

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

creative4business

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Not To Be Missed

Dear Reader,

Welcome to first edition of **Innovation Matters** for 2010. It is hard to believe that one twelfth of 2010 has passed by already and it is nearly two months since the last edition.

The long awaited revamp of ebook formats has not yet been completed, but never fear, they are on their way!

Here is a quote that sums up what our attitude to Innovation should be. **Star Wars** fans may recognise this quote from the wise **Yoda** "Do ... or do not... , there is no try". So true!

In this month's edition there are three articles. The first attacks the myth that **Creativity Cannot Be Managed** whilst the second reinforces one valuable aspect of creative thinking - the importance of **Challenging Assumptions**. I always like to promote the art of storytelling as a means of corporate communications so I have included a short story with



Its nearly time for [TED](#) again! For those who have not seen TED it is a conference with a difference. Call it creativity, curiosity, insight or anything else for that matter. All presentations can be viewed afterwards on the website. For a taster click [here](#) or on the image above to hear Sir Ken Robinson's brilliant speech in 2006 on the topic of Creativity in schools. Everyone can learn lessons from this

TED takes place this year from February 9th - 13th.

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

a valuable lesson, so please take a little time to read **The Easy Way To Communicate**.

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,

Derek Cheshire

Creativity Cannot Be Managed - What Rubbish!

I was recently taking part in an online discussion about [Creativity](#) and [Innovation](#) when one of the contributors posted something that just stopped me in my tracks. There were a few words about how Creativity and Innovation are not the same (about the only thing we did agree upon) and some very logical and left brained words about how Innovation can be managed and then the line "**Creativity cannot be managed**".

How come you cannot manage Creativity, but you can manage Innovation (which contains Creativity)? The rest of the article led me to believe that the author did not have a realistic grasp of the situation. As the person was obviously keen on following manuals to the letter, I had to agree that there is no manual for Creativity (one of my slogans as it happens), but we know enough to be able to manage creative and idea generating processes very successfully indeed.

There is much documentation on [creative techniques](#) for solving problems, generating ideas and making decisions. We know which ones work best for different types of working, and there are many guiding principles to help us set up our environment and ensure that creativity is nurtured. We know the best ways to capture ideas and share them, we can calibrate idea generation pipelines and we know the ideal characteristics for creative team members, creative teams and of those who try to manage them.

Better still we know how creativity fits into the process of Innovation as a whole, so how can anyone claim that Creativity cannot be managed? The answer lies in perspective. Many consultants and advisers think that Innovation is something that you do to a system i.e. you apply it by turning a handle and following the book rather than a framework and a set of behaviours that help you to innovate. Thus they get stuck when it comes to Creativity, you cannot just do it, there is no step by step guide to the whole process yet the principles I mentioned previously can be applied (within your individual context) to create a [measurable](#) and hence manageable system.





Challenging Assumptions - Digging Deeper

Most people reading this will know of the freezing weather that gripped the UK over the Christmas and New Years periods together with the associated problems. Although there was some panic buying of food in the shops, by and large we survived unscathed. Did this mean that when the road conditions were appalling, my local supermarket was making superhuman efforts to deliver my Cornflakes?

Towards the end of the freeze I went to a local supermarket and was wandering up and down the aisles when I overheard a conversation between two of the department managers. The first was obviously toeing the company line and said something like "the shelves have been full, the supply chain has been doing a great job". Nice, I thought, he recognises the contribution of drivers and warehouse staff in difficult circumstances. The second manager said "there were less people going to the supermarket because of the bad weather".

It did not matter to me, since I was getting what I wanted, but it highlights a valid point. Accepting observations about full shelves without looking at all the facts meant that I was making a number of assumptions. If I was the supermarket manager I could be patting myself on the back believing that the arrangements I had put in place worked well. Next time there was a big freeze I could do exactly the same. But what if the local council gets better at clearing roads, or everybody buys four wheel drive cars? More people will arrive at the supermarkets and the food may disappear.

Do you think that this is what happened to many of our businesses between 18 months and two years ago? There is no need to become highly cynical, but learning to question the status quo and challenge assumptions is an essential component of an innovation system.

Story - The Easy Way To Communicate

Story is one of the best and easiest ways to communicate meaning, rather than just spraying out words like we tend to do from time to time. I came across this little gem the other day which seems apt and needs no further explanation. I do not know the author so if you have come across this before and can attribute the author please let me know.



What is recession?

This story is about a man who once upon a time was selling Hotdogs by the roadside. He was illiterate, so he never read newspapers. He was hard of hearing, so he never listened to the radio. His eyes were weak, so he never watched television. But enthusiastically, he sold lots of hotdogs. He was smart enough to offer some attractive schemes to increase his sales. His sales and profit went up. He ordered more and more raw material and buns and sold more. He recruited more supporting staff to serve more customers. He started offering home deliveries. Eventually he got himself a bigger and better stove. As his business was growing, the son, who had recently graduated from college, joined his father.

Then something strange happened.

The son asked, "Dad, aren't you aware of the great recession that is coming our way?" The father replied, "No, but tell me about it." The son said, "The international situation is terrible. The domestic situation is even worse. We should be prepared for the coming bad times."

The man thought that since his son had been to college, read the papers, listened to the radio and watched TV. He ought to know and his advice should not be taken lightly. So from the next day onwards, the father cut down the his raw material order and buns, took down the colourful signboard, removed all the special schemes he was offering to the customers and was no longer as enthusiastic. He reduced his staff numbers. Very soon, fewer and fewer people bothered to stop at his Hotdog stand. And his sales started coming down rapidly and so did the profit. The father said to his son, "Son, you were right. We are in the middle of a recession and crisis. I am glad you warned me ahead of time."

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