

It's hard to pick up a newspaper or business magazine these days without encountering references to innovation as a key driver for organizational success. From *BusinessWeek's* recent rankings of the hundred most innovative companies to the *Economist's* annual awards for top innovators, this is a topic on the minds of leaders everywhere. The widespread interest in this field is evident, too, in Google's databases. Running a search for the word *innovation*, for instance, yields nearly eight hundred million links.

From the President



Apple's wildly successful iPod is a classic study in effective innovation and design—and the tremendous bottom-line results that can follow. But as consultant and best-

selling author Geoffrey Moore has observed, it's difficult to convert attempts at innovation into something as practical and popular as the iPod. Innovation is a chaotic process, one that can be nurtured but not completely controlled. Innovators have to be willing to face and accept failure. Not every idea will work, and it's critical to learn from mistakes and move forward.

At CCL, we're focusing our efforts on innovation for at least two reasons. First, CCL has in its portfolio a lengthy history of innovating, starting with its pioneering use of 360-degree feedback for leader assessment in the early 1970s. If curiosity is one component of innovation, the Center's investment in leading-edge research over the years also counts. In most cases that research has been converted into useful applications for practicing leaders, from publications to assessment instruments to educational programs. So innovation is embedded in our identity and DNA as an organization.

A second reason we're focusing on innovation is that one of the topics of research and application we've adopted through the years has been helping leaders learn how to be more creative and helping organizations develop a climate and culture for innovation. Again, our stream of activities on these topics extends well back into the 1970s, and it includes everything from publications to assessments to programs.

The Center's continuing commitment to innovation in its portfolio of offerings is vital. Carrying that work forward on a global scale, however, requires resources. That is why the Center has substantially increased its spending on research and innovation in its current fiscal year. We're investing in this work in part because it is such a key element of our identity but also because many of our clients are deeply passionate about stimulating innovation in their organizations through effective leadership.

We have, for example, launched a new open-enrollment program, Navigating Complex Challenges, that helps participants address tough leadership challenges through a twelve-week experience that blends classroom and virtual learning. Two other portfolio initiatives that will focus on organizational culture change and leading globally are also well into development. Robert Rosenfeld, who pioneered the practice of organizational innovation during his career at Eastman Kodak, is serving as CCL's Innovator in Residence.

CCL founder H. Smith Richardson Sr. understood that organizational success requires not just solid leadership but also leadership that is deeply informed by creativity. Helping individual leaders and organizations develop that capacity to lead innovatively is at the heart of our work. It's also a matter of urgent importance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Alexander". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John R. Alexander, president, CCL

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