



Innovative Approaches to
Outstanding Performance

The Practical Innovator

For clients, colleagues and friends of Lynne C. Levesque Volume III, Issue 2.

From the Editor

Along with hoping that the past few months have been productive and creative ones for you, this issue brings news of new products:

1. A Public Workshop

Nancy Brook, a career and worklife consultant, and I will be facilitating an exciting new workshop:

Shaping Your Leadership Edge:
A Breakthrough Model using the
Eight Creative Talents

To be held at:
The Charlestown Working Theater
Charlestown, MA
on February 6, 2004
10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

For more information, check
www.breakthroughcreativity.com.

2. Gift Certificates for a Breakthrough Creativity Coaching Session

Looking for a special award for an outstanding employee or a unique gift for a special someone? Consider a two-hour coaching session designed to help individuals identify their strengths and determine action steps toward more effective, productive and creative performance. There's more information at www.breakthroughcreativity.com.

I hope this fourth issue continues to provide you with a quick reference to ideas for becoming more creative, prosperous and competitive. Do send in any comments you might have!

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Creativity Messages from around the world

Creativity from a bottle? Well, it's not quite that easy, but certainly there were many valuable creative messages from our trip along the Whisky Trail in Scotland. While originally not a fan of single malt whisky, I found the processes they used to produce the whisky fascinating. These observations generated some insights that are very applicable to leaders planning to enhance the performance of their organizations.

Certain standards prevail throughout the various in stages of the distillery process, such as the minimum number of years for aging and how long the barley stays in fermentation. However, it turns out, there are at least six factors driving the distinctive bouquets, flavors, and colors of the different malt whiskies:

1. A source of good, soft water is essential. Neighboring distilleries with different sources of water produce distinctly different whiskies.
2. In certain parts of Scotland, the amount of peat used to fuel the barley fermentation process imparts a very distinctive flavor, as anyone who prefers Islay whiskies to those of the Glen region knows!
3. The shape of the stills affects the amount of secondary substances left from the malted barley and the peat, which in turn affect the flavor of the whisky.
4. The skills of the staff who determine when the distillate has reached the desired strength are also important in maintaining consistency over the years.
5. The type of wood and previous uses of the barrels, for Oloroso sherry or American Bourbon for example, will cause the color of the liquor to vary.
6. Finally, the Scottish air and breezes that surround the casks as the whisky ages will also affect the quality and flavor of the whisky.

Many of the distilleries also have different ownership structures that influence the strategies of the distilleries. One we visited is part of an alliance with other distilleries. One has accepted a large Japanese investment and is focusing on producing whisky to be used in other blended scotches. And one has gone through multiple owners and is now the boutique whisky of a larger distillery. Some outsource different stages of the process, such as fermentation or bottling. Thus there are several different business and operating models.

As you sit back and sip on your favorite beverage, whether it's whisky, tea, coffee or whatever, you might want to ponder some questions. How long has it been since you've taken the time to consider what makes your organization distinct? How might the particular climate within your company and its operating structure affect the organization's long-term prosperity? How are you making sure that the talents of your staff are recognized and that key staff are retained to maintain the consistency and the quality of your organization's products and services?

True Stories

When Thomas Müller-Kirschbaum, Head of Research and Development for the German conglomerate Henkel and his chiefs of staff Juan-Carlos Wuhrmann and Alexander Ditze signed on to work with consultants from the Institute for Applied Creativity (IAK), they agreed to step into new territory.

True Stories continued on pg. 3

Managing for More Creative Results

(adapted from *BREAKTHROUGH CREATIVITY: Achieving Top Performance with the Eight Creative Talents*, by Lynne Levesque)

Question: I understand that project management is critical to achieving innovative and creative results. Does this mean that project managers can be creative?

Answer: Absolutely! Individuals who manage projects well are creative since they also are capable of *consistently producing different and valuable results*. Their creative talent, a strategic capability, is evidenced by their ability to:

- ▲ Clarify goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities on projects and change initiatives;
- ▲ Come up with novel strategies and programs;
- ▲ Produce innovative organizational designs and structures;
- ▲ Take charge and make things happen, through inventive problem solving;
- ▲ Focus on progress, improvement, efficiency, productivity, and results; and
- ▲ Generate thoughtful questions and challenges to conventional thinking.

