

The critical importance of Organizational Strategic and Innovation Alignment

Approaching Strategic Alignment can be
through an integrated innovation
framework concept we call the Executive
Innovation work Mat approach



Paul Hobcraft



Content Included in this additional short booklet

1. Figuring out a different strategic alignment with innovation being central to this
2. Innovation failure starts at the top of the organization
3. The weak influence of strategy over our innovation activities
4. Forming the unified view on innovation design

These short articles have been taken from the blog www.paul4innovating.com and offer a personal view of innovation and areas that need much deeper thinking through at all levels, especially the leadership level within organizations.

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Figuring out a different strategic alignment with innovation being central.

Strategy as we have previously known it is officially dead. Strategy is stuck! Competitive advantages have become transient. We are facing situations where advantages are copied quickly, technology is just one constant change, and our customers seek other alternatives and things move on faster and faster.

In a new book written by Rita Gunther McGrath, a professor at Columbia Business School in New York and one of the world's leading experts on strategy, she has been exploring the changes rapidly taking place called "[The End of Competitive Advantage: How to Keep Your Strategy Moving as Fast as Your Business](#)"

"Strategy (in the past) was all about finding a favourable position in a well-defined industry and then exploiting a long-term competitive advantage. Innovation was about creating new businesses and was seen as something separate from the business's core set of activities."
"Sustainable competitive is not just ineffective, it's actually counter productive" says Professor McGrath.

She rightly states: *"Think about it: the presumption of stability creates all the wrong reflexes. It allows for inertia and power to build up along the lines of an existing business model. It allows people to fall into routines and habits of mind. It creates the conditions for turf wars and organizational rigidity. **It inhibits innovation.**"*

It tends to foster the denial reaction rather than proactive design of a strategic next step... A preference for equilibrium and stability means that many shifts in the marketplace are met by business leaders denying that these shifts mean anything negative for them."

Innovation needs to finally emerge in a new form.

Innovation cannot be separated from implementing an effective strategy, actually it is becoming far more central. Yet our leaders are constantly failing to recognize their essential role they must play to allow innovation to realize its place within the goals and needs of the strategy. They will be in denial by failing to build the innovators organization to manage this new transient advantage. One that is highly flexible, agile, built around a constellation of emerging business principles that builds upon the ethos of imagination, exploration, experimentation, discovery and collaboration (Steve Denning).

A new structure that has as part of it one that promotes independence, diverse thinking and seeking out individual contributions. To achieve this innovation needs to be fully embraced as a clear competency that does need to be professionally built and certainly well-managed; it needs leadership's total engagement for establishing new principles, practices, attitudes, values and beliefs that become central to the new way forward to deal with this new transient advantage suggested by Professor McGrath.

Today the rhetoric outweighs the reality for innovation and we need change!

Survey after survey of our leadership within organizations talks up innovation

- * Over 70% of CEO's surveyed constantly named innovation as within their top three strategic priorities
- * 93% of surveyed executives said the long-term success of their organization's strategy depends on their ability to innovate
- * For almost 90 percent of CEO's, generating organic growth through innovation has become essential for success in their industry.
- * Also over 70% of the top executives identified themselves as the primary driver of innovation

Yet innovation is failing, reality is constantly hitting home in poor results.

- * *Despite increased business investment in innovation, only 18% of executives believe their company's innovation efforts deliver a competitive advantage. Source: a new Accenture study (May 2013)*
- * *The "absence of a well-articulated innovation strategy" was identified as the most important constraint hampering organizations from reaching their innovation targets, in a study published by Capgemini Consulting in April 2012*
- * *Almost 60% of firms surveyed admitted that they have no explicit innovation strategy (a joint Cap Gemini and IESE study)*
- * *Only **one-third** of the executives report innovation is fully integrated in corporate-level strategies (McKinsey Quarterly, 2012)*

Then you go deeper into organizations current position on innovation

The formal management of innovation is largely overlooked and to quote these statistics from an Innovation Leadership Study in March 2012:

