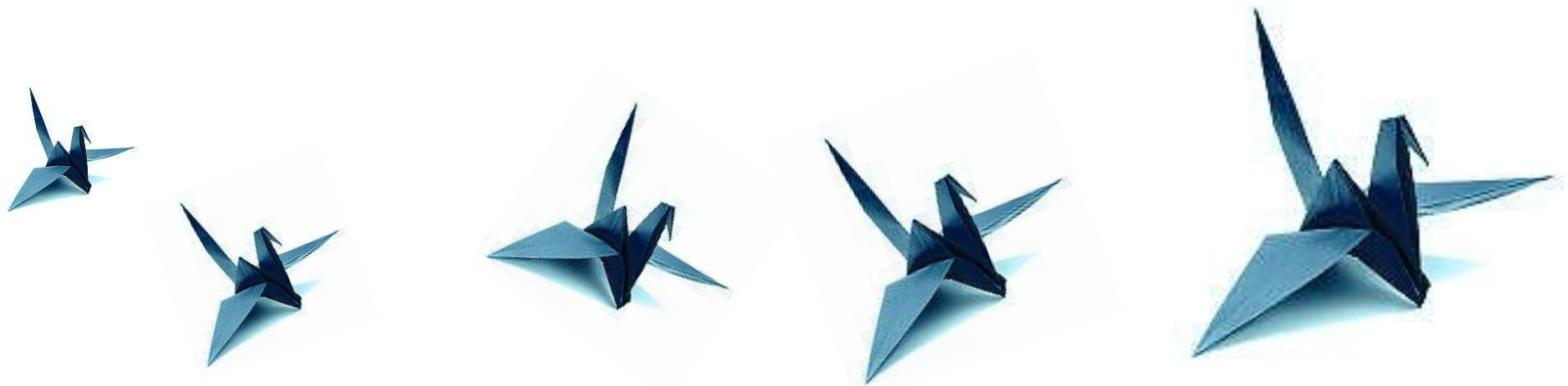


# What's the big idea? Practical tools for innovation



**Oregon Summit on Entrepreneurship  
Conference**

October 16, 2009

*Write to Know nonprofit consulting*

# A working definition

Innovation is  
people  
creating something  
uniquely useful  
through the implementation of new ideas



# Aha!

- When is the last time you really got excited about an idea?
- What was the idea?
- Where did the idea come from?
- What happened next?



# Objectives

- Demystify the processes of creativity and innovation
- Practice tools using your own issues and challenges
- See where you can improve skills and practices in yourself, your organization and community



# The muse and other inspirations

- Muse
- Genius
- Cold war supremacy
- Right place, right time
- Peace, love and self-expression
- Social process
- Competitive advantage in global economy
- It's only natural



I expect,  
therefore  
I am.

(with some work!)



# Steps

- Cultivating readiness
- Defining/discovering the problem
- Generating ideas
- Incubation
- Identifying and refining solutions
- Moving from idea to action

*(though not necessarily in this order!)*





*If you want to be creative, go where the questions lead you. Do things,  
Have a wide variety of experiences.*

*- Louis L'Amour*

# Cultivating readiness

- Believe in abundance
- Listen and observe
- Develop T shaped knowledge
- Vuja de and déjà vu
- Cross fertilization





# Centering the Challenge

- Focus on specific customer need
- Internal tension- no easy answer
- Compelling reason to solve it
- Wow!



# How?

- Write it down
- Change the words
- Why? Why? Why?
- What's the competing idea
- Desired outcome
- Motivation
- Explain it to someone and listen to yourself



**To commit:**

from the Latin “committere”:

to ignite action, to bring  
together, join, entrust, do.”





# Generating ideas

- Borrowing
- Combining
- Re-perceiving
- Perspective
- Assumptions
- Limits
- The science of brainstorming







# Identifying and Refining Solutions

- Sort
- Select a few to explore
- Yes and, what if, how else
- Six hats
- Zone of indifference



**An idea**  
is a point of departure  
and no more:  
as soon as you elaborate it,  
it becomes transformed by  
thought.

- Pablo Picasso



# Moving from idea to action

- Communication
- Worst case
- State the gain
- Risk homeostatis
- Resources
- The power of intent
- Deadlines



# Myths

- The lone inventor
- The big aha
- People like new ideas
- Innovation is always good
- Finding a good idea is the hard part
- Children are more creative than adults
- Money is a motivator
- Innovation is a step by step process
- Everyone is creative



# Now what?

- Top ten
- Assessment tool
- Questions



# Write to Know *nonprofit* *consulting*



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