

Volume XIII
Fall 2002

Creativity, Invention and Innovation: A Corporate Inventor's Perspective

By
Art Fry

“Whether you believe you can, or whether you believe you can't, you're absolutely right.”

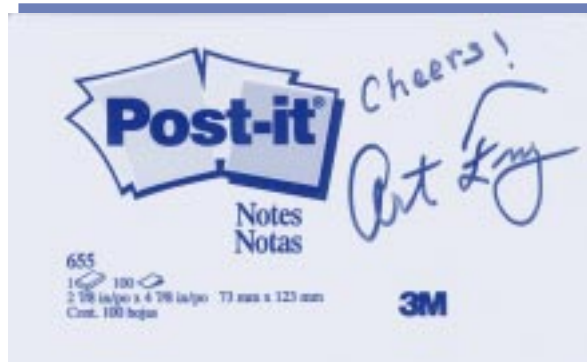
Henry Ford

In February 2002, I was invited to attend the CPSB forum entitled “The Spirit of Invention.” I was asked to give a speech that focused on my experiences and insights as an inventor in a large company. I attended a majority of the forum and can say it was an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for me. There were many rich and lasting connections I made with an array of dynamic people, who all had an interest in creativity. I was especially pleased to hear the presentation of another inventor, Dr. Wilson Greatbatch, and to be able to connect with him as an engineer, inventor and dreamer.

I was introduced to the individuals of CPSB through Kimberly Johnson who is one of my co-workers at 3M. She has been qualified to use the creative climate instrument known as the SOQ. Kim is one of the true creative sparks inside 3M today. I am glad we have been able to share our thoughts and experiences with each other through the last half dozen years. Plus, she likes my omelets!

Through this article I'd like to share

my personal views on the process of creativity, invention and innovation. A broad set of topics which others have written books about! As such I will continue this topic in a future issue of the Communiqué.



An Inventor's Beliefs

In developing my presentation for the forum, I went back over my experiences and thought about what some of the drivers of my career in 3M

had been. From this collage of thoughts,

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feelings, learnings, and experiences I then tried to look at the essence of what invention is and why I, individuals in 3M, and perhaps individuals throughout the world choose to invent.

In this article, I will discuss the fact that to have successful inventions, you have to do things for the “Right Reasons”. “Right Reasons” can involve spirituality or moral principles or the fact that a successful society is based on people who are mutually dependent on each other. People who must operate with a balance of consideration of the needs of others as well as self-interest. A dynamic balance, but one that must be maintained. My experience shows that systems fail when they get out of balance. Corporations fail when they lose their wisdom and forget to balance innovation and daily operations. You begin a slippery slope when today’s profits take precedence to investing in the future, or when you take the customer for granted and you expect him to buy what you want to sell, rather than what he really needs.

In my mind, a productive way to begin my speech on my personal views of creativity was to first look at my perspectives on humanity in general and the relationship we have to our world. It is my belief that all species have had to evolve and adapt to find some niche in the world that they can inhabit. It takes hundreds of thousands of years for other animals to evolve and adapt their bodies to inhabit a new domain. For example, longer hair, fur or body fat that makes it possible to live in colder regions of the globe; different digestive systems to eat different foods that must be obtained in different ways are examples of ways animals change. Long necks on giraffes to reach tree leaves or the long fangs and claws of lions to capture and kill prey are other examples.

Before I go further, I should probably provide a bit of explanation as to what I mean by the words adaptation and evolution. To me, adaptation is the change a species makes to fit into different environmental conditions. It is a change of

structures, forms, or habits to suit environmental conditions. Adaptations can be inherited within a species and promote increased rates of reproduction and survival. Individual organisms may adapt, but it is more common for it to occur over a couple of generations. To me, evolution is a change in the properties of populations of organisms that always transcends the lifetime of a single individual. Adaptations promote evolution because those that survive produce offspring that naturally use the adaptations and build upon them.

Humans are the most adaptable of all species on earth. We survive in the world through adaptation. Over thousands of years our brains have

To me, humans are symbiotic beings that are dependent upon each other and the other creatures and resources of this planet.

evolved to the point that now our brains and minds rather than our bodies can adapt to living and obtaining food in most places on the earth. We make clothes to protect us

from the cold. In previous centuries, we made tools, like spears and guns to make up for weak bodies and lack of teeth and claws. Perhaps most importantly, we learned complicated communication patterns that allow us to form coalitions to do things as a group that we cannot do individually.

To me, humans are symbiotic beings that are dependent upon each other and the other creatures and resources of this planet. As humans we are social beings and we ‘group’ in a number of ways that include families, tribes, teams, organizations and social or legal institutions such as marriage and partnerships. It is through communication that our minds have been able to evolve as we create and pass new knowledge from one generation to the next.

It is my belief that humans are also evolutionary creatures. As evolutionary creatures, we have a natural disposition to be able to adapt to our surroundings while at the same time we attempt to control and modify it to be more tolerable for us and to ensure our survival now and especially for our children. We do this through our capability to be creative, innovative and ultimately as inventors of newness designed to fulfill a dream, address a

challenge, solve a problem or realize an opportunity. These are the “Right Reasons” to invent since they lead to a better society and world when they are based upon the desire to help and not hurt other humans.

Now I’m sure natural and social scientists (e.g., Paul R. Ehrlich, Robert Carneiro, Edward O. Wilson, Gregory Bateson, Barry Lopez, Murray Gell-Mann, etc.) could provide a richer or more eloquent summary of these thoughts about adaptation and evolution. Simple as they are, however, these are the thoughts and beliefs that have helped me understand my purpose and worth in this world and have created my ability to survive through adaptation.

Post-it® Notes

I know most of the people reading this article have never met me, but we have had a relationship. I may have invented Post-it® Notes, but if individuals like you hadn’t started using them, they would just be a lab curiosity and not the office tool that they are today. To me, Post-it® Notes were a product innovation. They were developed from a commingled knowledge of four areas (i.e., paper, tape, adhesives and process equipment design) which I had gained in previous programs that had either failed or met with limited success. I was able to combine these into what you now know as Post-it® Notes. They became a new tool for you to use. They let you do things like organize, remind, and communicate with greater simplicity and reliability than before. Thus, it allows you to be more effective and yes, I could mark my hymnal easier! Even though we work in teams, and a large team of people was needed to make Post-it® Notes a commercial success, creative ideas still come from individual minds and are the product of the diverse knowledge of the individual. The barriers that stood in our way meant that many people were able to offer creative ideas to carry out their part of the program.

Now let’s move to my definitions of creativity, invention and innovation. So are Post-it® Notes a creation, an invention or an innovation? To me they are all three and let me explain by first providing you my personal and working definition of these three concepts.

What Is the Difference Between Creativity, Invention and Innovation?

As I define it, successful creativity produces ideas that are novel, appealing, useful and communicated to others. Creativity is where an individual visualizes a new pattern in their mind. The mind can recognize undiscovered patterns that were there all along, or generate new patterns that create the basis for a new product or service. It is the ability of humans to then communicate these patterns to other humans.

When I had the idea for making a bookmark while singing in the church choir, it was a creative

Attend The Next Forum!

For the last ten years CPSB has had the extreme pleasure of hosting an annual learning event we call a Forum. We started offering programs in Sarasota in February in 1991 and our first Forum was held in 1992 as a small informal group meeting. Being from the Northern USA this was a particularly good time to go south for the warmth of our friendships with Dr. Treffinger and Dr. Noller and to avoid the winter doldrums.

The Forum is a unique opportunity to learn about various topics related to creativity and innovation with and from individuals who have rich experience and interest in the field. The theme of the 2003 Forum allows for exploring a few new methods, sharing lessons from experience, and learning and exchanging ideas on cutting-edge research. Space is limited so early registration is recommended.

Meeting the Innovation Challenge

February 6 and 7, 2003

The Lido Holiday Inn

Sarasota, Florida

\$750 (registration includes some meals and materials)

Interested in becoming qualified to use the VIEW assessment of Problem Solving Style? The two days just before our Forum provides you just that opportunity. For more information on VIEW see pages 24-25.

VIEW Qualification Course

February 4 and 5, 2003

The Lido Holiday Inn

Sarasota, Florida

\$650 (registration includes lunch and course materials)

Special Offer: If you would like to attend the VIEW qualification course and the Forum, you can register for both events for \$1050 (a \$ 350 savings!).

idea, but not an innovation. Typically, creativity is a fuzzy idea and can't be clarified until it is made into a prototype, where you can touch it and test it and show it to others. At this point the creation becomes an invention. Thus, I define invention as the stage where a creative idea has been reduced to practice.