- * *Only 30% of respondents agree they have an effective organization structure for innovation*
- * *45% do not have a well-defined governance structure for innovation*
- * *40% lack clear roles and responsibilities for innovation*
- * *39% state they do not have an effective decision-making process for innovation*
- * *49% are not having a well-defined process to prioritize and allocate time and funding to innovation projects*
- * *54% of those surveyed indicate they do not have a formal KPI system for promoting innovation*

Innovation comes to a screeching halt because it is not totally integrated and fully supported from the top and embedded into the core of organizations. Innovation is failing to deliver on its potential. Can you imagine all that invested time in innovation, on tasks, products, concepts, ideas that fail? There is real waste if innovation is not fully aligned to the strategy.

If these constantly don't align to corporate strategies, someone somewhere should be concerned, I mean really concerned. Perhaps as "mad as hell" and we are not going to take it anymore. Something has to change or many of these organizations will not exist in the future.

The great disconnect at the top of organizations for innovation is in plain sight for all to see that needs resolving.

So we must see there is a huge gap that does exist between what executives want, and what the business believes and is knowing what is actually going on. Innovation for its needs actually lie in the senior executive own hands:

- Executives need to demonstrate that they want and need innovation
- They must become more engaged and outline (in some detail) their expectations
- They must create a framework or structure to ensure it exists

Innovation success starts and stops with senior executives.

They want innovation success but they consistently fail to understand their part within the innovation need-to-succeed. Only senior executives can:

- Communicate and develop the innovation vision and work towards actively reducing the barriers it faces within their corporation
- They need to bridge the existing culture with one that promotes innovation, where both short-term need and long-term sustainability are equally encouraged and worked upon
- Influence and encourage the breadth of skills and capabilities needed in innovation to be given the appropriate focus for its organization to successfully innovate
- Establish the environment and then create and support the incentives where innovation can flourish effectively.
- Work constantly at ensuring the conditions for success is well-communicated and the clear goals and expectations are articulated.
- The top executives must understand the investment required for innovation and provide the adequate resources and funding along with clear directions
- Actively seek alignment of the innovation activities into the strategic needs they see as critical to work towards
- They need to set the innovation strategic agenda and provide a robust and clear integrated innovation framework like [the Executive Innovation Work Mat](#), for example.

The sad, sad truth is that many of our leaders still cannot get comfortable with innovation.

Many of our present leadership of organizations are actually uncomfortable with innovation; they want to keep it on the periphery of their thinking. It disturbs much of what they have worked all their careers upon, honing a highly efficient and effective organisation that minimises the risks, reduces the surprises and works away in a highly predictable and steady way.

They often lack any real depth in innovation experience and training. They are fixated on the short-term, often to the detriment of the longer-term opportunities due to tenure and their incentive metrics.

Today the senior executive loves to get fully involved in the urgent needs of the day, moving constantly from one operational oversight meeting into another, spending decreasing time on the important. The pressures and demands placed on them to respond, to react, to comment on day-to-day events, are growing in priority to be seen as 'being on top of these' but are they losing the longer-term perspectives and detachments needed for designing organizations differently? To meet rapidly changing challenges and actively working upon new organization designs to give a new fitness and intent? Often these seem rushed and reactive to threats or poor results.

The larger the organization, also the greater the disconnect is happening between themselves and their employees and this is creating increasing growing barriers to understand the pulse of the business or stay tuned to market shifts. Organizations are losing any competitive advantage as they are failing to see a huge change taking place before their eyes as they remain rigid and fixed, locked in the past. Internally alignment is becoming harder. Advantage is only short-lived, yet our organizations are totally encumbered by out of date designs and structures.

Organizations are being challenged far more today and their relevancy needs radical redesigns and stepping back and designing these is becoming critical. The core of our organizations needs to shift towards more agile, adaptive and innovative designs.

