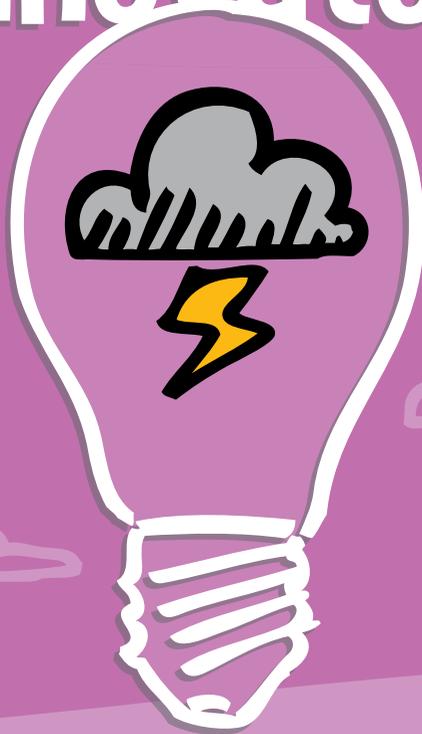


ALL NEW  
déjà vu's &  
hindsight

# Second thoughts from a **GRUMPY** innovator



written & illustrated by costas papaikonomou

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*to Patricia, Spiro and Dimi  
my anti-grumpidotes.*

**The future isn't in front of you, but  
*behind* you. Merciless in pursuit, on  
your heels, preying on every last decision  
you made, awaiting your next move.**

## Second Thoughts

In 2012, I published the first Grumpy Innovator book about the ugly reality of innovation in corporate environments and the responses have been heart-warming;

- “Thank god I am not alone, I thought I was the crazy one here at the office.”
- “I read a few lines every time I’m in the toilet. I’ve found it a great inspiration and laxative.”
- “It made me laugh and then cry when I realised I was the topic of the joke myself.”
- “It made me cry in the toilet at the office, thank god I was alone at the time.”

Three years later, there is good news and bad news.

The good news is that the book has put me in touch with countless new friends, who share my amazement of how organisations deal with innovation and get in trouble when they need to do doing things differently in order to grow, or even survive. There is an army of us out there, who will patiently sit through long meetings and tedious processes, waiting for the right moment to do what we know is required to actually get things done.

The bad news is we’re still a minority and I’m still grumpy. Which is why you’re now holding this second book: I’ve had no problem finding more stuff to write about.

Scattered across these pages you will find further thoughts on reasons why innovation is still a painful activity for so many businesses;

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## **Premise: why I'm still grumpy**

In the first Grumpy Innovator book I explored the paradox of innovation<sup>1</sup>. The conflict between a messy, ever-changing outside world which drives the need to innovate, versus wanting a predictable, calm environment in which it is easier to run a profitable business. In corporate ecosystems, this leads to over-relying on models and abstract views of the world, resulting in poor success rates. It was also fun to throw rocks at various functions who we all know get in the way of things more than anything.

What I'd like to explore with you in this second book is a number of perspectives on 'innovation' itself. What is it, how does it strain people & processes and what core competencies does a business need to do it well? But most of all to throw a couple more rocks and have some fun.

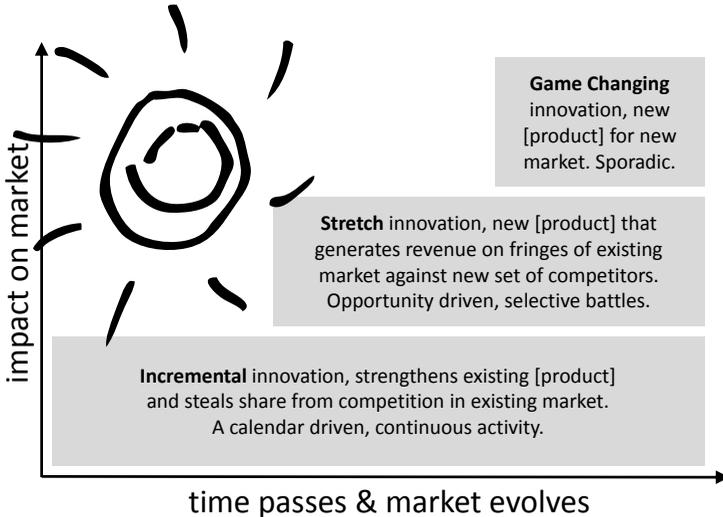
On the next two pages is a diagram showing the Sunny Smile of Innovation alongside its dark mirror image, the Murky Mechanics of Innovation. We'll explore how innovation is more than the business textbook definition of 'doing something new that makes money' or 'drives growth'. It comes in different shades and cannot be seen without its implications on the organisation delivering it.

