

Flexibility facilitates innovation

[Business](#), [Management](#)



How Flexibility Affects Innovation Summary Flexibility is defined as the ability to change. Flexibility can further be divided into adaptive flexibility, which occurs as a result of pressure to fit to a tough and challenging environment or spontaneous flexibility which is a result of preference for change caused by inherent reasons (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 166: pag 2). Making flexible utilization of available knowledge by integrating and re-organizing contributes largely towards new ideas. Making use of an atypical mode for relating one concept to another can be the recipe for a creative idea (2004: p 168: pag 1). A great deal of attention has been given to the psychological research on the personality of highly creative people in comparison to the less creative people. Positive characteristics are deemed to be related to high creativity.

Research has unveiled that the sensation- seeking trait, in terms of preference for new and different experiences and readiness to incur risk in order to experience such, leads to spontaneous flexibility (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 168: pag 2). Flexibility on the level of personality can further be reflected in the ability of creative individuals to merge opposite or conflicting traits. The dimension of cognitive style gives disparity between the explorers as individuals who demonstrate spontaneous flexibility in providing solutions to problems, and the assimilators as individuals who tackle problems in a rule- bound and more rigid way (2004: p 168: pag 3).

It may be more advantageous and profitable to employ a universal processing style during commencement of a project, in order to identify the importance of novice merchandise in the marketplace, or to collect information from varied sources (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 169: pag 3). On the

other hand, during the more content- based explanation of specific merchandise, after generation of an idea, processing locally is of great assistance. Creativity is a product of integration between an individual and cultural environment. Flexibility is a major characteristic of organizational culture. When the organizational structure is rigid with hierarchical model, corporate flexibility is low and managers make conservative decisions while desisting from risky procedures and thus suffocate creativity (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 170: pag 2).

Adaptive Flexibility

Adaptive flexibility in definition is the ability to conform to fresh methods and strategies to solve a problem because of failure in old methods, or redefining a problem so as to obtain an original solution (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 167: pag 2). The ability to change perspectives on problems leads to creative solutions and insights. An example of adaptive flexibility for innovation in organizations is a hotel manager who after receiving numerous consistent complaints regarding the snail pace of the hotel's lifts. Instead of going for the expensive option of replacing the lifts with faster elevators, he opts to end the boredom caused by the long wait by introducing large mirrors around the lifts.

Spontaneous flexibility

Spontaneous flexibility is the capacity to adopt varied solutions when no outside pressure to change is experienced. It can further be defined as the ease to change individual concepts and to generate numerous different forms of responses (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 167: pag 4). Spontaneous flexibility is measurable. In some mind jogging tasks, one may be required to

generate as many ideas as possible regarding the use of a normal object. An example is the case of Bill Gates carrying along his books while heading for a vacation since he believes that vacations are a waste of time. However, he is not under any pressure to broaden and alter his conceptual groups, regardless of the problems Microsoft faces.

Measures to improve innovation

Flexibility at the basic level of idea formation by an employee or small team can be improved by changing the organization culture through encouraging team work, influencing an individual's rigid and risk-averse attitude by offering training on the utilization of various thinking approach, and developing an individual's flexibility (Georgsdottir, 2004: p 172).

Bibliography

Georgsdottir, A. S. & Getz, I. 2004, How flexibility facilitates innovation and ways to manage it in organizations, *Creativity and Innovation Management*, vol 13, no 3.