

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

December 2009

creative4business

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Fun Stuff

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the tenth and final edition of **Innovation Matters** for 2009. Since many readers will be taking a break of some sort over the festive holiday period, the first edition of 2010 will not be published until February.

For those of you who celebrate Christmas and who have young children, I recommend that you visit the website www.noradsanta.org after December 1st. I also recommend the Santa tracking system from Christmas Eve onwards.

2009 has been a strange year, from low points when projects were cancelled to highlights such as visiting **Malawi** in April and **Mexico** in October. Enquiries continue to come in, but mainly from outside the UK. What will be the balance next year I wonder?

2009 also saw the development of a **Creative Leadership programme** leading to an **ILM Leadership Development** award. If this might interest you then please get in touch. For those organising events please take a look [here](#). Don't forget, all of my blog entries provide summaries of potential speaking topics.



No news this month, just something great to watch. Ever wanted to see how fun can be used to change behaviour? Click on the image above to watch **The Bottle Bank Arcade, Piano Stairs** and the **World's Deepest Bin**. Use these as inspiration to see how you could change behaviour in your organisation.

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

For 2010, a revamp of ebook formats is planned as well as new releases of techniques kits for running your own workshops, so keep your eyes peeled.

In this month's edition there are three articles. The first ponders the relationship between **Lean and Innovation** whilst we also have a list of **10 Phrases To Avoid** in a creative environment and **10 People Who Can Help Your Innovation Project**.

Once again, if you have missed previous editions of Innovation Matters you can find them in our [newsletter archive](#).

As always, your thoughts and feedback are welcome.

Happy reading and a prosperous 2010,

Derek Cheshire

Innovation or Lean?

A recent article published on the [Knowledge@Wharton](https://www.knowledge@wharton.upenn.edu/) website suggested that the philosophy of Lean could exist along with Innovation. After reading the article I have two questions:

1. Why would you want them to?
2. Why put Innovation into a box (like Lean or BPR) when an Innovation system has the ability to change and respond to its surroundings?



The article states "Lean has come to mean an integrated, end-to-end process viewpoint that combines the concepts of waste elimination, just-in time inventory management, built-in quality, and worker involvement -- supported by a cultural focus on problem solving. Can such practical principles be applied to innovation, or would lean's structure and discipline snuff out the creative spark that underlies the birth and development of great ideas? Can lean co-exist with innovation?"

The article suggests that Lean brings structure and predictability to Innovation without sufficiently defining Innovation. Innovation requires a framework within which we generate ideas, experiment and develop new products, services and processes. Such frameworks exist and also provide ways of measuring and monitoring Innovation. In that sense we have structure and predictability within Innovation so we do not need Lean also. The very definition of Lean also implies that the flexibility and adaptability required to change, either in times of crisis or to seize opportunities, may have been engineered out of an organisation.

Those who fully embrace Innovation will understand that Innovation systems evolve and fully embrace such aspects as new ideas of collaborative working, new leadership and organisational models, empowerment and customer engagement. These attributes are not specific to Innovation systems nor are they specific characteristics of Lean.

An Innovation system can exhibit Lean characteristics if necessary, but a Lean system cannot be truly Innovative since there is always be an intellectual overhead in an Innovation system and so the Lean system will become 'non Lean'.

Another contentious topic is that of separating idea from development. It is true that the mix of people that are required during the many phases of Innovation may change, but once more this is a characteristic of Innovation, that things change. In fact, idea and development must be connected. What if the technology to implement an idea does not exist

and ideas must be generated in order to put an idea into production? Imagine the first time Silicon wafers were used to produce chips in large numbers. I cannot imagine that those who developed the chips were completely separated from those who developed production processes.

So if Innovation is an end to end process which provides a framework, is adaptable to changing conditions and which can be measured, why would we wish to consider Lean? One possible (and perhaps cynical) answer is that those who promote Lean would lose a possible source of revenue or that they simply do not understand Innovation - after all, it does have ambiguity built in!



Enhancing Creativity - 10 Phrases To Avoid

This brief list is distilled from a very long list of phrases gathered over many years. Each phrase is given along with comments on its appropriateness and potential underlying meanings. If you hear these uttered then a warning bell should sound inside your head. These are all potential blocks to personal and organisational Creativity.

