

## **Leaders Get The Innovation They Deserve**

**An article written by Max Mckeown**

Innovation is a fad. It's a fashion. At least that's what cynics will say after a few years talking about its importance. After the innovation boom will come the innovation bust. Yet, the smart companies will keep innovating while the wannabes will stop. Smart people know the difference between fashion and fact.

It's not possible to cover everything but here are some truths that every leader should know:

1. **Leaders Get The Innovation They Deserve** – Leaders matter to innovation. The way you think. The way you talk. The way you talk about how you think. When the Disney CEO was asked to choose between 12 new business ideas, he responded, "Let's just do them all!" His words sent the message that ideas were welcome, wanted, and valued. The ideas transformed Disney from a back water family favourite to a global entertainment mega-giant. And they all came from *existing* members of the company in the first three months of the CEO's tenure.
2. **A Crisis Is A Terrible Thing To Waste** –When faced with a crisis ask: How can we use this crisis to inspire innovation? When IKEA was faced with competition with other mail order firms it opened its first showroom. Supplier boycotts led to it designing and building its own furniture. Transportation problems led to the flat pack concept. A showroom fire led to a much bigger showroom. Insufficient sales people at the showroom launch led to self-service. It would have been easy to waste each crisis but instead they inspired innovation.
3. **Cut Innovation Some Slack** - Leave space in role descriptions, the product plan and the roadmap for stuff that no one thought of when you wrote them. A software consultant at the Swiss CERN institute used slack computing resources to invent the World Wide Web. An accountant working at Fleeer Chewing Gum Company used slack raw materials to invent Bubble Gum. Not one of these inventions came from scheduled time. How much space does innovation deserve?
4. **Innovate Your Way Out Of Recession** - You could just cut back on everything but you will also cut back on the very things that can help you to survive and grow. Toyota started their hybrid car development during a recession. Can you create a mass market from a luxury or niche product? Apple launched the iPod during recession. While your competitors are full of fear, uncertainty and doubt, you can introduce innovations that will increase growth during and after the recession.

If you want to make your world better, the principles in this book are worth your time. It contains simple, yet often overlooked, important, yet often ignored, and critical, yet often underestimated, truths about innovation. If you have been working with innovation for years, it will remind you of what you know and still give you new insights. If you want to help colleagues understand what it takes to move from ideas to insights to innovation, then this is the book that you should buy for them. Everyone can help. Every kind of intelligence and personality plays a part. Our need for innovation has shifted power closer to the source of that power – Us. Get the innovation you deserve!

Visit Max's website: [www.maxmckeown.com](http://www.maxmckeown.com)

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