Creativity versus Innovation
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Extract from "The Innovation Pipeline"

We've seen many definitions of Innovation. Some include Creativity within the meaning of Innovation, while others do the opposite… they define Innovation as a part of Creativity. And we've heard Creativity and Innovation mentioned in the same breath to mean the same or different things.

All of this tends to suggest that Creativity and Innovation are difficult concepts to grasp, but we don't believe that is so. And because we think that the clearer our understanding of a word, a concept or a thing, the more useful it is to us, we will commence by suggesting clear and workable definitions of the two terms, Creativity and Innovation.

We define them separately because doing so emphasises the differences between them as well as the links between them. Let's start with Creativity:

Creativity is the merging of ideas which have not been merged before. New ideas are formed by developing current ones within our minds.

This definition is saying that when we get a new idea it comes from the connection of two other things we already know about, whether they are obvious or tucked well away in our brain. This notion of connecting ideas is explained and illustrated fully in "Flicking Your Creative Switch – Developing Brighter Ideas for Business". (Lotherington)

If Creativity is about generating new ideas, Innovation is about putting them into practice. It is the successful exploitation of new ideas. In other words, Innovation is about implementation... taking the creative new idea and turning it into something of value. We think these three points summarise it well:

1. Innovation is putting an idea into practice. If an idea remains just an idea, there is no Innovation.
2. Innovation is the "pay-off" when an idea becomes an outcome. Ideas are wonderful thoughts but they are worth little until they are implemented.
3. Innovation gets started when we evaluate our many ideas and decide which one(s) are worth the time and effort to bring to fruition.

You see, the work isn't done just because we have generated ideas – that might be the fun part, but it's just the beginning. Innovation requires discipline and action for evaluating ideas, testing them, modifying them, and applying them. It's these disciplines and actions that turn an idea into something of value.