HOW TO ‘DREAM BIGGER’: 6 WAYS TO CREATE A CULTURE FOR INNOVATION

GLOBAL INNOVATION FORUM – NOV 2022
After three years it was great to be back in person for the Global Innovation Forum 2022 – and boy did we come back with a bang!

From CERN physicists to Tesla designers, from zero-waste trailblazers to corporate disruptors, GIF once again brought together a diverse community of innovators all willing to share with and learn from one another.

The theme this year was ‘Dream Bigger’ and throughout the talks, workshops and side conversations, it became clear that culture was both the biggest enabler and the biggest barrier to this ambition.

Many of those present were grappling with similar challenges of how to shift their businesses - built for efficiency and replicability - to a mindset that embraces innovation and adaptation, with all the challenges that brings.

From the wealth of insight and inspiration shared over two days, we have distilled six key lessons on how you can start shifting your culture to be more conducive to innovation. You don’t need to address all six at once – just start with the one you think will have the most impact for your business today.

Hopefully it will be a first step on the journey to helping you, your team and your business not just dream bigger – but turn those dreams into reality.
Innovators are creating the future world we will all live in, so thinking inclusively is critical. Luckily inclusive innovation can also help fuel a true innovation culture.

Too often innovations miss those who should be included – but ignoring different genders, races, and abilities in the innovation process is lazy thinking that limits your market. Ask who are you missing from you thinking?

Including diverse colleagues can help you overcome biases, see things differently and spot new opportunities. As Mileha Soneji (Danone) reminded us, typewriters were invented to help blind people and electric toothbrushes were created for people with limited motor skills!

And thinking about inclusivity internally is also critical to creating a true culture of innovation – the more the business feels it owns innovation collectively, the better.

Ask who are you including and who are you missing both externally and internally; then use diverse thinking to uncover new problems to solve and groups to help.
USE LIMITATIONS TO FUEL CREATIVITY

‘Waste is a failure of imagination’ according to Chef Douglas McMaster – and many of our speakers spoke of how embracing limitations can drive creativity.

Defining clear, tight constraints can help you to think differently and achieve new breakthroughs. Think about Douglas creating a restaurant that doesn’t have a bin; Guido Schwartz’s tales of African satellites built to last longer; or Tom Kegode’s (Lloyds) push to recapture the ‘COVID urgency’ of accelerated change in the workplace.

As we look to create a more sustainable future, innovation should also focus on how less really can be more. Louise Scott (Natura) and Will Pearson (Ocean Bottle) both showed how challenging sustainability goals inspired new designs. We should start thinking about what we can do ‘inside the box’ rather than always going outside it.

Think about how you can switch your culture to one that sees problems as opportunities waiting to be solved and challenging constraints as permission to think differently.
MAKE IT PERSONAL

Innovation is so much more powerful when it comes from a place of personal passion and ownership rather than business targets and corporate buck passing.

So tap into the personal passions of your team. Think of how Mileha Soneji (Danone) innovated to help her uncle with Parkinsons. Or the personal passion for the ocean that led Will Pearson to create Ocean Bottle.

We also heard the importance of driving ownership at an individual level: Ravi Arora (TATA) and Ralph Hartmeier both spoke of how they are working to democratise innovation and then empower people to act on their ideas.

Encourage people to take personal responsibility too - as Emma King of IHG put it, don’t get caught up in the corporate morass, instead ‘Engage with what you can change’ – and set your mind to make a difference.

Hand over ownership of innovation to individuals, then find ways to enable them to turn their ideas into reality.
EMBRACE YOUR INNER CHILD

To be truly innovative, we need to unlearn the ‘rules’ we’ve absorbed with experience and embrace a sense of childlike curiosity: challenging the established fundamentals and being willing to ask ‘Why’.

As Nick De Leon (RCA) and James Beacham (CERN) showed us, we face challenges where the same way of thinking that created the problem, now can’t solve it. We need to free our minds from the rules and learn to play.

Kids don’t obsess over perfection – they just start trying stuff. As Javier Verdura (Tesla) noted, to get to brilliance we need to churn through ideas 10x faster. And we must get comfortable with letting go of control - “We are gardeners, not conductors” as Suhair Khan reminded us.

And if your team find this shift hard, find ways to work with young talent - like our Teentech entrepreneurs - and encourage their natural creativity: it will be infectious.

Let go of the ‘rules’, always ask why and remember – you don’t have to be serious to solve serious problems!
Address Fear of Failure

Fear is the biggest cultural impediment for innovation – and it’s present at every step of the innovation process: from ideation to execution.

Rob Murray (ex-Head of Innovation at NATO) recounted how soldiers risk their lives in wars, but avoid risk when asked to innovate in mundane operational situations.

Nic Umana (Mars) and Javier Verdura (Tesla) talked about the need for a mindset shift to create real innovation. How can you encourage people to seek progress over perfection, to learn how to fail faster to improve faster…?

To tackle this you need to get specific and ensure people understand how they can fail well. TATA has a ‘Dare to Try award that celebrates intelligent failures – research shows those who participate are 36% more likely to be involved in the ‘Successful innovations’ in the future!

Find ways to celebrate and learn from good failures and in doing so you will accelerate your innovation culture.
THE FUTURE IS PHY-GITAL

Phy-gital – a merge of the words physical and digital – may be an ugly phrase but it conveys how, accelerated by COVID, people are increasingly moving seamlessly between digital and physical worlds.

As Matthew Drinkwater (LCF) put it ‘the Metaverse is inevitable’ (not least given $100bn being pumped in by VC funds). Kumardev Chatterjee showed how the Metaverse has a CAGR of 37% and according to McKinsey 60% of consumers preferred at least one activity in the virtual world compared to its physical alternative.

But the Metaverse will also be a hybrid world where digital layers are added to ‘real life’. Businesses need to adapt to this new reality and understand how they can shift into this hybrid environment for both customers and employees.

Consider how the customer and colleague experience can be adapted to – and enhanced by – bringing digital and physical worlds together to create new opportunities.
FIVE WAYS TO CREATE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

1. Practice Inclusive Innovation
2. Use Limitations to Fuel Creativity
3. Make it Personal
4. Embrace your Inner Child
5. Address Fear of Failure
6. The Future is Phy-gital
LOOKING FOR SUPPORT ON YOUR INNOVATION JOURNEY?

INTRODUCING BRAND GENETICS
BRAND GENETICS UNCOVERS NEW GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT MAKES PEOPLE TICK & BRANDS GROW

WE USE PSYCHOLOGY, BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE AND PROVEN EMPATHY TECHNIQUES TO UNDERSTAND THE HIDDEN MOTIVATIONS THAT DRIVE PEOPLE’S CHOICES
**THE MOTIVATIONAL MATRIX**

Motivation is critical to driving human behaviour. Address these 9 science-backed, evidence-based and expert-endorsed higher order motivations as a proven way to energise people’s behaviour and promote human wellbeing.

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<th>ME GOALS</th>
<th>ACTION GOALS</th>
<th>SOCIAL GOALS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling positive in myself</td>
<td>Feeling positive about my actions</td>
<td>Feeling positive about my relations</td>
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<td><strong>Expectations</strong></td>
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<td>Unique, Interesting</td>
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Thank You Global Innovation Forum 2022
Dream Bigger, Dream Better!

Unlocking growth
by thinking human first

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