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<sup>1</sup> You can find the first book's premise on page 146

## Sunny Smile Of Innovation

Innovation is a commercial tool for businesses to continuously seek out new revenue opportunities, and



that's the bright happy side shown here.

- ☛ **Incremental:** this is your 'new news' process. Small tweaks to satisfy new questions from existing users/clients and piss off competition.
- ☛ **Stretch:** find new occasions and formats to draw in an audience just beyond your current reach. Great if you're starting to lose on price in your current market and things are commoditizing.
- ☛ **Game Changers:** The sexy end of the spectrum, where you create a lasting legacy, get your face on magazine covers and re-invent the industry.

## Murky Mechanics Of Innovation

When most business books and creative gurus talk about 'disruption', they refer to messing up your competitors' heads and shaking up the market.



That's *not* it. You are disrupting yourself much more.

- **Incremental:** a cross-functional effort you can tightly plan and control, within set ecosystems.
- **Stretch:** Requires understanding new category consumers and business rules, creation of minor new capability and your best bet for growing your market when you're still calling the shots.
- **Game Changers:** Only when your back is against the wall, your current [product] is completely commoditized or the market is going extinct.

So what does this dark and disheartening mirror image mean? It shows that not only do you need particular functions inside your business to innovate pragmatically in a messy world to keep the machines running<sup>2</sup>, you also need an additional set of meta-capabilities to adapt your organisation as much as the market you're serving;

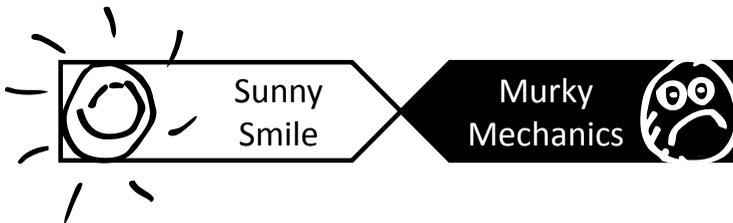
- The ability to share responsibility for innovation across functions; in parallel, not sequentially, with the lead switching sensibly as the work progresses. Similarly, realising that the source of the opportunity can come from anywhere too – sales, technology, distribution, etcetera – *not* just consumer focus groups and market research.
- Acute awareness of the required impact your innovation needs to make in order to achieve your business objective. Create an incremental innovation when that'll do the job, reserve game changers for when you need (or can afford) one.
- Savvy use of expensive assets over time, retaining function and relevance beyond the initially intended launch products and support future revenue as well.
- Install processes across the business functions that drive for value-add to the end result, your product. Not solely to optimize operational efficiency. It is the simplest way to ensure you keep aiming for relevancy *and* pick up early signals of change right at the source: the customers of your products and services.

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<sup>2</sup> See first *Grumpy Innovator* book

- Acknowledgment that when you move up into Stretch and Game Changing innovation, you are also moving *away* from daily procedures and into new ball games with unknown rules. That means success will depend more than anything on the judgment of the people creating the innovation, not on prescribed ways of working. *Trust* them.

I'll share my grumpy thoughts on pitfalls on these five principles, along with ways that might make life just a little



easier. Might. A little.

You may now be thinking... wait a moment, aren't today's celebrated new heroes of innovation in the digital arena doing all that Game Changing in the blink of an eye *and* making a fortune on the go?

Yes – *and*.

Putting those new digital heroes in a more realistic and perhaps even cynical perspective;

- The vast majority of the global economy runs on businesses who *make* things, not on digital platforms for selling or accessing them. This will remain the case in our lifetime, at least as long as humans consume physical foods & goods.

- Most, if not *all* billion-dollar start-ups prove to be pyramid schemes, not making any profitable revenue stream, ever. Then they collapse.
- The digital space is big and sexy, but it's also an immature Wild West in comparison to say, laundry detergents, chewing gum or dry soups.