The need for a real alignment of strategy and innovation

Innovation stands in service to strategic goals such as growing market share, differentiation and disrupting adjacent markets, serving the consistent changing and demanding customer needs by spotting these and then exploiting them rapidly and effectively. Creating clear goals and linking/aligning innovation to those more agile strategies is a vital role for CEO's and senior executives. Senior executives must establish the manner in which innovation fits within the strategic context established by goals, vision and strategies. They cannot abdicate this role. Change is hard, so is innovation.

However, even when executives understand the linkage, they may fail to understand how to ensure linkages between corporate strategy and innovation actually does lie with them to be communicated throughout the organization. When executives simply request innovation and delegate the decisions and definitions to business line leaders or executives outside the boardroom they are delegating the growth and future of the organization to others. They are killing the true potential of innovation as it remains unaligned. This cannot continue, we need to bring innovation into the boardroom as core.

If we are in a world of transient advantage as Rita Gunther McGrath suggests, she also clearly states: ***“Innovation needs to be a continuous, core, well-managed process rather than the episodic and tentative process it is in many companies”***.

Identification comes from the top and from our customers

This new innovation core can only be led and fully integrated from the top, aligned fully into the strategies, organizational design and the goals. In rapidly changing market conditions where advantage is transient then we certainly need very different designs within our organizations to respond.

It is absolutely time that innovation comes fully into the board room and driven from the top. Innovation needs to be recognized fully as the key to more prosperity, more growth and added value – achieving that is the mandate of the board and this requires an explicit integrated innovation framework, no less that reflects the changing reality of the era we are in. Then others can simply get on with the job of responding by delivering the innovation outcomes that are constantly aligned to the needs within the changing landscape and demands placed on all, to read, react and respond differently and this needs total integration from top to bottom through an overarching set of integrated frameworks.

A different alignment is required.

Alignment is just not the internal need any more; it is having clear external alignments as well; in knowing the customers' needs and reacting to these faster and with clear competitive intent, aligning with others on different platforms and collaborations.

Having an innovation geared organization that has clear goals, principles, values and attitudes that is working towards a consistent range of organizational possibilities. One that is ready to capitalize on breaking opportunities, aligned to exploit these. Then having in place the capabilities to build rapidly out on these to exploit these through new learning, new insights and growing connections so extending the possibilities even further.

A constant evolving strategy perhaps, one that will give the organization a new more demanding competitive advantage, that is built on anticipating and managing constant change, never standing still, always evolving, being in perpetual transition.

A different 'sustaining' capacity built around innovation as the continuous core, constantly evolving, adapting, learning and adjusting.

In perpetual innovation motion.

Innovation failure starts at the top

So who do you think form the group that are the most likely candidates for innovations consistent failure? It may surprise you to know that most fingers point straight to the top of the organization as the main cause for its enduring failure.

I don't think this is sour grapes of the people working away on innovation daily, that the 'finger of failure' is well and truly pointing upwards. There is more of an innovation knowledge gap at board room level or even just below this, than many can imagine, that is the plain reality. They often simply have no real clue on how innovation really works and what their essential role is in connecting all the different parts necessary to align this into the organizations overarching goals, objectives and strategies.

Let's simply select the top common causes of innovation failure.

In a recent survey I was reading*, it provided a set of results about the common cause of innovation failure. The survey was asking participants to check all that applied and although there were 30-odd possible reasons the top ten that stand out as head and shoulders above all the others are nearly all down to the simple failure of innovation engagement in its leadership. Failure lies at the very top on why innovation fails.

I know I keep 'going on' about [the Executive Innovation Work Mat](#) and its value but let's look at these top ten contributors for failure that is occurring in organizations just like yours. The Work Mat approach tackles these and lots more but those that are the cause of failure, the leaders in organizations, do need to understand it is them that are the reason for this. So the top ten causes of innovation failure then tell me the root cause, a lack of innovation leadership.

The top three failures

The three main reasons for failure have been given as 1) unrealistic expectations from top management regarding resources and the time really required in achieving innovation, then 2) the lack of resources allocated in budget, people, infrastructure and 3) far too much focus on products and technology and ignoring the other options within innovation, such as service, business model, platform collaborations etc.

