

Roger L. Firestien, Ph. D.



# insights into innovation

A NEWSLETTER TO HELP YOU BECOME MORE CREATIVE

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## Teach by Example, or, The Dark Side of the Force-ful Office Culture

While we may have trouble recognizing it (or even acknowledging its existence), every office, be it a business or organization, breeds some kind of culture. Now, I'm not referring to what's growing inside the back of your breakroom's refrigerator or around the edges of some of your employees' coffee mugs (you know who you are). I'm talking about the beliefs, traditions and values of the people in an organization. For some, these characteristics will be hard to discern. Others are painfully obvious and in need of a serious facelift.

While casual Fridays, organized company intramurals, bring your daughter-to-work day, and the dreaded company picnic can provide some slight benefits, to really improve the company and the outlook of its employees, changes must be made to the office organizational climate...

starting from the top.

### The Leader of the Pack

More than anyone else, it is the leader of the pack who sets the tone for his or her organization. It is he or she who has the power to shape the work environment—whether that environment nurtures creativity or crushes it. The climate of most organizations simply reflects the leader's attitudes and actions, for better or worse.

Travel with me a thousand years into the future, to a poorly run organization far, far away, to

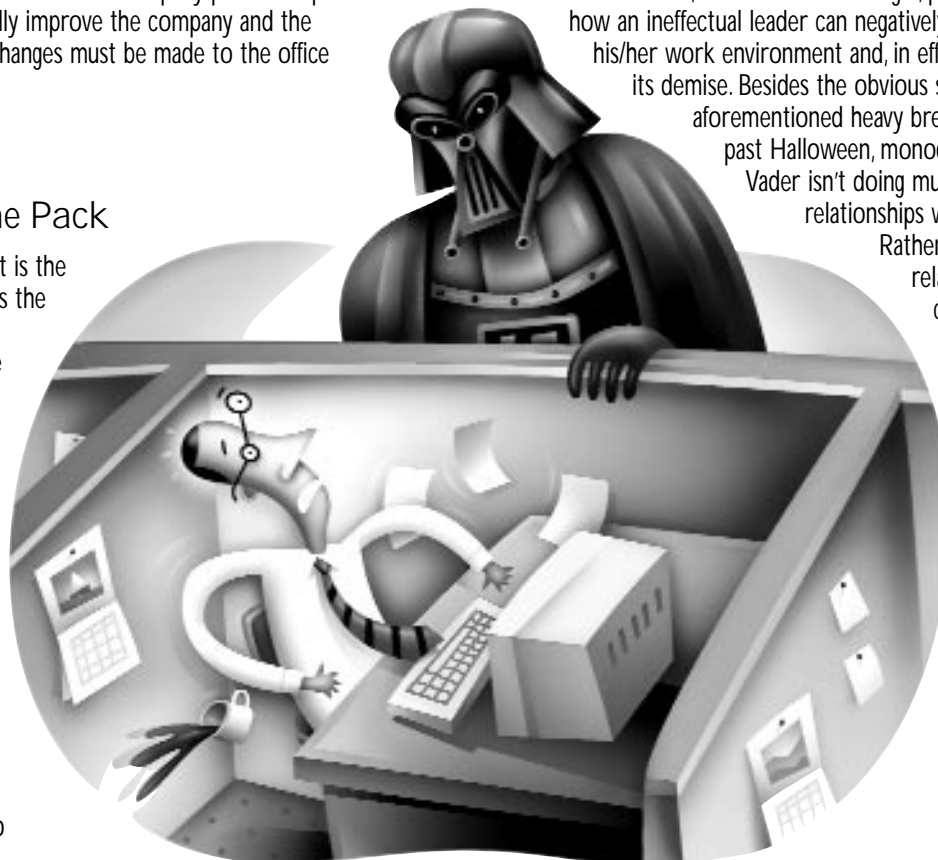
evaluate the "dark side" of a negative office environment. (Cue trombone section to begin *Emperor's March*.)

