

Capturing the Early Majority

Your specific technology does not matter

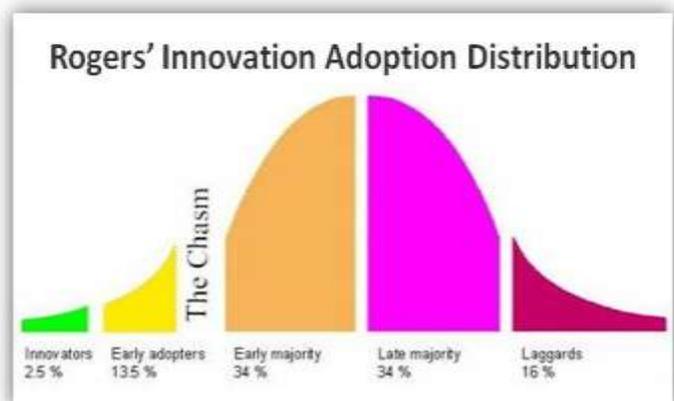
WHAT DOES MATTER?

We all know we have to satisfy customer needs. We often make the mistake of thinking all that matters to them is that our technology solves a problem. In reality, the decision to use a new technology can cause significant disruption and loss of productivity. This is the first of many things your potential customers will consider about your technology – not just its benefits. All change is at first disruptive, and often confusing and discouraging. The only reason to go through the change process is to achieve the promised benefit at the other end.

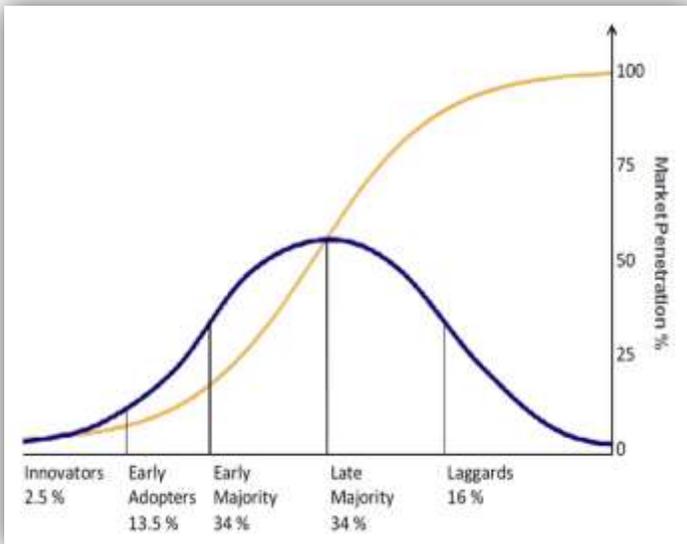
Why do some customers see past the immediate disruptions associated with adopting your technology, while many others issue an endless stream of questions that create a stubborn – and frequently shifting – hurdle that seems insurmountable. The answer has little to do with your specific technology. It's all about *human behavior* and people's *attitudes* toward change in general, and the adoption of any new technology.

Roughly 80 years ago people started looking at the adoption of technologies (from seed corn, electricity, and cars to home computers, the internet, and smart phones). What they discovered, and validated repeatedly, is that adoption of all innovations follows the same basic dynamic over time: the classic "S" shaped adoption curve. Why?

The answer was well documented by Rogers in his 1960s book, *Diffusion of Innovations* (later adapted to business by Moore in *Crossing the Chasm*).



The principle is simple: people's attitudes toward new technologies follow a normal distribution, from having a very low bar for change to having a very high bar. We all fall into each group along this adoption continuum, because our attitudes are technology specific. As individuals, we embrace some new technologies quickly; others we ignore or have many 'valid' reasons for not adopting. Age is frequently correlated with this adoption bias gradient, with older individuals more likely to adopt slowly. But age alone does not explain this behavior.



