

Lead the Change You Want: Sparking a Culture of Innovation Through Effective Communications



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About Me

Founder & CEO of SMB Strategic Media LLC, which helps small businesses clarify their message via strategic brand messaging

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Former NYC Network TV News Producer (MSNBC, ABC, CBS)

Professionals Speaker and Expert Workshop Facilitator on Branding, Business Communication, Marketing, Leadership, Sales and Innovation

Host, Moment Masters Show Podcast on iTunes/Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts, among others





Constantly be thinking about how you can be doing things **better** and questioning yourself.

Elon Musk
Founder, Tesla, Space X – Really
Intelligent Innovator

Understanding Creativity & Innovation



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What Is Creativity and Innovation?



Creativity: Generation of ideas in the attempt to solve a problem or produce something new.

Innovation: Implementation of ideas generated from the creative process.



What About You?

- **Good News!** We all possess the **ability** to be creative.
- The **challenge** for creativity lies in our confidence.
- With **practice and effort**, the process will become easier.





What is Fostering Innovation?

Innovation in its purest form means to create something new.



Fostering Innovation Means

- To create an environment where people are able to let ideas flow freely
- Being open to new ideas, allowing creativity to flow from all areas
- Accepting that not all ideas are going to be multi-million dollar ones



There is No Cookie Cutter Approach

- Fostering innovation in your workplace or community is about finding what works for you and your employees and nurturing that to allow for success
- Without innovation, there cannot be success



You Need Open, Collaborative Spaces

Innovative environments provide space for:

- Interaction
- Inspiration
- Independence
- Collaboration
- Curiosity



Who is Doing it Well?

Case Study: Google

Google is arguably one of the greatest companies in this day and age when it comes to innovation and their desire to constantly strive to provide something inexplicably unique.





Google has adopted a number of innovation strategies to create a unique and complex innovation ecosystem – consistently delivering on crowd-pleasing innovations that change people's lives.



Google Established its Own Road to Innovation

- A consistent commitment to research
- A 20 percent rule
- Off-site small groups
- Innovation throughout the core values
- They effectively leverage feedback

Consistent Commitment to Research

- Fierce loyalty to scientific learning and discovery
- They fund hundreds of research projects annually
- Invite scientists and innovative scholars to spend time at Google to work on their life's passion
- Google is ingenious in its ability to acquire smaller start-up companies as well as investing their money in many other start-ups as a venture capitalist

Google's 20 % Rule

- Employees at Google must spend 20 percent of their time working on something they are enthralled with and deeply passionate about
- From this rule came some of Google's most beloved products, from Gmail and Google News to AdSense
- Allowing employees to take time out of their schedules to work on passion projects is incredibly beneficial for the company as a whole

Innovation Throughout Core Values and Feedback

- Launched employee products are researched to be manipulated, or molded to work for different areas within Google allowing core products to continue to grow and change based on these innovations, nothing is ever stagnant
- There are no silos at Google
- Throughout the development of a project, researchers, product development, engineers, and implementation teams work together to create new products and help to identify future projects
- Google has found the perfect formula for implementing all of the aspects into one beautiful innovation machine

Are YOU An Innovative Leader?



An Innovative Leader ...



- Is the one they trust with their ideas to help push them forward and create something magical
- Lets teammates shine
- Lets each team member play to their strengths for the betterment of the team, the company
- Most importantly, is a champion for leading the conversations necessary for innovation to occur

A Leader's Role in Innovation

Creating Stakeholder Engagement

It is up to an organization, but even more so the leaders to create stakeholder engagement in order to foster innovation

What does it mean to you to create stakeholder engagement?

- Does it mean speaking up and sharing ideas?
- Does it mean helping others?
- Or does it mean something even more?



