Moving innovation into our Core

Building the argument for innovation to be more central to our thinking and day-to-day work

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A short series discussing the need to move innovation into our core

Additional Note: Here is a link into a ***part of the presentation deck*** provided to prompt this discussion.**

Building the business case of needed change in how we manage innovation.

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Moving innovation into our Core- Part One

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Innovation has sat outside the core of organizations central systems for long enough. Arguably this lack of being a core central focus holds the deeper understanding of innovation back.

A core that could offer up the sustaining value and contribution innovation can make, into the growth and future well-being of organizations and having available the level of resources and commitments it needs. Today innovation seems to be falling short in delivering on its promise. Why?

A three part series on rethinking the management of the innovation system.

Those constant top level concerns need finally addressing

So we all hear the constant 'disappointment' surrounding innovation. There are consistent concerns of a "lack of resources", the "top management is not giving innovation enough attention" or "innovation lacks a clear alignment to the strategic direction". There are constant complaints around innovation and its lack of 'impact' on final delivery from different disappointed stakeholders. To give innovation a better 'fighting' chance we need to rethink how we manage it and we have to make it more central to our organizations thinking, decision making and management in those systems and processes that give it this chance.

Today innovation tends to operate in discreet, often stand-alone applications, where the systems for innovation stay often clustered in specialized groups working on their part. This is partly by design but also by the restrictions we place on ourselves in organizational design or solutions being offered.

We have no solid, robust innovation management system in place that is Enterprise-wide to handle all that 'makes up' innovation, we all really do fail to deliver transforming innovation, apart from some notable exceptions based upon emerging technology applications, platforms and integrated designs.

We lack the dedicated organizational process to manage innovation

Innovation lacks an *Enterprise-wide Innovation Process* as this has not been tackled through any ERP system as yet, apart from some selected parts. Is innovation management to tough to capture as a total system? Can innovation be 'captured' fully and turned into a robust process? I believe so, but it will take a different, more radical form to deliver enterprise wide innovation that is adaptive, agile and fluid in much of its management.

The flows we need to imagine will be far more constant in change, more dynamic in what occurs and its impact and not that 'static' or well- defined inputs that much of the current ERP system requires. It will take a significant re-thinking.

Whenever the activities around innovation are required to be reviewed, much of this 'selective/collective intelligence' has to be constantly reworked, to allow it to be disseminated to a broader audience for their response and new input. What we have today is relatively inefficient and certainly not well-connected to make a system dynamic and agile in its evolution, to parallel the often talked about 'messy' innovation system of today.

Innovation has changed significantly over the past ten to twenty years

Innovation has moved from 'just' being within the domain of research and development, so as to then be passed over to marketing to implement, it has grown in its complexity with the movement to become far more open and complex in the necessary 'touch points' it needs to cover. A significant range of interested parties have become involved and needed to be drawn into the process of innovation and its development.

Open innovation has been changing the way we see and work with innovation. Ideas are constantly entering the organization as raw concepts or simply 'weak signals,' or intelligence, then translated into areas of investigation and then translated into potential opportunities to investigate and explore.

Idea Management is part of an integration puzzle.

Idea Management started as simply a 'stand-alone' system but has evolved over the years to continually improve and become the front end intelligent tool to increase engagement and quality of innovation activities. Within this it has continued to push out to map the strategic innovation areas and set the hunting grounds for innovation.

The best solutions strive to encourage and create a balanced road-map of ideas, look at ways to improve cost savings, encourage dialogues and exchanges. The push to speed up the discovery, development and implementation of ideas is driving much of the idea management software solutions. These systems are improving the ability to offer different

levels of governance and reporting, to keep moving towards effective and efficient decision making.

The ability to push the software and the technologies so as to provide the appropriate platform for engaging the creative energies within organizations is a key battle ground at present. Continuous social features are being 'released' to improve the quality of ideas by encouraging idea development and bottom-up support with community graduation, narrowing the focus on the most promising and well-developed ideas.