To this day, an army of goosebumps marches up and down my arm whenever I hear this sinister tune. I see the long, black cape. I hear the heavy breathing. I glimpse the disturbing metal mask and the ironclad fist of injustice.

It's the perfect example of how *not* to make friends and influence people.

Darth Vader, the anti-Dale Carnegie, provides a classic image of how an ineffectual leader can negatively impact the culture of his/her work environment and, in effect, violently bring it to its demise. Besides the obvious setbacks (the aforementioned heavy breathing, wearing masks past Halloween, monochromatic wardrobe), Mr. Vader isn't doing much to improve relationships with his fellow troopers.

Rather than establishing relationships of trust in a community safe for sharing ideas, the Ominous One promotes perpetual fear and trembling. (Notice how people scramble for shelter whenever he arrives on the scene? Not a good sign.) Whatever Vader wants, Vader gets. He leaves no room for debate or discussion on any



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# The Ten Factors of the CCQ

The Climate for Creativity Questionnaire was developed to better understand the organizational conditions of any given company. Through an extensive series of questions (50-item questionnaire consisting of ten dimensions of five items each) employees would be called upon to evaluate the overall attitude of the organization. From this study, the results should lead to positive discussion and direction toward key areas where the company can improve.

For your viewing pleasure, we present highlights of ten crucial factors in establishing a desired organizational environment.

## One: Challenge

*The emotional involvement of the members of the organization in its operations and goals.* If people are challenged in their work and enjoy the company of others, they are more likely to be productive and committed to the organization. But if an employee hates his job because of its lack of challenge and feels alienated by the other workers, he is more inclined to leave the firm dissatisfied and in the end, leave the firm altogether.

## Two: Freedom

*The independence in behavior exerted by the people in the organization.* Healthy work environments allow employees the freedom to share their ideas and converse with one another, both in a casual and professional manner. When employees do not receive this sense of security, they are prone to work strictly by the rules. Their work and attitude becomes very narrow-minded.

## Three: Idea Support

*The ways new ideas are treated.* In a supportive climate, ideas and suggestions are received in an attentive and positive way by bosses and coworkers. In an unsupportive climate, ideas and suggestions are constantly held under a microscope and are analyzed under extreme conditions, leaving workers with the sense that dumb questions and dumb answers do exist and are not to be shared.

## Four: Trust/Openness

*The emotional safety in relationships.* Same applies to family, friends and other trust-building relationships. With trust, comes security. Without trust, workers are more inclined not to share their ideas. They become introverted and afraid of others, especially with management. Open communication is key.

## Five: Dynamism/Liveliness

*The eventfulness of life in the organization.* Remember how much fun school was when the teacher surprised the class with guest visitors, unannounced field trips and afternoon dessert treats? Well, why should your office be any different? When an office culture buzzes with new ideas and innovations, people are excited to explore the possibilities, work hard, improve their own department's output and attempt the unthinkable—i.e., grow. Isn't that what your teacher was striving for in the first place?

*continued from page 1*

business matter or strategy. Few can question his authority, and those who unwisely choose to do so inevitably pay for their insolence. Vader's voice, like many poor managers, is the final word.

And how do these abuses of power, control, and dominance impact his company's culture? As renowned sportscaster Warner Wolfe bellows, "Let's go to the videotape!"

Vader's employees operate out of and are motivated by fear. For these individuals, job security is a fictional concept. Promotions come but once every black moon, and the only perks of staying on board with the company are staying on board, literally.

Not exactly a climate for growth.

And yet, not too far from some corporate climates I've witnessed.

## Enter the CCQ

So what can be done to alter this type of dark-side organization? First, you have to understand what the corporate climate is. In simple terms, according to Goran Ekvall, "climate" is the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors which characterize life in an organization. Although climate is not identical to organizational culture, it can be regarded as a manifestation of culture in the visible and audible behavior patterns of the organizational members.

Climate influences organizational processes such as problem-solving, decision-making, communications, coordination, and controlling, as well as the psychological processes of learning, creating, motivation, and commitment.

