

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Creating and Capitalizing on the Best Management Thinking

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The Web site for this book is available at www.accenture.com/bigidea.

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MAIN IDEA

When it comes to implementing new management ideas in an organization, it's not the business gurus who really count. The most important people are the "idea practitioners" – the people within your organization who sift through the pool of management ideas, choose the right ones and then do the real work of importing and implementing workable ideas.



To enhance your chances of success in taking advantage of new business thinking, put more emphasis on building the ranks of the idea practitioners within your firm and less emphasis on what the business gurus are saying. Therefore, rather than seeking more opportunities to sit at the feet of business gurus, build the skills of your idea practitioners. Encourage them to become highly skilled at ignoring the hype and focusing instead on superior business ideas which will be applicable and beneficial to your organization. Allow the idea practitioners to work with passion and sound reasoning to adopt sound new business ideas and your organization will leap forward towards the future. Conversely, in the absence of the discipline provided by idea practitioners, all that will happen is you will bounce uneasily from one management fad to the next without ever making any noticeable difference to your business operations.

“Business ideas serve two basic roles for organizations. One is to improve – or try to improve – organizational performance. They don’t always work, but new business ideas deliver to organizations improved cost, cycle time, financial performance, market share, and so forth, if implemented well. The other role business ideas play is to provide legitimacy. They indicate that an organization and the individuals within it are diligently attempting to improve their business – whether they truly are or not. Most writers on business ideas place the primary responsibility for the success of the ideas squarely on the shoulders of the business guru. If the idea is successful and becomes pervasive within organizations, it’s because the guru is a genius. If the idea is merely a fad, the guru is a goat. Instead, our primary focus is on the people within an organization who make ideas a reality. Unlike the gurus, these people have seldom been written about or even identified by other management thinkers, and there’s no real name for them. We’ve labeled them idea practitioners because they put ideas into practice and in turn have developed a practice of idea implementation. They also help to develop the ideas and in many cases are hybrid creator/practitioners.”

– Thomas Davenport, Laurence Prusak and James Wilson

“Regardless of whether you believe that pursuing new business ideas is a good approach or a poor one, most individuals have little ability to exclude them from their organizations altogether. The business ideas and advice industry is a large and pervasive one, and unless you work in a very small or remote company, you can count on these ideas playing a part in your organization. Therefore, it makes sense to try to identify and bring in only the ideas that are of most potential benefit and to make their impact as positive as possible. Idea practitioners put ideas into practice.”

– Thomas Davenport, Laurence Prusak and James Wilson

1. Understand the roles of the three components of new business ideas. Pages 2 - 4

Before you try and adopt whatever business idea is currently in fashion, first make sure you understand the three key components of the business idea game. Clarify the roles of each component first so you don’t have unrealistic expectations about what any individual element is expected to achieve.

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|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| The Three Key Components | 1 | Management ideas themselves |
| | 2 | Business gurus |
| | 3 | Idea Practitioners |

2. How to let new ideas flourish within your organization Pages 5 - 8

To succeed in harnessing new business ideas to improve performance within your own business organization, take a simple four step approach:

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|--------------------------------|---|--|
| How To Help New Ideas Flourish | 1 | Understand the interplay involved |
| | 2 | Get better at evaluating new ideas |
| | 3 | Provide good leadership |
| | 4 | Build the ranks of your idea practitioners |

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