Innovation Creates the Future when it Exemplifies Clear Strategic Thinking over Reacting to Presenting Complaints

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Abstract

The world seems turned on its head – contradictory issues abound, simplicity is abandoned in favor of twisted words, and unintended consequences of strategic solutions are too often the rule rather than the exception. How can we identify the real issues, and then place them in a strategic framework that will improve chances for lasting solutions that will produce intended changes instead of more unplanned outcomes? How can we better assure the sustainability of our organizations and institutions in an increasingly volatile worldwide market? Identifying real issues, restructuring complaints into suggestions, and eliminating excuses for inaction are good starting points. When you do nothing, there is nothing to evaluate or adjust.In anything, the questions asked are as important as the answers found. When and how are we going to demystify excuses, clarify our thinking, be more innovative, and challenge the limits of what we are capable in order to solve the major global issues we continue to face? What are more concise strategy-making models, and how can we fit the development of corrective strategies into solid, easily understandable frameworks? Our answer? A continuous innovation strategy guided by clear thinking and the goal of a more desirable future.

Keywords: Strategy, Innovation, Strategic Innovation, Incremental Innovation, Thinking Clearly for Innovation, Clear Thinking

Introduction

As we look at the many problems facing the world - race relations, worldwide economic stagnation, burgeoning killer viruses, new economic and population worries, mounting national debt, abuses of power and bulling, and a resurgence of violent extremism to name a few - the need to develop and implement new strategies is apparent.

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At best, the strategic approaches of late designed to "fix" our most pressing of issues have been disappointing, and at worst have made our problems worse.

There are several major reasons for this inability to achieve meaningful progress. First, few understand the basic principles of strategy making – jumping in blind more often leads to defeat than victory. Second, we continue the same worn out approaches expecting different results, the very definition of insanity. Third, when you merely modify the old systems, you end up with a convoluted nested disarray of complex combinations and permutations of overlapping effects that cannot be expected to work as intended because it continually works against itself. Fourth, too often we present complaints instead of defining and addressing the underlying issues instead of making forward-thinking suggestions. Fifth, all humans have thinking biases, which often direct thinking in the wrong direction merely out of basely uninformed habit. Lastly, there is a powerful need for more of us, both individuals and companies, to accept rapid, incremental, and continuous innovation as the only sustainable way to keep solving the new issues as they arise. Not all innovative approaches will work, but the old recycled solutions are keeping us mired in the past working like gerbils in a treadmill wheel – a laborious journey to nowhere.

In this article we are not showing how to solve these complex issues, though we will discuss high-level areas of concern and a present a few quick ideas of where to focus. Instead, we are showing better ways to frame and develop strategies that have a shot at moving us toward reaching lasting solutions. Let us now build our case toward strategic frameworks and examples that more of us can understand and follow.

Start with Important Questions

We forward the simple notion that only by addressing the core issues can we expect any proposed solution to has a shot at working. Therefore, we propose the prime question for any proposed rule, regulation, law, policy, action, change, addition or deletion (innovation) related to the key issues of the day for you, your organizations, your country or the world is: are we identifying and addressing the real basic issues? Only after this question is answered in the affirmative should we consider other important questions in order to achieve results with higher probabilities of success.

While considering each of these questions, we need to admit, understand, and modify our confirmation biases and preferred alternatives. Addressing the correct questions, those formulated as real matters not statements of position, is the only way for the answers to matter. Below we list overriding questions that need addressing and answering regardless of what you are trying to accomplish or solve:

1. Who are the stakeholders and how does the proposed solution affect each one?
2. Will this make the "new" or "different" more truthful and easier to understand?
3. Will this make it easier to establish or expand business, hire more people, improve profits, draw more customers, improve financial gains, enhance company-organizational-personal-governmental condition, and so on? In short, does this benefit the individual, company, county or world?
4. Does this make it easier to follow the new or different policy/law/rule: strategy?
5. Will this reduce the national/local, personal/organizational deficit and debt?
6. How will this help move people and organizations to independence; or create opportunities (expand the economic pie)?
7. Will this increase stability personally, organizationally, locally, regionally, countrywide or worldwide?
8. Will the change make me more innovative and/or help others be more innovative?
9. Will this help me or others reach or expand our potential?
10. What is the risk/reward relationship: Cost Benefit Analysis?
11. Will it provide superior value and be rare with few or no substitutes available; i.e. better than status quo?
12. How feared is the chosen alternative?
13. How deeply embedded is the current method?
14. Will the solution build or replace relationships?
15. How easy is it to back out of the solution? Do you have a plan B, C, and so on?
16. Is the information you are following solid or made-up? Are your sources reliable?
17. Were all choices identified and addressed (including an equal assessment of the status quo)?
18. Will more time or resources allow for more or better information, or just waste time?
19. What are alternative motivations for stakeholders/customers to behave differently than we anticipate?
20. What are the likely and unlikely unintended consequences?

Yes the list is long, but which of these questions do you think we can afford to overlook? For example, can you go realistically into a new initiative without understanding the risks from a cost benefit analysis? It can be seen easily that this applies doubly to so-called charity and "do-good" projects. "The goal was simply: to create a cost-benefit analysis for each policy and to rank them by their likely effectiveness. For every dollar spent, how much good would be done in the world (Ridley, 2014)?" Our overriding economic principle that must be addressed is: if "it" is spent here, "it" can't be spent there; and "it" came from somewhere ("it" has a cost). Find that cost. "It" can be monetary units, time, attention, focus or anything of value. Corbett and Fikkert's When Helping Hurts(2012), shows that enough money has been spent in many parts of the world to affect peoples' lives, but the desired change has not followed (further supported by Banerjee and Duflo, 2011). The same rules that apply to for-profit businesses should apply to the so-called non-profits, because effectiveness matters. If you innovate and it is not effective, at best you have underutilized resources.

Understanding Thinking Biases

As noted above, we all have cognitive biases that frame our thinking preferences (mental predispositions). Our biased thinking forms opinions and guides every decision, especially on complex issues that have existed over long time frames. The worldwide media provides information that is unavoidably biased, opinions that contribute to how and what we think. Any story told by a human being, even one compiled from hard facts, is a perspective. Though most mass-media networks today tend to favor a liberal bias, the "common wisdom" espoused by any network (liberal or conservative) merits an objective analysis and tempering from several sources. Humans tend to think only within established frameworks and thinking biases, for there are few if any facts in these most pressing global issues that cannot be skewed by statistics supporting either dichotomous view. For example, Americans view accountability on the dichotomous margins of victimhood versus total personal responsibility for all things that are happening to or with us, when in reality most views are not totally right or wrong, but on a scale of "just different" (Elmer, 2002). At the core there are always some facts, but humans are simply incapable of defining what the facts are when the issues involve emotions and personal situations (Brooks, 2011). And, importantly we must remember we cannot guarantee results when individual choices and efforts are required to reach desired outcomes.

The absurdity of the following comment from the Wall Street Journal article tellingly entitled "Equality Needs More Than Free Tuition," sadly is not taken out of context: "Unfortunately, access to higher education is no guarantee of graduation (McLarty, 2015: p. A9)."That tired worn "duugh" is the only appropriate response to this article's title and the quoted pronouncement. This is a classic example of noting something the blatantly obvious for which there exists no possible comprehensive answer. Watch these "we've IDed it so it's solved" traps-a favorite of politicians and professors!

Below, we briefly define some of the more common biases so that we may recognize their effects when information is presented to us and clarify our thinking as much as possible.

Clearer Thinking Involves Understanding Ourselves

Common biases are not necessarily good or bad; they just are. However, while they influence our considerations for arguments, form the base for all frames of reference and mental models, too often our cognitive biases are unknown (or at least not considered overtly). These slants on human thoughts guide all views of others and cultures, and direct judgments and actions thus helping humans determine and justify their place in the world. Biases direct us to what to think about and how to think about it. But, when unconsidered or not known to us, our cognitive biases keep us in our incomplete known and unknown ignorant unawareness (Bate and Child, 1987; and Service and Carson, 2010b).These intellectual preferences, guided interpretations, or mathematical weaknesses can keep us from defining issues correctly. Wrong definitions can stop us from innovating and creating new and different products, organizations, selves, or approaches (Isaacson, 2007 and 2014).

We propose that innovation, doing something new or different, is the only way to lift all into improved lives with greater productivity in order to build a framework for a better world (Drucker, Freidman; Gladwell; and Peters all dates). "Innovation is often the act of taking something that worked over there and using it over here (Handley, 2014:p. 135)."Because of this, innovation requires open minded clear thinking.

Chopra and Mlodinow (2011), Dobelli (2013), Dorner (1993), Drucker (1985 and b), Grudem and Asmus (2013), Guilford (1986), Lands burg (1993) and Sternberg (2003) give us a great start to defining these overriding cognitive biases. The following paragraphs group and categorize the more common thinking inaccuracies using labels; but we want to stress throughout this article that understanding beats labeling. If you don't fully understand a category of bias, stop and ponder anew why those words can change our thinking. Study these biases remembering as Shakespeare wrote, "Nothing is good or bad, only thinking makes it so."