Each of these is without doubt for me a top management failure. They either don't have a real clue of the complexity of innovation, starve it of its essential resources or just want to stay well within their comfort zone of existing product and technology understanding. This reluctance to push innovation, to extend capabilities and provide it with the right capabilities ends up in these continuing failures. Equally not to explore all the [types of innovation](#) available does not make sound business sense. This shows a lack of real involvement, comprehension, understanding and engagement.

The next three failures

In our next three the one that is so constantly described as limiting innovation is 4) that people or teams operate in silo's instead of broader collaborative approaches, 5) the wrong personnel are in place to make innovation happen and 6) that classic of classics, a poorly defined innovation strategy and the goals to achieve this.

Each of these again is a top management failure. They fail to understand the value of building up the capabilities for broader collaborations; they constrain the very essence that gives their organization its growth by holding back or not pushing for the best people to be engaged within the projects, or just fail to connect their (often) lofty strategic goals with the innovation activity that can deliver on this. Again, simply failures of top management to address and resolve these issues are the root cause.

Then the last four within the top ten

The last four within the top ten again start with 7) a lack of innovation strategy, and then 8) where the emphasis is placed in far too much on idea generation and not on execution, followed by 9) a lack of involving external partners and lastly 10) poor management of the innovation process.

So again a clear set of management failures. By not having a clear overarching innovation framework in place that links innovation to strategic alignment, which communicates innovations value and its value position and then the failure to put in place all the critical factors of an innovation process to make sure that innovation, has the chance to work.

Surely this top ten list of causes for innovation failure does become fairly worrying to anyone involved in growth, wealth creation and building and wanting to belong to a healthy sustaining business?

Depressing outcomes and on-going failure

For me, I simply can't understand why our leaders are simply not listening to the constant stream of innovation failure messages that get written daily. Of course, I hear you say "it is simply because they are too busy". Oh come on, lets stop protecting them. My argument straight back to this is "if a leader or his team does not focus on the clear ways to grow a business and make this happen and this must come primarily through innovation, then they should not be leading". They should not be focusing on just making organizations efficient but on being *increasingly* effective through innovation.

How can they be leaders of organizations, claiming they are keen to grow and expand, if they do not get fully involved in providing the appropriate framework for innovation to thrive? This is a strategic leadership failure.

I can only assume they are simple not understanding that they are the primary cause of innovation's failure within their organization, they are the main culprits in this. Will this change overnight, of course not?

Somehow or other, those within the innovation communities, both within and outside organizations have a job to do, a message to deliver to the leaders. They need to get across this failure message lies within the board room, not outside it and its needs addressing.

Deliver just one message today please.

We need to deliver this simple message – “as long as you as the leader of the organization and those immediately around you fail to understand what ‘makes up innovation’ you deserve to fail, and more than likely, fail you will”.

Why not just give the leaders of most organizations an early Christmas reading present- [you can download it here](#)- it explains the connected part of the [Executive innovation Work Mat](#) that forms the strategic framework for innovation to connect across organizations. Then we might begin to reduce this list of common failure points significantly. I do hope so, otherwise what’s the point?

The survey was conducted by Stefan Lindegaard under his post [Organizations and Failure: Why Don't We Learn More?](#)

I think he was focused more on looking within the organization, whereas I see failure ‘sitting’ far more at the top of the organization causing the problems within.