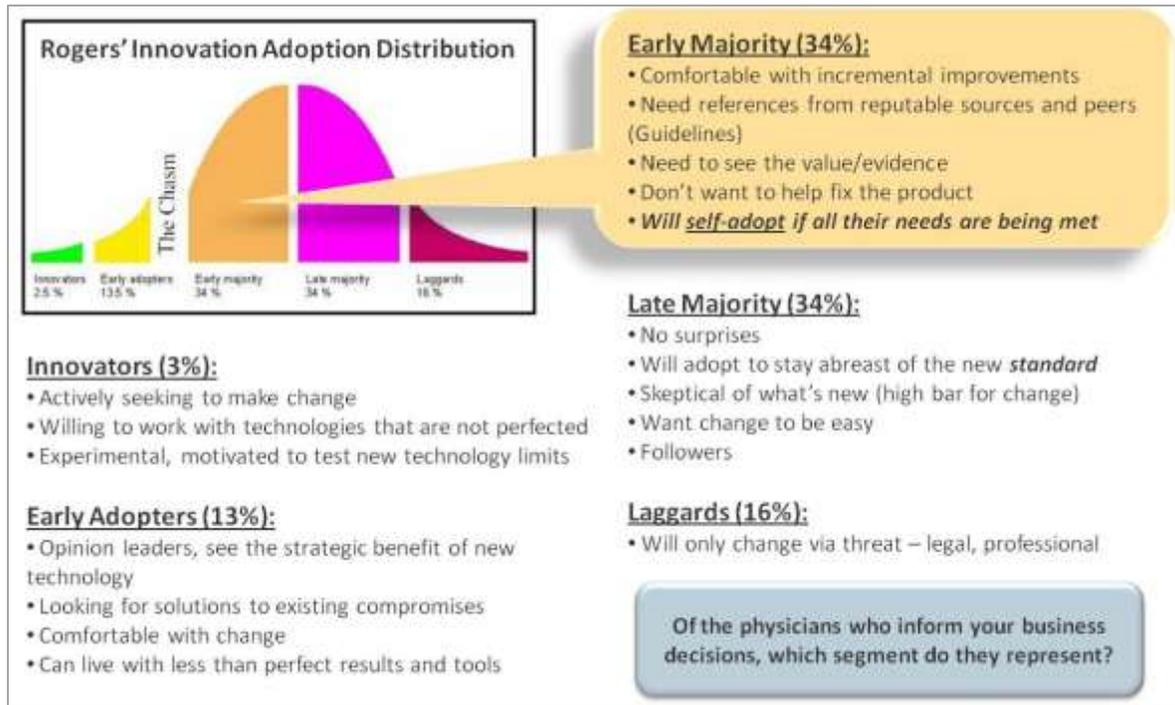
Rogers' contributions were in a) showing that adoption is a normal distribution, and b) defining the groups within the distribution. As shown here, there are five basic groups: Innovators (~3%), Early Adopters (~13%), Early Majority (~34%), Late Majority (~34%) and Laggards (~16%). Each group has its own standards for adopting new technology. As each group adopts, the cumulative "S-shaped adoption" curve is created (shaped by the distribution of people across groups).

The important things about these groups are their size and relationship to each other. The Innovators and Early Adopters love new technology (whatever it may be) because they perceive it as cool, innovative, or useful. They don't care about the disruption of change because they 'see the vision.' The Late Majority and Laggards are not influenced by the Innovators and Early Adopters – the Late Majority and Laggards think of them as radicals. The Early Majority does not pay much attention to them either, because the Innovators and Early Adopters focus on the technology itself (and its promise). The Early Majority care less about the technology; they just want to do their jobs well. They are willing to change, but only when it offers a **more practical, efficient, and economical solution** to a problem they have.

So if 84% of your potential customers are not influenced by the Innovators and Early Adopters, what are they influenced by? The Late Majority and Laggards are dominantly influenced by the momentum created by the adoption of the Early Majority. Once the Early Majority adopt, the Late Majority and Laggards are at risk of

84% of your market is gated by the Early Majority.

appearing professionally inferior. They now find themselves in the minority, holding onto what has clearly become outdated technology.



The key to the entire market is the Early Majority. Meet their needs and three things happen:

1. 'Legitimization' of your technology (no longer perceived as an interesting niche product)
2. Rapid adoption and market growth
3. Access to majority of the market

So what does it take to meet the needs of the Early Majority? Make your technology "a **more practical, efficient, and economical solution** to a problem they have."

For medical technologies, Dymedex has developed 14 factors that quantify the needs of the Early Majority. By analyzing these "Pillars of Adoption," investments and strategies can better target the factors that limit adoption. Understanding these dynamics for your technology is critical for setting and meeting expectations, focusing resources, and driving growth.

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