There has been a visible improvement in the workflow set of concepts that aims to simplify the idea development path, and makes progress more transparent. There is this encouraging management engagement through community platforms, certainly all good and very positive.

The core of any idea management system is to *drive campaigns*, *collect and develop ideas* and provide the ability and structures to *evaluate these* and move them through into a *pipeline and portfolio management system* to be managed accordingly. This has evolved significantly in recent years.

The enterprise portfolio systems is certainly attempting to manage growing complexity

The providers of portfolio and pipeline management systems have been exploiting the choices of the portfolio management needed, be this managing investments, projects, resources, applications, products, and services. They are designing them to be an end-to-end solution that constantly are planning the resources needed to achieve a better potential for integrating, deciding and executing around choices, driven by a focus on 'finding and calculating the 'hard numbers for the return on investments.

These platforms are providing the opportunity to have enterprise-wide visibility into the allocation and use of resources to deliver against this evolving demand. Whereas capturing all ideas is at the heart of Idea Management, it is managing resources within the Portfolio.

The present push is towards a more holistic view across investments, the assets, resources and services required that work from capture, through the planning cycle and through to execution and looking to achieve a more flexible integration. Analytics and visualization, along with greater updating of performance management and time-to-realization are being provided.

Yet I feel we still lack all the integrating that the parts being offered can provide, for achieving greater line-of-sight and alignment into organizations goals. Also in managing the competencies, capabilities and capacities that need to combine and deliver on the potential discoveries made or identified.

Any next 'big-step' by existing software vendors will require significant new rounds of investment and innovative thinking, is this one step too far for many and does this hold back the evolution we really need?

Social media is being 'plugged in' for greater innovation

Both idea management and portfolio software solutions have been working hard to integrate into leading business applications, including IBM Connections, Yammer, SharePoint, and Jive and become a host in the cloud or on-premise. The needs to increasingly connect into all the social media tools to attempt the capture of ideas and manage resources and portfolio decisions is requiring far more 'real-time' engagement that is needed to bring into any final decisions on ideas or portfolio management decisions.

Stand alone or adjoining systems are not providing the full answer we are needing today.

These 'stand-alone' systems aim are working hard at trying to create sustainable engagement, encouraging ever-increasingly scale in handling increasingly larger volumes of dialogues, information and data, as well as span global enterprise deployments.

Many software solution providers are working towards the focusing on the capturing ideas that are Customer need-driven, utilize far more the cloud-based potential, determine the Ideas and possible solutions to then work through the needed resource, identify gaps and then deliver a Work Management set of solutions, to move ideas through to eventual execution but we still have numerous 'disconnects' across the innovation process.

Yet we are still lacking a complete mind-set for managing innovation

Historically this split between idea management software and the enterprise portfolio systems might have previously made sense but I think it is possibly holding the integration of innovation back for today and the future. We need to make a greater connection into what is available, what is possible and what a broad innovation management understanding requires to finally deliver 'the' innovation solution and technology is advancing the possibilities here.

I worry over this 'fixation' on this front end of idea management as we are in a 'race' to provide and improve in a market place of 50 plus providers of idea management software. Equally the fragmenting within the messages and value within the portfolio and pipeline providers is possibly a cause for 'holding back' by a number of possible clients. Solutions that don't seem to align into the organization stay outside and for-ever stand alone, not yielding the potential value for all concerned.

Those that can 'see beyond' just managing in this one or selected spaces of innovation around idea management or portfolio planning, would radically alter the innovation management game.

Providers may make claims they are achieving this complete innovation management system but I am not yet convinced on what I see. *We need a more holistic and integrated approach.*

We need to go to the next step – providers of a holistic Enterprise-wide Innovation Process

We still are falling short on managing the total innovation process. The present software solutions, even if they capture radical ideas seem to 'boil these down' and 'dilute these' as they have to meet the criteria set within the portfolio management system and stage - gating decision process so as to actually work in delivering clear often predetermined outcomes . The end result so often it seems is re-affirming the incremental cycle of repeating, predictable, known decisions, based on hard numbers alone and known facts, so as to be able to achieve some 'given' set of outcomes, both sold in the value of the software solution and believed as wanted by the management.

