

News on Creativity and Innovation related topics

creative4business

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the July edition of **Innovation Matters**, the sixth of 2010. By the time you read this the World Cup will be nearly over, Wimbledon will have been and gone and the Tour de France will be in progress.

But what about these events, do they do any good? The World Cup has its critics, especially regarding the legacy for the people of South Africa. It has, however, shown the world that an African country is capable of organising and hosting such an event. Imagine the results if such resources could be channeled into social as well as industrial innovation?

Those readers in the UK who have watched ITV's world cup coverage may have enjoyed the moving theme tune which is a special recording of **When You Come Back** by South African artist **Vusi Mahlasela**. Watch him play at the [Live 8 concert](#) or for a more powerful performance at [Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday](#). Enjoy.

This month **News** has been kept at bay by **Fun Stuff**. I hope that you like the featured gadget!



This month I had a look for some useless but almost believable gadgets. This was my favourite! It is subtle, read the writing carefully.

You may remember the piano staircase which was featured last year. The 2009/2010 Fun Theory Award finalists (sponsored by Volkswagen) can be found at www.thefuntheory.com.

If you want something else to watch why not see Derek's interview for GuruView.tv? To take a look [click here](#).

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

The first of this month's articles looks at the issue as to why there can be **no manual for Creativity**. Next, with the aid of **Dilbert** we take a look at reframing and why we cannot see what is in front of our noses. Finally, **Innovation - wrestling with jelly** shows why getting an innovation programme on the road can be a little tricky.

I would also like to invite questions from around the world on the topics of Creativity and Innovation. There are readers on most continents so I am sure that whatever may be puzzling you will certainly be of interest to others. Simply fire your queries my way by replying to this newsletter.

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 - instructions not included

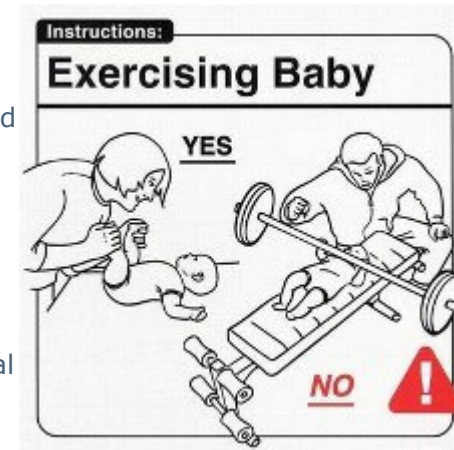
This article was inspired by a dialogue that I had with someone who commented on one of my blog posts. The post was about the resources that were required for Creativity. The person was looking for a definitive manual, a list of everything that they would need and the steps that they would need to go through. On reflection, my reply was probably less than helpful, but in a roundabout way I indicated that no such thing existed.

I still maintain that this is the case and if anyone tries to sell you such a manual then beware, however what they really needed was something to learn from, perhaps some case study material for a situation similar to theirs.

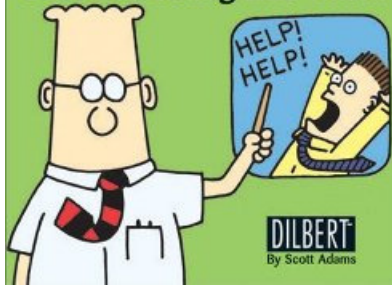
Putting together a creative system is a little like putting together flat pack furniture but without the instructions. If you have a reasonable skill level and knowledge of how such things are assembled then your furniture will grow out of the pile of pieces. If you are at the other end of the spectrum then you will be screaming for the instructions!

But what if the instructions do not exist, simply because every time the furniture is built by different people the result is different (but still a perfect piece of furniture)? What you need then are not instructions but an example of how the pieces fit together and a list of the tools required so that you can construct your unique item of furniture.

This is why we have components and tools to help you use creativity in business but the instructions are not included.



Our Disaster Recovery Plan Goes Something Like This...



What is it that you are not seeing?

Many of you will be familiar with Scott Adams' naive and downtrodden cartoon character Dilbert who sits in a small cubicle all day working for a tyrannical boss. If you have not seen Dilbert before then take a look at www.dilbert.com. On last year's calendar there was a scene where Dilbert and Dogbert were looking out over a panoramic scene. Dilbert said "wow look at that!" and Dogbert's reply was "look at what?".

There are times when we look at an issue with our colleagues and wonder why they cannot see the same things that we do. Have you ever been house hunting with someone who raves about the kitchen whilst you rave about the workshop or games room? This is much the same thing, we can all look at the same thing and see different facets or sometimes, like Dogbert, nothing at all.

Albert Einstein remarked that we are unable to solve problems in the same frame of reference in which they were created. So, to solve problems or make headway in a difficult business situation we need to re frame or change the way we look at things. These need not be dramatic changes. For instance:

- This piece will not fit - try turning it through 90 degrees or maybe upside down
- My customers are not buying the things I make - ask the question 'Am I making the things that my customers want?'
- Traffic lights - are they designed to stop accidents or manage traffic flow?
- I want to write upside down - do I need to design a pressurised pen or will a pencil do?

So try changing the way you look at the world and marvel at the increased opportunities.

Innovation - wrestling with Jelly

For those people who have yet to get to grips with using Creativity and Innovation to gain greater success in business here are a few things worth thinking about. For those of you that have, then you should look at these issues and feel proud that you have overcome them!



"Few great men would have got past personnel."

Paul Goodman

How true! Whether you think about one off characters such as Richard Branson and James Dyson or gangs of people that work for Google or Apple it is highly unlikely that your recruitment procedures would result in you recruiting these people. HR departments can get so fixated on employment law that they do not act to recruit and retain the best human capital for your business.

"Since we live in age of innovation, a practical education must prepare a man for work that does not yet exist and cannot yet be clearly defined."

Peter Drucker

Yet another issue to grapple with. We can have a stab at what the future holds (futures is a brilliant use for alternative thinking) but even without this, we do know the sorts of skills that our workers must have and the types of behaviours that they should exhibit. Our workforces should be matched to these criteria and be able to learn readily and tolerate a degree of ambiguity. But if things cannot be cast in stone, where does this leave unions and other representative bodies that might be resistant to change?

"The leaders say: "Let's be more innovative." The staff says: "Bravo. When do we start?" The mid-level managers say: "Wait a minute, let's think about that. What about... and ...? Have you REALLY thought it through? Does this mean I have to change?""

Claude Legrand

This is where you will find either the greatest resistance or the greatest assistance. Sometimes layers of middle management are inserted for no good reason. They are dead wood and must be removed, but they can occupy a very important position. Whether your information tends to flow bottom up, top down or side to side this is where data, information and knowledge smash into each other and connections are made.

"People buy more diet books than all other books, yet people are fatter than ever. Why? Most diets do not address the psychological reasons (mindset) for eating. The same holds true for innovation." **Stephen Shapiro**

True again. Why do you or your business actually wish to innovate? Is it because it is the latest craze down at the Chamber of Commerce or are there good reasons for it such as flexibility sustainability, improved motivation etc. Are your aspirations as a management team aligned with those of your employees (and perhaps middle managers)?

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