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Dear Dave,

Here is an opportunity to air alternative suggestions that might help or even solve some of our issues. Although called 'Dear Dave' because of our Prime Minister you can send your suggestions for your own country.

When we are job hunting and have to relocate, why is it that there is often no affordable housing, or housing that does not require huge financial guarantees, for us to move into? Surely a scheme which promotes movement of labour is what is needed right now.

Please send in your suggestions and they will be published in future editions along with any other ideas that we stumble across.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the July edition of **Innovation Matters**. This will be the final edition of the (wet) summer as most readers will be taking a break in August. Rest assured that we will return to your Inbox in September.

As previously mentioned, Creative HQ is in the process of moving to Sheffield. Everything should remain as normal although it is best to get in touch via email rather than by telephone as the number will change.

Our first article takes a fleeting look at the **uses of metaphor** and what types of metaphor are useful, particularly in a business context. Our second article shows how **asking the right questions** can help us get to the right answer - not always as easy as it seems. Finally we have some questions which will help you decide whether you are a **good boss** or a **bad boss**. You could also apply them to your boss!!

If you would like any help or advice in adopting Creativity or Innovation in your organisation please do get in touch.

Don't forget that you can also take a look at previous issues of Innovation Matters by visiting our website and navigating to the [archives](#) page.

Happy Reading and Happy Holidays,

Derek Cheshire



Getting To Grips With Metaphor

Keen followers of Agatha Christie's fictional character Miss Marple will be familiar with her technique of mapping happenings of the wider world with things she could understand that occurred in her own village of St Mary Mead. So already we have a list of things that metaphors can help us with:

- Giving explanations to those unfamiliar with a concept
- Examining problem situations from an alternative perspective
- Reframing situations
- Communicating concepts to a wider audience
- Learning or making sense of a concept that we are not currently familiar with



Another interesting use for metaphor is within stories and for use as a more sophisticated business tool but that is an article all of its own. But how about the application of metaphor, will it work for everyone and will it work everywhere?

We can use metaphor directly in:

- Business
- Politics
- Creative Industries and the media
- Any other areas that rely on human interaction

Metaphor works best when individuals can 'connect' easily with metaphors i.e. they are used to metaphor or storytelling and their lives are not littered with distractions. In developed countries we are buried underneath mountains of gadgets which we either rely on to automate our lives or which we take great delight in exploring in detail - we either want it to work or we want to read the instructions in detail. We do not wish to know that our new MP3 player is like a pepperoni pizza (or perhaps a more appropriate metaphor). I am speaking generally here, those who are emotionally intelligent will be using metaphor regularly.

In developing countries there is less technology and less complexity in life generally (but life is often very hard) and so people are often closer to their emotions. Storytelling and metaphors will work well here and have a very powerful effect.

But what makes a good metaphor? During a recent debate it was suggested that a good metaphor for a modern organisation was a jigsaw puzzle. I was not sure about this as it suggested to me that everyone has their place when in fact people can continue to contribute in many different ways. The originator of the metaphor then proceeded to explain it to me. When I suggested that a good metaphor should not require explanation they got a little upset!

A good metaphor should not require explanation. When someone suggests that a task or project is like 'wading through treacle' we instantly understand (unless we do not know what treacle is). Good metaphors should work for those who respond to different types of stimuli (audi, visual, kinaesthetic ...) and be easily modified and shared. Imagine the details of a house given to you by an agent. You like the garage, your partner likes the bathroom and the kids like the garden. You all know that you are sharing the same idea but have different perspectives. Others can also share and modify different aspects (the dog loves the garden!!).



Asking The Right Questions

To get the right answer we need to ask the right question. Consider the scenario where your sales are falling. You ask the question 'why are our sales falling?' and get an answer like 'because our sales people are rubbish'.

Before we fire our sales force let us try a different and more in depth style of questioning.

Why are sales falling? - Because customers don't like our products

Why don't they like our products? - Because they are outdated, not as cool as this year's model

Why are our products outdated? - Because we have not developed any new ones for 5 years

Why have we not done this before? - Because the boss has not allowed us

Why has the boss behaved in this way? - Because they have no spare time to spend

So our sales are falling because the boss (potentially us) needs a lesson in time management. Not only do we need to ask the right question, we might need to ask more than one in order to inform our decision about which course of action to take.

Good Boss, Bad Boss?

Do you identify with any of the following?

1. You have criticised an employee openly in public
2. You have taken credit for the work of others
3. Your employees are anxious in your presence
4. You expect employees to do what you tell them without question
5. You believe employees should automatically know what to do without guidance
6. You shout or scream at others in the workplace
7. You publicly belittle employees as a method of punishing them
8. You have favourites amongst your employees and you make this known
9. You dislike or fear delegating
10. You constantly check the work of others and micromanage constantly



The more of the above statements you identify with, the greater the chance that you are a 'Bad Boss'. Think about the last time you had a 'Good Boss'. I bet that they:

1. Were humble about their own achievements
2. Showed integrity
3. Were knowledgeable
4. Allowed people to work unhindered
5. Provided support when necessary

6. Were keen to try new things

And if you had a 'Bad Boss' they probably:

1. Were never there when needed
2. Wanted to know what you were doing and why
3. Usually said 'no' when you suggested new ideas
4. Made you feel as if you were not trusted
5. Looked glum most of the time
6. Talked about themselves a lot and listened very little

I think that you get the idea. Now which type of boss are you and what are you going to do about it?

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