So much of our innovations we should be dealing with deals are so often in the unknown, unpredictable, in their uniqueness and today our systems simply can't cope with these. We still struggle in dealing with a more radical innovation need, where unpredictable consequences can occur both in defining the right inputs, forecasting the process or outcome predictability. Our present software systems are falling short to manage this fluidness and need for constant agility and adapting.

This is where we need to find a better solution, to find a way, a system and its process that keeps moving innovation towards the broader strategic core having consistent 'line of top management sight.' As well as achieving consistent commitment to manage innovation far more dynamically, and in agile and fluid ways,

Even in this uncertainty we all face today, the full scope of innovation activity has much uncertainty and risk built into it that our present software solutions are finding difficult to manage or capture. It conflicts as they continue to build linear or parallel systems and not systems that adapt and respond as needed, ones that constantly 'loop' back, re-feeding the understanding to drive greater, broader, ever increasing innovation performance.

Moving Innovation into our Core – Part Two

A three-part series on rethinking the management of the innovation system.

Part two, recognizing the broken process we currently have.

The innovation process and the structures build into our organization certainly need to be changed.

I outline here different barriers that require change to bring innovation more into the core of a business.

Today, we need to build greater agility and responsiveness into our innovation design to counter for a more rapidly changing market, sensing changing conditions and to 'seize' breaking opportunities. . A new combination of speed, flexibility, networking and focusing on adapting and fusing the skills and capabilities needed, will require changes in our innovation work.

Our current structures and processes for innovation are holding us back and will continue to *not deliver* the expected results needed today or the future, giving real growth and sustainability. We do need a far more radical approach to a solution for managing innovation inside our organizations.

Poor collective leadership of innovation, functional design, slow decisions and innovation not being focused enough, along with a lack of appropriate skills or decision empowerment, are some of the inhibitors around innovation today.

We need to develop more agile and flexible processes that work more on outcomes that 'seize' the opportunity seen in the market place, emerging from greater (big data) insight, seen as strategically aligned and ensuring processes that shorten the 'reaction' to delivery time.

Firstly we have the strategic – innovation breakdown

The primary reasons for the breakdown in the strategic planning process that fails to connect strategy with operations are:

- A disconnect exists between corporate strategic plans, which typically define the company's targets for growth, and their day-to-day execution activities.
- The annual operating plans are quickly out of date due to constant changes in market, product, technology and competitive situations.
- The connection between corporate plans and the innovation strategy for new product development and product innovation strategy doesn't exist in most companies – this is one critical gap.
- The operational side of the organization frequently doesn't understand the strategy or how its execution connects to business goals.

We forget to alter our 'thinking' across different opportunity horizons, to direct resources around those innovations that address 1) *the burning needs* to improve on the existing here and now, with those that can build into the 2) *next and different winning positions* and finally, those that 3) *explore fundamental different premises* that can (radically) alter your innovation landscape. **Mapping across all three** is often missing, we stay trapped in the 'here and now' mindset far too much.

To achieve consistent, sustainable long-term growth and profitability in your company, you must have systems and processes in place to close this gap and connect your corporate plans with innovation strategy and operational activities.

"Our planning sucks, so how can we be more responsive"

There is the fashionable argument that you abandon annual plans and you seek fresh planning ways to create an organization ready to react to critical changes in the marketplace. That is great for the little fella, all nimble and lean but for the larger complex organization they struggle. Each of the different organizational parts have different reaction and response times, are governed in totally different ways. Plans are essential as the instrument of strategic design but how can these become more reflective and responsive, this is a real thorny problem to crack.

A recent report by Strategy& suggests being more agile requires a clear focus on two attributes of 'strategic responsiveness' and 'organizational flexibility' being built into the design of the larger organizations so they can move far quicker as conditions change. A combination of 'sensing new risk and opportunities' to craft quick responses and also being able to "shift execution rapidly", applying fast retooling and rework, applying this progressively over weeks and months.

