Catalyzing Innovation and Creativity in Your Organization

Moving Toward Peak Performance Conference,
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Presented by:

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Necessary Factors and Conditions

- What conditions contribute to successful innovation within organizations?
- Are there universal conditions needed? Obstacles that need to be removed?
- How might leaders become engaged in fostering such conditions?
- How do organizations measure success regarding innovation?

Olson and Eoyang, *Facilitating Organization Change*

- Why do self-managing groups work at all, let alone so well?
- How do we help an organization move toward self-organizing conditions?

*from Peter Vaill's Forward*
Peters and Waterman,  
*In Search of Excellence* (1982)

“If you want high performance from a team, give them the problem, give them a deadline, give them some resources (they’ll scrounge a lot more, of course), and leave ‘em alone!”

Olson and Eoyang:

- Self-organizing is the fundamental thing we need to understand and to learn to work with:
  - Container
  - Significant Differences
  - Transforming Exchanges
Change Through Connections

“The major business of leadership is to engage with all system agents to foster their interconnections.” (p.25)

“Change cannot be a simple top-down process. It must work from every point in the system toward every other point.” (p.27)


- LOOP Leadership Model:
  - Linkage
  - Obstacles
  - Opportunities
  - Plans

- Many different types of innovators are needed... Each focusing on a unique aspect of the challenge
- Creativity needs to be linked to organizational opportunities and the people who can catalyze change \( \rightarrow \) innovation
- IDEO as an example of an innovative culture

Dealing with Resistance

There are many sources of resistance of change... and a variety of responses that may be more appropriate to certain types, and not to others. Here are some of our key points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Resistance</th>
<th>Helpful Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Threat for Risk Taking</td>
<td>Increase Safety &amp; Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Trust</td>
<td>Increase Reliability of Honest Transactions (Transparency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Meaning (Inertia/Anomy)</td>
<td>Increase Opportunities/Access to “Communities of Practice” &amp; Networks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Dealing with Resistance (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Resistance</th>
<th>Helpful Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outmoded Processes &amp; Technologies (in which we are invested)</td>
<td>Design web-like organizations with capacities for self-organizing teams → Circulate info. that energizes the system with new capacity → Leverage opportunities for change → &quot;Flow Facilitation&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Status Quo</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Top’ Puts Kibosh on Innovations → (&quot;Why bother? It’s too scary...&quot;)</td>
<td>See #1 and #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuck in the middle of competing value (internal/external divide)</td>
<td>Reframe Issues → Collaborative systems Partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### What Can I Do? Sources of Inspiration

- What are some key sources of inspiration among staff, faculty, and students at the University?
- How might we encourage sharing of ‘inspiring stories’ with one another in ways that synergize, energize, and catalyze resilient responses by the University?
- Are there characteristics of ‘innovative people’? How do we attract, nourish, retain, sustain, and help them flourish? Can they be created?
UW-MANIAC – Catalyzing Innovative Thinking and Networking

- Innovation and Collaboration Learning Café Series – Sharing Stories, Tools, and Success Strategies
  - Next Café: June 30th at the Pyle Center (8:30am-1pm)

- Bi-monthly Breakfast Series – Focus on a Single Innovation and see how it may be applied to our work and lives
  - Next Breakfast Series Event: May 5th at Memorial Union, 8:00 – 9:30am
Harry’s Reading List for Creativity and Innovation

There are LOTS of excellent readings and resources available to support efforts to catalyze innovation and creativity in organizations. Here are a few that I especially like to share with others:

- McDermott and Sexton, *Leading Innovation* (2004);
- Olson and Eoyang, *Facilitating Organization Change* (2001);
- Wenger, *Communities of Practice* (1998);
- Leonard and Swap, *When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups* (1999);
- de Geus, *The Living Company* (1997);
- Koestenbaum, *Leadership: The Inner Side of Greatness* (1991);
- Buzan, *The Mind Map Book* (1993);
- Cloke and Goldsmith, *The End of Management & the Rise of Organizational Democracy* (2002);
- Rebecca Chan Allen, *Guiding Change Journeys: A Synergistic Approach to Organization Transformation* (2002);
- Mohrman and Cummings, *Self-Designing Organizations* (1989);
- Outcalt, Faris, and McMahon, eds., *Developing Non-Hierarchal Leadership on Campus: Case Studies and Best Practices in Higher Education* (2001);

I’m happy to talk with people about this topic... I’m not an expert on creativity, but I think I’ve learned a few things about sparking it, sustaining it, transforming its energy into constructive action, and helping people assess their impacts in useful ways.

- Harry Webne-Behrman
  April 2009