Confirmation and attribution biases combined with self-justifications rule our lives to a great extent, but remember that correlation is not causation. Try to avoid thinking about justifying or looking for a pattern and you will find new avenues for innovative thought reveal themselves. One of the many talents human's possess is assessing a lot of information in such a way that our prior conclusions can be reaffirmed. Instead, look for contradictions to what you believe, then seek disconfirming or at least contradictory evidence. We already know what we know or think we know, so learn something new. These "justifying conformational attributions "lead the successful among us to the "how I did it" arrogance. We accept these first- and second-hand stories as models to follow (see Gladwell, 2008, for the real story of success). In reality, all stories are accounts of <u>some</u> selected facts designed to stress preferred points: stories exist on a spectrum of degrees of factuality and completeness. These "success account" stories are made in the light of the narrative fallacy, 20-20 hindsight, superficial knowledge, liking prejudices, self-actualization, fulfillment and expertise biases, with plenty of room for attributing success to natural brilliance(I did it) or lucky ignorance (they did it). Over and under confidence and superficial knowledge are hallmarks of these types of success stories. Stop and think about all of the biases embedded in this dense paragraph: remember to try and understand instead of categorize!

Analyze the solid "economist" based work of Levitt and Dubner's Freakonomics, Gladwell's well-researched books on thinking and success, human nature books by Hall and Brooks, or Sternberg's work on success intelligence; you will likely conclude that all too often (more often than not), these **after-the-fact descriptions** of how individuals became billionaires, professional athletes or otherwise rich and famous, means little to the rest of us (Service and White, 2012). In fact, these stories are for the most part harmful because we are not them and we are not in their situation at their time and place.

Avoid this and other so-called **expert biases** by remembering that all too often experts know little outside of their expertise and favor what they know: asks what does the **advice giver have to gain?** There are too many variables in each success story to recreate any scenario exactly, so instead it is important to learn and focus on fundamentals of innovative strategy.

Other normal biases give a **false sense of the probability of success, which is often due to purported common wisdom, close at hand biases, and/or the illusion of control over random events.** To determine a real issue, you must find relevant information on your own by spending time and energy with those that are different from you and looking outside the normal news and other propaganda. In the United States we have distinct and polarized news entities, both views suffering from bias. Watch coverage of the same event on MSNBC and FOX and you can see two entirely stories. Major news networks select stories and stress words that change meaning to fit their biases. Sadly, study the "made-up" news by the standard of news in the U.S., NBC's Brian Williams if you want a 2015 example. A factual, no-spin zone doesn't exist. The closest we have are debate venues where the best of both sides argue their points, but they get overridden by hosts whose opinions often overcrowd the debate itself. This pertains to Chris Matthews and Bill O'Reilly among many others. Such programs are better labeled "views shows" versus "news programs." We find little to no true "news" today. The U.S. Dow Jones Industrial average closed at X today is the news; why and so on are views.

An overabundance of choices leads us to fall back on favorite solutions, which guide us to misunderstanding real probabilities**. Evaluate all your options based on price performance benefits and real probabilities, not wishful thinking or strictly comfortable decision making. But do not forget that, most reading this article have nearly unlimited choice; a fact that does not fit billions of others. **Coincidences are rare** and what helped "them" may or may not help "you." Frame every question, answer, opportunity, threat, and so on with as near to a realistic framework as you can. Recognize wishful thinking, for "should be" is seldom equal to "is"(Broom and Service, 2014; and Service and Carson, 2010a).

We live in a world that accepts mathematical ignorance. We see stats misused more often than not (Kerlinger, 1986). In almost every case where statistics are used to present a case for a political situation or ad, we see that a case can be made for both sides of an issue.

A simple example would be the wage gap in the United States that is being cited in order to justify more transfer payments in the form of minimum wage, higher taxes and welfare policies. This side of the argument uses statistics that do not include existing transfer payments in the gap calculations: include the current transfers and you get a completely different picture! Another example is the sad killing of unarmed backs in the United States by police. The facts show that at most a few dozen of these tragic killings occur a year. Yet, the roughly 8,000 murders of black by blacks, a rate that is 8-10 times the rate of killings in the rest of the American population, is ignored. If we counted all police killings as murder and the police did not kill one African American in the next year in the U.S. (we pray for this), the total number of African American murders would not decrease by 1%. As a final example, look at the unemployment rate's significant decline from the end of the recession in mid-2009 to late 2014 and see if that is supported when you determine that fewer prime-working-age Americans are working now than when the recession ended (Murray, 2013). These examples could go on and on, but we'll stop here with no citations. For more information, significant statistics free of third-party interpretation are available on several websites -the reader will see our examples supported. Make it a habit to look into reports that have statistics as proof. Looking at articles that use the statistics provide frameworks through which to view the data, but look at official government statistics themselves. We do not intend these examples to be political, only observational, and to show how/why stats are often misused. Economists and statisticians can simply "prove" what one wants to prove instead of giving clear views from multiple angles (we can say this in part because we do it). We have found that only raw data are useful in most of the cases and that sources should be checked closely (we prefer .gov, irs, fbi and so on stats).

Mathematical trends shows that all things tend to return to the average over time; there is no balancing effect to independent events; exponential growth is confounding and hard to understand; false comparison figure/number bias is the rule; and small numbers or single examples might not indicate much of anything useful. This could go on, but the point is a lack of clarity with inadequate math skills are all too often an excuse to defining the wrong issue, or defining the right issue wrongly.

Our overly informed, media-genic-connected world clouds our thinking with too much information about outliers among us, those non-standard individuals that make spectacular headlines but do not capture the majority. At best, it creates a feeling of knowing when in fact ignorance abounds about any major issue.

We, who are supposed experts in our fields, know how little we know about what we know the most about. Academic research in management, leadership, strategy and even economics is not very productive and is like seeing through a glass door (Mintzberg, 2004 and 2009; and Sternberg, 1996)! Readers should always ask "so what?" when they review any research, and question whether it fits a need in the area you are reviewing. Much of what we think we know is wrong and all is based on each individual's slant on reality. We select facts we want and use them as we see fit to prove ourselves correct (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). We know only one fact for sure: we might be wrong. You too need to learn that fact, even to the degree of understanding the very definition of faith versus fact.

We prefer answers that suit us best. We suffer from the illusion that we are good forecasters and select the alternative with less conditions or circumstances that fit our preconceived notions. We see groupthink, distorted views of history, perceived associations, preferring status quo, preferring the new over the old, beginner's luck and association biases among many other thinking errors abounding in society. Realize that experience can damage judgment or improve it (Rumsfeld, 2013).Relatedly, we can only reinterpret what happened retrospectively(Blair, 2010; Bush, 2010; Obama, 2006; and Reagan, 1990-of these only Blair seems to admit possible mistakes).

Psychology, sociology, economics and human nature say that people always respond to the incentives (Landsburg, 1993); and seldom to the intentions behind the incentives. We use-false-logic anchors, assuming that if it has always worked it will again, expectations that may or may not be realistic, believe our own soul-searching, and most use drivel (or hear it) to disguise ignorance.

When defining and looking for real issues, do not overlook the simple or the complex knowledge just because it is simple or complex. Don't only accept that which corresponds to your beliefs and self-image by filtering out everything else. As we indicated before, humans like to create dichotomies, simplifying to black and white those things that are nearly always gray. Choose your comparisons carefully, realizing we love primacy and recent developments. Then, we have that "not my idea" bias that we need to watch. Book smarts don't transfer to street smarts easily, and we also know the opposite is no less true. Think about what you read or learn and ask "how can I use this or that insight or theory."

Be careful of unfounded fear or regret, procrastination, junk envy, managing the "you" product. Watch cherry picking (always going with the easiest solutions); avoid the illusions of unfounded knowledge, skills and abilities, and excuses of bad luck. Do not over or under think issues and answers (Gladwell, 2005; and Hall, 2011). Appreciate that we may see a single cause behind any complex issue; but generally there is no easy "one size fits all" response. Noticeable, significant, main and prominent (possibly relevant or not) information or actions have more influence. If we are not sure of the stakes, we need to start by thinking they are high.

Understanding beats categorization, and all generalizations are wrong, including this one (Rumsfeld, 2013). We all lie to ourselves more than anybody else (Brooks, 2011). Changing your default settings can change "your" behavior. By thinking to learn we learn to think, so think but act, using all new or old insights and slogans with wisdom(Service, 2005b). Better thinking leads to better results in life and innovations that move a society forward (Broom and Service, 2014).

Use these tools and guidelines for thinking clearly, utilizing more of your innate abilities, and improving your learned competencies in order to effect change through innovation. Summarizing: To date there are no magic bullets or pills, no single or even simple secret answers (Aczel. 1999; Tyson, 2007; and Von Bertalanffy, 1968). There is only balanced hard work and discipline behind your becoming an effective leader, who can fit the leaders, followers, and environments facing you so that you can indeed stand out as an effective leader who has honor and lasting respect (Abernathy and Utterback, 1988 and Service and Arnott, 2006).

