

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

Spring 2007

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There is now a 'rough and ready' survey of the major barriers to creativity within organisations 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.

For those of you who receive CNBC you can still catch me in programme 3 of The Business of Innovation.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Spring 2007 edition of Innovation Matters. Questioning is a key component of creative behaviour and the article 'Does my bum look big in this?' provides some thoughts on the subject.

Many people are suspicious when told that you can quantify the effects of a creative intervention or that there are tried and tested frameworks or methodologies for Innovation. In the article 'The Way It Works', I provide an outline of one such methodology.

Last month I mentioned a 'Techniques Kit' that contains techniques cards for workshops in electronic format. Simply print onto coloured card, laminate and away you go. A total of 11 techniques are available in 2 kits. [Click here](#) for details.

I hope you enjoy these articles and the regular trivia items.

Happy reading

Derek Cheshire

Does my bum look big in this?

As every man knows, this is a question that is impossible to answer. Say 'yes' and you will either be dead within seconds or you will be drowning in tears to the words 'Are you saying I'm fat and ugly? You don't love me any more do you?' Reply 'no' and you will be accused of not wanting your partner to be slim and resemble a supermodel.

Joking aside, what sort of question is this anyway? Does it help, is there likely to be a way forward, can we develop a win-win situation? Much of creative thinking and hence innovation projects are based on subtle questions being asked at the right time. The art of questioning is paramount. Here are some examples of frequently heard, but not always helpful questions together with some suggested alternatives:



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- Why do we always do it this way? What sort of things would happen if we did it this (or any other) way?
- Will it work? If it does not work, what is likely to happen?
- How much will it cost? What is the target cost that we need to be aiming for?
- What are we doing this for? The learning opportunities are incredible. Can we explore all of the options and capture the results?
- When can we have a meeting to discuss this? We will start doing some prototyping and let you know our initial results as soon as we have them!

These alone could cause some of your team to lose the will to live. Assume you do actually get started, what about some questions that will help the creative process?

[Read the full article ...](#)

Innovation - the way it works



This is not the definitive guide to innovation. It is just one way, and it works. The process outlined below is for a single innovation project, not continuous innovation. That is a step too far for a newsletter.

To start with there will be some sort of **startup** event in which key stakeholders are seen to give approval. The traditional rallying call to troops is not appropriate here. Next you are likely to **take stock** of where you are in terms of skills and capabilities. Our [Innovation Toolkit](#) can help you to do this. The 'end of the beginning' is to set up the necessary **infrastructure**, define objectives etc.

If there are any skills or capability gaps then these need to be covered with appropriate **training** before entering a **research** phase. This includes market research, feasibility, trend spotting, reviewing legislation etc.

Next comes the **idea generation** phase. Although it sounds like chaos, the aim is to produce a number of options for products, services or processes but to then filter them down to a manageable number.

[Read the full article ...](#)

Trivia

- Runner's World, Wilfred Owen poetry and Uncle Tom's Cabin are restricted reading in Guantanamo Bay.
- Nearly half of all cases handled by top divorce lawyers last year involved a private detective to check on alleged infidelity.
- Chocolate is better than a passionate kiss, causing a more intense and longer-lasting buzz, and doubling the heart rate.
- Eighty-eight percent of children in Poland aged 12 to 18 use instant messaging, compared to 50% in the UK.
- Only four postcodes in the UK do not have a Tesco store. They are the Outer Hebrides, the Shetlands, Orkney and Harrogate.



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