

a special excerpt exclusive to InnovationManagement.se

the innovation master plan

the CEO's guide to innovation

by langdon morris



this excerpt includes

chapter 7

Langdon Morris is recognized worldwide as one of the leading authors and consultants in the innovation field. A new chapter of his latest book, *The Innovation Master Plan*, will be presented exclusively at InnovationManagement.se every two weeks throughout the summer.

It will soon also be available at Amazon.com (but not quite yet).

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The Innovation Master Plan

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chapter 7

who innovates

creating the innovation culture with geniuses, leaders, and champions

“I make mistakes. Even though I am a conservative person by nature, I still want to innovate, and when you innovate, you’re going to make mistakes. And I want to be able to have that freedom to make mistakes.”¹

Liu Chuanzhi, chairman and co-founder of Lenovo

We’ve examined why, what, how, and measurement. Now let’s consider who, which is to ask, “How can we inspire people to do the things that lead to innovation,” and “How should they be organized and managed?”

Organizations that are successful at innovation naturally develop a strong innovation culture. Such a culture is often admired by outsiders, and also experienced among the people inside the organization as a dynamic and innovation-friendly place to be.

But supposing an innovation culture doesn’t already exist in your organization. Then how can you nurture it? You might ask,

How do organizations develop the innovation culture?

Who should be involved in the innovation process?

And what roles should they play?

These are among the questions we explore in this chapter.

culture and innovation culture

Every culture, innovative or not, is an expression of the behaviors, attitudes, and actions of the people who are its members. This, of course, is an element of the tacit dimension because culture is mostly a tacit attribute. It does have explicit manifestations – symbols, flags, uniforms, anthems, and codified rules, but behind these lies an entire universe of unspoken understandings. Knowing and conforming to them makes you an insider, a member.

¹ “As China innovates, major challenges await.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 20, 2011. P D2. A very revealing interview by Marcus Chan.

Culture isn't created overnight, but rather it emerges through time, so it also exists as a consequence of history, reflecting what has been done in the past. It gets transmitted from the past to the present with notable continuity, which is often how we recognize its existence. Hence, when we reflect on our own situation today, we can see past trends interacting with new forces during our own times, and the aggregate picture is exactly what constitutes our culture *right now*.

Culture is also a force that influences whatever will be accomplished in our future; culture, that is, is largely self-perpetuating, and indeed its persistence from generation to generation is one of the defining characteristics of "culture" as a concept in and of itself.

The *innovation* culture likewise must develop as a consequence of particular behaviors and attitudes, as well as structures and tools, and most especially actions; the actions that result in innovations of all types - breakthroughs, useful incremental changes, and even radically new ways of doing business.

Organizations that have an innovation culture create innovations, by definition, with some regularity, and actually the concept of regularity is a quick test to see if a company really does have one. How frequently does the company produce interesting new ideas, concepts, products, or services? If cool new stuff seems to be coming out all the time, in different contexts and forums, and if the internal discussion in the organization is also rich with the talk of innovation, then it's indeed likely that an innovation culture exists there.

Since the innovation culture is not all that common among today's organizations we can infer that it's not so easy to create, but we knew that already. We've all worked in companies that felt sluggish and stifling, and most of us yearn to work in organizations that are vibrant and dynamic. A key reason for the rarity is that the characteristics needed to achieve an innovation culture are frequently not viewed as necessary, or even desirable, in successful companies.

It's only a slight parody to say that business leaders love stability and predictability because these are the conditions that make for reliable profits and increasing scale, i.e., growth. The pursuit of innovation, however, is a story of novelty, risk, and the unexpected, of adaptation and change, which is often difficult to live with, and also difficult to profit from. Consequently, many hesitate.

Innovation pursued reluctantly means that we consider changing only when we're absolutely forced to. We generally hate it, because it means we have to give something up that we prefer to keep, which is the old, comfortable way, even though the market may be telling us that the old way isn't good enough any more. Hence the dynamic power of capitalism, a remarkable self-organizing process of introducing novelty into markets through the mechanism of marketplace competition.

Companies die in this process. In the words of Dr. Deming, "Survival is not mandatory;" companies get thrown out entirely when they fail to adapt. So if standardization has triumphed totally over innovation, this is perhaps an indication that the past has overtaken a company. Perhaps it's dead, although various constituents may not have realized it yet.

If no one wants to buy your products, even if they are made to six sigma quality standards, then you have a different sort of problem. What you require are new and better designs, not ever more perfect manufacturing standards; the wrong product,

perfectly made, is still the wrong product.

A culture of innovative operations is partly where the genius of firms like Apple, Cisco, and Toyota lies, because their leaders have found a way to standardize or systematize the process of innovation. Perhaps the last sentence seems to express a contradiction – how do you standardize innovation? But that's exactly the point (and that's the same point that I made in the title of my book *Permanent Innovation*). They have created true innovation cultures, which is precisely what it means to make the creation of novelty a consistent output of an organization's behavior, and hence an attribute of its culture.

At Toyota, the fruits of manufacturing innovation led to transformative breakthroughs in simplification, resulting in a company that is universally recognized as the most proficient auto manufacturer. But they didn't stop with quality and efficiency; they also pursued elusive but important goals related to design, engineering, and business innovation, yielding the happy marriage of quality and innovation that led it to become the world's most admired car company.

The means of achieving this, and likewise the commitment to doing it, originated with the very top management of these companies, and then spread throughout. But how did it spread? What did they do? Here is what we've learned.

managing innovation with 3 roles

In the language of systems thinking, a key function of "management" is to eliminate unwanted "variation," which is, broadly, the tendency of things to go off uncontrolled in all directions. Excessive variation is the absolute enemy of profitability; indeed, the entire purpose of practices such as quality control and six sigma is to eliminate unwanted variety.

However, the purpose of innovation is precisely to create a particular form of variation, variety that is valuable novelty. Too often, however, the valued baby, useful variety, is thrown out with the unwanted bathwater, unwelcome variation. So unless variety-creation through innovation is a priority of managers, it may be omitted from management's job description. And it very often is, either because managers fail to achieve innovation, or because they fail to try.

Now, this does not mean that individual people - workers, managers, whomever - are against innovation. In fact, they're probably for it. Most people actually love innovation – new cars, new clothes, new homes, new TVs, new movies, new music, new everything. But the very spirit and process of contemporary organizations, as expressed in how we organize large groups of people to work, often makes innovation extraordinarily difficult, and hence the rarity of the innovation culture.

And yet you'd probably like your own company to be more innovative than it is today. Which means you understand the benefits of innovation and you want your company to be more innovative. You want, that is, to develop the innovation culture.

How?