For innovation to fit within this challenges much within the current process and structures needs changing

Any 'rapid action' requires very different skills and infrastructure to support it. Organizations will need to encourage a higher level of experimentation, with even more

of a constant focus on reducing all the unnecessary complexity. How can we reduce all the different concepts going through the pipeline? How can we achieve a more corporate-wide support to drive the ones that have real impact through the system to meet these critical new opportunities that meet changing market need or strategic goals. To do this alignment becomes essential.

Pulling together the broken pieces and silos of knowledge will need different approaches

The operational areas in an organization have their own functional execution systems which are often not connected to planning and innovation systems and processes. They remain separated as there is no real depth in the integrating process, this needs addressing. High degrees of resistance and communication breakdowns need real solutions.

I've written extensively on this lack of alignment (**for example**) and certainly believe there are far better ways to move forward in thoughtful, constructive ways that begins the movement to establishing a clearer innovation management system.

Also we focus too much on cascading down organizations, I would argue the **cascading effect** of flowing back up, from the 'grass roots' needs a far more robust system, it provides for a **deeper choice of better, connected decisions**. It is this 'cascading' both up and down on where we often lack the real alignment and fail to incorporate within our future plans.

Leadership constantly laments about 'poor innovation'

Many organizations are failing to build and nurture any design towards the 'innovation ecosystem.' We are also not formulating and communicating where innovation links into strategy, we are not connecting all the different parts. Innovation stays often poorly articulated, lacking understanding of what makes-up a holistically designed innovation ecosystem.

Often innovation 'appeals' because we can build compelling stores. Organizations are poor at building a compelling narrative and lack the skills and communicating methods that will engage us. Innovation understanding is often left to others to interpret what it means to them to figure out their part, with a hope that their decisions will fit somehow.

Because there is often lack of internal clarity, there is also a poor connection to the external environment where opportunities are never recognized for their internal value to develop. Leadership lacks much in addressing these issues.

We constantly fail in building lasting client value

Equally where the customer remains dissatisfied with the present offering, as one *not meeting* their explicit needs and where they often have to continue to compromise, they are ripe for change. Often the very leadership of organizations has a less than adequate 'grasp' of all the necessary levers for clients innovation 'need' to not design this in a sustaining, repeatable process with constant customer engagement they keep these ad hoc, project specific, they miss ongoing value building opportunities.

Innovation stays resolutely one-off, targeted and specialized and disconnected from planning out a series of solutions built through a well thought through road map of evolving value that builds for the longer-term lasting client engagement. There are notable exceptions here, mostly based around technology solutions, constantly evolving, adding increased benefits over time.

There is such a disconnect going on in 'talking and walking' innovation.

The organization 'demands' innovation, the leadership presents innovation at every opportunity, often more as a 'fig leaf' for the embarrassment that eventually arrives, as innovation into the market place. We need to set up a real connection between rhetoric and real value, delivering substance not just 'promise' or intent.

The leader needs to engage become the source or energy point to make valuable innovation really happen, no one else can. It cannot be simply delegated away. Whoever wants a leader that simply delegates growth, new wealth creation and your future to others? The need to both 'walk and talk' innovation consistently not just in annual meetings or board reports but in their daily engagement and detailed understanding of what makes innovation happen..

We also need to become far more comfortable with *our own* emerging practices.

I just always feel uncomfortable on the reliance placed on copying others best practices. It is inherently wrong for your organization if it believes in its unique design and offerings it can deliver upon. If you want to simply copy then seek out best practices and enjoy your 'race to the bottom'. By all means there are good practice solutions to learn from but if you are dependent on **others best practices** you need to kick the habit fast.

Your specific organizations needs its unique design to seed and cultivate innovation, otherwise you fall into a trap many constantly fall into. We need to work on ***our emerging practice*** as we learn through *our own* endeavours, far more than copying others. We need to capture these in our systems and processes as our stories and practices.

The constant switching on and off of our innovation activities.

