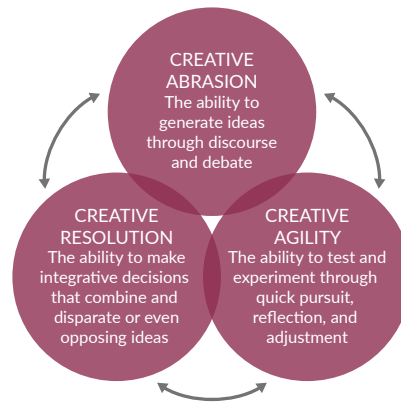


By Linda Hill, September 2014

Key messages



- What we see as good leadership does not necessarily create innovation: creating a vision and inspiring others to execute it is a different skill.
- Based on several studies conducted worldwide in different companies (e.g. Pixar) Linda Hill formulates strong insights into managing for creativity.
- Innovation is not about solo genius, it is about collective genius.
- The belief that people have “aha” moments is mostly a myth.
- Pixar has a rather unclear, messy process that is difficult to describe in unambiguous steps, still, they make the most creative products.
- Innovation involves a paradox: you have to unleash the potential and ideas of the many but these have to come together as a useful product. It’s a journey of collaborative creation, often involves trial and error and mistakes, and is some-times very scary.
- A lot of failures in innovation are attributed to there being too many cooks in the kitchen. Still, Pixar is full of cooks! So, what is the key?
- Innovative organizations are communities that have three capabilities:
 - **Creative abrasion**
The ability to create a marketplace of ideas through discourse wherein differences are amplified and not ignored or minimized. It is not brainstorming but heated constructive argument. People know how to inquire and to listen but also how to advocate for their point of view. Diversity and conflict drives innovative ideas.
 - **Creative agility**
Being able to define and refine a portfolio of ideas through quick action toward realization rather than planning the entire process up front. Creative agility is a combination of a scientific and artistic approach, where you use a series of experiments to find your way. An experiment is always useful; even if the outcome is negative, you always learn something you need to know (in contrast to a pilot, which for political reasons has to succeed).
 - **Creative resolution**
Being able to implement a decision-making process that allows the combination of all kinds of elements into new solutions. Innovative organizations don’t go along to get along and they don’t let one group dominate, not even the boss. These organizations have developed a more inclusive decision-making process that allows more than one solution to arise.
- Google is an interesting example of how these capabilities play a role in solving a crucial problem.
- Leadership is the secret sauce. It is NOT about creating a vision and inspiring execution. Leading innovation is about creating a space where people are willing and able to solve difficult problems innovatively, creating a world people want to belong to (a community) and ensuring that all voices are heard! It is about the power of the many and those close to the customers.
- **The leadership role in shaping collective creativity is to create the stage, not to play on it!**

Watch: TED talk by Linda Hill:

https://www.ted.com/talks/linda_hill_how_to_manage_for_collective_creativity