



## ATLANTIK BRUECKE INNOVATION CONFERENCE

May 22-24, 2013

1. An open market needs consistency and comparability to function. Innovation makes comparing products and services difficult. Some innovation is real and substantive and some is simply so the product cannot readily be compared with the others.
2. Innovation leads to commoditization, lower prices and off-shoring. This applies to legal services as well as products. And to the thoughtless application of the work of others to situations which may or may not be appropriate.
3. Most countries can create an automobile. The difficult part is passing the safety tests and complying with government regulations.
4. Distributors who have a strong relationship with their customers can block innovation. The end user will not buy what the distributor does not recommend. The distributor has to be given incentives to promote adoption of something new.
5. An entrepreneurial society requires not only clever, innovative people but also a system of investors, accountants, lawyers and stock markets. It requires a society which tolerates failure and which permits the productive parts of that chain to enjoy the fruits of their labor and risk taking.
6. Forcing all members of an international team to use English can prevent those who do not speak as well as others from participating fully.
7. If Germany does not permit fracking, it will not be able to use its engineers and companies to participate in the technical aspects of the process.
8. While innovation is important, ramping up production is a very difficult part of the creative process. The MP3 player brought Germany money but no jobs.
9. Ultimately societies are interested in innovation primarily as a source of jobs. While money plays an ever greater role in politics, ultimately it is ballots in the boxes which win elections. If the innovation does not create jobs, for politicians the process has been a failure.
10. Despite being a conference on innovation, no presentation was innovative.
11. Innovation means change. Some changes are not worth accommodating. The process requires the user to make a judgment whether the benefits of adapting the innovation justify learning new habits. As the population ages, adoption will decline, if only because old people have less time to amortize the costs of adaption.

12. Innovation can apply to every aspect of the production chain, not just product design and production. Distribution and financing, for example.
13. In Pittsburgh in 1975, a major engineering company drew up plans for a Soviet steel plant. The plans were rejected because the plant would not employ enough Russians. This seemed funny to us at the time.
14. Go for a walk through a forest. Measure what you see. Count the points on a leaf. Determine the girth of a tree. The results of the counting are not important but the process will make you see the forest differently.
15. Get a dog and see / smell the world through its eyes / nose. What interests the dog. What does it sense that you don't? How does it manipulate you, teach you?
16. Take a common task and accomplish it without some key element. Live without a refrigerator for a week.
17. Innovation in the law can be dangerous. It gives the opponent the opportunity to misinterpret what you have done to a judge. If you do something different, be very careful that it cannot be misconstrued but expect to have that happen anyway.
18. Middle management blocks innovation. It has the most to lose and is most afraid of change and creativity. Never underestimate the willingness of another to take credit for your idea.
19. A society's tolerance for risk affect the atmosphere for innovation. Americans want the freedom to carry guns everywhere and accept the resultant deaths but will punish a company that innovates and causes deaths. The French are willing to tolerate experimentation.
20. Innovation which eliminates jobs or moves them offshore cannot expect government support.
21. Innovation can take the form of reframing an issue, getting people to think about it differently.
22. Not all innovation is welcome or positive. Germans do not like gene manipulated food. The Boeing Dreamliner has been more of a nightmare. New Yorkers do not like fracking (but want cheap energy). Some societies are happy to accept old risks they are used to but not to accept new, unknown ones, even though they may be less dangerous than the old ones.
23. For decades, German cars were sold in North America without cup holders. One simply does not drink coffee while driving at 150 mph. As the Germans finally understood the North American market, they added cupholders and Germans models got them too. Soon North American cars will get whatever the Chinese want.
24. Yes, listen to the customer, but also try to lead and educate the customer.
25. Innovation means a hotel guest no longer gets to speak to the hotel switchboard to ask for a wake up call.

26. Innovation in the form of “labor-saving” inventions eliminated jobs.

27. Innovation can be as simple as reframing the issue or problem.

Some of these ideas came from reading a weekly newsletter from the Harvard Business School.

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