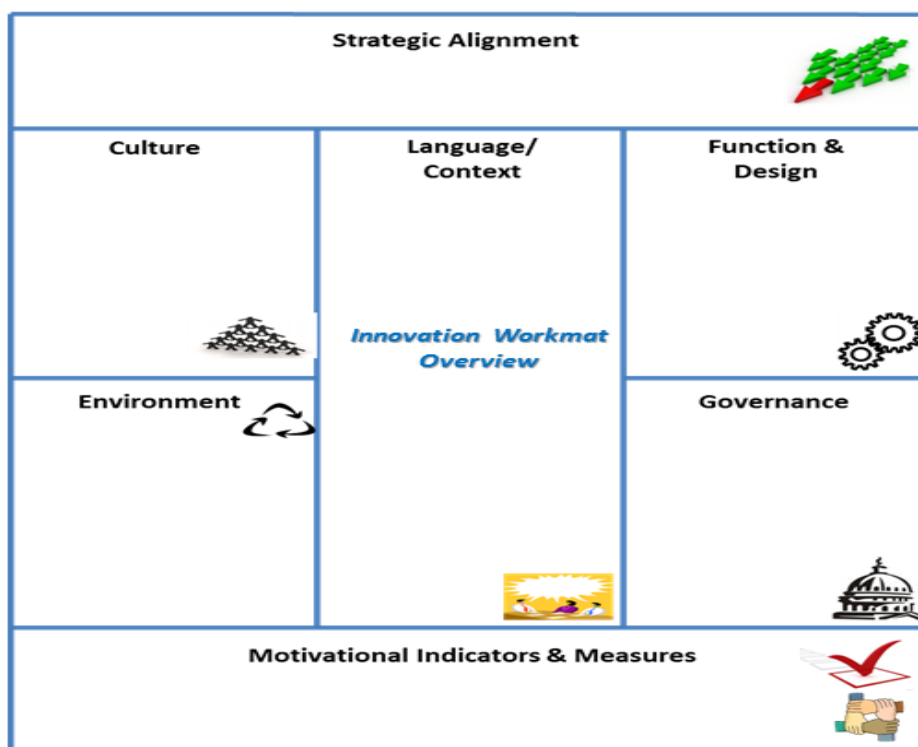
The weak influence of strategy over our innovation activities

All too often strategy is not influencing the behaviours and outcomes around innovation, it is simply allowing them to be left to chance. Innovation is often being ‘pushed down’ the organization for others to interpret and offer their answers. This lack of alignment and top leadership engagement is one of the main causes why many organizations seem to just simply ‘limp’ along in their innovation activity.

Then those in leadership positions start expressing their disappointment over final innovation results, yet the answers simply lies more often than not as in their hands to resolve. Top leadership in organizations needs to shape innovation and be more involved in its strategic design. We need to resolve this innovation leadership gap of misunderstanding. We need to explain what their essential place is and provide the strategic frame to allow it to be understood. Then the contribution for innovation might be ‘allowed’ to deliver far more on its potential as it achieves that greater strategic alignment.

The absolute need is for leadership to lay in the guiding principles for innovation, to make it a more explicit innovation strategy and framework. This then does not stop at this alone, it then requires a consistent re-enforcing through policy shaping, strategic guidance and the operational documents to support this. Innovation requires on-going leadership engagement.

As you might already be aware, I have suggested [the Senior Executive Innovation Work Mat](#) as a framing document to provide this leadership dialogue for that essential organization engagement. This simply gives a much-needed focus, many of the strategic delivery points, structures and guidance for managing innovation.



A strategic framework to moderate and accelerate meaningful innovation

The framework or work mat moderates innovation and goes much towards reducing the multiple interpretations and the variety of initiatives often described or justified as innovative but significantly missing the strategic mark. I would argue that most within the organization and those partnering with them, would appreciate a greater understanding of the core concepts, principles and direction that their innovation activity should take. To understand what is valued, essential to defend, promote and improve. To clarify what is highly strategic to describe and 'form' around helps innovation to perform its required task of delivering new growth that aligns into the strategic needs.

By having this work mat approach you can frame a formal set of mechanisms and principles for innovation to rise in quality. For instance in articulating that the selection of high potential concepts are highly valued and prized, and will certainly get a certain ring-fencing and special dedicated attention, does radically alter the innovation work-to-be-done within any organization.

Equally, many within organizations where innovation is left more 'open' do run the risk that there is an over-emphasis on idea generation. By placing the emphasis point further along the innovation value chain that it is the exploring the benefits that flow from ideas, not the ideas alone, can make a significant difference in improving the quality of innovation and reducing the belief that quantity was the important aspect.

