

# TRACY PEARSON

## WRITING SAMPLE

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## From Creativity to Innovation

As anyone in a business setting can attest, we frequently use the terms creativity and innovation interchangeably. A more in-depth exploration of the concept of creativity quickly reveals, though, that the relationship between creativity and innovation is more complicated than seen at first glance.

### **creativity (n)**

[kree-ey-tiv-i-tee]

1. The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination

### **innovation (n)**

[in-uh-vey-shuh n]

1. Something new or different introduced; the introduction of new things or methods

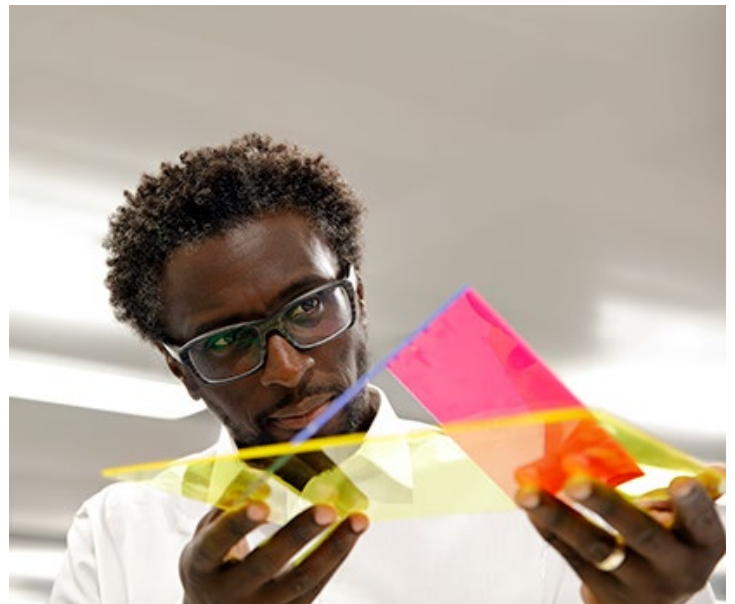
Creativity is the ability to generate original ideas and visualize novel solutions. Creative individuals approach problems with a fresh perspective and can recognize patterns and connections between seemingly unrelated topics. Innovation is the execution of those creative ideas to develop something new or different. Innovation propels business improvements to workflows, methods, products, and services.

At the heart of the relationship between these concepts is a cause-and-effect mechanism. Creativity drives innovation. Without creativity, innovation has nowhere to start; without innovation, creativity adds no business value. Creativity is about exploring change; innovation brings creative ideas to fruition. Theodore Levitt, a former editor of the Harvard Business Review, perhaps put it best: “Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things.”

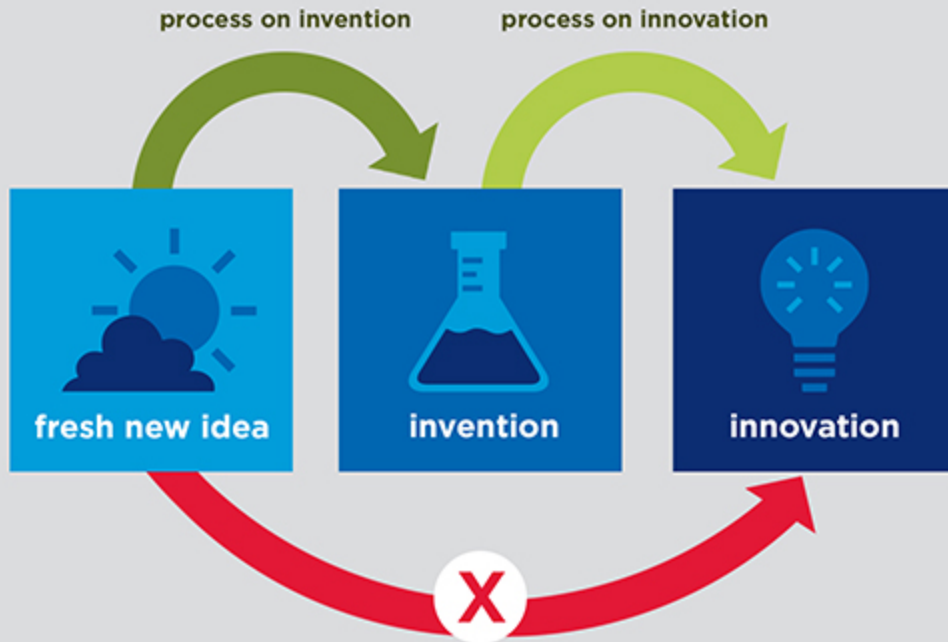
Another critical difference between creativity and innovation is that creativity is tough to measure, whereas innovation absolutely can and should be measured to judge success. Tracking the value-added through innovative processes and services is central to developing a project business case and metrics.

To further build on the creative/innovative process, one must also consider invention.

Inventions are creations that can potentially change an industry or launch a new line of business. They represent disruptive changes that affect the future in powerful ways. Examples include the printing press, semiconductors, and the internet. The telephone is an example of an invention that led to a notable innovation -- the cellular phone.



In practice, the process flow looks like this:



The takeaway is that organizations must embrace the entire creativity to innovation cycle. Driving for creativity alone may result in a multitude of imaginative ideas but it does not guarantee a solution. Pursuing innovation without creativity can skip a vital step so that incremental changes occur but without assurance that the changes have the optimal impact. Both are needed if the best ideas are to be brought to life.