When I made samples of bookmarks, gave them to others to use, and had tested them carefully; when we put them on the store shelves for sale, they were still not an innovation. They only became an innovation when people like yourself, bought a pad, used it up, and bought a second pad. By then you had changed your habit pattern and adopted it into your life.

People hate to change. However, innovation is about changing a pattern for doing something. We work very hard and study a long time to learn patterns. Sometimes we follow them even when a better plan or innovation is right there for us to use. We only change when the perceived pain level gets high enough.

Innovation is a new pattern or path or even paradigm that is adopted by an individual or a society. It is where the customers change their old patterns and use the new product. It can be an established pattern that you adopt. A path that was right there all along, but it was new for you and an innovation in your life. A new product that you start using, like Post-it® Notes. You become part of the innovation. It can be a new course that changes your work. A new pattern that you create that may affect only you or your peers. Where you encounter and solve a problem that everyone else stepped around, because it took extra effort to fix. A new pattern that affects the lives of many people. This can be something that an individual does, or most often, the work of a group of people, —working in concert— infected with the same vision and goal.

For 3M, innovation is the act of working through all of the obstacles and problems in the

path of turning a creative idea into a business. It is complete only when everyone affected by it has worked through their problems. This means raw material suppliers, 3M management, the distributor chain, and the customers. This can mean a lot of learning and hard work for everyone concerned. Creativity is that 1% inspiration that Thomas Edison spoke of and invention and innovation are the 99% perspiration. There must be barriers for the customers and we must have ways to overcome them.

What we sell is our skill in overcoming barriers. Barriers for others become our strength.



Both as corporations and as individuals, we make a living by supplying products or skills that are valuable to our customers. If it were easy, our customers would do it themselves. The more difficult or undesirable the task, the greater the reward. We may be the first to do something, but if it is easy, we just invite a lot of competition. The trick then is to make

products with barriers we can get over but our customers or competitors can't.

Innovation Wisdom

You are involved with innovation in one way or another, and it is only natural to be curious about other innovators. "What are the lessons that they learned? How can I use those lessons to solve my problems? Is there a way to become a more successful innovator?" So perhaps one of the reasons you are reading this article is to gain new information about trends or opportunities or land mines to avoid. You are reading this, perhaps, with the hope of gaining wisdom. You know that life in general and management in particular demands wisdom.

To me wisdom is the ability to see the connections between things that you previously thought were not connected. We see that something we do for good reasons, can have unexpected good or bad effects on other things.

Sharing that wisdom helps others to replicate the good decisions or helps them to not make the same mistakes. It is easy to make decisions if you are a zealot or a fundamentalist or an imbecile.

Wise decisions require careful consideration from different viewpoints. Wisdom requires broad knowledge for an individual, but some of the things we deal with are so complex that we need the communicated and collective wisdom of other people.

Business Wisdom

Not that I will dispense wisdom to you in this article so much as I will provide some tools for you to make wise decisions as they relate to creativity, innovation, and invention. First I ask the questions: Why are we in business? Why do we invent things? Why innovate?

I will begin answering these questions by mentioning a couple of business basics that you all know, but which often get overlooked when folks focus on their own specialized thing. The first basic, as I mentioned earlier, is that humans are symbiotic beings, dependent on one another and on the other creatures and resources of this planet. We live and flourish in a symbiotic society. Competition is insignificant as compared to our symbiotic networks. We rely on other people to provide products and services we could not possibly do for ourselves. Will Rogers once stated that “We are all ignorant. Just on different subjects”. We all depend on other people, that for the most part, we do not even know. They give us our quality of life. Our safety is in their hands. This is evident in the fact that when I was first asked to write about innovation, I called our CEO and asked if it was OK if I spoke about the culture of 3M that promotes innovation. He said, “Certainly!”

The second business basic is that we all make a living by producing a product or service that customers will buy. Products or services are purchased by customers because they fulfill a perceived need or overcome a pain they wish to remove from their life. Some products or services are too complex for one person to conceive of or produce, so we join together in corporations to make those products for the customers. For individuals and corporations, our income is from

customers who pay us for giving them the product or service they need. Our rewards come from the customer for giving him or her the right product. If someone else offers a better buy, they won't buy from us. If they could do it themselves, they wouldn't buy it from us.

When we work together to do complex tasks, it is easy to forget who the primary customer is and what the primary product is for them. The primary product is the one we sell to the primary customer. You may define your customer as the one you give your work to and the one you have to please to get a raise, but he or she is the secondary customer.

Sometimes corporations or individuals get so focused on making and selling their present products that they don't notice that customers' needs have changed and they require a different product or service. Individuals must innovate when they see changes that must be made in their work, and corporations must innovate to provide useful products to meet the changing needs of customers.

Summary

Through this article I have given you the basics and the framework that I use in my capacity as a corporate inventor. My beliefs as an inventor and my understanding of creativity, invention and innovation guide my work. As do my convictions regarding innovation wisdom, business wisdom and doing things for the “Right Reason”.

In part two of this article I will look at innovating and operating in a company. I'll also explore the importance of culture and how it supports innovation. Last, but not least, I'll look at innovators as leaders.

Author Information

Semi-retired, Art still keeps his hand in technology, networking and mentoring. He's become a spokesman both inside and outside of 3M on innovation and the company's unique culture. Art holds 3M's top technical title, corporate scientist. He has a unique perspective born of almost 40 years of experience developing new products for the 3M Company.

He is married and has three children and five grandchildren. Art lives in a St. Paul suburb and enjoys gardening, golf, tennis, skiing, cooking, reading, learning and of course inventing.

CPSB Incorporates

In conjunction with our 10th birthday in the fall of 2002, CPSB became a corporation. The reasons to do this were numerous, but we want to assure you that our dedication to our customers, friends and associates is the same. The major change you will see is that we have consolidated the names we use to designate our business. Now the only way you will see our name is as **The Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc.** or as **CPSB**.

Book Review

By Glenn Wilson

Dreyfus, L. (1996). *Bach and the patterns of invention*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. ISBN: 0-674-06005-9 / \$54.50 Amazon.com

In this book, the author analyzes numerous measures of music written by J. S. Bach and compares them to other composers of the time like Vivaldi, Ernst and Marchand. Many constraints imposed by the “style of the era” are addressed along with how Bach’s “personal style” was developed using “patterns of invention.” Invention in this context was defined as a “metaphor for the conceptual thematic idea that set the foundation behind a piece of music.”

Bach’s invention process (at least in part): used the initial bars of music to set the paradigm for the piece (vertical paradigm); replicated those bars throughout the piece (syntagm-a horizontal paradigm across time); varied and mutated the bars; and then connected the bars with highly novel adaptive content. This process also supports Bach’s interest in developing “all the possibilities” for a given set of notes (his patterns). So how did he get to this process?

I found it interesting that his process for invention may have been modeled on the strong tradition of homiletic sermon-“Not only was a Christian supposed to gloss a sacred text with an interpretation so as to reaffirm his belief, ... he was to search for an 'Application' relevant to the position of the interpreter³¹” (pg 242). Remembering the description above, Bach would set the foundation (initial bars) and then interpret his own work. His interpretations (looking for all the possibilities) found application in his music-for Bach “thinking in music was a necessary consequence of a belief in its divine origins” (pg 243).

Insights into: multiple stage compositional processes; the effects of tension between cultural and personal style; Bach’s flexibility in creating across a full spectrum of change; and invention abound. I have found this to be one of the most difficult reviews to write, not because the book intertwined the inseparable functions of people, process, products, and press, but of my space constraints. On every page, insights into Bach’s “patterns of invention” come alive!

If your preference is towards more mentally challenging readings over airplane books, this brilliant work is certainly for you!

WHAT'S HAPPENED...

Best wishes to Samantha Stead and K. Brian Dorval who are NOW married! They will be celebrating their one year anniversary this December. We all wish you peace and happiness in your life together.

We'd like to congratulate Priscilla Wolfe who has been chosen to head the new LDI (Leadership Development Institute) and the other members of the Blumberg Center at Indiana State University for all the ambitious work they are doing!

Erik got married! Erik Isaksen married Kristen M. Carlo in a small ceremony June 28, 2002. Erik and Kristen have an apartment near Fort Drum, NY. Erik is with the 10th Mountain Division of the US Army. Best wishes to the newlyweds!

