

RSOG Workshop

WHAT INNOVATION MEANS TO YOU

with

Christopher Looi

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Speakers : Christopher Looi

About the Workshop

Innovation icon, Steve Jobs once said “We hire people who want to make the best things in the world”. Such extremely high expectation is expected considering the ever increasing demand from the customers at ridiculously low price, under intense competition, and unpredictable environment. Without doubt, work, now and in the future requires a lot of thinking to move forward. Perhaps that is what knowledge economy is all about. Centre of Creative Leadership (CCL) has been in the forefront studying about innovation and leadership. One of their recent findings is about innovative thinking skills, which they believe is a crucial addition to traditional business thinking. They believe innovative thinking can help to bring new ideas and energy as well as solving challenges. It also paves the way to bring more innovation into an organisation. This seminar intends to explore the six skills; namely (i) paying attention – ability to notice what has gone unnoticed, (ii) personalising – ability to tap personal experiences and passions, (iii) imaging – ability to answer ‘what if’, (iv) serious play – ability to ‘branch out’ and have some fun, (v) collaborative inquiry – ability to draw diverse stakeholders’ viewpoints, and (vi) crafting – ability to live with and resolve paradox and contradiction.

Summary

Innovation is the ability to implement something new that adds value or quantifiable gain. There are three building blocks required for innovation, which are Mindset, Skillset and Toolset. The focus today was on the Skillset required to foster innovation. The six skills are Paying Attention, Personalizing, Imaging, Serious Play, Collaborative Inquiry and Crafting.

Paying Attention

Paying attention is the ability to notice what has gone unnoticed. Paying attention begins with slowing down temporarily, in order to be more deliberate in grasping the situation. It is the notion of being reflective, looking at a situation from many perspectives and paying attention to nuances, perceived details and seeing new patterns in the moment can help you notice an opportunity for innovation that did not first catch your attention.

Practical Tips:

- Treat every problem you encounter as unique.
- Embrace different point of view
- Ask powerful questions that challenge perspectives and assumptions.
- Use the SCAMPER (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Minify, Magnify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, Rearrange, Reverse) technique.

Personalising

It's about tapping into personal experiences, interests, hobbies and passions and applying them to work to introduce fresh perspectives on innovation challenges. Bringing more of who you are to the work that you do and encouraging those you lead to do likewise. Consider how ideas, patterns or strands of insight from the whole of your life might contribute to your work.

The customer side of personalizing is the ability to understand your customers in a full and real way: Who are you reaching, What matters to them and What don't you know. Personalising requires you to interact with customers in their environment. It pushes you to understand who they are and how they live. Deep customer knowledge leads to new ideas, patterns and insights that fuel innovation.

Practical Tips:

- Pay close attention to things outside the work that energizes you.

Imaging

Imaging helps us connect with ways of knowing that go beyond the intellectual and verbal. They reach into our imagination, our intuition and our emotions - all of which are vital resources when seeking to innovate. Using metaphors, images, and other tools to engage an innovation mindset, gain new perspectives and reframe a challenge. Imaging plays a vital role in collaborative innovation. It makes thought visible as groups create and share images.

Practical Tips:

- Use collages as a starting point to solve challenges.

Serious Play

Innovation requires bending some rules, branching out, having some fun. When you generate knowledge and insight through nontraditional ways – free exploration, improvising, experimentation and rapid prototype, limit testing-work feels like play but the results are serious business. It is a way of learning about the complexities and subtleties of an issue or problem by exploring the limits. It involves making or finding a relatively safe space so the bending and testing can be done without catastrophe. In this way you learn to see new patterns and ideas.

Practical Tips:

- Become a student who questions conventional wisdom.

Collaborative Inquiry

Collaborative inquiry is the heart of innovative leadership. It involves engaging in dialogue to propel innovations on a successful trajectory, through dialogue within and across boundaries. It involves cycles of action and reflection and thus promotes learning. Collaborative inquiry invites loyal skepticism, challenging questions, and a plurality of perspectives.

Practical Tips:

- Identify ways in which u can let go of what u know about something in order to listen to another person's point of view.

Crafting

Crafting refers to synthesizing the issues, objects, events, ideas and actions into meaningful whole. Crafting is making something new or well adapted come into being without simply resorting to formula and repeats. It's the integrated totality of the other 5 competencies.

Practical Tips:

- Identify ways in which you can develop reflection into your daily work practices.

Issues Raises

- Ideally, one focuses on all six skillset, which complement each other. Such approach could help one from over focusing on certain skillset.
- The right attitude and mindset is a prerequisite in successfully practising the six skillset.
- Evidently, changing mindset has always been a challenge to a leader. A positive mindset often paves way to innovation – willingness to embrace change.

About the Speaker

Christopher Looi is attached to CCL as a faculty member who specialises in the area of change, communication, conflict, and development. Before joining CCL, Christopher worked as a management consultant for Cap Gemini Ernst and Young, consulting with Fortune 500 companies in the consumer goods, banking and finance and retail sector. In addition to his consulting work, Christopher worked as a trainer and facilitator across the Asia- Pacific for an Australian non-profit company, building leadership and communication capacity. Christopher has also worked in the wealth management and advisory space with the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

Contact

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