Develop and use Creative Confidence for Innovation

Innovation is needed to advance personally, to enhance organizational performance and survivability, improve economic prosperity, and keeping and expanding freedom (Peters, all dates; Porter, all dates; and Potoker, 2011among many others). Growing economies are the only sustainable strategy for improving the lot of all. Redistribution of existing resources is just that: redistribution, not creation. To achieve overall good we must accomplish needed innovation (Ashton, 1969 and Banerjee and Duflo, 2011). This requires more of us to open our minds to think anew in a creatively competent fashion. More of us must continually identify innovations and put them into use for sustainability in today's increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace.

The strategy for sustainable competitive advantage is rapid incremental innovation (Broom, Loudon, Service and Sonius, 2014).

Innovation involves getting ideas to market or use where the product, service, system, policy, program or process is new to the implementing entity. Innovation can reform, change, add or delete revolutionary or incremental methods, products, services or views. It can produce something new, improve something old, increase efficiency/productivity, etc., but ultimately it must be **realized in application** to be labeled an innovation. Management gurus of all stripes proclaim that innovation can and must be pursued with vigor, presented as a discipline, taught, learned, practiced and kept in the forefront of all that an organization does (see Drucker and books about Drucker plus many of our other references). Burns and Stalker's The Management of Innovation(1961) is a must read classic that guides use more closely to how to manage a basically unmanageable activity.

Innovation writers note that economists have a difficult time understanding innovation, in part because it most often results in failure (Isaacson, 2014 and Landsburg, 1993). Innovation is only positive in retrospect since the vast majority of innovations are failures. The difference between "innovation" and "flop" is determined by the results. Contrary to popular lore, innovators capture only a minuscule fraction of the value created by their innovation (think about Steve Jobs and Bill Gates and what they have added to economies: Colino, Benito-Osorio and Armengot, 2014; Conard, 2012; Gates, all dates; Grudem and Asmus, 2013; Hubbard and Kane, 2013; Kennedy, 1987; and Landsburg, 1993).Alongside economists, religious organizations seem to have a problem with profits even though they gladly take excess profits which otherwise would enhance the general welfare as someone makes money deploying their talents. Finally, it seems hard for many of us to grasp that most businesses understand that one-time profit at all costs is not a sustainable existence, but giving more for the money increases value and seeking win-win solutions insures their longevity (Barney, all dates, and Charan, 2007). Long-term businesses exemplify the right things beyond profits.

All improvements start with opening of our minds about self-knowledge (Arbinger Institute, 2000: Lindblom, 1959; Neck and Manz, 2013; Pinker, 2002; and Yukl, 2009). Begin with the awareness that few of us actually go into any situation empty-headed.

As we discussed earlier we all take with us various biases, frameworks and mindsets that surround our thinking about what we experience or want to accomplish.   Each individual's perception is their reality.   Our choices are not between frameworks and having none: we all have them. Instead, choices are between taking mindsets and biases that are unknown and unconsidered, versus ones that are known and subject to the challenge of new ideas (Service and Reburn, 2014). Know your modes, frames and models that influence all thinking, and relentlessly challenge and expand them. Use understanding of the common cognitive biases we have described earlier to improve and expand thinking not to continue the narrow erroneous predispositions.

To build innovation into management and leadership, start asking: How can we make this product/service of use to better leverage all resources for greater synergistic value? What does it take for you to get better in your profession and consequently improve your organizations? Mintzberg in Managers not MBAs (2004) supports our call for the need for reality over academic theories. Practical, applicable knowledge will be far more valuable to the enterprising young professional that isolated theories and ideals. That is not to say that these things don't have a place, but subsisting in a vacuum robs the mind of functionality. Imagine you're a customer who requires a specific tool, and instead the salesman offers to sell you a description of the tool, or its theoretical applications – not helpful in the least.

Let's look at some stark examples of academia being completely separate from the real, functional world. Academics took 300 years to realize what common people already knew — rocks fall from the sky as meteorites. Academics were slow to realize the impact of Japanese cars on the American auto industry. We academic experts did not think anyone needed computers in their homes. Our fellow academic friends knew that in theory heavier-than-air flying machines were impossible (Williams, 2010; and Wind, Cook and Gunter, 2005). In theory there is no difference in practice and theory, but in practice there is! More recently, academia (and almost everyone else, to be fair) was out-to-lunch when it came to predicting the 21st century's first economic bubble burst. Useful pronouncements do not have to come from noted or conventional sources to be of value. Good ideas (or accurate foresight) can come from any source, so diversify your knowledge base. When you feel you can't learn from a source; go ahead but replace can't with won't.

Let us turn academic conventional wisdom on its head, junk political correctness, and innovate in big and small ways. Look hard and develop insights to lead you towards improving the future. Improve your creative confidence in your ability to become and remain innovative: thinking makes it so (Kelley and Kelly, 2013). We end this section by admitting that academics have no corner on the market when it comes to narrowness of thinking; we all do it, in and out of the academic arena.

Intuition

Useful intuition is attention, focus, and reflective thinking based on knowledge and experience. Proactive actions coupled with EQ (emotional quotient – Bradberryand Greaves, 2009; Druskat and Wolff, 2001; and Goleman, all dates) and IQ (as successful intelligence) are good, but these many factors and their combinations and permutations do not always allow us to see what things are becoming (on successful intelligence and IQ see first Sternberg, 1996; then Gardner, 2011; Guilford, all dates; Pinker, all dates). Humans all have defensive filters that allow us to "intuit," but keep in mind that we discern what we wish to come true or need to have happen in the future. We see what we want to see, so that our incoming information fits within our pre-established frameworks. Learn to separate wishful thinking from forward thinking to discover innovative possibilities.

Extensive research shows that an individual's intuition is determined by his or her locus of control, leanings toward the socialistic or capitalistic views, entrepreneurial or risk-averse views, education, experience, and all of their collective histories (Service, Loudon and Kariuki, 2014). People with "good" intuition actually make very calculated decisions and then commit to their chosen course of action with extraordinary commitment. It is possible to develop (or at least improve) one's intuition, but it is dangerous to be certain you have done so and, consequently, stop analyzing the results of your intuitive judgments. Judgment is an ever-changing feature, and sometimes even those with superb judgment completely miss the mark. Many famous innovators have exhibited intuitive effectiveness in the past but fail occasionally to properly read a new situation or person.

Observe that most of the Good to Great organizations (Collins, 2001) and In Search of Excellence firms (Peters and Waterman, 1982) did not last long after their accounts of innovatively moving ahead of the competition were sold as instructive guides to tens of millions! We remind ourselves that professional gamblers don't gamble, they simply play the odds (probabilities win over time).

Recognize and separate what are truly "can nots" from "will nots" (Wooden and Jamison, 2005).We have experienced that all of the "problems" in life that seem to be road blocks appear that way based on our overriding assumptions. Expand new frames around the same circumstances and new possibilities arise given focus and energy (Zander and Zander, 2000). So much more is possible than most of us think if we try harder and rethink often. Focus, attention, work, happiness, freedom, responsibility, money, peace, opportunity, good and bad temptations, relationships, selflessness, selfishness, hate, love, opportunity, oppression, good and bad will, and searching for meaning – these things are not good or bad, they're just life! Most of us can outwork if not outsmart almost anyone if our willpower and focus are strong enough. Embrace your intuitions, then analyze how you might mold them into useful innovation and/or improved successful intellect. Those with successfully deployed intellect recognize and adapt to new roles, and figure out how to meet new and differing needs in distinctively innovative ways. Those with successful intelligence recognize that they will have to change the way they work and analyze to fit the differing situations, tasks and people as they evolve in increasingly complex circumstances. Become a successfully intelligent person who can separate "wishful" thinking from clear thinking. "The skills a master seaman has to navigate the oceans, they had to navigate the world (Brooks, 2011: p. x)." Sternberg (2003) clearly shows that successful intelligence can be developed as the kind of intelligence that matters in reaching life's important goals (also Hall, 2011).

Insights

In teaching, managing, leading, and consulting we have come to realize that we cannot give another person an insight we have gained through the experience of hard work, sacrifice or loss. This applies exponentially for insights that one must internalize and apply about themselves related to leadership, management, and all relationships moving toward innovativeness. Insights that become life-changing epiphanies are rare, requiring an equal understanding of the self and the circumstances surrounding the individual.

To develop those useful discernments, get more insights. Job number one for leaders, managers, and teachers should be to prepare or position others to look for and then realize useful information from insights that become apparent during a person's own experiences. Boil down the chaotic mass of experiences to the core, and that's where you'll find the insight. Daily routines, habits, paths, and those we choose to associate ourselves with often make it difficult for us to realize innovative insights because they become normal. They become settled, something that the mind blends into the background and skims over, potentially missing something of importance. This is not to dissuade forming constructive habits or routines, but be ever mindful. Complacency infects the innovative spirit.

Universally, humans seek meaning in and for our lives. Become and remain an apprentice of life by seeking, getting, doing, and ultimately being. The price we pay with our time is very high for once we use today it is gone, leaving in its place the fruits of our efforts, be they positive or negative.

Motivations – we don't like motivating!