We've found that the innovation culture comes into being when people throughout the organization actively engage in the three different types of activities

that are critical to the creative endeavor:

Some people frame compelling questions, explore hidden factors, conduct rigorous experiments, come up with new ideas, and then explore them to see if they have the potential to become genuine innovations, whether large or small, breakthrough or incremental. They are curious, looking persistently for surprises to develop into ideas, and then into value-adding insights and innovations. **This is what innovation's Creative Geniuses do.**

Some people define the strategic goals and pathways, set the policies and expectations that this strategy-to-idea-to-innovation process is what we're actually going to do, and they set aside the capital to support it. They define a firm's goals and policies to favor innovation. **This is what Innovation Leaders do.**

And some people provide support, guidance, and tools so that the creative process itself can flourish. They support innovators and manage the innovation process by helping creative people overcome the obstacles that otherwise impede their innovation efforts. They also manage the innovation portfolios. **This is what Innovation Champions do.**

In this chapter we'll explore each of these three roles in turn, and then consider some of the factors that bring the work of all three into a cohesive whole.

innovation's creative geniuses

Who comes up with the critical questions that are the beginnings of innovation, and then turns these into ideas and then into insights, and eventually into innovations? They are Creative Geniuses, and they work throughout your company.

They may also work outside, in your extended ecosystem of suppliers, partners, and advisors. And they may be customers; in some industries it is customers who provide the vast majority of innovation ideas. They may even be non-customers; tapping into *their* beliefs and behaviors to create new products and services can create powerful and compelling growth opportunities.

Creative geniuses are often the individuals who bridge the gap between the organization and its customers; we sometimes call them front line workers. They may also be senior managers, who, after all, have plenty of exposure to new trends that may stimulate new ideas. And they may also be middle managers, who are uniquely positioned at the crossroads of many information flows to spot innovation opportunities that others may have missed. The point is that it doesn't matter so much where these people are located in the organization, or outside of it; what does matter is the mindset that they bring, and the fact of having a productive pathway for that mindset to be channeled into.

If it feels like a stretch to label these people as "geniuses," then let me explain the rationale. Your idea of a creative genius could be Leonardo or Michelangelo, but

chances are you don't have many of *them* in your firm. So you may wonder how, among so many workers in your firm, you'll identify the creative ones. Who are the creative geniuses?

But this, in our experience, is the wrong approach.

A more useful viewpoint is to assume that given the opportunity and the context, just about *everyone* in the organization can be and is a creative genius. That's been our experience over many decades of working with thousands of organizations, because we've seen that people everywhere love to come up with great, new questions and new ideas, and often the people you might least expect to have a valuable insight are exactly the ones who do. So not only is it more useful to consider everyone a potential creative genius, it's more accurate.



Figure 22
Engaging the Creative Genius in Everyone

People love to innovate because it's inherently satisfying, and we can indeed bring forth this spirit throughout our organizations. Starting from this premise means that it's up to the leaders and champions (whose roles we'll discuss shortly) to remove the obstacles that are holding others back. It's also up to them to set the tone and expectations accordingly. Carpet One co-founder Howard Brodsky puts it a bit more bluntly. He says, "If you're not bringing new ideas to our organization, you won't last here very long."

No one can innovate, however, if they simply accept things as they are today. Making innovations requires that we are willing to consider that things might be different, and then to ask the questions that illuminate the roots of current reality, and which lead us to explore alternative future ones, to think about what it means, and to examine why. To engage in this sort of behavior we have to overcome any institutional or bureaucratic inertia that may inhibit our thinking process, and also to challenge ourselves to see beyond conventional viewpoints.

This sort of creative behavior is also a natural and innate human capacity, and indeed it's what people do from the very first moments of life, apparently as an entirely natural function of living. Alison Gopnick explains this beautifully.

"We take it for granted that young children are perpetually 'getting into things.' In fact, a major job for caregivers is to keep this instinct for getting into such things as plugs and electric fans from causing harm. As a do-it-yourself exercise

in developmental psychology, find any child between one and two, and simply watch her play with her toys for half an hour. Then count up the number of experiments you see – any child will put the most productive scientist to shame. But when you think about it more closely this is a very odd thing for children to do. They don't get into things in order to satisfy their immediate needs; their immediate needs are taken care of by adults. Why do young children spend so much energy and time, even putting their own safety at risk? It makes perfect sense, though, if you think of toddlers as learning machines. Experimentation is one of the best ways of discovering new causes and their effects and understanding the causes you've already observed. Although preschool teachers and parents have long felt intuitively that play contributes to learning, these experiments actually show scientifically that this is true. The drive to experiment seems to be innate, but experimenting provides us with a way of learning things that are not innate. What are built in are techniques for discovering things that are not built in.”²

All babies are geniuses, and they learn at a phenomenal rate. Our organizational goal is to replicate this entirely natural process as a matter of systematic organizational behavior, and this emphasis on creative thought fits quite nicely with the dictionary's definition of genius, “exceptional natural capacity shown in creative and original work.”

I realize that this idea that everyone in the organization is a creative genius is a significant departure from how things used to be. In the past, people in front line roles were often specifically instructed *not* to be thinkers, not to have ideas, and certainly not to ask questions. They were supposed to perform pre-defined roles in a repetitive way.

Today, of course, it's the opposite. We know that front line workers have a unique and invaluable perspective that, with the proper encouragement, can lead to innovation in many dimensions. Hence, the average Toyota worker, including those working on the assembly lines, contributes on average more than one hundred ideas each year. This is how creative genius gets tapped, and how it contributes to the greatness of a great company.

insider and outsider

It often helps geniuses to succeed when they have a deep insider's knowledge of their industry, but also bring an outsider's perspective to it. That is, because they are not willing to be satisfied merely with what currently exists, they often look for new knowledge outside of their own fields, and this outsider perspective helps them to see things differently, to recognize opportunities that others have missed.

Consequently, a great many of the breakthrough business ideas in recent history reflect this insider-outsider combination. The overwhelming global success of

² Alison Gopnik, *The Philosophical Baby*, Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009. p 91. I highly recommend this book.

Starbucks, for example, was not driven by the company's original founders, who had in fact a rather narrow view of their business, but by outsider Howard Schultz, who came to Starbucks with a vision of a much broader market than the founders had imagined. It was Schultz who ended up taking over the company and forging it into a global beverage leader.

Another example is Southwest Airlines, which was not created by "airline people," but by a lawyer and an air charter executive who understood a need that their insider competitors had not recognized. Together, they pioneered an entirely new business model in the airline industry, and in the intervening decades their model has triumphed: just about every airline in the world has copied elements of Southwest's business model, while most of the ones that did not do so have disappeared from the market because they were unable to compete effectively.

Likewise, many great companies including Toyota's Scion, GM's Saturn (RIP), Home Depot, McDonald's, as well as Amazon and Fedex, were originated by people who combined insider's knowledge with an outsider's willingness to do things differently. They also shared a universal goal, to meet customer needs better than they had previously been met.

