



Darren Coomber

Welcome to this issue of First to Know.

Collaborative innovation continues to gain international momentum in articles, conferences and through corporate initiatives. I can recommend the excellent article on [Innovation Ecosystems](#) written by Adrienne Burke for the New York Academy of Sciences Magazine: "No single actor in an innovation system functions in isolation. If one member is weak, everyone suffers." The article highlights the importance of developing both a 'network' and a 'culture' in innovation; the ability to collaborate across disciplines and sectors; and a willingness to tolerate risk taking and failure. As concepts, networking and culture are more difficult for organisations to support and measure, making it easier to invest in infrastructure, clusters or industry programs.

Proactively changing an organisation's innovation culture can only occur if an investment is made in human capital and an environment created in which knowledge sharing and acceptance of failure are embraced. Clients have employed IXC Intermediaries as exemplars of the type of innovation culture they seek and invested in IXC training programs to improve innovation performance by providing staff with training and tools in collaboration and innovation. Our experience inside companies and working across sectors has shown websites or software systems only lead to collaboration and conversion of new ideas to products when complemented by staff skills training and management that targets an open and collaborative culture.

IXC Problem Definition, Collaboration and Innovation training programs continue to prove popular with preparation underway to deliver a session to a group of organisations in the water sector. Please contact us at info@ixc.com.au if you wish to discuss how our Innovation training programs could benefit your company. Next available sessions will be in June.

In a previous First to Know it was highlighted that Australia ranks poorly in the OECD in industry-research collaboration. We sought feedback on the barriers to enhancing collaboration and responses received from academia, government programs and industry associations indicated that:

- Significant government programs exist to fund collaboration eg Researchers in Business and ARC Linkage grants. Although these programs are well known at senior levels in industry and universities, there is less understanding at the operational level from both industry employees with technical needs and scientists/technologists 'at the bench'. There is also no easy mechanism that can match research discoveries with industry needs, particularly when these are from different sectors.
- Research organisations indicated that industry collaborations do not always provide the types of outcomes needed for career advancement such as academic publications or through the ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia) metrics, which makes collaboration less attractive than obtaining direct grants.

We would be interested in obtaining more feedback directly from industry. What does industry see as the barriers and what is stopping greater engagement with research?

For our own part, the InnovationXchange has always adopted an ecosystem approach to innovation with a proven process to overcome many of the barriers to collaboration. It is our belief that an innovation ecosystem requires active participants from large companies, SMEs, research and government to flourish; and that input should come from across all sectors and be unrestrained by location. The 'non-obvious' connections from outside of our industry can be great drivers of disruptive innovation.

Following the success of the Creative Innovation conference last year, [Creative Innovation 2011](#) will be held in Melbourne over 16-18 November 2011. IXC is again proud to support Creative Innovation.

On May 26, I will be presenting as part of a [panel](#) on Open Innovation at the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of New South Wales. Fellow presenters are Paul Levins from Intellectual Ventures and Darren Williams from Freelancer.com. The session will be moderated by Valerie Khoo and I look forward to sharing my insights in delivering Open Innovation services in Australia and internationally.

Regards,

Darren

news and events

[Microbial Wars: Our fight with HIV, hepatitis viruses, tuberculosis and resistant organisms - new battles, new strategies](#)

Researchers at WEHI in Melbourne will outline the leading efforts to develop immunological protections against existing and emerging viruses and other organisms. Join them to learn about these fantastic endeavours.

Tuesday 7 June 2011, 5.45pm for 6-7.30pm

More info and registration [here](#).

[The future of digital security: The Kaspersky vision](#)

Eugene Kaspersky will describe the main factors driving the global cyber-crime industry, the main challenges and threats faced by the international community and the possible side effects of the swift evolution of digital devices, networks and online services. Kaspersky will also present his vision of the ways that can help us to solve or at least minimize the cyber-crime problem globally.

23 May 2011 - 6:00pm - 7:00pm, UTS Sydney

More information and registration [here](#).

[The Business of Social Change](#)

Attend this Churchill Club event in Melbourne to learn parts of the story of the rapidly growing and dynamic sector of social entrepreneurship. Speakers live and via skype from San Francisco, USA.

Thursday, 19 May 2011, 17:30 - 20:00 Upstairs @ The Leveson Hotel, 46 Leveson St, North Melbourne

More info and registration [here](#).