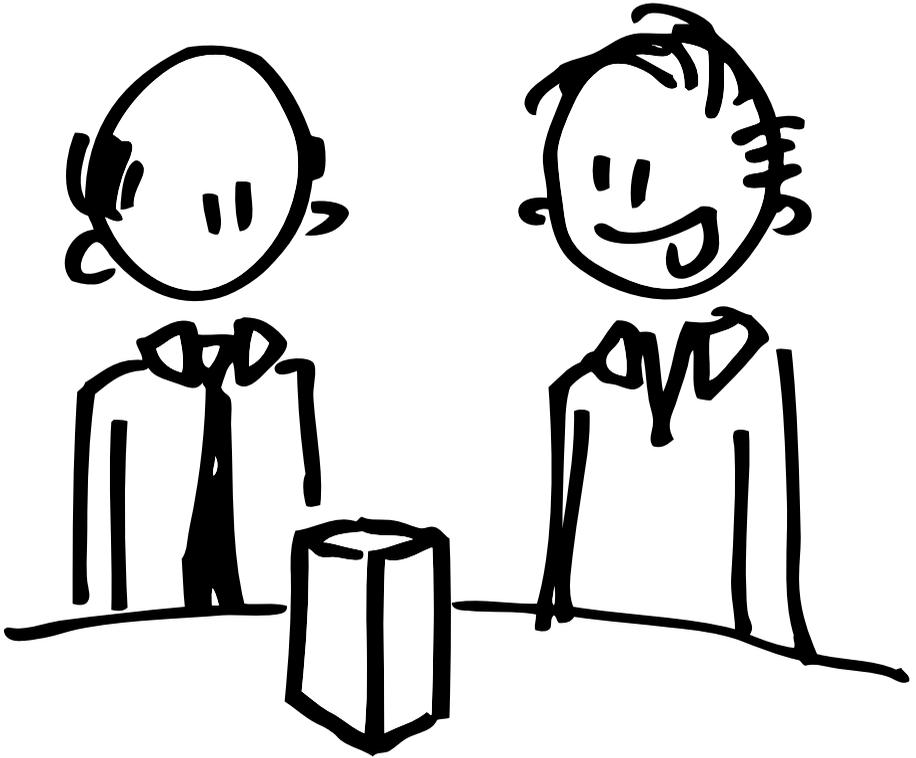
This book is for people who are in the business of making and selling real things, to highly competitive mass markets around the globe. People building brands by carefully crafting relevant improvements to win their consumers' hearts. For them, the Murky Mechanics Of Innovation are a reality that tires them by day and keeps them awake at night.

I salute you.

Costas Papaikonomou

June 2015

**Which mouths do I put my money in?**



**THE FINANCE TEAM IS PRETTY SURE  
THIS IS WHAT OUR CONSUMERS WANT.**

## Which mouths do I put my money in?

*Somewhere, early autumn: a cross-functional discussion in a corporate meeting room.*

- CEO: *Knocks on table with toy hammer.*  
"My dearest Innovation Committee, that was a good start. Now let's move on to agenda item 2. By the way, who's taking notes today? Anyway – ahem – agenda item 2 is to allocate our innovation budgets for the next 5 years. I have 10 million cash-thingies reserved. What do you think?"
- R&D: "Well, that depends. It's \$3m more than we had last year before you came on board. Which is great, as we overspent \$2m this year on catching up with [competitor]. But it was worth it as we are now ready to file patents of our own and won't need to work with [supplier] anymore."
- Finance: "Did you budget for filing patents? That's expensive."
- R&D: *Ruffles papers.*  
"Well, that depends. We did for US & Europe, but Sales wants to ship [product] to Asia."
- Finance: "So that's a No."  
*Scribbles in notepad, with stern face.*
- Marketing: "Sorry I'm late. What are we discussing today?"
- CEO: "Innovation budgets for the next 5 years. And late arrivals get note-taking duty. We just started and R&D is asking for \$2m to plug last year's gap."
- Marketing: "We need to change that notes rule, it's unfair to busy people. But good to hear we're talking innovation. I need a game changer next year. After that I don't know yet. How much does a game changer cost?"

- R&D: "Well, that depends. Do you have a spec?"
- Marketing: "No, I'm waiting for the U&A to come in."
- Market Research: "Preliminary U&A findings are due in 3 months."
- Marketing: "Hey, I hadn't seen you were here. Hi. But wait, you said 3 months at last month's meeting too."
- Market Research: "Yes, and then you all-of-a-sudden urgently wanted to include Asia, while fieldwork in Europe and North America had already started. And don't look at me like that."  
*Rolls eyes.*
- Marketing: "Ya Ya. Touché. Anyway, without a spec, how much does a game changer cost? Ball-park will do."
- R&D: "Well, that depends. Last year's [game changer] was only \$5m but it did take 4 years to develop. Do you want to know what we can do in 1 year or do you want a game changer?"
- Marketing: "I'm not sure I understand but either way, I can't spec without the U&A and I do need something next year."
- Manufacturing: *Raises finger.*  
"Sorry, can I say something?"
- Marketing: "Maybe you can work from the segmentation? The infographics are really inspiring and it's pretty accurate except for France."
- Sales: "Hey hold on, France just happens to be the only market that consistently makes the numbers. Remember who's paying the salaries here. We are."
- CEO: "Guys, just a second. Manufacturing would like to say something."
- Manufacturing: "Thank you. Well, I just wanted to say 3 of our 4 plants are severely underutilized already, since the orders for the last

[game changer] have been disappointing. If we scrap all that kit now, we won't hit the ROI we promised."

