



Innovation Focus Articles

Innovative Issues 09/20/02

Tina Sanders, Editor



Innovative Issues

Welcome to this month's edition of Innovative Issues. Innovative Issues is meant to be a resource for you and your company to provide information, insights, and opinions on new trends and events in the business world. Hopefully, this e-newsletter can also offer you an opportunity to enter into a dialogue with other professionals in the business community, a chance to take a brief mental excursion, and connections to hot Web sites on innovation and creativity. Check out the winner of our drawing for the Cubicle Creativity Contest.

Interactive Innovation

This is the area where your response counts. You are encouraged to comment or respond to any of the following items. Responses will be printed in next month's e-newsletter. Thanks for your participation.

Quote of the Month: *"Some consider it noble to have a method; others consider it noble not to have a method. Not to have a method is bad; to stop entirely at method is worse still. One should at first observe rules severely, then change them in an intelligent way. The aim of possessing method is to seem finally as if one had no method."* -Chieh Tzu Yuan Hua Chuan, *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* submitted by Neema Moraveji of Carnegie Mellon University.

How does this quote affect you? To respond or comment on this quote, e-mail [Quote](#) with the subject heading "Quote of the Month." If you would like to submit your favorite inspirational quote, e-mail [Quote of the Month Club](#) with the subject heading "Quote Club". Watch for readers' quotes in upcoming editions of Innovative Issues.

Responses to Last Month's Quote:

"There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress and we would be forever repeating the same patterns." -Edward De Bono

1. "Not wanting to throw cold water on Mr. De Bono's statement, but there is something to be said for serendipity. Sometimes we discover things by plain dumb luck. Other times we take a 'sledge hammer': Edison tested hundreds of filaments before he found one durable enough for a lamp. Darwin's theory is based on random trial-an-error. These methods all result in progress. That said, my sense is creativity represents the single most important factor directly affecting the speed of progress." -Randy Seiss, Dow

2. "History repeats itself. That is an irrefutable fact. We are creatures of habit, and most times it requires great effort to step outside of the familiar and choose a different path on both large and small scales. Great effort can be achieved in a myriad of ways, but it must be motivated by something. The desire to see the landscape with a new perspective; the need to solve a problem in a new way; the dream of trying something that's never been done before--all of these motivations can be seen through with creativity. Other factors like determination and vision will play a role, to be sure. But creativity of thought and action is the spark needed to dream the dream and break away from the familiar in order to make it happen. It is the creative mind that can break the patterns and, in turn, inspire the same action in others." -Cynyth Pertersheim, Innovation Focus Inc.

"Cubicle Creativity" Contest...and the winner is...

Many successful organizations have found that it is essential to embrace the creative spirit in each and every employee. They believe that creativity and innovation are not an event; they are an essential part of the company's evolution. Finally, they have a willingness to take reasonable risks in an effort to lead change---rather than be forced to merely react to it. What role does creativity play in your organization?

Over the past few months, Innovative Issues asked the readers to write in with one piece of advice that they could offer to help foster creativity in the workplace. We received many excellent ideas and will be sharing them in a special section in the next couple of issues. We thank all of the people that took the time to share their insights with us. It's clear how much enthusiasm, insight and innovation your presence adds to your organizations.

Since we wanted to celebrate creativity in the workplace, we entered all of the entries into a random drawing to win a basket full of creativity stimulators-- Innovation Focus--tested toys that we've found help people enhance their problem-solving abilities.

So, without further ado, The winner of Innovative Issues' Cubicle Creativity Contest is **Mechele Flaum**, President, Marketing Fire.

Mechele's advice is:

"Get together with your group and invent and dimensionalize your competition. Your people know every kink in your armor. By inventing a better competitor, your creativity and productivity will surge. Then, turn yourself into that competitor."

Congratulations Mechele and thanks again to all of those who participated. Keep your eyes open for more creativity advice from our readers!

Trend of the Month:

* In 2000, 269,873 women had eye lifts according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. More than 7,500 of them were ages 19-34, while another 90,200 were between 35-50.

