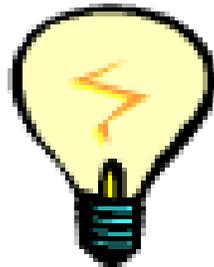


If you are interested in learning more about creativity or wish to share any experiences, please contact Karl Mettke at kmettke@fs.fed.us.

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CREATIVITY FRINGES



FOREST SERVICE

EASTERN REGION

JUNE 2007

CREATIVITY, IT MATTERS!

Do you worry all the time? Is your work life going down the tube? Do you hear the negative hallway talk? Negative thinking constrains your creativity and affects your ability to think positively. It takes a lot of effort to be positive! Thinking positively helps your creativity, finding ways to deal with challenges and forming opportunities. Thinking positively can help you become more successful in all areas of your life. While some people are naturally positive, most of us just accept things as they are. However, you can teach yourself to be positive. You can put yourself in a positive state of mind. Sometimes all it takes a new perspective. You need to believe that you can think the unthinkable and believe the unbelievable. You must believe that you can challenge the accepted way of doing things. Remember, that there are many ways of looking at things. Creative thinking requires positive thinking. Read positive messages. For long term creative thinking, read and study books on positive thinking. One way to keep focused on positive thinking is to be happy.

The secret to happiness, says one researcher, is to stop striving for it. Suzanne Segerstrom, author of "Breaking Murphy's Law," says people who want to be more optimistic and happier should aim to be engaged, instead of aiming to be happy. The way to happiness is keeping busy with something you love. When you're engaged in something you care about, it distracts you from a pessimist's favorite pastime: worrying. It's no wonder that optimists are more creative and get more done than pessimists. Martin E. P. Seligman, a

pioneer in the positive psychology movement, offers these three tips on how to become more positive:

- **Use your strengths.** Write down your top five strengths, such as generosity or creativity. Then use one of your strengths in a different way every day for one week. Researchers have found that people who do this exercise for only one week increase their level of happiness for the next six months.
- **Track the good.** Each day, write down three things that went well and why. When good things happen, pessimists dismiss it as a fluke, while optimists aren't shy about taking credit for the success. Conversely, when bad things happen, pessimists blame themselves and expect long-term negative consequences; optimists see bad events as problems that will pass quickly and have little to do with them.
- **Say "thank you."** Write and deliver a thank-you letter in person to someone who has been especially kind to you, but whom you have never thanked properly. Researchers have found that doing so boosts happiness for a month afterwards.

When Someone Gives You a Lemon! Make lemonade. Or so the adage goes. While it's easy to assume a negative attitude when things go awry, a positive attitude will take you much further toward success. Here are a few ways to turn negative problems into positive possibilities:

Say it positively. Put a positive spin on the situation by restating it with positive words. For example, turn a "problem" into a "challenge," or a "failure" into a "lesson."

It's not you. When someone, such as a customer, takes his anger out on you, don't join in his negativity. Act calmly, reassuringly, and pleasantly. Your positive attitude will help diffuse the anger. Tell yourself he's just having a bad day and needs to vent—which is probably true.

The glass is half full. Always focus on what you can do to help improve a situation, not what you're unable to do. This positive thinking allows your mind to accept new ideas and creative thoughts.

I think all great innovations are built on rejections.

Louise Nevelson

Suggested Readings:

Business Week, "Special Report, Most Innovative Companies," Jeana McGregor, Aili McConnon and Arlene Weintraub, Pages 52-60, May 14, 2007 (www.businessweek.com).

US News & World Report, "Creativity On Demand," Kimberly Palmer, Pages EE2-EE4, April 30, 2007 (www.usnews.com).

RealInnovation.Com, “Assess Your Personal Innovation Level,” Praveen Gupta, April 27, 2007 (www.realinnovation.com).

Sloan Management Review, “The Five Stages Of Successful Innovation,” Alissa Mariell, Pages 8-9, Spring 2007 (www.sloanreview.mit.edu).

Harvard Management Update, “Creative Leadership: Be Your Team’s Chief Innovation Officer,” Judith Ross, Pages 1-4, March 2007 (<http://hmu.harvardbusinessonline.org>).

Innovation, The Five Disciplines For Creating What Customers Want, Curtis R. Carlson & William W. Wilmot, Crown Publishing, New York, NY 2006.

Creative people live in spaces that help them cultivate their ideas and develop new projects. We may find inspiration in a fabric, a photo, or a childhood memory.