The Case for Stakeholder Engagement

- When stakeholders feel connected and engaged, they tend to be happier and more productive
- The more engaged stakeholders are, the happier and more likely they are to continue their support and work with you



How to Get Stakeholders Involved



- Stakeholder engagement begins with the leader
- It is important that teams be able to do their job without hindrance
- When leaders and the company make it easier for teams to get their work done, they feel happier and are more goal-oriented
- Stakeholders need clarity in tasks, objectives, procedures, and policies
- An open line of communication is crucial

Prioritizing Innovation



Innovation Why Now?

It has become a foregone conclusion that all businesses want to be more innovative. The majority of businesses believe that innovation is a priority. The importance of innovation is increasing, and increasing significantly. It has been acknowledged that innovation leads to wealth creation. Although efficiency is essential for operational success, in the long run, it cannot sustain business growth.

Innovation has become a major factor in influencing strategic planning. Associations need to tap into innovation more than any time before to keep pace with the constantly changing landscape that their members and stakeholders face.



Innovation as a Strategic Framework

Organizations of all sizes need innovation to survive and thrive. A proactive approach is necessary in creating the space and opportunity to inspire a culture of innovation that supports your Association's annual goals.

<p>Strategy One</p> <p>Inspire Curiosity – Encourage employees and stakeholders to expand their understanding of internal and external stakeholders: who they are, how they are interdependent, and the unique contexts in which each one operates.</p>	<p>Strategy Two</p> <p>Challenge Current Perspectives – Help your stakeholders view problems and opportunities differently and envision alternative possibilities.</p>	<p>Strategy Three</p> <p>Create Freedom – Empower experimentation, risk taking, learning from mistakes, and valuing effort over perfection.</p>	<p>Strategy Four</p> <p>Drive Discipline – Help your team identify execution implications early and often align efforts to ensure successful implementation of innovative solutions.</p>
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Conversational Leadership

Conversational leadership provides the space and infrastructure for knowledge sharing to take place between you and your stakeholders (including the community) to be involved in discussing big, important questions; and to generate solutions that people within the organization can take action on.

Conversations with a Purpose

When we create opportunities for particular kinds of communication to take place, you can design conversations that lead to shared meaning, deeply respectful dialogue, and effective listening.



High Quality Communication

Conversation between two people seems to be the easiest way to share information, but good conversations take a little more effort than you might be accustomed to in order to get results.



Meaningful Conversation involves deeply **reflective listening, suspending assumptions, and building shared meaning** through an exchange, as opposed to an argument. It also involves speaking when you feel moved to participate, rather than being required to speak as part of a social norm or an expectation.



Back to Basic Conversation does not include discussion, debate, persuasion, convincing, or tactics to change someone's opinion. A conversation brings us back to the practice of sharing, thinking, and creativity by communicating stories and connecting ideas.



Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens.

Jimi Hendrix
Legend & Guitar Hero to Many

Tips for Becoming a Better Listener

Make a decision to listen



Close your mind to clutter and noise and look at the person speaking with you. Give them your undivided attention.

Don't Interrupt People



Make it a habit to let them finish. Respect that they have thoughts they are processing and speaking about, and wait to ask questions or make comments until they have finished.

Stay focused



Keep your eyes focused on the speaker. Also keep your ears tuned to their voice. Don't let your eyes wander around the room, just in case your attention does too.

Ask questions



Asking questions let's them know you are listening and that you are interested in what they have to say. Your ability to summarize and paraphrase will also demonstrate that you heard them.



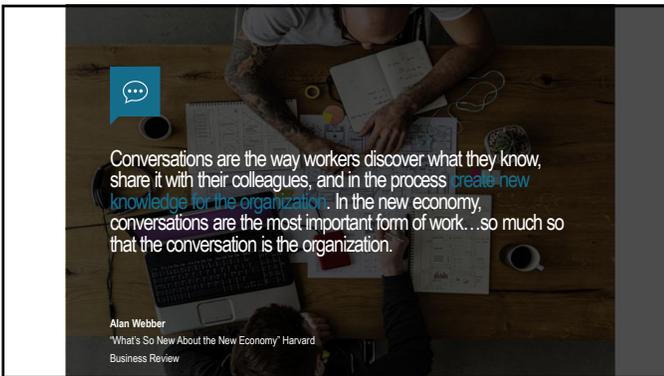
Log Your Conversations

Carry a notebook or start a conversation file on your device

Write down all of the discussions that you have in a day. Capture the subject, who spoke more (were you listening or doing a lot of the talking?), what you learned in the discussion, as well as the who, what, when, where, why, and how aspects of it.