Most executives know that outside knowledge is critical to success, and a recent McKinsey study notes that 75% of them report getting new ideas as a result of interaction with outsiders such as suppliers, peers, and partners. You can apply the same underlying principle by ensuring that creative geniuses inside your firm have access to a broad range of experiences beyond the boundaries of their departments or their organization, that they have opportunities to explore into the edges where new experiences and new insights are often found.

But it's probably not enough to expose the people inside your organization to outside viewpoints. In addition, you need to bring the outsiders all the way into the innovation process. Customers, vendors, partners, community members, scholars, and even in some cases competitors can contribute significant insights to your innovation efforts. Further, many aspects of the work can be supported by consultants, either when the in-house staff is simply not large enough to handle the work load, or when they lack specific technical expertise in areas such as research, engineering, and marketing (to name 3).

A broad name for this kind of effort engaging with outsiders is "open innovation," and it is being used successfully in many firms. A more detailed conversation about open innovation is presented in Chapter 9.

A last point about geniuses inside of your firm – the willingness to take risk and overcome obstacles may be a critical part of the genius role as their visionary insights, but what if the budding geniuses are not entrepreneurs? What if they work inside a company, and they don't have the intention or the desire or the political skills to take on the bureaucracy to push their ideas forward? Then it's up to innovation champions to help them, and we will explore their role shortly.

the process of genius

The details of creative work come intuitively to many people, while others need

coaching and perhaps training to master it. Champions can support them as well. And even those who approach creativity with ease can still benefit from a bit of structure to help them organize their efforts. Hence, the purpose of the innovation process described in Chapter 5 is to give the right amount of guidance and structure to both individuals and organizations.

The effort required to master the innovation process takes time, and of course it also takes time to think through innovative ideas. Thus, a critical element that also supports the flowering of creative genius is time to let the process unfold both as a matter of skill development and for the development of specific innovation ideas and projects. Hence, if the pressure of the day-to-day is so great that there's no time for new ideas, then the flow of innovation will dry up.

But if people do have time to explore, to learn, and to discuss, then they can create great things, which is why companies like Google and 3M have, as a matter of company policy, invited people to spend up to 20% of their time working on projects of their own choosing. For there is creative genius in each of us, and it may take only the right mix context, curiosity, support and environment for it to come abundantly forth.

innovation leaders

Another central role in the innovation culture is that of the Innovation Leader, someone who significantly influences or even defines the core structures and the basic operations of an organization, all with a clear focus on shaping and assuring its future, which of course includes the necessity of supporting innovation.

Core structures may include the design of the organization itself, as well as its policies and their underlying principles. Metrics and rewards can also be core structures, and we know that people in organizations respond to how their actions are measured, and of course to how their rewards are determined.

All these elements together broadly constitute the internally-defined rules of the game, and leaders are the people who define a lot of them, either by explicit statement of policy, or by the tacit expression of their own behaviors. Since none of these factors are absolute givens from the outset except those that are mandated by law, and indeed most of them can be changed, that's exactly the point: they are subject to *design*, to thoughtful choice about what's best. It's generally within the power of senior managers to change these structures, and when they impede innovation they should be changed to favor it.

Do you think, for example, that the rules at Toyota, both explicit in policy and tacit in culture, are different than the rules at GM or Ford? You bet they are. Toyota's rules have favored innovation for a long time; GM's rules definitely hindered it.

Consequently, figuring out exactly what the obstacles to innovation are is a key management responsibility, and since the creators and champions are probably highly aware of what they are, all you have to do is ask and you'll learn a great deal.

Innovation leaders also set expectations, define priorities, celebrate and reward successes, and encourage disciplined failures, and all of these tasks can be done to

make innovation easier. Because each can be arranged to favor the status quo or to favor useful and effective inquiry and change, the nuances do matter.

Leaders also set goals, and they don't need to be modest ones; in fact they can and perhaps should be outright aspirational. By setting ambitious goals that emphasize the linkage between an organization's strategy and the pursuit of innovation, leaders elevate innovation to a strategic concern where it properly belongs. It's their responsibility to also then provide the tools to achieve the aspirations, as goals without the means to achieve them will be rightly seen as a set-up for failure, and this will be demotivating to many people, and therefore self-defeating.

And if innovation isn't expressed as a specific goal of top management then it probably won't be a goal of anyone else, either; policies that are restrictive and make it difficult to test new ideas practically guarantee that there won't be many new ideas.

Trust is also critical. Are people suspicious of the motives or behaviors of their leaders or their coworkers? If so, they probably won't be willing to ask the necessary probing questions, or share what they learn if they do ask, because doing so entails organizational risk. In this situation the behaviors that are considered "normal" are the ones that reinforce the status quo.

By their very nature, in fact, behavior in most organizations tends to reinforce the status quo. This, as I noted, is not because of any shortcoming on the part of the people, but because success in the short term is usually enhanced by factors like stability, predictability, and repetition. These are characteristics that managers are trained to manage toward.

The problem, of course, is that getting the job done well often locks innovation out, and executing on the plan can also invoke another meaning of executing on innovation, which is killing it. Hence, the re-definition of execution has to mean the application of principles and policies that enhance innovation efforts as much as it also pertains to the day to day.

When people do feel safe asking the tough questions and they understand the necessity of change, they'll be more likely to explore and develop new ideas themselves. The difference between these two states of being has enormous consequences for the future of the organization, and working to assure a trusting environment is essential to long term success.

Hence, innovation leaders are typically, although not exclusively, senior managers who feel a compelling need to bring innovation to their organizations. They also reduce or even eliminate obstacles that inhibit innovation performance, and it's the overlap between commitment and authority that makes the innovation leader's role unique as well as indispensable.

The actions and attitudes of senior managers are based, ultimately, on their philosophies about management, on their mindsets, which we explored as a key formative factor in the introduction. So if you want to develop the innovation culture in your own organization you must be a willing exemplar for others, in tone and word as well as in your policies and actions.

Let's take a few specific examples. How about budgets? Do your budgets include a line item like "investment in innovation"? If not, are you sure that innovation is getting any investment at all? If there's no budget for innovation, then

the likelihood that it will happen declines significantly.

And is there a seed fund for investing in promising new ideas?

Is there a team of people to manage new ideas that do not fit inside of existing business units? If not, then how will such ideas find support?

If tools such as these are not in place, then if innovation does happen it's almost certain to be exclusively incremental, executed only in the regular course of product and service management. What is prevented from happening is anything remotely related to a breakthrough innovation, or the development of a new business model or a new venture.

Another recent survey by McKinsey found that top managers believe breakthroughs will deliver the greatest performance improvements, but without specific budgetary focus they're never going to get there.³

So are your business units budgeting for innovation? Are they measured on their innovation performance? Are goals established for the contribution to value growth achieved through innovation?

