

INNOBEE

LISTENING • INGENUITY • TRUST
EMPOWERMENT • SPARK • INSIGHT • WILL
ENTHUSIASM • COURAGE • FLEXIBILITY • CARING
STREAMLINING • FORESIGHT • RENEWAL



2013

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Innobrokering means the sharing, dividing, and combining of information flows. In short, it equals streamlining.

STREAMLINERS – NECESSARY SPARKS

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INNOBROKERS

INFORMATION IS fuel for innovation, but information streams managed and controlled by individuals and communities provide the spark necessary to give birth to ideas and innovations. The Innobrokers project at Lahti University of Applied Sciences has acted as a sort of a catalyst for regional innovation activities by coaching facilitation experts, i.e. innobrokers, and by creating environments where information can flow and sparks ignite.

INNOBROKERING MEANS the sharing, dividing, and combining of information flows. In short, it equals streamlining. What is needed for innobrokering is a way of thinking that requires trust: trust in oneself as well as in the networks one operates in. In addition, social skills and wit are needed to carry messages further in easy as well as challenging environments. This translates into no more and no less than to an ability to drive significant change in existing organisational cultures and models of thought.

INNOBROKERS ARE necessary promoters, facilitators, and executors, i.e. streamliners, who are familiar with the many

levels, both horizontal and vertical, of operational environments. They have the ability to learn and help others learn, to spark enthusiasm, to create trust, to make expertise visible, and to see opportunity where others only see trouble. They have a key role as creative actors, as organisational change agents, and as guides across great distances – they are necessary sparks.

THE TOOLS of the Innobrokers project have included coaching, open learning cafes, and seminars that have offered appropriate arenas for meetings between work life and educational institutions, including their staff and students. By combining hidden expertise and creativity, it is possible to raise one's operations to a whole new level. Concepts and terms used are not the key; the aim is to understand the phenomena that lie beneath. This publication is a collection of stories that explain, each in its own way, the phenomenon known as innobrokering. The process takes time, but the first steps have already been taken. A regional innovation system that allows everybody to be on the winning side is on the horizon. Getting there may take time, but, as they say, even Rome was not built in a day. ■

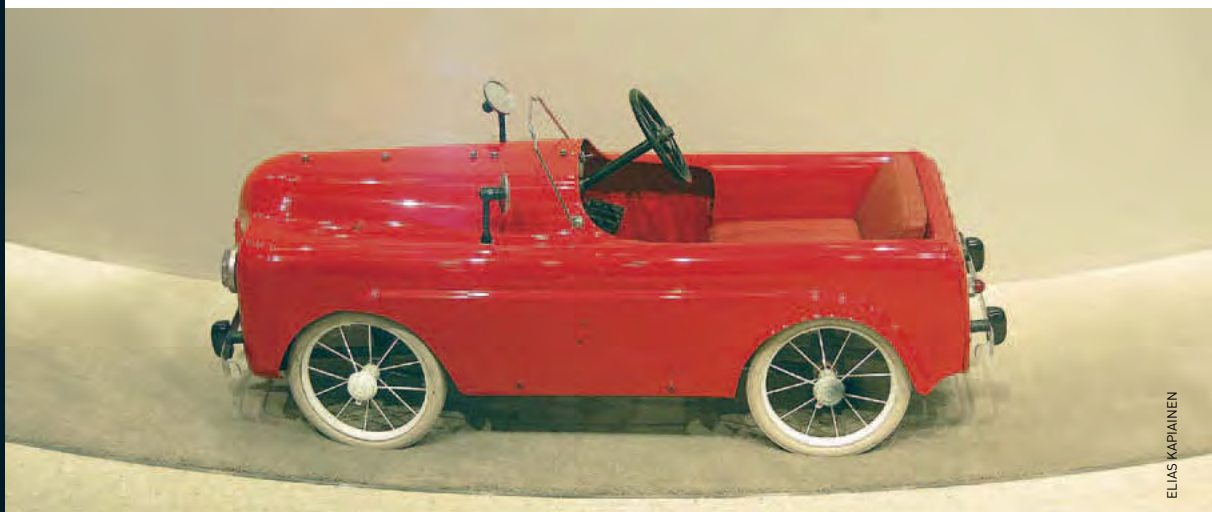
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ELIAS KAPIAINEN





by ILKKA VÄÄNÄNEN

BUZZ!



JARI KOSKINEN

– through cooperation a top actor in applied research, development, and innovation activities and a significant part of an efficient and practice-based innovation environment



A **REGIONALLY COMPREHENSIVE** education network is the backbone of Finnish expertise. It secures the efficient use of expertise and talent reserves and the availability of needed skills and expertise in all Finnish regions. Finnish research, education, and innovation policies support economic growth and positive development of the national economy, renewal of the society, and citizens' wellbeing. The task of the universities of applied sciences (UASs) is to ensure the availability of knowledge and expertise capital in innovation centres and hotspots.

THE LAHTI region has a great chance of being successful in global competition as long as all stakeholders of regional development respond to the challenges posed by the future through foresight. However, developing or advancing a single function or a single institution does not necessarily enhance the functionality of the whole; development work should be based on cooperation between a variety of actors.

The best research, development, and innovation activities are created through cooperation. For UASs, cooperation with their operational environment is defined as follows: "Each university of applied sciences should, in fulfilling its task, act in cooperation with the private sector and other work life, particularly in its own region, as well as with Finnish and foreign universities and other educational institutions."

ACCORDING TO the Regional Competitiveness 2011 report by the Finnish Chambers of Commerce, most Finnish companies have worked in cooperation with educational institutions. Such cooperation has been many-sided, has taken many forms, and most stakeholders are content with it. Similar results were received in early 2013 through a questionnaire regarding regional effectiveness as well as cooperation between SMEs and UASs. The questionnaire reveals that UASs are considered to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of their respective regions.

Companies value cooperation with UASs because it may ensure access to skilful employees. Nearly half of executives assessed that cooperation with UASs works well or very well. The cooperation between companies and educational institutions included internships for students, companies'

visits to schools, and students' visits to companies as well as various research and development projects. The most common forms of cooperation include internships, thesis work, and project work.

As regards wider partnership cooperation with UASs, the members of The Federation of Finnish Enterprises had little experience. Such wider cooperation is usually done by larger companies.

ACCORDING TO companies, cooperation in research, development, and innovation activities should take the needs of business life better into consideration. However, they also noted that the closer and more many-sided the cooperation, the better the results. Regardless of the size of the companies, all entrepreneurs consider the cooperation beneficial and further development of the cooperation and its modes necessary.

Four out of five respondents believe cooperation enhances regional competitiveness and has a positive impact on employment. Nearly half informants assess that UASs' activities have supported the development of their respective field of business or industry.

A recent study on the stakeholders of Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS) states that our overall image is rather positive. The demand for our educational services is, however, far greater than for our research, development, and innovation services, knowledge of which has not yet reached regional actors to any great extent.

CHANGES IN the operational environment pose many challenges also for LUAS. LUAS operates within a global innovation structure as a part of the innovation ecosystems of Lahti region as well

as the wider metropolitan area of Helsinki. We take part in building a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy and help reach high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Our goal is to be an internationally renowned, networked, interdisciplinary UAS that educates responsible experts, develops innovations, supports regional competitiveness, and renews the structures of work life. LUAS is committed to strengthening the competitiveness and vitality of the Lahti region, as outlined in a proposal for growth plan between the municipalities in the Lahti region and the state.

In the future, our operations will concentrate to the Lahti region innovation centre, which includes actors such as Lahti University Consortium, regional development companies, and private businesses. The innovation centre offers authentic development and learning environments and includes international partners. Reorganising innovation activities promotes a multilateral operative model for the regional innovation environment. It is of paramount importance to further develop lasting and active partnerships between stakeholders to advance and promote regional development.

LUAS IS active in actualising the development programme for the Lahti region innovation environment through the principles of practice-based innovation. The operation model of smart specialisation is realised through concrete learning environments that strengthen stakeholder cooperation.

Learning environments are physical and/or operational entities that take fields of particular focus into consideration and that make good use of intellectual cross-pollination and Living Lab principles. They offer a cooperation environment which enables the creation and finding of novel, concrete cooperation possibilities, examples of which include Interaction Design Environment – IDE!, EcoMill, and an expertise centre for physical activity in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of diseases.

STRATEGIC FOCUS fields of LUAS, i.e. environment, design, and development of wellbeing services, are tightly linked to the regional development goals in business and wellbeing. All our educational fields and actors promote the operational models and profiles of integrative pedagogy, practice-based innovation, and student entrepreneurship. ■

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Focus Fields of LUAS

Practice-based innovation translates into students' and teachers' active participation in the development tasks of work life by combining theory and praxis. It can be described as learning through innovating and includes active and unprejudiced development of teaching methods. Students are active stakeholders of learning processes and increasing innovation skills form a part of the advancement of students' expertise. The idea of practice-based innovation revolves around knowledge production based on clear and strong orientation on the praxis and on problem solving in authentic situations. Experts and actors of various fields produce knowledge through cooperation in an interdisciplinary manner. Such a setting provides room for learning, new insights, intuition, and problem solving. In LUAS, innovation activities have two kinds of goals; to promote and enhance learning and to recognise, evaluate, and process ideas to be utilised on the market or in the public sector.

Just as other Finnish UASs, the nature and role of LUAS' research, development, and innovation activities is not yet clear enough for stakeholders in the region. At their best, the activities are customer-oriented, based on key expertise, beneficially networked, open, and make use of practice-based innovation processes. A good example of this is the Innovators project with its multidisciplinary and heterogenic actors, investigating approach, demand and practice-based nature. The project has given rise to innovations and enriching, serendipitous bumps; a true buzz.

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THE AUTHOR HAS TAKEN PART IN COOPERATION BETWEEN UASS AND COMPANIES ALREADY IN THE 20TH CENTURY. NOW HIS WORK IS MORE FILLED WITH MANAGEMENT, STRATEGIES, MEETINGS, AND STATISTICS.



JARI KOSKINEN

LEARNING BY INNOVATION?

by ANU RAAPPANA

W E ALL are used to the idea that innovations are needed. And we are bored with it. The results of ideation are expected to be commercially successful products and services. Companies stand competition through

innovation. New innovations keep the society alert and on the move. But there are additional benefits to innovation; it teaches, it forces to learn.

Innovation starts with the individual and innovation activities form a continuum of development paths created by individuals. So what is meant with innovation activities of a university of applied sciences (UAS)?

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At its simplest, it means renewing one's own organisation. In his article, **Ilkka Väänänen** notes that changes in the operational environment pose LUAS and other UASs new challenges. LUAS operates within a global innovation structure as a part of the innovation ecosystems of the Lahti region as well as the wider metropolitan area of Helsinki. We take part in building an intelligent, sustainable, and participatory economy and help reach high employment, productivity, and social togetherness.

HOWEVER, UASS have another point of view towards innovation activities. It is the viewpoint of future expertise and of the development of contemporary students' professional identities. Arene, the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, has published guidelines to common competences that should be found in the curricula, student evaluation, and thus in the skill set of all graduated UAS students. Some aspects of the guidelines can be taught, but others need to be acquired through actions and by doing things oneself.

