

The Future is Digital, Global and Green.

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When I tried to think of what innovation meant to me, the main concepts that came to mind were creativity, change, invention, curiosity and strategy. In a market with ever-increasing competition and endless commodities of mass-produced value, innovation challenges competitors, provides a previously unknown value, and offers a massive pay-off for taking the risk. Seeing how endlessly we chase the opportunity to be what is new, improved, and effective I realised innovation pointed itself boldly towards this one core theme: the future.

The future can sound intimidatingly vague, or perhaps too variable or convoluted to be properly analysed. However, the pursuit of innovation moves beyond the metaphysical difficulties, instead questioning the practical context of what world we could be living in. How do we envision the prospective demands of the future? How do we foresee its potential, its consumers' motives, or build towards its priorities. Innovation does not mimic the past, it sees something better and provides the possibilities and potential to head in that direction. The two key players in this process are the entrepreneurs tasked with producing innovation, and the government with protecting it. As one creates, sells, and hires, the other supports, safeguards, and subsidizes. In order to ensure both production and protection are centered around principles that define our future, I believe the guideline must stem from these three undeniably essential elements: digitalisation, globalisation and ecological sustainability. An innovative company with no digital presence, an improved service only available locally, a new product that hurts the environment, they will fall short every time because they don't align with the reality and expectations of what lies ahead. Fostering effective innovation means aligning focus with the DGG priorities: digital, global and green.

DIGITAL: Entrepreneur

STEP 1 Invest in technological research to innovate a product.

STEP 2 Experiment with digital marketing strategies for innovative promotion.

Innovation in the digital realm can be daunting. Where to start, how to code, who to talk to about it. Although the technical side of things may appear complicated, there are two clearly malleable areas that can be game changers if faced with innovation: the product, and the marketing. In such a consumer-rich society there are an abundance of options and as an entrepreneur, learning how to circumvent a saturated market can be a powerful asset. In the midst of a shopping mall's thousands of products lined-up on shelves, knowing what makes your company the best choice for customers truly demands innovation; and the most common way to do so is by investing in research. This could entail finding new technologies to develop, or using existing technology to find new capabilities. Getting the funding for this research can be a crippling difficulty, particularly for smaller businesses or those wanting to start out. However, there are an increasing number of both private and public programmes eager to foster innovation, such as Horizon 2020 in the European Union or the Small Business and Innovation Research program in the United States. Nowadays, there are real opportunities for products to be improved through digital technology, and as an entrepreneur it's all about seeking out these possible research objectives, techniques and funding. When it comes to marketing, creating an online presence is imperative to successful innovation: websites, social media, email contacts, each have the capacity to play a major part in attracting customers. 20, even 10 odd years ago nobody could have predicted the market for advertisements on YouTube videos, these days a thriving,

multi-billion dollar industry¹. Innovation is about reading these trends in order to preempt solutions, offers or merchandise. Entrepreneurs therefore have a diverse ability to use digital innovation to their advantage, being able to exploit technological development for improved product value or to better market their brand.

DIGITAL : Government

STEP 1 Protect citizens against harmful innovation.

STEP 2 Encourage and provide the knowledge for citizens to implement valuable innovation.

With the explosive increase of internet usage in the 21st century, countries were forced to extend their national laws to cover the digital world. It is now time for the government to step up and ensure firstly: that any new online practices are subject to fair policing as soon as possible; and secondly, that those without computer literacy are given the opportunity to develop those skills. The most recent case-study of this idea has been the digital platform Uber as a supposed intermediary car service. Created in 2010, it was a modern-day success story that innovated the access and price of private transportation, and a mere 7 years later it became available in over 80 countries worldwide. However, the global popularity of this service has been met with economic, social and political critiques due to the company's alleged undermining of the taxi industry and the underemployment of their own drivers². A number of countries in the EU have since banned the company and looked at how to better safeguard their citizens against irresponsible practices of innovation. In order for the government to encourage valuable- and protect against harmful- innovation in business, they need policy approaches that enforce clear boundaries, close exploitative loopholes, and also offer opportunities for small business owners to learn the skills and laws relevant to making their company digital. For example, we see robotic technology allowing companies to vastly increase their profit margins, but it can also take away jobs from employees. This phenomenon will not only affect unemployment rates, but also damage tax revenue. So creating multidimensional policy that permits a business to reap benefits from innovative technology, whilst making sure it does not undermine the job market, is extremely necessary. It can be a difficult balance to manage, however, the government has access to all the relevant agencies for specific advice, analysis and solutions.

