

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 52

Could the predominant style in an organisation may influence the type of innovation that it develops

Match Style to Organisational Innovation

"Innovation! One cannot be forever innovating. I want to create classics." Coco Chanel



"I like disruptive innovation"

Could the predominant style of innovation in your organisation influence the type of innovation it develops?

This weekend, I was a co-tutor at an Open University (OU) MBA Alumni Masterclass weekend on People, Innovation and Change.

We had a brilliant time (I love this job!), the group were great and all the speakers were first class. One speaker, James Fleck, (Dean & Professor of Innovation Dynamics at the OU Business School, UK) distinguished between three types of innovation (with thanks to Wikipedia):

Incremental Innovation ~ making minor changes over time to sustain the growth of a company without making sweeping changes to product lines, services or markets in which

competition currently exists (source: Boston Consulting Group)

Radical Innovation ~ a new product or service that is based on a substantially superior technology than the dominant one used by products or services in the market and offers substantially superior benefits than existing products or services in the market (source: Chandy, Rajesh and Gerard J. Tellis (1998), "Organizing For Radical Product Innovation," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 35 (November), pp 474-487)

Disruptive Innovation ~ a technological innovation, product or service that eventually overturns the existing dominant technology or product in the market e.g. the compact disk replacing the vinyl record (please click [here](#) for a good overview of disruptive innovation)

Apart from wondering whether a Dyson cleaner is a form of "radical incrementalism" the Professor set me thinking...

[Min Basadur](#), Professor of Innovation at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada, (see) has a style profile in which he identifies four styles:

Generator ~ Creates options in the form of new possibilities or new problems the organisation might solve and new opportunities that might be capitalized on

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Conceptualizer ~ Creates options in the form of alternate ways to understand and define a problem or opportunity and good ideas that help solve it

Optimizer ~ Creates options in the form of ways to get an idea to work in practice and uncovering all of the factors that go into a successful implementation plan

Implementer ~ Creates options in the form of actions that get results and gain acceptance for implementing a change or a new idea

Each of us has a blend of each style, typically with a dominant and secondary style. A study of an organisation can reveal the split of people with each different style and identify the “dominant” style.

Professor Fleck’s presentation set me thinking whether there is a correlation between the dominant style of innovation in an organisation and the type of innovation it produces.

SO

Would an organisation that consists predominantly of Optimisers be more likely to develop Incremental Innovations?

Would a “Conceptualiser organisation” develop Radical Innovations and would a “Generator organisation” be more likely to develop “Disruptive Innovations?”

I am assuming that Implementers would be at the forefront of implementing any of these types of innovation.

ACTION

I’d welcome your thoughts on the above. Have you any evidence that this might be the case?

If you would like to profile your team or your organisation, please contact me to discuss workshops we can run.

TO CLOSE

I attended a funeral service on Friday. Just before we sang the last hymn, there was a power cut, the lights went out and the organist said, “I’m sorry but the organ isn’t working, I’ll lead you shall I?”

He jumped up and with a fine voice led the gathering in a rousing rendition of “Amazing Grace”. A case of disruptive technology outwitted by a conceptualiser, I wonder?

May you have a week of radical thinking and incremental happiness.

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