AT ITS best, innovation expertise develops into a way of thinking that supports and enables innovation. Arene has defined that innovation expertise includes the abilities of creative problem solving and development of work methods.

An innovation-attuned individual knows how to work in a project setting, is able to actualise research and development tasks by applying existing knowledge and methodology of the field, knows how to find customer-driven, sustainable, and profitable solutions, is able to create new knowledge, and has the capacity to renew operational models by combining expertise from various fields. Such a person is able to lead projects as well as research, development, and innovation activities and to use research and development methods.

TO SUM up, each UAS graduate is able to develop customer-oriented, sustainable, and profitable business. Reaching this goal demands doing things in practice as well as a situation where students are allowed to take chances and to occasionally make odd moves. Odd moves mean making decisions that force one to adapt one's own knowledge and expertise into a new context

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Ouch,
I just had
an idea!”

and a new environment in a way that creates added value in one way or another. This calls for creative pedagogic solutions and less ordinary learning environments.

WHERE DO pedagogic solutions and new learning environments lead to? They require learning new things and acceptance of surprising situations from all stakeholders.

“Ouch, I just had an idea!” said a student while thinking hard, trying to develop something new. “How come ‘ouch,’” I asked, “just say wohoo.” The student replied that he now has to

start acquiring information and that takes quite some time and then he has to find someone to actualise the idea and that there's an awful lot of things that he does not yet understand.

The idea caused work – and work is arduous. In such a setting it is not only arduous for the student; the teacher's role completely changes as well. The teacher has to exit his/her comfort zone by accepting such a move and its outcomes.

TO PUT an idea forward requires other people, concepts, words, descriptions and illustrations of phenomena, and constructive debate. The question is, first and foremost, about learning through applying existing knowledge and history. This is a way to analyse new information and to create new concepts. Innovating provides many skills that would be difficult to teach.

LUAS makes use of the concept of integrative pedagogy to describe the variety of possibilities of teaching, learning, and learning environments. We hope our approach leads to situations where students happily state they are exhausted by all the learning.

SUCH A MODEL requires work life oriented learning processes and students' and teachers' active roles in various development projects.

Integrative pedagogy creates people who look at the world in different ways. They believe they are creating changes, they are in midst of change – not mere bystanders watching change take place. They have the ability to create networks and to find the right people for each project. They don't think they own their ideas; they share them in order to create something beneficial.

Is this brokering? Does integrative pedagogy help create brokers who actively develop and advance their operation environments? I sure hope so. ■

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THE AUTHOR STUDIES, OBSERVES, AND PONDERS. SHE AIMS TO HEAL THE WORLD ONCE AND FOR ALL AS BETTERING IT BIT BY BIT IS RATHER ARDUOUS. SHE HAS INGENIOUS IDEAS DAILY BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THEY OFTEN VANISH BEFORE SHE'S MADE SENSE OF THEM. IT DOES NOT MATTER. JOY OF LIVING REPLACES LOST IDEAS.

VALUE INNOVATIONS THROUGH VERSATILE EXPERTISE

by MIKA KYLÄNEN

W **E** ARE used to explain innovations by the creativity, innovativeness, and courage of individuals. Innovators are mythical fairytale heroes, arriving on their white horses wherever new insight or unforeseen solutions are needed. The archetype of an innovator has been an inventor, entrepreneur, and researcher.

The sources of innovation have since been placed on the market, customers and end-users often crowned as the true champions of innovation. However, the characteristics, goals, and assessment of innovations have changed. Companies have started to struggle with drying springs of creativity and lost means of actualising, utilising, and commercialising ideas and insights. New operational environments require new tricks.

INNOVATION ACTIVITIES require increasingly versatile expertise at all stages; in the creation of new ideas as well as in driving the ideas forward. One should never underestimate or forget the importance of networking, wit, foresight, ability to combine expertise from different fields, or a systematic approach to combining everyday practices, modelling, and theoretical knowledge. Money is needed, too.

VERSATILITY OF expertise gives innovation potential whole new dimensions. It is a means to escape from the shackles of technological arms race and the performance competition regarding core product innovations. Innovation brokering and versatile expertise help see innovation possibilities also in the start and end phases of production and logistics chains.

DOING THINGS differently is possible – and often also lucrative – in the solutions and structures that enable production, but increasingly in the meanings



JARI KOSKINEN

and symbolic value created through customer or user experiences. Whereas new technology can easily be copied, replicating a business model, networks, other immaterial capital, or customer experience is a lot more difficult.

SKYPE'S SUCCESS as an instant messaging service has been explained by the company's business model, not by technological superiority of the application. And what makes the iPhone different from a Lumia? The power of a user-oriented brand. Apple's explicit willingness to think and act differently, in place ever since 1984, explains, to a great extent, the company's success, the meaningfulness of the brand for its customers, and the sense of community amongst users.

HOW ABOUT Levi, a Finnish ski and tourist resort: is its success due to its exceptional nature or its unique boutiques and services or to its ability to create and manage networks and to give rise to shared enthusiasm and willingness? And does the Christmas tourism in Lapland rely more on genuineness, experiences, and emotional ties than on the functionality and cost-effec-

tiveness of travel agents' product and service offerings?

Versatile expertise, vital for innovation, includes also the ability to see beyond and above the familiar and the self-evident. Successful businesses offer customers wider experiences instead of mere solutions. Tomorrow's innovations are value innovations and there is a dire need for understanding experiences that are meaningful for the customers. ■

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PLAY BETWEEN DISTANCE AND PROXIMITY

by SATU PARJANEN

THE BIRTH of innovation through social and economic interaction requires a multitude of mutually benefiting skills, expertise, and resources to come together. A key factor in innovation activities is the significant variety of stakeholders. This results in different distances between individual actors. In innovation activities, making good use of the innovation potential embedded in these distances is essential. Varying distances can be considered a source of creativity and innovation. On the other hand, the creation and operation of networks with varying

distances between stakeholders can be rather challenging. Actors can be so far from each other that innovation activities cannot take root without specific brokering between the stakeholders.

LOOKING AT distance and proximity, the traditional standpoint has been to concentrate on the geographical distance between actors and the resulting benefits and problems as regards innovation activities. A short physical distance is considered to pile up benefits and knowledge spill-overs.

However, besides physical distance, the discussion could include cognitive, communicative, functional, organisa-

tional, social, cultural, and temporal distances.

COGNITIVE DISTANCE refers to differences in the knowledge bases and ways of thinking between different stakeholders. Differing ways of thought may block interaction between different pools of knowledge. It must be noted, however, that some degree of cognitive distance is often required to give rise for new innovation. Variation between knowledge pools enables new and innovative combinations, but if the pools are too far from each other they often remain unused.

The task for brokering is to define what sort of expertise is needed in a given innovation activity and where such expertise could be found. Cognitive distance may also manifest itself in communicative distance, which means that a common understanding is hard to find due to differences in terminology and professional languages used. Even basic concepts can be understood and interpreted in various ways. This, in turn, hinders the creation of common understanding. Innovation activities are always dependent on communication.

ORGANISATIONAL FUNCTIONAL CULTURAL

FUNCTIONAL DISTANCE refers to field-specific knowledge which is not directly applicable in a different field or industry.

It is often profitable to search for new ideas outside one's own field and to adapt the new ideas to one's own operations. However, knowledge gained in one context might not be directly exploitable in other contexts. Adopting new knowledge includes not only understanding it, but also its interpretation and combining it with existing knowledge.

The greater the distance between two fields, the more the new knowledge and innovation needs to be

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Adopting new knowledge includes not only understanding it, but also its interpretation and combining it with existing knowledge.

adapted to suit a new context. Indeed, innovation brokering requires courage to offer stakeholders ideas and practices from surprising as well as obvious fields.

ORGANISATIONAL DISTANCE refers to structures and systems by which operation can be coordinated and knowledge exchanged between different units. Knowledge production is dependent on the abilities to coordinate knowledge assets in different organisations, units, and teams. For example, reliance on routines in knowledge acquisition decreases flexibility, which, in turn, may translate into a lack of initiatives and new ideas. Knowledge creation can often be hindered, amongst other issues, if the organisation is too large or the work group is too tight; in both cases there is no inbound or outbound flow of information.

Knowledge creation and dissemination may also become difficult due to a lack of clarity as regards roles: with whom should information and knowledge be shared. This means that brokering should take into account how knowledge is shared between different stakeholders and how existing structures support or block innovation activities.

INNOVATION ACTIVITIES are social by nature. Social distance refers to the relationships between individual people. Interaction, spending time together, and cooperation build trust between individuals. Envy, fear, and

prejudice stifle shared innovation activities. On one hand, trust creates an atmosphere where innovation may blossom. On the other, exaggerated social proximity may damp the creation of new ideas because the proximity blocks external influences from entering the network, organisation, or team.

An important issue in innovation brokering is to create a safe and creative yet open atmosphere. In the early phases of innovation activities, it is wise to ponder how well the individuals know other stakeholders and their ways of operation. There might be a need for some “warm-up.”

CULTURAL DISTANCE refers to the differences between the cultures of organisation or organisational units. Organisational culture is used to describe e.g. the values on which a shared understanding of how to behave in the organisation is built. Thus, the culture also defines how new ideas are treated in the organisation and the extent to which existing practices can be questioned.

Organisations differ from each other also in their stance towards the future. Whereas some have visions reaching far into the future, others concentrate their development work around the very near future. In some worst cases future possibilities are not considered at all because all activities deal with the current moment.

THERE IS always a tension between similarity and difference; too much similarity or excessive differences become problematic. The challenge of brokering is to find a balance between distance and proximity in innovation activities, so that stakeholders can find shared means of development. ■

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LESSONS FROM GREY ECONOMY?

”Is there something to learn from the innovation environments within the grey economy, something that is applicable in the legal part of the world economy?”

by MARI SILVENNOINEN



ELIAS KAPAINEN

IN THE traditional view, an innovative environment is one where actors from different fields and their knowledge, expertise, skills, motivations, values, and interests meet. New ideas are born in open environments, in the in-betweens of different fields. In favourable settings and through dedication and hard work, these ideas transform into innovations.

Companies want to be innovative and agile, the EU ponders on European innovation policies, and the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy works and supports competitiveness by strengthening the Finnish innovation environment. At the same time, half of the world economy belongs to the so-called grey economy. This is to say that we hope one half of human economic activities to be innovative and the other half not. Is there

something to learn from the innovation environments within the grey economy, something that is applicable in the legal part of the world economy?

RECENT NEWS reports revealed that the city of Lahti and the whole of Southern Finland are self-sustainable as regards the production of cannabis. Reasons for this include minimising the risks related to import as well as higher profitability of drug trafficking by keeping a greater share of the value chain in one's own hands. Minimised risks and better profitability are linked with innovative solutions to growing the plants; these solutions often leave house searching policemen to marvel at the ingenuity of the criminals.

Another great example of the innovativeness can be found in the production of pirated goods. Industrial espionage and copying of products

| Asia is traditionally innovative.