The same survey exposes a huge disconnect, as only 24% of the responding executives are actually involved in setting innovation budgets. Only 22% of executives say that planning for innovation is part of their annual planning cycle, which means that 78% are not. If it's neither budgeted nor planned for, then is it going to happen? Probably not.

Do you measure the "contribution to innovation" made by individuals, teams, and departments? As a general matter you should, as we discussed in the previous chapter.

In summary, the critical function of innovation leadership can be expressed in two words. "Policy" is the first, because innovation leaders have to choose organizational policies to favor innovation. "Tone" is the second, because innovation leaders also set the tone that others follow, either encouraging innovation or inhibiting it through the ways they behave and communicate.

managing a P&L while managing innovation

There are important nuances pertaining to P&L responsibilities, innovation budgets, and performance measurement which also need to be explored.

Two questions frame the issue. First, do you assess and reward P&L managers on the profitability of their operations? Certainly. And second, do you also expect them to lead innovation? Probably.

But if you're requiring them to do both then you're giving them a mixed message, because innovation is not only a short term expense that reduces current profits, but it also carries the risk that there won't be any medium or long term benefit at all. Any investment in innovation therefore reduces the P&L manager's apparent performance, and hence the rewards.

Have you seen companies fail because of lack of innovation? This P&L dynamic is often a key factor, because when a P&L manager also has responsibility for

³ McKinsey & Company. "How Companies Approach Innovation," October 2007.

innovation, the decision to innovate must come from a moral, philosophical, or visionary commitment to doing so despite the penalty it will incur. The more short-term the incentive structure is oriented, the greater the threat to innovation. In most companies, the game is rigged against innovation-promoting behavior by this short-term structure of rewards.

A solution is that while P&L managers should definitely have innovation management responsibilities, the capital to fund their non-incremental innovation efforts should be allocated from a corporate budget, not from their own P&Ls. In this way, a manager can generate as much profit as possible and send the funds to corporate, but then corporate returns a portion, to be invested by the manager in the search for breakthroughs.

The manager then has the responsibility to function as a portfolio manager and achieve a solid return on the capital, which, again, is accounted separately from the performance of the P&L. This structure leverages the obvious knowledge and expertise of a key manager, without burdening him or her with an unfair impediment to profitability, and still provides the financial and organizational means for the business unit to evolve and adapt to changing market conditions.

innovation champions

The third role that shapes the innovation culture is the innovation champion, the catalyst who makes every innovation system work. By “innovation champion” I don’t mean the ones who competes for their personal glory to win a gold medal, perhaps in the sense of a world champion in sport, but rather as ones who advocate on behalf of others, defending and supporting a greater cause than themselves.

We could also use the terms “guide” or “coach” to describe this role.

No matter the name, their responsibility is to create the irresistibly fertile environment for innovation, and provide the necessary tools to support it such that it thrives. Champions are therefore individuals and teams of people who promote, encourage, prod, support, and drive innovation in their organizations.

They do this in spontaneous moments of conversation, coaching, and insight, and through ad-hoc efforts, as well as in highly structured innovation programs and systems. In doing so, innovation champions build the practical means for effective innovation throughout their organizations.

Innovation champions are catalysts, an essential role that’s often missing in organizations, and in its absence the spirit of innovation often languishes. There will always be people who want to think innovatively given the opportunity, and there will always be senior managers in leadership roles, whether they favor innovation or not. But there will not be innovation champions unless they are created and supported as an explicit organizational function.

An innovation champion may have a job title in R&D, such as R&D Vice President or Director; the champion’s title may also be linked directly with innovation, such as Chief Innovation Officer or Director of Innovation. This person may also have a broader management role, as a Vice President, Director, or Manager of some specific department or division.

Regardless of their title, what they do is take direct responsibility for finding people who ask really good questions, creative thinkers in other words, and encourage them to explore everything that can be explored, and to seek and hopefully find answers to their probing questions; they help people seek new experiences that may spark new ideas; and they create a regular operations context in which sharing and developing new ideas is the norm.

the bridge from strategy to innovation

While champions may work anywhere in the organization, including in senior management positions, line management roles, staff, or front line operations roles, the specific nature of the Innovation Champion's role is to function in the middle, to provide the bridge between the strategic intents and decisions of senior managers who generally shape policy, and the day to day focus of front line workers who create business results.

In smaller or more compact organizations, and occasionally in larger ones, too, innovation champions are often senior leaders themselves, who have strategic roles as well as operational management responsibilities. The renowned HP practice of management-by-walking-around, MBWA, was a great innovation champion technique for learning about innovation efforts and supporting them. One of the reasons it worked so well is that the founders of the company were the ones doing it. MBWA kept Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard in touch with what was happening throughout their company, and helped them link their strategic roles with the day-to-day thoughts, questions, and opportunities that were being developed by the people working around them. In this role and in recognition of the importance of innovation to their firm, Bill Hewlett himself personally retained the responsibility for managing HP Labs for decades.

But regardless of the size of the firm or where you may sit in the org chart, the key is that champions provide practical support and guidance for innovation. Thus, champions are enablers who work as facilitators and supporters and play a critical, hands-on role in nurturing innovation efforts.

succeeding as a champion

Champions are usually persistent networkers who are in contact with many people and who know what's going on in many places. They know who has skills, talents and resources, and they find out who needs them, and then they put them together to accelerate innovation progress. They also want to know about needs, and they spend a lot of time learning about what's not working well for customers, or inside the organization, so that they can point innovators toward likely innovation opportunities.

They spend a lot of their time helping others to develop their skills through coaching and mentoring. They also look for learning opportunities for others to engage in, such as conferences, discussions, external events, and perhaps even trainings. They gather interesting materials - books, web sites, papers, articles - and

they distribute them broadly, helping people to discover useful new information.

One R&D director that I knew and admired became the unofficial literature supplier for his executive team. He kept multiple copies of about 100 different books, articles, and magazines in his inventory so he was always ready to respond to questions and conversations with helpful resources. Every time I went to see him I would leave with one or two things to read that were extremely well chosen for the concerns of that moment.

As managers with specific responsibilities in the innovation effort, Innovation Champions are almost certain to be involved in the oversight and review of particular projects. Here they have a critical role to play, because the effective pursuit of innovation must, as we have explored in Chapter 3, necessarily involve a significant degree of failure, and failure is usually a very sensitive issue. Will it be avoided, scorned, tolerated ... or embraced? If it is avoided, scorned, or merely tolerated, then the underlying message is that our organization prefers to remain within its established comfort zone, and we're not willing to accept the challenge of finding new solutions. This path, of course, contains the seeds of self-destruction because it sets the stage for externally-driven change to at some unforeseen point in time overwhelm the inwardly-obsessed organization. Hence, innovation champions embody the enthusiasm for failure, intelligent failure, that is, because disciplined failure is the extraordinary enabler of innovation.