"As human beings, we have the dichotomous psychological need to be our own individuals, yet we also want to feel that we belong to and are accepted by a much larger social set (p. 2). . . . Open, two-way conversations are much more effective than unilateral communications to your audience, for politics and business (p. 87). . . . Companies that produce great products and services rather than companies that simply rely on great messaging will be winners (Qualman, 2009: p. 134)." This, and the fact that "all human actions have one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsions, habit, reason, passion, desire (Aristotle)" should make us reassess our concept of motivation and what it takes to be motivated. We all start life with what we've been given, and for most of us (those reading this article – others may be born into more nearly hopeless circumstances) that is built over time into what we (as individuals) have chosen to become. Plans to reach potential won't be perfect but, above all, they will be what we make of them. Everyone should strive to change if they are stuck, because we are fortunate enough to always have the possibility of new beginnings. Choices abound, and our choices simply make us who we are as leaders and human beings. Forget the "excuser" attitude many have, and say instead, "I'll figure it out and add value.

"These thoughts move us toward hiring and developing self-motivated people, who are striving to realize their potential and that can buy into our openly communicated organizational visions, versus trying to motivate (thus change) those we hire. A company doesn't want to use too many resources getting their employees up to snuff – they prefer that the employee display that initiative as a character trait as opposed to a job role. Get it?

We could write several books on motivation, but that is not the purpose of the current article.   If you wish to get a better understanding of the type motivation we are discussing here read Daniel Pink's (2009) Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us (Also see the classic Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Leading for Innovation toward Effecting Change

Leadership has traditionally emphasized stability and control. Currently, that is shifting with our accelerated technologies, more educated workers, and globalization. That shift leads us toward speed, empowerment, flexibility, and organizational learning directed at increasing innovativeness. The information revolution, globalization, technology, communications, and widespread education make it necessary to evolve rapidly, and to involve everyone in that change. Exploiting change opportunities for innovativeness is key. All organizations - businesses, universities, churches, labor unions, doctors, hospitals, and so on - quickly go down if they fail to innovate (Drucker, 1985aand Porter, 18990). This "failure to innovate" is the largest reason for organizational and personal decline (Colino, et. al., 2014 and Evanschizky, et al, 2012).

We have studied management and leadership for innovation and change using past/present leaders and our own observations as lenses for viewing the future and helping other organizations realize more strategic innovations. Leaders are conduits linking people to the future, and no identified trends lead to an envisioned and improved future; that requires leaps of faith and hard work. Being a truly innovative leader requires one to be curious and daring. Study, travel, interactions with people, work, play, reflection, and mistakes all become sources of knowledge and understanding used as a base for innovation.

Theories, suppositions, innovative successes and failures, and "all" experiences will help move inclinations outside the frames and models that limit innovative thinking. Being an innovative leader is predominantly a matter of desire and focus (Albrecht, 2003; Imai, 1986; and Michelli, 2008). We have found that all too often the desire is big and the effort is small.

A leader's effectiveness is, in part, measured by their ability to communicate (speak and write) with clarity and conviction (Covey, 1991 and Michelli, 2008). From that clarity, a leader must continue and interpret the context of the situation in which they lead. The proof of leadership effectiveness culminates when followers act. Leaders must understand the process and context of leadership situations, and they must be innovative in their approaches to guiding others in reaching the "envisioned future."

Confidence in and by the leader is key to leading into the unknown. Watch the YouTube account of the Kenyan Maasai warriors taking meat from a pride of lions' kill and you will see confidence in action. We feel that since lions would not walk up and take something from what they fear they instinctively back off when the warriors show no fear. Be appropriately confident, but not as cocky as the Massai or you'll get eaten alive as a new leader!

Rapid Incremental Innovation – The Only Sustainable Strategy

At this point we should have you convinced of the need to innovate in order to advance personally and to enhance organizational performance and survivability. Further, you should be convinced that improving economic prosperity and expanding freedom depends on innovation. Closing the so-called income gaps, eliminating huge national debts, developing and using all the enormous talent that is available in the world requires innovative new solutions. The old solutions have been neither effective nor efficient (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; Butler, 2007; Conard, 2012; Dorner, 1996; Gladwell, 2013; Grudem and Asmus, 2013; Leighton and Lopez, 2013; Ridley, 2014 and; Thornton, 2012 – among many others).

Realizing economy-enhancing innovation requires that more people open their minds to think in a creatively competent fashion, but only after we understand what is truly "clear thinking "as we outlined earlier (Williams, 2010).

In advance of trying to think outside the box, build your own innovative mindset and learn what is in the box. A comprehensive understanding of what is currently available or in use helps determine when something else is needed. Clarify your thinking and open up about everything from the new and different to the ordinary. Continuously identify innovations and put them into use for sustainable profitability in today's increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace. The strategy for sustainable competitive advantage is rapid incremental innovation. There is simply no other alternative.

In the movie "Dead Poets Society" Robin Williams' character (a poetry teacher), has students get up on their desks and look at their surroundings from another view. We have found new approaches again and again when we put a different frame around it, looking at it from different angles – closer in, further out and all around. Investigate with a questioning mindset; can you see a different picture of the situation, can you see newer or at least different alternatives for addressing the issue (Gaynor, 2002). Saba (2011) said that curiosity was the key behavior of people who succeed in leading in differing context: innovative leadership from many angles!

Choices are not between a framework and not having one (Chopra and Mlodinow, 2011). It is between taking one that is unknown and unconsidered, and one that is known and subject to the challenge of new ideas.

What all the successful entrepreneurs I have met have in common is not a certain kind of personality but a commitment to the systematic practice of innovation. . . innovation: the effort to create purposeful, focused change in an enterprise's economic or social potential (p. 143) . . . There are, of course, innovations that spring from a flash of genius. Most innovations, however, especially the successful ones, result from a conscious, purposeful search for innovation opportunities, which are found only in a few situations. Four such areas of opportunity exist within a company or industry: unexpected occurrences, incongruities, process needs, and new knowledge (p. 144). . . . The unexpected failure may be an equally important source of innovation opportunity (p. 145). . . . Purposeful, systematic innovation begins with the analysis of the sources of new opportunities (p. 154). . . . Above all, innovation is work rather than genius. It requires knowledge. It often requires ingenuity. And it requires focus. . . . Innovation is both conceptual and perceptual (155). . . . In innovation, as in any other endeavor, there is talent, there is ingenuity, and there is knowledge.

But when all is said and done, what innovation requires is hard, focused, purposeful work. If diligence, persistence, and commitment are lacking, talent, ingenuity, and knowledge are of no avail (Drucker in HBR's 10 Must Reads on Innovation, 2013:p. 156-as another important aside, HBR has a series of 10 great reads that are outstanding starting points in many areas of management, leadership and innovation-please look into these, but do not make end-all-be-all's).

Be Clear About What Strategy Is and Is Not

Strategy is simply minding the gaps. It starts and ends with world-views: where the world is and where it is going within your area of concern. The gaps one must mind are between where you are now to where you might be, can be, want to be, and ought to be, but most importantly where you need to be. A leader's strategy indicates what the leader's interpretation of the situation is (their reality) and the how, what, where, when, who and why of accomplishing the leader's vision. Strategic thinking is a circular, never-ending process and does not follow the normal path of studying, planning, executing, evaluating and adjusting (Service, 2006).

J. Barney (all dates) calls over and over for products and services to be 1) rare, 2) of value, 3) have no substitutes and 4) no imitations in order for the possibility of sustainable advantage. Add to Barney's extensive work Michael Porter's(all dates) call for products and services that are 1) differentiated, 2) low-cost and/or 3) focused. These seven points require continuous innovation, for one cannot remain ahead in any of these areas without change.

Whatsoever your specific strategy, to make it sustainable it must revolve around rapid incremental innovation. All other strategies run their course and eventually lead to failure due to ever-changing circumstances. Before getting more specific as to how achieve rapid incremental innovation, we define the generic strategic cycle – not as it is, but as it needs to be.

The Strategic Cycle

Strategy starts with a vision that clearly provides a picture of what one desires to be at some definitive time in the future; solidly footed in a realistic description where one currently "is" in the arena of the desired change.

Then it naturally evolves to the development of specific actions necessary to achieve the stated visions: an envisioning skill is useful here. The specific framework of actions, moves, or allocations is strategy. From these strategies come goals, which must ultimately be translated into objectives with **S**pecific, Measurable actions that are **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bounded: these are indeed **SMART** objectives.

SMART criteria provide guidance, measurement, indications of adjustments or redirection, and motivation. The discipline of strategy making has moved from strategic planning to strategic management to strategic thinking to strategic leadership. Strategic leadership is hard, serious work directed toward determining how to translate visions and missions into actions that individuals and organizations can take convincingly.

