

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

September 2008

creative4business

In This Issue ...

News

Creativity - Getting It Right

Transferring Innovation Know How

Quick links

News



Is the management of Human Capital of interest to you? If so then you should be attending the [iProCon HCM 2008 Conference](#) in London on October 22nd.

With the credit crunch you may not be able to move house but if you are considering upgrading your property then you will definitely be

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the September 2008 edition of Innovation Matters, the sixth edition of the year.

I hope that readers have made the most of the unseasonal Summer and have not been embroiled in the collapse of travel companies and banks.

Since the last issue I have been lucky to have a chapter included in the book **Ideas, Creativity and Innovation** published in India by ICFAI University Press. I am delighted to be in the company of authors such as Jeffrey Baumgartner and Arthur B. VanGundy. Later this month my article on **Futures** will be published in the Asia Pacific Tech Monitor, an online journal published by the United Nations.

In this edition the musings include some thoughts on how to get your workshop attendees to use less of their Left Brain and more of the Right as well as an outline of how you might be able to transfer know how from your stand alone Innovation project to the rest of your organisation.

The second of the two articles is also the subject of a competition. I have a new 'product' that will solve the problem of transferring know how but I have not been

interested in getting savings of up to 20% on high quality double glazing if you live in the South West. [Click here](#) to find out how the PRD Partnership and Enterprise Works can help you.

Don't forget that you can now look at past editions of this newsletter by visiting our [archive](#).

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.

able to think of a name for it. There is a prize for the best suggestion that is adopted or which leads to the eventual name. And the prize

The lucky winner will get the opportunity to have a **creative workshop** delivered **free** of charge for their organisation or a client organisation if they are a consultant. All that you will need to pay are expenses (note that this offer is valid worldwide). Depending on the number of attendees this could be worth up to **£1200**.

Happy reading,

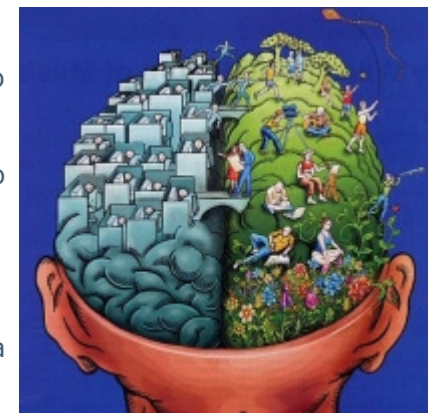
Derek Cheshire

Creativity - Getting It Right

For the past 6 years, I have been working with a range of organisations who have identified the need to raise the bar for innovation and creative thinking. One thing that's become very clear to me is that as many as 95% of all the people who end up in my workshop sessions are predominantly left-brained. They want to "get out of the box," but first they want to define the box, measure the box, compare it to other boxes, and/or send the box upstairs to make sure that everyone signs off on the collective vision of non-boxiness.

There are a number of things that can be done to ensure that creative workshops go with a bang or at least a colourful fizz and meet the objectives so carefully set out for them. Here are just a few, I'll slip a few more into later articles.

Establish credibility - if you do not already know the participants in your workshop then get some biographical material to participants before the session begins. Include anything that will help people understand that you have the experience and expertise

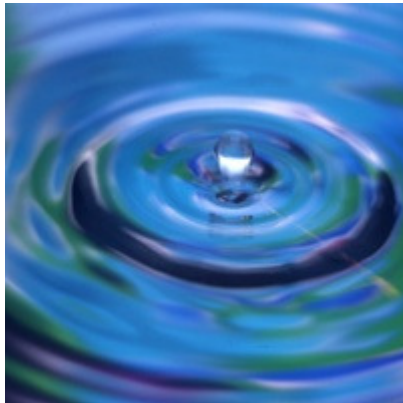


to be a valuable resource. If this is not possible, introduce yourself early in the session and describe your qualifications. You must reassure participants that you just didn't walk off the street with a magic marker in your hand. Doubt kills creativity. Do everything possible to remove doubt from the room.

Clarify outcomes and address expectations - if you are going to take people on a creative journey, it's a good idea to start with the big picture. Even though you know that "the map is not the territory", participants will need confirmation they are not participating in a big improvisation session. People are just not ready for the "I'll play it first and tell you what it is later," approach. They need a clear picture of the day. Otherwise, they will be too uncomfortable to let go. Simply and clearly describe the process and agenda for your session, as well as the deliverables they can expect.

Establish ground rules - if you want to break new ground in a creative thinking session, you will need to establish clear ground rules first. Participants need to know what game they are playing - which behaviours are acceptable and which are not. You are, in effect, establishing an ideal "culture of innovation" in the room - the kind of mood that will be conducive to the appearance of new ideas. Rather than telling people what these ground rules should be, your task is to facilitate the process by which participants identify the ground rules they want to live by. These ground rules help create the safety required for the "shy" right brain to make its appearance. They also secure everyone's permission for you to play your facilitator role - an assumed ground rule that will need to be articulated - especially since there are likely to be a number of participants who do not like giving up control to someone who they've never met before or someone they have some reservations about.

Break the ice - most people who end up in your creative workshop will probably not be in a creative mindset when they enter the room. On the contrary, they are likely to be hurried, multi-tasking, overloaded with information, overwhelmed with tasks, and/or feeling underappreciated. One way or another they are likely to be dwelling in the logical, linear, left side of their brain. What they need is some kind of transition - a bridge from the world of "human doings" to the world of "human beings." A well-facilitated icebreaker is the best way to do this.



Transferring Innovation Know How

This is intended to be an outline of a system that will allow Innovation know-how such as knowledge, behaviours and cultural attributes to be transferred from a standalone or bolt on Innovation project and disseminated throughout the host organisation. Knowledge can be thrown like a stone into a pond and the ripples will then spread at their own speed across the pond.

Organisations are not as fluid as our metaphorical pond but it is possible for knowledge to spread through the creation of Innovation Action groups that are not dissimilar to quality circles and action learning groups. They do, however, have some fundamental differences. They are:

- not unique, they have boundary spanners that overlap
- they can multiply, rather like human cells
- they are not confined to improving quality or modifying behaviours
- they act as catalysts and are not just suggestion boxes or talking shops
- they are bi directional, 'ripples' can travel both inwards and outwards
- they do not rely on technology

So how is it done? Well the minute details are secret but the recipe is as follows. Select a number of Innovation Ambassadors and ensure that they have an appropriate balance of coaching, facilitation and action learning skills as well as the latest strategic objectives of the organisation. Next create a number of Innovation Action groups spread throughout the organisation, both geographically and functionally. Ensure that the composition is as varied as possible and give them one of your Ambassadors as a leader/facilitator. Each should also be 'seeded' with an initial idea/knowledge item to work on. These groups can then:

- work out the best ways of spreading know how in their local context
- create links with other groups to increase their reach
- combine existing knowledge to create new knowledge
- capture knowledge and ideas
- use their problem exploration and solving skills
- create new groups
- act as libraries of knowledge and resources

The entire system can be independent (and devoid) of technology although technology can act as an enabler where appropriate.

Technology on its own cannot act as a knowledge transfer mechanism so if anyone tries to sell you a computer system as a solution to your knowledge problems then please run in the opposite direction.

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