CEO: "OK, that's a clear message. I suggest we forget about the game changers for next year and ensure we utilize our factories a bit better first. We have shareholder value to protect. The Six Sigma team are on the case, no?"

Manufacturing: "Plants. They're called plants, not factories. And the Six Sigma guys have indeed optimized the lines such we can make [game changer] more effectively, but we haven't anything new to fill the excess capacity so we're now nearing 30% idle."

CEO: "Sorry, plants. Not factories. Whatever. But are you saying TQM has made our plants more effective or less effective? I'm confused now."

Sales: "Hey hold on. You're changing the subject. How do I beat off [competitor product] if I can barely offer parity with [our product], even when I cut out all the margin? What do we do about that first?"

R&D: "Well, that depends. We could go back in time, properly spec it and then design it cheaper, faster and better. Shall we do that? Oh no – DUH – time travel <sup>2<sup>nd</sup> prize inventor</sup> hasn't been invented yet."

Marketing: "Ya Ya. Spare me the sarcasm. Our whole marketing team was different 2 years ago, how could *they* know what *we* would want to work on, eh? Besides, I want a game changer because I have a brand to build. I'll cut the comms budget to fund new kit in the factory if I need to."

Finance: "You'll do what? Cash-thingies cannot be moved around like that. Comms, factories, we need to follow the process, ISO audit season is coming."

Manufacturing: "They're called *plants*, please. And that's exactly how we funded the new lines 4, 6, 11 and 14 years ago. I know because I was there every time to sign the paperwork."

CEO: *Knocks toy hammer on table again.*  
"This is going nowhere. I asked a simple question at the beginning. How do we spend our \$10m over the next 5 years? We need to innovate, because that's what well run businesses do. Fewer Bigger Better.  
Who owns the Innovation Funnel? I mean the Stage Gate"

All: **"Marketing's search!"**

CEO: "What?"

Manufacturing: "Well, Supply Chain write all the contracts for anything new we do. But they're not part of this Innovation Committee. They're the only people we deal with when sorting out capacity, suppliers or anything new and that's been working fine for twenty years."

Market Research: "Ha! Well, we're a consumer centric company now and they don't represent our consumer. That time is behind us. Market Research should own the innovation funnel because we are the Voice Of The Consumer."

R&D "You mean you put every single one of my team's ideas in front of your focus groups. That's where most of my overspend went."

CEO: *Hammers more loudly now.*  
"Jeez, settle down guys. Last time I checked, Procurement is part of Supply Chain and since we initiated the PartnersPlus programme, they control what market research we buy too. Now, can someone make a note to invite Supply Chain at next month's meeting to present the Innovation Funnel or Stage Gate or whatever it is they do to chart how we spend innovation budgets around here? Who's making notes?"

Marketing: "This is unfair."

Hopefully, you recognize nothing whatsoever of that scene and you have the innovation responsibilities clearly defined in your organization. Then the problem of budgeting for the future becomes as simple as: how much do I spend on what and when?

The problem with innovation resource is of course it's about planning for unknown solutions to yet uncertain problems and the further out in time you look the worse it gets. The only thing certain is it will be expensive, and there's never enough cash. The business books talk about building a car while driving it, but none mention the blinking fuel indicator.

Then how place your bets, when it comes to innovation investments? Is it about bringing the trend watchers in and watching them perform their 2x2 magic on flipcharts? Is it about sinking money in local start-ups hoping for a return? Or simply spend it on 10% free-wheeling time for your technical teams?

The problem of course, is the immensely different time lines that your technical and marketing teams operate on. Ask your R&D team how long it takes to develop a particular capability and the default answer is 5 years, plus a request for an expensive piece of laboratory kit. Ask your marketing team what new products they expect to need in 5 years' time and they'll tell you what they think they might need next year, along with a massive market research budget.

In essence, both teams are right. In the myopic world of foresight, they're saying the same thing: "We don't know

how the future will affect us". Which is useless if you need to decide now where to invest for long term capabilities, be it technical or operational.