GLOBAL: Entrepreneur

STEP 1 Gain new insight and benefits from globalised communication.

STEP 2 Grow innovation abroad through globalised trade.

How can an entrepreneur just starting out look for international advantages? Is it realistic for start-ups to even consider a global market? I believe that in the world of giant global conglomerates, it is essential for any new companies to not put any restrictions on their ability to innovate. Entrepreneurs have two steps that allow them to become more innovative: taking advantage of globalised communication and trade. The existence of a global language, English, gives the entrepreneur access to the latest information and research. In many ways, innovation owes itself to previous discovery, in the words of Sir Isaac Newton: 'if I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants'. Thus in the pursuit of innovation, keeping up to date is fundamental so as to not reinvent the wheel. Furthermore in the era of social media, news can spread far and wide in a matter of days. What can this mean for business? International brand recognition that money can't buy. Take it from a company in the United States, Gravity Payments, after it's CEO made an unprecedented move in 2015 by

¹ Worstall, T. (2013, December 12). Google's Youtube Ad Revenues May hit \$5.6 Billion in 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/timworstall/2013/12/12/googles-youtube-ad-revenues-may-hit-5-6-billion-in-2013/>

² Rosenblat, A. and Stark, L. (2016, July 30). Algorithmic Labor and Information Asymmetries: A Case Study of Uber's Drivers. International Journal Of Communication, 10, 27. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2686227>

cutting his million dollar income to raise the minimum wage for all of his employees up to \$70,000. This innovative business model not only created a happier and more efficient workplace with greater retention levels of staff, it also created a worldwide media storm that garnered the brand international acclaim and ended up doubling the company's profits annually³. Entrepreneurs should acknowledge how globalised communication can not only inspire their own innovation, but then market it to the world. If you have an innovative product, if you provide an innovative service, or if your company innovates itself effectively, there is no reason why the success cannot be recreated in foreign markets. Does the product meet demands for other countries? Will the vision work well- or even, better- targeting a completely different demographic? Beyond the practicalities of website translation, international trade deals, and shipping prices, the reality is that people will buy products from all over the world. Smaller companies with the courage to innovate should equally dare to have the courage to compete with multinational enterprises in the global arena.

GLOBAL: Government

STEP 1 Increase funding in education for a more innovative native population.

STEP 2 Strengthen favourable labour law policies to bring in innovative immigrants.

Government can attract the national and international talent who create and help build innovative businesses through two key governmental areas, namely educational institutions and laws regarding work-life balance. Providing an education which is not only prestigious but affordable too, means a country's citizens will be able to develop intellect without economic disadvantages. It will allow students to learn at least the base skills of analysis and research that is unfathomably valuable in the pursuit of innovation. With the addition of a freely-available course detailing how to start a business for those aged 16 and over, this improved educational support would increase not only the physical creation of start-ups, but the self-belief that people are good enough too, cultivating the mental aspect which pushes us to live up to our potential. With the right tools more people will have the necessary skills to live up to their entrepreneurial spirits, and be aware of the option of starting their own enterprises in an effective, supported manner. Beyond education, governments will need to equally seek the highly skilled people of other countries to join the national workforce. Diversity inspires creativity, and creativity leads to innovation. Through an attractive work-life balance lifestyle, which gives an individual more freedom from the constraints and stresses of employment, a country can reasonably hope to draw in the crowds that create hubs of innovation. The best and the brightest will flock to the likes of Silicon Valley, so it is a government's responsibility to offer competitive lifestyles and business opportunities for new ideas to flourish. Innovation is the inevitable result of a skilled and educated population, be it from those born and bred or from far and wide.

GREEN: Entrepreneur

STEP 1 Ensure that any new products do not harm the environment.