There are stories about ships sailing the seven seas with handbag and clothing factory equipment onboard

have as long traditions as Finnish paper production. There are stories about ships sailing the seven seas with handbag and clothing factory equipment onboard. During the trip between, say, Asia and Europe, skillful copies of the newest, most expensive designer goods are produced.

The risk of getting caught is minimised and sailing in international waters assures even greater probability of not being sanctioned. Furthermore, the products have better profit margins as the manufacturer can save in real estate costs by innovatively combining production and logistics capacity.

THE GREY ECONOMY is linked to a multitude of severe phenomena and its negative impacts on the society are beyond doubt. But how could we harness its innovation capacities for the good of legal business? Even better, could we transfer the passion, expertise, and motivation behind grey market operations to the official market?

Typically the grey economy is restricted through legislation and punishments – and this is of paramount importance where grey profits are achieved through the distress and misery of human beings. But the greatest incentive to enter the grey economy comes from the opportunities to reach greater profits than in legal business. However, the viewpoint on human suffering holds true in some legal businesses as well.

In Finland, discussion has recently revolved around quick loans (or ‘payday loans’), which have a large demand and therefore also high prof-

itability. Another somewhat similar form of business is private traffic warden service, which has recently become rather large business. The legislators are currently working on ways to limit such business activities.

ONE STANDPOINT is to look at the various kinds of innovation environments the arenas of grey economy offer.

One such innovation environment is a highly networked model where the knowledge and expertise of all actors are being efficiently exploited. The grey economy is also often transdisciplinary by nature – and the different kinds of knowledge assets are often used very efficiently. Further, the grey economy is highly flexible; it is able to adjust according to the market situation very fluently. A key means of competition is to react to new opportunities rapidly. All the issues discussed above are highly welcome characteristics for innovation environments in the legal markets.

FORTUNATELY THE innovation environment surrounding the city of Lahti is not built on grey economy but on openness, crowdsourcing, flexibility, and networking. The university campus being built in the city strengthens the possibilities for open and interdisciplinary development work. At the same time, we are building operational models and opportunities for various stakeholders to ideate and innovate increasingly better products and services in cooperation with each other – and brokering has its significant role in this development. ■

MARI SILVENNOINEN

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INNOBROKERING IN PRACTICE

by KATI HONKANEN

”Innobrokers are people who promote, actualise, and facilitate innovation activities and know the needs of companies as well as the opportunities offered by educational institutions.”

WHAT DOES promoting, actualising, and facilitating mean in practice? Innobrokers’ aim is to bring together people from different organisations and different fields to enable innovation and to ensure the realisation of a concrete outcome.

HOW CAN this be achieved? Innobroker training provides participants abilities to act as innobrokers in the interface between the business world and educational institutions. For me, the training opened up new viewpoints and helped me understand my own role as a member of cooperation networks. In

particular, I learned that contradictions and colliding ideas are often essential for something new to be found.

Now I try to give more time and space for different kinds of ideas and viewpoints and not to draw conclusions and define preferable trajectories too hastily. Earlier I was in more hurry to find consensus and tried to find common denominators between the sometimes contradicting ideas of all stakeholders.

Sustainable Development as Example

IN HER book *Yhteyksien kirja* [Book of Connections], **Liisa Häikiö** discusses the realisation and future of sustainable development. She notes that locally

realised processes of sustainable development reveal that it is difficult to give birth to and maintain change when the goal is to change the society widely.

“Processes have far too greatly underlined unanimity and avoided dealing with contradictions. Instead of consensus, it would be fruitful to identify what kinds of mutually contradicting goals of sustainable development are connected to the values of individuals and societies. Utopias offer a tool to ponder on how these contradictions can be solved in the society of tomorrow.”

HÄIKIÖ’S IDEA can be used in the handling of nearly all wicked problems. It is time to identify and accept the fact that solving old problems requires new methods. Innobrokering offers one such model.

THERE’S A lot of work and it is easy to notice one’s own limitations as an innobroker. On the other hand, promoting, actualising, and facilitating is not that complicated. What innobrokers need is openness, ability (or willingness) to see beyond self-evident issues as well as courage to combine things and people. Doing things together is worth far more than the sum of its parts, i.e. by working together we can achieve a whole lot more than we ever could as individuals. ■

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I INVENT, I BROKER, I ERR – I AM AN EXPERT IN DOING

THINKING RESPONSIBLY starts with worrying about tomorrow or, quite the other way around, with a desire to create a better future. What is coming cannot be seen without pondering and inventing. That's what innovativeness is about: new, newer, and the newest ways of seeing. Being responsible equals being resourceful as regards the future.

Responsible, future-oriented resourcefulness equals caring: the future is ours – and that's why I care for

what I invent; how my invention functions when I think about it thoroughly. I stick my neck out in the name of the future.

Inventiveness as Professional Skill

Students of communication and business are educated also as experts of responsible business. Understanding futures as well as the nature of responsible solutions are parts of their expertise. In work life they support, communicate, and make decisions regarding the direction and goals of

their work community as well as the tasks and activities of employees. They come up with solutions and applications to match the changes of work life. The only thing that's for certain is that the operational environment is constantly changing.

'Inventor' might be an accurate occupational title for many in the contemporary work life. Resourcefulness – especially as regards the future – is particularly required from human resources people, marketing and communications professionals, and from managers and leaders. The tools for surviving change



JARI MOSKINEN

by JAANA LOIPPONEN

RESOURCEFULNESS = CARING

FUTURE =

include wit, good teams, trust, enthusiasm, ideation, experimentation, and moving forward. Luck is needed as well. Luck can be both good and bad. Once something has been invented, done, decided, and perhaps mistaken about, it is time to either celebrate or to fix earlier work. However, irresponsibly made decisions are impossible to correct. The really stupid decisions are never responsible ones. One should have used wit: been resourceful in order not to create a malfunctioning future.

Caring as a Value

Responsibility is about caring. A leader's worry and joy is to lead work activities in a way that produces a well functioning whole and gives all participants a feeling of being valued as themselves and as parts of the whole. A leader helps to build success and creates a safety net in case of failure. This requires intellectual resources. One cannot lead if one has not thought about and internalised a set of values which is in harmony with the values of the work community. The basis of leading is in values. Futures are built out of that ground work – and if one cares for the future, one of the values is, indeed, caring. One cannot take care of others without understanding what is meaningful for oneself.

Caring about people and work has to take place in the here and now – and it may not harm anyone or any thing. As a value, caring means that one comes up with a way to handle things now in the best possible way and that the decisions of today give rise to good things for the people on their way to the future.

Future = resourcefulness = caring.

Knowing through Action

Anyone brokering towards the future or sense-making potential worlds, be they leaders, innovators, or leadership and communications students, requires futures knowledge and silent knowledge. Expertise is based on intellectual cross-pollination and problem-centred learning. In practice this means that we are all surrounded by a web of possibilities. Interpretations and paths everyone must find for themselves. This is called practice-based innovation (Pässilä et al. 2011): there is knowledge and activities that form the basis for understanding some other

issue. Knowledge is operative labour: a convention is renewed by doing things differently.

Researchers studying work note that if everything is processed and modelled, things do not necessarily get any simpler. The amount of information an individual must master increases beyond the breaking point. For example, the “new wisdom” required in health care professions is already so complex that the requirements may be impossible to fulfil. The everyday also drives stakeholders to solutions that professionals may deem unethical. In other words, whereas an employee meets customers as human beings, economy and efficiency treat everyone based on demographic calculations (Mertala 2009).

“ Interpretations and paths everyone must find for themselves. This is called practice-based innovation. ”

A mix of resourcefulness, caring, and practice could act as an opposing force to the current development that leaves all of us without any choice or say. We are too busy measuring and processing to be able to think. Let's do things differently! Let's all promise to understand and know only if we are allowed to go through both trial and error. Let's not let the processes think on our behalf. Let's have a break: take time for resourcefulness to surface. Only then shall we act and accomplish. Let's get things done as responsible people who take care of the tomorrow. ■

JAANA LOIPPONEN, PHD, MA

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Where innovation environment is concerned, multiculturalism is a possibility.



COORDINATOR = BROKER

by SENJA JOUTTIMÄKI

THE **INNOBROKERS** project has been an interesting journey of trying to wonder and find out with others what being a broker means – not even to mention trying to identify a broker in oneself; combining, mediating, breaking boundaries, bumping people and ideas together, shaping potential worlds, facilitating, promoting, actualising, shaping organisations, reaching over distances, etc.

These activities require at least the abilities to accept new knowledge and information, to analyse it, and to share it further as well as the skills to create networks, bring stakeholders together, recognise bottlenecks, and to enable learning together.

IT SEEMS that the role of a broker always includes the goal of affecting individuals' attitudes, opinions, thinking, and most of all their behaviour. The innobroker message includes a sort of a manifesto: one has to think and act differently or the future is dire at least where competitiveness is concerned. Through individuals, the goal is to have an impact also on whole organisations.

A generally agreed means of influence is to invent new expressions and words or to tamper with the semantic content of existing terminology. Albeit there might be good reasoning behind promoting new terms, their active usage may spark opposition. For example, many people involved in this project started actively thinking about what is meant with 'brokering.'

I NOTICED that my daily job can be considered brokering. As the Secretary General of the Lahti University Consortium, my task is to coordinate cooperative actions and to offer services that support practical functions and related development work. Coordination is a common task in the contemporary world. As work is increasingly done in projects and through networks that include a multitude of stakeholders, i.e. different kinds of people and organisations, some form of coordination is required.

A dictionary definition for 'coordination' is: "the organisation of the different elements of a complex body or activity so as to enable them to work together effectively." A coordinator's task is to search for opportunities, build bridges, combine different sorts of expertise, and promote cooperation. Brokering and coordination are pretty much the same thing.

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However, at times
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However, at times coordination becomes a swear word: at worst, a coordinator is a bully or an unnecessary intermediary.

Network Cooperation and Context Dependency

THE INNOBROKERS project underlines network cooperation. Dedication towards cooperation requires trust and that all stakeholders consider the cooperation provides added value. I will never stop restating that cooperation is never done by organisations, it is always a task for individuals who form various kinds of communities. Instead of organisational structures, successful cooperation calls for social capital and interaction between people.

IN MOTIVATING or persuading people to change their behaviour, it is essential to take their situation and needs into consideration. It is wise to remember that an individual's actions are affected by many factors that guide and drive their thinking and actions in different kinds of situations.

THE INNOBROKERS project took place at a challenging time. Finnish institutions of higher education are being struck by a phenomenon called structural development. In 2008, the Ministry for Education and Culture revealed guidelines that aim to strengthen the quality of universities' and UASS' operations. The aims written down included that, in the future, the number of universities and UASS is smaller, their profiles are clearer, they have less (and larger) units

and that there are strategic, mainly regional alliances between universities and UASSs.

IN THE everyday of educational institutions, key words have in recent years included centralisation, condensing, eliminating, and saving. Such a situation calls for new ways of operation and, for its part, the Innobrokers project offered some relevant tools. However, the demands to think and act anew may have at some points felt as threatening or unnecessary burdens instead of real opportunities. If the primary concern is about one's own future employment or work load, where could one find resources to renew oneself or one's surroundings?

