

News and Views on Creativity and Innovation

creative4business

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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.

"We're involved in an economic rescue mission, but we're not just a bunch of accountants dealing with the deficit" - David Cameron. OK, how are you going to communicate this message then?

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 November edition of **Innovation Matters**. Winter is now upon us in the UK and Christmas is looming (sorry). Today the US voters will reveal their choice of inhabitant for the White House.

If you have not read the transcript of my interview with Peter Cook you can read [Something in the air - Holistic Innovation and Creativity](#) by clicking on the link. You also get to listen to some vintage Thunderclap Newman. For those who have not come across **The Music of Business** before you might like to take a peek at Peter's latest book of the same name or visit him at [The Academy of Rock](#).

This month we take an initial look at how we might try to describe the organisation of tomorrow with **Creativity, Gardening and Cookery**. Next we pose the question **Does your HR department stifle Innovation?** Finally we take a light hearted look at some signs whose grammar is open to interpretation.

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



Creativity, Gardening and Cookery - envisioning the future

Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter said "a clear destination is necessary to guide the journey of change. Many change efforts falter because of confusion over exactly where everyone is expected to arrive."

Of course, we don't always know what our final destination is. However, answering a series of questions can help us decide where we want to go and provide easy steps for getting there.



- What problem are we trying to solve?
- What's the current situation?
- What are our ultimate objectives?
- What needs to change to meet your objectives?
- What process should we employ?

Stop right there!

Can you see something wrong with this course of action? It is a traditional change process that has been taught on many a management course over the last 2 decades or so. The above was actually billed as 'envisioning the future' but in reality it is simply 'bending the organisation to fit'.

So what about the future, how do we envision it, create it and share it? There is a longer article in the pipeline but here is a summary.

The traditional methods imply a big change, going from here to there, a long or tough journey that not everybody feels is worth it. Also the journey is often forced upon us. In the embryonic creative organisation there is no journey, except through time. Instead of steps, we are building an environment (think of a children's den as a metaphor). We think of capability and opportunity and have a feeling about our new environment, but we have no concrete objectives. Because we value capability we visualise what can be done, not what engineering can be done on our organisation to make it fit our ideas for the future.

We are living in a world full of ambiguity here. What are our values, do we have a structure, have our roles changed? The only constant is change - but not as we know it.

And finally what process do we employ? A mixture of cookery and gardening!



Does your HR department stifle Innovation?

This is not directed at anyone in particular so there will be some readers within HR who take exception. I hope that these people realise that I am not suggesting that everyone who works in HR is a problem, just that the HR function more often than not can be a hindrance.

So what does your HR department do? I mean what does it REALLY do as opposed to the wise words on the intranet or in the employee handbook? Many HR departments have become less interested in people and more interested in compliance with employment law. This is not their fault but it still makes them part of the problem. So if I am a senior manager I know that my back is covered regarding the law, but what help will I get with changing culture, recruiting the right people,

creating time and space for creative activities, and more importantly demonstrating how they affect the profitability of the business?

If you are really unlucky your HR department will be one step ahead of you and will have been renamed something like People and Organisational Development (or POD for short). POD are even worse as there is very little emphasis on people, the organisation or development. Still just payroll, employment law and Investors In People tick boxes. It is easy to kick these people when they are down but how can they really help, or if they cannot help, what help do you need to look out for? Here is a short list that might help:

- Encourage team work
- Avoid micro management
- Encourage a desire to succeed
- Ensure that everyone knows what success looks like
- Get your heads out of the sand
- Encourage external relationships/partnering
- Grow the right culture
- Create the right environment for stretching employees
- Get the best from people

By the time you get to this point you might be thinking 'what has this got to do with me?' The thing is, if you are a professional who works with, and wants to get the best out of people then it is your problem. If the big cheese and the rest of the board are taking strategic decisions and middle managers are busy managing, then as an HR professional you are in exactly the right place to create a blueprint for an innovative organisation. The question is, are you the right person, or have you got the right people?

Don't take things too literally

As I wander around on a daily basis I find myself taking note of signs and posters and interpreting them in ways that the original author had never intended. For me it is a humorous exercise but try it on your own scribblings and see if your communications are up to scratch.

Seen outside a pub - Good Food Served Here. Well would you actually deliberately sell bad food? Why not use the space for a meaningful marketing message?

Seen near a school - Slow Children Crossing. Am I to drive slowly because I am near children or am I being warned that these particular children are in need of cattle prods?

Seen in the toilets at a motorway service station - Wet Floor. Is this a warning or an instruction?

Road sign in Essex - Secret Nuclear Bunker

Seen on newspaper stand at motorway services - Please refrain from reading the newspapers

Sign at Northampton General Hospital - Family Planning Advice, Use Rear Entrance

Be aware of the words you use when communicating with others.



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