

Managing change and creativity in organisations



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There have been a lot of on-going discussions and arguments surrounding creativity and innovation such as the use of technology, more unpredictable customers, higher expectations and competition amongst organizations. But before getting to the roots, we have to understand what creativity and innovation means.

What is Creativity? Creativity is the generation of novel, valuable, and non-obvious ideas (Andriopoulos and Dawson 2009). Creativity is the ability to develop new ideas and to discover new ways of looking at problems and opportunities.

What is Innovation? Innovation can be best described as the implementation of creative ideas in organisations (Andriopoulos and Dawson 2009).

Innovation can also be defined, as the ability to apply creative solutions to those problems and opportunities in order to enhance people's lives or to enrich society. Generally speaking, creativity is thinking new things, and innovation is doing new things. And together they work along i. e. Creativity + Innovation = Entrepreneurship.

There have also been discussions regarding the complexity of creativity as to why creativity is complex, the fear of making a mistake, the inability to tolerate ambiguity, the inability to incubate, lack of challenge, excessive zeal, and lack of access to areas of imagination (MSDN 2013). Creativity does not just happen in organizations; entrepreneurs must establish an environment in which creativity can flourish – for themselves as well as others. The number of potential barriers to creativity is almost limitless. They include time pressures, unsupportive environment and overly rigid policies

and strategies. Perhaps the most difficult hurdles to overcome, however, are those that individuals impose on themselves. Roger Von Oech (1990) identifies ten mental locks" that limit individual creativity.

Myths Of Creativity There are several myths associated with creativity; below I will layout some myths associated with creativity, examples and references for each myth.

1. **Money Is A Creativity Motivator:** People put far more value on a work environment where creativity is supported, valued, and recognized. People want the opportunity to deeply engage in their work and make real progress. So it's critical for leaders to match people to projects not only on the basis of their experience but also in terms of where their interests lie. People are most creative when they care about their work and they're stretching their skills. If the challenge is far beyond their skill level, they tend to get frustrated; if it's far below their skill level, they tend to get bored. Leaders need to strike the right balance (Breen 2004). Based on research that has been done on creativity suggests that money isn't everything.

2. **There Is Only One Type Of Creativity:** A critical mistake many of us make is in assuming that we're all the same. Did Henry Ford have the same kind of creative style as Picasso? Ford was conservative and created within a rigid model; Picasso was much more fluid. We all have unique knowledge, can learn techniques, and are capable of creating in our own way. Give a classroom of children a topic and ask them to write an essay, and then see how many variations you get. Each of us sees the world in our own way, and we act accordingly. Our creativity is as unique as our fingerprints and leaves

an impression on whatever we make (Skip Prichard – Leadership Insights 2013).

3. The Myth That Good Ideas Are Rare: If you watch any 6-year-old child they will invent dozens of things in an hour. We humans are built for creativity. The problem is the conventions of adult life demand conformity and we sacrifice our creative instincts in favour of social status. Unlike a child, adults are supremely and instantly judgmental, killing ideas before they've had even a moment to prove their worth. It's easy to rediscover creativity, which is why brainstorming rarely helps much. We're already creative. The challenge is ideas don't come with the courage to invest in them. Good ideas are everywhere: what are uncommon are people with the conviction to put their reputation behind ideas (Berkun 2013).

4. Everyone is creative: Creativity is for everyone, but a field sets the standards for worthwhile contribution. In a competitive arena, these standards can be stratospheric. Be creative, but also be realistic about the value of your contribution.

5. Competition Beats Collaboration: There's a widespread belief, particularly in the finance and high-tech industries, that internal competition fosters innovation. In recent surveys, it's been reported that creativity takes a hit when people in a work group compete instead of collaborate. The most creative teams are those that have the confidence to share and debate ideas. But when people compete for recognition, they stop sharing information. And that's destructive because nobody in an organization has all of the information required to put all the pieces of the puzzle together.

6. Time Pressure Fuels Creativity: In Bill Green and his team's diary study, people often thought they were most creative when they were working under severe deadline pressure. But the 12, 000 aggregate days that we studied showed just the opposite: People were the least creative when they were fighting the clock. In fact, we found a kind of time-pressure hangover when people were working under great pressure, their creativity went down not only on that day but the next two days as well.

Time pressure stifles creativity because people can't deeply engage with the problem. Creativity requires an incubation period; people need time to soak in a problem and let the ideas bubble up. In fact, it's not so much the deadline that's the problem; it's the distractions that rob people of the time to make that creative breakthrough. People can certainly be creative when they're under the gun, but only when they're able to focus on the work. They must be protected from distractions, and they must know that the work is important and that everyone is committed to it. In too many organizations, people don't understand the reason for the urgency, other than the fact that somebody somewhere needs it done today. (Breen 2004)

7. Creative People Are High Rollers: The willingness to take calculated risks and the ability to think in non traditional ways do figure in creativity but you do not have to be a bungee jumper to be creative (Smith and Reinersten, 2004).

8. The Creative Act Is Essentially Effortless: Although creativity is a complex process, there is a tendency to emphasize what is termed as the illumination stage. This downplays the contextual dynamics of change and fails to

recognize how most innovations occur after many trials, dead ends and a lot of personal effort (Placone, 1989)

Some other myths surrounding creativity are

a) The smarter you are, the more creative you are. b) Creativity derives only from eccentric personalities. c) Coming up with new ideas is the most difficult part of creativity

In my own opinion, to be more creative you have to take risks, and expect to make lots of mistakes, because creativity is a numbers game. Work hard, and take frequent breaks, but stay with it over time. Do what you love, because creative breakthroughs take years of hard work. Develop a network of colleagues, and schedule time for freewheeling, unstructured discussions.

Where Does Creativity Come From? The concepts of creativity and innovation are often used interchangeably. Creativity as a context-specific evaluation can vary from one group; one organisation and one culture to another and it can also change over time. Evaluating creativity should therefore be considered at the level of a person, organisation, industry, and profession and wider (Ford, 1995). Creativity can also be derived as a result of individual wants. As business enterprises strive daily to provide innovative solutions to clients' business challenges, or create ads with real-world impact, businesses know there must be a nonstop generator of creativity but where do all these creative ideas come from? (Arnold 2010). Creativity can also be derived from past experiences, hard work and dedication.