If the leadership could provide a more comprehensive innovation framework it would make such a difference. If this could cover the guiding principles, the mechanisms and ways the top leadership views innovation for its contribution to the organizations strategy, it would certainly offer a clear statement of innovations importance. This view can then 'cascade' throughout the organization, searching out its connecting points, proving the essential value, the debates required and facilitates the contributions, so innovation activities can relate far more to achieving the strategic growth goals.

Outlining the strategic principles of the innovation activity is vital.

Any strategic innovation framework needs to move well beyond offering just a set of indicators, it needs a far clearer articulation of what is valued, needed and will be well supported. For example by pushing and encouraging for the delivery of a few big bets shifts thinking radically away from incremental into more breakthrough in designs and concepts,. By offering a set of formal mechanisms for this selection of high potential concepts to be assessed, supported and effectively resourced would make a radical difference for many to make that mental shift in their innovation thinking. It prompts and provides the necessary stimulus.

Today many organizations presently find themselves locked in the innovation incremental trap. Real growth needs a more radical approach from innovation. Incremental innovation, often gives a very limited degree of security as others quickly copy or push this just a little bit further, so you are ending up chasing instead of making those leaps that give clear competitive space where that 'advantage' can become a sustaining one.

Most of your innovation resources equally become locked within this incremental race, sucking up the innovation energies that should be 'directed' elsewhere. It is for the leadership

to manage the risks of de-emphasizing that just simply competing within the incremental race is not good enough. They provide the conditions that places a far higher emphasis on seeking out those innovation activities that will simply alter the race, radically.

Signalling a more innovation-orientated organization changes the dynamic forces within.

By having this more strategic and systematic approach does give a clear 'signal' that we need to be more of an innovation-orientated organization. A framework that is offering the signposts and path finding points in vision, in proving the mechanisms for a whole innovation system transformation, in documentation, by engaging in constant discussions about innovation and its alignment to strategy, you move from 'aspiration' into gaining that 'attraction power.' You offer a fresh dynamic stock for innovation to feed from.

That would be for many, a strategy that is innovative itself. The frames intent, it's very nature, is that it promotes excitement, growing identification, the chance to debate and offers that clarification so it can significantly provide the support to the people involved in innovating the ability to execute in a cohesive way their innovation activity. It provides the framing opportunity for that elusive alignment that is often missing in today's organizations.

Achieving innovation alignment to strategic goals should be our aim in the immediate time frame

If we can achieve this innovation strategic alignment in what we do in 2013 and 2014, we have significantly advanced innovation's performance for leading us onto a greater growth track than where we find ourselves today. Perhaps that place where we are doing the disrupting and not simply reacting to be the ones always being disrupted is not a bad place to go, but it does need leadership and framing.

Forming the unified view on innovation design

Although we are seeing a number of cases where innovation in its structures, functions and design are evolving, we still have not achieved the mainstream recognition of innovations importance within the boardroom. In many organizations it still lacks a clearly separated 'voice.' Its present voice tends to be fragmented within its parts represented by the separate functions providing their narrower view of innovation.

You still have marketing, research, financial, strategic development all offering their unique views of what and where innovation can contribute. This often 'fragmented' approach reduces the promising breakthrough effect of innovations potential contribution. By not having this comprehensive and cohesive viewpoint articulated at board level by a fully accountable person, *the Chief Innovation Officer*, innovation often stays locked up in one position or another. No one is stepping in and unlocking its full potential from a holistic viewpoint, totally responsible for innovation by structuring it, for adding real scale, giving it momentum and growing sustainability but more importantly driving it throughout the organization from the top board room perspective.

What this 'combined' voice can really bring too many present and future growth orientated discussions is real strategic alignment significance; it can transform discussions and significantly influence directions the organization can take and where to allocate its resources. Yet innovation still struggles to be fully accepted as a fully functioning discipline and expertise needed in the boardroom to focus innovation on providing real sustaining growth, fully integrated and aligned across the whole organization for its value potential.