1. **We tried that before**

Well yes you might have done but were the circumstances the same and what happened exactly? Perhaps whatever you did was not executed correctly or you did not have the right skills? This is a phrase usually uttered by someone who has a vested interest in doing things in one particular way or who dislikes change. Try saying "When we tried this previously we got these results, how can we improve on this?"

2. **That's not my job**

Maybe not, but if you are looking to the future then it may currently be nobody's job. Again a phrase uttered by those who dislike change in their personal workspace or who simply want more money. If you are trying to get someone to behave differently then point out the advantages to a) themselves b) the organisation (in that order).

3. **We don't have the time**

Time always gets filled with something so it really is a question of what is more important. Are you looking to the future, do you have your backs against the wall? What is the result if you do NOT do this?

4. It's too radical a change

The word radical has to be taken in context. Any step towards where you wish to go has to be good. There will be repercussions though and if sufficient research is carried out, any unwanted effects can be minimised. This is a phrase uttered by the risk averse.

5. The staff will never buy it

Who said this? Someone is attempting to predict what a group of people will say. Taken at face value, it is a reason not to proceed, but try asking your staff. Likely to be uttered by those opposed to change.

6. Let's get back to reality

What is reality when thinking about the future? If you want to maintain the status quo then fine, but if you wish to improve things then you will have to dream a little (of new products) or try to predict the marketplace.

7. Let's give it more thought

This is used as a political gambit to bury ideas or by those who prefer talk to action. The ONLY reason an innovation project can fail is through inaction.

8. Let's form a committee

A way of gathering like minded people together to oppose an idea! Cynical perhaps, but committees with the best intentions often slow things down. Empower people to DO things and co-opt others if necessary.

9. It won't pay for itself

Does it have to? What is the cost of not taking a course of action? It may cost \$10000 and only make \$5000 but what if it prevents the company from going bust? Cost, like benefit can be measured in many ways.

10. If it ain't broke, don't fix it

Only if you wish to get the same results all the time. Broke is like cost, dependent on context. A system can have worked well in the past, but if the future is different from the past then your system could well be 'Broke' sooner than you think. This is often used by those who have actually invented the 'Unbroke' systems.

10 People Who Can Help With Your Innovation Project

Here Ten is often seen as a magic number when providing solutions to problems. In this case it is a convenient way to provide a shortlist as there are a potentially huge number of people who can assist. Read on to find out who can help and why.

1. **You**

You have the vision and have seen a way forward. A project needs to be started, the only way it can fail is through inaction so it is down to you to set the ball rolling.

2. **Boss**

A potential ally and gatekeeper. Get your bosses blessing (how is another matter) and those who waiver will follow.

3. **Spouse**

You will need an understanding spouse as there could be long days and filled weekends in store. You also need someone who knows you best to appraise your strengths and weaknesses and who will 'tell you like it is'.

4. **Children**

Children are very good at asking awkward questions and making suggestions as they have not been conditioned by life. Particularly useful for products and services aimed at consumers.

5. **Pub Landlord**

Often ridiculed, but they are in a position where they can solicit opinion from a huge number of people. Good for testing ideas and taking soundings of a market. If you want to go up market, go to a golf club or wine bar!

6. **Secretary**

Another potential ally or gatekeeper. Secretaries or PAs often have access to a huge number of people and are well informed regarding office politics. Use as a sounding board and a source of knowledge.

7. **Receptionist**



Yet another person who interacts frequently with a huge number of people. They know who visits, leaves parcels, makes phone calls etc and are well placed to advise on networks and the interface with the outside world. Use your delivery drivers in this way too!

8. Finance Director

Finance is often seen as very logical but it can be used creatively as the fuel for innovation projects. Convince this person of the benefits of your project before the naysayers get to them and resources will be easier to come by.

9. Customers

I'm sure you do canvass the opinions of customers but how do you treat them? As responders to questions or as a huge body of knowledge to tap into. If you deal with them regularly and have a relationship with them then can you also tap into the bodies of knowledge that they have? Talk to suppliers also.

10. Standards Bodies

Often seen as gatekeepers, standards bodies and even your own Quality department can help you identify issues before they arise as well as spot barriers that might keep your competitors at bay but allow you access to a market niche.

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