Interaction and Social Capital

I THINK about network cooperation and network communities from the viewpoint of interaction. Social capital and trust affect the success and possibilities of a community. People have to possess willingness and abilities to work with each other and they have to trust one another. Good social relations are a requirement for success; they support and promote individuals' and communities' opportunities.

GOOD COOPERATION is based on voluntary action. However, from time to time individuals have the need to convince others about the greatness and truthfulness of one's own thoughts and opinions. This might be due to aspirations related to one's status or image or simply to the human need to feel one is "right." Such needs may lead to attempts at persuasion or manipulation – and these are by no account few and far between.

I THINK about my work. A coordinator may not drive one's own, selfish agenda. One has to be humble and ready to recognise that someone else's understanding and knowledge are wider, more thorough, and more justified than one's own. And even though others' views and arguments may seem utterly odd, one has to have the strength and willingness to listen, ask, and debate.

Conclusion

A COORDINATOR or broker should not drive a bulldozer even though



the goal is to break boundaries. A know-it-all or a besserwisser never manages to create cooperation. Stamina and patience are needed because people are not always enthusiastic about new ideas or issues – particularly if presented at the wrong time.

FOR ME, the Innobrokers project was a journey that began with a play on words, concepts, and ideas. People who did not know each other very well tried to understand what the goals were and what was supposed to be accomplished. The dedication level of stakeholders seemed rather weak. Fortunately a common understanding started to show as enough time was spent playing with ideas. In addition, the scope of the project became increasingly clear: no single project may expect to save the whole world. Right now it is essential to ponder how the created successful

Broker must not be a bully.

practices and models of operation can be carried forwards to the future. How can we keep the expertise and social capital created in the project alive? ■

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JARI KOSKINEN

AS DESIGN FELL FROM A TREE

by SAMI MAKKULA &
HANNU KAIKONEN

FINNISH DESIGN has been a matter of national pride for decades. Design has been used to rationalise many things; it has been linked with practically all possible forms of production. In the latter part of the 20th century, design, or actually a small group of top designers, was placed on a pedestal. A star cult was built, especially within the design field. In the early years of the 21st century, design was considered essential for the national economy. This was preached far and wide, for example under the banner of Design Year 2005. This allowed design to jump up from its pedestal to reach higher branches of the tree that is Finland. Design assumed almost mystical characteristics.

AT THE same time, something different was brewing in the background. Discussions about engaging end-users, creating things together, and participatory design began to surface. Co-design, co-working, co-creation, produsage, prosumerism, crowdsourcing: new words and concepts entered the daily vocabulary of design and planning work. The debate continued and at some point the concept of service design and the idea of engaging citizens to participate grew into strong themes. Suddenly every person was able to take part in “doing” the design of a tea cup, a space rocket, or an immaterial service, etc. The mystique in which design was clad vanished in a puff of smoke. Design became a part of the everyday, a part of normal development activities. In a way, design fell out of the tree.

HOWEVER DRAMATIC this may seem, it was nothing special. As a professional or occupational group, designers did not vanish. Their actual work changed only a little and their expertise and related demands did not suffer from these changes. Designers were brought closer to other professionals, as the

new design culture required and requires transdisciplinary design teams. In such teams, the expertise and importance of each individual reaches new heights because all team members represent their own profession and, thus, reinforce and supplement the expertise of others. Transdisciplinarity is a richness that requires adapting as well as new interaction skills – and offers great rewards.

ACQUISITION OF user information quickly became routine. When users are

CO-DESIGN, CO-WORKING, CO-CREATION...

brought in to take part in design, their opinions regarding the outcome of design are collected. It didn't take long to find out that users give no straight answers, no matter the methods used to gather data. Users do not have required education and those born with needed traits are few and far between. People are not good at describing things that do not yet exist. What they are good at, however, is telling stories about their everyday. Between the lines and sometimes subconsciously, people are able to describe existing needs. Designers and other professionals need to collect these stories, interpret them, and create new solutions to answer the identified needs.

SERVICE DESIGN is based on transdisciplinary cooperation that engages and empowers users. It creates new possibilities for service development, often by combining existing and well-known methods and ideologies from a variety of scientific and business fields. Users are treated as equals in design work and their insights fuel service ideation and the refining of those ideas. Defining the shape of the finalised services makes good use of

the visionary insights and expertise of the transdisciplinary design team. But the basis is always laid by determined, systematic work that respects or even supports serendipity. That's service design at its best.

THE PROCESS takes its time and ideation often gives rise to completely new insights. Some ideas are impossible to put in practice and some are bland to begin with. However, ideation always includes the possibility of coming up with true jewels, innovative

eureka moments that can be used to strengthen existing business or launch completely new endeavours. When things are looked at from many different viewpoints, it becomes easier to identify unused potential outside one's core operations. Transdisciplinarity is a key to the creation and exploitation of by-product innovation.

PARTICIPATORY AND transdisciplinary design that takes different user groups and levels into consideration and is both systematic and determined leads astonishingly often to ideas that require a whole new operational model. Even if development work concentrates on a single service, related service design work is surprisingly likely to change the operational model and culture of the company in question. It must be noted, however, that service designers do not manage or lead a company's strategic change; other professionals have a greater chance of success in such an endeavour.

AS AN expertise area, it is (already) time for service design to change. In a situation where service design as a concept is merely 15 years of age in Europe, the time is ripe to survey and

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Designers were brought closer to other professionals, as the new design culture required and requires transdisciplinary design teams.

assess its contemporary status as well as its future. Even if the tree of star designers might have a branch open for a few service design stars, the tree may not be very tempting or interesting for contemporary designers. This is partly because designers want to take part in creating new things in cooperation with others and because of the fact that the significance and role of design in service development and planning is not yet clear.

IN THE US, the roots of analogous design culture come from interaction design. Our American peers are, at least in part, confused by all the European fuss about service design. Service design remains unfamiliar or unrecognised because the whole design culture is dominated by money. In the US, interfaces are designed as a part of technological planning work which can, in turn, be subordinated to product development processes. Whereas the European approach to design is tightly related to arts, the American way of design has traditionally been to integrate design into an exploitable part of commercialisation. This is why radical service innovations and great service inventions are more likely in Europe. Or at least we hope so as we recognise fruitful conditions for such development.

IS THERE a way to combine these two approaches to service development? Perhaps the most interesting recent statements have dealt with participatory design and the relationship between users and (service) brands. Indeed, service development often deals precisely with the changing

or advancing that relationship. The change towards self-service in petrol stations (and currently back in the direction of full service) is a great example of radical change in the interaction between customers and companies. Now it's time for business fields that have for a long time thought they have found "the right way" to ponder whether their culture of interaction is, indeed, the best and most profitable one. The world is full of new and different ways of encountering the customer. Copying and stealing may commence!

WHAT IS the role of designers in developing new ways of interaction? The work no longer revolves around communicating or shape-giving, but about giving birth to something between the organisation and the customer. The answer is quite simple: designers job is what designers have always been good at; shaping new ideas and visualisation. Designers' most essential role has always been to represent the user in various development teams. The role of designers is still to concretise things: "This is what it would look like, this is how it would function, and this is an approximation of the user's experience." Sometimes climbing the tree reveals the bigger picture. ■

This article is loosely based on the international ServiceD project (2009–2012). The project developed service design expertise and piloted service design education.

SAMI MAKKULA, DESIGNER

SAMI HAS 15 YEARS OF DESIGN EXPERIENCE AS AN ENTREPRENEUR, DEVELOPER, AND TEACHER. HE HAS TAKEN PART IN DOZENS OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES THAT COMBINE DESIGN, RESEARCH, AND COOPERATION. CURRENTLY HE HEADS THE SPECIALISATION STUDIES IN SERVICE DESIGN AT LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND WORKS AS AN ENTREPRENEUR.

HANNU KAIKONEN, ENGINEER

HANNU IS A TECHNOCRAT, ENGINEER, AND SERVICE DESIGN EVANGELISTA. HE HAS PARTLY LOST THE BATTLE AGAINST HIS DARK SIDE, I.E. HIS INNER HUMANIST, AND HAS FOUND HIMSELF ENGULFED IN THE WORLD OF USER-CENTRED ACTIVITIES, USER INFORMATION, USER RESEARCH, AND USABILITY AS WELL AS THE REALM OF SERVICE DESIGN. HE IS AN EXPERT OF PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOPS, BUT HE STILL TALKS TO MACHINES AND THE MACHINES TALK BACK.

by ARI HAUTANIEMI

A GROUP OF 30: students, teachers, and entrepreneurs. The scene: huge piles of snow ploughed from a skating rink in Lahti. Date: March 2013. Weather: biting cold. They built a snow castle.

Next to the castle, they built a labyrinth and other structures for play and games. They only had six hours time (within two days), shovels, and imagination. What was the sense of it all? And why did they start?

IT IS easy to talk about entrepreneurship. It is easy to state that everyone should be innovative, seize the moment, and see opportunities where

there are challenges, to live and act with an entrepreneurial spirit, to find one's inner entrepreneur. Funded by the European Social Fund, the Entre Akatemia project at Lahti University of Applied Sciences has since 2011 been one of many actors promoting the mentality of entrepreneurship.

This time we wanted to do something different.

Ability to Hold on

Americans have a saying: *put your money where your mouth is*. It means that one should prove by action what one trumpets in words. The teams of Entre Akatemia accepted a challenge to try what entrepreneurship, responding to surprising challenges, and exceeding oneself mean in practice.

On March 13 and 14, the teams attacked the snow with the aim of building a pop up snow park for all



JARI KOSKINEN

SNOW CASTLE

children of the Lahti region. The endeavour wanted to put forth the entrepreneurial spirit of Lahti and LUAS and to do good: provide costless fun for the children and child-like adults of the city.

Indeed, powered by nothing but hot drinks and muscles, a whole castle with secret hiding places, mazes, and slides was built. The event gained a lot of media attention which is clear proof that such activities are few and far between. Let's hope this success was the first of many to come. The Entre team showed that the whole city is filled with possibilities if you just looked at it the right way. All you need is courage, creativity, and the ability to hold on.

Test of the Broker Spirit

Besides causing interest and being fun, the snow castle event had a deeper, philosophical-pedagogic background

that can be considered to breathe the spirit of brokering.

If brokering expertise means the ability to create intellectual environments for “cross-pollination” where practical and scientific knowledge, skills, and experience of a versatile group of individuals are combined, the event was a concrete example of brokering in the real world: there were no professional snow builders, the project was not planned in advance, the participants had the freedom to create, ideate, and realise things that they felt right.

And all this in cooperation within a transdisciplinary group, all decided upon ad hoc. The team included students and teachers of business as well as of social and health care, an entrepreneur, and a work life consultant.

A challenging environment, challenging schedule, lack of clear orders, and a constant fear of failure forced the team to use creative problem solv-

ing, rapid organisation, and a solution-oriented approach. In addition, the team generated an environment that, on one hand, enabled the creation of a collective memory imprint that, in turn, supported learning, and, on the other hand, developed mutual trust and social capital around a common goal.

