Creativity—Innovation—ToP "Market"- Self-Assessment

Cheryl Kartes Sat, Jul 21, 2012 12:39 PM

Dear All,

I appreciate the research and thinking that was done before, during, and now after our time together! Thank you to all who provided session models for us to respond to!

I will put the meeting dates into my calendar, and plan to be on future calls.

Eunice's comments below are helpful in trying to refine our thinking about which piece of the creativity pie we plan to take on. I can imagine our need to further the conversation on this going forward, so I started this conversation in our restricted Creativity and ToP team area, so that we could track the related dialogue.

I have noticed a number of "innovation" sessions going on locally, and noted that creative thinking alone is useful, but when we take a creative idea and make it useful/put it to work, it becomes "innovation". We talked at our retreat about the gifts of ToP methods including the capacity to gather a group's creativity and frame it towards action. So I'm thinking as we think about marketing, that facilitating innovation is part of what we do.

 During our retreat, the idea of a "self-assessment" came up. I agreed to find out more about the "Innovation Styles Profile"(ISP) that we used at the Intuitive Leadership Project, that was quick, on paper, and supported the notion that "everyone is creative". I've put a number of ISP resources into my research file in our Dropbox. You will see their 28 page booklet on their theory, and sample materials that have questions to ask each of the innovation styles for different purposes, ie: strategic planning, etc. It becomes a way to maximize the creative approaches of each of the styles while they are working together.

Today I had a Skype meeting with William C. Miller, whose ISP work we became aware of in the 80's, associated with Stanford and Willis Harman, futurist. He was intrigued learning about the global work of the ICA and the methodologies that came from that work, recognizing that ICA'ers/ToP'ers are in service to the world from his perspective. He is very interested in what we are doing, and willing to provide a package that "works for us".

During our call, I learned he and his wife have been living in an Ashram in North Central India for over 12 years. He has created an India based company that has developed a "device and cloud system" for their 12 curriculums, of which Innovation Styles is one of. He mentioned "bringing good character to innovation" and "innovation processes" as materials to help people gain more skill in innovating before engaging with a team.

They have their survey online, it can be taken before the course, takes about 10 minutes

for 20 questions, and people get an immediate "at a glance" understanding of their preferred styles of innovation. Then they get a 12-page booklet about their style. Additionally, a team gets a team chart, a team profile and a team booklet regarding the skills on the team and recommendations on how to improve their work together. For the trainers/facilitators of a team/course, they provide various workshop materials PPT decks, feedback and lots of support. For corporate teams, they charge $75 per person for access to all of their materials. For us, he's willing to wait to see what we think the value is for us, what our budget might be, and "work with that".

He offered to let 2 (I pushed and got a max 3) on our team try it out. I only knew the longer paper version, but I don't need to do the online version. I think it is best to have other volunteers from our team try it out and see what you think. For example, it was mentioned that Sawyer(?) had a free tool we could probably use. I did not take that one, so I think those who have should be the ones to test this tool for comparison.

There are no obligations. If you are interested, I would send your email address to him, and he would provide the connections to the survey tool.

Additionally, I've added some info from Dennis Stauffer of "innovator Mindset" who also has a wide range of materials. He has sent me more I haven't opened yet, and offered to talk too. He is based in the TwinCities and I've been aware of him for a while. His info came recently through a local group of about 100 folks from several corporations who meet regularly to explore topics on creativity and innovation. Their meeting times are very inconvenient for me and I've never made it to a meeting. But they are ACTIVE! Always looking for more tools for creativity.

All Good Wishes,

CK

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Eunice Shankland - Tue, Jul 17, 2012 10:55 am
Subject: Brief reflections on the weekend

Dear Matt and Y'all,
Thanks for your continued enthusiasm and the "moving forward practical next steps"

I would like to share with you a quick thought/reflection from the weekend's work. I truly appreciate everyone's work and attention. It was an impressive first retreat for me. Thank you very much.

Here it is:
Title: Creativity for Group Facilitators (or in Group Facilitation)

Target audience: We decided that facilitators are our main audience – and I add, **group to** facilitators and what they do.
Then we need to expand on who, what they are, what they do, what they need, what their work demands of them

I. Theoretical Considerations
   a. Neural-science, psychology, theology, and OD principles, ToP values, Theory U, others
   b. Four phases: orientation, incubation, illumination, validation
   c. Two dimensions: individual and collective (group)
   d. Foremost thinkers and authors and trends in creativity thinking and practice

II. Implications to Group Facilitation (what will make group facilitation creative)
   a. Collaborative work
   b. Strategic work
   c. Change work
   d. Others

III. Practical Applications (who to enhance these processes with creativity)
   a. Problem solving (to problem finding)
   b. Strategic Planning
   c. Organizational change
   d. Community development/transformation
   e. Training

IV. Methods and Tools
   a. Step-by-step methods
   b. Tools for the tool kit including glossary, case studies, tips and pitfalls

I think that we need to pursue clarity on what we want to convey re the theoretical framework. Then we look at what facilitators do and where would they need to infuse creativity in their work (or catalyze creativity). And then we can hone the methods and identify tools we need to reinforce the thinking and the practice of creativity in what we do. I also think that this is iterative and we should pay attention to all the "side" thoughts that come to us as we work on any of these points.

