



**Creativity and
Innovation...**

**How YOU can get More of
Both**

FIIS Intersections - 6th Edition

*Creativity and innovation... Where do they come from?
What is the difference between them? How can you develop these skills and utilize
innovation and creativity in your business?*

Whether you are working in a Fortune 500 company or as a bootstrap entrepreneur, the spark of creativity is waiting to be ignited. I venture to say that creative power lurks in every individual in your organization and as a leader it is your job to unleash it. The problem occurs because most people need a process to connect with their powers of creativity and innovation and the process is not immediately obvious or accessible.

We have seen a variety of people harness their creativity and innovation under varying circumstances and for a plethora of reasons, however with one element in common; facilitation using a process called Innovation Games (IG) and Collaborative Play. (CP) And by a diverse group of people, I am talking about bankers, plumbers, conference center managers, event planners, and numerous consumers and customers of our clients. To help our clients uncover unmet needs, design new strategies, increase productivity and discover new product ideas, these processes, IG and CP, are invaluable tools to spark transformational ideas.

To be clear, we differentiate creativity from innovation rather simplistically. Creativity is hard to measure, difficult to evaluate and is subjective. Innovation is measurable, accessible and once applied, can be objectively judged. (For example, do your clients embrace the idea, did they buy it, and did it work, is it profitable... well you get the picture.) Innovation is 'applied **creativity**'. In business, innovation is rewarded while creatively may not be.

Why does Collaborative Play work as a process for innovation? There is a great deal of neuroscience on why our brains do not embrace change easily. In order to be creative and innovate you need to change.



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G. B. Shaw said, “Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.” Our brain is stingy, and wants to use old habits to drive future activities. However, when using CP, we force the brain to think, see and feel differently. CP creates randomness in our thinking and it literally opens up our minds.

We are hardwired to play games. They are fun, emotional, exciting and have a beginning, middle and an end. We always play them collaboratively and not competitively within groups. When we play, we have to create new neural passageways and/or new mind maps in our brains. These actions force us out of our comfort zone.

Everyone gets to play if they want to; no one sits on the bench as the games are relatively easy and engender camaraderie *and* lots of laughs along the way.

Shawn Achor who is a New York Times bestselling author¹ talks about mind maps and suggests that “if we map success routes before escape routes we are on the way to becoming a positive genius as it allows you to channel your full range of intelligence towards solving problems.” The same thought process applies to IG and CP. When you reorient your mind maps towards a creative process you will find innovation, promise!

Here is the rest of the story and an example you may find interesting:

Convinced that his team knew the right approach to working with and acquiring more GenXY private wealth management clients, a banker at a mid-sized institution, surveyed the internal business units and developed a plan. They had a technology implementation scheduled that would take online banking and do-it - yourself personal investing to new levels of speed with educational content and tutorials that were very robust and technical. This capacity was slated to be their prime differentiator. Before moving forward with the plan, they decided that it was probably a good idea to ask their GenXY clients what they “really wanted” versus what the bankers and technology division thought that they wanted.

We curated and conducted a series of Innovation Games with consumers’ ages 19- 52, all considered to be high net worth and/ or private wealth management clients with a substantial level of their wealth being managed by banks.

Surprisingly, after playing IG and CP with these investors, we found that they simply expected the bank to have speedy technology as a core competency and did not necessarily view it as a differentiator. When given the opportunity to build their “perfect wealth management structure”, they wanted a client experience, with a knowledgeable person that they liked and could change at will without moving away from the bank itself.

While successful and intelligent, many of the investors still felt insecure with making financial decisions based on their own ability to understand the jargon and wanted a “touchstone, a guide, or a Sherpa”. While there were many variations on the themes, a primary one was for a Sherpa that knew the terrain better than they did and could navigate the path for them when necessary but leave them alone when desired. What emerged are the client advisor as the architect of the client experience and the key differentiator.

Their ideas for successful client experience included spending time learning alongside their advisor; so special events with elements of education; financial and otherwise were welcomed. A 360 degree view of them as people, not simply as fee generators was also desired.

This information changed the plan for the technology implementation timeline and the type of technical content. The menu of choices included more video content, shorter tutorials and instant access to an advisor when it was convenient for the client. The number of senior and junior Sherpa hired and the level and type of training they received was also modified based on the outcome of the Games.

1. Before Happiness (2013) and The Happiness Advantage (2010), www.goodthinkinc.com.