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978-1-107-08839-9 - The Psychology of Innovation in Organizations

David H. Cropley and Arthur J. Cropley

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## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INNOVATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

In today's highly competitive market, organizations increasingly need to innovate in order to survive. Drawing on a wealth of psychological research in the field of creativity, David H. Cropley and Arthur J. Cropley illustrate practical methods for conceptualizing and managing organizational innovation. They present a dynamic model of the interactions among four key components of creativity – product, person, process, and press – that function as building blocks of innovation. This volume sheds new light on the nature of innovative products and the processes that generate them, the psychological characteristics of innovative people, and the environments that facilitate innovation. It also fills a significant gap in the current literature by addressing the paradoxical quality of organizational innovation, which may be both helped and hindered by the same factors. The authors demonstrate that, with proper measurement and management, organizations can effectively encourage individuals to produce and take advantage of novel ideas.

David H. Cropley is Associate Professor of Engineering Innovation at the University of South Australia. His publications include *Creativity and Crime: A Psychological Analysis* (with Arthur J. Cropley), *The Dark Side of Creativity* (with Arthur J. Cropley, James C. Kaufman, and Mark A. Runco), and *Creativity in Engineering: Novel Solutions to Complex Problems*.

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Innovation is creativity with a job to do.

John Emmerling, Innovation Consultant

Everybody believes in innovation until they see it. Then they think,  
“Oh, no; that’ll never work. It’s too different.”

Nolan Bushnell, Engineer and Founder of Atari

Innovation and best practices can be sown throughout an organization –  
but only when they fall on fertile ground.

Marcus Buckingham, Business Consultant and Author

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## PREFACE

“Innovate or die” is the catchphrase for commercial organizations today, but the necessary discussion about innovation is hampered by the absence of a comprehensive set of concepts for conceptualizing the issues and terms for a systematic discussion of it. This book offers a reorientation: on the one hand, a switch of attention away from properties and processes in organizations to a focus on human actors; on the other hand, a turn to psychological research on creativity to work out the necessary conceptual framework. The use of creativity research to cast light on organizational issues leads to some looseness in distinguishing between creativity and innovation, but tolerance of fuzzy boundaries is a core aspect of both domains.

The book deconstructs the traditional four Ps approach to creativity by dividing the P of person into three domains: personal motivation, personal feelings/attitudes, personal attributes. Each domain is characterized by various behavioral dispositions, such as a disposition to react to a problem by generating novelty versus a disposition to fix what already exists. These behavioral dispositions are seen in this book not as static properties that people either possess or do not, but as styles or even habits that provide favorable (or unfavorable) personal prerequisites for innovation and can be learned or developed with the help of, among other things, appropriate leadership from managers. Thus, this book provides highly differentiated insights into best leadership practice in guiding and developing the disposition to innovate in individual members of an organization. In addition, the traditional P of product is made more specific to innovation by applying the usefulness imperative: In the case of innovation, products must display commercial salience. The result is, in effect, a Six Ps model of innovation, although the six elements are referred to in this book as the building blocks of innovation.

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The analysis deals with the paradoxes of innovation (such as simultaneous calls for innovation and rejection of innovation) in the society as a whole, in the organizational environment, and within individual people, as well as conflicting conclusions about what kinds of action promote innovation. This is done by dividing the process of generation and implementation of novelty into phases and working out the relationship between the building blocks and the phases. This approach shows, for example, that the effects of an aspect of the organizational environment, such as leadership style, or of a particular kind of thinking or motivation within the human actors differ at different points in the innovation process (that is, they are not static but dynamic); thus, they yield a proactive and dynamic model of the interactions among the various components of the overall system of innovation within the various environments in which it is embedded.

The book's closing chapters introduce the innovation phase model (IPM) of innovation and the innovation phase assessment instrument (IPAI) – both derived from the psychological analysis of innovation in organizations presented in earlier chapters. Taken together, these make it possible to work out tailor-made guidelines for promoting and managing innovation that fit the specific needs of particular organizations with their widely differing goals and vastly different areas of strength and weakness.



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*DHC*