* People are starting to get lunch hour face lifts; eyes, and wrinkles lifted; 250,000 procedures will be performed this year, up from 150,000 in 2001 according to an article in Time 4/22/02.

If you would like to comment or respond to this trend, please e-mail [Trend Response](#) with the subject heading "Trend of the Month".

Excursion of the Month:

In the middle of a piece of paper, write down the first word that comes to your mind. Then draw three lines, like branches on a tree, from this word and write the first three words that come to your mind, one on the end of each branch. Finally draw three branches from each of these words and add a word to each. Look at the tree of words you've created and see if you can come up with any creative solutions to your problem. Go out on a limb and you just might see from a perspective you never had before.

Spotlight Interview

This month's Spotlight Interview is with **Robert B. Tucker**, author of the forthcoming book, [Driving Growth Through Innovation: How Leading Firms Are Transforming Their Futures](#), a three-year study of 23 of the most innovative companies in the world.

Tucker is president of The Innovation Resource, a research and consulting firm in Santa Barbara, California, and is a frequent speaker at national and international conferences. Other works by the author include; [Winning the Innovation Game](#), [Managing the Future](#) and [Win the Value Revolution](#). [Driving Growth Through Innovation: How Leading Firms Are Transforming Their Futures](#) is available at www.amazon.com. Read on to learn more about our Spotlight Interviewee.

Innovative Issues (II): *Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you became interested in the area of business innovation?*

Robert Tucker (RT): As a kid, I was always fascinated with the story behind creative products and inventions. Inquiring minds want to know, right? I was teaching at UCLA when I got this wacky idea to travel around and interview leading innovators like Andy Grove of Intel, and Fred Smith of FedEx which became the book [Winning the Innovation Game](#). That was 1986, and before long, I was being invited to lecture all over the place, and my interest in innovation took off from there.

II: *What made you decide to write [Driving Growth Through Innovation](#)?*

RT: I became acutely aware through my work as a consultant and speaker of the difficulty companies have in implementation of innovation. For example, an Accenture survey tells us that 83 percent of executives in 26 countries believe innovation will be "critical to their future." But other surveys show a clear sense of inadequacy when it comes to delivering. One Arthur D. Little survey showed that fewer than one company in four is satisfied with its current innovation performance.

II: *But isn't innovation taking a back seat because of the slow economy?*

RT: Not at the companies we studied: companies like BMW, EDS, Whirlpool, Appleton Paper, Medtronic, and Citibank, among others. We found these "Innovation Vanguard Firms" asking fundamental questions like: where will our future growth come from, and putting innovation on the front burner. In an economy such as the one we have now, the business media seems to be focused on bursting bubbles and reporting on malfeasance. Rightly so, given their irrational exuberance in trumpeting the Enrons and Tycos. But just when it looks like everyone is asleep or on survival mode, pay attention not to what the herd is doing, but to what the mavericks are doing. Because when things come back, these guys have a whole new set of competencies they've been honing that the rest of you know nothing about.

II: *Why is driving growth so important today?*

RT: Because you're sunk without it. Even though stocks have tumbled in the past two years, most are still high by historic standards. So if you don't have a growth game plan, your stock price could tumble further. If you look at the data--and Bain & Company (the Chicago-based consultancy)--recently did, the number of companies that are growing more than five percent each year is decreasing. The number of mature markets worldwide is increasing. You can't raise prices. What you can do is try to raise productivity and hack away at costs,

and indeed you must. But doing so doesn't do a thing for your top line, and Wall Street is watching.

II: *What are these companies you discuss through the book doing differently?*

RT: The 23 plus companies we looked at are approaching innovation as a systematic, enterprise-wide process. An executive at Borg-Warner told us that before they launched an innovation initiative, most people there would have laughed at the apparent oxymoron, 'innovation process'. But then they, as well as a growing number of other firms, began to realize, 'hey, we've got a process for everything else, why not innovation?'

