Innovation management frameworks

Numerous industrial innovation management frameworks are being used around the globe. However, research shows that:

- None of them has ever emerged as the clear leader in the field.
- Many such frameworks have certain rational parts but are not all encompassing and rarely consistent or even effective in their long-term outcomes.
- Note that perhaps only highly risky disruptive innovation – that might (or might not) provide substantial (i.e., global or at least country wide) economic benefits – merits introduction and use of a specially developed innovation management framework. North American (Drucker, Deming) and, especially,
Japanese (Kaizen) and Korean experience well illustrates that less ambitious and costly alternatives, such as incremental improvement or limited task R&D projects, can be effectively managed by more conventional tools, such as project management or enterprise resource planning, with the help of adequate financial reporting.

- Some of the “innovation management” frameworks are overly bureaucratized and unnecessarily formal, requiring huge overhead to implement, which is in the inherent conflict with the agile character of today’s product and service development.

- Innovation is inherently risky. Typically, the riskier approach might lead to a more original and competitive solution and the resulting steep economic growth in the industrial sector or even across a very large country (witness the recent positive effect on the US economy of just several high growth companies, such as Apple, Facebook and Amazon). The main challenge in innovation management is to control risk without stifling innovation while preserving its agile character.

- Academic research shows that the most successful industrial innovation examples of its times (Bell Labs, Xerox, IBM, GM, Microsoft, Sun, Sony, Honda, Nortel, Apple, Next, Amazon, Google, Facebook, eBay, BlackBerry, Wal-Mart, IKEA, Zara, Virgin, etc., etc.) greatly depend on the proactive personality of their leaders and the contemporary organizational culture rather than on any formal innovation management frameworks. They typically lose competitiveness or even die with the changes in their top leadership, or even with the change in the personality of their top leader – but also with the radical changes in the competitive environment.

- Most such frameworks only deal with the product-centric R&D (i.e., high tech, pharmaceuticals, genetics) components of the industrial innovation. However, the new service-centric global socioeconomic GRC paradigm (Governance, Risk management and Compliance) that emerged after high tech industry collapse in the new millennium, necessitates development of the non-R&D innovation management frameworks. A new innovation management framework must particularly address such advanced economic segments as ecommerce, efinance, egovernance, even ICT content management and security, all of which are typically only indirectly relate to the traditional R&D management processes.

- The critical role of attracting and managing risk capital, both inside large corporate environment and venture capital for agile startups is usually not adequately addressed by the traditional industrial innovation management frameworks.

BMA Lite® is a powerful Innovation Management framework developed by Mr. Ramses Girgis of Pharos Consulting of Ottawa, Canada, see http://www.pharosconsulting.com/. At the start of the project, Mr. Girgis and his associates have identified all the contemporary leading Total Quality Management (TQM) systems that can be adapted for managing innovation (i.e., Six Sigma, Lean Enterprise, ISO9000 series, Baldrige Quality Awards/Balanced Scorecard, Deming Prize, and others). As a result of the comprehensive analysis of all identified TQM systems, Mr. Girgis’s team has found that only US developed Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (currently Baldrige Performance Excellence Program) ensures a standard of excellence that could help an
organization achieving world-class quality in innovation management.

In Mr. Girgis analysis, no other TQM system was comparable to Baldrige in its effectiveness and comprehensive character, especially in relation to critical leadership accountability. Baldrige enables corporate leaders to understand all of the internal and external forces that drive their business; to prioritize, enhance, and improve what is critical to success; and to select the courses of innovative action that achieve, increase, and sustain the best possible overall performance. Not surprisingly, it is seen in some US innovation development circles as the very embodiment and formalization of Yankee ingenuity.

With the time, radical changes in the industrial environment, and in field experience, Mr. Girgis’s understanding of the innovation management issues has substantially evolved. Although he saw much advantage in using comprehensive Baldrige Award methodology, it became clear to him that a modern digitally driven organization with the high executive turnover and the need for fast outcomes requires a far more rapid and nimble innovation management approach. In response to this challenge, based on the sound Baldrige Award and Balanced Score Card principles, Mr. Girgis has developed an effective and agile BMA Lite® Innovation Management Framework.

It is important to note that in Mr. Girgis’s view, no formal innovation management framework can ensure effective outcomes on its own without strong CEO commitment and proactive executive support, without which the corresponding effort would likely be fruitless. In that, an innovation management standard might differ from many other standards that cover routine processes with lower degree of structural risk involved.

In addition to being based on Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, BMA Lite® encompasses equivalent Canadian and European models that are heavily based on Baldrige but include some regional specific requirements, such as Canada Awards of Excellence (CAE) and European Quality Award (EQA).

We believe that to become a comprehensive innovation management standard adequately covering ecommerce, efinance, egovernance and ICT, BMA Lite® must be further advanced and complemented by the following present day critical factors that weren’t as prominent in the 1980s when Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award has been developed:

- Corporate management of Governance, Risk management and Compliance (GRC).
- Managing organizational cultural issues and CEO’s/Board of Directors commitments/personal accountability and regulatory responsibilities.
- Addressing environmental concerns and sustainability.
- Maximizing VC participation – to address and balance resources and risk factors.

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