The snow castle stood intact for as long as the weather allowed it to. Kindergartens used it as a destination of choice for winter trips, and local children as an unusual playground. And even as the sun's warmth melts the snow, the experiences of builders, visitors, and bystanders remain. ■

ARI HAUTANIEMI, MA

THINKS TOO MUCH OF HIMSELF, BUT FORTUNATELY SO DO OTHERS.



TOWARDS CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

by MINNA LISKI

THREE ERASMUS-FUNDED intensive courses titled Towards Creative Entrepreneurship (TCE) organised in 2010–2012 by Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS) brought students and teachers together from different fields of culture and business to share experiences and viewpoints and to learn entrepreneurship in practice. The participants came from five different countries: UK (Southampton Solent University), Ireland (Cork Institute of Technology), Norway (Norwegian Academy of Music), Estonia (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre), and Finland (LUAS). Students changed from course to

course, but the teachers remained pretty much the same through the three TCE courses. The location of the course also changed.

The task of the transdisciplinary and international group was, firstly, to identify challenges related to employment in their respective fields and to pay particular interest to the possibilities of entrepreneurship, and secondly, to develop practical pedagogic means to study entrepreneurship. The courses did not focus on studying theory in lecture rooms, but concentrated on developing a concrete business idea, on refining the idea to a real product or service, and finally on training how to sell it. This was all done in small teams; ideation was done together as a

tightly knit group for whom teachers were process guides and sparring partners. The courses also involved local entrepreneurs of creative fields. They assessed the teams' ideas and shared their experiences regarding entrepreneurship.

In the last two days of the ten day course, the teams of 6–8 students genuinely marketed and sold the created products and services. This would not have been possible if the teams hadn't been able to find common ways of operation, to create mutual trust, and, perhaps most importantly, to combine the strengths of the team members in a new, unprecedented way. The results have included surprising products and services as well as multidisciplinary performances.

Examples

- “Oh Baby – 15 ways to cope with your bundle of joy,” a guide book for parents written by a team and illustrated by the team's artist, sold from a baby carriage on the streets of Cork, accompanied by jingles composed and performed by the team members.
- Ealain Creative Community Open Night concept: an opportunity for musicians and artists to present

- and market their expertise and skills in different environments (e.g. in a pub), organised by the team. Ticket sales of the event include a small provision for the organisers from the sales of gigs, art pieces, etc. during the event.
- The Tea Stumblers: a product family around the theme of tea, including, amongst other things, a Tea shirt packed in a suitcase built out of tea bags. The aim is to sell the products through various tea shops, cafes, etc. around the world.

IDEATION HAS largely depended on the creative processes of individuals, but the courses have offered the teams various methods to support ideation. One example is theatre-based methodology that has been in use particularly in the beginning of each course, helping team members learn to know each other quickly and to ease the creation of trust.

Evaluation by the end of the course has been done according to the World Cafe method and the questions to the students have been:

1. What have you learned? What do you personally carry forward from this course as regards your own future?
2. What recommendations do you have for the course next year?
3. Think about your expectations before the course: what were they and has the course been able to meet them?
4. How did the course affect your understanding of entrepreneurship?

The participants have shown a lot of enthusiasm, challenged themselves sincerely, and acted without any prejudice. Learning a networked and team-based model of work has been one of the key accomplishments of TCE. The importance of a multidisciplinary and international knowledge and expertise base has been understood by all stakeholders. At the same time, participants have gained access to a wider view of the possibilities of entrepreneurship within and especially outside their own field. The feedback of one student puts it best:

“There are many things that we can learn from one another. And with the TCE programme acting as a bridge between these creative communities there is a brighter future ahead for all involved in such exchanges as we broaden our

horizons and cross the borders between the business and creative sector whether it be for personal or professional development.”

THE RAPIDLY developed products and services created during the programme may not necessarily have a long life, but the most essential part of the course has been planning and ideation done in cooperation with partners that may have earlier seem rather unlikely. Where would you find a team that consists of a Norwegian soprano, an Irish BBA, a Finnish photographer, an Estonian violinist, and an English graphic designer? Perhaps the experiences of TCE bring such a group together in different settings, events, or networks in the future. ■

MINNA LISKI, BSC IN MUSIC

THE AUTHOR WAS SUPPOSED TO BECOME A MUSICIAN BUT TURNED OUT SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT INSTEAD. SHE IS A NATIVE OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUSIC AND DRAMA AT LUAS SINCE 1999.

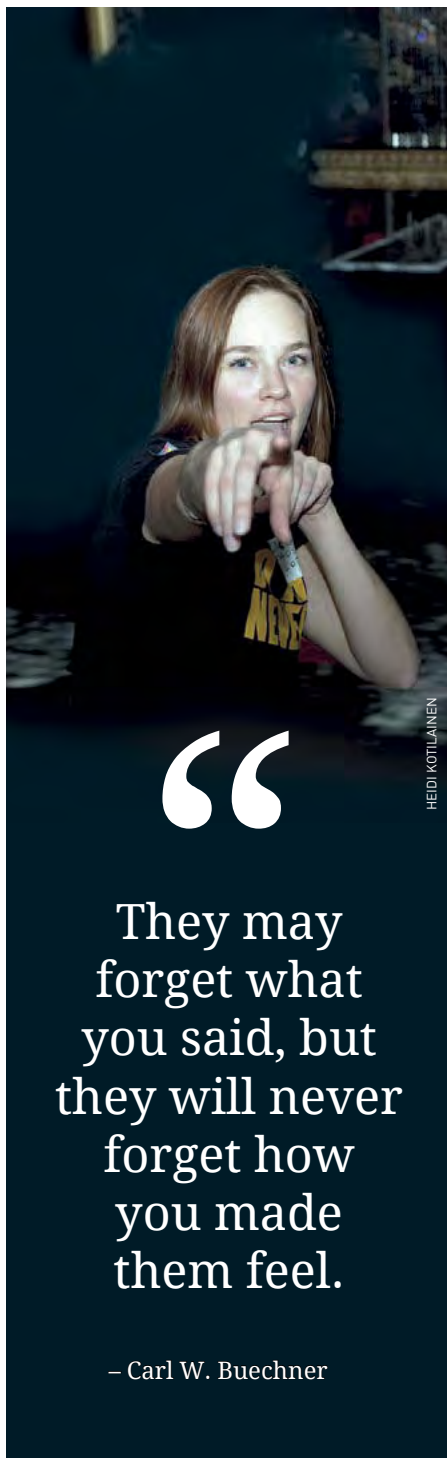
ON THE ROAD OF CHANGE

by RIIKKA MÄKELÄ

I BECAME A change agent through the experiences gained as I studied during my maternity leave. I was surprised to find my strengths in entrepreneurship and development activities. Traditional ways of operation and studying didn't fit my values anymore. Instead, I decided to learn from mistakes and took unusually big risks in the name of learning.

AS I was coaching students and employees of different organisations, I learned the power of encouragement and doing things together. I understood that to initiate change, some sort of leverage is needed to ensure sufficient pace of change to get the ball rolling. The greater the preferred change, the better the potential results. It is crazy to think one could achieve different results by using old ways of operation. This is why it is essential to find the right actors, i.e. key individuals and gatekeepers within the organisation undergoing change, who possess the needed leverage and courage as well as enough power within the organisation in question.

A CHANGE agent facilitates and sparks change. However, change is always "done" by the very actors that are affected by it. Change always starts within each individual, but it also requires encouragement and questioning of existing norms both within the community in question as well as from the outside. I usually act as an external facilitator, sparring partner, and coach, but in some cases I find it best to be a stakeholder in the changing community; it is the best way to understand change. My own strengths certainly include the ability to combine. I am



HEIDI KOTILAINEN

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They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

– Carl W. Buechner

able to see possibilities in different kinds of people and situations.

MULTIDISCIPLINARITY AND versatility are the very tools that enable the creation of something new. Combining different kinds of people and their expertise, creating trust, and coaching or guiding activities enable new things to be born. In practice, innobrokering is a similar role of facilitating; the tasks of the external broker include combining things and shaping the big picture as well as questioning existing solutions and norms.

IN THE future, I want to put increasing focus on the ways in which teams work, on creating and expanding trust within a community, and on the ways individuals can be motivated. In Finland, education is of high quality, but things being fine should never be an excuse for not making them even better. The educational system gives people a certain set of skills and provides the most long-term impact on individuals' ability to learn new things. The power and potential of Finland is in its individuals – and in the differences between individuals. All that's needed is someone to teach how different kinds of people can co-exist and learn from one another. ■

RIIKKA MÄKELÄ,

LAHTI CAMPUS ENTREPRENEUR CO-OP

THE AUTHOR IS AN ATTITUDE COACH AND AN ADVOCATE OF LIFELONG LEARNING WHOSE SUPER POWER IS ENERGETIC IDEATION AND SECRET WEAPON A SMILE THAT SOLVES ALL SITUATIONS. SHE FIGHTS FOR CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT.



on reports done by the group, the company is able to achieve the right to use an environmental label, but creating a whole system regarding the environment was found too arduous and expensive to actualise. In addition, we recommended the company further developed biodegradable products. The development exercise turned out to be more difficult than expected and we ran out of time, but, according to the owner of Plastella, the ideation and research help of the group was necessary and needed.”

SUSANNA:

”My group’s task was to create marketing material for a new residential area in Kärkölä. The assignment came from *Koskisen Ltd.* and indirectly from the municipality of Kärkölä. The team consisted of students of environmental engineering and wood technology. The material we created underlined the environmental values, location, and transportation connections of the area. In addition, the material included concept images of the ecologically sound houses of the area. According to the feedback we received, both the municipality of Kärkölä and *Koskisen Ltd.* were happy and content about the cooperation and the marketing material created by the team.”

All in all, the innobroker training widened our understanding about how project-oriented learning should be actualised. For example, making decisions about the roles of individuals within the group and underlining a company-oriented way of thinking in the early phase of the training are essential in securing a successful result for such project work. ■

STUDENTS AMONG STUDENTS

by REETTA JÄNIS & SUSANNA VANHAMÄKI

WE TOOK part in innobroker training within a group of technology students in spring 2012. The training supported our current work in which we act as facilitators and experts between work life and the students of Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS). At the start of the course, we agreed to take part in the training as students among other students even though we are employed by LUAS. This created an additional challenge to our participation.

THE BEGINNING of innobroker training concentrated on mapping one’s own expertise with the help of various tools. Thinking about one’s strengths and goals of learning was necessary and educational. The most important part of the training was the actual realisation of a business-oriented development exercise. The course offered consistent guidance from creating an action plan for the development exercise all the way to presenting the final results.

OUR GROUPS included students from different study programmes within the Faculty of Technology at LUAS. As the work advanced, the benefits of combining students of different fields became clear. The students did not know each other in advance – let alone knew the contents of different study programmes. Each participant gave the project group their own viewpoints and expertise. We tried to provide our expertise in an appropriate manner and shied away from taking up significant roles within our respective teams.