Similarly, innovation champions are always ready to learn about surprises, since surprises may be early indications of market change and innovation opportunity. And further, innovation champions always have a great enthusiasm for new data and information, particularly those data that contradict what we used to know, as they may also be harbingers of change, and the sooner we learn about impending change, the better.

By exemplifying these attitudes in their interactions with a wide variety of people, Innovation Champions carry both a powerful message and they demonstrate an important practical set of attitudes: innovation is important in this company, they proclaim through words and actions, and all the factors that support innovation are carefully aligned to enable the creative geniuses to achieve their maximum potential as innovative contributors to the evolution of the company.

In the language of Malcolm Gladwell's concept of *The Tipping Point*, Innovation Champions function in all three roles that are essential to the spread of new ideas: they are mavens, who have deep knowledge that they are keen to share, salesmen who influence others to take action, and connectors who have strong relationships with many people. In all of these roles, the underlying emphasis is on defining the pursuit of innovation as a normal, expected behavior.⁴

This idea of a norm is central to the concept of innovation culture, and it's a key role of champions to promote these behaviors precisely as "normal." In many organizations, dare I say most, it is the opposite behavior that has been standardized as normal, the behavior that embraces the status quo, and often leads to behaviors that are bureaucratic, anti-change, and sadly of course, ultimately self-defeating.

⁴ Malcolm Gladwell. *The Tipping Point*. Back Bay Books, 2002.

collaboration and trust

The core of the Champion's role to support and attain innovation thus revolves around three linked activities, building collaboration, and building the trust upon which effective collaboration occurs, and building the skill level of people working on innovation initiatives.

It's not an exaggeration to say that the culture of innovation is built upon the practice of effective collaboration, because innovation is a collaborative endeavor that requires the participation of many different people who may be working inside and outside the organization.

This McKinsey study has something to say about the relationship between collaboration and trust.

"Managers and employees broadly agree about the attitudes, values, and behavior that promote innovation. Topping the list, in our research, were openness to new ideas and a willingness to experiment and take risks. In an innovative culture, employees know that their ideas are valued and believe that it is safe to express and act on those ideas and to learn from failure. Leaders reinforce this state of mind by involving employees in decisions that matter to them. Respondents to our survey of 600 executives and managers indicated that trust and engagement were the mind-sets more closely correlated with a strong performance on innovation. In the same survey, 46 percent said that they were far more likely to seek out a trusted colleague than an expert or manager to get new ideas and feedback on their own ideas."⁵

Innovation doesn't happen easily in environments where trust is absent, because the search for innovation is inherently risky and the lack of trust can stifle even the elemental attempt at innovation because of the fear that will open the would-be innovator to ridicule.

Or stated from the opposite perspective, there is little innovation without collaboration, and there is no collaboration without trust. We will discuss collaboration in more detail in Chapter 9.

Another key role for Champions is building the infrastructure that supports innovation. This infrastructure may involve various tools for collaboration and communication, including online idea repositories and wikis, knowledge management tools, and social networking tools. This is also discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

If we were to choose a single word to describe what Innovation Champions do, that word might be "practice." Innovation Champions implement the essential tools to foster innovation through effective interaction, helpful attitudes, and practical means. They also work to transform abstract concepts and mandates into practical realities.

As I noted above, we might also label them as "guides," those who know the

5 Joanna Barsh, Marla M. Capozzi and Jonathan Davidson. "Leadership and Innovation." *McKinsey Quarterly*, 2008.

way ahead and help everyone to get there. And they are also coaches, who provide necessary structure and at the same time corrective advice, and abundant encouragement, to carry the creative process through it's many difficulties.

complementary roles in the innovation system

To make this approach useful we need to understand how the three roles constitute a whole system, and we especially need to know how this whole is different from the parts that comprise it.

If you're among the many managers who have identified the innovation culture as a goal for your organization to achieve, then getting rid of the obstacles by understanding and applying the three roles defined here should yield a significant improvement in your firm's innovation performance. Latent innovation geniuses, champions, and leaders are already working in your organization, and as you bring specific focus to defining and supporting them in these roles, their work will be validated and their efforts are likely to become much more effective.

Creative geniuses apply know-how that results in new knowledge, insights, ideas, and ultimately in innovation. Creative geniuses *produce* innovation results.

Innovation Champions define the practices that *enable* innovation, eliminate those that impede it, and in so doing enable the entire innovation culture.

Innovation Leaders define the policies that enable innovation, and eliminate those that impede it, thereby taking a lead role in *creating* the innovation culture (but not necessarily the innovations).

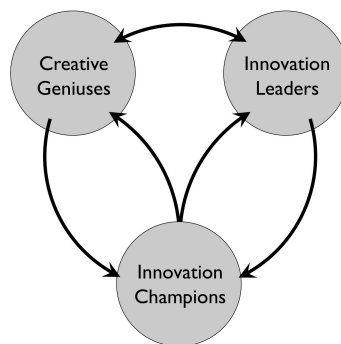


Figure 23
The 3 Roles of the Innovation Culture

Without know-how, without effective practice, and without policy, innovation will be inhibited or stifled outright. Hence, each of these three makes an important contribution to the development of the innovation culture, and all three roles are essential to success.

It doesn't matter which functions originate with which individuals, but it matters a lot that everyone is involved, and that they have a clear understanding of the roles that must be played, and how each contributes to the bigger picture of the emerging innovation culture.

There are many occasions when ideas and idea creators need support; there are times when policies are needed to enhance and enable innovation efforts; there are situations when people need new ways to look at their problems to find new ideas. How well are these three roles understood and applied in your organization?

When your business model is based to any degree on innovation, or requires innovation (and it should), then people in all three roles will be the ones who execute it.

Conversely, the absence of any of the three roles will show up in business operations as painful disconnects. Lacking a systematic innovation culture may cause great ideas to go nowhere due to lack of receptivity, innovative products not to reach customers, innovative services to fail to be delivered, or distribution systems to lack effective products.

Consider a few somewhat oversimplified examples of what happens when the parts don't fit together well. Imagine a company with an amazing breakthrough technology from a team of amazing creative geniuses, but a sales force that is incapable of selling it and a senior management that is largely indifferent to prospective buyers. Actually, that's not so difficult to imagine, nor is it all that oversimplified. I already mentioned that Xerox had that experience; the company practically invented the PC, but was not successful in bringing it to market.

Why not?

Because Xerox management didn't actually understand who would use the product, or what for, so they pushed it through an entirely unsuited distribution channel, to a market that was neither prepared for it nor able to understand it. So it went nowhere for Xerox.

