Creating a Tribal Approach to Innovation in Organizations

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Seven Tribal Instincts*

**Ambition**: Think Bigger, A Vision Quest

**Structure**: Emergent Processes Based on Values, Beliefs, and Codes of Conduct

**Roles & Responsibility**: Needed Roles Matched to Skills

**Trust**: Sharing Resources, Knowledge and Rewards

**Navigation**: Analytics, Calculations, Experiences, to Guide the Quest

**Resolve**: Patience and Perseverance

**Sacrifice**: Placing the Interests of the Tribe First.

Today’s Rules of Engagement

Emergent Structure: Codes of Conduct, Informal Rules, Norms.

Roles and Responsibilities: Dominant role and responsibility.
Emergent Process

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Emergent Structures in Tribes

- Human Touch
- Consensus
- Resourcefulness
- Ceremony
- Storytelling
- Loyalty
Roles and Responsibilities

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Roles and Responsibilities (Not exhaustive...just some I have seen)

**Oracle or Architect**: Provides leadership, vision, coaching, and direction.

**Seeker**: Roams among members and other teams. Gives / receives information.

**Wizard**: Provides research, data, scientific experiments.

**Facilitator**: Stages formats of discussion, referees, negotiates, reasons.

**Flamekeeper**: Keeps track of time, finds resources, schedules

**Artist**: Transfers ideas to art. Creates visuals, charts, illustrations.

**Author/Historian**: Translates ideas into words and words into documents.

**The Genius**: The expert in critical subject matter.
Narrative Building

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Divergent Thinking

Two ways of thinking

Left brain
- Convergent thinking
  - Analytical
  - Logical
  - One right answer

Right brain
- Divergent thinking
  - Intuitive
  - Associative
  - Multiple solutions

Diverge

Converge

Create choices

Make choices
Thinking Bigger: “Small Words Ask Big Questions

Ask What is Possible? Not What is Probable?
Building Narratives: “What is Possible?”

1. Develop a question of interest. Create clarity, challenge assumptions, see things in a new way, encourage critical thinking.

   Data → Question? → Data → Alternatives

2. Choose two broad dimensions (D1 and D2) that frame possible solution space.

3. Make sure dimensions are not too closely related.

4. Frame the dimensions as extremes (e.g. Traditional, Non Traditional)

5. Develop learning narratives (stories)

6. Develop trajectories, solutions, and impacts

Remember: Small Words Ask Big Questions!
The Issue:

Disney has experienced ride interruptions on some of its most popular attractions. These attractions: Haunted Mansion, Pirates of the Caribbean, It’s a Small World are visited by thousands of people a day. In fact, Pirates has been experienced by over 400 million riders since it opened in 1967. The attractions rely heavily on atmospheric effects (smoke, smell, water) as well as robotics and machine hydraulics.

Disney operators have discovered gummy, oil-like substance within the rides. They have also noted instances of riders experiencing eye irritation, congestion, and discomfort. There does not seem to be a systematic pattern to these occurrences.
Disney: A Project that Might of Happened......

**What**

What is the substance?

Something native to the attraction.

Something foreign to the attraction.

**How**

How does it enter a facility?

Created in the Attraction?

Brought in from outside?
Native substances that originate within the ride. Puppets, costumes, lights, mirrors, smoke, vapor. Grease, hydraulic fluid, etc.

Foreign substances that are created within the ride. Operators, maintenance, birds, vermin.

Native substances that are brought into the ride. Water, air, supplies, coins, trinkets.

Foreign substances that are brought into the ride. Trash, suntan oil, food, ?????????
Disney: How Should We Film Star Wars?

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Story Telling

**Storytelling** is the social and cultural activity of sharing *stories*, often with improvisation, theatrics, or embellishment. *Stories* or narratives have been shared in every culture as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation and instilling moral values.

Traditional Story Telling:
One story teller. Intimate setting and discourse between storyteller and listeners. Shared meaning through the storyteller’s revelation of story and listeners reception. The personality and character of the storyteller are part of the story.

Non Traditional Story Telling:
Many or ambiguous storytellers. A dynamic and shifting context between storyteller and listeners. Multiple meaning through the storyteller’s revelation of story and listeners imagination. Visuals, sound, and other media are part of the story.

Disney: How Do You Tell an Amazing Story?
The Plot

**Plot**: A report of connected events, **real** or **imaginary**, presented in a sequence of written or spoken words, or still or moving images.