You can help them build their creative capacities by:

- ▲ Providing the right structure with clear goals and objectives and plenty of challenge;
- ▲ Discussing the processes to be used, making sure that people issues are being addressed;
- ▲ Ensuring they take time to gather data and see the shades of gray;
- ▲ Encouraging them to slow down to reflect and learn;
- ▲ Supporting their efforts to learn to delegate; give them opportunities to teach others how to lead;
- ▲ Helping them work on relationships and interpersonal skills; and
- ▲ Advocating playfulness, fun and a sense of adventure to help them deal with stress.

Remember one size does not fit all when it comes to being creative! ☺

Next issue: **Managing the "people person" for more creative results.**

Creativity Tips

Q: How do the eight creative talents fit in with other personality instruments, including the MBTI®?

A: Both the Eight Creative Talents and the MBTI® are based on the work of Swiss Psychologist Carl Jung. The eight creative talents bring together a well-grounded theory of creativity with Jung's research on personality differences with the goal of helping everyone understand how to be more creative, effective and productive.

In coming to appreciate the eight creative talents, it is important to remember Jung's belief that his model was not cast in stone. The Breakthrough Creativity Profile and the MBTI® like other instruments designed to measure personality don't necessarily capture the full richness of who you are. Family or work pressures, for example, force many people to operate out of a substitute personality, and tests may not capture this situation.

You don't want to label yourself; you want to use this information to grow. As one Jungian expert put it, Jung believed "that his model was useful, a practical way to orient ourselves, psychologically, as completely as when we locate a place geographically by latitude and longitude."



"The four functions are like the four points of a compass"

And Jung himself said:

"The four functions are somewhat like the four points of the compass; they are just as arbitrary and just as indispensable.... One thing I must confess: I would not for anything dispense with this compass on my psychological voyages of discovery."

Finding your creative talents is a first step on this voyage! ☺

Lessons from Research

The recent Innovation Survey designed to get a better understanding of the challenges facing leaders eager to build more innovative organizations produced some surprising results. To hear a discussion of the preliminary results, log onto www.breakthroughcreativity.com.

The preliminary findings include identification of three drivers of organizational prosperity:

- * A leadership style that is humble, open to input, curious, willing to experiment, and truly values people;
- * Flexible processes that promote

communication, focus, execution, creative decision making, and new ways of doing things; and

- * Metrics that drive accountability and progress.

In addition to significantly more detail describing these drivers, the final report will contain specific recommendations for leaders to improve organizational performance.

If you're interested in learning more or in receiving a copy of the final version, email me, lynne@breakthroughcreativity.com. ☺



True Stories (continued from pg. 1)

Müller-Kirschbaum and his department of over 100 chemists and engineers had a major challenge. As one of the leading R&D labs in Europe, it was well recognized for its innovation processes in product development. The management team, however, felt the need to speed up the steady stream of new product ideas and innovations to ensure Henkel's future prosperity. Müller-Kirschbaum, Wuhrmann and Ditze were attracted to the basic assumptions around IAK's training approach, including the belief that everyone is creative and that the contributions to the innovation output of an organization varied by individual preferences. They were therefore eager to learn how this approach could be applied to boosting individual and team creativity. They also wanted insight on how to most strategically organize the department for highest performance.

Working with IAK consultants Peter Schmidt and Stefan Skirl from Cologne, Germany, they embarked on a new program, called "The Human Side of Innovation." Fifty managers of the R&D Division were selected to serve as "Innovation Champions" with the primary task to develop viable concepts for new consumer products and technologies. One module of the program was based on the model described in the book *Breakthrough Creativity: Achieving Top Performance Using the Eight Creative Talents*.

The program's objectives:

IAK and Henkel agreed on three goals for the program:

1. Supporting the individual creative talents of the key R&D employees and helping them answer a key pre-requisite to the innovation process: Am I using

my preferred talents to the fullest extent and is the environment around me providing the opportunity to do so?

