

June 2012

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Dear Dave,

Here is an opportunity to air alternative suggestions that might help or even solve some of our issues. Although called 'Dear Dave' because of our Prime Minister you can send your suggestions for your own country.

Has the UK government heard of the Cynefin framework? We think that it could be useful in stabilising simple systems that become chaotic and also stop whole swathes of government blindly adopting best practice.

Please send in your suggestions and they will be published in future editions along with any other ideas that we stumble across.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the June edition of **Innovation Matters**. Regular readers will notice that it is a little late arriving. This is due to the extra public holidays in the UK because of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Normal service is now resumed.

Later on this Summer, Creative HQ will be relocating to Sheffield. If you are local to the area and would like to say hello then please get in touch.

Our first article comes courtesy of the street artist **Banksy**. His alternate view of problems and authority is exactly the type of thinking that creative thinkers employ to solve difficult issues.

Article number two provides a brief outline of the **Cynefin Framework** for modelling complex systems which can help us make decisions, and prevent some common pitfalls when innovating. Our last article takes a brief look at **why innovation programmes fail**.

If you would like any help or advice in adopting Creativity or Innovation in your organisation please do get in touch.

Don't forget that you can also take a look at previous issues of Innovation Matters by visiting our website and navigating to the [archives](#) page.

Happy Reading,

Derek Cheshire



Challenging Boundaries The Banksy Way

Street artist Banksy is well known for challenging the establishment. Below is his take on PR and advertising. Whether you agree or not it should make you think.

People are taking the p**s out of you everyday. They butt into your life, take a cheap shot at you and then disappear. They leer at you from tall buildings and make you feel small. They make flippant comments from buses that imply you're not sexy enough and that all the fun is happening somewhere else. They are on TV making your girlfriend feel inadequate. They have access to the most sophisticated technology the world has ever seen and they bully you with it. They are The Advertisers and they are laughing at you.



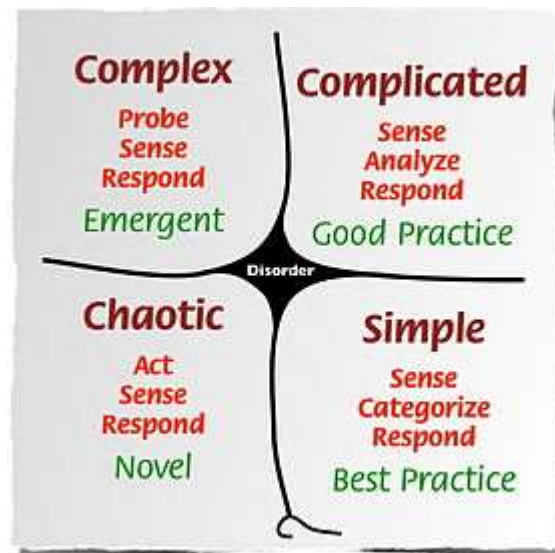
Feed The World

You, however, are forbidden to touch them. Trademarks, intellectual property rights and copyright law mean advertisers can say what they like wherever they like with total impunity.

F*** that. Any advert in a public space that gives you no choice whether you see it or not is yours. It's yours to take, re-arrange and re-use. You can do whatever you like with it. Asking for permission is like asking to keep a rock someone just threw at your head.

You owe the companies nothing. Less than nothing, you especially don't owe them any courtesy. They owe you. They have re-arranged the world to put themselves in front of you. They never asked for your permission, don't even start asking for theirs. - **Banksy**

The Cynefin Framework



The Cynefin Framework is a useful model for describing complex systems and is particularly helpful when grappling with the complexity and ambiguity that often surrounds innovation. To do it justice requires many thousands of words but I have tried to provide a flavour so that readers can investigate further for themselves.

First of all it is a sensemaking not a categorisation model i.e. our data already exists and our model is applied to make sense of the patterns that occur within it.

The model describes 3 types of systems - ordered (subdivided into simple and complicated), complex and chaotic. For simple systems the relationship between cause and effect exists and is predictable. The decision making model is thus Sense, Categorize, Respond and we tend to apply best practice.

In complicated systems the relationship between cause and effect exists but is not self evident. Our decision making model is thus Sense, Analyze, Respond and we apply Good Practice. This is because we might need to employ expert advice and there may be several possibilities open to us not a single correct course of action. The big danger is to blindly employ Best Practice here.

In complex systems the relationship between cause and effect is only obvious with hindsight. The way forward is to conduct a series of experiments, to probe our system. Depending on their success or failure

we will probe further and we will then develop emergent practice. We are effectively learning!

Chaotic systems are usually where we wish to be when we are innovating. There is no relationship between cause and effect. We are normally in control of these systems but such a system can be entered accidentally and we need to know how to tackle such an issue. Because we must act quickly in this unstable state our decision making model is Act, Sense, Respond.

So how do we use this? Well depending on which type of system we are in we should think and make decisions in different ways. One size does not fit all and it should be obvious that such an approach is disastrous. Often we start off in the central 'disorder' region i.e. not actually knowing which state we are in. This often means we do not conduct any form of analysis and will act according to personal experience and preference.

The framework also suggests that we can move around between states. This is true as boundaries are mostly smooth transitions except for the Simple/Chaos boundary. People working in simple (often bureaucratic) systems can become complacent and when their world becomes chaotic they suffer a rough ride as they change states. This transition has been likened to falling off a cliff!

Further reading is suggested for those serious about complexity and change, however it is a very useful tool for working out how you should be behaving as an organisation, and when it is safe to adopt best practice.

Why Innovation Programmes Fail

There is only one real reason for your Innovation programmes to fail and that is the fact that you have taken no action at all! I'm sure, however, that is not what you want to hear and you will be shouting 'not true' at you computer screen. One of the components of any such programme is learning, so that even if you don't hit the targets you set for yourself you will collect some knowledge on the way and thus not 'fail'. The only way you can fail, therefore, is by not doing anything thus not making any progress and not learning anything.



If you have read much literature on the topic of Change Management then inaction will be a recurring theme. Many Managers mistake discussion, planning and specification for action thus they believe that an initiative may be underway when it is not. When asked what is happening they will tell you that the Innovation Task Force is meeting regularly and soon they will have objectives and a plan. Great in the early stages but you should ask the question 'Have you actually done anything?'. In many cases the answer will be no. So no surprise that your initiative will be flagged as failing when it never actually started. To Innovate you must DO SOMETHING.

Readers will I'm sure like a few pointers as to why they have not made the progress they anticipated when they have taken action, so here are some potential reasons. Not all will apply to you but use them as a checklist:

- Employees do not know about your initiative - check communications
- Employees do not care about your initiative - check motivation and morale as well as management sponsorship
- Poor performance - did you identify any areas for training and development?
- Nothing is happening - have you officially kicked things off, have you changed what YOU do? Are others sabotaging your efforts?
- It all seems like hard work - do you have a team in place to help?

There are four broad categories of people to address when kicking off your innovation programme:

- Enthusiasts - no problem here, welcome them with open arms
- Disbelievers - 'no that will never happen', simply 'do' and conquer
- The Angry - 'over my dead body' hard work (see below)
- The Followers - 'well if its going ahead I might as well tag along', welcome these people also.

It is only the Angry (or Awkward) who pose a problem. What you need to realise is that a 70:30 rule applies here. If you run your innovation programme in an appropriate manner (you can borrow from Change Management here) then you will have 70% of your employees onside. There things aren't so bad are they? So just DO, and you can't actually fail!

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