

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

April 2009

creative4business

In This Issue ...

News

Innovation - is there such a thing as best practice?

Modelling innovation culture using social media

Using your Right Brain

Quick Links



News

Up and coming speaking gigs include a trip to Malawi working for the British Council. Watch this space for more exotic

destinations.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the third edition of Innovation Matters for 2009. The weather has improved at last and the world is ablaze with colour of spring flowers. What could go wrong you may well ask?

The world economy is still in the doldrums but finally we have all stopped moaning and have got stuck into doing something positive to get ourselves out of the mire.

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.

This month we have two articles, **Innovation - is there such a thing as best practice?** and **Modelling innovation culture using social media** plus a guide to **Using your right brain**.

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](#).

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

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](#).

... and here is a joke from comedian Peter Kaye:

"I was having dinner with Garry Kasparov and there was a check tablecloth. It took him two hours to pass me the salt".
Happy reading,

Derek Cheshire

Innovation - is there such a thing as best practice?

On many blogs and websites there is evidence of people asking for examples of best practice in Innovation and many (often poor) responses. The question is are those seeking an answer asking for the impossible and are those providing answers actually talking gibberish?

I have no doubt that the pleas for help are genuine but do those behind them know what they are asking for (and even why)? Those seeking knowledge about Innovation often do so for four main reasons:

- They are stuck and want some (free) help to extract themselves from the mire
- They are thinking about Innovation and believe that if they obtain the correct formula they can 'wing it' without really understanding the process
- They are thinking about Innovation and want to have everything planned before they start
- They are trying to set themselves up as gurus and want to attain 'guru ship' the easy way



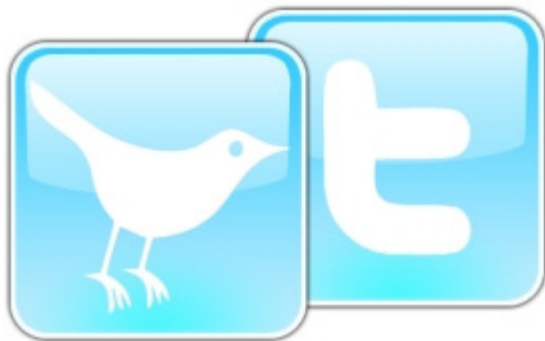
Each of these reasons stems from a belief that there is one true way, which is not the case. There are many examples of 'best practice' being borrowed or transferred and working less effectively, or even not at all, in its new environment. Environment and context are key here.

Consider the simple example of constructing a model aircraft from a kit made of plastic components, paint and glue. Such a kit made in Europe might be assembled with no problem in Europe or the USA but for reasons of heat or humidity there might be issues in India, that is unless someone with knowledge of the components of the kit and local environmental issues assists.

So when a kindly soul provides you with a copy of the One Minute Innovator or Innovation for Dummies and states 'it worked for me' you need to make sure you pay attention to the following:

- Go elsewhere and obtain information about as many information projects as you can and learn from both successes and failures
- Try and map the information you have onto your copy of Innovation for Dummies to get some sort of plan together
- Thoroughly understand the differences between the examples given and your own environment paying particular attention to both corporate and organisational culture
- Be prepared to learn as you go along and change your plans on the fly

Remember, 'best practice' transferred and applied without contextual knowledge is as much use as a chocolate teapot.



Modelling innovation culture using social media

I have my own unique model of Innovation which helps with obtaining 'buy in' and best of all, it leads to a method of measuring the capacity to innovate which is a much more sensitive measure than waiting for KPIs to change. I had been puzzling for a while about how to model the spread of Innovation and the transfer of knowledge as well as other issues such as communication and trust. Little did I know that I had already considered this without really understanding.

Recently, I attended a talk by Dr Kelly Page of Cardiff University about New Media and Web 2.0. I became particularly excited by some of the concepts and analysis surrounding Social Media such as Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube.

In an (ideal) Innovation culture there is little or no hierarchy and knowledge flows at varying rates and often 'on demand'. There are groups of interest and depending on technology, trust relationships can also be built. Rather than humans adapting to technology (remember the first mobile phones, the birth of the Internet), technology is now being developed to match and mimic the behaviour of groups of people in a social environment.

Analysis of this behaviour is interesting. Looking at traffic on say Twitter, a group interested in a particular topic will have what looks like random connections. These are not random and are built upon interest, trust and knowledge amongst other things. Within Organisational Development we might say that these connections do not map onto an organisational structure chart but map onto informal advice, trust and communications networks.

So interactions within Social Media look like those in an ideal Innovation culture, and playing with this idea we can adapt our model for a range of situations. But these changes are incremental. We know that introducing certain technologies into society often changes society itself (electricity, telephone, motor car) so will introducing technologies such as Social Media actually lead to changes in society and in particular our businesses?

The answer is most definitely yes. By trying extreme versions of our new model we can safely say that hierarchies will die and that concepts such as vision and values will truly have shared ownership. Ultimately it will make our businesses more profitable as those working in them will be empowered and will all share responsibility for success. Those who cling onto the old hierarchies will find themselves bypassed in advice, trust and communications networks, they will be lonely. Watch this space for new developments (or should I say MySpace?).

Using Your Right Brain

Have you ever wondered why the answer to the problem that you have been trying to solve pops into your mind just as you are driving home, taking a shower or waiting in the queue at your local takeaway? The answer is that your Creative Right Brain has been thoughtfully working on the problem for you. So how does this happen when you have been wrestling with a particular conundrum all day?



Although not completely physiologically correct there is a useful Left Brain/Right Brain model that we can use. The left side of our brains is logical, linear and provides filtering of ideas, so although it will provide solutions it also has a nasty habit of saying 'but it won't work', 'that is not a good idea' or 'the boss will not be happy'.

The right hand side of our brains is linked to creative behaviour and does not have these filters thus increasing the range of possibilities. The problem is, how on earth do we hand our problem to one and not the other? Simple, we play tricks on it!

If you have something really tricky to work on then you should get stuck in at the start of the day (this trick works in a workshop environment too). Really get to grips with every facet of the problem, all of the bad bits, barriers or desirable outcomes. You are trying to mimic the situation where you work all day, drive home and experience the Eureka moment, except that we are trying to save you working all day and then going home late.

Back to the problem. Your logical Left Brain should really be getting stuck in so now is the time to hand over the problem. Go and get on with something else, distract the Left Brain and let the Right Brain do the work. This is what driving home or having a shower does when you have been working late. Distraction is important here, simply pretending to be busy or waiting will not work. The answer (or answers) to your problem will probably come to you at an unexpected or possibly inconvenient moment so remember to have a pen and paper handy at all times.

Good luck!

eBooks and other products | Innovation Measurement and Audit | More about Creative Business Solutions

Creativity Seminars and Workshops | PRD Partnership Limited | Our Partners | Creativity and Innovation blog

Constant Contact

[Forward to a friend or colleague](#)



This email was sent to derek@creative4business.co.uk by derek@creative4business.co.uk.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Creative Business Solutions | Brookside Cottage | Mill Lane | Corston | Malmesbury | SN16 0HH | United Kingdom

Email Marketing by