2. Leveraging and synchronizing team talents, to answer the question: Are we using the different talents within the team to the best advantage? Looking at the team's chart of preferences, what patterns do we see and what impact do they have on our performance?
3. Developing the organization, to address the question: Are the organizational structure and innovation strategy in line with the talents of the team and how can we enhance our innovation culture?

The program

To achieve these goals, the whole group first received an overview of the "The Human Side of Innovation" approach. Each participant then completed the MBTI® questionnaire, to identify their preferred talents. In small coaching sessions, participants validated their results and received feedback on the strengths and challenges of their preferred creative talents, particularly during the innovation process. The feedback session also included a reflection on the findings and action planning for more powerfully applying their talents.

Many of the participating managers left the sessions, eager to share their results with their teams and to create more awareness for the different talents. About four weeks later the whole group met to review the overall results and generate ideas to improve their innovation processes and to better leverage individual talents.

Results and insights

According to IAK consultant Peter Schmidt, "Very few members had a full awareness of the possible differences among creativity styles and talents in the organization. The Eight Creative Talents model provided them with some important insights."

The patterns on the team were also revealing. As Vice President Müller-Kirschbaum expected, 65% of the dominant talents were Pilots and Explorers and 50% of the auxiliary talents were Visionaries and Inventors. Since the mission of the R&D department was to deliver viable product solutions, the strengths of the dominant talents seemed to be aligned with this mission.



However, the team was concerned about the level of experimentation and willingness to make mistakes. In addition, given the preponderance of certain talents, the team wondered whether other talents felt heard and appreciated. Finally, according to Schmidt, the team also questioned how well they were building relationships, both within the team and with other groups, given the low proportion of Harmonizer and Poet talents.

As a result of the program, the group decided there is a vast untapped reserve of creativity and innovation in the organization that needed to be liberated by:

- * Starting a process to better appreciate the different talents and to consider the talents, when establishing new teams;
- * Making sure the environment for those with Visionary and Inventor talents was working, given their preferences for more private space and reflection;
- * Involving other departments, such as Marketing and other groups within R&D, in the effort to identify and leverage talents, for more inter-departmental creativity and innovation.

The team agreed that the Eight Creative Talents were very helpful in understanding how individual differences for gathering information and making decisions can impact creative contributions. Team members commented, "We have started to listen more carefully to different talents." "Without a diversity of talents, we would just continue to get more of the same output." "This initiative will certainly stay with us over the next several years." The results of the program, according to Ditze, will be "better internal communication, faster implementation of projects, and new ways to tackle tough innovation challenges." 

The Practical Innovator

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"Everyone has the potential to be creative.... But not everyone knows how to be his or her creative best."

About the Editor:

Lynne C. Levesque, editor of *The Practical Innovator*, earned a doctorate for her work on creativity in top executives after spending 17 years in industry and management. Nine years ago she started her consulting and research practice, now located in Charlestown, MA. She works with leaders to build more prosperous organizations through strategic application of innovation and creativity.

Coaching Sessions

One-on-one coaching sessions help individuals and management teams identify their strengths and define action plans for enhanced personal and organizational performance.

Consulting Services

Consulting and facilitation services support organizations in strategic planning, new business creation, teambuilding, and change management. Services include organizational, team and individual assessments and diagnosis and ongoing support for leaders and teams.

Publications

Breakthrough Creativity: Achieving Top Performance Using the Eight Creative Talents (Davies-Black, 2001)

Breakthrough Creativity Profile, HRDQ, 2003

Breakthrough Creativity Profile Facilitator's Guide, HRDQ, 2003

We welcome your questions, success stories, and suggestions for future issues!
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Workshops

Workshops provide substantive material in an interactive environment, focused on practical application. Because of their modular design, they can be easily customized to meet each group's particular needs.

The Innovative Environment

- ▲ Using The Innovation Assessment Process to Manage for Innovation and Change (one to two days)
- ▲ Building a Resilient and Innovative Organization (two days)

Creative Processes and Tools

- ▲ Creative Problem Solving (one day)

Creative Teams

- ▲ Building Team Talents using the Breakthrough Creativity Profile (half – full day)

The designs in this newsletter are based on Australian aboriginal symbols, describing travel and change. The logo depicts the new perspectives a traveller brings to the problems of others.