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**Traditional Plot:**
A clear, logical and linear representation of connected events. A moral or “lesson” is frequently the destination. Well defined characters. Heroes, villains, equity and balance. The storyline is the focus.

**Non Traditional Plot:**
A moving, dynamic, and non-linear representation of events (connected and unconnected). The path and destination can contain the unexpected, the illogical, or unreasoned. Can be story that is nested in a story. Characters are not clearly “good” or Bad”. The experience is the focus.
Disney: How Might We Tell a Story?

Story Telling

Traditional

Non Traditional

Narrative 1

Narrative 2

Narrative 3

Narrative 4
Disney: How Might We Tell a Story?

Story Telling

Traditional

Non Traditional

Story

Traditional

Non Traditional

LA LA Land

Sixth Sense

Blade Runner

Pulp Fiction
**Industry Language:**
Performance and value are institutionalized as a “language” within an industry.

**Performance Paradox:**
Disruptive technologies are commercialized in emerging markets. Technology is embraced in the least profitable markets and in its first incarnation may under perform against traditional industry metrics.
Disruptive Innovation: New Measure of Performance

Technology Trajectory:
Technologies can progress faster than market demand: suppliers overshoot the market. New metrics of performance are ridiculed, misunderstood or ignored.

Disruption:
Traditional players are unaware that newer innovations actually outperform traditional technology on new, important metrics of the industry.
New outcomes require new Chains of Logic. However, organizations will tend to resist changing initiatives.

Three Deadly Responses:
1. Ignore the new, emerging Chain of Logic.
2. Recast data, analytics, and KPIs without changing initiatives.
3. Double down on existing initiatives and hope.
Patience and Perseverance

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Elements of Project Risk

Scope
The amount of budget, impacted units, time, and complexity of the project.

Experience
The existing inventory of knowledge, skills, and “know how” within the organization.

Structure
The clear definition of the problem, associated metrics, and objectives.

The Risk Dilemma:
Organizations will tend to take on “easy” projects. Likewise, difficult projects will be avoided. Or, the solution to an organizational challenge will be framed as a small rather than a bigger project to ensure success.

The Challenge:
Quickly manage risky projects towards less risky terrain.
Managing the Risk of Innovation Based Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low Risk</td>
<td>(Some risk of spending money to solve nonexistent problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low Risk</td>
<td>(Can escalate to higher risk quickly if new knowledge is required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>(Danger of believing that requisite skills exist in the organization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium Risk</td>
<td>(Danger of misidentifying project goals and objectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium Risk</td>
<td>(Susceptible to cost overruns and lack of return)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 6</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High Risk</td>
<td>(Susceptible to mismanagement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 7</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Very High Risk</td>
<td>(Danger of cost overruns and movement to type 8 project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 8</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Very High Risk</td>
<td>(Danger of Runaway Project)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map Existing and Needed Project Within the Organization

- **High Structure**
  - **Small Scope**
    - High Technological Knowledge
  - **Large Scope**
    - Green Light
      - Very Low Risk

- **Low Structure**
  - **Small Scope**
    - Low Technological Knowledge
  - **Large Scope**
    - Yellow Light
      - Medium Risk
        - (Path Forward Not Fully Understood)
    - Red Light
      - Very High Risk

We lack the “Know How” or Technological Knowledge
Sacrifice
The Crowded House:
Organizations will tend to keep all projects, all initiatives, all products, all locations, all identities, everything for too long. This results in a crowded house. There is little room for new ideas, new initiatives, and there is a lack of clear focus.

“Everything is Important and Nothing is Important”

The Challenge:
Organizations must practice “investment triage”. New initiatives must be prioritized and initiatives that no longer perform should be purged. The savings from purged projects is used to fund new and more important initiatives.
Falling Stars
Projects that are beginning to be replaced by better technologies and processes.

Legacy
Traditional products/projects that yield no strategic advantage yet form the core of legacy operations or products within the firm.

Rising Stars
Emerging products/projects that require resources yet add little to current mission.

Stars
Breakout products and projects that require resource but deliver breakthrough performance.

Invest to build a star.
Divest and begin to harvest.
Divest and find efficiencies.
Invest to build a comeback star.
Invest to turn a legacy into a rising star.
Invest to build a star.
Divest and begin to harvest.
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Strategic Importance Today
High
Low

Strategic Importance Tomorrow
Low
High