Organizations constantly do this switching on and off, believing by pressing the innovation button, it springs back into life and delivers on demand. We just can't simply switch innovation 'on or off' to meet short-term needs, it is certainly not faddish, it provides future wealth and sustainability and needs sustaining and nurturing consistently. We need a system that not just monitors the innovating health of the organization but its variances are as vigorously discussed as any operational variance.

Switch innovation 'on and off' at your eventual peril. You will eventually short-circuit the organization and the source of your future will simply drain away. People leave when they see no future or are fed-up with all the constant change. We need to make innovation our core to drive future organization performance and keep it burning bright for all to see and 'fuel' into to make it sustaining.

An Enterprise-wide innovation processes that provides transparency and visibility.

If the leadership of the organization fail to formally integrate innovation into the core of any strategic – management agenda, so that is 'constantly running through' the decision-making process innovation, it will remain disappointing and frustrating in its impact and results. With the increased disruptive competition and rapidly changing conditions in markets, technology and demands placed on organizations, innovation needs to be more central in design and its management.

The leadership need to close the gap between aspiration and execution of innovation, make it more central in their thinking and activities, delivering the explicit message for everyone up and down the organization to feel more confident that innovation is a core focus and needs developing. Make it highly visible and central.

Our leaders need to explicitly lead and manage innovation

Leaders not only need to demand change to come from managing innovation, they need to create this case for change and must 'make it happen' by *demanding* all the connecting parts be understood, designed and delivered, in a more sustaining innovation process.

They need to see a solution that provides an Enterprise-wide innovation process built upon making all the connections for innovations complete understanding, not on selected parts. One that can deliver organizational-wide visibility and transparency, designed for achieving the greater strategic responsiveness needed from the top and able to give back the organizational flexibility, and flexibility in adjusting resource commitments to meet changing needs.

A redesign that is not linear but adaptive and dynamically evolving, based on changing intelligence and knowledge, to bring greater agility and faster decision commitment into its design, something that our present systems do not have designed into them.

Moving innovation into our core – Part three

This is the third and final part of this series on the rethinking within the management of the innovation system. **Technology will drive innovation change.**

We are in need of a different sustaining capacity, one build around innovation as its continuous core; constantly evolving, adapting, learning and adjusting, in perpetual motion.

We are heading for transformational change

Digital technology and the cloud are offering us a radically different conduit to achieve a new engagement process within our organizations. Innovation is going to be very much caught up in this transformational change.

Technology and data will be innovation's catalyst for change.

Digital technology is prompting us to find new methods and manner to shape our environments; these will alter much of what we do around innovation, in radically different ways. We will be able to amplify far more of what is going on in real-time, we can capture and explore all the interactions to understand their potential value, we can discover greater individual needs, exchange and extrapolate better, simulate and experiment, all at a growing scale and speed.

The predictable, well-established ways of the past within our innovation processes will be inadequate to cope. We will require solutions moving towards this very different, constantly adjusting future; one of experimentation and exploitation, delivering solutions that meet changing market needs. Ones that requires a greater alignment in the practices of innovation, so it is constantly adapting, being fluid, flexible, nimble, agile and responsive one that offers an environment that is far different, more dynamic environment to capitalize on this new way of working within our innovation activities.

Designing engagement platforms

Not only will we need a new innovation management system, we will need to build this on multiple engagement platforms. Our growing pressure is to find solutions that offer a cohesive and business-focused approach to the new socially enabled enterprise.

The need is to design these engagement platforms where we seek collaboration and sharing at scale, tapping into a multiple array of communities and advocates that have valuable data for organizations, so they can analyse and interpret this. In return the innovation outcomes delivered back are value propositions that meet those needs and understanding.

This 'marriage' of digital and technology with the physical output of innovations will make it new growth core. Our need is to think through its process, structures and design, as it may have real conflict if we don't change our present thinking around the management of innovation.

Innovation sits outside the organizational 'norm' today

Innovation challenges much of what organizations believe they want: those repeatable systems, so that our organizations performance is well-oiled, highly structured and maximizing value by striving to be efficient and effective. Innovation often is in conflict with this.