Scott Isaksen, Don Treffinger, Brian Dorval, Barb Babij, Russ Ward and Ken Lauer designed and delivered four well received sessions at the 2002 Creative Problem Solving Institute in June. The sessions were titled Ethnography & CPS: Changing an Organization's NPD Process, Style & Leadership: Emerging Research, Supporting Organizational Transformation & Change: A new VIEW, and Emerging Developments & Applications in CPS. All these sessions focused on current research CPSB, CCL and the CRU are doing in the area of Organizational Climate, New Product Development, Leadership and Style of Creativity and Problem Solving.

CPSB would like to announce that Katleen Dethier, Rob Sheffield, Eric Cassells, Eddie Tsui and Renee Lau have completed requirements to be qualified CPSB Climate PractitionersSM. Eddie and Renee, who work with AMEX in Hong Kong, were the first individuals to complete the requirements through a distance learning format. Congratulations Katleen, Rob, Eric, Eddie, and Renee!

We often talk about how CPS 6.0 can be used to support other change methods. Two recent examples where that has been the case stem from Brian Dorval's work with Armstrong World Industries to support the training of Trailblazing (an internal problem-solving and change method that builds on the GE Workout program). He has also been providing training in facilitating CPS to support the use of Root MapsTM, a method developed by Root Learning, Inc.

Katleen Dethier is working at the main CPSB office as part of a cooperative venture between CPSB and CIC-Europe to strengthen their business and affiliate relationships. Katleen has worked on a variety of projects including the Client and Instrument databases. Thank you for all your help Katleen!

Keith Kaminski is engaged to Catherine Herr! The wedding is planned for June 27, 2003. Keith and Catherine currently live in Denver, Colorado. Best wishes on your engagement and a joyful life together!

Creative Problem Solving at the United Way

by

Karen Christie & Keith Kaminski

The United Way of Buffalo and Erie County has a vision. In our vision we will create a “Caring community with the highest quality of life in America.” The vision will be achieved through a careful focus on the mission of the organization: “To work in partnership with others to build a stronger community by developing resources that effectively meet human service needs through prevention and intervention programs.”

The United Way of Buffalo and Erie County is a member of the national organization. We have helped our community for over 80 years, through the generous support of literally thousands of individuals, corporations, labor unions, and foundations to furnish the tools needed to build and maintain a strong community.

The United Way has a proud history as a community-based, volunteer-led organization which is both a catalyst and participant in identifying and resolving our community’s health and human service challenges. Through the United Way’s Community Care Fund, donations are invested in programs that serve priority needs in the most effective, efficient way. United Way investments are reviewed and tracked to make sure they are making measurable progress towards specific goals developed by expert Investment Team volunteers from the community. Only programs that demonstrate results are funded. Over 90 cents of every United Way Community Care Fund dollar raised is invested into the community to build self-sufficiency, hope, supportive living situations, and a stronger community.

Over the past ten years, the organization has seen erosion in the funding given to the Community

Care Fund and an increase in donor-directed giving to specific agencies. The trend has impacted the ability of the United Way to reduce the most pressing problems in the community. This trend has required the United Way to critically review its mission and activities. The review resulted in a decision to strengthen the level of activity at the neighborhood level in the communities we serve. A revamped marketing message about the unique value of the Community Care Fund to the community as a whole, was an additional result.

How have the United Way and CPSB worked together? It all started back in June 2000 with an unusual request made to CPSB to moderate a community meeting for the Western New York chapter of the American Red Cross. There was a heavy debate between the surrounding community and the Red Cross regarding plans to remodel an unused part of their building into a temporary shelter to house fire victims. The particular issues of the debate are not important, except to note that one of the attendees was from the United Way. This person was sent to observe, since the Red Cross is headquartered next door to the United Way offices in Buffalo. Keith Kaminski moderated the community meeting with the charge to create a forum for both sides to have a voice (and not let things get out of hand). With a clear briefing on ground rules and strict management of process, a potentially volatile situation was tempered while still creating a forum for both sides to share their points of view.

The success of this meeting resulted in a request from the United Way President (since retired) to facilitate a retreat for a New York State education agency for which he was a board member. Again, positive feedback was received for the facilitator of the retreat,

CPSB Associate, John Gaulin.

Seeing the United Way as an organization that CPSB would be honored to serve, an invitation was offered to the United Way to have two of their people attend its Igniting Creative Potential course in November 2000. Karen Christie, Vice President

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of Human Resources and Operations, along with a regional director of Community Building, attended the course. In addition, Karen and her colleague offered a task upon which the course participants could practice their new Creative Problem Solving skills. The challenge focused on certain aspects of managing a major internal transition.

The long standing United Way President was due to retire and his successor had yet to be selected by the Board of Directors. The input to this challenge proved to be

very insightful and a few key elements were implemented to help manage the transition. Of particular interest was the idea of using the power of the “naysayers” to create a focus group of those who felt the changes were leading to disaster. This focus group provided a forum for them to express their concerns and develop responses which resulted in positive energy. A rumor control hotline was created where anyone could post a question or a concern anonymously and find the answer on the employee intranet within 24 hours. Karen and her colleague, being in key leadership positions within the United Way and having early success using CPS, could see the wide applicability it could have in the organization. The road was paved for working together in the future.

In April 2001, a customized, in-house, Igniting Creative Potential course was offered to a mix of community builders and internal staff. The folks attending this first course, work “in the trenches,” both with agencies externally and together internally, to make change happen. The course received a 4.6 rating out of 5.0 (a “1” rating means poor and a “5” rating means excellent). Getting impressive results on course feedback is one thing, however, the important questions that communicate benefits received from the training take time to answer. The key questions are:

- Will participants use their new skills?
- What will be the value add or impact as a result of the training?

In November 2001, we received some answers

to these key questions when we held a half-day CPS refresher workshop with the course participants. As part of the preparation, participants were asked to document their impact with CPS by writing short stories. We paused during the workshop to acknowledge and recognize those who took the time and energy to document the results they achieved.

So, what impact have course participants had with CPS? The results are pretty impressive. The following three case studies highlight some of the value add.

The issues were framed as “how to maintain and expand the success of 2000 within the environment of 2001.”

- A. One of the top corporate sponsors of the United Way was experiencing change from many different directions. The organization was going through merger talks and also renegotiating the labor contract with its union. The enthusiasm to support the United Way from the previous year carried over. However, it came as no surprise that this organization was off to a slow start with their donation campaign for 2001. Seeing the changing environment for this corporate sponsor as a key concern, the course participant who was close to the situation put these newly-acquired skills into high gear to attack the issues proactively.

The sponsor’s staff and United Way staff were brought together to work through this challenge. The issues were framed as “how to maintain and expand the success of 2000 within the environment of 2001.” The group generated ideas using Brainstorming with Post-its® and focused using Highlighting. Seven concepts emerged from the meeting, such as: improving logistics, increasing campaign visibility, and expanding education. When a concern was raised on one of the concepts, the ALUo (Advantages, Limitations, Unique Qualities, overcoming Limitations) tool was used to work it through. Each person was assigned a concept and specific actions were developed. The person facilitating didn’t stop when this initial meeting was over. There was continuous follow-up on the progress for each concept and additional check-in meetings were held. As a result of pre-planning, developing action plans, and following-up to drive implementation, this corporate sponsor achieved and surpassed the campaign goal from 2000.

B. On the related topic of fundraising, another trained facilitator received a call from the local Chamber of Commerce to facilitate a Board retreat to improve and enhance the Chamber's key activities for the year. The facilitator carefully designed nine short sessions to tackle each of the Chamber's activities such as a golf outing, dinner dance, auction, and business showcase. Teaming up with a fellow participant from the CPS course, Wandering Brainwriting was used to generate new ideas for each activity. Selecting Hits and Highlighting tools were used to focus on the ideas. Towards the end of the meeting, selected ideas were assigned to people in order to put them into action. Many of those ideas are well on their way to being successfully implemented. When asked about how the meeting was conducted, board members were pleased with the new approach, as they were able to really address issues and put them on the table. There was also a noticeable increase of engagement and smiles when compared with previous meetings.

