



Creative intelligence in organisations

Insights for executives

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Setting the wheels of innovation in motion.

The 21st century is in full swing. Change is picking up speed, complexity increases and opportunities are emerging in places where we don't expect them. CEO's and senior executives have a lot on their plates. It is time to make sense of what is happening and adopt new mindsets and strategies.

Which challenges are organisations facing now?

- **Responding to the growing tidal wave of technological developments that is headed our way.** Change happens within months instead of years now: the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by *velocity, scope and systems impact* (Klaus Schwab). Kevin Kelly refers to this as *the technium*.
- **Leveraging the potential that is in people, making them not just smart (they are highly educated) but also more creative, skilled and confident about navigating through chaos and uncertainty.**
Organisations are filled to the brim with intelligent people, but can they adapt quickly, thoroughly analyze problems and show initiative when it is and isn't expected of them? They have to become able to navigate complex situations and uncertainty and do what is needed to move forward.
- **Embodying innovation instead of treating it as an isolated activity with a pipeline bringing products to market.** Organizational forms have to reflect the dynamics of the market and society and be fundamentally innovative, have all the relevant processes in place and be willing to become a fluid entity instead of a rigid vehicle.
- **Attracting and retaining talent and highly skilled people.**
It is not possible to automate talent, the added value of sharp minds or the wisdom of highly specialized and experienced people. They will be in higher demand than ever.
- **Creating new business models in a volatile economy.**
When the message is that 'all bets are off', how do you allocate your resources? When down is up and up is down, how do you create a blueprint for your future? Maybe business models are a thing of the past and perhaps organisations need business attitudes, business principles and business dynamics navigators.
- **Creating a corporate culture that engages and challenges people as well as provides them with structure and security to hold the space for their growth.**
In order to truly activate people, sincere freedom is required. In order to learn and experiment an underlying texture of facilitation and direction is required. It is easy to be too lenient ("Just try some stuff, whatever!") or be too controlling ("Experiment, but make sure it makes sense and is profitable from the beginning!").

- **Branding and marketing strategies fail, organisations have a hard time connecting with the market.**
Customers are an elusive element, loyalty is a thing of the past and it's not as clear as it used to be how you add value and stay relevant. People are more educated, inform each other rapidly if something is off, it is hard to stay on top of all that is being said about your brand and conversations with customers or (potential) clients quickly seem awkward and artificial.
- **Capacity building through the reskilling and upskilling of people.**
The call for developing additional skills in people is strong, but where to begin and how do you teach people things like ingenuity and imagination?
- **Executives are trained and experienced in today's (or worse: yesterday's) economy.**
They have to prepare for the future and deal with the unprecedented.
- **Seeing, acknowledging and leveraging emerging realities and the opportunities they represent.**
It is easy to see what is being dismantled by change – and all the harder to see which new paradigms are already there, showing themselves in their early forms. There are weak signals and small scale beginnings present though and they can be turned into business opportunities.
- **A balance has to be found between activation, speed, agility and action and contemplation, relaxation, resting and allowing people to replenish, be open to inspiration, following a less artificial rhythm and reconnect with their natural 'beat'.**
This means that people have to spend their time on things that matter without wasting it but are also not be frowned upon when they go hiking in the woods when they want to work on a tough problem that way or take a nap when they've expended a lot of mental energy.

What others say

According to the World Economic Forum the top 3 out of 10 skills you need by 2020 (which is around the corner) to be able to thrive in what they call 'the Fourth Industrial Revolution' are:

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity

How do you quickly teach people these skills without derailing your organisation in the meantime? How do you activate qualities in people that require a lot of

practice, stamina and willingness to deal with inner resistance, fear, shame and prejudice? How does one unravel the mysteries of conceiving what is not yet a reality to be able to use this force?

We believe that the way forward is by activating and cultivating creative intelligence in people and organisations. It allows individuals and systems to respond to change from deeper layers of human insight and potential.

The fourth industrial revolution is a part of human evolution.

What is creative intelligence?

Creative intelligence is that which emerges when you combine intellect (ratio, reasoning, logic) with imagination (the ability to conceive something new, see in a different way and make connections) and you start applying this for progress and improvement. The combination of these two enables you to be a better problem finder, come up with relevant and often surprising new ideas, create experiments and implement new insights.

Because of this you can respond to constant change but also be a proactive force in that change process. It is what allows humanity to progress.