The answer lies in de-constructing this huge question into smaller chunks *and* the simple ambition to shape the future instead of just trying to guess what might happen.

Remarkable opportunities reveal themselves when you look at the future through different lenses for things you can do;

- **Consumer & society.** What's going on in the lives of your end-consumer, throughout the day? How do the different generations use your products and what does that say about their next life stage?
- **Technology.** What are barriers you and your competitors are all running into, the contradictions and trade-offs that come with delivering your core benefit?
- **Channel & distribution.** How are the channels you are in now evolving? How do you make those even easier for your products to run through? What new channels are emerging?
- **Point of sale.** Will your end-users be buying products from you at the same point in time and place, or is this likely to change? Same for your middle-man or retailer.
- **Environment & supply chain.** How can environmental impact be reduced, not just for ethical reasons, but also to overcome rising scarcity of just about every raw ingredient known to man?
- **Legal.** What does the regulatory landscape look like, what new rules and limitations are likely to be imposed

on you? Look at categories that might serve as ominous precedents.

- **Brand.** If you were to just extrapolate what your brands have been doing so far, what would the effect be of multiplying by ten times faster, softer, harder, smoother, nicer ...?

Etcetera. Defining the right set of lenses is *not* an exact science<sup>3</sup>, the trick is to cast a wide net of relevant yet distinctly different directions that matter for your business.

Explore future scenarios first, through each of your lenses. Go further out than you'd ever be comfortable with for ROI calculations, it's OK. Have your technical and commercial teams spend some quality time together on thinking up what *the world* will look like in 5 to 10 years' time, not what they will be doing themselves. How will these changes affect your industry, your category, your markets. Ideate for 15-20 product/service concepts that would do well in your future world.

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<sup>3</sup> *In fact, people stating that looking into the future is a science with any degree of certainty, have no more accuracy than a horoscope. Anyone with actual certainty about the future would not be telling nor selling it to you, but using that information to make bazillions in the stock market. There are no trend agencies in the Fortune500 last time I checked.*

>>> PAUSE FOR SIDE STEP:

If you're struggling to go beyond the obvious, use this simple old Soviet<sup>4</sup> trick. In the future, everything becomes more ideal at delivering its core benefit:

1. **Perfectly**, at optimal impact, sweetness, delight and efficacy.
2. **Instantly**, only when and where necessary.
3. **Autonomously**, with no material nor info required from the beneficiary.
4. **Free** to the recipient.

Just think about it - if any competitor would introduce something that surpasses you on one of those four dimensions, you're in trouble. If they hit 2 or more - you're **toast** - and you don't need a single focus group nor technology scan to figure that out. But you will need to be clear on what your core benefit actually is as it might not be what you think. For example, if you're in the business of lawnmowers: the ideal isn't an autonomous robo-mower, nor ceramic blades, nor solar power. Because the core benefit that people want is nice lawns, the ideal result is more likely to be self-cutting grass. Which means your future might lie crop genetics which is a completely different industry from garden machinery.

Shaping the Future implies tackling category barriers.

<<< END OF SIDE STEP.

Chart & rank what technical capabilities you'd need to create your concepts for a future world. For every one of your future concepts, list a maximum of 3 new capabilities you would need to have matured in order to deliver them profitably. Again, go 360: review technology, supply chain, sourcing, distribution and so on. Not the functional teams in your business, but the capabilities you'd need to develop if you were a start-up. Chart the overlap between them

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<sup>4</sup> TRIZ – go check Wikipedia. It's the closest you'll get to objective problem solving.

across concepts. Which capabilities appear over and over, as critical for multiple concepts? You're getting warmer now, most likely a top-5 of core capabilities is emerging: the platforms that will give you most bang for buck wherever the future winners turn out to be.

Review their implications, and then some more. This is where it gets fun. For each of the key capabilities, list the implications across your business (internal) and market (external) of implementing them. Then list the implications of those implications. You'll be surprised at what that second round reveals. Most likely, your list of core capabilities halved along the way, and at least one new joiner appeared.

Ask yourself what you need just to play the game and where you can excel to win? This automatically takes you into 'make or buy' considerations. This last step is surprisingly easy and shamefully often overlooked. Practice saying "MAKE or BUY?" out loud in front of a mirror, and then in front of your technical team, it will turn heads. For some reason, too many organizations culturally assume everything needs to be developed from scratch. Look again at your shortlist of capabilities you need in order to thrive in the future, in the context of what passed in all three steps before. Which of them are actually mere nice-to-haves, platform standards that most likely already exist in other industries? Just BUY them, now. Then ask yourself what are the ownable, differentiating capabilities you want to excel at and win? MAKE them or buy the companies that make them. Start developing and patenting like there is no tomorrow. Because there is.