As a result of this one meeting, the facilitator, who also worked in the Chamber's area, landed three new

As a result of this one meeting, the facilitator, who also worked in the Chamber's area, landed three new corporate accounts.

corporate accounts. These corporate accounts run internal campaigns for their employees to donate to the United Way. The funds earned from these three new accounts equal 39% of this person's yearly goal for new business. All three of these new accounts also have great potential for increasing their contributions in the years to come. Another benefit derived from the meeting was that the facilitator made a key contact with an influential member of the community. This contact has provided opportunities for growing additional business.

C. Last, but certainly not least, this story focuses on adding value to the community. Several schools within the City of Buffalo are experiencing low academic performance on statewide tests. These schools also happen to be located in neighborhoods with the highest levels of assault, teen pregnancy, asthma, and public assistance in the city. To address this pressing issue, the United Way, State, County, City, and Board of Education officials formed the, "Closing the Gap in Student Performance Initiative." This initiative utilizes a

full service school model, in which the school becomes a central point of delivery for education, physical health, mental health, youth development, and family support services. One component of implementing a full service school model involves addressing non-academic barriers to student performance. Two trained facilitators teamed up to help one school, of this six school initiative, do just that. The facilitator team worked with a diverse group of administrators, teachers, and parents to generate broad goals and opportunities associated with non-academic barriers.

Highlighting was used to focus on the large menu of options. Two key opportunities emerged from this CPS session – literacy at home and parental involvement in the school. Literacy at home was selected to work on first as many of the students' families have English as a second language, where speaking, reading, and writing in English are not strong. Without strong literacy skills at home, the student is missing an important resource for help and assistance with school work.

As a result of this diverse group having clear focus and support from the sponsoring officials, key grants were awarded within four months to coordinate existing literacy services to help the families of fifteen students. This coordination has helped to maximize the use of facilities and resources already available. For example, during the school day, parents can visit a facility run by the Boys and Girls Club (used for after school programs) to access tutors, computers, and other resources to help improve their language skills. Specific steps are also in place to further explore why parents are not involved with the school. Plans to start a similar approach with other schools are forming.

These are three examples of how CPS played a part in adding direct and indirect value to the Western New York community.

Using CPS 6.0 has enabled the United Way staff to work with key groups to design responses to the issues and problems facing each particular community group. The resulting action plans have significantly improved the chance of success

because of the thoughtful and careful process with which it was designed. The CPS process is applicable to a myriad of situations and provides the United Way with an opportunity to add value to any group process through its utilization.

What does the future hold? Success achieved to date forecasts continued use of CPS. As a matter of fact a program of the United Way, called The Not For Profit Resource Center, is currently exploring the use of CPS with individual agencies to enable them to ensure their own viability, and to utilize CPS with clients to increase treatment plan success.

At no time in recent history has the use of CPS been more necessary for the not-for-profit arena; traditional sources of revenue are collapsing, and the war on terrorism is profoundly affecting individuals and families. New responses that are novel and useful are critically needed to shape the future.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to acknowledge contributions from Suzette Hayes, Chris Leed, Melissa Mummery, AnnaLisa Prada, and April Rogers. Their stories and insights have made this article possible.

To learn more about the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County and to give on-line, visit www.uwbec.org.

Author Information

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Keith Kaminski is a former Program Manager for the Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. As a certified Foundations of CPS Trainer and Facilitator he delivered and supported many change management and product development projects. He currently resides in Denver, Colorado, where he is a manager for Advanced Exercise Equipment, Inc. By applying the same skills talked about in this article, the company's outlet center is enjoying over 30% growth in sales each month. Keith can be contacted at krkaminski@hotmail.com

What We've Learned

Beyond the story shared here about their experience at the United Way using CPS, the authors also wanted to share some facilitator tips. They hope these insights may help you someday!

- *Provide a clear and measurable outcome and clearly describe how you will achieve that outcome.* A few participants mentioned the importance of being clear and explicit. In one session, the group pushed back on the facilitator, as they did not want to generate ideas and then focus on a few in the same meeting. By being clear on the agenda up front, this tension could have been avoided.
- *Know when it is best not to facilitate.* In one project, the facilitator was also the expert from United Way, which proved to be very difficult. In the future, this person will seek another person to facilitate on this project, as she can add more value as a content expert.
- *Be deliberate when helping a group achieve consensus.* In one meeting, the facilitator did not anticipate the amount of time and energy needed for a group to come to a consensus. Some tools were used to help the group. However, it was acknowledged that pre-planning an approach to achieve consensus is critical.
- *Encourage fun and laughter when generating.* In one internal meeting where CPS was used, the atmosphere was very playful. Some of the best thinking was formed from combinations with silly comments. Hard work, getting results, and having fun can happen at the same time.



WHAT'S COMING UP...



The Center for Creative Learning and the Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. have announced the following dates for VIEW qualification courses.



Date	Location
Feb. 4-5, 2003	Sarasota, FL USA
March 10-11, 2003	London, UK
March 20-21, 2003	Brussels, Belgium
May 3-4, 2003	Sarasota, FL USA
July 29-30, 2003	Buffalo, NY USA
Sept. 25-26, 2003	Sarasota, FL USA

The Occupational Research Centre (www.kaicentre.com) has announced the schedule of KAI courses and workshops. If you are interested in becoming certified in the KAI or advancing your skills you might want to consider one of the following:

Date	Location	Event Name
Jan. 26-30, 2003	Missenden Abbey, Bucks UK	Certification Course
Apr. 27-May 1, 2003	ISU, Indianapolis USA	Certification Course
June 29-July 3, 2003	Missenden Abbey, Bucks UK	Certification Course
Sept. 28-Oct. 2, 2003	ISU, Indianapolis USA	Certification Course
Nov. 9-13, 2003	Missenden Abbey, Bucks UK	Certification Course

Contacts for the courses are:

UK-Rosanna, tel: 1 442 871200, email m.j.kirton@herts.ac.uk

USA-Dr. Priscilla Wolfe, tel: (812) 237-2830, email soewolf@befac.indstate.edu.



The Creativity and Innovation Center - Europe (CIC) has announced plans to host a VIEW qualification course in Brussels. The dates for this course are March 20-21, 2003. For information on this course or other CIC-Europe events contact Luc or Jan at info@cic-europe.be.



The Greenleaf Center's annual international conference on servant-leadership will be held June 5-7, 2003 in Indianapolis, IN. For more information please contact The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, 921 East 86th Street, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46240 USA: Phone: (317) 259-1241, Fax: (317) 259-0560; <http://greenleaf.org>.

WHAT'S COMING UP...



Indiana State University is hosting Igniting Creative Potential courses in June, 2003. The exact dates are still being worked out at this time but will be determined soon. These courses are licensed through CPSB. For further information, please contact Esther Summers at (812) 237-2842.



The Creative Education Foundation (CEF) has announced the dates for CPSI® (Creative Problem Solving Institute®) Winterfest 2003. The dates are February 5-9, 2003. It will be held at the Red Lion Hanalei in San Diego, California USA. The dates for the CPSI Summerfest are June 22-27, 2003. For more information on either event please contact CEF at 1 (800) 447-2774 or go to the web site www.cef-cpsi.org.

The Creativity and Innovation Center - Europe (CIC), Van der Meer & van Tilburg and the Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. have announced they are conducting a joint Igniting Creative Potential course in Brussels, Belgium. The course will be held from Dec. 10 to 13, 2002. For information on this course contact Luc or Jan at info@cic-europe.be. or Han Van der Meer at <http://www.innovation.nl/> tel: 053-4323000 fax: 053-4338465, E-mail: Enschede@innovation.nl



If you have information on an upcoming event, conference, or course that you think would be of interest to your fellow readers, please submit it to: Upcoming Events, Attn: Communiqué Editor, 1325 North Forest Road, Suite 340, Williamsville, NY 14221. The email address is cpsb@cpsb.com.

Igniting Creative Potential™ –

This four-day course combines our Foundations of CPS™ and CPS Facilitator Development™ with change – including easy-to-use tools, a flexible framework, and powerful language. You will practice solving real-world problems and receive coaching from our world-class team of trainers. You leave ready to ignite the creative process.

"We were able to take our customer retention from 3% to 68% in four months using the facilitative leadership skills provided by CPSB."

**Samantha Stead, Editorial Director
International Masters Publishers, Inc.**

Foundations of CPS™ - A System for Change

Do YOU want to...

- Become significantly more productive at home or work?
- Know how the creative process works?
- Improve your approach to decision making and problem solving?
- Learn why you respond to change the way you do?
- Expand your toolbox?