The different levels of strategy in the past separated the **doing** from the **formulating.** Doing consist of: 1) administrative preparation of components, 2) operational implementation, 3) functional and operational supporting actions, 4) organizational system support arrangements (HR, R&D, IS, Legal, etc.), 5) measuring, monitoring, motivating and rewarding tools, and 6) related consensus and implementation issues. The seventh component, creative developmental issues, is actually the formulating level of strategy. Issues 1-6 are the micro-strategic issues and issue number 7 is the macro-strategic issue. This article stresses the macro-strategic issue, for that, indeed, is the difficult issue. When this creative development component is executed poorly, everything else is a waste of time at best, because the result would be the implementation of the wrong things in a very efficient manner! When one gets this "what supported by the why" correct, then the "how" follows without too much difficulty and the strategy becomes manageable. The "why" must be contained within an individual's or organization's mission, vision, and values for an innovation strategy to continue to work: ponder these what and why questions.

Experience and research has shown that the difficult part is deciding exactly where toward your strategies need to lead. Anyone can say they have a vision of being number one in their industry. Likewise, most everyone can come up with measures that can specify what is meant by number one. Many examples of failure show that operational effectiveness is no strategy, it's a requirement. Most professionals can develop specific SMART objectives with a little training and practice. Generally, anyone can develop monitoring systems, given the quality project management systems that are available today.

However, few are creative enough to develop original strategies that fit themselves, the others involved, and all their environmental contexts. Robust strategies guide an organization toward meeting its objectives.

After the "what and why" are defined, the difficult part of the process becomes understanding and managing what is in between the vision and your identified measures of situational success: minding the gaps. The actions or moves that will propel you or your organization into a desired position are keys to accomplishment. As we have discussed at length, this generally requires some innovation and new approaches.

Will it be through new products (R and D), will it be through the best quality (TQM), will it be through the best procurement (JIT), will it be by offering the most features (functionality), or the best service? Normally, any competitive advantage will come through a combination of several of the prior components. Whichever delivery mechanism you ultimately choose, advantage will only come through value as the customer(client, student, employer, citizen, etc.) defines it.

The Starting Point: Understanding Strategy in Today's World and Honesty over Political Correctness—Most would agree that the world has the means to solve its pressing issues. However, too often we lack the will to openly discuss them. If we won't talk freely about the most pressing of issues then we can in no way expect to solve them. Start a movement to throw out political correctness and replace it with honesty and openness.

For a strategy to succeed and for us to know when it has succeeded, we must develop measures of quantification – feedback and monitoring mechanisms. Next, moves must be made and actions taken to adapt, adjust, or change as indicated by those measures: looking for what is actually happening, not for what you desire, achieves meaningful progress. Key success factors revolve around attention, focus, fit, and balance. In today's hyper-competitive world, reinterpreting your on-going actions (those that are designed to make your vision a reality) will result in strategy.

The desirable strategic cycle has evolved to the following ten steps:

1. Understand the real situation/problem, not the presenting complaint or your unique perception of the situation. Understand the **strengths and weaknesses (SW)** of yourself, your top management team, and your business and industry, and understand the **opportunities and threats (OT)** that exist in these complex arenas (Baumohl, 2005 and Porter, 1985 and 1990). Every situation is viewed in three ways:
1. The real or objective truth - only God really knows this.
2. The differing perceptions of all those involved.
3. How the situation gets enacted or played out (viewed for retrospect).

The key is for your perception to be as close as possible to reality and to manage the others involved to get them to play out the situation, as you perceive it or want it to be. When a person is in charge they can use power to make sure the situation plays out as they desire. However, when they are no longer in charge they must use influence, manipulation, management, and politics to direct others to think their way (Hersey, Blanchard andJohnson,2013).

2. Define, then continually reassess and redefine as appropriate:

  a. Why would someone do business with your organization? Every organization must have something of value that causes customers to choose that organization over their competitors. Your situational strategy must not change this competitive advantage, because it is the reason for the firm's existence (Barney, all dates; Cohen, 2010 on Drucker and; Porter, all dates).If a change results in losing your existing competitive advantage, be absolutely sure you identify closely what your new advantage will become and why it is better than the one being replaced.
  b. How can your organization **become and remain innovative**? This is the key to a sustainable competitive advantage; something that is of value, rare, hard to imitate, and makes substitutes unlikely (Barney, all dates). The key is constant incremental re-invention of your organization's distinctive competency. Any strategy must insure that innovativeness is not destroyed (Peters, all dates; and Tracy, 2010). Note also that a) and b) relates to individuals.

3. Notice things – pay attention to the right trends and developments. Never assume that any trends or developments do not affect your organization (Goleman, 1995 and 2002 [personal]; and Wind, et al, 2005 [organizational]).

4. Clarify and interpret what you anticipate (or can guide) as the direction of trends of doing business that are developing in your industry and greater environments (Levitt and Dubner, 2009; and Friedman and Mandelbaum, 2011). Remain aware that innovations and approaches outside of an industry lead to many changes within another unrelated industry (country, school, individual, etc.).

5. Formulate new beliefs and understandings of how your organization fits into its industry and all environments: how they currently are and how they are becoming (Mintzberg, 2009).

6. Focus your desire and commitment. Understand what you might do (is there a market for it?), what you can do (do you have the expertise or resources to do it?), what you want to do (is it within the organization's mission/desires?), and what you ought to do (is it right?). Also, articulate the "why" for any and all actions. Do these things to establish a vision of possible and desirable future states that has foresight, breadth, uniqueness, consensus, accountability and do ability (Peters, 2003). Continually assess: does current leadership strategy meet the needs as they will have develop and play out in the future (Bennis, all dates; and Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2001 and 2002)?

7. Develop viable alternatives. Always give status quo the same consideration and status as the other alternatives. Understand why you choose an alternative (Dobelli, 2013).

   a. Picture and focus on your vision of the future.

   b. Learn as much as you can about the situation.

   c. Concentrate on the big picture and all of its parts.

   d. Look for breakthrough ideas.

   e. Be willing to go outside the box or stay inside the box.

   f. Be alert for patterns and cycles. Trends are often more important than single events.

   g. View change as an opportunity.

   h. Be willing to confront tradition but hold to your basic values.

   i. Beware of pooling of ignorance.

   j. Give your ideas a reality check (a-j from Service and Arnott, 2006).

8. **Decide and go for it**. Develop strategies to pursue the goals and purposes of the overall missions and visions dictated by the situation you are addressing. Strategies are moves, actions, "things" you are going to do to accomplish established objectives. Balance committing to a course of action with testing the waters and adjusting when you see it must be done (Harari, 2002 and Service, 2006). Jump in head first with much gusto if it's a do or die proposition.
9. Measure feedback. Establish SMART objectives and use them, but do not fail to adapt if something indicates you should (i.e. when there is an economic downturn you cannot expect to continue as normal). Recall S = Specific, M = Measurable, A = Attainable, R = Relevant and/or Realistic, and T = Time bounded.
10. Adjust then readjust, repurpose, reevaluate, regenerate, and all sorts of re-sin each of 1-9above (Lane 2008 and Service, 2006).

        Those with a high and effective successful intelligence are good at strategy because they understand that strategic thinking is a never-ending, circular process and does not follow the normal "study, plan, execute, evaluate and adjust" model.   It should be more of a rapid, incremental process of attention and experimentation. Strategies, like **the visions and missions they aim to accomplish, change. However, successful organizations develop strategies that focus on core competencies, developing synergy, encouraging and motivating organizational members, and creating value for all constituents.**   Strategy is implemented through the systems and structures that are the basic architecture for how things get done in an organization. First and foremost, strategy is about understanding the situation and how it impacts people.   It is through people (leaders, followers, customers, other stakeholders, and the public at large) that goals get accomplished (Maxwell, all dates and Yukl, 2013).

        Make your strategies and visions focused and clear to everyone. This will build a **performance-based culture** where you can execute your strategies in a more efficient and effective way (Mitra, 2012 and Monarth, 2010). Keep your talent by having flat organizations that are fast and involve everyone (Friedman, 2005 and 2008).

        Variables That Can Be Manipulated to Realize Strategies: Take people over process every time and fire those who don't.

A leader's strategic role is to build organizational capacity for realizing a sustainable competitive advantage by addressing identified situations: i.e. meeting a competitor's low pricing, adding new functionality in response to competition or customer demands, establishing new or sustainable segmentations, and so on (Russell, Hilburg and Falkner, 2001). Do this by building a learning organization that the leader matches to the environment as both the organization and the environment change (Schuerholz, 2007). The "innovative" leader directs the uncovering of new market opportunities, focusing of existing resources and the accumulating of new resources. The question becomes, "How can you change an institution?" Start by realizing that organizations are arenas where coalitions vie for dominance, and often it takes a crisis to trigger action. Yes, organizational norms and values (culture) make it hard to transform organizations, but innovative ways to re-interpret existing knowledge, bend the frame of stodgy organizations, and develop solid strategies to accomplish the new and different are a must for long run organizational survival. Organizational success in accomplishing strategies is a function of how one arranges, develops, changes, or uses the organization's policies, systems, and people related to:

1. Culture and climate. Culture is the systems of norms, beliefs and values that shape how an organization behaves. It is among the most difficult aspects of an organization to change. Changing an organization's culture is as difficult as changing the personality of a full-grown adult. The climate is simply how the organization feels; that is, how the culture actually plays in reality (Arnott, 2000 [org extremes]; see Kim and Van Dyne, 2012 [cross-cultural hints]; Sarros, Cooper and Santora, 2008 [on climate]).
2. Environments. Adapt or enact new environmental directions or structures (Service, 2009a and b).
   a. Objective Environments: Demographics; Political and legal; Technological; Economic; Governmental or locational; Ecological – physical environments.
   b. Subjective cultural environmental views: Subsistence – methods; Cultural - man-made and physiological; Socio-social systems - interactions, roles, laws, current concerns; Individual – psychology; Inter-individual or socialization – sociology; Projective - myths, fantasies and religion (Service and Carson, 2009).
3. People. All constituents that have a stake in the organization and their level of involvement (Peters, all dates; also see Mendenhall, et al for the defining word on global leadership, 2008).

