

Trigger Question: Sri Joydip - Can Creativity be controlled

Other day , I visited a company to advise its CEO, on a strategic issue , and watched a very interesting mission statement in the wall , leading to his room , where it is emphasized on "Controlled Creativity"

We are into an Board meeting , and after completing my advising session , I asked him ...

" Can Creativity be controlled ?"

The CEO replied - " Yes . Back of our mind , we always think of a criteria, before becoming creative . So you see , that's how we control creativity"

My response was - " It is not about what is the right way to do it, but it is about , is it the right thing to do ?. How do you know a idea is a good or a bad , before even you have conceived it ? Aren't you limiting your exploration , if you are putting criteria's, before even you have expanded your horizon. Controlling creativity is one way , of saying that I don't want to be creative at all ."

The CEO looked at me , very intensely and said “ How do you control the time and energy, which get wasted in the creative process ?

Somebody replied from the board “I think , people that's why wanted to work less on original idea, and more on what you call “others idea”. Infact there is no orginal idea , all are “others idea””.

I replied – “ Some people copies ideas, and claim there is nothing original in the world . That's not true . If your idea is not original , you are not creating , you are copying .”Others” even have started there idea somewhere . Talking about the cost and time The process of making creativity efficient , is not anyhow related to not becoming creative. The control is the next step on the creative process, where you funnel the ideas through different criteria's to choose the best of them . You need to have sufficient amount of bad ideas, to choose a good idea. Most people thinks , that if it is not controlled , then it is uncontrolled . There is zone in between control and uncontrol, and most things happen in this intermediary zone. That's how creativity happens , the control is not step to begin with , but the step to end with . So there cannot be something called “Controlled Creativity “ if you really want to be creative.

The CEO viewpoint is that it needs a separate session altogether to discuss such a complex topic as “Controlled creativity” and it cannot be punched in with regular strategic sessions as it affects corporate life very intensely

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On the meantime , I thought , it would be a good idea to seek a opinion here on these.

Interaction: Dr. L. Ramakrishnan

You have given me an opportunity to recall an incident that took place more than 15 years ago.

Those were the days when our company was spearheading the Quality movement and PDCA was a mantra that everyone was expected to follow.

This happened during one of our presentations to the management. I was a member of the R & D team and in my presentation I discussed some of our research work. The Head of the Plant objected to my presenting the information without "fitting" it into the PDCA process. I told him that as a researcher I don't believe PDCA is the framework within which R & D will work. PDCA is OK for operator controlled issues. Research is about getting out of the box solutions and thinking differently. If PDCA is the route for success in R & D, many inventions would be on the table by this time. I quoted the Eureka story and told him to continue with PDCA for only the operator controlled activities or activities that fit into that format. He was furious and threatened me with the consequences of my not following the procedures of the company. Having worked in India and abroad in research laboratories of repute, I just told him to mind his business and not to interfere with the research methodologies.

I fully agree with you; creativity (however you call it or name it) cannot be achieved by the logical thinking process. Anything achieved by LTP is a routine. Creativity does not happen in a vacuum. One has to have a lot of knowledge in various subjects and the sudden gelling of a combination of specific areas of this knowledge that makes one to invent new ideas. Unfortunately most of the CEOs (not being researchers themselves) confuse Development with Research and innovation. That explains the concept of "Controlled creativity"...to them creativity perhaps is, for example, improving the yield, reducing waste, cost cutting, substitution of materials, efficiency improvement etc. These are important; but to call improvements achieved in them "Creative" is an indication of the understanding of research by the management !! I can probably attend a CII Conference on Energy and copy a few projects that others have carried out elsewhere; for a CEO who was not exposed to these events, it may be a creative solution for his problems. I appreciate that such improvements are necessary and are motivating to the employee; but we should give credit only when it is due. It depends on the person who uses this term, creativity, to define it for his purpose; his definition may not be universally accepted.

Interaction: Dr. GG Shastry

There can't be any "Controlled Creativity". Creativity is a process to look beyond. If you put limitations how to think, the very essence of creativity is lost. In creative process we allow every idea however obscured/vague/radical to come in and then we start choosing the one which suits the organisational needs.

Interaction: Sri Virendra Goel

Perhaps the gentleman using the terminology wishes to convey the message of controlling the creativity or directing the creativity towards a implementable action plan. A business leader is making this statement because creativity can be an abstract also that does not convert into a business plan hence of no use to a business leader.

Interaction: Mr. Stephen

Sometimes external circumstances many a times become an impediment to creative thinking....like if a Gun is held to the temple and a person is asked to concentrate...his eyes would often be darting to the finger and trigger rather than concentrating on what the person is forcing one to do....

During my stint in the entertainment Industry....one of my colleague who was handling the M.P. market once happened to drop-in at the Dealers residence on a Holiday to see if he could persuade the Dealer into making the due payment which he had been dilly-dallying....this Dealer was residing in a private bungalow outside of colony area and M.P. at that time had some notorious characters of Gabbar type...the moment my friend stepped into the drawing area with a strategy to wean the payment from him...he just walked into the gentleman who had just finished cleaning his Double Barelled Gun...and sighting him...he held it up ...pointing it straight at his head.....my friend just forgot all the strategies....the collection visit turned into a social visit....and he left after having a cup of tea....

