

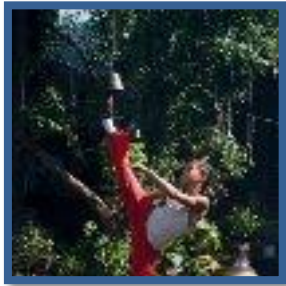
# THE CREATIVE GORILLA #118

*How to facilitate innovation...*

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## Eight ways to facilitate innovation...

*"The rules are simple, hit him, don't let him hit you." Jackie Chan in "The Karate Kid"*



### *How might you facilitate innovation?*

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This week I drove to Dublin in Ireland with a colleague to start a new Innovation Programme. After a long drive and with the prospect of a full day ahead we retired to our rooms at 8.30 pm, my head hit the pillow at 10 pm and I was asleep. Three hours later I was awoken by a loud crash, like someone throwing a collapsible table out of the window.

I dozed off, only to be startled by another loud crash. After the fourth time I realised it happened whenever a vehicle exited the hotel car park over a metal speed bump. This being a tourist hotel in Dublin I laid awake for most of the night as taxis came and went, drifting off around 4 a.m.

On the bright side I was able to relate this story to the group next day, using it to define business innovation as:

- Find someone with a problem (crash!)
- Identify if they are willing to pay for a solution (I would happily pay!)

- Develop a solution
- Market it
- Earn revenue

True, this is highly simplistic, but it can be useful to cut through complexity to the basic concept.

## SO

Whilst the concept of innovation is simple, implementing it is a little more difficult, so, here are eight ways to facilitate innovation in an organisation, based on my experience and reading:

### KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

- Understand why you want to innovate and describe the future when your organisation is innovating well
- Understand and measure the critical success factors to achieve this

### UNDERSTAND THE PREVAILING INNOVATION STYLES AND CREATIVE CLIMATE YOU HAVE IN YOUR ORGANISATION

- You can find instruments to measure this on the Internet

### CREATE A GOOD FLOW OF IDEAS

- Use a structured approach to innovation
- Focus your idea scheme on desired innovation areas

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- Ensure people develop ideas and have them peer reviewed before submission to idea scheme
- Allocate a day when people can work on any project or idea to innovate in the organisation
- Appreciate your department / organisation / management level don't have all the ideas; seek ideas everywhere

## DEVELOP INNOVATION SKILLS

- Teach people to use and facilitate the structured approach
- Rotate people around job functions to expand their thinking

## ADAPT REWARD SYSTEMS TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

- Set targets for revenue from new products (e.g. 25% revenue from products / services implemented in last three years)

## ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

- Facilitate communication with senior people and across functions
- Enable informal opportunities to discuss (e.g. long tables in the cafeteria (as in Google))
- Encourage networking

## ENCOURAGE INNOVATORS

- Identify the innovators and people who encourage innovation
- Promote them to relevant positions where they influence innovation

- Provide more freedom and autonomy for innovators (they tend to like this)

HAVE FLEXIBILITY OF FUNDING AS INNOVATION CAN BE DIFFICULT TO BUDGET FOR

- Have a fund set aside for innovation type projects

## ACTION

- Review the list above. What else would you add? Please let me know!
- Where might your organisation improve?

## TO CLOSE

Yesterday, I went with my son to see "The Karate Kid". It has a great performance from Will Smith's son Jaden, though it could benefit from twenty minutes of content editing.

I had to laugh when the Kid asked his instructor, nicely played by Jackie Chan, if he knew the rules of the tournament the Kid had to fight in. ["Simple," he replied, "hit him and don't let him hit you."](#) (Click on the quotation to see a clip).

It's almost as simple as innovation then.

Enjoy an innovative week.

*John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.*

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