



The Insanity of Being Stuck

Businesses get stuck. It is inevitable – a natural occurrence in organizations, even for the great ones. Unfortunately, it's a challenge that leads to insanity or, "doing the same thing over and over, expecting new results." Worse, being stuck can develop into stagnation, which slows growth and prevents organizations from achieving competitive advantage.

Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, once said, "All of us think we see the world as it is; in fact, we see the world as we are." We develop mental images, or paradigms, of the way things are and we perceive this to be reality.

Within organizations, paradigms can lead to a state of "stuckness." We become trapped in a certain way of thinking, which blinds us to new possibilities. We become hostage to our strategy, our processes, our products, and our views of our industry.

Consider Infinium client, Milbank Manufacturing, a company with more than 80 years in the electric metering socket business. Seeking ways to grow into new markets, Milbank struggled to innovate beyond what they had always known and done for decades. They were stuck in paradigms that limited their creativity and ability to execute new ideas in a meaningful way.

Getting unstuck requires new thinking. It requires a paradigm shift that ignites a new mental image of our reality. There are many ways for organizations, and the individuals who lead them, to get unstuck and break the cycle of insanity. Here are three of the most common:

Ask new questions | Find momentum by asking questions that provoke new thinking. For instance, instead of pondering how your organization can grow from its existing foundation of success, ask, "If we were starting the business from scratch today, knowing what we know, how would we design our organization?" This subtle shift in perspective opens the discussion to new possibilities that were previously limited by old ways of thinking.

Challenge assumptions | Organizations, especially successful ones, find comfort in their "tried and true" approaches. After all, if it's worked countless times before why rock the boat? While at times there may be merit in this philosophy, it often gets organizations stuck. This was the case for the leaders at Milbank Manufacturing, who held the assumption, "We're in the electric metering business," for many years. Infinium helped them challenge that assumption to create a new reality, asking "What if we were a company that leads innovation in our industry?" This shift transformed their sleepy socket company into one that now produces cutting edge technology in its industry.

Ignite new conversations | It's called "death by meetings" for a reason. Organizations are killing creativity every day by rehashing old conversations around boardroom tables. Change it up! Infinium worked with a Fortune 500 client facing declining customer appeal. The company had invested in market research and felt they understood their customer, but struggled to satisfy their needs. To spark fresh dialogue, actors were brought in to personify each of the company's five customer segments. The process not only helped the team form an emotional connection to their customers, but also resulted in hundreds of new concepts that were filtered into ten big ideas to execute.

Getting unstuck means doing things differently, and possibly, feeling a bit uncomfortable in the process. It's not always easy to think the unthinkable, or connect the seemingly unrelated. Yet the rewards for doing so are multi-fold and significant, from growth found in new markets or new products and services to greater organizational effectiveness and a reenergized workforce.

Infinium ignites innovation and creativity to help organizations break the pattern of insanity and get unstuck.

What will you do today to break the pattern of insanity in your organization?