



PROFESSIONAL Tips

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What's the Difference between Creativity and Innovation?

Discussions about innovation are often made difficult because people are unclear about the exact meanings of some key terms. In particular there is confusion about the difference between creativity, innovation and invention.

Creativity is the capability or act of conceiving something original or unusual.

Innovation is the implementation of something new.

Invention is the creation of something that has never been made before and is recognized as the product of some unique insight.

If you have a brainstorm meeting and dream up dozens of new ideas then you have displayed creativity but there is no innovation until something gets implemented. Somebody has to take a risk and deliver something for a creative idea to be turned into an innovation. An invention might be a product or device or method that has never existed before. So every invention is an innovation. But every innovation is not an invention.

We tend to think of an innovation as a new product but you can innovate with a new process, method, business model, partnership, route to market or marketing method. Indeed every aspect of your business operation is a candidate for innovation. Peter Drucker said, '*Every organisation must prepare for the abandonment of everything it does.*' So do not restrict your vision of innovation to products. Some of the most powerful innovations you can make are in business methods and customer services.

Innovations can be incremental or radical. Every improvement that you make in products or services can be seen as an incremental innovation. Most businesses and most managers are good at incremental innovation. They see problems in the current set-up and they fix them. Radical innovations involve finding an entirely new way to do things. As such they are often risky and difficult to implement. Most larger organisations and most managers are poor at radical innovation. So we need to constantly look for incremental innovations and radical innovations. We need to develop creativity and turn it quickly into innovation.

Posted on **August 4, 2012** by **Paul Sloane**, (Abridged version).

P.T.O.

The story below reflects one of the simplest real life situations triggered by creativity and innovation.

Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said: "**I am blind, please help.**" There were only a few coins in the hat.

A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." What he had written was: "**Today is a beautiful day and I cannot see it.**"

Do you think the first sign and the second sign were saying the same thing?

Of course both signs told people the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively.