

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 123

It is futile to argue about what innovation is. It is far better to encourage all forms...

Encourage Innovation...

"It occurred to me by intuition, and music was the driving force behind that intuition. My discovery was the result of musical perception." – Albert Einstein



"Music to your ears"

Confused what innovation is?

There have been discussions on Linked In forums and elsewhere about innovation and what it is.

Is it a lot of small steps over time that transforms a company (as heard at a dinner recently) or is it a paradigm change that shakes up an industry (as discussed in a telephone call yesterday)?

I had racked my brains for a while to find a simple way to describe my thinking and this week, *inspiration struck*. For some reason, my computer started playing music tracks at random (I suspect childish fingers at work).

Suddenly, I had the soprano of La Bohème fading in to James Morrison, followed by a snatch of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, leading in to a (surprisingly catchy) rap song my son had downloaded. The thing was, it worked; they segued in to each other with a few rough edges.

The inspiration was that if we equate music to innovation, there is no need to differentiate. Whether it is a thirty second advertising jingle,

the theme tune to a TV series, a three minute pop song or Beethoven's 9th, it is all music.

SO

Let's play with the metaphor of music here. As creative leaders, let's not waste time arguing whether this is music or that is music. Good jingles can launch products in to popular culture; the writers of the *Neighbours'* (Australian soap opera) theme tune have made a fortune and Beethoven has inspired millions. There is, however, a difference in scale, capability and appropriateness.

Let's discuss these three factors:

SCALE

One person in the marketing department can create a metaphorical jingle on a £50 keyboard. Beethoven's 9th will need somewhat larger resources from the senior management team. It will probably need some of your star players, selected, additional players and a concert hall.

CAPABILITY

It would be somewhat daunting for the new junior to hear that you want them to create Beethoven's 9th. Teach them to compose and build their confidence to write jingles; this might lead them to co-create a symphony one day. In the meantime, they might delight you with the business equivalent of Neighbours.

APPROPRIATENESS

In the music world there is a lot of annoying jingles, banal TV themes and turgid symphonies. You have to sift through them to find the hits. That's life. Many of the hits would not exist without the duds.

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 123

The creative leader's role is to foster an environment where people create music, develop an organisational playlist to guide them and create a system that spotlights the hits and gently but firmly, dims the rest.

In conclusion, we can waste a lot of energy debating what innovation is. It is better to:

- Recognise and facilitate different scales of innovation
- Build the capability and encourage people to innovate at all scales
- Implement approaches to develop and use the metaphorical jingles, pop tunes and symphonies

ACTION

Take my metaphorical piece and translate it in to a literal plan of action for your organisation. How can you get your team or organisation to produce sweet music?

TO CLOSE

My daughter was practising on the piano the other day. She was repeating a refrain that I really enjoyed. In fact, I liked it so much, I went to ask her who the composer was. "Oh, it's something I am trying to compose for my exam," she said.

On one hand, I was pleased that she had composed this, on the other I was disappointed that I couldn't download it on iTunes and hear the entire piece. All I could do was to encourage her to finish it.

In a way, isn't that what we have to do as creative leaders? Spot glimmers of innovation, give them a warm breath of encouragement and some fuel (piano lessons) and hope for a raging success!

John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.



We facilitate leaders and teams in medium to large organisations internationally to:

- *Make Meetings Outstanding*
- *Make Transformation Simpler*
- *Make Innov8ion Flow*

Imagine what we can do for you...

Contact John or Kate Brooker:

Speak: +44 (0) 20 8869 9990

Write: hi@yesand.eu

Read: www.yesand.eu