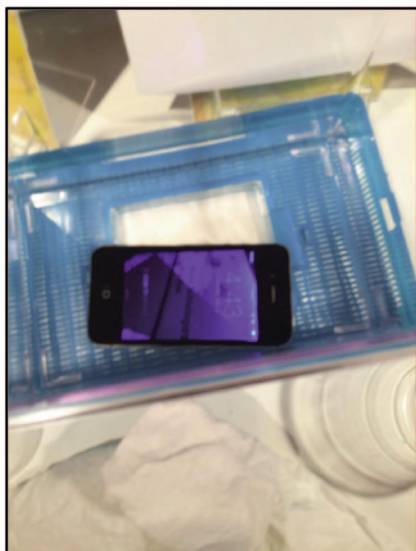


Letter from the Editor: Innovation that Isn't "High Tech"

One of the traps we often fall into as innovators is comparing innovation to Silicon Valley. While Silicon Valley has definitely proven itself many times over as a magical place where new technology is invented, built, and incubated on a daily basis, there are many other places where life-changing innovation takes place under the radar.

As an example, I was fortunate to receive press credentials to the famous (in energy circles anyway), Offshore Technology Conference (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offshore_Technology_Conference). As you will see from the wiki page, conference attendance exceeded 50,000 attendees from 110 countries, and it was incredible. Many readers do not know that my first semester in college was as an engineering major. This gave me just enough background, over the course of four days, to learn how the energy industry works. I saw some of the most incredible things this industry had to offer—and they were impressive. While software, apps, the cloud, and big data are my thing outside of innovation, I am now an engineering convert.

Amongst the things I saw were glass beads so tiny that they act as a lubricant—in essence, a bunch of microscopic ball bearings that serve hundreds of functions. I also had my precious smartphone dropped in a container of liquid, and it worked; and it still works (see picture).



As you can imagine, when the guy dropped my phone into the vat of liquid, I just about had a heart attack. The good news is that this liquid can be sprayed on your server farm in case of a fire, but not harm any of the electronics. It puts out fires, but has no effect on electrical circuits.

I learned about “fracking,” and no matter how you feel about the process itself, it is a pretty impressive innovation. In fact everywhere I turned, I found something else that defied my understanding of how the universe works.

In the past, I have written extensively about innovation and barriers to entry. Buying a desktop computer and creating an app is significantly easier than building and testing a sub-sea blow-out preventer. The energy, time, and expense are not even close to comparable—so innovation in high tech for the most part is easier (unless you are building a new generation of microchips, or a next-generation smartphone). In industries where the cost to enter the market is higher, innovation tends to be seen as “just R&D.” However, more and more

companies are beginning to recognize that innovation programs offer a leg up on traditional R&D. It speeds it up; and if your competitor is inventing at twice the rate you are, innovation as a practice becomes more important to even the most progressive company.

The strangest thing about the whole experience was that very few people I spoke to actually considered themselves innovators—they were just engineers doing what engineers have always done—creating new and interesting things, improving existing machines and processes, and generally solving problems. While the people I spoke to were applying innovation methodologies as a matter of course, very few acknowledged the terminologies and approaches we study independently in the innovation field. It made me contemplate the effect of mainstreamed innovation concepts on basic R&D practices, and what they could further accomplish if they embraced new and emerging innovation tools and techniques to purposefully advance innovation inside their companies and industry. And this leads to the amazing issue we have pulled together for this quarter.

Our first paper is sure to cause some controversy in the title, but it is a well-written study by Max Singh titled “The Impact of the ObamaCare Excise Tax on Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Early Empirical Findings.” In his research, he essentially argues that the doom and gloom impact on innovation that some predicted in the Affordable Care Act does not seem to have taken place and that medical device makers seem to be innovating at the same pace they did before the Act. Innovation outside of Silicon Valley.

Our second paper, by Peter Altmann, also deals with the medical device space, but specifically studies the effect of human resource management and the effect that process and outcome have on innovation. Findings also offer insights into when certain innovation theories hold, and suggestions on how to manage human resources and innovation under various conditions of uncertainty.

The third paper, written by Tharnpas Sattayaraksa, is a study of transformational leadership and innovation performance. The author offers a theoretical framework from which a CEO can operate and tests that framework with almost 300 firms in Thailand. We encourage readers to take the instrument and do additional experiments.

Our fourth paper this quarter, “Partnership Management, Supply Chain Collaboration, and Firm Innovation Performance: An Empirical Examination” by Hui Zhang, is all about achieving innovation improvements through supply chain and partnership management. The paper establishes a positive link between innovation and partnership establishment, selection, and sustention.

In our fifth paper, Xavier Triadó-Ivern examines the value added contributions of science parks. In particular, the one in Barcelona, Spain. His paper is interesting because it actually explores the value proposition from the perspective of the tenant, and the results do appear to support the continued use of such parks toward supporting technology industry start-ups.

In the sixth and final paper, V. Sivalogathan offers another large scale examination in the “Impact of Organization Motivation on Intellectual Capital and Innovation Capability of the Textile and Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka,” whereby he argues that intellectual capital has a significant positive relationship on innovation capability with mediated and moderated effects.

As promised, six papers with only one specifically dedicated to high tech, and that is in the establishment of science parks. Like the energy industry, innovation is becoming a required component of all industries throughout the world.

With warmest regards,




Brett E. Trusko, DBA, MBA
 Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Innovation Science
 Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University & New York University
 President and Executive Director, International Association of Innovation Professionals
 Prof.Trusko@InnovationScience.org
 brett@iaoip.org