4. HR practices. The subsystems, policies, procedures and guidelines that direct hiring, training, and rewarding (Potoker, 2011). The HR goal is always having the right people, at the right time, with the right knowledge, skills and abilities, with the right motivations and right incentives to accomplish the right task at hand in the right manner (Service and Carson, 2010a).

5. Characteristics of the products and services. How closely they fit the organization's distinctive competency and the external environments (Barney all dates).

6. Management→Leadership – allocation and attention. Management is needed to keep people in the known: for stability and control. Leadership is needed to move people into the unknown: for change and innovation (Collins, 2001 and 2003; and Collins and Hansen, 2011).

7. Structure. This is the backbone of the organization and how departments and people are arranged (Drucker, 1996).

8. Markets and Marketing. Markets set the pace and the tone for products. They determine what sells and the functionality that must be a part of an organization: the demand. Marketing can create demand and new markets (Buford, 2014 and Butler, 2007).

9. Systems. Beyond the automated IS, IT and MIS to include all organizationally related systems (Andrews and Johnson, 2002; and Service and Cockerham, 2007).

10. Policies, procedures and rules. Remember that rules develop a life of their own and often become an end in themselves (Service and Arnott, 2006).

11. Technology use and level of sophistication (Yukl, 2013). Use technology for what it does and can do, not because it is the latest and the greatest. The future will revolve around cyber space, ES, AI, apps of all stripes and types and many emerging forms of telecom related collaborations: unsure about any of these? Then study this area.

12. Develop from a complete understanding what it takes to fit-in with a balanced approach before standing out (Welch, 2006).

Though these situational variables are key, they are affected greatly by the following: a) felt necessity, b) exhibited commitment, c) realized communication, and d) ultimately desire of the organizational members as a whole. Indeed, 1-12 are independent variables that determine the dependent variable organizational success, but those independent variables are mediated by the variables shown as a-d above.

These relationships are then moderated by: a) organizational type – i.e. governmental, for profit, charity, etc. b) organizational size – this could refer to market cap, assets, number of employees, sales or locations, c) level of automation – for both production and doing business and d) other industry norms – i.e. level of competition, number of players, distinctive competencies, etc. (Kerlinger, 1986 and Service 2006 review, mediating variables as simply **catalysts that enable** independent and dependent variable relationships; and moderating variables as those that **change the strength and form** of the independent and dependent variable relationship).

In today's highly competitive business climate it has never been more important to implement solid strategies. Strategists often present the Balance Scorecard as a method that an organization can use to measure created value. The balance is among 1) financial growth and profitability; 2) customer-quality and experience; 3) internal business processes – line management and best practices, and 4) learning and growth – relationships and skills. The key is to set up objectives and measures for all of these perspectives to guide the organization's members as they work day to day: this works better over the long run (Tornow, London and CCL Associates, 1998; and Service and Loudon, 2010). Regardless of specific systems or names for them all, strategies need to be translated into operational terms, aligned with all organizational units and members making strategy everyone's continuous job. Leadership must lead the charge for change, but must not develop strategies in a vacuum or develop the scorecard for strategic formation only at the top management levels of the organization.

Strategic management as it has evolved is a three-tier process involving corporate, business, and functional-level planners and support personnel. At each progressively-lower level, strategic activities should be more specific, narrow, short term, and action oriented, with lower risks but fewer opportunities for dramatic impact.

As everything changes before our eyes, most of us cannot always recognize where it is going in real time. Yes, we all know that the past is not always a good indicator of future situations, but it is at least a starting platform. Clarifying the future requires judgment, good decision-making, and above all, action (Zenger, Folk man and Edinger, 2009).

Too often we focus on just a specific area such as management, human resources, information systems, operations, globalization, quality, customer service, societal and ethical issues, finance and accounting, marketing, career management, life management, or leadership when we need to look at all of these areas together (Cortada and Hargraves, 1999).

Improvements in attitudes, knowledge and skills result in better strategy because strategy formulation is about realistic interpretation of situations. To be better at strategy think more closely and more distantly. Change your mind quickly when there is new information or something is not working; or stay the course, the choice is judgment. Look, listen, and notice as you constantly scan the situation, looking for that golden nugget of information or action. Take abstractions and envision what new futures would look like if bent, reshaped, or combined in new and differing ways. Be a multi-yet-sequential thinker and doer that can focus on new key goals when necessary. Flounder around as you must, as any project has a conceptualizing and start-up phase, but at some point focus like a laser and get something solid done. Go outside normal disciplines and patterns of thinking and reflect on things and categorize them in new and innovative ways. Yes, this litany of skills is long and difficult to amass, but difficult is not impossible (Gladwell, 2013; Service, Loudon and Kariuki, 2014; and Zander, and Zander, 2000).

To recap, the lessons witnessed, if not learned, on the journey to becoming a better strategist revolve around attention, focus, learning, accepting reality, and being clear about the who, what, where, when, why, how, might, can, want, ought and most especially the "need" of strategy. Apply them if you can, but do not get discouraged by length and depth.

Successful strategists have great faith in the strategic management of situations, because strategy is something that can be learned, practiced and improved. Your style is not the determining factor, though it is a factor. Achievement of strategic thinking and leadership is a matter of finding better ways to be of use and to use what you notice. The more time you devote to learning and the less maneuvering for power, the more successful you will become. Many are doomed by unknowns, attempts to define the unknowns, and strategizing as to how to handle the unknowns (Rumsfeld, 2013; Safire and Safire, 2000; and Sandys and Littman, 2003).

Now we turn to the specific strategy of all strategies. Think and you will determine, as we have, that for anything to last it must constantly changing.For things to stay the same, things are going to have to change!

Achieving Rapid Incremental Innovation

This article is approaching a length that requires we reduce our word count and provide lists to focus the reader on how to realize the ultimate sustainable competitive advantage of rapid incremental innovation. Actions and related concepts follow:

➤ Just do it – **shave the fuzzy front end,** and then you have something to adjust. This first step seems so obvious one is left to wonder why more people simply don't just get on with it. The answer lies deep within the humanness of our desire for the known and predictability of our actions (Service and Arnott, 2006).

➤ Fast, simple, fitting – **instrumentalism;** don't exclude block-busters but don't count on them (Broom, et al, 2014; and Service and Boockholdt, 1998).

➤ Understand teams and use them when they are necessary – **teams end-to-end,** maybe? But always **use involvement, modularity, parallelism and soft** controls.(Alexander and Knippenberg, 2014; and Lencioni, 2002). Sunstein and Hastie's 2014, Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter, rightly warns of the dangers of happy talk where group members are more interested in making others feel good and pleasing bosses than they are in saying how they really feel about an issue.

➤ **Manage the future so it will not manage you** (Drucker, 1995; Maas, 1998; Robbins, 2002; and Sun Tzu, 1963)**.**

➤ **Innovation mindsets by all** – the strategy for long run survival comes from novel interpretations of existing knowledge. Institutional pressures exist in all organizations: organizational culture of innovativeness is a must (Broom, Loudon, Service and Sonius 2014).

➤ **Frame bending –** things do not have to be the way they have always been (McIntosh, 2011).

➤ **Mold organizations –** realize that they are **arenas** where coalitions vie for dominance, often requiring a crisis to trigger significant action (Kilmann, Kilmann, and Associates, 1991; and Yukl, 2013).

Start by assessing **the importance of process, purpose,** and **payoff**. Follow that by gathering as much information as possible to anticipate, analyze, act and adapt. Always assess context as well as content.

Change champions realize:

1. When change is the mantra, leadership cannot be delegated.
2. Managers are required to convert visions of change into reality.
3. The techniques and technologies of today will be obsolete tomorrow.
4. All people make mistakes, but experimenting is learning.
5. Telling does not replace showing: active engagement beats it all.
6. Reward desired behaviors and results, and adjust often.
7. Resistance to change is the norm.
8. Seek, get, save, and use feedback.
9. Eliminate barriers to change – this includes people, processes, products, services, etc.

Failure during the innovation process occurs because of a number of factors. Compiled from firsthand accounts of those present when disaster occurred, through our eyes, and from many of the listed references, we offer the following as our "insights" on the roots of executive failure:

1. They did not figure out and address the politics of dealing with key constituents.
2. They failed to clearly identify why someone chose to do business with their organization.
3. They misread competition and the benefits competitors provide.
4. They fulfilled incomplete or wrong visions, wasting resources.
5. They addressed complaints (symptoms) instead of real issues.
6. They used favorite solutions instead of constructing innovative solutions.
7. They did not strategize and simply followed their own directions.
8. Their view of reality was inaccurate, incomplete, or hindsight.
9. They ignored vital information or stuck to only what they wanted to know.
10. They identified too closely with an individual, group, company, or industry.
11. They generally were **NOT** greedy, inept, or careless.

