



HOUSE RULE

Finding early
adopters is easy.
Scaling is
the hard part.



House Rules.

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Early adopters are the easy part.

Here's how to plan for scale from the start.





The biggest adaption challenge leaders will have in 2025 isn't finding change agents or early adopters to tackle big topics like AI governance or data-driven creativity.

It's scaling that curiosity and technical competence to the edge of their organization. To get beyond proof-of-concept pilots to proof-of-impact systemic change.



It's a challenge familiar to marketing and people leaders who have long faced the struggle of getting their teams to share a path forward. Instead, watching adopters, adapters and avoiders further diverge into camps increasingly unable to understand one another.

Is this a technology problem? It certainly can be, but the scaling challenge faces nearly every aspect of work on "the new":

- New research, read voraciously by a few and disregarded by most
- New ways to work as a team, rapidly taken up by a few but set aside by greater numbers
- New opportunities to use data in decision making, focused on by a few but left out by many
- New tools easily picked up by a few, but seen as a blurry future to their colleagues
- New ways to explore customer behavior, quickly accessed by a few but...

You recognize this problem in no small part because it's the one that's led you to ask – either in frustration or wonder – *why don't people care??*

Here's a different question: Why does everyone play Pac-man?

If you go to an arcade today – and, you can thanks to the proliferation of 16-bit throwback spots – you'll see people playing nearly every game. I'm a Frogger person myself. Maybe you're Street Fighter II or Galaga. **No matter what clunky arcade stick you grab first, we all play Pac-man eventually.**

That game made \$1 billion in quarters in its first year (1980). Then it continued on one of the longest-runs for best-selling, highest-grossing franchises in history, including regular new releases for over 40 years.

Imagine any marketing or leadership initiative having that kind of adoption.



The Lessons of Pac-man

Looked at through the lens of scaling, Pac-man reveals new ways to build for adoption and adaption that can benefit any project – from a new tech introduction to findings from research to innovative ways of work.

PLAN FOR EVERYMAN

How you'll personally use a project, is just that: *personal* to you and your work style. You'll get that output. But, what else?

Start projects by exploring how your stakeholders are learning and changing right now. Build it to integrate with their choice of channels, metrics, and style.

One of the biggest mistakes I see marketing teams make is interviewing their top salespeople to gather input for new tools and messages. That's not really their audience. That top 5% could sell anything. You really don't have to build anything for them – the question is how do you engage everyone else?

LOWER THE COST TO ENTRY

Sure, Pac-man made its billions on quarters. That is certainly a low cost of entry but it's not the only way they made it easy to try.

The mechanics are straight forward, the joystick – or arcade stick – moves in the most intuitive way possible. The rules are clear without explanation.

Scale requires that same sense of instant comfort with the mechanics of the solution or toolkit.

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

The finish line is right there to see. The ghosts approach in the wide-open bright glare of the screen. The speed ticks up predictably. The game not only shows you what's happening right now, it also shows you what's coming.

For scale, transparency isn't just telling people what decisions were made, it's opening up how they were made, why they were prioritized, and where they're leading to.

MAKE USERS TEACHERS

One of the brilliant dynamics of Pac-man is how many people have showed someone else how to play it. This is not a game of experts and craftsman whose YouTube videos must be watched in frame-by-frame detail to learn it. Instead, it's a game friends show each other; moms teach their sons; boyfriends get their girlfriends to play ...

It's easy to teach because users feel confident they know how it works. That's what we're looking for in scale as well. Some of the biggest jumps I've personally seen in adoption came when I taught a line manager how to use a custom generative AI tool then had her teach it to me before taking it to her team. She owned that scale.

KEEP IT FRESH, NOT NEW

Pac-man launched new releases for over 40 years. And you know how to play every one of them. That trick of keeping it fresh without losing the learning is one that's uniquely repeatable right now.

We're moving past a period in which we saw constant churn and change in technology tools to one in which we're integrating enduring change (AI/ML, data-driven decisioning, etc). The certainty of any multi-year approach – be it tech adoption or customer learning – makes the right balance of consistency and novelty essential to find.




OK, BACK TO YOUR ARCADE FIELD TRIP

There are 50 games in that arcade. Why do 5% of people play each of the other ones but everyone plays Pac-man? The learning curve is a bunny slope. The interface is transparent.

It was made for everyone; so, it was made for you. The penalties for failure are little more than a swirling, meep meep sound and then you start again

LET'S BUILD THAT INTO EVERY MARKETING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IN 2025.



House Rules is provided by House Strategy, a healthcare marketing partner for life sciences and B2B leaders who want to empower their teams with catalytic moments of co-creation, truly actionable customer insights, and detailed strategy blueprints that earn accountable performance.

Our key services include:

- Brand and digital marketing
- Customer research and co-creation
- Organization / capability transformation
- AI- and data-driven innovation
- Behavioral science integration
- Product planning and development

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