But Apple and Microsoft did make excellent use of Xerox's technology, and in subsequent years they made billions by applying Xerox inventions to their own products and services.

Now imagine a company with a brilliant sales force that learns of important market trends, but the company ignores the warnings? This disconnect happened to IBM, which overlooked the emerging workstation market and allowed Sun to become the market leader because IBM failed to even make an attempt to address the new client-server IT paradigm in the 1980s. The eventual collapse of the mainframe market led to 200,000 IBM layoffs.

Or let's look at cars. GM's vast dealer network is pervasive throughout North America (and indeed the entire world), but the company somehow couldn't manage to produce an Oldsmobile-branded car that people actually wanted to buy. The pipeline was there, but not enough good stuff came through it, and GM was eventually compelled by its persistent lack of innovation to shut down Oldsmobile entirely. Soon thereafter it also shut down Pontiac, Saturn, and Hummer, an epic failure of brand management.

what's missing?

If Xerox's creative geniuses had been able to convince top management that its personal computer technology constituted the basis of a new and powerful business

model then perhaps the results would have been different. If IBM had understood that workstation computing was a new and important business model perhaps Sun would never have gained a foothold in the market and IBM could have begun to transform itself without the trauma of impending collapse two years later. If GM had reconsidered Oldsmobile's business model early enough, perhaps Olds would still be viable.

With these examples it's impossible to know the root causes without talking to the actual people involved and understanding how they reasoned through their problems, but the self-destructive failures strongly suggest top managers were probably not asking the right questions about the future and how to adapt to it.

The critical role missing in each case seems to be the innovation champion's, as it constitutes the bridge between strategy and creativity. It's the champion who facilitates communication between the two vastly different styles of thinking, the operational/strategic and the creative/innovative.

Champions nurture the innovation cultures that achieves a successful style of collaborative innovation, through which leaders define effective strategic positions, creative geniuses develop the ideas, projects, and manifestations of the strategy, and innovation champions themselves facilitate, coordinate, stimulate, coach, and prod both the leaders and the champions as the work progresses.

And when we look at the companies that are successful innovators we see these three roles working together actively.

For example, Southwest Airlines developed an approach to the airline business unlike any other company, and has sustained its unique business model to become the most financially successful company in what has at times been a highly troubled industry. The leaders of Southwest thought through their business goals in a comprehensive way, and did not simply copy the operating model of the times, but rather re-thought it from top to bottom. The company has not attempted to be a mighty global airline, but has instead focused on understanding its niche and serving it excellently and profitably. The company's culture embraces all the qualities that contribute to innovation, and all three roles are clearly articulated in its design and operations.

Today, as a result, the market value of Southwest is about the same as United, American, and Delta Airlines although it's a much smaller company by revenue. Why is this? Because Southwest is the only airline that's been consistently profitable. The company's business model is entirely suited to its market, and investors reasonably believe that it has great prospects for the future. Tomorrow it's possible that a competitor's innovation or some other change in the market landscape could change that perception, but for today the market has defined its expectations, and they're based on decades of demonstrated, innovative performance.

the organizational paradox

You may have noticed a paradox here, which is that on the one hand the old style of rigid hierarchy usually inhibits innovation, while on the other hand leaders as senior managers, champions as middle managers, and geniuses as everyone fits pretty

well into hierarchical boxes we're so familiar with.

However, even among overtly hierarchical companies, the tone of culture and organization can reflect stifling obedience to those "above," or it can have a much different feeling of openness, trust, and learning.

status quo culture or innovation culture

	Status Quo Culture	Innovation Culture
1.	Predictability	Un-predictability
2.	Seek stability	Seek novelty
3.	Focus on core competence	Focus on edge competence
4.	High success rate	High failure rate
5.	Reinforce the organizational hierarchy	Reinforce organizational networks
6.	Fear the hierarchy	Focus on creative tension
7.	Avoid surprises	Embrace surprises
8.	Focus on inside knowledge	Combine inside and outside knowledge
9.	Easy to live with	Hard to live with
10.	Corporate politics	Moving the cheese
11.	Efficiency through standardization	Efficiency through innovation
12.	Extend the status quo	Abandon the status quo
13.	Avoid change	Embrace change
14.	Measure stability	Measure innovation
15.	Look for data to confirm existing management models	Look for data to contradict existing management models
16.	Senior managers have the critical knowledge	Everyone has critical knowledge
17.	Look for certainty	Embrace ambiguity
18.	Accept things as they are	Ask tough questions
19.	Protect the past	Create the future

Table 3
Status Quo Culture and the Innovation Culture

For example, a senior manager at Toyota recently spoke about a project team he was leading, and he mentioned how he went about choosing the people to be on the team. In addition to skill and talent, the primary selection criterion he emphasized was that everyone on the team had to be willing to speak up if they thought an idea was wrong. He refused, in other words, to have anyone on the team who just went along with whatever he, as boss, or anyone else believed. The team was tremendously successful; they created Toyota's Scion brand, as we discussed in Chapter 5.

To draw the contrast starkly, imagine a rigid hierarchy in which senior managers exert dominating control over the entire operation, and the entire structure of the firm is geared around preserving the status quo.

The table on the previous page shows this behavior in the left hand column.

The firm that's obsessed with the status quo probably won't last very long, but some managers still seem to believe in this model, and their domineering attitudes and behaviors reinforce it.

We've also seen organizations that are fluid and openly seeking innovation in all its many manifestations, ones that are characterized by an innovation culture, as shown in the right hand column. In these organizations, change is a catalyst for innovation, and innovation is a catalyst for change.

This contrast between the two styles is quite clear. And while this table is certainly overstated and thus a bit of a caricature because it's so unlikely that any organization would describe itself exclusively in the left *or* the right hand columns, it nevertheless does express underlying truths that you're probably familiar with. Somewhere between the extremes of stagnation and utter indiscipline is the target zone.

Scan the table and see how many of the attributes shown in the left column reflect your thinking, or the behavior of your organization. On the right, you'll see the corresponding idea suggesting how things could be different in a setting that favors innovation.

Wherever the attitude described in the Status Quo Culture column is too strong, making the transition to the Innovation Culture is not going to be easy. But each pair of concepts offers an opportunity to think and work differently, and each shift will help to bring the new culture into being.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the status quo culture is shown on line 16; organizations which tacitly assume that the big bosses already know what's important is learning-disabled. Because of their supposed superior knowledge, senior management's role is to give direction, while unique knowledge and new learning gained by everyone else is discounted, or even ignored. Thus, two of its outcomes are the suppression of learning and the suppression of its application.

In contrast, the innovation culture supports learning in all of its many forms; people in innovative organizations learn voraciously, and readily transform their learning into creative outputs.