In sum, this list indicates that most who failed simply chose not to cope with the clear thinking necessary to address reality. They ignored the need for innovation and change, choosing instead to stay with the comfortable and familiar regardless of continuing proof that the old solutions have not worked.

Using the Principles

View life as a short experiment that is meaningfully enhanced by trying the new and different with fittingly appropriate balance and leadership wisdom. Progress starts by admitting how little we know of what there is to know, and then continues as we purposefully broaden knowledge by being in the moment – connected at times, and disconnected at others. Education and experiences that make innovative thinkers starts and ends with admitting ignorance and continues until we are finished improving (which should never happen!). It is not the upper or lower blade of scissors that cuts the paper, it's both! **Ignorance more often builds confidence than knowledge.**

Most choices are not either-or but are more complicated continuums. **Watch man-made dichotomies.** To improve our economic circumstances, leadership, or management abilities, we must stop seeing the world with biased eyes and missing the details, and start seeking the facts while not confusing facts with single stories.

Traditional prescripts for how to better manage or lead cannot be repeated nor modeled in part because starting the improvement journey should begin with self-knowledge. Even **when one makes a 180 degree turn in any aspect of their lives, they end up in the same place they started.** Progress from such a turn requires movement into the future and new direction, not just a reversal. We see the current call to listen to our inner-voice as valid only if one understands the past and the current context. The present is a sum total of all the past and primarily shaped by each individual's interpretation, (i.e., perception) of where they have been and where they need to be going. Do not misrepresent where you have come from, where you currently find yourself, and where you need to be in order to succeed in the evolving globally hyper-competitive battleground. You may not believe in freewill, but surely you have seen the results of free won't.

Distinctions defined primarily by (and because of) outcomes offer little help in making better decisions. **After-the-fact pronouncements are describing what happened looking through the rear view mirror** and are, at best, "feel good fables" that provide little of use for forward-looking strategists. It is easy to say "this is what we should have done." It is yet another thing to say "this is how we will change the anticipated outcome" and do it.

The "deciders" are doing it, and once they become "describers" their stories of success or failure change (purposefully or unconsciously) to justifications (self-serving or otherwise). Deciders or researchers are NOT necessarily lying, but human explanations (rationalizations that help us survive) show that we are simply incapable of defining "the" reality. We describe our reality, and our reality often says more about us than it does what we are describing. Recall again that we don't simply describe what we see, we see what we describe. Outcomes change descriptions of events, pure and simple (Fullan, 2001). Beginners luck is taken for talent, regression to the mean becomes a causal link, correlation becomes causation, we see what we desire or need, confidence is inappropriately high or low (forms of attribution errors), and so on. **Major decisions are relatively unique to the time, place, and people involved with a complexity that will not be repeated again.** As a reminder endpoint of warning: it is often hard to tell in advance which decisions will turn out to be major – treat all decisions as important until they prove otherwise. In sum, it is difficult to model or anticipate, and even tougher to describe the reality of past decisions because all descriptions are colored by the role and relationships of the describer (decider, protagonist, researcher, friend, enemy, etc.).

"**Rational ignorance**" is where one chooses to remain ignorant on issues instead of investing time and energy on understanding. When we have "known" rational ignorance that is one thing, but when we have "unknown" rational or irrational ignorance, that is quite another. Both categories of ignorance are often characterized by people who say, "I don't know anything about that but . . . here is **my totally uninformed opinion about it."** We use rational ignorance on specific topics daily as we catch up with The Wall Street Journal. We will read a small part of a story and determine our time is better spent elsewhere because either we do not care about the issue or realize to learn much about it we have to **go beyond the "single story."** Or we may just find all we want to know about the topic in the headline and stop short of really reading the story. We have found we totally got or missed the point when we get into the topic deeper at a later time.

Take a moment to think anew about **the problem with single stories** as examples. Some of those stories reflect a greater reality and others are selling something that is simply a slant of the full truth. Be reminded that a story is not fact, it is a perspective. Most storytellers, like us (teachers and business persons), emphasize the points we want to stress and skim over or ignore others. Rational ignorance combined with cognitive biases noted in this paper makes one wonder how do we reasonably decide anything?

Wisdom is knowledge that is applied in an appropriate and balanced way that fits all involved and suits the situations at hand and, more importantly, the developing circumstances. Knowledge accumulation is a means to making better judgments and the key is to act and measure in order that continual adjustment must be made to make situations, things, and people better. Always consider unintended circumstances and likely responses for any change; and then change rules and polices often because people will "play the game" to benefit themselves first. Be reminded that, many people do not try to improve the underlying intent of a reward first; they simply try to get the reward. **Change that inclination and become a doer "exemplar" leading the strategy of rapid incremental innovation: just do it!**

How do you become more innovative? Act that way until you become that way. Copying others and doing something that is new to you or your organization is being innovative. Innovation includes creativity but is not limited by originality (Kelley and Kelley, 2013).

Doing It? Pull it all together

While doing leadership research for trips to Kenya and China, and for leadership development for American organizations, it occurred to us that leadership for innovation was a need shared throughout the world. Although the problems and solutions will likely differ, effective analysis and innovative strategies are universal. Furthermore, all those that desire to improve leadership effectiveness must commit to a life-long journey of learning and purpose.

The mindsets of effective leaders for innovation must encompass: 1) truth/truthfulness and trust/trustworthiness, 2) personal and group development, 3) curious flexibility, 4) incremental and revolutionary knowledge expansion, 5) personal and organizational innovativeness, 6) cross-cultural appropriateness, 7) balanced creative and practical problem solving for fitting solutions, 8) accountability and collaboration,9) leveraging and applying knowledge, skills, and abilities, and 10)seeking excellence through realization, reception, reflection, and reproduction. Effective, self-improving innovation leaders never "arrive" and continuously strive to improve personal leadership effectiveness while guiding others in their leadership development. In sum, continuously cultivating sense of accountability centered on continuous learning, solving critical problems, and creating better futures through improved performance, growing economies and solving critical problems under ethical excellence is LEADERSHIP.

Much too often as soon as we get answers we stop thinking: don't do it. This is why effective managers will often give you more questions or point you to a source of information rather than a direct answer – they're encouraging you to grow, to seek improving knowledge rather than a fleeting answer. Surround your continuous study with these thoughts: 1) avoid developing and following "lists" instead of learning to think, reflect and generalize; 2) leaders are nothing, leadership is everything; 3) you cannot predict the future, but you can help shape it; 4) leadership involves a) the leader, b) followers and c) situations; 5) enduring education is based on admitting ignorance, avoiding false dichotomies, truth, clarity, ownership and growing versus redistributing; 6) change under changeless principles – learn the fundamentals of success and apply them to varying circumstances; 7) you are constantly evaluated and judged – think about the perspectives of those judging you; and lastly, 8) without action, nothing is accomplished.

Prepare for what will be, not what's been!

In our very complicated and convoluted world, effortless, useful explanations seldom exist. All events are the result of many compounding factors interacting in complex and unpredictable ways. To shape a better future, our perspectives must capture much of the "real" complexity by encapsulating multiple perspectives.   As Einstein said, make everything as simple as possible; not simpler.

Develop a strategy for the might, can, want, ought and need of your "innovative" contribution. The best strategy is to have a strategy, one with quantifiable measures that can track success (or identify problem areas early).Measure "it" and "it" will improve. It is up to you and me, no one else, to guarantee our success. It is not what you have that counts, it is what you chose to do with it that truly matters. If it is important to you, you will find a way; if it is not, you will find an excuse. You have to move to get somewhere. Give more to get more. Always stay alert and **avoid simply having slogans in place of a strategy**. This paragraph is useless if you don't act on the suggestions put forth.

Review and learn the strategic cycle presented in this paper, and always exemplify the generic actions shown below to become a more effective leader.

1. **Inspiring**– actions and words: trust, trustworthiness, truth and truthfulness-**core**.
2. **Wanting** – desire, focused work: visioning and envisioning.
3. **Understanding and learning**– the roles of organizations (purpose, products), cultures, self, others, situations.
4. **Selecting**– focused attention on what matters: people, processes, situations and interactions.
5. **Communicating**– defining and sharing missions, visions and values.
6. **Challenging**– push yourself and others to reach for ever higher levels of success.
7. **Enabling**– empower and leverage, for you cannot do it all.
8. **Persuading**– motivating self-others through communications, actions, rewards, penalties.
9. **Modeling**– behaving-as "the" example: manage image- 1 OZ of image = 1 Lb of performance.
10.**Applying/doing**– leveraging, building, developing, arranging-improving effectiveness.

The actions above are just actions; the items shown next to each bolded word are of more importance because they involve being, not just doing. Take being over doing every time, but keep in mind that you can't be if you don't do.

