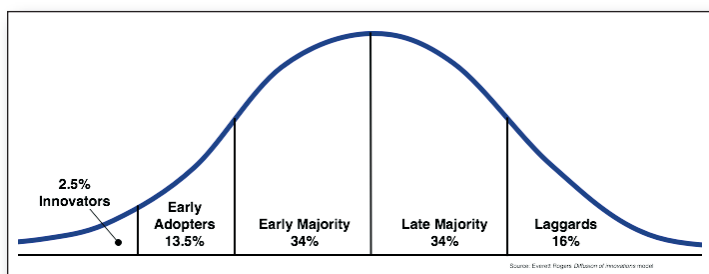




# Early Adopter

*I ordered an Apple iPad the first day I could. I'm not sure why, but I did (a reason that socioeconomic professors call irrational behavior). I even ordered the 3G model (which allows me Internet access over 3G cellular networks around the world) and had to wait an extra month for it to arrive. I'll admit it was a painful month, because my brother-in-law brought his iPad to the house every chance he had while I waited for mine to ship. When my 3G Apple iPad finally arrived, I wasn't disappointed.*

This action of ordering an iPad the first day I could placed me in a group known as early adopters. When any type of innovation is introduced, not everyone jumps on the bandwagon at the same time. It first starts with the innovators. Those that create something and put it out there – then the early adopters get a hold of it and put it through the mill, followed by the early majority, late majority and finally the laggards. This whole process was put into terms in 1962 by an innovator, Everett M. Rogers in his textbook *Diffusion of Innovations*. It is a theory of how, why and at what rate new ideas and technology spread throughout cultures. The theory is of interest as an innovator because it helps to explain why it seems to take so long for innovations become accepted.



*Adoption of any innovation roughly follows this curve.*

Each golf course superintendent is an innovator. Some more than others, but each of you have tried something new on your property, streamlined an operation, or made a task more efficient. An innovator is a person who is the first to do something that may open a new area for others and achieves an innovation. An innovation can take on many different forms, but in a general sense, it brings about a positive change. Innovators are willing to take risks, often youngest in age, very social and have the closest contact to scientific sources and interaction with other innovators. An innovator is often linked to a pioneer, no matter what the field of study. These people are responsible for the application

of innovation and start the whole process of change.

The early adopter is the second fastest group who grab onto an innovation. They are usually young in age, are social, have advanced education and have a high degree of *opinion leadership* among the rest of the adoptee categories. Opinion leadership is defined as “leaders who are influential in spreading either positive or negative information about an innovation (Rogers, 1962)”. The next category, the early majority adopter will wait a significant amount of time before putting their arms around an innovation. They pay attention to innovation, but need reassurance before adoption from the early adopter, and this happens after time has passed. The late majority are often very skeptical and adopt after the average member of society. The laggards, often the oldest of any group, are the last to adopt an innovation. They are focused on tradition and are not often social beyond family and close friends.

Understanding this concept of innovation diffusion can be important when trying to roll out a new idea, concept, plan or process because it can help you identify the key players. Most agree for an innovation to take off, the first two groups (innovators and early adopters) are the most important ones. The innovators must be willing to try new ideas and not fear failure or setbacks, and not be afraid of stepping out of a comfort zone within social networks. Early adopters put the word out about the innovation, whether good or bad, and because of this are respected within their realm of peer networks. Early adopters are “the ones to check with” before using a new product or idea. If the innovation doesn't get past the early adopter, it is dead and won't make it any of the next categories. This day in age the time gap between the early adopter and the early majority taking hold of an innovation is lessened because of our advanced methods of communication.

Adoption of an innovation is a five step process that takes time. One must first have *knowledge* of the innovation or be exposed or aware of it. In the second step the person is

*(continued on next page)*

*persuaded* to actively seek out information about it. Next the adopter must *decide* whether to adopt or not adopt weighing the entire pros and cons of the innovation. If accepted, the adopter will begin to *implement* the innovation through use followed by *confirmation* to continue to use the innovation to its fullest potential.

As a golf course superintendent/innovator you can understand the importance of the early adopter and their reach to those within their realm. It is important to educate the early adopter and to let them form their own conclusion so they may share it with others. The greater acceptance they have of your innovation, the quicker and easier it will be for you to make positive changes at your property.

Sent from my iPad. - lc -OC



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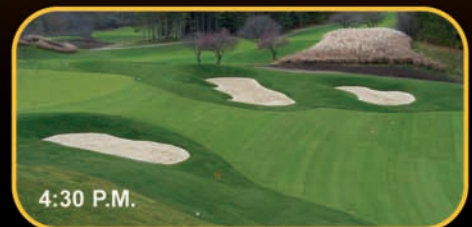
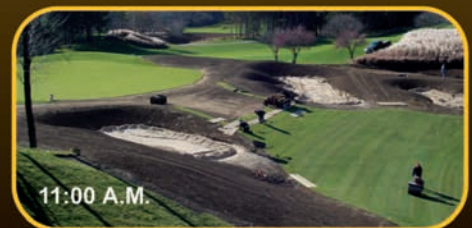
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