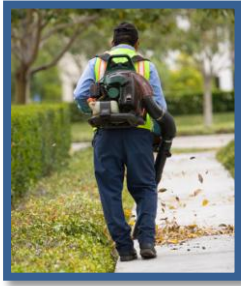


YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 122

Product and process is not the only area of innovation to focus on...

Innovate In The Day Job...

"The question is not "How do we innovate on top of the day job?" It is, "How do we make innovation part of the day job?" John Brooker



"Leaf blowing"

What qualities do you need to cultivate to become a creative leader?

What is your least favourite innovation? Early one morning last week, I was walking round the lovely village of Trendelburg in Germany. I was preparing myself for a workshop when the peace was shattered by that worst of innovations; the petrol driven leaf blower / collector. Not one, but four of the pesky things, plus a lorry based vacuum cleaner disrupted my tranquillity. I understand why people use them (if they pick the leaves up afterwards), but the noise they inflict on others is outrageous. Can no one make a silent engine for these monsters?

Having mentally ranted, I began to think about the blower as an example of a product innovation, with a touch of process innovation; having replaced the process of raking and brushing with the faster process of ANNOYING OTHER PEOPLE!

Much of what I read about innovation refers to product or product manufacturing processes and Research and Development. This is a shame because it is somewhat limiting, tending as it does, to lead to a view that innovation is for the "product people", and cutting others out of the innovation loop.

Here are a few areas of innovation other than product, which I have identified in the payments' business. What else might you add?

- Non product processes
- Services
- Working with others e.g. strategic partnerships
- Systems
- Customer experience
- Brand
- Delivery
- Packaging
- Organisation
- Functionality
- Business model
- Material
- Platform

SO

What I hope this list indicates to you as a creative leader is that innovation is an organization wide responsibility. This concept brings with it some additional burdens for those not normally tasked with innovation.

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 122

As someone recently asked me at a workshop, “How can we fit innovation in on top of our day jobs?” “That’s a great question,” I replied, “but it’s the wrong one. The right question is, how can we make innovation part of the day job?”

One answer is to ensure that everyone in the organization understands how to innovate. That is not to say I advocate a “sheep dip” approach of training up everyone in creativity and innovation, only for them to forget everything a few weeks later.

A better alternative is to form a cross-functional team, use a structured innovation approach and give the team a tangible opportunity to explore and develop. This produces a concrete outcome and the energy to move it forward, with the skill and knowledge development becoming a by-product of the work.

This is an approach colleagues and I have used very successfully recently, producing tangible innovations in many areas and creating enthusiasm across the organizations we worked with.

ACTION

Think about your organization. Are you focusing all your efforts on the product area? How might you push the idea of innovation through the organization as a whole?

TO CLOSE

My favourite innovation is the Genius function on my iPhone and in iTunes. It allows me to select a music track I like and with one click creates a list of 25 - 100 complementary music tracks based on my collection. It is really simple to use, I now listen to songs unheard for years and with my headphones on I don’t have to listen to the soundtrack of Obnoxious and the Leaf Blowers. Brilliant.

May you inspire someone this week.

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