STEP 2 Offer an innovative product or service that actively fights against global warming.

It is hard to imagine what our world would look like without the industrial revolution, as it quickly paved the way for subsequent revolutions in digital technology and international trade. One of its most brutal consequences however, has been the impact on the climate. With mass extinctions and severe weather events continuing to rise, entrepreneurs have a duty to use innovation to steer our future in the right direction. An innovative company cannot rightly contribute to growing carbon emissions or supply damaging materials in great quantities, therefore entrepreneurs must instate sustainable company objectives with regards to climate change, and use eco-friendly methods. To begin with the

³ Murray, R. (2016, August 11). Gravity Payments' \$70K Minimum Salary. Retrieved from <https://www.today.com/money/gravity-payments-70k-minimum-salary-ceo-dan-price-shares-results-t101678>

latter, entrepreneurs should oblige any new product or service, innovative or not, to meet the requirements for carbon neutrality and thus not harm the planet. This can be done for instance, through the use of recycled, recyclable or biodegradable materials, or investing in ecological power sources such as solar-energy panels. And secondly, for an entrepreneur to place ecological sustainability as a clear directive, it brings forward an opportunity for innovation. It is one thing to not add to global warming, but what about actually combatting its effects? Recent actions have included carbon offset donation programs offered by transportation companies, a simple innovation yet increasingly vital. All in all, entrepreneurs have the capacity to build future companies, jobs and commodities that are compatible with sustainable technology. Failure to do so jeopardises not just their own, but all of our long-term success.

GREEN: Government

STEP 1 Innovate the economy through carbon neutrality and green energy investment.

STEP 2 Adapt infrastructure and legislation to minimise possible impacts of climate change.

As the great philosopher Thomas Hobbes spoke of a sovereign power needed for preserving peace and preventing war, the Leviathan, we see how modern government holds claim to the authoritative voice in matters of climate change. The average person often feels they have no real effect when giant factories and machines are consistently burning up coal, oil, and gas, continuing the thickening of the ozone layer. Because truly, how does having quicker showers, a compost bin in the garden, and energy-efficient light bulbs even compare? We can no longer afford government bodies paralysed by fossil fuel lobbying, there must be a unification of expectations for both corporations and individuals alike. This can be achieved through strong and detailed policies on the transition to carbon neutral economies, and adequate resources for adapting to current and prospective consequences of climate change. Government funding of innovation in clean energies is at this point essential, every nation should be scrambling to invest in this research to reap the benefits of innovation in wind, solar or hydro power sources. Carbon emissions can additionally be addressed through taxation and relieving subsidiary funds within fossil fuel industries. These kind of actions must obviously be treated with the utmost care as not to drastically damage the lives of thousands of employers and employees; by perhaps offering training programs for those wishing to transition into new roles within a clean energy company, for example. Although this may put the brakes on rising CO₂ levels, the impacts have already hit regions across the world and they need to be reduced as effectively as possible. Droughts, fires, floods, hurricanes, we know the basic solutions to these natural disasters, but adapting to their extremes can be greatly improved with the support of the government. Strengthening building codes, emergency organisation, disaster relief efforts, alongside other green policies such as carbon neutral public transportation and increased funding of ecological conservation, this will have a real physical and cultural effect. Sometimes it takes seeing the edge of chaos and having a ticking time bomb for innovation to jumpstart, and adaptation is at the very heart of this process.

In summary, the steps that entrepreneurs and governments can follow are made to be more clear and effective when in alliance with DGG priorities: digital, global, and green. Innovation ultimately reflects future wants, needs and expectations as much as it does future problems and solutions. Today we can see the shame in an entrepreneur blinded by dishonourable profit, or a government corrupted by external influence; but once upon a time we could have said a company that exploited cheap labour overseas was an innovative business plan, or a government that represented corporate interests as well as those of its citizens was an innovative partnership of ideas. Innovation has so much levity and power, it truly did give us all the benefits of digital technology, globalised connectivity, and power and energy sources well beyond our means.

At the end of the day, it is so important that we continue to put the passion and hard work into innovation, but also that we live up to its responsibilities.