REETTA:

”The task of our group was to develop the environmental profile of a micro company operating in the plastics business. A few meetings and getting acquainted with the operation of *Plastella* were needed to launch cooperation. We ended up looking at the company’s environmental profile from three viewpoints; environmental labeling, the company’s system of environmental issues, and a comparison between the environmental impacts of different kinds of products. Based

REETTA JÄNIS

THE AUTHOR IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST WHO AIMS AT AND TRIES TO LEARN A RESPONSIBLE LIFESTYLE. SHE HAS PROJECT EXPERIENCE SPANNING OVER TEN YEARS. SHE HAS GREAT RESPECT FOR THE Y GENERATION, SMES, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GENERAL.

SUSANNA VANHAMÄKI, YTM.

THE AUTHOR IS A GEOGRAPHER WHO ENDED UP DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES VIA THE FIELD OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY. SHE CONSIDERS WORKING IN COOPERATION WITH STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT HOLDS A LOT OF PROMISE AND POTENTIAL.

by ANTTI IHALAINEN

BUILDING A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

LAHDEN SEUDUN Kuntatekniikka (LSKT) [Lahti Region Municipal Infrastructure Company] is a regional limited company founded in 2009 and owned by the cities of Lahti and Orimattila and the municipalities of Hollola, Nastola, and Asikkala. We produce cost-efficient building and maintenance services for infrastructure as well as related design services for municipalities and private actors. In addition we act as a constructor in various demanding projects. Our operations follow a quality assurance system. The company employs 170 people full time and our turnover in 2012 was 30.5 Million Euros.

OLLI HURME, the CEO, and the author **Antti Ihalainen**, development manager, took part in innobroker training in 2012. Our participation was confirmed as I joined LSKT as a new employee. I had discussed my own participation earlier, when I was still employed by another company. After changing jobs, we had to decide quickly which individuals from LSKT would take part in the training.

LSKT ENTERED the project two themes in mind and with two “sharp ends,” two people. This created some challenges, especially in the beginning of the course. In the same vein, it was difficult to prioritise one’s use of time in a project whose starting point was somewhat unclear to all stakeholders. The project started from zero without any kind of a “road map.”

In afterthought I might conclude that without the determination of the coach, it might have been logical for us to throw in the towel and exit the group instead of boldly see what came next.

HOWEVER, WE decided to stay in the training and individuals were divided into teams according to one’s own interests. Brokering and learning about it began.

I took part in LSKT Smart Alarm (GreenCity LivingLab Lahti) product development project with three students. It was amazing to realise how the project team organised itself. Each participant found their own role. Enthusiasm was evident and expectations high. The project advanced phase by phase and we learned new things together. Out of all the things, making things visible has been the most memorable issue of Innobroker training.

THE SMART ALARM project continued and was later joined by VTT, Technical Research Centre of Finland. After Innobroker training, the project was renamed Green City LivingLab Lahti. The aim of the project was to develop and install an urban situational imaging system that makes use of real-time information regarding the location of masses in the city, social media, ad hoc sensor networks, GPS information, and 3rd party interfaces.

A particular focus was placed on connecting *Urbansim*, the world’s most many-sided open source city simulator that makes use of urban



planning and green construction, to this environment. With the simulator we can build a simulation of the city and its future scenarios.

THE ACTUALISATION of the project took place in many phases. These included building a system for real-time information gathering, modelling and simulating the city of Lahti, creating the situational imaging system, choosing and realising the Green City LivingLab application, and analysing the results as well as national and international reporting. The main outcome of the project



“ Without the determination of the coach, it might have been logical for us to throw in the towel. ”

JARI KOSKINEN

is the simulation model of Lahti that supports the beat of the city as well as green urban level solutions, the futures scenarios simulated with the system, and the situational imaging system that acts as a platform for Green City LivingLab. The project has also applied for funding from Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation.

IN ADDITION to the project described above, Innobroker training gave life to a number of interesting openings for LSKT, for example cooperation with the EntreAkademia project. All

in all it is easy to say that a regional company and a regional university of applied sciences are natural partners. Small companies rarely have resources for development activities and the little that exists is usually aimed at developing everyday activities. A guided process – like the one in Innobroker training – that includes teachers, students, and coaches provides a great framework to look at issues outside the daily activities of a participating company. My own experiences give me good reason to recommend such cooperation for other companies as well. ■

ANTTI IHALAINEN
THE AUTHOR WORKS AS A DEVELOPMENT MANAGER IN A REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY AND FINDS, ON A REGULAR BASIS, INTERESTING EVERYDAY CHALLENGES THAT REVEAL POTENTIAL FOR NEW BUSINESS.



JARI KOSKINEN

STRENGTH FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

by JENNI AHOLA

PLASTELLA PRODUCES plastic products by injection moulding. The company offers design, production, assembly, and packaging services according to customers' needs. If needed, the company also designs and commissions the production of moulds needed in the process.

Alongside traditional plastics, the materials used include, for example, a combination of biodegradable polyactic acid (PLA) and softwood pulp. Objects produced with the compound can be washed a few times and they can be composted after use. Plastella also has its own product line that includes biodegradable cocktail plates, wedges, and plugs as well as solid rubber wheels.

TIMO KORVENOJA from Plastella took part in innobroker training without any preconceptions. At first the coaching and discussed issues seemed difficult to understand and even somewhat far-fetched, but as the training advanced, the issues became clearer by the minute. The theoretical contents were good and new ideas and even new product ideas came up during the training. Students of Lahti University of Applied Sciences also ideated new products for Plastella, but in the end no true innovation was actualised.

IN THEIR training exercise, students developed Plastella's environmental profile. They pondered on the needs for and benefits of environmental certification systems for the company. They widely analysed the demands of various labelling and certification schemes. They also went through the environmental aspects of the company's operations. By advancing

environmental awareness, Plastella could decrease environmental burden throughout the product lifecycle and achieve a competitive edge. Plastella could also increase its revenues through increased energy and material efficiency. Environmental aspects could be better utilised in marketing through environmental certification or ecolabelling.

IN ADDITION, students analysed the lifecycle of some Plastella products. The most essential environmental issues identified were recycling of material back to the production process, efficient use of space, re-use of excess heat, avoidance of unnecessary chemicals, decrease of emissions, and development of biodegradable products.

The students addressed the last point in more detail through comparing the properties, processing, and environmental impacts of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) and biodegradable polyactic acid (PLA). Products from biodegradable materials have a better chance of surviving competition due to customers' increasing environmental awareness. Use of bioplastics can also decrease CO2 emissions compared to other plastics.

ALL IN all Korvenoja is satisfied with the training. The only criticism is related to the preparations of the course. He thinks that marketing efforts should have been able to explain in more detail what the training is about and how participants should prepare for it. That would have allowed him to gain even more from the training and to reserve more of his time especially to guiding the students' exercises.

However, he considers the training beneficial for Plastella. The lessons learned and the ideas presented through students' work have unfortunately not led to any operational changes within the company. This is due to limited resources for the actualisation of the ideas. For example, the use of environmental certificates would require hiring a consultant. But as soon as there are enough resources, Korvenoja knows where to begin. ■

*Jenni Ahola
Postgraduate
Tampere University of Technology*

Based on an interview with Timo Korvenoja.

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By advancing environmental awareness, Plastella could decrease environmental burden throughout the product lifecycle and achieve a competitive edge.

NEW INITIATIVE SYSTEM

by VILLE MYLLÄRI

RAUTE IS a company serving the wood products industry worldwide. Its customers mainly work in the areas plywood and laminated veneer lumber. It is a market leader in its most essential field, i.e. in plywood industry, with a market share of ca. 15–20 %. The company's technology offerings comprise all the machinery and equipment of clients' production processes. In addition, Raute offers comprehensive technological services through its full-service concept. The company employs five hundred people in 8 countries.

RAUTE TOOK part in the Innobrokers project to create a new initiative system. Related investigation was done in cooperation between students from Lahti University of Applied Sciences and Raute. The old system was from a time when Finland had not yet entered the eurozone. Contemporary employees do not think the system functions particularly well and new employees haven't necessarily even heard about it.

The goals for the new initiative system were to increase the number of initiatives, to develop and enhance the company's internal operations, to take clients' needs better into consideration, and to measure results in a clearer way.

THE COMPANY had to choose between acquiring external, ready software from the market or developing one through its own IT department. Despite the students' recommendation of purchasing a software license, Raute decided to develop its own software. According to Research Director Harri Lyytinen this was due to better modifiability and lower costs. He says that the software is almost finalised and the goal is to launch it in 2013.

THE SOFTWARE works in the following manner: when an employee has a good idea, he enters it to the system. The

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The goals for the new initiative system were to increase the number of initiatives, to develop and enhance the company's internal operations, to take clients' needs better into consideration, and to measure results in a clearer way.

software sends each idea to an initiative secretary or a research manager who goes through the ideas and forwards them to the correct field of responsibility. Once a month all ideas are assessed and each idea is given a certain amount of points. Based on points gathered, the employers are paid a bonus that could be anything between 50 and 1000 Euros.

In addition, all accepted initiatives are awarded in some other matter as well. The most essential changes compared to the old system are the clarity of the system and the substantially larger bonuses awarded. In the near future, the company will organise info meetings regarding the new initiative system in order to ensure that all employees know about it and are able to use it.

AT RAUTE, the amount of true employee inventions changes yearly, but the number is usually between three and six. The company deals with inventions rather differently than with initiatives and the rewards are far greater. This not only due to legislation: inventions often provide the company new benefits or revenue. Inventions are kept secret for as long as possible – until potential patent applications have been filed.

LYYTINEN HAS a mainly positive feeling about the Innobrokers project. He was particularly fond of the attitude and approach of **Mikko Markkanen** who acted as an innobroker coach. Looking at the project from the students' viewpoint, Lyytinen thinks the project was a welcome change to everyday chores: he tried to spend as much time as possible with the students in order to ensure the best possible results for Raute. He says that the training matched the expectations even though no new innovations were made during the project.

LYYTINEN THINKS that work could be done more efficiently and has at least



JARI KOSKINEN (kuva on otettu Lontoossa, designliikkeessä)

one proposal: the framework of the training courses should be enhanced so that participating companies could achieve more practical results. Lyytinen discussed with students and other companies who participated in the project and states that people seem to have rather different kinds of experiences.

According to the feedback and information he received, there is a need to enhance student-business cooperation by preparing the participating companies better. In turn, that would

ease the companies' work in guiding the students better. Lyytinen mentions that a part of the students felt that the companies they worked with did not provide sufficient help or resources for the project assignment.

AS A WHOLE, Lyytinen considers the Innobrokers project beneficial for Raute. The old initiative system was outdated and required a renewing touch. Cooperation with students achieved this very well. Challenges of the near future include launching the new system suc-

Employers can be encouraged to ideate.

cessfully and to actively market it to the employees so that the whole system doesn't wane in the same fashion that the old one did. ■

*Ville Mylläri
Postgraduate
Tampere University of Technology*

Based on an interview with Harri Lyytinen.



DEVELOPING DIGITAL MARKETING

by JENNI AHOLA



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The interaction with the students went well.

