

THE INNOVATION KILLER

**How What We Know Limits What
We Can Imagine – And What Smart
Companies Are Doing About It**

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CYNTHIA RABE held the position of Innovation Strategist for Intel Corporation until she left Intel to found her own consulting firm, Zero-G, LLC. Her prior business experience includes acting as Director of Consumer Marketing for Intel's home networking product line, and as manager of consumer product lines for Ralston Purina and Eveready Battery Company. At Eveready, Ms. Rabe was a member of the 4-person development team who introduced the "Energizer Bunny" advertising campaign in 1988. A graduate of Washington University in St Louis, Missouri and the Stanford University Executive Institute for Management, Ms. Rabe has more than 20 years of experience in senior business and marketing management roles for consumer product and technology companies.

The Web site for this book is at www.innovationkiller.com.

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MAIN IDEA

Thinking innovatively is a challenge for many organizations because it requires a rather delicate balancing act. On the one hand, creative ideas need to draw on some specific and well established expertise but at the same time, the conventional thinking needs to be challenged. The trick lies in getting this balance just right.

In practice, highly creative organizations bring in outsiders who are not weighed down unduly by the “way things have always been done”. These outsiders come with a fresh perspective, and therefore exercise what can be described as “zero-gravity” thinking – that is, clear thinking which is unfettered by established practices, internal politics or any other impediments. These temporary team members can then push people to think outside the limits of their existing mindset.

Zero-gravity thinking addresses directly the human side of innovation. It is based on the fact every invention, every great idea and every breakthrough product is the brainchild of a real person or a group of people combining their thoughts and talents.

1. Why Innovation is Difficult For Most Organizations Pages 2 - 3

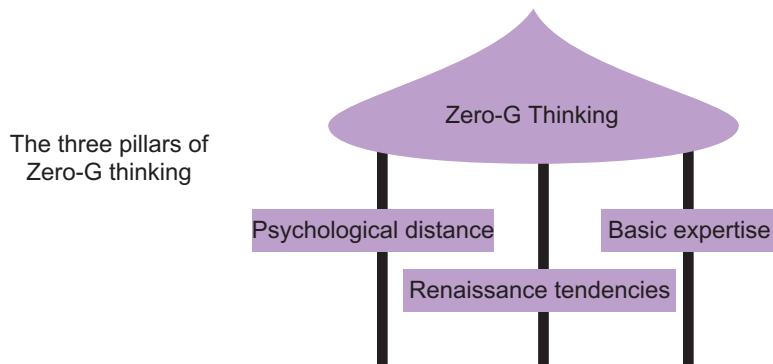
When innovating, human nature is an obstacle which must be overcome. Our thinking is constrained by the fact we accept blithely what others have said and what the experts say is possible or impossible. All of this limits our field of vision and puts blinders on our thinking. To innovate successfully, we need to put aside what is known and let our imaginations run free. We need to break away from what we know, what our organization believes and what the experts in our field accept are the established boundaries.



2. The Solution – Zero-Gravity Thinking Pages 3 - 4

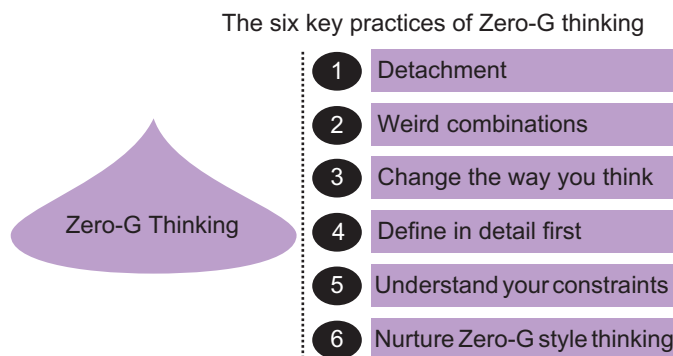
Zero-gravity thinkers are team members who help everyone escape the weight of what is known so some creative thinking can take place. The three pillars of zero-gravity thinking are:

1. Being able to distance oneself from the problem psychologically.
2. Having a predisposition towards learning or inventing new things.
3. Having enough basic knowledge to understand the basics without falling victim to ExpertThink.



3. How to Make Zero-Gravity Thinking Work in Practice Pages 5 - 8

To overcome what you know and think innovatively, you can either bring in an outsider or try and use the key principles yourself. When it comes to innovation, there is no one-size-fit-all set of rules. All you can do is build a good foundation and then innovate from there.



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