

News and Views on Creativity and Innovation

creative4business

May 2012

In This Issue ...

Dear Dave

How to become a Jedi Master of Creativity

The Cost of Ideas

Does the light stay on when your refrigerator door is closed?

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.

UK news this week is that more and more people are receiving help from **food banks**. How can this be reconciled with the fact that some people living on benefits are living in relative luxury even when compared to those who are employed full time?

Please send in your suggestions and they will be published in future editions along with any other ideas

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the May edition of **Innovation Matters**.

Last month I mentioned the new website at www.creative4business.co.uk. A big thank you to those who did look and reported a few gremlins. Hopefully they are fixed. If you missed out then why not take a peek now?

Are you interested in the topic of **Leadership**? If so then you need to be at the Park Plaza Hotel, Cardiff on May 16th. [Download event and booking details](#).

This month's articles are designed to make you think. Learn how to become a **Jedi Master of Creativity** by making subtle changes to your everyday behaviour. You might also like to re-evaluate your decision making process in the light of the second article **The Cost of Ideas**. Sometimes it costs more not to implement ideas. Finally we take a look at the assumptions we make on a daily basis in **Does the light stay on when your refrigerator door is closed?**

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



that we stumble across.

How to become a Jedi Master of Creativity

Have you ever wanted to be the person who has all the new ideas? Some people think that creativity is something that you either have, or you don't. The fact is that everyone of us is creative and the creativity that we have can be boosted. Here's how!

Learning to think creatively is a lot easier than you think. The left and right hemispheres of your brain work together like a two man soccer team, and it's natural for them to try out new tactics every now and then. With just a little bit of effort, you can be bending your brain, and twisting your thoughts in new and exciting ways in no time at all.



The first step to training your brain to generate new thought patterns is to sneak up on yourself. There are things that you do, that you take for granted. Patterns, or ruts that simplify your life and that help you to focus on what is important. It is natural and healthy to develop patterns in your life so that your brain is comfortable and at ease, and able to focus completely on whatever task you assign it, but be aware that every pattern you fall into unthinkingly, is another thread of unconscious-unthinkingness that collectively binds and suppresses your creativity if you don't take steps to keep your thinking clear and fresh.

Here are one or two things that you can do to spice up your life and trick your brain into thinking a little bit differently:

- Wear your watch on your other wrist or even somewhere completely different
- Wear differently coloured socks or gloves
- Use your left hand to do something when you would normally use your right
- Wear a flower on your lapel
- Invent a new handshake with your friends
- Start up a conversation with a stranger that you wouldn't normally consider talking to
- Try ordering something strange or out-of-the-ordinary at a restaurant

Coming up with your own creativity exercises is a great way to flex your own creativity muscle. Judicious use of self-trickery can slice through complacent, uncreative thought patterns like a Jedi's light sabre and release your natural creative power in no time at all.



The Cost of Ideas

What normally happens when people come up with bright ideas at work? A manager will typically calculate the cost of implementing it. This cost will then be balanced against the value potential of the idea - usually additional income from increased sales or reduced operational costs. The more creative an idea is, the harder it can be to determine the value in monetary terms. Many potentially very exciting ideas are not implemented simply because a manager has decided that to do so

would be too costly.

While such managers are excellent at working out the cost of implementing an idea, they often fail to calculate the cost of NOT implementing an idea which can often be far more than the cost of

implementing.

How much does it cost not to implement an idea? Here is a simple example where an idea might lead to cost savings on a production line. The cost of the idea in terms of equipment and labour is 500,000 dollars and is a one off cost. As a result of this, the cost of manufacturing each widget that comes off your production line is reduced by 5.00 dollars. Your Sales department tells you that you are currently making 100,000 widgets each year and that sales are expected to rise 10% per year over the 5 year life of the equipment.

Simple maths tells us that the cost of not implementing the idea is zero in year 1 and then 500,000 dollars in year 2. Over 5 years the cost would be over 2.3 million dollars which is significantly larger than the initial investment needed.

Things are not always this easy though. Imagine that one of your R&D staff has come up with a pen sized device that can see through solid objects with potential applications in medicine, construction and intelligence gathering to name a few. To get such a device into production might cost say 50 million dollars but how can you predict the sales potential of such new technology and also keep it secret from your competitors until launch? The potential seems huge but you cannot put your finger on it.

We know that ideas do not spring from single sources and it is likely that a competitor will come up with a similar idea at some point. What will they do? Will they develop the idea and create a new product? What will happen, will it be a success? If it is then you lose out big time in terms of cash. But what about your reputation?

The cost of not implementing an idea might be both financial and long lasting damage to your reputation and brand. Does anyone remember Polaroid? Polaroid was the word that described instant images. The company failed to keep pace with digital technology and almost went bankrupt.

Next time an idea is put to you, think very carefully about the cost of not implementing it as well as the actual cost of implementing it.

Does the light stay on when your refrigerator door is closed?

This has always been a topic for debate amongst those propping up bar counters or for day dreaming types. How do you know what goes on inside your refrigerator when the door is shut? We all assume that the manufacturer has done their job correctly but you can not be sure, unless of course you climb inside (definitely not advised).

Not long ago I had a similar experience with my car. Like most people, I assumed that when I shut the doors and locked the car all of the interior lights went out. Sadly this was not the case and the combination of the interior lights and the car alarm flattened the battery. The next time I went to the car it would not start.

I am not suggesting that we all become obsessive and peer into our refrigerators or hang around parked cars waiting for lights to go out but I do believe that once in a while it is worth examining all of the things that we take for granted just to see if anything has changed. Maybe I will detect a faulty light switch once in a while but the implications in a business context are far more important.

How many times have we been told that a particular project or course of action is closed to us because of certain 'givens' that are accepted as variables that never change? Maybe a project costs too much, or the computers are not fast enough or the container ship takes too long to travel from China. But what happens when costs fall, computers become faster and container shipping times are slashed? Shouldn't



we periodically consider these things?

Our business environments change at different paces. Competitors react faster than governments and customer requirements even faster. We make assumptions at our peril, most things change at some point so we should be ready and be checking once in a while. Once we get used to doing this we can also avoid the other obstacles that get in our way. The only way to dodge the rocks being hurled at us is to be looking for them!!

So if your are the type that simply shuts the refrigerator door and forgets about what might be going on inside, just take a sneaky peek once in a while.

**[Blog](#) | [Creativity](#) | [Innovation](#) | [Workshops](#) | [Online Shop](#)
[Resources](#) | [About Us](#)**

[Forward to a friend or colleague](#)



This email was sent to derek@creative4business.co.uk by derek@creative4business.co.uk | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

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