This intensive two-day workshop provides you a comprehensive look into the CPS system of tools, framework, and language. It explains the process for change, your personal approach to managing it, and reasons why people may APPEAR to resist it.

Day One

- Exploring Your Personal Creative Process
- Introduction to CPS
- Styles of Creativity and Change
- The Heartbeat of CPS
- Understanding the Challenge

Day Two

- Tools for Generating Ideas
- Managing Reactions to Novelty
- Preparing for Action
- Tools for Focusing Ideas

Walk away with skills to:

- Use 15 tools for creative thinking & problem solving.
- Shift from impossibility thinking to possibility thinking.
- Construct opportunities out of your biggest challenges and opportunities.
- Generate new & targeted ideas for your problems.
- Develop clarity about your priorities & evaluate the potential of your solutions.
- Build buy-in & acceptance for your ideas.

"CPSB's process turns the art of creativity into the science of creativity."

**Al Wilson, Systems Analyst
Camber Corporation**

practic

Focusing the Power to Change

workshops. As a result of completing the Igniting Creative Potential™ course, you learn a system for getting the most from the CPS system. You will actually facilitate groups in creatively solving real creative potential within your colleagues, project teams, and other work groups within your organization.

"Last week was a phenomenal experience. One of the best learning experiences of my life. In a discussion during our return travels, we agreed that this learning experience far exceeded our expectations (which were very high). Please extend our thanks to all those involved in making last week possible!"

Christopher Goodrich, Industrial Designer
Datex-Ohmeda

CPS Facilitator Development™ - Releasing Group Power

Do YOU want to...

- Double the productivity of your project team?
- Cut your meeting time in half while doubling productivity?
- Reduce the time and cost of your new product and service development while increasing quality?
- Coordinate your use of different change methods?

This intensive two-day workshop prepares you for using the CPS system to ignite the creative potential of individuals, groups, and teams. It builds on the prerequisite Foundations of CPS™ workshop. You receive feedback and coaching while learning and practicing seven core facilitation skills.

Walk away with the ability to:

- Scope the magnitude of change needed.
- Design a targeted and flexible process for making change happen successfully.
- Plan sessions that accomplish extraordinary results.
- Use a powerful framework and tools to increase the speed of decision making and problem solving.
- More effectively manage group dynamics.

Day Three

- Qualities of Effective Facilitators
- Understanding Clientship
- Managing Resource Groups
- CPS Teachback Activity
- Planning Your Approach to CPS

Day Four

- Practice CPS Facilitation
- Coaching & Feedback Sessions
- Planning to Use Your Skills

"I looked around for a creativity group and found that some had practical experience and others had theories. CPSB was the best group that I saw that was able to effectively weave the two together."

Bruce Esposito, Senior Faculty Member
Executive Consulting Group IBM

"Thanks again for an amazing week. In all of the jillions of seminars and classes I've attended throughout my career, nobody comes close to you for effectiveness, thoroughness, professionalism, and of course, entertainment!"

Michelle Taufman
Doyle Research Associates

Yes! I am serious about enhancing my creativity and would like to attend *Igniting Creative Potential™* or one of the workshops.

To Register

Call the CPSB office, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, at (716) 689-2176, or fax the completed form below to (716) 689-6441. Registrations will also be taken via Email at cpsb@cpsb.com.

The course is typically held at an area hotel. Please call us for the location and special room rates.

Name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Country: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

I would like to reserve a space on the following course (please check one or more):

Igniting Creative Potential \$1,850.00

- April 8 - 11, 2003
- October 21 - 24, 2003

Foundations of CPS™ \$950.00

- April 8 - 9, 2003
- October 21 - 22, 2003

CPS Facilitator Development™ \$1,250.00

- April 10 - 11, 2003
- October 23 - 24, 2003

Payment Policies

Fees are due no later than 15 days before the course. Registration is confirmed upon receipt of payment. Fees are fully refundable if cancellation is made at least 7 days prior to the course. Thereafter, 75% is refundable. Transfers and substitutions may be made up to 5 days prior to the course.

Method of Payment

- Registration fee enclosed Send me an invoice
- Charge my: Visa MasterCard American Express

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

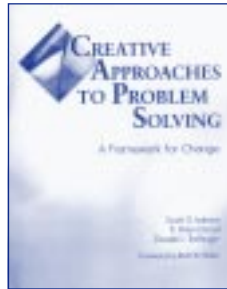
Signature: _____

Enrollment is limited. Register today! Questions? Call (716) 689-2176. Send the completed form along with your payment to: CPSB; 1325 N. Forest Road; Suite 340; Williamsville, NY 14221

BEST SELLERS

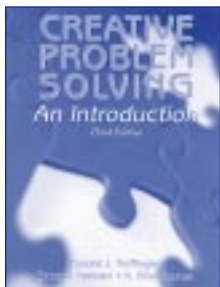
Creative Approaches to Problem Solving

Looking for a creative way to approach problem solving and decision making? One that will unleash your personal creativity yet provide enough structure that it can be applied to most situations? Creative Approaches to Problem Solving is the book you need. The new edition has been completely revised.



Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving

Looking for a field guide that helps you get the most out of using powerful thinking tools? This resource is your "pre-flight checklist" for 17 of the most commonly used CPS tools. Each tool comes with its own booklet that has step-by-step instructions, tips, and worksheets. Additionally, you'll receive 5 informative chapters that help you understand creativity at a systems level, utilize productive thinking guidelines, and choose tools for appropriate situations.



Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction

Completely revised and updated, this book provides you with a concise overview that is consistent with the comprehensive text, Creative Approaches to Problem Solving: A Framework for Change.

Guidelines Posters

Enhance the productivity of your CPS applications by displaying this two poster set. Each 22x17 inch, full color poster contains words and graphics that reinforce the meaning of the guidelines.



VIR Photograph Gallery 1.0

VIR (Visually Identifying Relationships) is one of the many powerful tools contained within the *Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving*. It is a tool that uses photographs to help people incubate or reflect on a topic in order to create different perspectives on the task being addressed. Its purpose is to provide facilitators with a wide variety of high-quality, royalty free images that can be used without concern of copyright infringement. It contains 30 images in a PowerPoint Presentation and comes on a CD or Zip disk.

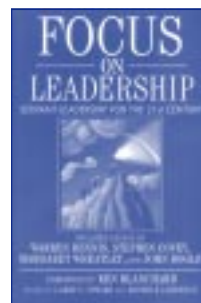
NEW



Horse Puzzle

Do you need an activity for your clients or coworkers that demonstrates the mental barriers we tend to impose on ourselves? Maybe you just want to show that even simple problems can be complex and require problem solving skills? This simple puzzle helps you do so in an experiential manner.

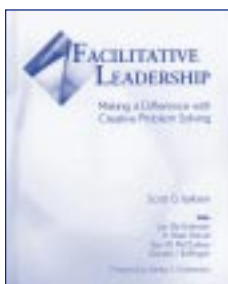
Shrink wrapped in a bundle of 12, each set contains instructions and the solution.



Focus on Leadership

Looking for some of the newest thoughts on leadership by some of the biggest names in the industry? This book includes works by Bennis, Covey, Wheatley, and Jaworski. Also included is a work by Freeman, Isaksen, and Dorval that looks at Servant-Leadership, and its connection to Creativity.

NEW



Facilitative Leadership: Making a Difference with CPS

Facilitative leadership is the kind of leadership that focuses on service - helping, developing, and strengthening others in ways that inspires motivation and commitment. Filled with practical recommendations and resources, this

book pulls together our knowledge of facilitative leadership and what it takes to promote creativity. Everyone who needs to make a difference in organizations will find this book invaluable.



Creativity Poster

Are you looking for an attractive way to remind yourself and your visitors of the importance of creativity? "The Fundamental Human Resource" poster is a 21" by 26" color poster that conveys creativity as part of our world. The word creativity is written in 13 languages and adorns a likeness of the globe on a black background.

PRODUCT ORDER FORM

Item	Price	QTY	TOTAL
Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving	\$79.95		
Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction	\$24.95		
Facilitative Leadership Book	\$69.95		
Creative Approaches to Problem Solving (2nd ed.)	\$69.95		
Facilitative Leadership/Creative Approaches to Problem Solving Bundle (Save \$19.90)	\$120.00		
Guidelines Posters	\$9.95		
VIR Photograph Gallery 1.0	\$59.95		
Creativity Poster	\$4.95		
Horse Puzzle Activity	\$10.00		
Focus on Leadership: Servant Leadership	\$34.95		

Shipping & Handling
\$4.00 Minimum shipping charge on all orders
U.S. & Canadian Orders – Add 15%
International Orders – Add 30%

Subtotal	
Shipping & Handling	
NYS Residents add 8%	
Total	

All orders shipped via U.S. Postal Service. For faster delivery, please call us at (716) 689-2176.