The exploring going on around innovation

Many organizations still are exploring how to approach innovation and you can see plenty of experimentations and I'd say interim 'bridging' solutions. We are making some progress within innovation for its function, location, financing and ownership, as these have shifted more towards the top of organizations, yet they still lack that final unifying catalyst, of appointing a chief innovation officer for many, and innovation as a strategic activity being pulled together in a unifying strategic innovation framework.

Some that have made this appointment are still working through the make-up of the function and how the 'arm-wrestling' works out between the existing groups making up their part of innovation and this new realignment can be hard work. Often, as the CEO lacks real innovation expertise to effectively arbitrate such an appointment, to design in the real accountability and appropriate weighting for managing such a critical component needed for growth, it does not have the executive strength built into the position to make it the pivotal role it should be. The role remains poorly understood in its focused value and contributions, and can be reduced to this in-fighting and trading, to make slower headway than it should.

Driving outcomes often required separate innovation functions.

Added to the lack of recognition of what ‘makes up a clear innovation function’ many organizations are still rather stuck in a silo thinking that innovation is only about developing products and services based on traditional functional lines. Innovation has evolved way beyond this product and service view only, or certainly should have done.

We need to explore making major shifts by thinking through different business models, working on a variety of collaborative platforms and ventures, having increased agility to explore, experiment and step far more out of the ‘classic’ core, into new adjacencies, or even investigate whole new ‘white spaces’ for business opportunities. Many are leaving this to others as they stay ‘locked into’ traditional viewpoints of what innovation contributes.

These significant changes on ‘how to innovate’ are creating organizational tensions that do need resolution as they are increasingly colliding against each other, like tectonic plates. These tensions are disrupting organizations and having a lot of internal friction that reduces performance, at this critical time when a unified approach to tackling external challenges would be better served by aligning the innovation view.

In some ways organizations are experimenting in different innovation designs but these still tend to be ring fenced, islands of experimentation that stay locked in their space and unable to be seen, strategically, for their (rapid) scaling opportunity due to this lack of a comprehensive, innovation view, from the top.

There are different designs being explored, often within the same organization. All serve a ‘given’ purpose but perhaps stay constrained by this lack of an overarching strategic understanding of innovation and its contribution to strategy and driving growth. We might be in real danger of dispersing innovation energy when we should be unifying it.

Diversity is made up of innovation experimentation.

We see today innovation centres, new-business development functions, separate emerging-business opportunities groups and selected incubators along with emerging-technologies business groups and even advanced-technologies or institutional collaborations. Each has a focused and valuable role to play but the cross-over values, the ability to drive cross collaboration and learning often lack that overarching coordination that only a dedicated top person can bring in bringing this together to serve the strategic purpose of the organization. Usually we also have the older established research and development centres, the marketing pilot plants and other more established and traditional avenues that product and service tend to work through.

I think we definitely duplicate resources, loose knowledge, constrain expertise and don’t get the potential innovation ‘horsepower’ out of the combining effect as and when needed. Can this change? It certainly should to extract and unlock all of innovations true potential.

How we align innovation will decide many of our futures.

Alignment between the goals and objectives at the top of our organizations is still at serious ‘odds’ with what is being worked upon. We need a real strategic innovation framework. I’ve

offered some thought on this in the past if you care to pick up on this as one starting point, in this article [“The Overarching Proposition for the Executive Innovation Work Mat.](#)

We are daily being faced by significant challenges in meeting our strategic objectives and where often innovation fails to bridge. Examples of this can be seen in the ongoing competition with short-term priorities from across the parts of the business as well as the difficulties of integrating different function’s objectives with those of the core needs.

Then there is still the poor business case or value propositions made often to corporate leaders, or that consistent dilemma of withdrawing funding from an idea that has not lived up to its promise and become one that drags and diverts away critical resources. All work against innovation delivering on its much-needed potential.

We are managing more cross-functional issues than in the past.

