**Motivation and Innovation – November 18, 2008 – CSS 350  
Group: Paula Haddad, Ian Sigmon, Akio Akazawa, Glenn Plant, Taoying Vollstedt, Ethan Crawford**

**Top 10 Recommendations to Optimize Innovation in the Software Industry**

1. Provide time, space, and resources for creative people to flourish. Examples of this are flexible schedules, offices, “think time”, visual inspiration, dogs at work, vinyl pants and budget.
2. Continuously and gradually optimize and improve products and processes. Promote an employee feedback system, conduct annual surveys, encourage peer review, provide training and allow everyone to find and work on at least one personal problem.
3. Tolerate risk. Structure incentives to avoid punishing risk-takers while rewarding success.
4. Suspend judgment by encouraging positive feedback during peer review and coaching people to absorb new ideas before passing judgment.
5. Set project scope but avoid micromanagement to avoid pre-conceived outcomes.
6. Limit bureaucracy to avoid stifling creativity under a mountain of TPS reports. Do regular reviews of management layers and processes and consolidate or eliminate redundant or obsolete job roles and practices.
7. Stay close to customers to focus innovation. Provide a customer feedback mechanism, do beta tests, invite customers to the workplace, feed them dinner.
8. Encourage collaboration and information-sharing via open work areas, brainstorming sessions, common spaces for ad-hoc hallway conversation, and shared whiteboards.
9. Build the right team for the job. Hire the right mix of people to fill the needed technical, project, and social roles, ensure the team is the right size (not too large or small), encourage natural leaders within the team, and provide mentoring.
10. Set SMART goals to encourage successes while avoiding complacency (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely)

**Motivation and Innovation – November 18, 2008 – CSS 350  
Group: Paula Haddad, Ian Sigmon, Akio Akazawa, Glenn Plant, Taoying Vollstedt, Ethan Crawford**

**PAGE IT Applicablity of Industry Best Practices For Cultivating Innovation.**

In order to encourage employee innovation, PAGE-IT provides comfortable furniture, buffered schedules to provide time to think, headsets to allow employees to listen to music. Our CEO celebrates significant schedule milestones and new patents by wearing a chicken suit and doing a dance. Our office building has a shared kitchen and fountain drinks and Top Ramen are provided. In the common area, we have large whiteboards and a ping-pong table to encourage hallway conversation and relaxation.

Our CEO keeps an anonymous employee feedback corkboard outside his office on which anyone can post a note or a reply. Our programmers peer-review each other’s code and perform buddy-builds to avoid build breaks. Every six months, all employees take a week of training to improve their skills. As part of the annual goal-setting process, each employee adopts a Pet Project and works on it throughout the year. Our processes are not yet so heavy that more than this is required or desirable.

Although our employee compensation is very personalized to the individual, there are no built-in disincentives for failing to meet project goals. Success, on the other hand, comes with a relatively high profit-sharing incentive for each employee that participates on the product team, primarily in stock options, although also in bonus dollars.

As part of the code and document review process, PAGE IT policy encourages employees to wait a day before providing feedback that is critical of an idea. Our managers are encouraged to deal directly with our customers to define project goals and deadlines, meeting with them multiple times and soliciting feedback over the development lifecycle. After that, individual employees create the designs and perform the implementation.

PAGE IT currently has an overly bureaucratic hierarchical management structure. After this came to the attention of our CEO, he recommended a review of this structure with possible reorganization in the next fiscal year. This issue is somewhat ameliorated by the fact that our titles are somewhat honorary and every employee often performs multiple roles. TPS reports have been abolished.

PAGE IT has carefully selected its current employees based on skillset, potential, and varied personality types. This has provided us with flexibility, as each employee works well with others and is able to take on multiple job roles. Our leads are coached to encourage natural leaders within the team and to provide mentoring.

As part of the annual review process, each employee, up to the top of the organization, is required to choose 3-6 annual goals that match the SMART criteria. Employees use these goals to determine success and compensation every year.