Similiarly I too had an experience which even now raises my heckle....during my first stint in Ministry of Textiles...where I served as Junior Investigator...I was doing a survey in Delhi on behalf of AEPC for the status of Ready Made Garment Manufacturers and Quota allocation.I had taken an appointment with the Director of a Garment Manufacturing/Exporting Firm and at the appointed time I went to his office and the Reception asked me to go straight in...I knocked on the door and after getting a confirmation I opened the wooden door and had taken a few steps inside to walk across the room when suddenly from one side of the Desk where the Gentleman was seated

a massive Chinese Boxer with the most ugliest face one could see...rose up....I just froze there for a moment and without moving any muscle..I asked the gentleman..." Does it Bite ? "...he smiled and said just walk across casually and take the seat...he will sniff you and return back to its position. I did as informed and at that point of time I was more concerned for my health than the survey questionnaire I had framed in the paper....

So you see....Mission statements on the wall make a pretty picture and halt your thoughts to provoke you...but in reality it is the situations which make an individual act...positively or negatively...outcomes range from Posthumously honoured Ashok Chakra to Govt.footing the medical bills....but the choice is ours.....

Interaction: Prof. Vizay Kumar

CEO, who thought he is controlling creativity, is, perhaps only suggesting issues to people. Obviously, we think and get ideas on the issue we take up. without any issue, you do not develop ideas. Thinking, the thinking with knowledge, is the process of getting ideas to lead to creativity. The ideas can never be controlled. Your CEO means, instead of 'controlled Creativity, 'stimulated creativity'. Even in teaching, we always think, how better we can present the paradigm to the students so that it is simplified to understand. Therefore, there is always an issue to think. Tell this to your CEO friend in your next meeting.

Interaction: Dr. Mandi

Dears

I agree with that everything Indian B Schools is BAD..when somebody says .. But I also ask a question for the same person who came out with such a statement on Bad condiciton in Indian B Schools.

As a faculty member, I can do and change certian things in my class room to impact to make B Schools better.

I am quite satisfied in the last 10 years for what I am doing at NITIE with couple of colleagues on this issue. With my experience I had i confidently say that faculty can do lot and lot.

More in due course.. dr mandi, professor of dhandha..NITIE Mumbai

Interaction: Dr. SN Ghosal

I think controlled creativity should mean creativity within limits of the organization's capabilities both of fund and intellectual. When one is not

prepared to bring external resource both fund and thought, it may be said that the organization has adopted the strategy of controlled creativity. Obviously it is not an ideal alternative strategy as any individual or institution who loves to stay closed door would not progress much and perhaps sooner would reach its ultimate downward journey. I therefore wonder how any progressive institution seeking outside cunnilingus could confine to controlled creativity. But the world is a strange place, anything and everything could happen that may keep u thinking and innovate ideas and strategies to counter these.

Interaction: Sri Joydip

Is “innovation” and “creativity” a word, only found in management books and in reality it is all “shameless stealing” in the name of Corporate benchmarking.

Interaction: Sri Virendra Goel

I would like to suggest a look at the whole thing as under:
1. CREATIVITY is a brain wave that one may have during the course of carrying out the responsibilities or having dialogue or reading or viewing or analyzing/evaluating or finding solution to a proplem (if one is attentive, sensitive concerned passionate) etc. etc.
2.The process of translating this idea into an implementable plan is process of controlled creativity. 3Successful implementation of the plan is called INNOVAION.

Interaction: Dr. SN Ghosal

Branding creativity and innovation as 'shameless stealing' is nothing but a 'shameless mindset' as even copying may lead to further improvement thru creative and innovative thinking and mind set as could be seen in Korea and at present in China. If creativity would not have been there, people like Steve Jobs would not have been admired for his Apple. We should in fact encourage creativity as often it dies within due to lack of encouragement and funding.

Interaction: Prof. Arun Singh Ruhela

As air, as water so as the thoughts.. must for life.. must for living.. and thoughts can be Bombs on Heroshima as well TB/HIV fighting drugs.

Old models of business gave us Maximization, and now we are creating equations for Optimization..!! Also, Optimize use of moments of Life... some takes bus of Yoga and some some walks on the path of spirituality...!

and the locus then created by extremes points of maximization, optimization is "Creative Control".. constant yet changing.. changing but constant.

On the other side of same coin we find a beautiful picture.. ever-evolving picture of another two conflicting points.. One is PROFIT and other is WELFARE.. and both have to be Perceive independently.

And here is the hidden key.. how to Perceive the Welfare in Profit and Vice-verse.. and that is "Controlled Creativity"

Teaching toddlers, engaging old-people, surgery... all comes in domain of Controlled Creativity.. or "Conformity with/in/and creativity".. one has to perceive his own word between the two.. !

Interaction: Sri Virendra Goel

Corporate can not and should not do anything. It is the team leaders who have to engage in Creative Controls to allow creativity leading to Innovation. Corporate should take the responsibility of providing resources for third step i.e. implementation of a well designed plan without ifs and buts.