I see that looking at Illumination with Ann and Spence, we need to both go upstream to articulate the higher level context and benefits to facilitation and then downstream to methods and tools.

This will also mean how this endeavor relates to ToP in its essence and how it may enliven ToP work/existing courses now. Thanks for listening.

August 13, I am working with a 100-person group – literally night and day. I will do my best to check in at least.

I also would like to raise this idea about how to get feedback from the larger group of people, TTN, ToP and non-ToP people. Should we post something in one of the Linked In forums? IAF Forums? Any others?

Have a great day and Summer!

All the best, Eunice

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I have already committed at the retreat, to debrief Larry. Thanks Matt for quick organizing. I do think there may be some other items we need to discuss. We can build them in to the agenda. We are creating the matrix of various versions of the creative phases, for example. I can get the template going on this over the upcoming weekend when I get back home.

I am eager to read and incubate on our notes and have already had some thoughts that build on the substantial work we did this past week end. Appreciations to the team that showed up, all the hard work many did before arrival and all the effort put forth while we were together.

- Marti

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Hi Matt and all,

These times and topics sound good to me. I'll try my best to be with you from Malaysia or wherever. I really appreciated working with you all this weekend in such a fantastic setting with wonderful food and hosting - thanks to Linda and Cheryl.

Ann

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From: Matthew Rezac [mailto:matthewr@sherwoodfoundation.org]
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2012 1:36 PM
Subject: retreat II: some logistical next steps

Sorry I inadvertently sent that last email before I was done writing it. Let me try again...

Hi all: Good to see you all over the weekend and unreel the next layer of this onion! Below are some quick logistical next steps:

• I suggest we meet the 2nd Monday of the month at 6p/7m/8c/9e in the PM beginning August 13. Please let me know ASAP if this does not work for you.

• I propose the following general topics for each month:
  •   August 13: report from Orientation team
  •   September: report from Incubation team
  •   October: What's the plan for ToP Annual Shindig?
  •   November: report from Illumination team
  •   December: Full team: How do we address Validation?

• I have deleted Ester Mae and Bill Davis from the email list. Not sure if I should also

delete Becca and Joanna...Linda, do you have any guidance about that?

• Would anyone be willing to contact Dennis and/or Jim and/or Larry to give them a debrief of the retreat?

Let me know if you have any questions or suggestions for improvement.

Thanks! Matt

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Ann Epps - Tue, Jul 24, 2012 2:28 AM

Hi Cheryl,

Thanks so much for putting up all this information on Innovation Styles. It is truly awesome and goes way beyond what I thought you were saying about a brief survey on one's innovation profile. I would be very interested in exploring this further, particularly in seeing what is in the survey. I have submitted a proposal for conducting a one-day creativity workshop in Geneva at the IAF Europe conference. I would not want the 3-hour workshop from Innovation Styles, only the survey and an interpretation of the results. What might be the next step to look into this further?

Thanks, Ann

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Ann Epps - Tue, Jul 24, 2012 3:47 AM

Hi All, Thought I'd share with you a demo conversation on creativity I led at a recent TFM in Denver. The conversation is built around a You Tube video that Ester Mae referred us to some time ago:

ToP Focused Conversation Demo on the plastic bottle light video:

Lisan Litrong Liwanag, You Tube

Context: we would like to show you a very brief video case study that is very different from the work any of you do we would imagine. First of all it takes place in the Philippines and shows how ordinary people in ordinary situations can bring about extraordinary creative and innovative actions. We invite you to watch (will show it twice) and then we'll discuss it together.

(Play 2.5 minute video twice)

Rational Aim: Invite the group to explore the factors that help generate individual & group creativity and how we can encourage creativity and innovation in the groups we facilitate

Experiential Aim:

To feel confident that we can help inspire collaborative innovation in the groups we facilitate.

Questions:

We all saw the same video, but probably were addressed by different details, so we want to reflect and discuss together about the video.

1. What's one detail in the video that caught your attention? Can be a person, a scene, a word or line of dialogue - whatever is on the top of your head. Let's start here and just go around quickly with one response from everyone.

