

Innovation: Angry People Make Change

I probably have not read a dozen books on innovation. I've probably read a *hundred* books on innovation. And some of the most sophisticated ones explain to you how to do focus groups and how to organize this and organize that, and figure out what the customer wants and so on. I'm hardly dismissing that as stupid.

On the other hand, it is my belief that, by and large, there is one and only one source of innovation, whether it's internal IS/IT systems, recruiting systems, or whether it's the development of a technical product.

And that source is: Pissed-off people. That source is: Angry people. People who are determined to make a change. They will go to their *grave* trying to change things. And, mainly, I think it's the case because when you do try to change anything, a simple piece of a system or what have you, you get resistance. People don't like things to be changed, internally or externally. And so, you have got to take the heat. You've got to take the fury of people's lives that you're trying to change.

Juan Trippe was the founder of Pan Am. And somebody wrote about him and said this: "What drove Trippe? A fury that the future was always being hijacked by people with smaller ideas—by his first partners, who didn't want to expand air mail routes; by nations that protected flag-carriers with subsidies; by elitists who regarded flight, like luxury liners, as a privilege that could only be enjoyed by the few; by the cartel operators who rigged prices. The democratization he affected was as real as Henry Ford's."

And I think whether it's Juan Trippe and an airline or, again, whether it is a 26-year-old who thinks a purchasing process is the stupidest thing that he or she has ever seen in their life, that is the source of innovation. What's the bottom line? Don't get rid of your angry and furious people who are annoyed at you by the way you do things now. Sure it can go too far. But if you believe what I'm saying, fury, anger, irritation—pissed-off people—is the only serious source of innovation. Only. Period. One. Singular.