Lise Richards

Get Your Creative Juices Flowing

Creativity is an important trait for employees in any level of an organization. New ideas are essential for progress. But how do you harness your own powers of imagination to develop creative ideas? How can you put yourself in a creative state of mind? Here are a few tips:

- **Get out and about.** Creativity requires diverse stimuli and connections with other people. Get to know what the other staffs are doing and how their work might connect to your idea.
- **Keep ideas on track with your organization's goals.** If management wants to streamline services, train your mind on how it can be streamlined right where you are.
- **Be open to accidents.** Some of the most successful ideas are developed after an accident led to their discovery.
- **Put the time in.** Be prepared to spend some of your own time to explore and develop your ideas.
- **Educate yourself.** Go to seminars or classes that may be related to your ideas or areas in which you want to develop ideas. They help feed your imagination.
- **Keep going.** Don't listen to those who say no. Do listen to constructive criticism.

Charting Trends

Management and Innovation

Management innovation is just as important as product or technological innovation, says Gary Hamel, visiting professor at London Business School and author of “Leading The Revolution.” Management innovation is more likely to result in

long-term sources of competitive advantage. Unfortunately, he adds, most companies don't have the corporate DNA that makes them really good at innovation. Hamel says a good theoretical model is the "innovation stack," in which operational innovation leads to product and service innovation, which leads to business model innovation and finally to innovation of the entire industry architecture...for example, satellite radio and the iPod. As you move up the stack, the returns to innovation grow. It's hard to get any type of real lead advantage at the operational or even product level, Hamel says, while management innovation enables companies to cross fundamentally new performance thresholds. Deconstruct your management beliefs, he urges. Ask yourself 10 things you believe about management. For example, many believe it takes a crisis to change a large company, and that a new leader is needed to affect this change. The problem is management may be using a mental model of their industry that's five, 10 or even 15 years old. Example: Microsoft was very late on both the Internet and Internet search.

Business Innovation Insider
November 2006

Service Innovation: The Next Big Thing

IBM, Oracle, and other tech companies have formed a new nonprofit consortium dedicated to the advancement of this hot concept. When most consumers and corporations think of innovation, sleek, user-friendly products such as Apple's iPod come to mind. But leading companies, innovation consultants, and academic researchers are shifting their focus from products to services as the next hot area. "People have a good idea of what technological innovation is," says Jim Spohrer, director of service research at IBM's Almaden Research Center. "But service innovation is more hidden." Though the phrase is not yet widely recognized in the business world, the concept of service innovation isn't new, as Spohrer illustrates with the example of the lightbulb. "The average person knows the story of Thomas Edison, the inventor and innovator who came up with the lightbulb. People don't tend to think of the related service innovations—getting lightbulbs into houses and schools, setting prices for the electricity services to keep them lit. That's all service innovation," he argues. More recent examples, though most people wouldn't think of them under the phrase, are outsourcing and the shift toward self-service. While the initiative's first concrete project is hosting a symposium, *The Challenges & Opportunities of Services Research & Innovation*, on May 30, at the Santa Clara Convention Center, the groups aims to do more than organize talks and gatherings. The initiative hopes to grow to be "an open, Web 2.0 community," in Pridham's words, and a clearinghouse for research reports and other information on models of service innovation. (The initiative lives online at www.thesri.org.) The SRI Initiative's plans to formally involve educational institutions and government funders to collaborate with corporations—perhaps the next step in gaining widespread acknowledgement for both the idea and practice of "service innovation"—should further distinguish the two organizations. But even with the

growing number of consortia with service innovation in their titles, the concept won't achieve the recognition of say, management theory or supply-chain analysis overnight. While the strategies put forward by the SRI Initiative are tailored to technology companies, corporations in other fields could use them as an early guide to navigating the new field of service innovation.

Business Week
March 29, 2007

Some thoughts from a few Dreamers.....

At my District, there seems to be a desire to empower the people, but, as I have seen happen before, management feels the need for "control." We have all the typical problems, blame, cya, lack of feedback, etc. While the plan to change "Forest Service Culture" is all the rage today, how can the culture ever change when the urge to control is so strong? We have given our feedback through surveys, but the message is not getting through. Why is a huge challenge in the Forest Service? Can you answer this question? People make it happen in the Forest Service. Without our work ethic, passion, innovative spirit and a desire to do the best we can do, we are just another government organization. It seems management just never listens. Do you have any ideas out there to help us see the light?

I enjoy every Creativity Fringes. Here are some thoughts for you. Potentially, each of us has sources of creativity. The tricks are first finding them and then honoring them. Some of us have found our well-springs or touchstones -- places, activities, rituals, people, or things --- which in some way support the attainment of inner peace, joy, creativity, or well-being. The secret here is in maintaining these sources. There is much that we can do in the Forest Service to help people here. I believe it is important that we teach people these skills and help them discover their personal creativity.

Web Bites

The Creative Class Group (CCG) is a global think tank headquartered in Washington DC that develops new ideas and strategies for business, government and community competitiveness. Richard Florida author of the "Rise of the Creative Class" blog is also available. You can reach the site at <http://creativeclass.com>.

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Thank You For Taking Time To Be Creative.....