2. How would you describe the emotions you observed in the video?
What was your internal reaction?
What innovation did it remind you of in your own experience?

3. What do you think were some of the factors that enabled the main character to come up with this invention?
What other factors help generate innovations? What are the conditions that help us be creative whether as individuals or groups?
What are some of the things that can hinder creativity in a group?

4. What can we do as facilitators to nurture collaborative innovation in the groups we facilitate or lead or train?
To whom would you like to show this video?

Conclusion: Thank you for sharing your thoughts on what helps generate more creativity in our lives and our work with groups. This is an important subject and one in which I just spent three days with a group in Minneapolis to ponder in an effort to come up with a course on creativity and innovation as part of the ToP group of courses. I welcome your thoughts as part of this process.

Ann Epps, 17 July 2012

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Matthew Rezac - Thu, Aug 2, 2012 9:21 AM

Hey Cheryl:

Many thanks for the voluminous info you have provided about Innovation Styles in Dropbox and in this post. I'd be very interested in being one of the 3 who get to take a free trial of the survey...is that offer still available to us?

I'm sorry I am so long in replying...had a couple big events in the 2 weeks after our retreat and am still digging through my inbox.

Thanks! Matt

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Cheryl Kartes - Thu, Aug 2, 2012 9:59 AM
Yes Matt, you could be one of the 3. At this point, I perceive Ann and Spence as the other two for the trial for Innovation Styles Profile. Correct? I will get your email addresses to William C. Miller for the invite to test it. Thanks! CK

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Cheryl Kartes - Fri, Aug 17, 2012 10:29 PM

Dear Matt, Ann and Spence,

The four of us have now taken the Innovation Styles Profile, so if you go back to the website, you can download the team report that indicates how our innovation styles relate to each other, etc.

Wondering what additional feedback to provide William? Also wondering how you might imagine this or any other survey tool being integrated into our Creativity and ToP course.

CK

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Matthew Rezac - Tue, Aug 21, 2012 11:52 AM

Hi all: Thanks, Cheryl, for calling our attention back to the group results...interesting! A few thoughts about possible next steps:

1. I wonder how/whether the 4 strengths overlay other frameworks we're learning about? For instance, are "Visioning" and "Exploring" especially well suited for Orientation and Incubation, while "Experimenting" and "Modifying" are needed for the Validation phase?
2. How does this compare to Shelly Carson's test? What are the different kinds of insights each test provides and how might they fit in the course?
3. I like how the test suggests a cumulative team capacity...complements the "creativity happens via networks" idea.
4. I see the cost is pretty cheap, but part of me wishes it were free. I'm in a this-is-the-age-of-open-source-everything-so-info-should-be-free stage. I'd be inclined to explore how free assessments might suit the course before settling on this one.

5. This also re-raises for me the question of "what makes our work a <u>ToP</u> course"? So far, it feels like we're cobbling together a bunch of other peoples' stuff. While I see value in this, I'm not sure it earns or strengthens the ToP brand. Another way I've thought about it is: there are TONS of team dynamics assessments (Myers Briggs, Gallup Colors, etc.) which could theoretically fit in a TFM course...but for some reason, they're not included. Why not? Might this inform our approach to 3rd party assessments for Creativity and ToP?   Or...what would it take to create our own ORID-based creativity self-assessment? Would that feel more authentic in a ToP course...or does it matter? Does anyone else have thoughts about this?

Thanks! Matt

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Ann Epps - Mon, Aug 27, 2012 1:09 AM

Hi All, Apologies in being absent from discussion for awhile. I guess meditating at the Seoul Korean Buddhist temple has contributed to a state of tranquility that just hasn't landed me back in the real world as yet. Now that was indeed a creative experience, especially since I don't speak a word of Korean and find it difficult to sit in meditation pose.

Yes, Cheryl, the innovation group results for the 4 of us are indeed interesting - we're all explorers! The amount of information they give explaining so much on so little info we give on the survey is indeed awesome.

I would love to give this innovation assessment to each person who signs up for the daylong creativity workshop in Geneva. I don't think I want to pay $32.50 for each person, though. I suppose I could use the Shelly Carson assessment.

Matt, I share your concern about what will make our course a uniquely ToP course, but haven't come up with any real answers as yet. I do think we can use some of the exercises and processes, such as Stanford Design and give them a twist. One of the participants in my Seoul ToP Strategic Plan course is a software engineer from Samsung and he said his department had some Stanford Design school people come to their company to help them adapt the innovation process for their work, for example.

Now back to working on the one-day creativity workshop for Geneva. All ideas are appreciated. Matt, I'll try to look at your work on Google docs as soon as I learn how to navigate the system.

Ann