## **Are you awaiting the future, or shaping it?**

Charting innovation bets and deciding where to invest your innovation budget becomes much easier once you realize you don't need 20-20 vision on what the future will bring, nor spreading the bet across a huge number of alternatives. As long as you know what you need to be good at.

**Innovation success is mostly about luck, and resisting the temptation to gamble.**

"Stop being so stressed" - the single most useless advice you can receive when you're stressed.

Most Marketers talk with their Manufacturing team just like they talk to the guy in the blue overall who repairs their car. Fearful & impatient.

If you're considering developing complicated products for Millennials, be aware that by the time you launch they'll be nearing 40.

Everything so far in your career is a consequence of your own choices. So is everything from here on.

Innovative destruction and hopelessness: long queues for collecting benefits. By that I mean marketers lining up for focus groups.

"I had a beer, please"  
*A futurologist walks into a bar*

Hey Marketer, if you want your CEO to suck up every opinion you ventilate, pre-empt it by "we've been hearing in focus groups that..."

Consumer centricity =  
[time spent convincing consumers] /  
[time spent convincing internal stakeholders].  
Try scoring > 1%

**Love as marketing concept statement:**

***You're lonely & need love***

***Discover Me***

***You'll feel super amazing***

***Because only I give TLC***

***Me Me Me***

Success in market is less dependent on the perfect idea, than it being an idea a small team is willing to work overtime for to improve and make a reality.

Time for my legal team meeting to discuss our new claims strategy!

*Packs wooden stakes, crucifixes and garlic.*

"We will do focus groups to let our consumers define our strategy", he said, followed by the hissing sound of all hope deflating into a vacuum.

"Fewer & Bigger Innovation" also implies "Less Innovations". Which means the required competence isn't scaling but the ability to choose.

To pessimists, the glass is half empty.

*Meanwhile, the optimists are making a mess and splashing water all over themselves.*



**COVERING YOUR ARSE IN PILES OF RESEARCH  
JUST MAKES IT LOOK BIGGER.**

A management culture of looking down the hierarchy for answers ("you tell me what to choose") is passed down all the way to the focus group.

"We have an informal, flat organisation", said the Secretary General.

Millennials, temper your heroic expectations.  
Actual things you do before you die: sore joints, dementia, kidney stones & maybe cough blood.

A framework for "judging quality" isn't meant for "creating quality", ie. reviewers are not the makers. In business that is misunderstood.

Navigating your innovation project through murky C-Suite waters will likely involve more coochy-coochy with your CFO than your CEO or CMO.

**"I can change him!"**  
***Women attracted to the wrong men  
and marketers trying to attract consumers.***

Nature's fundamental Weak, Strong, Electro-Magnetic and Gravity forces ... meet their corporate mirror Wimp, Ego, Internet and Guru forces.

Bulls and China shops. Sometimes it really is the China shop's fault.

Hey Boomers, the house with the big mortgage you're leaving as inheritance would be better named as 'tax bill', 'debt' or just 'no house'.

Buying stock of a business that's never made profit: gambling. Selling that stock on before it does make profit: pyramid scheme.

The fact you've overcome huge internal organisational hurdles to launch this product is irrelevant to the audience buying it, sorry.

**[ Presume the opportunity needs to be MADE, not FOUND. It'll set you up better for the journey ahead. ]**

Rising into the middle classes brings two emotional drivers into the mix: "I hope I don't fall back" and "I hope my kids do even better".

Remember that growth requires non-linear resources. 10% extra revenue might well eat up 80% more of your energy.

"Consumers always say the same things!"

*Marketer ignorant of his/her products always having the same problems.*

If you're not sure if the trending behaviour will continue, then plan for the other two options as well: stalling or reversing.

The biggest obstacle to getting lucky is presuming everything happens for a reason.

Charting future states without charting their implications for your business is like, well... useless.

If you want to see a stale team be creative, ask them to come up with reasons not to change anything. They'll have 100's of ideas.

"There is no life jacket underneath your seat. Nor seatbelts for when we hit turbulence. Parachutes, maybe." = Innovation reality.

Being able to see the merit of someone else's work and use it to complement or even replace your own, is a brave creative leap, not theft.

Someone probably already had that great idea of yours before you. Probably someone sitting in the same canteen as you every day.

The best way forward from your current position is making yourself obsolete. Simply because it forces you to move on and reinvent yourself.