It is the capacity to thoroughly analyse a problem, come up with solutions that are imaginative and demonstrate ingenuity, combined with having the confidence and necessary skills to navigate through uncertainty and chaos. If any of these elements is missing it is not creative intelligence.

Creative intelligence unifies and cultivates these skills and offers an integral approach to enhance all these skills at the same time.

It is impossible to automate creativity, ingenuity or the ability to combine different fields, drawing from other disciplines to come up with novel ideas. It is a universally human principle that is present in people and systems. We need to learn how to gain access, amplify and cultivate our creative intelligence in order to become more future proof. The amount of creative intelligence present in individuals and systems is not a fixed given. People can learn the techniques needed and grow their process confidence. They can expand the amount of mental technology they have at their disposal, improving their cognitive flexibility, flow of ideas and problem finding capacities.

How does creative intelligence help organisations face these challenges?

- Upskilling: it is an **enrichment** of people's experience, thinking toolbox and 'chaos navigation' skills.
- It represents a universal concept, not an empty buzzword or promise of a silver bullet.
- It transcends roles, education, job titles, projects and objectives.
- It unifies and creates a shared language and approach.
- It is a method that promotes learning. In fact, it is a means of deep learning.
- It supports not just creating innovations but innovating the organisation continuously on a structural level. It transcends hierarchical, industrial age thinking.
- It does not focus on the result but on the process and deep problem finding, which is the way to go in times of fast paced change.
- Better problem finding is what sets creative intelligence apart from "just" intelligence or "just" creativity. Throughout history it is evident that people who made a profound change for the better were very good problem finders. Attacking problems with a solution oriented (problem solving) attitude takes away from the quality of processes that promote progress.
- It is a means of deep iteration, not just scraping the surface but continuously probing profound layers of the situation, systems and dynamics.
- It is fundamentally positive, pro-active, inspiring and growth oriented. It honours our humanity and looks for answers inside, not outside of us. It is, however, much like the Force: one can learn how to access and master it, but it can be used for either side.

What is the business case for developing creative intelligence in people and organisations?

An increase in creative intelligence yields (at least) the following results:

- Better problem finding resulting in better solutions.
- More engagement for employees, addressing more personal qualities and talents and offering a more integral approach. They can bring more to the table, they are invited to stay in a more interesting zone where there is more vivacity, provocation of resourcefulness, personal growth.
- More meta techniques to manage processes and troubleshoot.
- Greater flexibility because people have greater mental and practical flexibility. It is easier to deal with the inflow of information and change.

The greatest benefit is that you don't have to recruit for new talent, high potentials and experts because you can upskill your existing workforce.

What do organisations have to do in order to increase and cultivate creative intelligence, both systemically and in individuals?

- Organisations have to understand change has to happen in an organisation's structure and system, not just in people or processes and procedures. Creative intelligence is a fundamentally deep approach. This requires commitment, openness and courage.
- Organisations have to install guiding principles rather than rules and procedures. They have to organize around intention and values rather than solely strive for quantifiable objectives.
- The physical space has to reflect the processes: war rooms, laboratories, meeting rooms that reflect the inner work, offices that are not designed for 20th century work, spaces that allow for introverted activity; contemplation, focus and sitting with concepts and ideas for an uninterrupted, continuous amount of time.

- They have to strike a balance between solidifying and fluidity. This is a complicated dance but it is the only path to becoming future proof. There is no recipe for this.
- Organisations have to learn how to keep pushing forward using techniques to start and guide processes of creative intelligence. An example of such a technique is the Heuristic for Creative Intelligence (make bold?) we have developed. They have to return to their battle plan again and again.
- Organisations have to be aware that the better the thinking tools and techniques for creative intelligence processes people have installed as 'mental technology', the better the results! It is a form of practical upskilling, not of introducing abstract concepts or myths.
- Organisations have to create symmetry: enhancing creative intelligence in people is useless if an organisation's leaders don't allow for these processes to have consequences and initiate and shape profound change over time.
- This means that leaders have to upskill themselves too, become learners, not knowers and lead the way through their example.
- Having people high in creative intelligence within the organisation will inspire others. It is a known phenomenon that ingenuity, creativity and original thinking is contagious.
- It is also about understanding that creative intelligence is not just about better problem finding and better ideas, but also about accessing the wisdom in people and processes, about a more human centered take on progress and innovation.