So the Innovation Vanguard Firms are imbedding innovation as both a discipline and a process. They are designing improved ways to solicit and harvest and manage ideas, so that the best ones don't get lost, and go through a rigorous process and ultimately get funding and get implemented. They are allocating resources - time, money and talent - to support their objectives. They are devising metrics so that divisional leaders and their people have bonuses tied to how well they innovate, not just to profitability alone. They are using cross-functional teams of innovators to break through internal monopolies on new ideas. By thinking through these seemingly discreet issues, these firms have developed what might be called a strategy for innovation, one that guides them in good times and bad, and one that can conceivably survive changes in leadership.

II: *What would be an example of a company that now has an innovation strategy?*

RT: Citibank, a division of Citigroup which developed a comprehensive approach to driving organic growth to even out its string of huge bank acquisitions. In typical Citibank fashion, the CEO convened a task force of bright managers from all over the world in 2000. They focused and interviewed and benchmarked intensely for 30 days and came up with a game plan to imbed innovation that suits their needs and culture. For example, to ensure the flow of new-product ideas, they now appoint "innovation catalysts" at the country level to work closely with "magnet teams," locally empowered, cross-functional groups of senior executives that regularly meet to review ideas. The catalysts don't propose new ideas; instead they help local managers and prepare a case for their ideas.

II: *What kind of results have they had?*

RT: In one Asian country, the innovation catalyst model has worked so well that the magnet team meets every week to review and prioritize ideas that have been proposed. And in Citibank's Trinidad bank, the approach was responsible for 30 percent of the total revenues. Overall, I think it's too early to make any hard and fast conclusions but what Citibank has done in a short period of time is adding millions of dollars to their top-line, and more growth is coming.

II: *Okay, we're motivated. Where can we find your book, and when will it be available?*

RT: Thanks for asking. Driving Growth Through Innovation should be available at your local bookstore, or online at Amazon.com(www.amazon.com) by October 19th, 2002. And you can always e-mail me direct at rtucker@innovationresource.com.

If you have any other questions regarding this book or this Spotlight Interview, please email the editor at [Questions](#).

****Thanks for spending some time with us Robert!****

Upcoming Speeches and Conferences

October 12-16, 2002

Orlando, FL

PDMA International Conference 2002

Innovation Focus presenters will be participating in the following events:

October 13, 2002

Pre-Conference Research Forum: "Tomorrow's Products Today--From Imagination to Implementation"

Christopher W. Miller, Ph.D., Founder, Innovation Focus will be leading one of the discussions

October 14, 2002

The Fundamentals: Foundations

Diane Ray, NPDP, Vice President, Innovation Focus will be joining Robert Brentin, NPDP, Business Development Leader, The Dow Chemical Company; Beebe Nelson, NPDP, President, Working Forums, LLC and Diane Scheurell, NPDP, Senior Research Manager, Consumer and Product Insights, S.C. Johnson & Sons, Inc. to present a workshop for newcomers to new product development.

For more information or to register for this event, please contact PDMA at 800.232.5241.

October 21, 2002

Rochester, NY

Rochester Institute of Technology NPD Forum

"Sustaining the Flow of New Ideas for Better Products and Services"

An Innovation Focus presenter will be facilitating the following discussion:

Hunting for Hunting Grounds (TM): Forecasting the Future

Christopher W. Miller, Ph.D., Founder, Innovation Focus

For more information, email H4HG with the subject heading "RIT Forum".

This month we:

* helped a leading credit card company lead focus groups to learn how to better serve their customer's needs.

* helped a major office products manufacturer conduct ethnographic research in two major cities to observe how consumers decorate their homes and storage spaces.

* facilitated a two-day workshop on Hunting for Hunting Grounds (TM) with a leading chemical company.

* facilitated a two-day workshop on Hunting for Hunting Grounds (TM) with a diversified technology company.

* audited and coached a "gate committee" at a major distribution service provider of oils, lubricants and fuels to help enhance the process.

* finished a major public domain study on lipstick/lip care products, now available for purchase.

To learn more about Innovation Focus and the services we offer, call (717) 394-2500 or e-mail What IF?

Hot Websites on Creativity, Business and Innovation

Creativity for Life (<<http://www.creativityforlife.com/index.html>>) Seeking a little injection of creativity in your daily life? Check out this website and you'll find various articles on creativity and more.

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