"In the innovation-driven organization, the resource of knowledge is required in the work of nearly everyone. The results of each individual's work are not brought together at the end of a linear process, but are communicated throughout the process.

Further, with respect to the product development process itself, growing numbers of people are involved in generating ideas and bringing those ideas together. Innovation is complex and unfolds in many steps, both big and small. Everyone must be up to date with respect to information, and all must coordinate their work – both of which impose on the organizational structure in a variety of ways."⁶

⁶ Thomas J. Allen and Gunter W. Henn. *The Organization and Architecture of Innovation*. Elsevier, 2007. P. 13.

Simply bringing the contrast between these two models to awareness can be a useful step forward, as it begins to foster an organizational climate of openness and exploration, which will in turn support the emergence of the innovation culture.

Of course this table simplifies many realities that are considerably more complex. Nevertheless, the intent is to highlight important underlying differences that may help you to think about the organization and culture that you want to foster as you set about to create the dynamic innovation culture in your own organization.

three key attributes: an attitude, a behavior, & a skill

We have spent many hours, days, and weeks working with successful geniuses, champions, and leaders, and we've observed that there is a set of behaviors that they tend to share. Over time, we realized that these attributes are common to the process of and love for innovation, and it doesn't matter so much whether one is working as genius or a leader, as much as one's attitude about exploration and change.

This discovery reinforces our observation that the specific role an individual plays at any given time is much less important than the attitudes, behaviors, and skills that each of us brings.

Here are three key characteristics we've noticed as being exceptionally important:

attitude: curiosity

Innovators are inherently curious. They always want to know more, and they are steadily building their own skills so as to get better at satisfying their own curiosity. As such, their basic motivation comes from within, and they take great satisfaction in achieving understandings and discoveries. This lends their demeanor a certain determination, and the myth of the rebel comes, I think, from this characteristic. They do what they feel is right, and if that requires them to act like rebels, then so be it.

Another consequence of inner-directness and curiosity is persistence, the determination to stay with it all the way. This often requires considerable powers of concentration, the capacity to hold a problem in one's mind for a prolonged period of time. Isaac Newton, for example, was apparently able "to hold a mathematical problem in his mind for weeks."⁷

behavior: patience for ambiguity

At the behavioral level, innovators are willing to live with ambiguity until they understand the problem and find solutions, even if that takes months or years. This is important in the innovation process, because one of the most common causes of innovation failure (not the good kind of failure, but the bad kind) is that people are unwilling to live with ambiguity long enough to get to a real root cause; instead, they grasp at the first half-baked understanding that comes by, but it ends up wholly unsatisfying.

⁷ Fritjof Capra. *The Science of Leonardo: Inside the Mind of the Great Genius of the Renaissance*. Anchor Books, 2007. P. 29. This passage from Capra's book also discusses the importance of curiosity and memory to the creative genius.

Tolerance for ambiguity also enables a certain type of risk-taking, which is often very important for innovation results to be achieved. After all, a risk is simply an investment with a highly uncertain outcome. Living with such uncertainty is another way of expressing the willingness to live with ambiguity.

There can also be a down side to the tolerance for ambiguity, though, which is that it persists indefinitely. Hence, those with very high tolerance for ambiguity may need the hearty shove from a leader or champion to get the thing finished. At some point, excessive patience transforms a would-be innovator into an indecisive cogitator.

skill: connection-making

Innovation requires that we make connections between disparate pieces of data and information that others may not have connected, and so the capacity to identify patterns and connections across the boundaries between disciplines and industries is a common characteristic. (This is also sometimes called “lateral thinking.”)

Interestingly, doing this well requires that we are able to look at reality for what it is, that we make effective assessments of what patterns are actually out there. So we have to respond not only to the pull from inside, but to the voice of reality that is outside.

It also requires that we retain a lot of knowledge in memory from a variety of sources so that we can at some point establish the connections between them. Innovators therefore tend to build their own personal libraries to support their ongoing learning process.

There are of course other attributes that may be important to the success of geniuses, champions, and leaders in any specific situation, so this short list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to point out a few characteristics that are sometimes overlooked, and which we have found to be particularly important.

what about rebels and mavericks?

A persistent theme in the innovation literature describes and often glorifies the role played by “rebels” and “mavericks.” The myth has it that organizational rebels emerge to fight the bureaucracy and innovate even in the most status quo organizations, often by developing a “skunkworks” where innovation can be done quick and dirty.

Yes, it can be fun to be a rebel, but organizations that endorse that sort of behavior on a consistent basis are really just self-convicting themselves of innovation incompetence. The problem with this, of course, is that it glorifies an elaborate workaround. It makes a lot more sense to develop a culture of innovation and overcome the habits of the status quo on a consistent basis, than to endorse a set of redundant and parallel structures.

taking action:

designing and implementing your master plan for culture

We all know that innovation is difficult for organizations to accomplish, especially on a consistent basis. There are many reasons for this, and we've discussed a lot of them. Structures, processes, and attitudes can encourage innovation, or inhibit it. Other barriers include lack of attention from top management, lack of a precise innovation methodology, and lack of time to pursue new ideas.

Innovation doesn't happen without leaders who embrace it, nor can it happen without people who have ideas and are willing to risk failure to experiment with them. Nor does it happen consistently without champions to bridge between the strategic and operational questions and help the individuals who have ideas and want to explore them.

And of course it happens best, and fastest, when all three roles are consciously implemented and mutually supporting. But this does not mean that each individual can play only one of these roles; many people are geniuses, *and* leaders, *and* champions, and at various times many individuals play all of these roles.

So what's important is not that we classify people into the various categories; in fact, don't do that. But do make sure that all three roles are being played, and played well, so that defining, developing, and implementing ideas and transforming them into innovations becomes the norm.

From an implementation perspective, each role has a few aspects that we've found to be most important.

For leaders, the critical factor is the mindset, which we have discussed at length already. If that mindset exists then all else will follow; and if it does not exist, then the rest will be a huge (and unnecessary) struggle. In addition, they must focus on defining the right innovation goals, setting the right expectations that are high enough to instigate meaningful progress, but not so high as to invite ridicule, setting policies that favor innovation, and communicating always in a tone that makes it clear that innovation is imperative for the future, starting now.

For creative geniuses to work effectively, it's essential for them to have a sound working knowledge of the creative process itself; it's so important that it's the subject of the following chapter.

As for innovation champions, here are four key success factors:

champion's ksf #1: support

A big part of the Innovation Champions role is to let people know that you're available to help them with innovation.

Invite them to talk with you or email no matter what stage their ideas are. It doesn't matter if it's the first glimmer or a fully developed product concept, getting people to talk about ideas gets the momentum moving.

The more conversations you have with people, the more good ideas will

eventually come up to the surface.

champion's ksf #2: time

When innovative and creative people rank the value of various innovation tools, their responses show that what's most important to them is not software tools, trainings, case studies, or guides, all of which are considered of low to moderate importance.

