

Create instant mash-ups by embedding screens from third party tools and services in the workzone page. Add content that provides context for the mash-up within your application. Advanced users can insert javascript into the workzone to call a web service and exchange data with other programs.

Edit the workflow. Revise the workflow in the flowchart panel using drag and drop icons and path connectors. An editable workzone is created automatically for each new step. Pre-

assembled flowchart modules for loops and branches contain the workzone control buttons.

Save changes to the master workflow or as variations to create alternate versions of applications to create new workflows.

Beyond productivity and on to innovation. Encourage application building by creating an ecosystem of interconnected applications that are managed independently, but share entity data. Shared dynamic content is often the fastest way to provide value to siloed business units and expand participation.

The fastest way to drive adoption is by relieving pain quickly. In most team activities, lag time occupies most of the elapsed time. Implement existing processes “as is” to for immediate, significant productivity improvement from efficient routing, team alerts, timely knowledge and tool delivery, accurate document versions, and real time visibility. For example, if your team shares operational spreadsheets by email, attach the spreadsheets to workflow steps that mirror your email routing as a quick first phase.

By automating the “roughly repetitive” work that makes up most knowledge-intensive team activities, and enabling knowledge workers to accommodate change as it happens, you can evolve beyond a narrow productivity focus to drive innovation for competitive advantage.

Itensil drives innovation through four basic change mechanisms.

Scope of Change	Mechanism
Develop product ideas and business models	Ad hoc discussion in Project team page wiki
Add best practices, tools, examples, tips, training to workflow step knowledge	Articles in searchable community Knowledgebase
Modify workflow to address specific needs or functions	New workflow variation, available on demand
Extend business function ecosystem with new application	New application workflow connected to existing entities