

'INNOVATION NEVER STOPS' WORKSHOP



Our signature one day course, first delivered over ten years ago, it is continually updated as new thinking emerges in the fast moving body of knowledge that is innovation. It addresses strategy, process and culture and has been provided in continents from Asia to Europe to the Americas. Peter Merrill's book 'Innovation Never Stops' is provided as the text book for this workshop.


Peter Merrill

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1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation is the only strategy by which an organization can differentiate itself in the long term. This is because the world is changing so fast through technology, the market place and our demographics. We respond to change through innovation. Conventional thinking is that innovation is magic but innovation has a process. Many think technology drives innovation but convenience drives innovation. We saw this in the move from photographic film to digital photography and from notebook computers to handheld devices. 'Fear of failure' inhibits innovation, as does short term ROI, and the absence of a creative and innovative culture.

Workshop; 'Assessment of Innovation Concerns and Opportunities'

2. AN INNOVATION CULTURE

Knowledge is the fuel of innovation and an innovative culture releases knowledge. For most of us, innovation requires a change in culture. Workshop Participants identify how to make their own best personal contribution to innovation. For success, you need a 'mix' of people. A creative culture involves exploration where we 'step out of the box' and gain new learning. It involves collaboration in which we interact with people 'different' from ourselves and experimentation with a willingness to fail and find new solutions.

Workshop; 'How you will make the best contribution to Innovation'

3. THE CREATIVITY CHALLENGE

Creativity is the ability to produce new ideas through imagination and unconventional approaches. It occurs when people have freedom to think. The first step in the innovation process is finding the opportunity through open networks for sharing knowledge. We need to understand the customers mind. We don't ask 'what new product are you looking for', instead we ask 'what are you having trouble getting done? The next step in the creative phase is connecting to the conceptual solution. Success comes from having a clear problem definition. 'Ideation' techniques are practiced and techniques such as clustering, and brainwriting are explained.

Workshop; 'How to identify Innovation Opportunities and Solutions'

4. STRATEGIC CHOICES

This is the 'Tipping Point' and so far we have a People Investment but not major financial Investment. Common failings now are to pursue too many options and "under resource", kill the best ideas with aggressive ROI or to assess risk internally and not externally. We must especially manage External Risk with Partners. We now select ideas in which to invest Resources We need Risk Data to make decisions and also need to understand the core competencies of the business. You learn Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation for new ideas. We Balance Risk against ROI, Time to Execute and the Radical Nature of the new offering. We must encourage 'risk taking' and be willing to fail. The innovators maxim is 'fail early.

'Workshop; 'Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation'

5. EXECUTING THE STRATEGY

The process now switches from loose to tight and the game changes. We narrow focus and move with speed. Leadership must monitor this change in behavior and have regular review meetings of the strategy selections checking ROI and Risk in the portfolio. The development mission is to make the solution "user friendly". For 3000 ideas only 1 makes it. Delivering the solution will be successful if we involve operations and sales in the earlier stages. Advance notice is their biggest advantage. Delivery risk revolves around revenue being held back by customer adoption cycles and distributor decision cycle. We need a 'value proposition' for the offering and to switch our thinking from 'features' to 'benefits'

Workshop; 'Importance of changing culture from 'loose' to 'tight' in order to execute with speed'

6. THE INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION

Traditional structure is the military model or more recently the process approach. The creative organization requires a network. We reduce hierarchy, increase autonomy and encourage diversity. The open networks in the creative phase is for sharing knowledge. The closed network in the execution phase is for getting results. This forms more easily as people gravitate to similar backgrounds and there is a high level of trust and collaboration. You learn about the different kind of organizational structure that is needed to lead to the creation of breakthrough innovation. You evaluate 'how good is my organization at innovation?'

Workshop; 'evaluate innovative strengths and weaknesses of your organization'

7. THE PATH FORWARD

A mind map of innovation strategy points to strategy traps and how they should be avoided. The roadmap for change emphasizes the need for the innovation strategy to achieve a 'short term win'. The key aspects of culture, organization structure, the innovation process and the alignment of team and process are summarized. Research has shown that companies with 'radical innovations' generate ten times more shareholder value in an IPO. A survey by a large financial institution has shown that companies that commercialize patents fast outperform the market by 1000% over ten years. You are encouraged to take the first steps on the path forward and identify individual aptitudes, assess your organization, form the team and execute a project. If you truly innovate you enter a market that has no competition and price is not an issue. You have a great sense of personal achievement.

Workshop; Action Plan

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