

## OUTSOURCING INNOVATION

Ideas from Other Industries May Be Just What You Need

In the early 2000s, Dr. Allan Goldman, a chief physician at the Great Ormond Street Hospital, a children's hospital in London, observed that too many mistakes were being made when patients were transferred from surgery to ICU. It seemed that no one person was specifically in charge of a patient hand-off, and confusion would arise as several people would exchange vital information all at once. The process was slow, inefficient, and occasionally disastrous - such as when a patient, needing assistance in breathing, arrived in ICU before the ventilator was set up.

Then one day after watching a Formula One automobile race, Dr. Goldman noticed similarities between patient transfers and a race car making a pit stop. The race car crew was able to change tires, refuel, clean vents, and more in seven seconds. The process was systematic and precise. It was exactly what the hospital needed, and he decided to consult the Ferrari race team to help design an efficient patient transfer protocol.

The people from Ferrari helped develop a three-step procedure to complete patient transfers, and the result was a decrease in technical errors of 42 percent, and a decrease of clinical information omission of 49 percent.

In a previous article, I wrote that creativity takes time, and because of this busy people are seldom innovators. Time is needed not just for innovation, but also for identifying where the innovation is needed. Now busy companies can outsource innovation to creative think tanks.

Recently I had the opportunity to speak with Joey Reiman, founder of BrightHouse, an idea consultancy. He said, "We thought the notion of ruminating could have powerful implications for businesses that seldom have time to stop and think."

Companies looking to develop strategies and tactics, new products, HR programs and practices, or consumer communications, can now turn that over to BrightHouse. Reiman said his 21 person team of creative thinkers will spend 16 weeks developing a Master Idea. Making his consultancy unique, Reiman begins by identifying a company's purpose.

According to Reiman, "Purpose is your organization's distinct reason for being, and the positive impact you seek to make in the world. The soul of an organization and its purpose lies at its origins. That's why we excavate purpose. The fruits are in the roots."

I also had the opportunity to speak with John Palumbo, founder of BigHeads Network. He describes his company as the curator of a brain-trust of more than 1000 hand-picked creative minds, visionaries, and problem-solvers who all come from different backgrounds including: a Documentary Producer, Collegiate Coach, Jewelry Designer, Professional Firefighter, Cardiologist, Celebrity Chef, Iron Worker, Video Game Developer, Tattoo Artist, Music Therapist, Small Town Mayor, Yoga Instructor, Reality Show Host, and a Major League Baseball Umpire.

When companies come to Palumbo for ideas, he assembles a creative team of six or more of these diverse minds to work with a core team from the client business. According to Palumbo, "Innovation is often the result of random collisions where ideas from outside your industry are applied to your own." His unique creative teams bring their contrasting perspectives to the table to accelerate the process.

Similar to the hospital surgery/race car pit crew collaboration, Palumbo brings in experts from outside industries to identify techniques and approaches they use that could be applied to his client's objectives.

In my own work with innovation, I have found that people can also use their hobbies to give them unique insights that they may combine with their work. Whatever your hobby: singing, skiing, knitting, rock climbing, tennis, or painting, it is something about which you are very passionate and have developed a powerful knowledge base.

Think about your work, your products and services, your business practices, and the problems you may have encountered. How can you apply your special expertise from your hobby to your company? What aspect of your hobby could improve your business?

Whether you outsource ideas from a think tank or from your hobbies, you will gain a unique perspective on your problems.

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