WIIITTA IS a family business that produces sewerage fittings. Alongside polypropylene fittings, the company also produces plastic plugs and offers subcontracting services regarding plastic and rubber products realised through injection moulding. The company does not have retail sales but operates through wholesales and directly with construction companies. The company employs 11 people, the annual turnover being approx. one million Euros.

MANAGING DIRECTOR Wille Viittanen took part in innobroker training. He states that the training raised interesting questions and was a good experience even though he wasn't exactly sure what he signed up to. From the beginning on, he considered the training course a good opportunity to enhance cooperation between work life and educational institutions.

Viittanen gave LUAS' students an assignment exercise where they had to consider developing the digital marketing of Wiitta. The main idea was to strengthen B2B marketing. The task included utilisation of social media, search engine optimisation, and development of the company's web site. The assignment was based on identified needs and the company's thoughts about developing digital marketing.

THE UTILISATION of social media in industrial manufacturing and B2B marketing is quite an unknown field, so exploitable, ready-made solutions were not found. The exercise work showed, however, that it is essential to maintain social media content on a regular basis in order to make it beneficial. Wiitta has now increased its use of social media and the frequency of updates.

THE TASK of search engine optimisation was aimed to create a situation where the site's natural advantages are visible in the best possible way. This would enable the site to rise up as high as possible in appropriate search query results. However, Wiitta has not yet done search

engine optimisation in practice, but the web site has been updated so that it now serves customers also in Swedish. The students also provided development ideas regarding, e.g. the general outlook of the site and a potential web store.

VIITTANEN IS satisfied by the students' work. They took the job seriously and communicated well with the company. Interaction with the students was good. They met weekly and students did research work independently. The group members were also given a possibility to attend presentations about social media. In addition, **Minna Patosalmi**, an industrial blogger from Ferroplan, met with the students and discussed her blog.

THE ASSIGNMENT provided good results, even though it is easy to say in afterthought that the theme could have been more strictly framed, Viittanen says. Project work with students was fruitful and gave the students a good opportunity to gain new insights. Viittanen adds that he expected the training to be more crossdisciplinary by nature and would have liked to see students from a greater number of subjects in the group. Now the assignment was manned with students studying wood and plastics technology.

THE DIGITAL sales of Wiitta have not increased since the recent changes, but that wasn't the main goal of the project assignment. B2B marketing has been given more focus little by little; its results will show later in the future. Viittanen says that the theme of the training course was abstract and it was difficult to transfer directly to work life. This is why practical benefits are difficult to attribute exclusively to the training exercise. Viittanen concludes, however, that the lessons of the training course can come in many forms, some of which might come about unnoticed. ■

*Jenni Ahola
Postgraduate
Tampere University of Technology*

Based on an interview with Wille Viittanen.



by VILLE MYLLÄRI

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The visual material has been utilised in many different places and situations.

MORE EFFICIENT

KÄRKÖLÄ IS a municipality in the Lahti region with approx. 5000 inhabitants. The residential area of Hähkjärvi is situated ca. two kilometers from Järvelä, the municipal centre. Järvelä offers most necessary public and private services, but in order to reach special stores, one has to travel either to Lahti or to Riihimäki. Hähkjärvi is a peaceful area suited perfectly for people who value nature and good outdoor sports facilities.

THE PLAN is to develop the lots of the Hähkjärvi area by building houses designed by Koskisen Ltd. Koskisen is a wood company with a history spanning more than a century. One of its product lines is Herrala Talot [Herrala Houses]. The company, an employer of more than a thousand people, holds

its headquarters in Järvelä. The Herrala product line is manufactured in Vierumäki, ca. 50km from Järvelä and Hähkjärvi.

VESA SAARELAINEN, product manager of wood construction at Koskisen, says that participation in the Innobrokers project was a sum of many coincidences. The municipality of Kärkölä had just finished work zoning the Hähkjärvi area as the company was contacted by the project. Saarelainen immediately got an idea regarding the use of students in advancing the marketing efforts related to the new area and, thus, decided to join the project.

The development project sparked great interest amongst the students and there was an excess of interested individuals. In the end, ten students from LUAS, encompassing people studying environmental technology,



MARKETING

design, construction, and marketing were chosen to take part in the training exercise. Saarelainen views the results very positively and considers the project a success.

However, Koskisen would have enjoyed the cooperation even better if the project team had also included graphic designers or other visually-oriented people because the municipality of Kärkölä produced virtual images of the area in cooperation with the architect.

THE STUDENTS' work ended up recommending the good qualities of wood, such as ecological and aesthetic aspects, the low-energy status of the houses as well as the good outdoor recreational possibilities, the natural environment, and the good basic and transportation services of the area as the starting points for marketing efforts. The innobroker training

provided Koskisen a written paper and visual marketing material which have both been used, for example, at fairs and exhibitions. The material is available for download at the web pages of Kärkölä.

ACCORDING TO Saarelainen, the project results are successful in that the visual material has been utilised in many different places and situations. In his opinion, the visual material is the most important outcome of the training – even more important than the actual written exercise report.

Encouraged by the innobroker training, he tried out a new kind of marketing event in autumn 2012, one that was attended by various stakeholders as well as the public. Unfortunately the audience did not find its way to the event and lot sales has been regrettably quiet. However, Saarelainen aims to organise a similar

marketing event again and hopes it will attract more people.

FROM THE students' viewpoint, Saarelainen considers the date of the project – late spring – somewhat troublesome as the students had a whole lot to worry about, e.g. exams and summer job applications. Even though the direct costs of participation were rather low for Koskisen, such activities always create financial pressure in the form of work time used.

That's why it would be welcome that students could concentrate on the project fully and use time for innovation, Saarelainen concludes. ■

*Ville Mylläri
Postgraduate
Tampere University of Technology*

Based on an interview with Vesa Saarelainen.



WHAT IS INNOBROKERING RELATED TO?

by MIKKO MARKKANEN

O **OTHER ARTICLES** in this publication have explained what is meant with innovation brokering and what sort of activities have taken place in Lahti. This article concentrates on discussing what sort of activities innobrokering has been, is, or could be related to.

THE TRAINING courses organised in the past two years have touched upon

two different "systems" operating in and around Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

The first training included mostly people from LUAS and regional development companies. Such a group was perhaps more able to directly discuss how the participants could act as innobrokers, i.e. as combiners of ideas, experts, and development resources in their own work and activities; as a sort of "innovation

experts" in their respective work communities.

IN SUCH a group, all participants can relatively easily find targets for training their innobrokering skills in practice in their daily work.

This starting point ties the innobrokering activities to the system that could be titled "innovation operations of educational institutions and open innovation" or even directly to the way of thinking

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Regional innovation activities and development games need meeting places. Simply put, they need times and spaces where learning can take place regardless of organisational boundaries and make good use of others' experiences and activities.

JARI KOSKINEN

that uses a slogan “business from research.”

THE SECOND incarnation of the training involved a lot more students, but participants also included a number of teachers and regional development companies. Participation of companies has been largely realised through their development tasks and their role has been more one of a client or an employer. This approach has two sides. On one hand, the focus of the content is in developing project skills and, on the other, in commercialisation and innovation expertise (such as marketing, learning, etc.)

THIS APPROACH ties the innobrokering activities to the system of “work life connections during studies.” At its best, the project has been a good opportunity for teachers to test teaching methods, i.e. to simulate how external development needs could be addressed with student power in an agile way and by letting the students learn skills related to their degree in the process.

Regional Picture

The viewpoint can also be widened from LUAS to include the dynamics of the whole Lahti region. The

grand old man of regional development, **Michael Porter**, has stated that regional competitiveness is born (at least in part) from the consciousness about other actors' development needs and common direction; a regional vision that requires cooperation and a relative proximity of actors. Since Porter, the same issue – loosely titled “A learning region” – has been discussed quite a lot, but its practical implementation has at least one weak point that could be strengthened by innovation brokering.

REGIONAL INNOVATION activities and development games need meeting places. Simply put, they need times and spaces where learning can take place regardless of organisational boundaries and make good use of others' experiences and activities. In such a time and space, stakeholders listen and combine expertise as well as resources. It is up to regional strategy and network leaders to decide who is activated to take part in such encounters and why. What is the scope of such a process?

What is for certain is that relatively few people have adequately strong personal relations and a sufficient amount of trust capital to advance regional expertise and knowledge sharing. And such individuals need

support; they cannot create learning environments on their own.

CHARACTERS SUCH as innobrokers could create just these kinds of opportunities and encounters. At best they can build bridges in their own environment and in their own genre. They can build such meeting places and help other people learn from one another and launch cooperation projects.

Many entrepreneurs act naturally in such a role, without realising they are “innobrokering,” but right now there seems to be an empty slot in the in-betweens of research, education, and business for an enthusiastic and inspired innobroker. In addition, the renewed funding structures for Finnish universities (and especially for UASs) provide a clear revenue model and justification for such activities. ■

MIKKO MARKKANEN, BA

THE AUTHOR IS A LIFELONG ENTREPRENEUR AND A TRAINER OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES. THINKS IN A TOO COMPLICATED MANNER, BUT THAT IS ONLY DUE TO A CHILDHOOD SPENT FOLLOWING TRAINS AND RAILROAD TRACKS IN PIEKSAMÄKI.



JARI KOSKINEN

INNOBROKERS – CREATING FUTURES

by TIINA SAARINEN

LONG GONE are the times when work life was just another “phase” of life that started after studies and was completely detached from all earlier phases. Long gone are the times when educational institutions thought they can match the needs of work life without any concrete or effective ways, modes, or tools of collaboration with the private sector.

Today companies are persuaded to become long-term partners with educational institutions; to become harbingers of development and learning, to act as platforms for innovation, to become spokesmen for regional development. Today the needs of work life are actively considered in the everyday of Finnish UASs.

The question is how could I – a representative of the business world – make use of UASs in the development of my company, in creating new information, in designing new and innovative services or products, in attempts at internationalisation?

LONG GONE are the times when students sat in crowded lecture halls. Today students find the information they need from the Internet, their friends, perhaps even their teachers. Today information is available everywhere at all times. The question is what offers me – a student – the best possible learning experience.

What sort of a service or mode of social interaction tempts me to take part in voluntary contact teaching unless there’s something extra, an unmatched experience to enjoy? What is the shape of learning that matches my future needs or, perhaps more to the point, offers me a preferable future?

LONG GONE are the times when teachers trusted they were leading experts of their respective fields and trustworthy sources of information. Today new knowledge and information is created with an ever-increasing pace and no monopoly of knowledge exists. One example of this comes in the form of MOOC courses that shape the educational field by being open for anyone anywhere.

Today, UASs have to meet, to an increasing degree, the research, development, and innovation challenges and needs of the private sector. Today all teachers are, first and foremost, actors in a network searching for the true needs and possibilities of work life.

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The question is how can I – a teacher – address the versatile needs and challenges echoing from the business world. How can I learn to build bridges over organisational and substance boundaries, to create and manage networks, to combine demands and needs?

The question is how can I – a teacher – address the versatile needs and challenges echoing from the business world. How can I learn to build bridges over organisational and substance boundaries, to create and manage networks, to combine demands and needs? Or to grow as an expert?

