

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

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creative4business

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Are you on Twitter? If so you can [follow Derek Cheshire](#) (only if you want to of course!)

Our new **Bite Size Creativity** workshop seems to be popular. Why not beat the queue and download an info sheet [here](#).

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the second edition of Innovation Matters for 2009. We have hit our publication deadline of the first Tuesday of the month (whoopee) and Spring has arrived here in the UK, although there is still time for the temperature to dip.

Meanwhile the economy continues to dive, all the more reason to look at Creative ways to beat the recession. Do you know about [Train to Gain](#)? Yes, the **UK government** will actually **give you up to £1000** towards management development. Get in touch to find out more.

Using a trusted domain does not seem to have affected delivery at all so we will keep on using this method.

This month we have two articles, **When is Creativity not Creative?** and **Building versus Implementing** plus an introduction to the **Morphological Matrix**.

Please look to your left and see what the latest news is. Don't forget that you can revisit past editions of Innovation Matters in our [newsletter archive](#).

Details of all our workshops and programmes including **Domino² Knowledgeware, Futures, Intelligent Growth,** and **Business Creativity** can be downloaded from our [downloads](#) page.

The 'rough and ready' survey of the major barriers to creativity within organisations is still located on my [Home Page](#). If you currently work, or have worked for an organisation then I would appreciate it if you could take the time to click on two buttons.

... and here is a pearl of wisdom from Irish Rugby player Brian O'Driscoll:

"Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, wisdom is knowing not to put it into a fruit salad".

Happy reading,

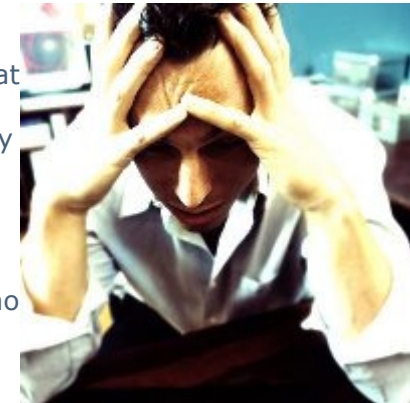
Derek Cheshire

When is Creativity not creative?

There have been (and there will continue to be) debates about what exactly is creativity and what it means to be creative. I remember having a discussion with some artists about being creative. Being artistic, they naturally thought of themselves as creative and were seen in a similar way by the general public. To be fair, their methods and output was, to say the least, alternative but I posed them the question "If you use the same method for each piece of art work you produce, are you being creative even if the output changes?"

There is no real answer to that question, or rather there are billions of answers depending on who you ask. The reason is frame of reference. Creativity depends on who and where you are and possibly what has gone before, it is relative. One man's creativity is another's drudgery. What might be seen as creative in one business will be viewed as 'old hat' in another

So I might see someone else's ideas and methods as mundane because I have seen it, done it and bought the T shirt. Does this mean that I have to keep pushing the boundaries? Again there are many possible answers. If you simply require new product ideas and have a perfectly good 'creative' technique to use which does create new product ideas then keep using it. Pushing the boundaries would simply waste time and could be considered frivolous. If, however it was your job to create new



idea generation methods for your business then you would almost be duty bound to experiment wouldn't you?

Then we also have the issue of whether it is the method or result that is classed as creative. In this case I suggest that it is terminology that is the issue. In business, it is an alternate way of thinking that matters, to be used to gain a different perspective or insight or to generate new ideas.

So to answer the original question, creativity may not be creative if you are observing someone else or if you are using the same method and not generating different results. Other than that, creativity is generally creative, but I'm sure readers will have a different opinion!



Building versus Implementing

Like most people with websites I spend time analysing statistics from my website, especially the words and phrases that are typed into search engines such as Google and Yahoo.

One of the most frequent phrases or sentences that crops up is 'implementing an innovation system' or 'implementing innovation'. This is both puzzling and worrying. It would seem to be a good thing that people and businesses are searching for information regarding Innovation but they seem to be thinking that Innovation is a system to be implemented rather like a book keeping system and that there is a magic prescription that they can follow that is to be found somewhere on the Internet.

These Googlers are likely to be frustrated and will probably be heard to utter expletives at consultants who don't give anything away unless they are paid exorbitant daily fee rates. Of course those who develop intellectual property will wish some reward but that is not the main reason for these frustrated Google users. The truth is that there simply is no prescription. It is possible to find checklists, frameworks and balanced scorecards as well as stories of success but nothing of use unless you first understand that an innovation system cannot be implemented.

Such a system must be built from the bottom up, with a thorough understanding of where you are starting out from and what you wish to achieve. What you may not know is how you are going to get there. This is what takes the leap of faith and which is often the reason for the consultants' fees. Once you start, the process is a little like building a bespoke house brick by brick except that you may never finish.

A better term might be 'growing' rather than 'building' as Innovation frameworks tend to be based on soft skills and are

unique to the businesses in which they exist. They may exhibit similar characteristics to one another on the surface but each company's Innovation context differs due to the make up of its components, employees. This is what we strive for, deriving competitive advantage in a way that cannot be copied easily by others. Having a system that could be implemented from a standard blueprint would not be worth doing as others would copy it.

And those consultants? Yes you will need them to facilitate the process but beware those who wish to implement everything for you. You will be paying them for a system that can be easily copied - best to get the ideas then do the work yourself.

The Morphological Matrix

This is a form of random stimulation that can be used solo or in groups. It is ideal for generating ideas when you have an idea about WHAT you wish to do but not HOW you might go about doing it.

If you were a TV producer you might ask the question "How might we go about creating a new soap opera?" To use this technique in such a case first create a table with ten rows labelled 0 - 9 and 4 columns initially numbered 1 to 4.

Next perform the following steps:

- Label each column with a different parameter or characteristic of the problem or task e.g. for our example column 1 could be target audience, column 2 - setting, column 3 - theme, column 4 - suggested title.
- For column 1 generate varied and/or unusual ideas and fill the column (you now have ten wacky suggestions for target audience).
- Repeat for column 2, column 3 and column 4. Try not to refer to adjacent columns when filling a column.
- Randomly select four numbers in the range 0 - 9. To do this you could
 - Turn over 2 dominoes, 2 numbers on each end gives four numbers
 - Use the last four digits of your telephone number
 - Use the last four digits of your National Insurance number
 - Use the day and month of your birthday



- Use the four numbers to generate combinations by using each number in turn as in index into one of the columns. Each set of four random numbers thus selects a target audience, setting, theme and title. Record your combination.
- Repeat the previous step as many times as you wish (and keep recording the results). Note that this simple table can create 10,000 different combinations!
- When you have sufficient combinations, choose one (or more if you have time) to examine in greater detail. You might use them as generated or they might suggest something else to you.

Good luck!

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