Innovation requires increasing agility, flexibility and allowing creativity to flourish. Innovation often stays outside the mainstream system structures, sometimes to it's and the organizations detriment as it often does not fit the 'norm'. This is today's innovation problem

Innovation needs to be fluid, open, responsive; sometimes reliant on the instinct, hunch or powerful insight that is never 'predictable' but suddenly emerges from a collision of events, or random thoughts that lead to a new insight, a game changing one. It is really hard to turn this 'randomness' or serendipity into a system but certainly not impossible.

We need to renew organizational engagement.

Many, if not most of our existing systems, will need radical redesign. Much has to change, be uprooted and completely revisited to begin to design a new digital and physical integrated into the system.

Today digital and physical work at really different speeds; how will they connect different patterns and opportunities and try to fit these into a clear view of the world that ends in new innovation? Can the innovation pipeline cope with even more business opportunities? The human mind-set will need to re-orient to receive new digital information in 'informing' ways.

Innovation throughput will need different approaches than at present. The innovation pipeline today is very manual; it needs human intervention, in decisions, in inputs, in what is communicated, what is approved or dropped. Innovation gets often weighed down by much unnecessary human intervention.

We will need to transform much within our systems but more importantly to orientate our skills to receive, translate and diffuse new knowledge, in significantly different ways.

How can we connect, enable and deliver better innovative outcomes?

External insights and Intelligence will not become Enterprise knowledge that flows. <u>Without</u> real, deep integration receiving the knowledge alone will not turn these into higher scale, richer, more innovation business outcomes that have real growth value, unless we realize this pending and massive 'mismatch' between digital flowing in and the physical process attempting to cope with this to respond with tangible outcomes.

Market trends are changing faster and becoming shorter, so opportunity windows are narrowing. Risks of missing out are constantly increasing for those who are not focusing intently on that critical 'time to market' and not constantly streaming their innovation system, looking to automate it where ever they can.

What happens when all this digital knowledge and insights starts hitting our desks, having to work through an ongoing manual or semi-manual system, when we are seeking to capitalize on a 'breaking' opportunity? It will be a real choke point that will become a crisis – a real burning platform to be resolved.

We need to really think though this as a complete redesign for innovation to cope.

It cannot be a simple 'bolt-on' job, it needs a radical redesign. We should grab this 'moment of time' to think what a new innovation system will need to achieve, fit for the post-digital age, how it should look, feel and operate like.

Organizations will be in their search for understanding what needs to change within their innovation systems, as soon as they realize that today's design can't cope. What is needed depends on how organizations 'embrace' digital. It will need a real depth of understanding and working through.

The pressure for a new business core is building- what will change?

Combining technology and innovation will seriously challenge all of us differently:

- ***Our mental capacity and physical adroitness will continue to multiply*** through digital technologies and the need to be far more agile in responding.
- Yet equally our whole ***domain expertise we know today will eventually be stripped away*** and replaced by something else based on 'collective' knowledge.
- Somehow we will need systems that help us ***manage the physical world of innovation with the constantly changing and informing digital world*** that each of us will need to be 'pulling' together in different ways.
- We will ***need to blend intelligence and experience that we need to share*** will need new ways of networking and exchanging around these ideas and insights into tangible values that fit with the organizations goals.
- As data flows in we will need to ***rationalize the risk decision-making in real-time,*** adjusting risk with opportunities on a constantly changing basis, as our intelligence and knowledge flows update us with more informed understandings..

- We can look to insights as possibly **better predictions of success** by lessening the risk factors of no knowledge being replaced by emerging knowledge based on latest insights.
- We will be able to **explore the 'worlds' trending on those topics relevant to our needs**, knowledge and innovation thinking and bring these into our physical environment to adjust our development process.
- We will consistently **discover the unexpected and the surprising** and we need to be ready to adjust our thinking and capitalize on this quickly, before others come across it. We need high levels of agility and responsiveness.
- Through constant validation we can **consistently confirm or question the business case**, we can test hypothesis and experimentation in real-time, in multiple scenarios and options.
- Having data, creating a history you can be equally **be more backward looking to judge success and failure** to learn from these to intelligently improve going forward.