Katz articles:

2. How Bell Labs Creates Star Performers

* Taking Individual Initiative: 1
* Structured Mentorship Environment: 2
* Developing a network of experts with equitable trade of skills: 2
* Inter-team presentations and peer pressure: 2
* Peer review: 2

4. Managing Creative Professionals

* Non-conformity (unconventional dress, hours, customs): 1
* Assignment of multiple projects for incubation purposes: 2
* High autonomy: 1
* Risk tolerance: 1
* Fun!: 2
* Collaboration and Information-sharing: 1
* Structured feedback/problem-solving system: 3
* Reserve time for research and exploration: 1
* Think outside the box: 1
* Suspend judgment: 1
* Set project scope but don’t micromanage: 1

5. How to Manage Geeks

* Structure incentives appropriately to motivate without alienating: 2
* Provide interesting problems: 3
* Set project scope but don’t micromanage: 1
* Inter-team presentations and peer pressure: 2
* Encourage natural leaders: 2
* Peer-review: 2
* Optimize team size: 2

7. When Less Is More

* Limit bureaucracy to encourage creativity: 1
* Non-conformity (unconventional dress, hours, customs): 1
* Risk tolerance: 1
* Limit Fear of Failure: 1
* Creativity is an individual process: 1
* Thinking outside the box: 1

8. Why Managers Fail

* Reserve time for research and exploration: 1
* Set project scope but don’t micromanage: 2
* Creativity is an individual process: 1
* Interpersonal skills are important for managers: 2

9. How Do You Feel?

* Interpersonal skills are important for managers: 2
* Emotional intelligence is a predictor of business success: 2

10. Beyond The Charismatic Leader

* Risk tolerance: 1
* Team goals must be challenging but achievable: 2
* Change must be continuous and incremental: 1
* Picking the right people is important to team composition: 2

14. The Discipline of Teams

* Teams serve a different function than working groups: 3
* Generally, teams are better than working groups at motivating people to innovate: 3
* Teams are structured to encourage open-ended discussion and reward innovation: 3

22. Critical Functions: Needed Roles in the Innovation Process

* Picking the right people is important to team composition: 2

23. Innovation Through Intrapreneuring

* Creativity is an individual process: 1
* Thinking outside the box: 1
* Non-conformity (unconventional dress, hours, customs): 1
* Risk tolerance: 1
* Limit Fear of Failure: 1

35. 3M’s Post-It Notes: A Managed or Accidental Innovation?

* Creativity is an individual process: 1
* Non-conformity (unconventional dress, hours, customs): 1
* Thinking outside the box: 1
* Change must be continuous and incremental: 1
* Increasing labor does not necessarily increase output: 2
* Change must be continuous and incremental: 1

40. Dreams To Market: Crafting a Culture of Innovation

* Preserve internal identity as an innovative organization: 1
* Be experimental in all phases: 2
* Stay close to customers: 1
* Creativity is an individual process: 1
* Involve everyone in the creative process: 2

44. Winning The Talent War For Women

* Change must be continuous and incremental: 1
* Effective change comes from the top: 2
* Training can facilitate change: 3
* Effective change requires transparency: 1

45. Danger: Toxic Company

* Work/life balance is an important part of a healthy organization: 1
* Structure incentives appropriately to motivate without alienating: 2

Prompt (paraphrase):

How can we optimize software workplace performance for innovation, using our understanding of the fundamentals of motivation, including environmental and other factors and all that other good stuf?

Assignment (paraphrase):

1. Review all the readings as a group. Per article, identify key practices and themes.
2. Identify themes across all the articles.
3. Assign an importance to each theme.
4. Re-read themes list to identify implied themes not yet made explicit.
5. Prioritize the list, pick the 10 ten industry best-practices, and rewrite them in a common style and voice as recommendations.
6. Write a one-page overview of how PAGE IT would or would not apply these practices, using our organizational specifics as justification.
7. Print and bring to class 35 copies of your list.
8. One presenter from your group should speak for max 10 minutes with examples from study and personal experiences to explain why each theme is important.
9. Turn in top-10 list and one-page overview.
10. ???
11. Profit!