Name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Country: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Method of Payment

- Check enclosed (make payable to CPSB)
- Charge my: Visa MasterCard American Express

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____



Send or fax the completed form along with your payment information to: CPSB; 1325 N. Forest Road; Suite 340; Williamsville, NY 14221 Phone: (716) 689-2176 Fax: (716) 689-6441

Book Review

By Glenn Wilson

Kelly, T. (2000). *The art of innovation: Lessons in creativity from IDEO, America's leading design firm*. New York: Doubleday. ISBN: 0-385-49984-1 \$19.25 Amazon.com

This book is an exceptional example of blending content and process. Within the pages of this work you will find hundreds of examples of IDEO work, everyone nicely set up with: the problem to be solved; some constraints of the project; a framework for their descriptive process to solution; and the final product outcomes. A very enjoyable read for those interested in product development processes.

The book in general, provides guidelines for overcoming the most basic constraints in the concept and new product development process. It covers such topics as: "Six ways to kill a brainstormer;" "Eight crazy characters for hot groups;" and "Barriers and Bridges Checklist" – used to increase the flow of breakthrough ideas.

At the end of the book, Kelly synthesizes the book into six practice tips: Watch customers, Play with your physical workplace, Think verbs not nouns, Break rules and "fail forward,"

manage space to maximize human interaction (listed by Kelly as the number one most overlooked tool in the innovation toolbox); and build bridges from one department to another (pg. 296). You'll definitely want to read the book to get a more in-depth perspective of this list.

For me, one of my key learnings is Kelly's suggestion to: see products as "verbs: – as animated devices that people integrate into their lives... and you'll be more attuned to help people use products, spaces, services- whatever you're trying to improve (pg. 46). The second big take-away was to abolish "they." In your organization, how is the word "they" typically used? Go ahead. Try it out in a typical sentence. For me, "they" is to blame as "but" is to condition. By the way, have you abolished the word "but" in your organization yet? Some companies I work with have. They have replaced it with "and...." It all gets down to the most classic of design principles: "make simple things simple, and complex things possible" (pg. 214).

This book is an easy and enjoyable read that provides a rare look into one of the country's most well recognized new product development companies. If there is such a thing, this could be the perfect airplane book!

SAVE THE TREES – Receive future issues via E-mail!

Dear Readers –

We would like to be able to e-mail the Communiqué to our readers. Toward this end, we are asking that anyone interested in receiving the Communiqué electronically, please provide us with your e-mail address.

You can simply e-mail us (cpsb@cpsb.com) and you will be added to the list of 1,200 people who are already helping the environment.

Thank you!

CPSB Update: Staff, Affiliates & Associates

Part of our strategy as a business has always focused on establishing new relationships with people and organizations. Over the years, these relationships have been in the form of new staff members working at CPSB, Associates (independent people working with us to serve clients) and more recently, Affiliates (organizations containing multiple Associates who have business relationships with CPSB). In the past year, we have experienced many changes in these areas and are very pleased to share them with you.

First and foremost we are pleased to welcome to our team William J. Shephard as the Vice-President of Group Services. As a seasoned and expert practitioner Bill's presence adds to our capacity to deliver high value service to our clients. Bill will also be responsible for developing and maintaining quality relationships with CPSB affiliates and associates including managing the qualification and licensing of programs.

Bill joined CPSB this fall after a long and distinguished tenure as the Chief Program Officer of the Creative Education Foundation and Director of the Creative Problem Solving Institute for nearly 20 years. Bill brings a wealth of experience in designing and coordinating creativity programs and in applying CPS in organizations. In particular he has extensive international experience training and coaching facilitators in the concepts and skills of facilitative leadership.

We are honored that Bill is joining us in our shared commitment to continue to build upon the Buffalo-based foundational work of Alex Osborn! Bill can be contacted at bill@cpsb.com.

On the CPSB Affiliate front we are currently developing our first relationships in The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Over the years we have enjoyed our relationship with Han Van der Meer who often attends our Sarasota Forum. Han is a leading member of the European Association of Creativity and Innovation (EACI) and founding partner of Van der Meer & van Tilburg.

In the UK, **Andy Wilkins** of Andy Wilkins Associates has been another long standing friend,

associate and colleague of CPSB. Andy is in the process of growing his business and developing a team of other individuals in London who can offer a wider variety of CPSB products and services.

In Belgium, **CIC-Europe** extended its Affiliate agreement with CPSB. We have enjoyed a special relationship over the years with Luc De Schryver and his team and look forward to many more. CIC-Europe's current work includes translating CPSB materials into Dutch and French.

Kate Stuart-Cox joins CPSB as a new Associate working out of England. We have enjoyed working with Kate on a variety of projects and her skills in flipchart writing give hope to all whom she works with that some day our charts will look as good as hers!

In June, **Glenn Wilson** completed his qualification to train the Igniting Creative Potential™ course. Glenn is president of CEO Consultants and we look forward to his continued contribution to supporting CPSB and its activities to serve clients and promote research.

In August, **Samantha Stead** of International Masters Publishers completed her qualification to train the Igniting Creative Potential™ course. Samantha has extensive experience in training CPS 6.0 and has facilitated it on a wide range of topics, such as new product development and understanding consumer needs.

Mary Boulanger of Armstrong World Industries completed her qualification as a CPS 6.0 facilitator. Mary completed her internship during our April Igniting Creative Potential™ course in Buffalo.

Keith Kaminski completed his qualification as a Foundations of CPS™ course trainer in December, 2001. Keith recently moved to Colorado, but continues to work with CPSB as an Associate.

Russ Ward of Datex-Ohmeda completed his qualification as a CPS 6.0 facilitator in February. As many of you know, Russ has had great success in using CPS 6.0 to identify customer needs and to redefine new product development at Datex.

Creativity Research Unit

The Creativity Research Unit (CRU) is the component of CPSB which creates new knowledge, information and insights by conducting investigations and studies of creativity, innovation and change with individuals, groups and organizations. Our studies, and those we assist, are done around the globe. The function of CRU is to maintain CPSB's product leadership in its existing services, fuel the development of new services and provide new knowledge to the academic study of creativity, innovation and change. We thought the following information involving the CRU would be of interest to you.

- Scott and Ken had an article published in the *Creativity and Innovation Management Journal* (Vol. 11, #1, pp. 74-86). The paper is entitled *'The climate for Creativity and Change in Teams'*. Please contact us at CPSB if you'd like a reprint.
 - Scott and Ken have had two papers accepted to be included in the proceedings of the 7th European Conference on Creativity and Innovation. The research papers are titled *'Driving Through Changing Climates: Using the SOQ to Direct Organizational Change'* and *'The Climate For Creativity in Teams'*. For more information on purchasing the book go to the web site at www.eaci.net.
 - Scott, Brian and Don Treffinger were honored at the 7th European Conference on Creativity and Innovation to have the second edition of their book *'Creative Approaches to Problem Solving'* honored as the Best Book on Creativity by the European Association for Creativity and Innovation. Scott accepted the award for the authorship team who did an outstanding amount of work completely revising this book.
- 
- The image shows a certificate from the European Association for Creativity and Innovation (EACI) awarded for the period 2000-2001. The certificate is titled "Best book on Creativity" and is awarded to Scott G. Isaksen, K. Brian Dorval and Donald J. Treffinger for their book "Creative Approaches to Problem Solving".
- Scott and Don Treffinger each had a paper included in the recent book edited by Andrei G. Aleinikov entitled *The Future of Creativity*. The book is a compilation of papers presented in honor of Dr. E. Paul Torrance at the annual lecture series at the University of Georgia. Scott's paper is titled *'Unleashing Creative Talent in Organizations'*, and Don's is titled *'Advancing Creative Learning in Education'*.
 - Brian and Bill visited the Blumberg Center at ISU this past September. In addition to meetings with Bill Littlejohn and Priscilla Wolfe they met with a variety of other staff, professors, students and associates of the Center.
 - Scott, Ken and Glenn Wilson have had an article entitled *'An Examination of the Relationship Between Personality Type and Cognitive Style'* accepted for publication in the next issue of the *Creativity Research Journal*.
 - Scott and Brian have had their paper *'Connecting Creativity and Quality: CPS and Continuous Improvement'* published in the proceedings of the American Society for Quality (ASQ) Quality Conference Exposition held in Buffalo Oct. 30th. Brian also presented the paper to the conference attendees. For copies of the article please contact Brian at CPSB.
 - Don Treffinger, Ed Selby and Scott reached a milestone in their work on the Cognitive Styles Research Project. They unveiled the measure entitled VIEW: An assessment of problem solving style at the CPSB Forum in February. For more information on VIEW see pages 24-25 of this Communiqué.

