

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 20

You should aim to obtain the right balance of operation and innovation...

Balance operation and innovation...

"This coffee plunges in to the stomach.... the mind is aroused and ideas pour forth like the battalions of the Grand Army on the field of battle. Memories charge at full gallop... the Light Cavalry of comparisons deploys itself magnificently, the artillery of logic hurries in with their train of ammunition and flashes of wit pop up like sharp shooters." Honore de Balzac, Author and Journalist

"So was that decaff you had then, Honore?" John Brooker



"A bit less caffeine in the next one please"

Is your organisation balancing operation and innovation correctly?

In my office I start up my brand new (expensive) computer. It has a noisy fan. Box it up and return it. Fan replaced, I fire it up. No sound and the memory reader doesn't work. I wonder at the money they spend on advertising when they can't get the basics right.

In my car I drive in to a motorway service station to buy a coffee. The billboard advert extol the virtues of their Italian coffee. "A decaff coffee to take away please."

"Sorry" says the lady behind the counter, "we haven't got any lids." "No lids?" I reply, bemused.

"No, we've only got six cups left too." I think she is proud of that.

Pushed for time and not wanting hot coffee in my lap, I leave without coffee and muse on the logistical planning that leaves a coffee store without the basic needs to trade.

After twenty articles, most of you will realise I am a raving fan of creative thinking and innovation. But as I drove away in the car I would have swapped any amount of creative thinking for some good operational planning and a coffee. And the thought struck me, "Yes, creativity is great - but it is no good unless you get the basics right".

That thought occupied me for quite a while. The danger is, if you just focus on the basics, you end up looking like your competitors.

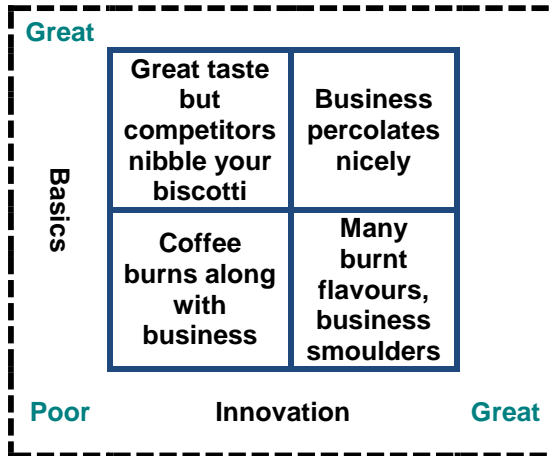
SO

In any organisation, do you agree we have to strike the right balance between getting the basics right and being creative and innovative?

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As I write, the idea comes to mind for a 2 x 2 explanatory matrix based on coffee.

The sceptical will say that any concept you can explain with a 2 x 2 matrix doesn't need a model to explain it, but humour me, it's a bit of fun.



Essentially, the model shows that too much focus on one or the other axes leads to poor results. You have to innovate and get the basics right.

ACTION

Think about your organisation or business. Is it getting the balance right between the basics and innovation? Is it bubbling along nicely or leaving a bitter taste in the customer's mouth? What might you do to get in to the top right quadrant?

TO CLOSE

For my quotation this week I intended to use one on "balance" by Euripides, but came across the quotation above by Balzac, full of illuminating metaphor.

Read it again and enjoy how well it describes the mind when it has absolute clarity and you are at your creative best. Of course like all metaphors it overlooks some factors, like having the shakes and waking up at 3.00 A.M. from a caffeine overdose, but hey, it is picturesque.

May your biscotti not be nibbled!

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