I have a hunch that prosperity is roughly Bell-curve shaped. Not for income, but for the amount of trash you permit yourself to generate.

Arrogance: "I am right".

Confidence: "I can make it right, whatever happens".

Indifference: "Right, whatever".

If you create a clear distinction in your organisation between customer acquisition and retention, you will have equally disparate results.

I thought you did your 3-year plan last year?

Rank your own job's redundancy score:

**["other functions would prefer to  
get stuff done without me"]**

**["who'd notice if they do"]**

"Pfff. We can put a man on the moon but we can't get a live web stream to work"

*IT nag overlooking we can no longer put a man on the moon.*

"Has the potential to revolutionise [X]" and "Is revolutionising [X]" are two very different things, but continuously confused.

Hey leadership team, are you reading performance or assessing potential? Not the same.

Nothing distorts your view on the future more than what you perceive as your investments in the past. Your past self might have been wrong.

"The Schmeeting Point" - the point when more time is spent in meetings discussing what to do, than the time spent doing what is discussed.

**[ Is your Innovation time line expressed  
in man-years or dog-years? ]**

If Serendipity and Luck got the credit they deserved in business, there would be way less business books.

Water is a subset of coffee.

Almost everyone operates with best intent. That includes those b\*\*tards you consider as barriers to your project success.

That unsettling moment you realize you can whistle along with the teleconference holding music and the robotic announcer sounds like an old friend.

If you're not sure it's going to annoy the hell out of your competitors, is it really worth the hassle?

I just learned a new word which I must use more often: "bifurcation". Wow.

"Less Is More". Try saying that to your shareholders with the same enthusiasm you're trying to convince your customers and suppliers.

Scoping or just coping?

The fact you disagree doesn't mean you're right.

Hey futurologist, technically you're not looking into THE future but A future. Note the subtle but important nuance there.

Wisdom Of Crowds:	"Faster Horses"
Wisdom Of Operations:	"Cheaper Horses"
Wisdom Of R&D:	"Smarter Horses"
Wisdom Of Marketers:	"New Size! Ponies!"

"It was one value-engineered step too many for me"  
*If consumers had the vocabulary to express why they turned their back on you.*

The market research paradox. The more research you do, the more likely you are to hear/see conflicting things. Do it iteratively.

**[ Roughly right is better  
than precisely wrong. ]**

"We want to be as innovative as Apple." – Then you should make a plan to launch iTunes 10 years ago.

Isn't it about time to update quant survey Lickert scores to "LOL - OMG - LIKE - MEH - FFS - FML" ...?

Being informed and being opinionated are not the same thing, either can be true without the other.



**PROTECT THE INTROVERT OPTIMIST  
AND SHUN THE EXTROVERT PESSIMIST.**

If you keep your headphones on while asking me for directions, I will send you the wrong way, OK?

"Make Or Buy?"

*The C-suite paradigm for innovation which too often defaults to "Make" and then fails.*

**Hey SVP, do your innovation teams  
spend more time preparing for  
meeting with you or with your consumers?**

Assumption is the mother of all disaster. But that's just an assumption, obviously.

"There's no downside to this opportunity, it's incredible!"  
*An opportunity with no up-side either.*

**[ In a shrinking market, copying  
your competition is probably  
not a smart thing to do. ]**

If you gather enough data, causality and correlation lose meaning as you can prove anything you want.

"Robust forecasting procedures" is an oxymoron.  
If your system requires a lot of forecasting to run smoothly, it is clearly very fragile.

A: "The shame & blame culture in this organisation is absolutely horrendous!"

B: "We need to find who's causing it and fire them!"

There's no dreaming during sleepless nights.

The goalposts aren't moving, the field is.

Saying innovation is only about finding the right idea, is like saying you can keep an alligator's mouth shut with one hand and not bother about the other 15ft.

Half my fellow grads from 20 years ago now work in industries that didn't exist when we graduated. Makes you wonder what universities are supposed to teach.

If you're using macro trends to inform your innovation strategy, you're probably forgetting how micro your share-of-wallet really is.

It seems a lot of lifestyle businesses fear missing out on the Fear Of Missing Out trend.

A: "Let's ask a couple of total strangers for sign-off on our strategy."

B: "No f-ing way."

A: "Let's do focus groups then."

B: "Yes!"

The buck usually stops over there.

Judging by this stack of MR reports I've just scanned, Women's Lib must have happened in a parallel reality. It's all "Clean-Feed-Care-Repeat" ...?

Mental note for next year's planning cycle: 'Hope' is not a strategy.

Creating, developing and launching in 8 months is pointless if you start 5 years too late.

