

**Creativity and Innovation in Top Large Organizations:
An Executive Summary of Januale's Master's Project**

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Introduction

The Purpose. Januale in his unpublished Master's project The Evaluation Of Fortune 100 Companies Mission Statements with respect to Creativity and Innovation (1999) approached Fortune 100 companies in order to evaluate how and to what extent do these companies incorporate creativity and innovation strategies and programs in their operations.

Several Fortune 100 company mission statements were examined for references to creativity and innovation, and select Fortune 100 companies were finally analyzed according to those references.

Why is this project significant? The current complex environments require creativity strategies to be developed in the organizational settings. No previous study has examined mission statements with respect to creativity and innovation strategies in large corporations. Therefore, this study may prepare the groundwork for future research in this area.

Why Fortune 100 Companies? Januale addressed the "Why" question with the following reasons: 1- The brand awareness of the respective company; 2- Accessibility concerns; 3-Financial and/or personnel resources to have formal creativity/innovation teams, or departments; 4-Stability for the Fortune 100 companies list over a period of this project; and finally, 5- These Fortune 100 companies are arguably perhaps the leaders in their respective industry. (p.4)

Questions that guided this project. The following questions provide the framework for the study:

- Do Fortune 100 companies refer to creativity and or innovation in their mission statements?
- What are the strategies that companies use to promote creative or innovative thinking?
- Does a formal creativity or innovation program exist within the company?
- How is creativity and innovation measured by companies with a formal creativity program place?
- Is there a formal Creativity or Innovation Department within the company? (Januale, 1999, p.5)

Background and context

Creativity and Innovation in context. What does creativity and innovation mean in the context of this study?

Januale (1999) presented three approaches. First, he used The Webster's New World Dictionary (1974) to define creativity as "creative ability, or artistic or intellectual inventiveness." Innovation was similarly defined as "something newly introduced; new method, custom, device, etc.; change in the way of doing things". Second, he used Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (1994), experts in the field, who referred to creativity as "novel ideas that are useful" (p.375), and to innovation as "the result of creativity which emphasizes the product or outcome" (p.381). Third, Januale defined creativity as a "personal and private event", whereas innovation may result "for the benefit of the individual, group, or public" (1999, p.2).

Corporate Mission/Vision Statements. Mission statements represent the "reason for being" of the companies. These statements serve as the framework that guides companies' operations on a daily basis. Opposite to the missions, the vision statements build the dream, which serve as a long-term view for the company.

Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace. Kao synthesized the need for creativity stating "This is the age of creativity because it is the age of knowledge. And in an era that prizes knowledge, creativity adds value to knowledge and makes it progressively more useful" (1996, p.8).

Opposite to personal creativity, organizational creativity is defined as "the total sum of creative traits, abilities, and actions of all the organization's members" (Van Gundy, 1987, p.360). Januale (1999) stated that "People are seen as creative, and organizations are comprised of creative people, therefore innovation occurs when people all work together towards a goal" (p.11).

Method and population.

Method. Phase I of the study involved the collection of several Fortune 100 company mission statements. The list of companies was gathered through *Fortune Magazine* in the fiscal year 1997. The magazine was obtained from Fortune Magazine's web site.

Phase II entailed gathering information from selected companies which mission statements contained a reference to creativity and/or innovation. A list of questions focusing on general corporate background and creativity was

used for the interviewing process. The interviews were done by phone and e-mail. The information was obtained from different persons that represented those companies.

Population. 49 Fortune 100 companies, out of 100, presented mission statements. 7 of the 49 companies contained a reference to creativity and innovation in their statements. Finally, 3 companies elected to be part of this study.

Outcomes and Findings

The following outcomes were taken from the original study (Januale, 1999) and have been synthesized here into six main findings.

First and foremost, there was a lack of references to creativity and innovation in the mission statements under examination. Second, there was a lack of creativity programs in these companies. Third, cross-functional work teams along with a climate that encouraged risk taking, were apparently common practices used within these corporations. Fourth, all the organizations recognized the importance of having reward systems. Fifth, the CEO stimulated the existence of creativity programs. Sixth, traditional measures appeared to be the way of assessing the creative accomplishments (such as means of sales, production goals, etc.)

Suggestions to develop a creativity culture.

Different practices that promote creativity will be developing and expanding over the next decades. Van Gundy (1992) suggests the developing of "creativity rooms" and the introduction of cross-training employees in functional areas in the organizations. Birch and Clegg (1996) called the corporate attention when affirming "the greater an organization's effectiveness at recruiting homogeneous employees, the less likely it is that they will be able to create effective teams" (p.120). Firestein (1996) illustrate creativity as an essential weapon for any organization:

Creativity is a strategic business weapon. The organizations that will survive and thrive in the twenty-first century will not be the ones with the deepest pockets, but the ones that can unleash and apply the creativity of their workplace. (p.13)

Given those remarkable perspectives, Januale (1999) pointed out some recommendations that might nurture creativity within those corporations:

- Develop a formalized creativity/innovation program;
- Establish a creativity department or have creativity trained specialists;
- Require cross-functional work team members and training department personnel to read books and/or journal articles on the subject of creativity and CPS; and
- Start and maintain a creativity library (p.28).

A more detailed and broader set of recommendations may be found in the original project.

**In What Ways might this Study
Be Improved in the Future?**

Januale (1999) also gave a few recommendations that may enhance future work on this area:

- Some researchers might be more effective than one researcher in the collection of the data;
- Open the criteria of this research and include all other statements and compare the relationship between mission and vision statements;
- Research companies related to small business segments, for example high technology;
- Compare differences and similarities between companies from the United States and Europe; and
- Re-examine companies of this study after a period of 10 years.

Conclusion

This project entailed interviewing specific individuals from select Fortune 100 companies after several Fortune 100 companies' mission statements had been examined for references to creativity and innovation.

On one hand, results showed a lack of creativity and innovation under the form of strategies or programs within those companies. On the other hand, experts in the field of creativity strongly predict that creativity will be necessary and indispensable in the near future. As a result of that, the author of this project recommends several action steps that will allow organizations to develop a creativity culture. Finally, the author presents specific suggestions in order to enhance the work on this area in the future.

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