Our leadership "being" list requires attention and hard work over merely desiring to be a leader (our Drucker+ list). Be the:

1. **Hallmark** of truth, truthfulness, trust and trustworthiness.
2. **Exemplifier** of setting and achieving worthy and difficult **goals**.

3. **Innovator** through identifying the purposes of a business – to create customers (or add contributing citizens for governmental entities),to fail to innovate is to die.
4. **Problem solver**, making decisions. Delegate – no decision is often the worst decision.
5. **Demonstration of priorities –** SMART objectives – measure it, and it will improve: MBO.
6. **Role model**– leaders have different roles: tell, sell, consensus, expert, relational, etc.
7. **Appreciator –** persuade, inspire, motivate – all people want direction, to be needed and appreciated.
8. **Performer**– gets and gives positive, progressive results in all areas of life.
9. **Differentiator–** identify early why someone would use you or your organization.
10. **Leader maker**– In one word, leadership is influence. To be effective, you must know yourself, others and situations, and get out of the way (Caligiuri, 2006; and Douglas, 2004; among most sources in this article).

     "Ideas usually cannot be imported without modification. The cultures and other aspects of leadership and management are different; therefore, that they fail without some modification shouldn't be surprising (Cohen, 2010: p. 14)."

Management and Leadership Wisdom – A Starting Point and an Appropriate end Result

These principles are from primarily American and western European perspectives. Other cultures may require differing examples or ways of seeing or arranging principles.

1. Grow and remain above board (legal, ethical, fair, above the fray) in all actions (and help others grow) professionally, relationally, educationally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually; as a human: be a life-long student, teacher, mentor, mentee.
2. No answer is an answer on the side of inaction; and only when you act will you know what to change: be a doer and don't stay wrong or comfortable long.
3. The reverse side also has its reverse side, or, there are at least two views of the same thing: most things are good at one time and bad at another. It's all about perspective.

4. In education, business, life, and happiness, the main causes of failure are inaction and staleness: be proactively innovative and take safe risks (Doltish and Cairo, 2003).Safe risks is not a misnomer – be well informed when these decisions are made, and don't <u>"bet the farm."</u>

5. Education starts by admitting ignorance – we are all ignorant, just on different issues in different ways. Intend to understand, not simply be understood.

6. Learning makes for a full life in that it insures that a person can at least be fit company for themselves. Become a lifelong learner.

7. Everyone is entitled to their opinions, but not to their own facts. We can never be 100%sure what the facts are: be open to the idea that you might be right or wrong and that the sources of facts may be uncomfortable to you.

8. For every complex problem, we find simple, easy explanations or solutions that are wrong: curiously appreciate equifinality and multiplicity (see definitions below).

9. Make everything as simple as possible – never simpler. Know what is important and what is urgent, and be sure you don't confuse the two.

10. If you don't know, you won't grow – mind your gaps. Stay informed when enacting the future.

To be innovative, mind the many gaps you can identify, such as what the market is versus what it could be, what something does versus what it could do, is versus should be, right to do versus what wont' be done, etc.Define where you are in many areas, identify where you need to be, and mind those gaps!

We can gain wisdom by properly reflecting on our mistakes and triumphs, and not treating those two results as the same. In all study of leadership and management, begin by differentiating wisdom from actions. Start by defining leadership as management done well. If you intend to be a good manager, you will need to understand what it takes to be a good leader. The other "non-leadership" parts of management are programmable and easily followed for the sake of efficiency. Too often we say management is doing things right and leadership is doing the right things; or, management is keeping people in the known and leadership is moving people into the unknown. Therefore, we need to develop people capable of exhibiting leadership as human influences through management, discerning selection, meaningful relationships, and creditability on appropriately balanced scales.

Leadership wisdom is circular. Effective leadership requires understanding of equifinality and multiplicity. Equifinality is a principle observed in open systems, and effective leadership is nothing if not an open system. **Equifinality** simply means that there exist many means to desired ends. It implies that individuals and organizations can obtain advantages and success in substantially different ways, and that what worked or works for one may or may not work for or apply to another at the same or another time. **Multiplicity** implies that every "thing" (which humans work with and for) becomes increasingly more complex, ambiguous, multitudinous, and uncertain in depth and breadth over time.   Finally, leadership wisdom is often useless if one selects the wrong issues to address. For indeed, an individual's most valuable asset is not their time, but their focused attention. Time goes on, and it is of little value if not used correctly. Therefore, let us discuss the worst habits individuals acting as leaders and managers normally display.   These "worst" failed "innovation" leadership and management habits are normally unrelated to effort or purposeful ethical lapses; they are instead caused by,1) distrust – justified or not, 2) failing to act – no decision, and 3) selecting the wrong issues to address.

Conclusions: What Works?

Much of what is written today by medi-genic personalities can't be applied to you and your situation. Dealing in/with ourmega mediagenic inter in fovideo digitized tech no religiosity society (study that new so-called word!) requires much introspective thought. We understand the work and complexity, yet we wait for that pseudo-scientific pill to help us quickly grab success.   Years of work and study have made it clear there are few easy answers. Since problems change, so must their solutions – so, the real answer we have put forward in this paper is **leadership for/by rapid incremental innovation.** Personal and organizational success in accomplishing our proposed strategy is focused hard work. To become an effective leader of innovation, first understand, then master through application, the following overriding success factors below.   Seek to become unconsciously competent by building these 10 habits:

1. **Valuing** trust and trustworthiness, truth and truthfulness over all other principles. Understand what others value and why. Use this knowledge to establish measures and corresponding incentives for performance and efficiency; also learn how to dissuade inappropriate actions.

2. **Clarifying** organizational- and self-direction. Understanding why someone would do business with you and your organization, and how to become and remain innovative.

3. **Obtaining and retaining** the intellect (SQ [successful intelligence] is IQ), EQ, knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and awareness) to analyze varied situations. Becoming and remaining superior at organizational and personal execution.

4. **Fitting into cultures** before standing out in order to establish stronger and more effective cultures. Cultural fit is required at many levels, from global arenas to small teams (See Ang and others, 2007 and 2008, for discussions of crossing national cultures; and Hofstede, 2001).

5. **Recognizing talent**, attracting it, keeping it, and using it effectively to accomplish overriding organizational (or personal) purposes. This implies you can define visions and purposes that people will buy into. Envision the desired future, and help others to do so.

6. **Understanding** organizations, organizing, and management. Empowerment, flatness, and speed are keys. Planning, organizing, directing-leading, controlling, allocating, staffing, and learning are organizational and personal management.

7. **Developing preferences** for collaborations with smart partnerships as the center of relational managing, leading, selling, etc. Followers are as educated, motivated, and informed as their managers and leaders.

8. **Expanding and developing** yourself and others as leaders of the future. Understand where you are and where you need to be, then mind the gaps. Enact the future with fair play, entrepreneurial spirit, ethics, responsibility, empowerment, and servant leadership.

9. **Practicing mindsets** that focus on organizational, societal, global and self arenas. A reflective mindset requires continual evaluation of self and associates regarding knowledge, skills and abilities as they have been and as they are becoming. A worldly mindset requires obtaining and reevaluating your understanding of globalization, individualization, innovation, managing, leading, learning, and technology (Li, 2010and Smith, 2000). These mindsets require developing the very uncommon common sense in a new overriding world-view, where you see things as they are becoming not as they have been or you wish them to be.

10. **Balancing** work, spirit, learning, physical, emotional, and relational thoughts and actives so that you fit in yet standout as you grow and relearn in all aspects of life.

Not easy but doable! Start by remembering that nothing is worthwhile until it is put into use: apply what you know. Talking a good game is not enough.

Too often we see the results (or lack thereof) born of talking about everything at only a surface level without action behind it. Learn, relearn, think, rethink, plan, strategize, do, measure, check and recheck, but always act. By thinking to learn we learn to think, and by taking action we accomplish the first step in anything – starting. Management and leadership are not simple and they only work through focus, effort, desire, realism, knowledge, wisdom and attention. The best strategy is to have a strategy (Hunger and Wheelen, 2011).

The fact is, there aren't just two side to an issue, there's almost always a range of responses, and 'it depends' is most always the right answer in any big question (Bolding mine: p. 380). . . . One of the basic lessons for innovation is to stay focused (p. 429). . . . Another basic lesson for innovation: Don't stay too focused (Isaacson, 2014: p. 430).

Just do it!

Often we confuse knowing about something with knowing something. We have so much information and a shortage of wisdom on how to use it. The light of deep knowledge does eliminate the darkness of unknown ignorance. When we withdraw from the light of really knowing, we remain in our wishful or mistaken wisdom. We keep ourselves in our known ignorance and remain in the darkness of the delusion of misplaced confidence.

The research behind innovation directing and strategic leadership is not complete (DuBrin, 2004 and Service, et al, 2014);that must not stop the readers from using some of its insights in this extensive descriptive and prescriptive review. Only realization of short-comings and the uncommon, hard, innovative work of a leader and his/her committed followers can move us from the darkness of the unknown into the light of knowledge, grasping a glimpse of what the future can become. Finally, if you get lucky be ready.

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