The underlying shifting paradigms:

Previous paradigm	Creative intelligence paradigm
Silver Bullet Thinking	Applying universal principles within the entire organisation
'Download' skills once, use them rest of career with occasional upgrades or crisis based adaptation	Continuous learning and adapting. Attitude is more important than education. Continuous learning is default
Structure and protocol enable growth in an industrial age	Flexibility and guiding principles enable growth in fast paced, profound change
Innovation as a pipeline, pushing products	Innovation as DNA, organisational renewal informing products and services
Moulding people through education to fulfill a role and a function within an organisation	Tapping into human potential and heritage of ingenuity to unlock forward thinking and progress
Economy is science	Economy is philosophy
There is no tomorrow	Everything we do has an impact on future generations
Unlimited economic growth, unlimited debt creation, consumer creation	Limited economic growth, but unlimited ecological improvement as an economic opportunity towards an improved humanity and planet
Creativity downstream (add-on, sales tool)	Creativity upstream (fundamental, strategic tool)
One big download of knowledge, should last entire career (diploma/certificate) and get new chunks of knowledge and skills added every so often	Continuous learning, less from memory, more from interconnected resources (internet, AI, enhancements/bionic)
Rational Newtonian thinking	Greater understanding of chaos and complexity, applied to organisations and management, non-linear
Safety, control	Risk of dealing with the unknown in a non-traditional way
Leave parts of yourself at home, play a role with certain behaviors and clothing code associated with the job	Bring more of yourself to the job and the organisation's objective, care less about uniforms, codes and statements
Short-term historical awareness, seeing current generations as the apex of human development	A different image of Man as an answer to cumulative results of our actions, creating exponential outcomes that seem to surpass our capacities to deal with them
One-sided development as humans	Integral development, addressing all capacities: the obvious and the less obvious
Linear processes, cascades	Circular processes, heuristics

Gimmick approach	Profound approach
Factual, controlled knowledge management	Tolerance for ambiguity, process trumps content
Silos	Fields and expertise overlapping
Encapsulated, goal oriented thinking	Transformational thinking
Controlling human resources	Empowering human resources, authenticity and personal accountability
Crisis driven change initiation	Creation driven change initiation
Avoiding the unknown, the dark forest and the dragons	Reconnect to courage, going on a quest and embark on a mission to deal with the unknown
Plan power	Idea power
Business plans	Values, intention and guiding principles
Confusion as a reason to freeze	Confusion as a challenge to engage, explore and learn
Status quo acceptance	Pushing everyone harder to address more of their inner resources, activate and use more ingenuity
Boredom	Activation, interestingness and engagement

What else can we observe when there is an increase in creative intelligence within the organisation?

Some examples.

Culture:

The organisation and people's interaction and communication become more humanized. Language becomes richer, vocabulary reflects an expansion of mental technology. Conversation becomes richer, people are more courageous in sharing what is on their minds, presenting ideas they are working on before they are perfect.

There is more room for the human experience; emotion, curiosity, wonder, vulnerability, fierceness, intuition, imagination, confusion, paradox, exploration and honesty.

Challenges are met with heuristics and vigor instead of aversion and apathy.

People have a shared language to work and communicate with each other; processes facilitate cooperation across all layers and disciplines within the organisation because creative intelligence and the associated mental technology can be used by everyone, everywhere.

Strategy:

Strategy becomes more sustainable because processes yield more profound insights about the market, needs and requirements.

Experimentation is the norm.

Strategy is not just created by CEO's and senior executives, the entire organisation contributes with knowledge and insights.

Leadership:

The organisation becomes more attractive to employees because there is more engagement, more imagination, more good thinking and people can bring more to the table.

Leaders leading by example by heightening their own creative intelligence and becoming a better, more inspirational and effective leader.

Less artificial, pumped up language and objectives. More realness.

Way of working:

People approach challenges in fundamentally different and deeper ways, with more intensity and clarity. They will all become more effective chaos navigators, embarking on these explorations together and naturally. Through individual and shared mental technology more connections and information exchange are happening, creating better decisions and communication.

Some of the risks involved in activating and navigating creative intelligence:

One has to step away from the status quo in order to gain greater understanding of it and perform the interventions needed to revitalize the organisation. As any artist-scientist can tell you; it takes deliberation and wisdom to strike a balance between staying in the normal and venturing out into the extraordinary, to know which kind of 'weird' is the right kind of weird or the one that leads to too much alienation and confusion.

