

Engineering Innovation: Some Useful Techniques

Presentation to the Innovation Salon

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Innovation

- What:
 - An idea generating a substantial improvement
 - A strategic tool for competitive advantage
 - A potentially disruptive and costly venture
 - A fun and motivating experience
- Why:
 - Crucial to quality, productivity and competitiveness
 - Due to costs, needs to be engineered where needed

SchoolNet: An Innovative Experience

- Context: Drive learning performance for innovation & productivity
 - Limited success with various tools: eg., scholarships
 - Then came the Internet: powerful, magnetic and insidious
 - Small trials prove the SchoolNet concept; soft launch
 - Consensus built at working level across all stakeholders
 - Grew project goal to include “all schools by 2000”
 - Few schools connected by feds; worked to remove barriers
 - By 2001 Canada a world leader in internet skills/creativity

Steps to Engineered Innovation

- A Clear Strategic Vision to Frame Hunt for Innovations
- An Ever-Open Door to New Ideas; 5% Budget Reserve
- Spot Your Partner’s Innovations and Promote Them
- Select Innovations Generating Multiple Solutions
- Harness Wisdom of Seniors and Energy of Youth
- Fly Below the Radar Screen: Many Small Pilots
- Market and Diffuse Innovations across the System
- Reflect and Share the Glory on Partners/Champions
- Recognize and Create Pride in Well-Implemented Ideas
- Measure the Impact and Shut Down Old Innovations

Why Public Service Innovation is Declining

- Accountability System is Unbalanced without an Explicit Risk Policy
- Control Centres striving to Eliminate Failure; Innovation is Risky
- Post HRDC, Control Centres are dominating Operating Managers
- Few Career Gains for PS Innovators, only Risks
- An Aging Hierarchy is Dampening Youthful Creativity
- Constitutional Constipation: Action is at the Community Level

A [sound recording of](#) *this presentation is available for your listening pleasure.*