

Defining Innovation

DIFFERENTLY

Innovation, it seems, is the buzzword in every business strategy plan. It's what pharmaceutical training has always taught us to aspire to. We all want to stay ahead of the curve. And yet, like most of the words in the dictionary, how many ideas are truly new? How many are truly innovative?

Well, many of them are not, but do they need to be? The words in the dictionary are just that — prescribed and defined words. We've heard them all before. However, it's the way we use all these common words that can turn them into beautiful love poems or great novels. And in business, too, it's the way we use the tools we already have that can make our endeavors truly great — that can make what we do truly innovative.

At the Tipping Point of Greatness

The life-sciences industry in particular is at a tipping point of greatness today where innovation is its strongest driver of success like never before. Over several decades, we've amassed a vast dictionary of business ways and means that has always served us well.

For example, those of us who grew up through the project management of blockbuster drugs and saw our small biotech and pharmaceutical companies become greater, bigger, and stronger pharmaceutical conglomerates know the value of consistent and productive innovation and how it affected the industry we care so much for.

Today, the life-sciences industry is at a tipping point of greatness and innovation is its strongest driver of success.

But today we've seen that innovation do a 180-degree turn, and corporations have started to embrace a new way of using the tools we've always had to go in a different direction. Gone are the days of clandestine development and discoveries within secret silos. Now there is a realization that the collaborations of

some of the greatest pharmaceutical and biotech organizations in the world are giving us all a new sense of purpose: the reduction of costs, while at the same time creating a more open drug development process for the future that will ultimately lead to the new gold standards of treatment.

These major changes are sending a clear message: collaboration is the rising innovation and face of the pharmaceutical biotech and life-sciences industry.

One of the major reasons for this trend is that individual life-sciences companies have mastered their approach to investigating, discovering, and developing new therapy areas. Some of the best-known companies in the world have built compound banks that now house millions of samples, and they've got more ideas now than they can successfully fund or develop with their own resources.

For example, with the mapping of the human genome, now we can find out our genealogy with the scrape of an inner cheek. This is the type of evolution that science can bring, when organizations collaborate on such

huge and complex projects — results that we can all benefit from.

But these innovations, like the successful mapping of the human genome, must be within reach for everyone. The challenge in the life-sciences industry is the continuing

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Strategic workforce planning and analysis is a primary process that can help organizations mitigate the risk they see around corners, and prepare for what the future brings.

The strongest days are ahead in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, and it is great collaborative innovations with the strongest workforce solutions that will get us there.

need for cost-reduction, efficiency, and sustainable execution.

Setting the Right Workforce Strategy

Nowhere is the industry better equipped to do all of the things possible with science than with its workforce. In the life-sciences industry, not only have we always strived for innovation, but we've always depended on our human capital to be the catalysts for idea generation and innovation. And yet, how often do we truly analyze our workforce strategy and develop a long-term plan that can sustain the growth that needs to occur?

Overall workforce analysis — from core employees to flexible, contingent staffing and SWAT work — is now, in fact, the new mapping of the “workforce genome.” This is the next frontier in the ability for biopharmaceutical and medical device companies to continue to develop the life-saving therapies, products, and discoveries that each of us enter this industry to do.

But what really needs to happen in order for this to occur?

First, like realizing the limitations of clandestine development, we've all got to realize that the age of the single, linear solution to workforce needs like staffing or outsourcing is over.

Secondly, we all need to start looking at workforce needs like we do the supply chains of so many of the other most important components of the business.

We are used to placing the utmost importance on the compound supply chain, the active or inert ingredients supply chain, the manufacturing, clean rooms, and stainless steel towers, and the supply chain associated with site and subject enrollment. We still need to stay focused on these things. But what if we started placing the supply chain associated with talent at the top of our priority list?

Raising awareness and increasing the focus on talent supply chain management and workforce solutions analysis should be an internal function of every organization.

Partnering for Success

By handing these responsibilities to a trusted workforce partner, an organization can free itself to concentrate on its core competencies. And the first step in entering into a true, trusted partnership with a workforce solutions firm when engaging human capital should be the same as when companies decide to invest in any other capital expenditure.

The competition is already doing this. Your competition, your partners, and your vendors are engaging consulting services and overall analyses to ensure that they are the most effective and efficient in the industry when it comes to hiring the best talent. And yet, just as I said in the beginning, there are very few new words in the dictionary — and there are very few workforce solutions that are new, too.

We all know what traditional contingent staffing and strategic staffing looks like. More strategic solutions like workforce management, flexible resources, and the functional service provider (FSP) model — in addition to executive search, perm placement, and direct hire recruitment process outsourcing — are being offered not only by Kelly Services, but many other companies.

We need to approach the challenges with solutions in unique ways, turning them into poems, songs, and best-selling novels. We need workforce analysis output that can assist a corporation in becoming that rare new word in the dictionary that everyone is going to want to talk about.

Strategic workforce planning and analysis is a primary process that can help organizations mitigate the risk they see around


corners, and prepare for what the future brings.

Organizations such as the Human Capital Institute (HCI) have spent a decade designing methodologies and crafting highly advanced tools for workforce analytics that can be used by corporations like Kelly Services to dig deep into the capabilities of any corporation's current workforce.

From your current business plan to future business hopes, from how you segment your roles to an analysis of employee engagement tenure and turnover — a closer look at role value and headcount requirements can lead to efficient execution of the core processes of your company.

The development of talent, the acquisition of expertise, and the devotion to creating an engaging human capital supply was not a core competency of many of the corporations that I worked for over my two decades in this industry. But even then, it was one of the most essential needs, indicators, and factors for the success in all of our companies.

Yes, I see the future of innovation in our life-sciences industry to be multifaceted. There's no doubt in my mind that as I have moved through my career from drug development to people and solutions development, the realization of the importance of human capital and the expertise needed to execute workforce processes has never been greater. And yet, the true engagement of this process can still elude even the most innovative companies.

Our strongest days are ahead of us in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, and it is these great collaborative innovations with the strongest workforce solutions behind them that will get us there. 

Creating a more open drug development process for the future will ultimately lead to the new gold standards of treatment.

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