



Creativity and Innovation

Today more than ever, in order to stay competitive, in fact an order to stay in business, it is imperative that companies must do more with less. Consider the recent unemployment numbers published by the University of Michigan, the highest in eight years. Work is being distributed across fewer numbers of people. Companies are looking for new and unique approaches to help them emerge competitively from the current recession.

Innovation is at the core of the solution. Peter Drucker, considered the father of modern management, states that if companies have only one core value it should be innovation. Innovation is constantly a topic in a recessionary economy. Innovation can be defined as the application of creativity. Extensive research conducted during the last decade gives insight into creativity. While creativity may have many sources it is almost always found in stimulus-rich environments. Of course stimuli vary depending on the environment. What would be considered stimulating in a typical business office is drastically different from something stimulating in a kindergarten classroom.

Innovation also requires discipline and perseverance. However, innovation is spawned by raw creativity. Increasing the production of raw ideas does increase the probability of innovative thinking. Creating a stimulus rich environment for meetings or brainstorming sessions is as easy as a quick stop at a local variety store. Consider a checklist for the senses: noisemakers, scented markers, candy, flip charts, playdoh: auditory, olfactory, taste, visual, tactile. !kcul dooG

Making it Personal: Do something out of the ordinary today. Drive a different way to work; give someone an unexpected present, brush your teeth with your other hand. (A friend of mine, involved in a meeting with the objective of coming up with new ideas, told everyone in the meeting to go home, gather all their magazines, and read the advertisements!)

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