

Enter the *Minnovators*

Innovation is all the buzz today. It has become a hallowed centerpiece of the company's mission statements and strategy. Yet, few are able to implement innovation systematically. On the other hand, there are some companies who do not obsess over innovation, yet are able to consistently increase their market share, have high brand appeal and delight their customers year after year.

Could it be that our perception of the innovation process is disconnected from the reality of how it actually happens?

Innovation is not limited to a new product or technology, and rarely ever occurs in a single blinding light. Instead, innovation is often a simple change in a product or process that happens through a series of minor tweaks, iterated over and over until it becomes successful. Most often these minor changes are driven by employees at the front-line – those that have a thorough understanding of the product/service, as well as the needs of the customers. Enter the “*minnovators*” – or *micro-innovators*.

The *minnovators* are constantly exchanging information between various parts of the company and the customers, their information networks are extensive and diverse. Rather than acting as “gatekeepers” and leveraging this information for personal/political gain, these *minnovators* use it to improve products and processes. These are the men and women who drive the continuous innovations.

The challenge for companies however, has been to identify them systematically... until now!

We now have the technology to understand organizational networks, and make visible the patterns that either strengthen or suffocate innovation. Using Organization Network Analysis, companies are finally able to identify and encourage their *minnovators* – and crack the innovation code.