**["Women and children first!"  
*Marketing*]**

"Not Invented Here" is absolutely fine as long as it's not being "Invented Over There" either.

"Reframing" aka "Deja New"

"Hold that thought!"

*A guarantee to forget that thought. WRITE IT DOWN.*

If you are category leader, then you shouldn't be awaiting the future, but shaping it. Actually, you should do that whatever share you have.

"What's the benefit of doing this?" versus "What's the cost of doing nothing?"

*Short term versus long term views.*

Sorry for my ignorance, but which of your MBA courses taught you "coupons" as strategy device?

Or was it as an intrinsic value multiplier?

In debate with R&D team looking for tools to save money on prototypes and need your help: where can I order a ruler with a half measures scale?

Inertia is not an external factor stopping you. Neither is paralysis.

"My predecessor was excellent and I have no plans to change the strategy, at least not for a while"

*No one in management, ever*

Innovation road map: Ask directions (*without shame*) / Straight on (*probably not*) / Correct course (*all the time*) / U-turn (*last resort*).

When dealing with ambiguous alternatives to choose from, it's less about what you choose & more about how well you stick to what you chose.

If you have to resort to crowd sourcing to find your company's next big idea, then you're not really in control of its future are you?

"Fifty Shades Of Orange" – A saucy new bestseller on interpreting mixed results from quant research.

If you're wondering what the CEO of 2030 will be like, don't ask today's CEOs to predict. Talk to the stars in today's middle management.

If you want to get senior stakeholders on board, make it sound like you're letting them in on a secret. Being covert beats being loud.

If you need over a year to sign off a foresight project, it has become an insight project. Another year, and it's a post-mortem project....

"Stage gate process" anagrams to "Sage protects sage", which then anagrams to "Greets scapegoats". *Remember, you read it here first.*

"Hidden development projects are no longer possible in our business, we have full transparency"

*Someone unaware why 'hidden' is called 'hidden'.*

We (I) made a unanimous (*polarising*) decision (*compromise*) based on observations (*hearsay*), facts (*opinions*) and foresight (*hindsight*).

"Business Analyst" anagrams to "An Unstable Sissy".

To explain your junior team member what to listen out for in focus groups, just say "WhatsApp me all the WTFs & LOLs".

Just to check, when was the last time you used one of your own products?

Few things are black & white in innovation, except for this: you MUST be comfortable with ambiguity.

**[ Don't be fooled by political barriers  
being introduced as technical barriers. ]**

Solutionocracy: the deification of people good at suggesting solutions, even when there aren't any problems.

\*\*\* SPOILER ALERT \*\*\*

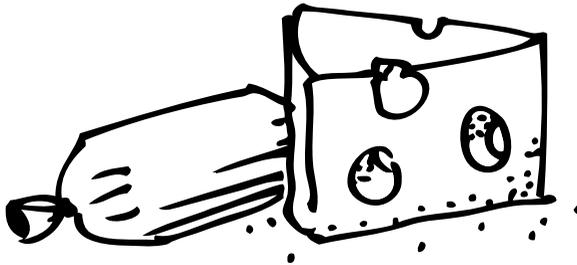
Consumers have no idea what 'category' means, nor which one your brand/product belongs to.

Sadly, many global businesses seem to think that Developing Markets can be satisfied with Under-Developed Products.

**Do not complain about your boss' inability to think long term if you've covered yourself in tattoos.**

"Level five corporate leadership" anagrams to "Verified poser, all over the place". Remember, you read it here first.

Your number of options seldom decrease over time. They just increase in cost the longer you wait.



**AS THE GERMANS SAY,  
A "WURST KÄSE" SCENARIO**

The real-old Polaroids of Me versus the fake-old Instagrams of Me ... the Polaroid-Me looks real-young and the Instagram-Me real-old.

**[ Are things really getting better or have  
you merely revised your expectations? ]**

## Further salutations

A big THANK YOU to my fellow founders and our incredible teams at Happen & Winkle, you are the reason I get out of bed in the morning. Albeit only if I'm not out of bed already for being with my wife and children first.

Another big THANK YOU to all the client teams who not only challenge us daily with delightful innovation questions, but also laugh with us about the peculiarities this work often brings.

Warm and bountiful THANK YOU's to the Rebels who come to Happen's Rebel events – you know who you are – this book wouldn't exist without you. You're probably holding a free copy in your hands now.

And THANK YOU anonymous reader of this book. I hope it made you smile, it was a pleasure writing. Get in touch to let me know your thoughts, your messages are very welcome.

Thank you all,

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