Where Customers' Needs Meet Suppliers' Expertise: Getting Marketing Back to Its Roots

by
Jeffrey Hyman & Andy Wilkins

Introduction

To rapidly increase the quality and speed of New Product Development (NPD) and reduce the costs by up to half, we need to focus on the principle of involving customers. Needless to say, however, the principle can be applied to all aspects of a business.

The Business Need

In the rapidly changing business world of today, organisations must continually renew their product range to keep pace with consumers' needs. Business gurus tell us that a company's *rate-of-product-innovation* should be neither so high that its core range decays too rapidly, nor so low that its catalogue stagnates and products become obsolete.

The big question is always "How to maintain a process of effective product development?" In our experience, this goal has to be reached by spending "quality time" with consumers! It is simple and according to us the very essence of marketing.

There are marketing experts who say that consumers can't or won't tell us what they want. We disagree! Maybe they are not asking the right questions, using an inappropriate process, or creating an inappropriate environment.

There are also marketing professionals, working inside organisations, who have lost the real marketing plot of identifying and meeting customer needs. Maybe it has become more comfortable for them to deal with agencies and research companies than to listen to customers themselves.

Sooner or later, marketing will need to re-align the day-to-day marketing practice with the classic concept of what marketing should do (see next column).

Involving Customers in NPD

Drawing on our combined experience, we have developed a fast track and proven way of finding out what consumers really want – not only now, but also in the future. It's extremely effective not only for new product development but for old product development, as well.

Our experience, skills, and knowledge of creativity have allowed us to design tools that draw out from consumers exactly how their needs are changing. We find out what's important and what isn't, what they need from a product and what they really don't! Next, we arrange these needs as a hierarchy that becomes an agenda for action.

So, how do we involve customers in NPD? We use a 5-step "fast track".

Step 1:

In a stimulating workshop environment, we pitch any number of heartland, articulate consumers against a cross-functional supplier team. Typically, we spend the morning thrashing out, eyeball-to-eyeball, exactly what our consumers need, by looking into the hearts and minds of consumers and experiencing, first hand their needs, wants, and desires. We don't work on hallucination, intellectual appreciation, or second-guessing what our consumers' needs might be. This is a crucial stage, which is often missed.

We bring the company's cross-functional experts face-to-face, with present, past or potential

What Marketing Should Do

In some organisations, Marketing is under pressure to defend its value add – all too often it is over indulgent in spending and lacking in relevant performance measures. It is failing to fulfill its original role. According to us it needs to return to the original and classic role of marketing as the interface between a company and its customers – such as the role described in this article.

If anyone would like more information on this article, please contact Andy Wilkins on andyofawa@aol.com

consumers so that they can apply the full-force of the company’s competencies and develop superior offerings.

Although we facilitate these events we offer no interpretation or “attenuation” because, for us, innovation really happens when suppliers’ expertise collides, head-on, with the needs of the consumer.

Step 2:

We spend the afternoon generating concept after concept using a tool we have developed called Concept Sheets. It’s a bit like Brainstorming with Post-it® Notes but includes images as well as words.

We continue building, refreshing, refining and illustrating until we have thoughts, ideas, positions and propositions that might meet the present and future hopes, wishes and desires of our consumers. If appropriate to the situation, we also involve a professional illustrator who can take the simplest of sketches and turn these quickly into illustrations that are detailed enough to show to consumers.



Step 3:

Then we spend the evening painstakingly presenting our offerings to those same consumers, but this time they sit as a ruthless jury.

Consumers are shown the concepts one-by-one which, by this time, are a bit like TV commercials – a picture and someone reading the words. The reader highlights any particular features of the concept that might not be immediately obvious. Each concept presentation takes about a minute and responses are recorded on a prepared form. Participants are asked to think about whether the concept applies to them or not. If it does, each member decides, silently and privately, on a four point scale, whether they would definitely not buy; probably would not buy; might buy; or definitely would buy the product or service. Participants

mark their score on the sheets provided. Finally, they are invited to add their thoughts to the sheets regarding what they’d modify on the concept to make it more appealing for them to purchase.

Step 4:

Then, with the scores and the feedback from the consumers, we take the top choices and tease out what would make the propositions even stronger. Typically we end up with ten to twenty consumer-evaluated concepts.

Step 5:

If risks and costs are low, the concepts can go straight into the next step of the NPD process – typically some kind of stage gate system.

If the risks and costs are high, the concepts are already in a format suitable for robust research through systems such as Omnibus, Brand-Screener or Accupol.

Summary

We involve customers in NPD by bringing them face-to-face with the company’s experts. After finding out what their needs are, we use Concept Sheets to generate concepts. During the presentations of our concepts, the consumers are also involved. They actually are the jury and they give a score to each concept.

Author Information

Jeffrey & Andy have long histories in the field of marketing. Jeffrey has been in the food industry for over 20 years and Andy has been working in the IT industry for 20 years. Between them, they have successfully developed and launched over £1 billion worth of products and services based on a simple principle that they share: innovation happens where customer needs meet supplier expertise.

Jeffrey Hyman is Director of Innovation at RHM and Andy Wilkins is an associate of the CPSB Group.

VIEW: A Brief History

by
Ed Selby

One year ago, on November 30th, Don Treffinger, Scott Isaksen, Ken Lauer and I met in Sarasota with the objective of putting the final touches on an assessment of Problem Solving style which I named VIEW: An assessment of problem solving style. We met this objective and decided VIEW was theoretically and psychometrically sound enough to share with other individuals. As you might guess this was not an overnight development and in this brief article I will summarize a bit of the developmental history that has allowed us to put VIEW into production.

Beginning in the late 1980's, I became involved in the study of various style theories and approaches (Dunn & Dunn, 1978; Kirton, 1976; Kolb, 1981), and later in the study of psychological type theory and their potential impact on instruction and problem solving facilitation (Lawrence, 1997). My hope was that I might be able to apply these theories to my own role as a middle school educator in music, drama and creative writing. My main question was how best to use style and type theory in conjunction with the application of the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process and tools when facilitating students' creative projects.

While I felt successful in structuring my curriculum and my facilitation approach in a way that was sensitive to the individual needs of my students, I was keenly aware that the instruments associated with the identification of type and style preferences were, in many ways, limited. The first limitation I saw in these instruments was their lack of flexibility with our concepts of facilitation and the CPS process. In addition, as an educator I found their cost, training requirements and availability for use in a school setting to be prohibitive. They also lacked the ease of use and practicality needed for working with middle school students.

With these concerns in mind, I took action and began to design and experiment with informal measures, building first on the work of Kirton (1976) and Schaar (1994). These efforts resulted in several informal instruments (e.g., Selby, 2000) that while useful, were limited in their application. It was at this point that Don Treffinger and I

started to seriously explore the dimensions required of an assessment instrument that would have a broad application in education. The fruit of our exploration was that we developed and field-tested early versions of VIEW, which we called the *Indicator of Problem Solving Style (IPSS)*. This work was more extensive than my earlier research and now included insights from the work of Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg, Todd Lubart, and Patricia Schoonover. Underlying our research and theory development was Don's work with individuals from CPSB on the flexible and descriptive nature of the CPS 6.0 framework.

Don and I included Scott Isaksen of CPSB formally in our discussions in March of 2001 and he agreed to become part of the authorship team. With Scott we began to consider the true implications of CPS 6.0 in terms of the connections between person and process and characteristics and operations. This collaboration led to our conceptualizing three scales for the assessment which are Orientation to Change, Manner of Processing and Ways of Deciding. The development process included field work consisting of three stages: data gathering, reevaluation and revision. The process utilized the data of 3000 individuals, aged 11 through 84, drawn from education and business settings in North America and Europe. Ken Lauer of CPSB was added to the development team in August 2001 to conduct and interpret the statistical analyses we performed on the assessment.