The more we engage with open innovation partners or begin to develop promising new business models then more we conflict with many established positions. This slows the real contributing value of innovation. These new challenges need a different type of boardroom representation, it needs a clear mandate for a Chief Innovation Officer, to bring the ‘disparate parts’ together and explore the broader potential that wider innovation can bring in all its potential forms.

A call for a new concerted effort for providing an overarching innovation design

Designing a new strategic innovation framework at the top of organizations helps close the many gaps we see today. We need to move from ‘disconnect’ to ‘reconnect’ and make innovation more centrally designed to meet today’s challenges, those that are cross-cutting, to allow innovation that greater freedom and scope to contribute into the growth organizations leaders are demanding.

To align innovation to the organizations strategic goals, we need to challenge many of the established practices and functions to allow innovation to fulfil its promise of being the true catalyst to growth.

About Paul Hobcraft



I simply enjoy innovation. I got 'hooked' ten years ago and have increasingly focused upon it until it is 100% of my business thinking and activities. I research across innovation, look to develop novel innovation solutions and frameworks that have real potential value to apply to different problems we all face in managing innovation. I provide these through a range of solutions that underpin my advisory, coaching and consulting work at www.agilityinnovation.com on supporting innovation for individuals, teams and organizations.

For me, innovation needs to enter the DNA of our organizations and our own individual make-ups. Here on this site, I try to work across different aspects to offer thoughts, ideas, advice and concepts to help each of us to understand innovation that little bit more.

My areas of focus

Through my business, **Agility Innovation Specialists**, we deliberately set out to help grow your body of knowledge on innovation. Having this 100% focus we believe does provide the necessary *additional* intensity of focus needed for innovation success that someone who specialises can provide.

We research topics that relate to innovation for the future, applying what we learn to further develop organizations core innovation activity, offer appropriate advice on tools, techniques and frameworks so clients can achieve positive and sustaining results from their innovating activities. Web site: www.agilityinnovation.com

Recently a dedicated site for exploring the components of our 'fitness' make-up for innovation, is outlining my working towards an approach that can model what is dynamic or not, that improves innovation performance. There are clearly dependencies and this evolving model attempts to provide answers to current performance gaps, to improve the innovation performance engine in capability and capacity building, to raise the game and align it more into the strategic needs. This dedicated site can be found at www.innovationfitnessdynamics.com

Finally, www.hocaconsulting.com HOCA consulting contributes to those emerging areas of Corporate need to link the new approaches we need to have in place to meet the different challenges we are faced with today.

The personal journey makes up a set of unique experiences and understanding

As for my personal journey of how I got to this point I can only say it has been varied, challenging but full of fun and learning. This has taken me to live and work in Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Malaysia, Switzerland, the Netherlands, USA, Australia, and recently eleven years in Singapore, starting up businesses, turning them around or simply accelerating them and achieving their footprint within the world.

In mid 2008 I moved back to Switzerland from Singapore and presently focus my time between Asia and Europe for this innovation practice and its **related sister company** (www.hocaconsulting.com) that focuses upon related subjects important to growing organisations capability in today's world. I work and move between my preferred bases of Switzerland and Singapore.

Innovation as a source for our growth fascinates me. I hope I can share some of this passion with you here on this site as I search for the DNA makeup of innovation.

Paul Hobcraft was voted into the top three innovation bloggers for 2011 and also for 2012 on a leading Global Innovation Community- Innovation Excellence- , go to



<http://bit.ly/tWE1oX>

Also in 2012 Paul was voted as one of the top 50 tweeters on the subject of innovation su.pr/4U9EBB .

“These accolades are highly appreciated and valued- they inspire me to keep innovating in my own unique way and style. These recognitions help me believe I can contribute to the wider innovation community we are all part of”

Paul Hobcraft runs Agility Innovation Specialists: <http://agilityinnovation.com>

His Email is: paul@agilityinnovation.com

Direct contact: **+41 91 751 4350**

The organization is based in Switzerland for Europe & Singapore for Asia.