

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 106

Do we need to rethink how we value time for innovation in organisations...?

Value Time for Innovation...

"I would like to propose a large (think Stonehenge) mechanical clock, powered by seasonal temperature changes. It ticks once a year, bongs once a century, and the cuckoo comes out every millennium"

Danny Hillis, Computer Scientist. To see how it has progressed, click [here](#)



The 10,000 Year Clock

Do you have time to think?

I met a business associate the other day for a coffee and a chat. We were discussing his new role and he said that the day before, he had got up at 4 a.m. for a flight to Berlin, had spent all day in negotiations and arrived home at 9.00 p.m, very tired. "You just don't get any time working in an organisation any more," he said.

Keep reading! I am not going to get in to the work / life balance discussion which has already laid waste to a few forests! My perspective is that we need... a new currency. No, not a replacement for the Euro, Dollar or Pound, that are issued by central banks. This currency is based on the value of time.

A currency must have a name and as this is my concept, I named it the Think, the value of time. I reasoned that I value time in business because it

enables me to think clearly and when I have been thinking, I will often say, "I have had a good think about this".

You may say my grammar is appalling, but the Oxford dictionary tells me that "Think" is an informal or humorous past participle of "Think".

Also, whilst not an original word, Think does have a kind of "Winnie the Pooh" feel to it and Pooh is renowned for his deep thinking, "Ooh, after my honey, I must set aside some time for a good think." (Apologies to AA Milne)

SO

Many people in organisations are paid a salary, i.e. they are not paid by the hour, their time, but what they contribute. As my business associate said, this can lead to the situation where they have money, but they don't have time. He is not alone.

I meet lots of people in organisations who say the same thing. In fact, after writing the first draft of this article, I was talking to an ex-colleague who said she had worked sixteen hour days for a long time on one project. The affect is that the operation continues, but innovation doesn't as the ideas dry up. Not something creative leaders want to see.

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These people are, as the cliché says, cash rich (OK, rich... ish) and time poor. Why is this? Is it because their time, unlike their salaries, does not appear on the balance sheet so is not measured? And if it isn't measured, is it valued? So let's put it on the balance sheet. And to make that easier to do, let's make it a currency.

Enter the Thunk. As well as salaries, people get paid some thinking time too. We might even develop the holy grail of business analysts, a ratio! For example, Sales : Overall Thunks could be an indicator of how efficient an organisation is. Potential employees could compare the ratios of different companies and get an idea of how much time they would be paid in Thunks. Perhaps too, we could develop a ratio for innovation i.e. New ideas : Thunks?

Yes, there are a few complexities, like how do you value the Thunk, but I'll leave that to the economists. Let's not destroy an idea with practicalities, but play with this concept:

If the value of time were an entry on the balance sheets, what impact would that have on organisations and how people work?

ACTION

- I'll leave you to ponder my question above and welcome any feedback on it.
- For an excellent and very readable discussion about time by Keith Devlin (a Dean of Science at a US College), click [here](#).

TO CLOSE

The wonderful thing about the Thunk is that it can reduce the worries of those who don't work in organisations.

Freelancers, who worry that a day without work means they may not eat, can get some psychological comfort from being paid in Thunks and [Dr Who](#), Time Lord, and ultimate unpaid freelance, would be the world's richest man.

[I can't believe it; I just did a final Google search on Thunk and Pooh and found an article about a Time Lord called Dr Pooh! Read it [here](#), it's quite fun!]

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