



Leading Change
Through Creative Insights

Dr. Ralph Kerle

Why An Organization Should Build Its Own Digital Innovation Platform and How It Can

The Innovation Ecology Contribute an idea and become an Innovation Leader

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Every organization is systemically and uniquely creative, made up of its employees' cumulative creative capabilities and experiences. To make innovation work in that context requires a way of devising an organizational framework that recognizes the unique creative contribution of each person whilst fitting it into the individual uniqueness of the organization's creative culture as a whole.

Digital collaboration technologies, currently the digital rage such as ideation platforms (the process of creating and capturing ideas), take a one shoe fits all approach to organizational creativity, regardless of the inherent uniqueness of the creative culture of the organization. Further, ideation platforms create disruption to organizational process when they are layered onto existing technology infrastructure currently driving the organization. Unless there is genuine intrinsic motivation for an employee to participate, the ideation platform will die along with the innovation initiative, subsumed into the myriad of current digital technology processes employees are required to engage with on a daily basis.

My recent research shows a failure rate as high as 80% on money spent in this area with little result 12 months hence and once an innovation initiative collapses in an organization it will be consigned to the scrapheap of failed projects, never to fly again.

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So what is the solution for organizations who genuinely want to innovate?

There are three essential elements to the discipline of organizational creativity.

- Creative Leadership – the creative knowledge, experience and behaviors of the organisation's leaders.
- Strategy – the creation of a strategic innovation plan aligning innovation with the overall organizational goals and objectives;
- Tactics – the facilitation of ideas designed to capture and harness the cumulative creative knowledge and thinking within and often external to the organization to drive the implementation of the strategic innovation plan.

If an organization fails to explore any of these elements before it implements an ideation platform then the innovation initiative will commence with uncertainty and confusion and, as a result, often die a quick death at the start or take much longer to embed and produce results.

The most successful organisational innovation initiatives I have worked with started by carefully selecting an innovation leadership team made up of the brightest middle management talent from across all areas within the organization, empowering this group to design the future of the organization.

A one day envisioning workshop with the team, having them invent the organizational framework for the future - a framework built on the concept of an externally focused creative thinking organization that is continually innovating and adapting internally and externally, is all that is needed to surface a coherent purpose and vision for the group.

I recommend as part of the workshop running a quick diagnostic such as Foursight on the innovation thinking styles of the team so members can understand how each individual thinks and collaborates creatively. This helps in detecting whether there are behavioural biases that may impede the innovation leadership team going forward.

On completion, the innovation leadership team has a vision for the organization's future, a basic framework for the strategic innovation plan and a set of principals, protocols and practices underpinning the plan's implementation.

Now is the time to focus on the design of the organization's digital ideation requirements.

The Innovation Ecology is a new digital platform deliberately designed as a simple low cost, highly flexible, easily adaptable on-line ideation tool. It supports early stage ideation experimentation through a simple challenge process that reveals how quickly an idea can be elevated into a project and once implemented an innovation. Using this project prototyping approach, an organization can experiment and explore its own ideation capabilities in a de-risked user friendly environment without huge technological commitment or disruption.



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It also quickly surfaces potential innovation champions who are likely to be future innovation leaders. This is very important in assisting the innovation leadership team to embed and drive deeply the ideation process throughout the organization.

The Innovation Ecology comes with a comprehensive innovation guide on how to set up and manage a digital innovation technology platform authored around real world practices and experiences rather than technological specifications. You can choose to subscribe to the Innovation Ecology through its cloud based hosting service or you can purchase a set of web site wireframe specifications and the comprehensive innovation guide and have your technology department build the platform.

Remember, it is the innovation teams creative behaviours and capabilities, not the technology platform, that will determine the future success or failure of the organization.

Register here to join me on November 25th for a demonstration on the Innovation Ecology functionality and get one month's free unlimited subscription to run your own organizational innovation ideation challenges.