Interaction: Mr. Stephen

Innovation & Creativity can be found in another Book besides the Management Books...this book is known as Dictionary....or Encyclopedia...

Actually the 'Shameless stealing' that you mention is actually Plagiarism to which some people who lack Creativity and Innovation resort to....but in the end...Righteousness catches up like the long arms of the law and when the truth comes to light...the person loses face. Every Individual is endowed with the Gift of Knowledge from our Maker but the trials and hardships act like the fire which makes the gold shine brighter and gives it shape and design through the hands of the artisan. Likewise individuals face trials and temptations in their endeavour to find their ground but when they are guided by mentors who are intent in giving their ideas a new direction....they realize their potential and give out their best. The appreciation for their contributions spurs them to do even better but the high expectations thereafter puts pressure on them and then at times being weak....the person succumbs to it and plagiarises from other works and presents it as his own...thereby cheating himself besides trying to hoodwink others.....and for that one moment of weakness....their entire hard earned reputation is put at stake....the realization thereafter often breaks them....the pain thereafter and the guilt...keeps hurting for a lifetime.

Interaction: Dr. Padma Mishra

Controlled creativity or creative control

Both are relevant..... you may ask how...

Well Controlled creativity.....could imply in the positive sense as something which yields positive results, like environment friendly products, use of genetic engineering for improving health ...etc And not in negative sense like products which are not healthy and safe.....or using genetic engineering to have designer children....trying to play god...No that is not controlled Creativity.....that is destructive, dangerous and uncontrolled.....

Controlled Creativitycan be very strong message if translated adequately keeping all stakeholders in view..... It could stand out to mean....there is nothing that cannot be corrected.....and there is nothing that cannot be taken care of..

creativity is very difficult to control.....to do so one must be conscious and take decisions of using creativity wisely..... for there is always a chance of falling into the trap of going too far..... endangering the lives and wealth of many people.....

Now for the Creative Control.....this could lead to improvement in processes, Day-to-day business operations, employee management.....Which need to be controlledBUT ...CREATIVELY

Interaction: Mr. Stephen

Very Well Made Out Argument Dr.Misra.... Yes I agree with you on Controlled Creativity as far as it benefits mankind....stem cell research breakthroughs which promise an end to many ailments are a welcome research which I'm sure everybody would agree...

During my visits to Ghaffar Market in Karolbagh, Delhi...I often come across youngsters...could be school drop-outs...repairing mobiles, uploading softwares, expanding the memory of Mobiles....though perhaps they haven't had a formal Class Room training, they perhaps picked up the skills working as apprentices under trained Supervisors/Owners.

Quite some time back...Uttam Nagar ...a small suburb in Western Line of Mumbai...was more popularly known as U.S.A. and the copies of imported items would find the duplicates emerging out of this small suburb which even won a patent case thereafter modifying the marking on the product as Made as USA. Can we call this Plagiarism....??? After all it is somebody else's Idea ?

The Coco Ad War between Thums Up and Pepsi...was almost a slander campaign trying to tear into each others creativity.....and ultimately Court had to intervene.

Interaction: Prof. Raj Verma

Creativity leads to innovation and journey towards excellence. Thread started with Industry and lost in academia.

In Corporate' Creativity' is never controlled (particular CEO may be exception). It is promoted , formalized, moderated and rewarded.

Creativity and innovation leads to competitive advantage and Intellectual Property Right is a tool to take strategic advantage. Future Wars will be IPR Wars.

All leading organizations promote creativity in the form of Idea Schemes, Suggestion Box or some name like Eureka, Anveshan etc. Even training in Creative Thinking is given. I used to train even shop floor persons along with engineers in creative thinking. In one of the organization I was given responsibility of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights). I motivated people to think even silly and put in idea scheme. Even a helper can give an excellent idea.

Corporate process is that all ideas goes to Committee which scrutinize the idea and selected ideas goes to management for action. Persons giving ideas are recognized and rewarded. One may call it a Controlled Creativity but organizations refrain in using such terminology.

While giving performance rating I used creativity / innovation to increase the rating. On Scale 1 to 5, Rating 3 is given if you full fill your KRA (Key Responsibility Areas) and KPI (Key Performance Indicators), Rating 4 is given if you exceed the expectations and results by working productively and adding value to organization. Rating 5 is given where persons shows creativity and innovation.

People who used to be afraid of even sharing ideas on Tea table were motivated that they are thinking excellent. It has resulted in 17 Patents.

Particularly in Management Education students are taught that all creative ideas are workable. Even the idea of a novice or new joinee may be excellent. Professors should inculcate that new generation students are more creative than we professors. Projects are some of the tools to judge productivity in students.

Jugads are produced by villagers or mistrys who are not trained graduate engineers. For the last 3 years my dedicated work in Rural has led me to the conclusion that Villagers are more creative in many fields than we qualified, trained and experienced persons.

Even in small kids parents / teachers should not control their creativity but should channelize in right direction.

But at no place creativity should be controlled.