



**innovative
interchange**
A S S O C I A T E S

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ave you ever felt the urge to take a risk, to step out of the box, and you didn't because you weren't sure people would understand or support you?

Do you and your colleagues talk yourselves out of "crazy" ideas?

Would you and your colleagues like to be more motivated, innovative, and open to new ideas?

Then Innovative InterChange is for you.

We are not an ordinary consulting firm. Innovative InterChange coaches people toward "Aha" moments that transform their personal and professional lives. With decades of experience working in and consulting with Fortune 500 corporations, nonprofit organizations, schools, and spiritual organizations, we take a fresh approach to human and organizational development.

We don't give you quick tips or checklists for managing a few challenges; we help you uncover and use the best of what you know, and it can change

your life.

Our in-depth communication and leadership workshops and coaching are for groups and individuals who want to restructure the habits that prevent creative, effective communication. We tailor sessions to meet your organization's needs or your individual goals. And we stick with you to help make your new skills a habit.

The Innovative InterChange process is about making the choice to fly, even when everything in your experience and everyone around you want to keep you from taking off.

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The roots & process of Innovative InterChange

A man found an eagle's egg and put it in the nest of a backyard hen. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them.

All his life, the eagle did what the backyard chickens did, thinking he was a chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He clucked and cackled. And he would thrash his wings and fly a few feet into the air.

Years passed, and the eagle grew very old. One day, he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. It glided in graceful majesty among the powerful wind currents, with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

The old eagle looked up in awe. "Who's that?" he asked. "That's the eagle, the king of the birds," his neighbor said. "He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth – we're chickens."

So the eagle lived and died a chicken, for that's what he thought he was.

We built our program directly on the foundation laid by 20th century philosopher Dr. Henry Nelson Wieman, who said human beings are made for what he called "creative transformation," much like a bird is made for flight. And if we don't use our wings, they atrophy. We let them atrophy by avoiding being ourselves, by wearing the masks we think make us more acceptable to our family, friends, and colleagues. This is not to imply that conformity is always bad. It poses a problem only when it keeps you from being authentic with yourself and with others.

On one level, Innovative InterChange is a process that can improve communication, productivity, and the level of

innovation in your organization. On a deeper level, it can spark profound transformation in the way you live your life.

In our workshops, we talk about the five basic conditions that need to be active for Innovative InterChange to work most effectively.

The first and most fundamental condition is understanding your **intrinsic worth** – an understanding that you have not been, nor will you ever be, worth more than you are right now. You can accumulate knowledge, experience, and influence, which may increase your competence, confidence, and comfort. It won't add to your intrinsic worth as a human being. Intrinsic worth is not

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about what you do or what and who you know. It is about who you *are*.

Once you are in touch with that worth, you are more open to the other four conditions that lay the groundwork for the Innovative InterChange process. Those conditions are:

Trust: The willingness to risk sharing the best you know, and the humility to be open and receptive to the best others know; the assumption that other people are trustworthy until they prove otherwise.

Curiosity: Exploring and appreciating new ideas, even if they appear to contradict your own.

Connectivity: Understanding that your brain operates by discovering and creating links between ideas and that your imagination builds on those connections to create new ideas and solutions.

Tenacity: The commitment, discipline, and practice it takes to turn new thinking and behavior into sustainable habits.

Innovative InterChange itself is a four-fold process that will lead to higher levels of productivity, morale, and satisfaction. The phases of this process are:

Communication: To share the best you know with integrity and to listen with humility, understand, and learn from the best someone else knows.

Appreciation: To resist your culturally programmed tendency to think in "either/or" terms; to look for the similarities and differences between your perspective and someone else's; and to be willing to

understand and acknowledge the context of and value in both points of view.

Integration: To absorb the differences you find between your perspective and someone else's and then to use your imagination to discover new possibilities.

Transformation: To resist your culturally programmed tendency to become rigid, stubborn, and trapped in the ruts of conventional communication; to have the discipline to practice and develop habits that will lead to new ways of thinking, behaving, and being.

To fully engage in Innovative InterChange, it helps to develop a core set of skills and new ways of thinking. Our workshops focus on the following:

Intent sharing: To communicate your intent and your message up front with integrity.

Confirmed paraphrasing: To listen with humility to a presenter's message; to restate that message in your own words; and to verify that you understand it the way the presenter intended.

Finding hidden positives: To find value in another person's perspective; value that may have been obscured by your differences.

Integrating differences: To develop "both/and" thinking by converting "but" to "and;" to recognize that there's enough room for diverse opinions and perspectives to co-exist.

Reframing: To expand your frame of reference to think about a problem, situation, or goal from a different perspective; allows you to avoid missing ideas, options, and solutions you may never have considered.

Reconfiguring: To step away from your problem, situation, or goal completely and to use metaphors and outside-the-box thinking to generate new ideas.

Repeating & Observing: To practice your new behavior, and to catch yourself doing it right.

Positive Reinforcing & Correcting: The feedback you get from others and yourself that your new thinking and behavior are working; the ability to adjust when you get off track.

Transformation Works

The ability to transform distinguishes the high-performance team from the mediocre one. In ongoing research during which it has studied more than 6,000 companies, global consulting firm Accenture points to 500-plus companies – such as BMW, UPS, and Amazon.com – as models of high performance. Among the findings published recently in “Outlook: The Journal of High Performance:”

“Leaders in high-performance businesses continually find ways to keep their organizations on their toes, ... improving the way work is done, whether individually or collectively, to continuously improve performance; and revolutionizing the work by seeking out the next wave of products and processes that could disrupt even the most efficient status quo. ...

“By embracing the challenge of continuous renewal, high-performance businesses recognize the need to explicitly address continuity and organizational learning so that the company does not lose learning-curve benefits or simply zigzag with the latest management fad.

“Companies can sometimes get stuck in the conventional world of ‘either-or’ – either we can manage for today and optimize returns with existing people and assets, or we can invest in the future in the hope that our next generation of products and services will lead the way out of an unsatisfying present. ... Leaders of high-performance businesses avoid the ‘either-or’ trap by taking a ‘both-and’ approach.”

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Note such phrases as “revolutionizing the work,” “continuous renewal,” “both/and” – these are strong threads in the fabric of Innovative InterChange. High-performing teams take risks, consider all the possibilities, and constantly reinvent themselves.

Our in-depth training and coaching can help you and your team see that the choice to take risks and to transform can be the most important business decisions you ever make.

–Outlook: The Journal of High Performance, Number 1, 2007