

Light bulb manufacture

Looking for new ideas about having new ideas? Then look no further. Innovation consultant **Matt Kingdon** is happy to share a few of his own

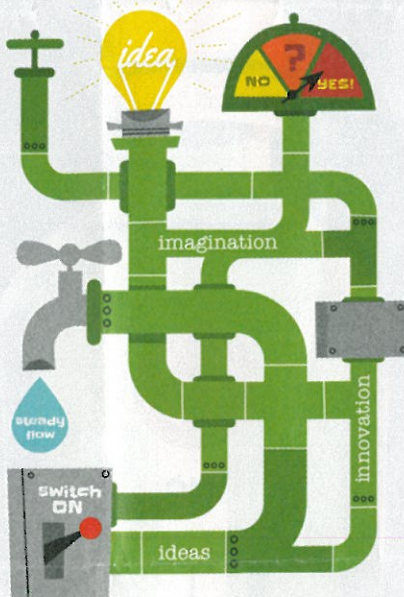
2 mins

1 Culture eats strategy for breakfast. The way we behave with each other at work has more impact on our ability to innovate than how clever our strategy is. So realise that it's the 'innovation environment' at work that almost always counts more than the smartness of the innovation strategy.

2 Disruption is a red herring. The Holy Grail for corporate innovators is a game-changing, revenue-shifting idea. The problem with this is that most big ideas start small, and many small ideas can be made surprisingly big. So better than sweating the scale of an idea, make sure you have a full pipeline of them.

3 Go where it hurts. Chances are that right now you are researching what customers think of your product. But so are your competitors, and they're probably hearing the same stuff. Get out there and hang out with customers who have rejected you or wouldn't consider buying from you. Ask yourself how competitive your source of inspiration is.

4 Explore beyond your category. Incremental growth in category is fine but to turbocharge growth, corporate innovators have to lose the blinkers and look outside their category. So, for example, how about seeing LoveFilm not as a DVD or movie rental service but as a way of getting the most out of 'sofa time'?



5 Signal Signal Signal. Because new ideas are often born in a babble of enthusiasm, half cooked and poorly articulated, it can really help to signal you need help. We've all said to someone as they rush down the corridor, "I've got this idea, what do you think?" Although we probably want someone to give our idea some TLC, we are actually asking for an instant judgment. If we rephrase the question as, "Have you got a few minutes to help me build my idea?" we are then encouraging our buddy to nurture and grow the idea.

6 Lose the ego. Good ideas have many helping hands. So don't hold your idea close – share it with others and let them take some credit.

7 Make it real. All too often we kill ideas with overly complex formal presentations – 'death by PowerPoint' is known to all, particularly in the world of innovation. So corporate innovators should make models, draw or write scripts – anything that brings the idea to life and provokes a reaction.


8 Lower the stakes. In most large organisations, new ideas face real combat to get to market. Try lowering the stakes and plan multiple rounds of low cost experiments. Try asking the person next to you now about your new idea – that's a low cost experiment. Why not try it again later today? That's another.

9 Measure it softly. Subjecting a new idea to hard-edged payback criteria is like putting a baby in a boxing ring. Instead of getting the business excited by the scale of the opportunity, focus on the least amount of money it will take to get your great idea to the next stage.

10 Get over it! It's a fact of corporate life that new ideas will see combat. Anticipate the objections that will be thrown your way and put a smile on your face – you'll need reserves of energy to battle the naysayers. ■

details Matt Kingdon is co-founder of innovation consultants What If! and author of *The Science of Serendipity*. Visit whatifinnovation.com

SEAN SIMS

know this...  **2.5 million** people aged between 45 and 64 live alone in the UK



52% of Britain's SMEs are businesses run from home

SOURCES: ONS/DL4B

1 Pet Theories Beyond Analysis