So what is the climate for creativity in an organization? Can we measure it? If so, can we enhance it for optimum creative productivity? Could we also help leaders to set the organizational climate that will best grow their companies? The answer to all of these questions is, Yes—thanks to our friend Ekvall and his work on the Climate for Creativity Questionnaire (CCQ).

The Climate for Creativity Questionnaire grew out of a research program that began in Sweden during the 1980s on the organizational conditions that stimulate or hamper creativity and innovation. The CCQ is a fifty-item questionnaire, consisting of ten dimensions of five items each. According to

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# Orange dot marks the spot for success

It's really true—the little things in life matter most.

The laugh of a happy child. A warm reception from a wagging, four-legged companion. The rich color of an orange sticker on a floral delivery card.

Not sure about that last one? Then you haven't spoken with Paul Godbout, store owner and manager of Jacque's Floral Shop & Garden Center in Manchester, New Hampshire. About three years ago, Paul and his wife stumbled upon a technique that revolutionized his 24-year-old nursery business—all because he made room for new ideas.

Paul's adventure into success began in 1997 when he and his wife attended a Y.O.M. (young owner-manager's) seminar sponsored by Florist Transworld Delivery (FTD) in Palm Springs, California. It was here, amid a serene landscape of white sand and lush green oceans, that the Godbouts discovered a "new way to get information and to attack a problem"—something they learned from the redoubtable (never thought you'd see such a fancy word *here*, did you?) Dr. Roger Firestien.

"We love change, so when we listened to Roger, we thought it was great," says Paul. "Both my wife and I thought it was a great presentation. We were anxious to put it to use when we got back to the shop."

Paul had never before imagined taking time out to write down his thoughts and scheme out a game plan. He was used to solving problems by the "seat of his pants" and by drawing on old habits. But that didn't gain him the advantage he needed.

"A lot of times we do things without knowing why we do 'em," Paul says. "We just kind of do 'em. You know, it's kind of like when you throw something against the wall and maybe something will stick."

But after attending Roger's seminar, Paul's *modus operandi* shifted. No longer did he haphazardly sling around ideas for solving problems, like a Jackson Pollack might hurl paint against a broad canvas in hopes of creating something magnificent. Now he became more like a Van Gogh, a detail-driven virtuoso meticulously working at his sunflowers—a process still full of risks and experimentation, but now helped by a method that can be harnessed to solve company problems.

"This is really a good way to attack a problem, to write something down," says Paul. "And the more you write, the more you think about something. It just

seems like one idea leads to another idea, which leads to another idea. Even though most of the ideas are wacked out—or I guess you would say, 'can't use them'—there are always one or two gems that come forward. After we attended the seminar, it just seemed as if almost anything was open. Roger made it broad enough so that we could attack almost any problem creatively."

Paul returned home with vigor and determination, introducing some new methods at his company's monthly employee meetings. To start, he addressed three key store issues: delivery problems (merchandise not arriving on time); sales problems; and design problems (not having certain colors or flowers readily available for production). Instead of allowing each department to critique its own shortcomings, Paul invited employees from other areas to give outside input.

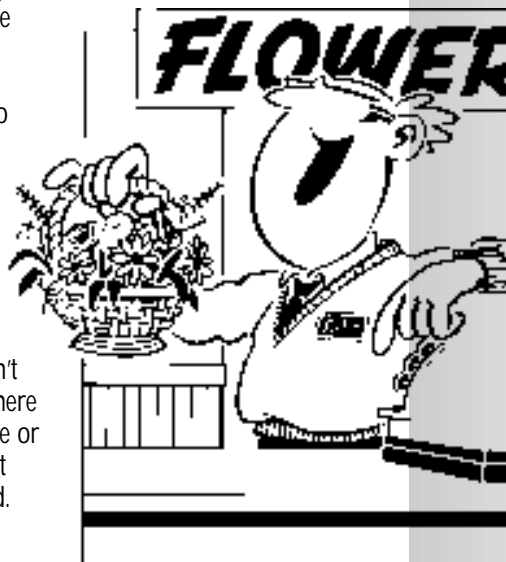
"When we switched everything around, it was amazing the amount of stuff that someone came up with from a different department," Paul declares. He was astounded by how each division uniquely perceived the business and how employees processed and solved dilemmas not their own. He then asked his crew to write down 30 things the sales department could do to solve its problems. The artists went to

