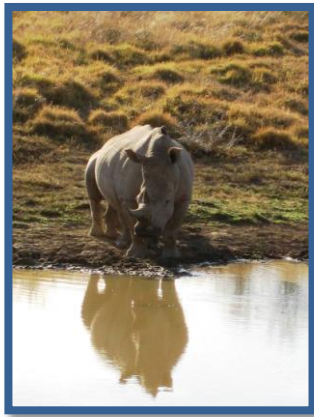


YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 68

If we are careful about the rules and policies we set, we can help stimulate innovation...

Encourage creative people...

“As innovation is hard to micromanage, the best policy is to attract smart people and get out of their way!” Edward L. Glaeser ~ Glimp Professor of Economics and director of the Rappaport Institute at Harvard University



“Get out of their light”

Are you getting out of the way of your smart people?

Taking a paddle on the Internet recently (at my line speeds it's hardly surfing), I found an article in the Boston Globe by Edward Glaeser, a Professor of Economics at Harvard University. In the article he outlines how Massachusetts might reinvent itself again and how the state government could help or hinder this.

His driving idea is that the government should have policies to attract smart and talented people and then get out of their way so that they can innovate. Unfortunately recent government policy has had the reverse effect.

They introduced onerous business regulations that deterred organisations from setting up in the state and heavy taxation for high earners, which drove them away.

It reminded me of a workshop that I ran which we designed to encourage individuals to be more innovative. It was a young, enthusiastic and talented group and a significant number cited company rules and bureaucracy as a deterrent to their innovation, this in a company that positively encourages innovation!

SO

If you work in an organisation, it probably invests a great deal to attract, keep and develop talented staff. Unfortunately, it doesn't cost much to set up the needless rules and policies that then drive them out. For example, yesterday, a friend told me that his company's travel policy changed so that they couldn't use British Airways. Consequently, a business trip to the south of France (normally 30 minutes to Gatwick and a direct 90 minute flight) took 13 hours, from London City, via Paris and two internal stops. The policy wasted 9 man hours

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but saved a few pounds on the air fare, a good result, for the person who developed it!

Why is it when people come up with a creative idea, senior management requires a business plan and a set of financials to consider it, but when someone introduces a new rule or policy it gets waved through?

True, there are risks in organisations and some industries are heavily regulated, but how many rules are there which could simply have “because we don’t trust you” appended to them?

ACTION

John Gardner (an educator) said “...One of the best things we can do for creative men and women is to stand out of their light”. As it appears one of the big clouds over innovation can be rules and policies, here’s a creative thought for you if you are in management. Set up a team to look at the rules and policies in your company and have them answer three questions:

“If we trusted people, would we have this rule?”

“Who benefits from this rule or policy?”

“How much is this rule or policy costing us in hidden costs?”

TO CLOSE

My nine year old son recently mentioned that when he was younger, he used to think that you put your hands together and point your fingers up when praying because it sent your prayers straight up to Heaven. Now that’s a way to by pass bureaucracy and get your message to the top!

Have a rule breaking week.

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