Often people experience knee-jerk reactions to the unexpected, the unpredictable and the unknown, so snapping back into the groove of the familiar is very probable. It takes inner strength and commitment to stay with the process, to keep holding the space for change and 'creative intelligence chemistry'. It is tempting to resurface and join in the echo chamber rhetorics again.

Also, not everyone will enjoy a process in which they themselves, as human beings, become the subject of the process, where they will have to deal with

their own inhibitions, ideas and convictions. They will just want to do their jobs and not be bothered with processes and challenges that are difficult and demanding.

Furthermore, people will most probably go off on a tangent, wander without aim, lose confidence, be triggered and relive old pain. We are paying a price for not living fully, deliberately and wholly engaged and we have to overcome the pain associated with this when we bring it to the surface. We feel safe in predictable environments, with clear roles and assignments; we can stay away from a crippling fear of failure, dreading humiliation and losing our position in the hierarchy. We don't want to break things that are still working and we most certainly don't want to accidentally engineer our own redundancy.

Hence, the mission critical attitude for activating and navigating creative intelligence is first and foremost one of earnesty and devotion, of deeply understanding that much is asked of us during this crossroads in human development.

In its most elementary form, to initiate building an organisation with more creative intelligence means this:

1. Adopting the mindset that people can access and cultivate creative intelligence
2. Preparing to transform the organisation by using different approaches for problem finding, generative processes and progress
3. Introducing creative intelligence processes within the organisation: experienced mentors, guides and exemplary people are a must or else you will get lost and lose the motivation needed to learn and grow
4. Integrating this mindset and approach in the entire organisation and letting it be the new normal

What do people need to start doing, changing and planning in order to heighten their creative intelligence?

The main idea is that becoming better at a certain process means heightening creative intelligence. It is not a matter of learning some tricks and going through the motions once or twice. Once you've familiarized yourself with this process you can initiate and go through the process again and again.

Mindset, mindset, mindset!

The most important element of starting your quest is your attitude towards your own potential: you have to start assuming that your creative intelligence can grow, come to life if it is dormant, be enhanced, managed and cultivated. You can familiarize yourself with techniques and become more experienced in the type of processes that characterize artists, scientists, thinkers and entrepreneurs. You'll have to endure confusion and resistance but if you stick to the plan you will learn and grow your creative intelligence.

Mental technology

Using different techniques will render different results. The more mental technology you have at your disposal, the better you become at approaching situations and dealing with challenges.

This is a matter of personal preference and after a while it will become clear to you what works for you and what doesn't. There are literally hundreds - if not thousands - of methods, tools and techniques that can be considered mental technology, ranging from entry level idea provoking tools to metaphysical interplay with fields and other layers of life, from systemic constellations with Playmobil dolls to vision quests in the forest, to association games in museums, to sitting with questions for long periods of time to improvisation or enquiry. There are card decks with questions to guide your journaling process, games to help you stretch your thinking and libraries filled with books about expanding your skills and insight. Collecting and using this mental technology is part of your journey to enhancing your creative intelligence. It does not come with a standard recipe. Find out what works for you. Explore. Practice. Learn.

Process

The objective of all this is that you become experienced at processes that characterize people high in creative intelligence: what sets most people apart from people with exceptional insight and ingenuity is not just a matter of talent or privilege: these people do things differently and we can emulate their processes and attitudes to change our own experiences. Although emulating others comes naturally to us as humans (this is how we have learned a lot of life skills) we somehow believe that some things are out of our league or cannot be acquired. Most highly productive and original artists, scientists, thinkers, innovators and entrepreneurs have their own specific set of elements that form their processes. But it is always about finding your way through uncertainty, discovering new things about a subject or situation and being able to learn essential lessons or gain new insights. This can lead to a book, article, discovery, pinpointing a problem, crafting a new format or concept, a marketing strategy, a business model or a deep understanding of the needs of the people involved in a project - but because you have gone through fundamentally deeper layers you have found more and better experiences and insights. You have not just tried to generate solutions right off the bat but have intensified your quest.

In conclusion:

Human ingenuity is the answer to overwhelming technological advancements, the impact of which is changing our lives, organisations and business models, at a breakneck pace. It means that we have to start applying a universal principle as an answer to universal processes of profound change. It means our human ingenuity can be rekindled, enhanced and applied in an unprecedented manner.

Get in touch if you have any questions or suggestions or if you want to work with Veld to start enhancing the creative intelligence in your organisation.

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