

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

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creative4business

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the December 2007 edition of Innovation Matters, the last edition of the year. A lot has happened in 2007, I have been in **Mexico** twice, covered myself in finger paint and acquired a young nephew. It has not all been plain sailing but nothing disastrous has happened and it has given me plenty to write about.



News



The domain Creative4business.com.mx has been acquired for use in Mexico and Latin America. Currently it points to the UK site but a dedicated site in Spanish will be created in the New Year. For the time being, [details of my Mexican partners](#) can

Some readers will have heard of [Change This](#), a concept created by **Seth Godin** and carried on by a dedicated group of people in the USA. People are asked to submit proposals for manifestos (articles) and those selected are professionally edited and published electronically. I was fortunate to have mine published in November. If you would like to download or [read my manifesto on Slow Innovation](#) then please click on the link.

As always there are articles which I hope will give you some food for thought and with Christmas coming soon there are the usual end of year

be found on the UK site also.

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.

trivia.

I wish all my readers scattered around the world a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous 2008.

Happy reading

Derek Cheshire



The Confusion of Innovation

On my travels I talk to a number of people who claim that they just don't 'get innovation'. Holistic, whole company Innovation is an abstract concept but how complicated is it? The answer may be more puzzling than you think.

First of all let us consider a simple Innovation project. Typically it consists of a number of steps from inception through, audit, idea generation and prototyping to roll out. Add some project management and knowledge transfer activities and you have it nailed. So far so good, although you may question what these steps actually are.

Now we are ready to consider continuous Innovation. Imagine all your Innovation steps neatly drawn out onto a Gantt chart and then wrap them around on themselves so that your nice straight lines become a series of concentric circles. This is but a snapshot in time so now add the time dimension. Imagine your circles turned on their side like a series of disks and then add time by moving the disks from left to right. You should now be looking at a series of concentric cylinders.

Now many companies will have several ongoing Innovation initiatives, all at different stages and involving different people so consider all of your innovation projects in the manner described above - several sets of concentric cylinders all moving at varying rates and requiring management and resources. Would this convince you that your organisation, and especially your managers, need some assistance in getting to grips with the situation?

Resources for Creativity

There are many hits to my website from people searching for 'resources for creativity'. Goodness knows what they are actually looking for. Some may be looking for resources for training and workshops but many appear to be looking for a list of tools and materials that are mandatory or desirable for getting Creativity into an organisation.



So what is the answer to the question 'What do I need to be creative?' For a perfect creative situation the answer is that you need absolutely nothing as any resources can be created from scratch. The real truth is that organisations are not patient and do like to get a head start. Also the mix of human resources may not be ideal so here is the list that you need:

- External stimulus or facilitation
- An agreed set of objectives
- Internal champions/creative catalysts
- An initial embryonic framework for promoting creativity
- Time and space for employees to be creative
- Enlightened managers who will actively 'un manage' creativity
- A light touch audit method
- A simple but effective library of techniques that individuals can use
- A method of capturing, storing and retrieving ideas and feedback

Seeing the above list you may be tempted to 'go it alone' and some may find that they succeed however the following should be borne in mind:

- Internally led idea generation initiatives often fail or do not deliver as expected
- Externally led idea generation initiatives often fail or do not deliver as expected
- Simply running creativity training courses will have no beneficial effect on your bottom line
- Leaving creativity and innovation solely in the hand of your HR department will often consign them to the wilderness

The moral is to get some good advice, target your scarce resources and do not commit to anyone who wishes you to

create a long lasting dependency on them.

2007 End of year trivia

Each year the folks at NORAD, the North American Air Defence organisation provide a little fun with their Santa tracking website. It really is quite fun to sit for a while at your computer on Christmas Eve/Day (depending on your time zone) and watch Santa's progress. You will have to get ready in advance so visit the [Norad Santa site](#) in advance to see what you need to do.

At Christmas there are many people who imbibe a little too much and their speech becomes unintelligible. There are also many individuals and organisations whose communications are gobbledegook at the best of times. Here are some cases highlighted by the Campaign for Clear English:

From the British Airports Authority - "Passenger shoe repatriation area only"

Plain English Campaign translation: Get your shoes back here.

From Fastway Couriers - "The Carrier shall not be liable for injury or damage to or destruction or loss of the Goods or any other property arising out of or incidental to or in connection with or occurring during the provision of the Services or for the mis-delivery or non-delivery of the Goods and whether or not caused or contributed to by the default (including negligence) of the Carrier or any agent, servant or officer of the Carrier or any other person entitled to the benefit of these conditions."

Plain English Campaign translation: If anything happens, it's not our fault.

From Translink Railways - "Every Autumn a combination of leaves on the line, atmospheric conditions and prevailing damp conditions lead to a low adhesion between the rail head and the wheel which causes services to be delayed or even cancelled. NI Railways are committed to minimising service delays, where we can, by implementing a comprehensive low adhesion action programme."

Plain English Campaign translation: We'll really try not to cancel any more trains.

And finally, have you ever thought what would have happened if there had been Three Wise Women instead of Three Wise Men? They would have:

- Asked for directions
- Arrived on time
- Helped deliver the baby
- Cleaned the stable
- Cooked a meal
- Bought practical gifts
- Made sure there WAS peace on earth

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