LUAS HAS tried to answer the above questions by long-term development of work life cooperation. For its own part, the Innobrokers project has answered the challenges, opportunities, and needs of work life cooperation.

In other words, the project has excellently addressed the UAS’s goal of creating an increasingly versatile and deep societal role in the Lahti region. Further, the project acts as a natural and needed continuation for innovation promoter training done earlier in Lahti as well as for the development activities regarding work life cooperation and partnership expertise.

FOR ACTIVE participants, be they companies, teaching staff, or students, the innobroker mentality has offered capacities and tools for new ways of learning by doing, for expertise sharing, for participatory knowledge production, for managing innovation processes and networks, and for service design. The essential characteristics of an innobroker include the willingness and desire to be networked over organisational and substance boundaries. The abilities to notice weak signals, to identify needs, to combine expertise and experts, and to share things forward are also needed.

THE CLUE of innobrokering is its customer-oriented nature. All innovation, development, and research activities need to be based on the needs of work and business life as well as on the development of students’ expertise base. Innobrokering is a means of teaching about the future, but related training should encompass all the employees of an organisation in order to ensure the customer-oriented thinking penetrates the whole organisation in question.

IN DEVELOPING innobrokering activities, focus should be put on students working on their master’s degrees. They usually have steady and deep ties to work life and, in ideal cases, they come in with a concrete, work life based development goals.

By utilising BA students in attempts to reach these development goals, the best case scenario would give rise to cross-pollination between all stakeholders that could also have a positive impact on internationalisation.

THE FUTURE is born from us, from our ways of operating in cooperation with others. The future is born from our practices of utilising our expertise capital as fuel for knowledge production. The future is created in networks. What is essential is to move away from our comfort zones and to learn how to act in an entrepreneur-like fashion, everyone as their own little “information transmission office.” ■

TIINA SAARINEN, BA

THE AUTHOR HAS WORKED FOR A LONG TIME IN THE CAREER AND RECRUITMENT SERVICES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. RECENTLY SHE HAS OBSERVED THE COOPERATION POSSIBILITIES BETWEEN COMPANIES AND UNIVERSITIES AND FOLLOWED THE WORK OF SOME INNOBROKER TEAMS THROUGH HER WORK.



RANDOM CONTEMPLATION

by AINO-MARIA POKELA

A **SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON** in Lahti, one story down from the Finnish ski museum, 30 people invited by project manager **Katariina Mäenpää** sit with coffee mugs in their hands. I am one of them. I've promised to visit the "learning café" of her project as a passive student. As Katariina wishes everybody welcome I pour myself another cup of coffee.

KATARIINA EXPLAINS this is the third time such a coffee event takes place. This is my first time. Students, teachers,

and companies have announced that this isn't just another empty meeting. Katariina continues: "Innobrokering is a skill required in work life."

I'M STARTLED: "innobrokering – what's that?" I try to look through the brochure I hold in my hand. It says that "innobrokers promote, actualise, and facilitate innovation activities. They know companies' needs as well as the opportunities offered by educational institutions." I still do not quite understand.

LUCKILY MIKKO MARKKANEN from Business Area sheds a bit more light on the matter: the core expertise of an

innobroker includes the ability to bring people together and to create meeting places. Organisations do not talk, people do. Innobrokering is about breaking boundaries and having the courage to look beyond existing limits.

I'm already on the edge of my seat and I get increasingly enthusiastic as Mikko explains that an entrepreneurial approach and the skills required in entrepreneurship are pretty much what is needed in innobrokering. "Does that ring a bell?" Mikko asks. Yes, indeed; I almost shout out the thought in my head about "inner entrepreneurship."



JARI KOSKINEN

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Innobrokering
is a skill
required
in work life.”

AS A CONCEPT, I know 'inner entrepreneur' from my times as a student in a university of applied sciences. Innobrokering equals the second power of inner entrepreneurship. Why is that? Let's give Mikko and Katariina a chance to explain: the basic abilities of a broker include the abilities to learn, to help others learn, to see opportunities, to inspire, to make expertise visible, and to create trust. I feel like taking part in a religious event – this is just what work life and employees need. My pen is having a hard time coping with all the things I'm writing down. Creativity, enriching community, trust. Enthusiasm, success, dedication.

THIS COFFEE meeting is mostly attended by students from Lahti University of Applied Sciences. All have different backgrounds, some started their studies right after finishing school, others have already achieved multiple degrees. Some are in their early twenties, some full-grown adults, others look like post-

graduate students. But we all agree. Innobrokering makes sense. This is really needed in work life – just as Katariina mentioned in her opening words.

AT THE END Mikko gives us two questions to think about. How do you act as a broker? How can you be a broker in your current work? I ask myself a third question: why would I not be a broker? ■

AINO-MARIA POKELA, BACHELOR OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT (HOPEFULLY MASTER OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT SOON)

THE AUTHOR IS AN ALUMNI OF THE GERMAN SCHOOL IN HELSINKI (DEUTSCHE SCHULE HELSINKI) AND A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER OF EVENTS WHO IS EASILY INSPIRED, LAUGHS LOUD AND HIGH, AND HAPPILY DIVES INTO THE WORLD OF SOCIAL MEDIA. SHE CURRENTLY WORKS AS A DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR AT FUAS, AN ALLIANCE OF THREE UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES.

TRAVELLING!

by KATARIINA MÄENPÄÄ, photos by HEIDI FREUNDLICH

TIS good for a project partly funded by the European Social Fund to look around to see what is happening internationally. A good opportunity to do so surfaced as an EU institution named Knowledge 4 Innovation (k4I) organised the 4th Innovation Summit conference in Brussels in October 2012. We took part in the conference with an aim to familiarise ourselves with the European way of acting on and supporting innovation. In other words, we sought for inspiration for our own activities. Networking with other brokers, both in Finland and internationally, was naturally an important part of the trip. As the theme of the conference, Building Bridges – Creating Synergies, also referred to brokering, we didn't have to think twice.

1. DAY: MONDAY

We started our trip in Lahti in the afternoon of October 8th. A shared ride to Helsinki-Vantaa airport enabled us to exchange ideas and thoughts as well as to go through the schedule for the following days. At the airport we were joined by **Pirkko** from Tampere University of Technology and **Wille** from Wiitta. Before the plane took off we had time to eat dinner and to get to know each other. The participants had attended different innobroker training groups and hence it was good to change views and experiences. The flight went nicely and once we managed to store our belongings in our hotel rooms, some decided to have a nightcap at the local pub. Then it was time to sleep and to orientate for the busy schedule of the next few days.

2. DAY: TUESDAY

After breakfast it was time for our first meeting. We heard **Mina Legnered's** presentation about being a broker. Her way of seeing the world and working for the things she considers important forms a best possible example of making things run smoothly or, as we would call it, brokering. This is evident in her slogan "Connect, communicate, collaborate." At the time of our meeting, Mina worked at the European Young Inventors Forum (EYIF), but



Mina on the right.

soon after arriving back home, we heard she had joined the ranks of the EU. The courage and attitude by which Mina lives and works form a good example for us all.

After the meeting Mina walked with us to the European Parliament where we registered ourselves for the welcoming event that evening. Afterwards she gave us good hints where to eat lunch and then we went our separate ways. We spent our lunch break pondering and discussing our thoughts about the previous meeting. The whole group seemed very impressed by the energetic and happy woman.

We took part in the conference with an aim to familiarise ourselves with the European way of acting on and supporting innovation.

Next we saw **Marco Torregrossa** from European Partners for the Environment (EPE) which is a multidisciplinary instance that brings together governmental bodies, companies of different sizes, consumers, research organisations, trade unions, etc. to promote environmental issues – a kind of brokering. Marco shortly introduced EPE and we all spoke about the themes we work with. Marco shared his thoughts and commented on all participants' cooperation possibilities with EPE and shed light on the various funding mechanisms of the EU that could come in handy when planning development projects in the future.

After meeting with Marco, our group gathered for a cup of coffee and discussed our thoughts and experiences. We workshopped rather informally for a while and then headed to the hotel in order to get ready for the evening. The Opening Event & Welcome Reception of the Innovation Summit took place at the European Parliament. Once our identities were checked and our names found on the guest list, a guide brought us to the balcony where the event took place. The parliament building itself had a great impression on us. Someone began to wonder how many of us had visited the Finnish parliament house: not too many had.

The opening event offered us a chance to see and hear people who we only knew by reputation. The event was officially opened by the Chairman of k4I Forum, MEP **Lambert van Nistelrooij**, and further speeches were given by commissar **Máire Geoghegan-Quinn** who is responsible for research, development, and innovation in the European Commission and **Friedhelm Schmider**, President of k4I. Because the aim of the whole conference was to find means to ensure the competitiveness of Europe, the presentations discussed challenges and means of creating common understanding and finding appropriate tools for measure-



Impressiveness of the European Parliament.

ment. After the opening reception, our group headed for a well deserved dinner and got to know the nightlife of Brussels. When the time came to return to the hotel we were a bunch of happy travellers, our heads filled with shared discussions and experiences – doing things together creates a sense of community.

3. DAY: WEDNESDAY

The last day of our trip began with a session titled “The Role of Science & Technology in Support of Innovation.” Science, technology and innovation are essential factors when building a basis for sustainable development in Europe and European success in a global, competitive environment. The up-and-coming EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, titled Horizon 2020, aims to strengthen the position of EU as an internationally significant actor. The

journey from scientific and research breakthroughs to commercial success is unnecessarily long and arduous and requires special attention. The session underlined the significance of all EU citizens: all statements regarding, for example, the Horizon 2020 Programme are just propositions, nothing is fixed yet. The need for and meaningfulness of the various interest groups opened up to a layman from a whole new perspective. The presentations and comments as well as the discussion between participants were positively active and good viewpoints were shared.

After the session we had scheduled a meeting with **Martin van Aken**. Martin is an entrepreneur heading a start-up called 8th Color. For the time being he also works at another company, but aims to move more and more exclusively to his own business. His

All equal in a common arena.

business idea has been rewarded in various competitions, e.g. in a pitching competition arranged by EYIF. Martin gave us first hand information and experiences about entrepreneurship and the importance of cooperation relationships. There’s another area where innobrokering is needed.

After a satisfying lunch it was time to head to the airport and back home. Taxi to the airport, flight, and a shared ride to Lahti offered us great opportunities to discuss and ideate, for instance, about how to further build the innobroker community and the future of innobroker training. Many of the ideas presented have taken root; time will tell what will come of them.

Faith in innobrokering is well crystallised in a statement by MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij, the Chairman of k4I Forum: “We need to improve the communication between the different actors and build bridges throughout all levels to make Europe more innovative and bring us out of the crisis.” This cannot be achieved without brokers. ■

LINKS REGARDING THE INNOVATION SUMMIT AND PEOPLE WE MET:

<http://www.knowledge4innovation.eu/4th-european-innovation-summit-2012>
http://prezi.com/z3ov_dmlfz1l/the-mina-story/
http://www.epe.be/files/epe_added_value_for_members.pdf
<http://8thcolor.com/>

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 FOR THE TIME BEING, THE AUTHOR WORKS AS A PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE INNOBROKERS PROJECT.



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