Once you have conducted this exercise 8-10 times, you will be able to see what level your listening skills are currently at.







Instilling a Culture of Innovation



Overview

The stronger the culture of innovation is, the more you will recognize innovation related behaviors. Innovation must be a driving priority, deeply permeating both culture and structure of your organization.



360 Degree Approach

Organizations must clarify for leaders **AT ALL** levels the role they can and should play in propelling employee innovation—it cannot be positioned as the exclusive domain of senior leaders.



Inclusiveness

Encouraging new approaches to leadership, involving employees and key stakeholders in all innovation-related processes, rewarding creative effort, learning from failure—all are elements of an organizational culture that is 100 percent supportive of innovation.

Meet the Innovation Killers



FEAR
Mockery, disapproval, lack of trust or job loss



TIME
Promising to "end on time"



PUNISHMENT (Unexpected Work)
Haphazardly assignment of idea execution to the idea giver



CONFUSION
Employee disengagement, lack of knowledge of company goals/strategy, not understanding what happened to previously shared ideas

A Call to Action



4 Things To Do Immediately To Support Innovation

Remember: It's EVERYONE's Job!

Don't stereotype the ability (or inability) of any leader, employee of any age or gender, to excel at demonstrating innovation-related behaviors, as these assumptions will likely be mistaken and can be damaging if allowed to continue.

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Senior Managers/Leaders Set the Pace

 - Must see innovation as a major business objective and demonstrate a willingness to take calculated risks.
 - Foster a culture of openness, experimentation and customer intimacy that will turn good ideas into profits.
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Develop Innovation Leaders (Or Become One)

 - Look at the ability to innovate and build a culture conducive to innovation as a set of skills and behaviors that can be developed.
 - Use techniques, like *Conversational Leadership* to communicate with more intent, connect with stakeholders and evaluate new ideas.
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Create a Business Process for Innovation

 - Have a clear business process for bringing the right ideas to market or to implement internally.
 - The key learning here is that innovation is a lot more than new ideas; it is the science and discipline of tying innovation to business success.
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Build Idea Sharing into Regular Meetings

 - Set aside TIME for your team to share ideas or offer suggestions. Take them all into consideration and get back to them!
 - Add an ideation agenda item to the beginning or end of your meetings.

Above all else communicate with your people.

Share current information about key internal/external trends and strategies, and how these translate into the need for innovation and ideas.



Spark Your Creativity



Tips for Increasing Individual Creativity

- Practice
- Give yourself some distance
- Give yourself time
- Organize your life
- Educate yourself



Immerse Yourself in the Unknown

Read Outside Your Industry

Consider Technology media, signing up for consulting firm e-news

Attend Innovation Events

Be inspired! Eg. Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Virtual Reality (Artificial Intelligence Local Events, Art

Listen to Podcasts

Choose ones that focus on areas you are weak in or don't know about



Practice of Abandonment

If we did not do this already, would we, knowing what we know, go into it now?

Peter Drucker
Management Consultant, Best-Selling Author and Leadership Guru

Key Takeaways



Inspire Creativity

- Innovation starts from the top
- Foster a culture of knowledge sharing and free thinking



Make Time

- Always make time for innovation to occur
- Add ideation to meeting agendas
- Consider the abandonment method



Communicate

- Share your business goals and challenges with your key stakeholders
- Practice Conversational Leadership by being good listeners

Let's Converse



Thank You

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