We are a nation of innovators. As our country evolves so does the need to create alternative approaches to solving problems. Innovation is essential to ensure we can continue to improve our quality of life. As businesses continue to progress, understanding innovation categories can be beneficial to the creative process and can reveal how your ideas might fit into the overall future of your business.
Innovation can manifest in different ways. Determine the types of innovation your business needs.

1. **BREAKTHROUGH**
   - New, bold and way ahead of the next best thing that often combines the functionality of several different products into one.
   - A necessary evil. It's usually more exciting to think about new breakthrough innovations, but sustaining innovations provide financial protection.
   - A detailed understanding of the end user. Without a sufficient understanding of the end users needs, new product ideas can become a grueling exercise in trial and error.
   - Access to resources. Making a totally new and breakthrough product will likely require access to vast resources. The MBDA Business Center network can connect you to resources through MBDA’s Inclusive Innovation Initiative (I3).
   - Tunnel vision. Focus on one job to be done rather than several. Disruptive innovation is all about simplification and removal, the polar opposite of breakthrough innovation.

2. **SUSTAINING**
   - Improves the current product by developing the next generations until the product or process reaches the end of its life cycle.
   - Longevity. Breakthrough products will not last very long without a sustaining effort behind them.

3. **NEW MARKET**
   - Applies a current product in a new way or for a different segment of customers.
   - Adjacent spaces. Finding new markets are fertile grounds for the introduction of your existing product or service.
   - Customer usage studies. Customers may already be using your product in new and different ways that you haven’t considered yet. Find out how by investing in consumer surveys or other market research efforts.

4. **DISRUPTIVE**
   - Simplifies the user experience, lowers the cost and reduces the number of features in a product.
   - Affordability. Remove as much cost as possible to make the end price affordable for most users. May require removing factors, such as distributors and retailers.

The national network of MBDA Business Centers provides customized business development services that help your company gain greater access to capital, contracts, and markets. Visit www.mbda.gov/grow for more information.