

Management of Innovation Examen Paper

“A system is an organized and connected group of things that are associated in such a way that, according to Aristotle, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006, p. 17)

When an organization is viewed in terms of its innovation maturity it is easy to see whether that organization is functioning in silos, that is to say functionally bound and stuck, or whether it has moved forward in terms of its ability to take a more systemic approach to innovation. One might ask why it is so important to take this systemic approach to innovation, the answer being that for an organization to fulfill the innovation equation there must be cohesion of those who create, and those who commercialize. While commercialization and creativity are important as multipliers of each other, Whatley (2008) asserts that the most influential aspect of the equation is the quotient of intellect, in its various forms. In this paper, I will first discuss the ways in which the intellect factor of the innovation equation, as well as the systemic/ecosystem approach to innovation management, are crucial to creating an organizational community and climate for innovation. Next, a few of the seven principles of management of innovation, proposed by Shelton, Epstein and Davila, will be discussed in terms of how they apply to creating the climate for innovation to occur. Finally, the impact these lessons will have on both my career and personal future will be reflected upon.

Whatley (2008) proposes that an organization is an ecosystem, where employees exert influence on their environment, and where the organizational environment exerts influence on employees. As a result of this interactive system, an organizational climate is created, which can either help or hinder the innovation efforts of the organization. The most important facet of this climate is that it must create the systemic sense of community required for innovation to not only occur, but to occur across functional boundaries and drive the organization to a higher level of

innovation maturity (Whatley, 2008, Personal communication). Although at higher levels of the innovation maturity spectrum it is proposed that every employee creates this climate of community, in order to reach this stage of the maturity lifecycle, leaders need to display various forms of intellect (the quotient of the innovation equation) in order to create a positive, community climate. At the outset of this course, I was familiar only with knowledge based intellect, or IQ. The introduction of spiritual intellect (SQ), moral intellect (MQ) and emotional intellect (EQ) changed the lens through which I view the role of leadership, the innovation process and the values I place on each form of intellect. In terms of innovation, it becomes clear why intellect acts as the quotient to the equation, because the combination of the various forms of intellect used by management impact upon how employees innovate and then commercialize ideas, based on the climate that is created. If leaders only look at IQ, as I did at the outset of the course, their innovation efforts will be negatively influenced by the narrow lens that sees only the IQ-intelligent people of R&D as the source of innovation for the organization.

While the innovation equation, with intellect as a quotient, asserted by Whatley (2008) offers us a wider lens through which to view innovation, Shelton, Epstein and Davila's (2005) seven principles of innovation management offer organizations a road map of how to get from a position of silos to the alliance based network that indicates transcendence (Whatley, 2008, Personal communication). In particular, the importance of making innovation central to the existence of the organization, thus embedding it in the climate, is discussed. Shelton, Epstein and Davila denote the view that innovation comprises not only R&D and New Product Development, but also the management, technology and business model, thus necessitating a systemic view of the innovation process. Another principle, that the company must rid itself of the antibodies that hinder change efforts, is also pertinent. This speaks to creating the

appropriate climate for innovation, in which ideas are not ignored because of the mentality of that not being what the company does. A memorable example is that of Xerox, who invented Ethernet but did not commercialize on it because they felt they were only in the business of photocopiers (Isaksen and Tidd, 2006). This shows silo thinking, and an organization that is at an infancy of innovation maturity. It also shows that it is most often leaders who act as antibodies to innovation. As I go forward, I will look through a different lens as a leader, and consciously foster an innovation climate, instead of being an antibody to change.

At the outset of this course I was very much a *silo-thinker*. The major personal impact of this course on me is that I realize it is not only top management and R&D that are responsible for or capable of managing the innovation efforts of the organization. For an organization to truly transcend it must make innovation the business of all of its employees. In addition, when I look at the innovation equation with intellect as a quotient, I now realize that true intellect is not only learned from the classroom, but that it involves taking a systemic approach to life. What I mean by that is EQ, MQ and SQ are not developed in the classroom or the boardroom, but through life experiences and how one reacts to those experiences. These forms of intellect have value in business, because they shape and guide climate. As a future leader, this means ensuring that I have developed these various forms of intellect in order to view the world through a wider lens. Finally, the importance of not ignoring opportunity because of silo or narrow-lens thinking will continue to affect my career and personal life. On a both a personal and career level, this means that when I am faced with an opportunity to change I will not be Xerox, and pass it up because it might not be what I normally do. The true value of this course for me is that it has widened the lens through which I view the world, thus making me think more critically about the actions I take with regard to change.

References

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