

## **Innovation session – Brian Harper at Visionaries // March 2012**

Innovation and Visionaries are closely tied together. In Webster's dictionary, innovation means the following:

: the introduction of something new  
: a new idea, method, or devices

You are all innovators.

Some of my favorite quotes:

"An enterprising person is one who comes across a pile of scrap metal and sees the making of a wonderful sculpture. An enterprising person is one who drives through an old decrepit part of town and sees a new housing development. An enterprising person is one who sees opportunity in all areas of life."

Jim Rohn

"I want to put a ding in the universe." – Steve Jobs

"You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take." – Wayne Gretzky

"A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be.

- Wayne Gretzky

"When you innovate, you've got to be prepared for everyone telling you you're nuts" - Larry Ellison.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

### **6 Keys to innovate in 2012**

#### **1. Be a leader**

"Where there is no leadership the people fall, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. (Proverbs 11:14)

A Leader knows it's about the individuals and not about themselves.

It's essential to pay attention and to listen.

Innovation requires us to listen deeply, speak candidly, question constantly and challenge openly. In other words, an organization that values innovation will be light on bureaucracy and heavy on curiosity and transparency.

It is up to the leader to set the course and provide a direction for the future. Great leaders spend time illustrating the vision, the goals and the challenges. They explain to people how their roles are crucial in fulfilling a company's vision and meeting the challenges. They inspire men and women to become passionate entrepreneurs, finding innovative routes to success.

## 2. Be an example.

1 Kings 2:1-4

When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.

"I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel

To truly help people be great, an Innovation Leader must be an example of being "great" themselves.

An innovator is out in the ditches doing it every day. They are getting "dirty" with the troops. Their sleeves are rolled up. When your team sees you out actually doing what you're counseling them to do, they will then have more regard and belief in what you have to say.

## 3. Be a Visionary and Optimist

An innovator provides the group with vision and creativity. An innovator provides an optimistic culture and helps create meaning in a person's day-to-day life. Innovation teams need to be staffed primarily with people who have an optimistic frame of mind.

However, the optimists must be balanced by people who evaluate the idea using consistent framework and real world insight, to ensure the idea has mass appeal. Staff your innovation team with optimistic people. Evaluate the ideas with pessimistic people.

"As I think in my heart, so am I." Proverbs 23:7

## 4. Create trust.

Lord said in Psalm 118:8 "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."

Without trust, there is no collaboration. Without trust, ideas do not go anywhere even if someone finds the courage to mention them at all.

## 5. You can never have too many ideas

Ideas are easy.

What's rare is the willingness to bet your reputation, career, or finances on your ideas to commit fully to pursuing them. Conviction, like trust and willingness to take risks, is exceptionally rare. New ideas look strange. They seem impractical. They make us feel uncomfortable. But they also unleash billion dollar industries. And the way to make sure that we're part of that success is to avoid prematurely killing ideas and instead judge them fairly and deliberately.

## 6. Take the dive( risk)

Most managers/leaders are risk averse

But without the ability to take risks, innovation and progress can not happen. . You'll find very few big ideas that were adopted with immediate open arms and unconditional love by those in power. We know this, which is why we often keep our best ideas to ourselves. They are much safer there.

You can have all the budgets in the world, and resources, and gadgets, and theories and S-curves and it won't matter at all. The main barrier to innovation is the fear of taking the risk/jump Take the dive.

How many of you have read the book/ or have seen the movie Moneyball?

It is a true story of innovation. The Oakland Athletics have a secret: a winning baseball team is made, not bought. In major league baseball the biggest wallet is supposed to win: rich teams spend four times as much on talent as poor teams. But over the past four years, the Oakland Athletics, a major league team with a minor league payroll, have had one of the best records. Billy Beane, general manager aka innovator of the Athletics, is putting into practice on the field, revolutionary principles garnered from geek statisticians and a college professor. This was a first for major league baseball. At first, Reporters called him crazy.....other teams laughed at him.

Two years later, copying Billy Beans philosophy, the Boston Red Sox won the world series.

One of my favorite lines of the movie was when Billy was having a conversation with the owner of the A's( his boss)-

" I'm not in it for a record, I'll tell you that. I'm not in it for a ring. That's when people get hurt. If we don't win the last game of the series, they'll dismiss us. I know these guys, I know the way they think, and they will erase us. And everything we've done here, none of it will matter. Any other team wins the world series, good for them. They're drinking champagne, they'll get a ring. But if we win, on our budget with this team, we'll change the game. And that's what I want, I want it to mean something"

Everyone of us can help change the game in NYC with Visionaries and in our workplace. I challenge everyone of you to have this mindset. Change the game.