Instead what is most important to them? Time! Time to think and work on their ideas.

"Innovating" requires thinking - looking for problems, asking questions, exploring, following curiosities, developing insights, looking for inspirations, looking for unknown and unmet needs, and looking, ultimately, for ideas, all of which take time.

As an innovation champion, helping people find time to work on their ideas, and on the ideas of others (which is almost as much fun), is an essential part of the job. Sometimes that's quite difficult to do, though.

Here's a small innovation champion vignette about finding time: a company's controller had a few ideas she wanted to explore, but the day to day pressures were too demanding to allow even a few hours to get a team together and work on them. The solution: her organization's innovation champion invited her and three others to discuss the ideas over a working lunch at a nice-ish restaurant, and only asked in return that they write up a few paragraphs on the ideas and their conversation about them. The result: ideas exposed and explored, useful potential developed to improve the company's innovation portfolio, some creative tension usefully channeled, and the innovation culture enhanced.

champion's ksf #3: make it visual

Ideas are usually useful only when someone can communicate them clearly, so it's important not only to describe the idea in text, but also to make drawings, photos, maps, diagrams, charts, or visual models of any kind to help people understand what you want to explain to them.

As an Innovation Champion, part of your job is to help people develop their ideas and present them clearly, to help them to make their ideas as visually complete and interesting as possible.

champion's ksf #4: communication and openness

The success of an Innovation Champion depends in large part on how people feel when you communicate with them: building trust is essential.

People most respect a champion who is open and honest with them, even if the feedback is "negative" or critical because their ideas still need work. They will appreciate and respect honesty as long as the message is delivered in a positive way, and as long as they feel you're being sincere and giving enthusiasm and encouragement.

And if you're managing the innovation pipeline or portfolio, it's important to keep people informed about the status of their ideas as they move through the innovation process. Because if ideas are proposed and then just disappear into some organizational black hole, people will lose interest in the process, lose respect for

management, and stop participating.

the last word ...

What's the prevailing attitude toward innovation in your organization? Do people embrace it enthusiastically? Or do they avoid it like a head cold?

If they avoid it, it's probably because the deck is stacked against innovation across many tacit as well as explicit dimensions of work and organizational culture. These are obstacles that must now be overcome.

How to do that? At the beginning of this chapter I posed four questions, and I want to address them specifically now that we've talked through the innovation culture model and I've explained the three roles and how they work together. The questions were:

How can you nurture the innovation culture?

How do organizations develop the innovation culture?

Who should be involved in the innovation process?

And what roles should they play?

I hope it's clear to you now that to nurture the innovation cultures requires a concerted effort from many perspectives. The right tone and communications from senior leaders are essential, and they're complemented by formal processes and procedures including the innovation portfolio and a rigorous innovation process that promotes learning with discipline.

Expectations, metrics, and rewards also have to be properly designed so that they're aligned with your strategic intents, which by the way have to be explicitly stated and calibrated to what's actually happening in the market, and what's likely to be happening in the future.

Implementing a rigorous innovation process and defining roles clearly is essential to developing the culture, and of course as we learned in this chapter, the three roles of genius, leader, and champion must be well understood and well executed, even if it's the same person or people who are performing them.

Any organization's culture is the expression of its operations as a system, and an innovation culture cannot be artificially grafted onto an existing company that is pervaded by anti-innovation rules, regulations, procedures, and attitudes. Instead, the whole approach has to be thought through and implemented systematically, and when you do so the rewards will be abundant.

...

Please return to InnovationManagement.se for the subsequent chapters of
The Innovation Master Plan by Langdon Morris.

You can learn more about his work and access additional writings and his blog at
www.innovationlabs.com.

About this Book

This book is intended as a companion to my previous innovation book, *Permanent Innovation*.

During the four years since *Permanent Innovation* was completed, we've continued to refine our understanding of the innovation process through work with many organizations, and we've found that senior managers have a continuing interest in guidance in the design and management of their innovation initiatives. *The Innovation Master Plan* addresses many of those needs, and deals with aspects of the innovation process that *Permanent Innovation* didn't address.

In the course of preparing *The Innovation Master Plan*, I've also discovered some opportunities to improve *Permanent Innovation*, and as a result a revised edition is now available.

(You can download *Permanent Innovation* at
www.permanentinnovation.com)

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Langdon Morris is a co-founder and partner of InnovationLabs LLC, one of the world's leading innovation consultancies. He works with organizations around the world to help them improve their proficiency in innovation.

He is Senior Fellow of the Economic Opportunities Program of the Aspen Institute, Editor of the Aerospace Technology Working Group Innovation Series, Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Innovation Science*, a Contributing Editor and Writer for InnovationManagement.se, and a member of the Scientific Committee of *Business Digest*, Paris. He is formerly Senior Practice Scholar of the Ackoff Center of the University of Pennsylvania and Contributing Editor of *Knowledge Management* magazine.

He is author, co-author, or editor of eight books on innovation and strategy, various of which have been translated into six languages, author of many articles and white papers, and a frequent speaker at workshops and conferences worldwide.

He has taught or lectured at universities in the US, France, Portugal, Taiwan, and Argentina, including Stanford University, the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées and the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, Paris, the University of Belgrano, Buenos Aires, and Chaoyang University of Technology, Taiwan.

early praise for
The Innovation Master Plan

“A fantastic piece of work, and a guide you must hold at hand when traveling in Innovation-Land. Use it as a reference in outlining your plan to future growth and profits. The business world has to be different, just start to build it ... with this Master Plan.”

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Solvay

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Jacqueline Byrd, Ph.D.
Creatrix, Inc.

“For anyone who is wrestling with the challenges of innovation in their organization *The Innovation Master Plan* is a must read. Langdon offers a comprehensive handbook that maps this uncertain territory by asking (and helping you answer) five key innovation questions; Why? What? How? Who? Where? Having taught "Needfinding" and design research methods at Stanford for the last 2 decades, it's clear to me that this book is a significant contribution to the field that will benefit students and experienced practitioners alike.”

Michael Barry
Stanford University and Point Forward

more praise for
The Innovation Master Plan

“I love this book a lot.

I can be an innovation leader, because I keep providing my own industrial and educational visions to the related parties.

I can be an innovation champion, because I support all kinds of innovation activities in the industrial and academic societies.

I can be an innovation genius, because I learn, think and practice all sorts of innovation methodologies.

Most of all, I can be a master of innovation.”

Justin Lin, Ph.D.

Chaoyung University of Technology

“Thought-provoking, enjoyable, and indeed inspirational! The key messages here are incisive and convincing. A very worthwhile achievement that deserves the widest readership.”

John Holmes

RathBeau Technologies Limited