After a year of use the current edition of VIEW (Note: the full name of the assessment is *VIEW: An assessment of problem solving style*) has demonstrated both reliability and validity based on data from 467 individuals who completed the assessment (Selby, Treffinger, Isaksen, & Lauer, 2002). Its publication has been met with a gratifying degree of enthusiasm in both the education and business community. As we conclude this first year close to 5000 copies have been put into circulation (not including the new on-line version). Forty-six individuals from North America & Europe have been trained to administer, score, interpret and utilize VIEW. The instrument has been used with a growing list of organizations including Fordham University, IBM, Destination ImagiNation, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, CPS International-Chile, Allstate Insurance Co., and International Masters Publishers to name a few. We have already had some of our users begin their own work to develop new VIEW support material.

I believe this early success is based on the fact that in VIEW we were able to develop an assessment with both business and educational applications. Our goal was to build an assessment based on our integration of a broad range of psychological, educational and organizational theory and research; one that was relatively easy to administer, score, and interpret; and that was supported by a well-planned, concise, and effective training program for its users. VIEW's early success suggests we have accomplished this goal.

Even so, more must be done. If the instrument is to be continually effective and have wide applicability, it must be better researched and we must be open to possible revisions. We will remain actively involved in R & D with the instrument and invite others to carry out their own studies, independently or with the authors. Quantitative and qualitative investigations of the reliability or validity of VIEW, including predictive validity studies, long-term investigations, experimental studies, and action research projects, are needed.

As this work continues we will endeavor to expand VIEW's use by offering qualification courses to train new VIEW users. Training courses are planned for 2003 in Buffalo, Brussels, London, and Sarasota. Currently, the courses are only offered by the three authors, but an expanded group of international qualifiers are being trained to meet growing international interest. CPSB's affiliate in Belgium is also taking the lead on translating the VIEW into French and Dutch.

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VIEW Qualification Courses

Interested in using one of the newest and most friendly problem solving style measures available today? If you are, then perhaps you should consider the VIEW. The VIEW is useful in many contexts and has been productively used for individual, group, team and organizational consulting and development work.

Individuals wishing to use the VIEW need to complete a qualification course so they understand the basics of the instrument and how they can apply and interpret the results of the instrument. The two day course is being offered throughout 2003. The current schedule is:

Feb. 4-5 in Sarasota, FL, USA - CPSB & CCL

March 10-11 in London, UK - CPSB & AWA

March 20-21 in Brussels, Belgium - CIC-Europe

May 3-4 in Sarasota, FL, USA - CCL

July 29-30 Buffalo, NY, USA - CPSB

Sept. 25-26 in Sarasota, FL, USA - CCL

For more information or to register for any of these courses please contact CCL or CPSB.

A Journey With Ruth Noller

by
Lilian Dabdoub

In this article I want to share with you what I have learned about Ruth Noller. Most of what I will share comes from my networking with her at the CPSB Sarasota Forum over a number of years and a personal interview I did with her in 2001.

When you meet Ruth, the first thing that comes to you is her warm smile and her sweet blue eyes. She expresses a warm welcome with all her being and feeds you with a great dose of optimism. Her completely white hair, that gently falls across her forehead, strengthens her image as a wise and noble woman.

When you look at Ruth Noller's life, you can find that she has always been outstanding, intellectually brilliant, "warm", altruistic, and possesses an abundant love for others. In her personal journey, Ruth has managed to integrate, combine and generate a wonderful synergy between her two passions: creativity and mentoring.

In 1944, during the Second World War, it was unusual to find a woman working with computers. However, in that year, Ruth became the second woman in the U.S.A. to be trained as a computer programmer. At that time she was working as a

mathematics engineering officer for the U.S. Navy. It was Ruth and a colleague who coined the phrase "bug in the computer" after they found a moth shorting out the computer because it became lodged in the wiring and circuitry of their main frame computer. This experience speaks to Ruth's pioneering spirit.

She fell into the creativity field the first time, because of her curiosity regarding the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) which was organized by the University at Buffalo where she taught mathematics. Since her "business" was mathematical problems she thought she could learn something about creative problem solving.

The first time she volunteered to collaborate in CPSI was in 1964; it was her first opportunity to *rub elbows, as she expresses it*, with the people who were working on creativity. She met Sidney Parnes and Bea, his wife and agreed to start working with him immediately after their enthusiastic invitation. When she first went to CPSI she knew she had found what she was looking for!

During those years, people in the academic world were sceptical about the creativity field. However, since Ruth came from the field of mathematics, she found it was easier for her to gain credibility than it was for those that had been studying creativity for some time.

Since those days Ruth has contributed in

Article and Tip Submission Request

Have you had an exciting or beneficial experience in creativity or innovation that you would like to share? Do you know of an upcoming event which could be of interest to fellow Communiqué readers? Do you have some key insights, or tips into some aspect of creativity, leadership, facilitation, or innovation that you would like to pass along?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, we are looking for you! If you would like to submit an article or short write-up; information on an upcoming event; or share a couple of tips, please contact Ken or Marves by Email at cpsb@cpsb.com for a copy of the Communiqué submission guidelines. We look forward to hearing from you!

several ways to the creativity field through her teaching, research and writing. Her natural teaching gift enables her to make it easy for others to understand what could be a difficult process like creative problem solving or mentoring. An example is her book *Mentoring: A voiced scarf*, in which she illustrates what mentoring means with humor and metaphor.

And what about mentors? What are they and what do they do? According to Ruth, mentors believe in us and help us to believe in ourselves. For Ruth a mentor is not a person who has all the information, rather he/she is a channel for the wisdom which comes from other sources, including the mentee.

A true mentoring relationship is a symbiotic relationship. It helps the mentor to have a better self-concept by helping the mentee to have a better self-concept. So it helps both individuals. A mentor is a person who cares enough to see a vision of who I am and who I'm meant to be.

To be a mentor of others one needs to be motivated by the knowledge, experience and energy that comes from inside. Ruth is a living example that helps us understand what it takes to “walk the talk” of mentoring and creativity. Ruth has been a mentor to many men and women including Scott Isaksen, CEO & President of CPSB.

Ruth is not only creative. She also is productive and has a wide variety of interests: music, camping, gardening, photography and as a personal hobby, bell collecting.

Ruth has received many awards and recognition for her work from different institutions and organizations. She is a Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus, Creative Studies at Buffalo State College. She was appointed the Alex F. Osborn Visiting Professor of Creative Studies during the 25th anniversary of the Center in 1992. She received the *Creative Education Foundation* medal for founders for leadership, service and for twenty years of voluntary service. Ruth is also a fellow of the Creativity Research Unit. One of Ruth's current projects is the writing and editing of a book on leadership and management with Scott Isaksen.

Important End Note

Before we close this edition of the Communiqué we wanted to thank you for your patience as there were many delays in the production of this issue that was scheduled to be delivered this past winter. One of the opportunities we saw from this delay was that we were able to evaluate the need and purpose of the Communiqué. The driving need we saw was to provide a collection of information to over 5,000 individuals around the globe interested in creativity, innovation, problem solving and CPS.

To do this in a time and cost effective method we feel that the most appropriate manner to meet this need is to remove the four to six week delay that printing copies of the Communiqué involves. As such, we sincerely encourage you to join the 1,200 individuals who already receive the Communiqué via email. To do this all you need to do is provide us with your email address as described on the bottom of page 19. Please be aware that we will no longer print and mail the Communiqué after Volume 14. If you do not wish to receive the Communiqué via email you may be happy to know that you can still download it from our web site. In the coming months our newly designed web site will also be available and this will provide you access to the Communiqué and a variety of other resources.

For me it has been a gift to make this journey through Ruth's life. I can't find the words to let Ruth know how grateful I am for this opportunity. She is a living example of one of the most creative acts we can achieve; building our own life and transcending it by helping others transform their lives into what they can become. Thank you Ruth!

Author Information

Lilian Dabdoub is a Psychologist based in Mexico City. Most of her knowledge in the creativity field has been applied to the development of creative teaching strategies. Most of her professional experience as an educational psychologist has been applied in developing educational innovations in public and private universities in Mexico.

About the Communiqué

The Communiqué is an informal newsletter published by CPSB. It is designed to highlight and share key information about our current developments, research, and program activities.

If anyone is interested in submitting a short article, headline, or calendar item, please contact the Communiqué Editor at:

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ISSN: 1089-3970

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