

## ***Quote:***

"In organizations, real power and energy is generated through relationships. The patterns of relationships and the capacities to form them are more important than tasks, functions, roles, and positions."

Margaret Wheatley

## ***King Innovation Council Events:***

### **Innovation Café**

- March 27, 8-9 am, ***different location for this session:*** Kentville Research Station

Speaker: John Bragg, Oxford Frozen Foods

The Innovation Café provides an excellent opportunity for people interested in innovation to come together to hear an enlightening speaker (15-20 minutes) followed by informal group discussion. No registration required.

### **Innovation Workshop: Leadership Using Appreciative Intelligence**

May 9, 10 & 11 2007

Ledgehill Corporate Learning Centre Inc., 7608 Hwy 201, Lawrencetown

Cost \$695.00 plus HST (Includes workshop, all meals, and accommodations.)

***Limited number of spaces available so register early!***

Details of workshop and registration.....[more](#)

or contact Charles Bower ([cbower@ledgehill.com](mailto:cbower@ledgehill.com)) or phone 1-800-676-3393

## ***Other Interesting Events:***

Nova Scotia Community College Kingstec Campus Networking Event

*Wednesday April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 from 10:00 am to 12 noon followed by a lunch.*

This is a networking opportunity for employers and Human Resource personnel to meet students in an informal setting at small tables. You will be able to share your knowledge regarding your field of expertise and answer questions from students. We are encouraging our students to use this opportunity to gain valuable information in preparation for an employment search. We see this as a win-win opportunity for our community. The college is very aware of the valuable connections business owners and Human Resource personnel have and we encourage you to help us help students make connections to the community. To register contact Beverly Davis: Phone 690- 2173 or email [Beverly.Davies@nsc.ca](mailto:Beverly.Davies@nsc.ca) before March 23rd, 2007.

## *Interesting Website:*

[http://www.destination-innovation.com/free\\_downloads.cfm](http://www.destination-innovation.com/free_downloads.cfm)

## *Feature Article:*

### **Adopt and adapt ideas to drive innovation**

*By Paul Sloane*

Adapting ideas that have worked in one environment and using them in another is one of the most successful of innovation techniques. Let's look at some examples.

In 1916, a young American scientist and inventor called Clarence Birdseye went to Canada as a fur trader. He noticed that people in Labrador kept their food frozen in the snow for extended periods in the winter. When he returned to the U.S. he developed this idea and launched a line of quick-frozen foods and persuaded retailers to stock them in freezers. He created the frozen food industry. Birdseye subsequently sold his business to General Foods Corporation and made his fortune. He saw a good idea, adapted it to his business environment and implemented it.

Alexander Graham Bell studied the workings of the human ear. He adapted the idea of the eardrum vibrating with sounds into the workings of a metal diaphragm which led to his invention of the telephone.

The motto of the Round Table is adopt, adapt, improve and it is an excellent guideline for implementing new ideas in your business. Taking ideas from other environments and adapting them for use in your situation is one of the best ways of implementing novel solutions. Amar Bhide of the Harvard Business School studied the origin and evolution of new businesses. He found that over 70% of successful start-ups were based on ideas that the founders had adopted from their previous employments. They took a promising idea in a field they understood and made it better.

The person who invented the roll-on deodorant was looking for a new way to apply a liquid. He copied an idea from another field, writing, where the same problem is solved. He adapted the concept of the ballpoint pen to create the roll-on deodorant.

Samuel Morse was the inventor of morse code. He encountered a problem sending signals over long distances on the telegraph - the signal became attenuated and weak. Then one day when he was travelling by stagecoach he noticed how the coach changed horses at relay stations. He adapted this idea to put in relay stations for telegraphs that boosted the signal.

In 1941 George de Mestral went for a walk with his dog in the Jura mountains in Switzerland. On their return he noticed that many plant burrs were attached to his trousers and to the dog's coat. They were hard to remove. He examined them under the microscope and saw that they contained tiny hooks that caught in the loops of his clothes and in the dog's hair. He developed an artificial material to mimic nature and in doing so he invented Velcro.

## Putting this creativity technique to work

If you have a problem try to force fit a link with a random event or animal or institution. Then adapt some ideas from that environment. Say your problem is how to motivate a lethargic team and you choose at random the Olympic Games, a tiger and a Ballet school. What sorts of ideas would that trigger? You might offer medals as recognition for top performers. You could keep records of who has achieved the fastest qualified lead or the fastest assembly time and post them on the wall or the extranet in the form of Olympic records. The tiger might suggest face painting as a trick for raising morale or it might suggest hunting - you could have a treasure hunt in the office or organise a 'hunt for sales' competition. And so on. The ballet school students practice all their exercises each day before they perform a dance. This might suggest a high-energy group practice session each morning before work proper begins. Ballet dancers practice in front of mirrors - what if we installed systems that gave us feedback to build the team's motivation?

Alternatively, try to adapt a combination between your organization's main strength and that of other organizations or people. Say you provide high level training courses and you choose at random a hospital then you might come up with the idea of a consulting accident and emergency clinic where people turn up with their problems and you help diagnose them on the spot. Or you may ponder that many people forget what they learn on training courses. In a hospital patients have ongoing physiotherapy sessions to aid recovery. This idea could be adapted so that you send out "physio trainers" to top up the learning of participants after they have completed their courses. Alternatively, if you think of the Boy Scouts then you might imagine a summer camp for some of your top clients or a "bob a job" campaign where you offer short introductory courses for new clients.

Lateral thinking is about finding new ways to solve problems. It is very likely that the current problem you face at work today has been faced and solved by other people. Maybe they were in your line of business or maybe they confronted a similar problem but in an entirely different walk of life. Why do all the brain work yourself when you can adapt someone else's idea and make it work for you?

Have a great week.

*Marianne Gates*

Project Coordinator

Kings Innovative Communities

Kings Community Economic Development Agency

Phone: 902.678.0393

*"Innovation is the successful implementation of a creative idea." Kings Innovation Council*