

Video transcript

Dominic Price, Work Futurist – Atlassian

Building an innovative culture

Innovation's a fascinating topic, it's not a new word it's been around for a good while. But I think we're still coming to grips with what it actually means. There's three fallacies, or there's three mistakes, I see regularly – firstly on innovation: the innovation room, innovation only exists in a person (a singular person) and then innovation paraphernalia (a few posters, a few magic eight balls, a few mouse mats) and none of that's innovation. It's just coverage.

Real innovation comes from smart people anywhere in the organization saying: "I'm going to try something. I'm going to try something new." We do that through sometimes structured rituals. We have an event that we host every 90 days internally at Atlassian, called Ship It, where we give all of our staff 24 hours a day to innovate. We give them complete freedom but also – it's core to our values. One of our values is "be the change you seek".

So, innovation isn't something that happens once a quarter as a ritual. It's something that happens every single day, but that innovation is quite incremental. Small housekeeping changes, all the way through to moon shots, new products, new ways of working. And giving people access to that spectrum is important. But the reality is the barrier to innovation is often time, freedom and space. And so, it's very easy to talk about. It's a lot harder to dedicate the time and the focus and the space, say to your people: "go Maverick, go wild". And don't put a return on investment on it. Don't say: "you innovated today, what value have you delivered?" Because innovation is about planting seeds, that you may then nurture, that may turn into something. It's about what might happen, and it's about the possible versus the probable.

And I think great leaders can foster that as a culture and foster that where innovation exists in every single person's belly and your job as a leader is to ignite that innovation and give them the space to explore. And when you do that, you build this muscle of evolution. It doesn't become something that ... "oh it's innovation day". Innovation just becomes something that is core to everything that you do, every single day, in every person. And in that world, you evolve a little bit every single day. And the great news is you will never need a transformation – because you'll never get caught behind – because you're constantly edging ahead.