There are a host of significant changes about to occur, to build more of the dynamics of innovation into our management in radically different ways. These will bring about radical changes in the ways of working innovation, so as to align and extract digital knowledge and 'fuse' this into the design process of the physical for final tangible outcomes.

The combinations of social, big data analytics, computing anywhere at any time, the cloud, collaborative platforms, connecting the virtual world with the physical worlds will change how processes and whole industries will work.

It is how we blend the new business model of service with 'adaptive' technology, processes and people, both inside and outside our organizations will fuel success or speed up decline. What surely is clear that innovation simply cannot remain on the periphery, it simply has to become the new core of our organizations.

Today's innovation engine is not fit for todays or even tomorrows purpose. A time to change it

We are dealing with a completely different set of mind-sets, skills, procedures, governance, processes and responsibilities as we adjust to digital, social and technology advancements. To gain from the digital evolution taking place we need a robust, comprehensive and radical overhaul of much of what is going on within our organizations in relationship to innovation and its management.

We need to not just adapt our processes and structures, but radically challenge them to grab this opportunity to change our innovation processes, so we can provide a more agile and fluid environment. We should be thinking through our needs of the what, where and how we set about constructing this now.

A radical newly designed Enterprise-wide innovation process, that 'sits' in the cloud seems to hold the key in my opinion, embracing and adapting constantly to all we have been learning about how innovation works and what technology, digital, networks, relationships and social streaming brings that all needs to be fully integrated within this redesign. Do you agree?

About Paul Hobcraft

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I simply enjoy innovation. I got 'hooked' fifteen years ago and since then have increasingly focused on innovation until it is 100% of my business thinking and activities today.

I research across innovation, looking to develop novel innovation solutions and frameworks where appropriate. I provide possible answers to many issues associated with innovation with a range of solutions that underpin my advisory, coaching and consulting work at www.agilityinnovation.com .

The aim is to support individuals, teams and organisations, in their innovation activity, applying what I have learnt to further develop core innovation understanding, so clients can achieve positive and sustaining results from their innovating activities.

For me, ***innovation needs to enter the DNA of our organisations*** and our own individual make-up. In my writing, I try to offer a range of thoughts on different aspects of innovation to help each of us to understand this subject better.

Innovation as a source for our growth fascinates me.

As for my personal journey

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, Hong Kong, Australia, and recently twelve years in Singapore. Today, I live in Switzerland, my adopted home.

I've worked in a number of senior positions within global corporations, in global, regional, country and functional levels tackling different challenges that have included start-ups, turn-rounds along with significant re-engineering and operational design or automation across a global network.

The work has been varied, the challenges diverse coming from starting up different businesses in emerging markets, turning difficult ones around in challenging economic and

market conditions more than once, re-engineering a global organization over a three year period choosing to live permanently out of a suitcase (or two) for months at a time in each of the major global locations as the best way to deliver the changes, and finally simply accelerating companies, getting them through to critical mass points, for achieving their positive contributing footprint, within the world.

In 2000 I went into my own business of consulting and advisory work, firstly based in Asia and then in recent years, based in Switzerland

After I moved to Ticino in Switzerland, from Singapore I am spending different times between the two regions, although Europe holds an increasingly more central role. All the time my focus is on innovation and many of the related topics that move it increasingly towards a core within organisations. Innovation understanding does 'simply span' globally and I have been fortunate on building on the foundations initially laid down in Asia and advanced while in Europe through an ever-expanding network of collaborators, knowledge and insights.

My present focus is spent building this innovation practice, providing advice on building the right capabilities and capacities, into organisations or individuals wanting to advance on what they have already in place; to improve, accelerate and develop their innovation competencies and understandings of the 'fit' of innovation.

Paul Hobcraft has been voted into the top innovation bloggers over a consistent period from 2012 on a leading Global Innovation Community- Innovation Excellence- ,

"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"

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