## Plan now to chase those creative goblins away!

After a long, cold Winter, what could be better than a sunny Spring? Start making plans now to attend a unique three-day event titled *Unleashing the Power of Creativity*, to be held April 17-19, 2001, at the Garden Place Hotel in Williamsville, New York—a scant ten minutes from the new Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

Our own Dr. Roger L. Firestien will lead the first two days of the conference (and then he has to scoot to find some scandalous swimming trunks for the summer). Participants will learn the Creative Problem Solving process and how to apply it in order to solve problems encountered in their professional or personal life. Cost for the program is \$895, which includes—well, you'll just have to read the brochure, won't you? For full details and registration information,

see the brochure mailed with this edition of I<sup>3</sup>.



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## Deep Thoughts of Growth

Philosopher and humorist Jack Handy said it best: "Maybe in order to understand mankind, we have to look at the word itself. *Mankind*. Basically, it's made up of two separate words: 'mank' and 'ind.' What do these words mean? It's a mystery, and that's why so is mankind."

True, 'tis such a mystery. And in light of this Deep Thought, let us take this time to welcome more of mankind into our mysteriously growing circle of Official I<sup>3</sup> Readers.

(Note: we're not really mysterious, just big fans of Canada and her bacon.)

- GE Capital
- International Boundary Water Commission
- Federal Executive Institute
- Times-Mirror Leadership Institute for Managers
- United States Department of the Treasury
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- US AID
- General Mills
- PaineWebber

Welcome, one and all!



## Here's a climate worth investigating

You want *growth*?

You want *success*?

You want *creative advantage*?

Then you want Roger Firestien's *Brilliant, Simply Brilliant!*

This delightful five-part video presentation is especially designed to jump-start the creative urges in everyone. Five brilliant ideas are memorably showcased to demonstrate how the creative process can work for anyone interested in growing their business.

The five installments—*Over and Outta Here*;



There's *Something About Judy*; *Plastic Gold*; *Play It Again, Vin!*; and *Thinking*

*Inside the Box*—are drawn from widely differing sectors of business and demonstrate how the creative process can be applied to benefit anyone's bottom line. Each session lasts approximately six minutes and is perfected to open or close meetings.

Plant some golden seed for a golden harvest and order your copy today! Call 1-888-777-9144 to arrange a preview.

## Orange dot marks the spot *(continued)*

work, like a thunderbolt of inspiration, filling their canvases with brilliant colors and "off the wall" ideas. And a welcome storm began to brew inside Jacque's Floral Shop.

"The drivers came up with some really clever insights," Paul said. "Because it wasn't 'their' problem, they weren't bogged down. They'd just blurt stuff out."

Through this free-form, unconventional way of conducting business, employees were not only able to solve problems, but actually laughed at themselves and had fun.

In a recent meeting, employees evaluated policies for a just-opened store. Here, drivers had to tell the sales people how to solve their problems and the sales people had to tell the delivery folks how to do their jobs. Through this "round robin" discussion, workers not only gained a better understanding of the company, they also gained some fascinating insight from one of their drivers—who's now a sales rep. Not only did she shift positions, she shifted the entire floral business. Here's how.

Some deliveries are time-sensitive. That is, they need to be delivered at a particular time of day. That information was dutifully recorded on a delivery card. But when a delivery person had to juggle 25 or more such cards, the information sometimes got overlooked. This former driver suggested that an orange dot be affixed to such cards, calling attention to their crucial information. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, it is. Yet it

revolutionized the entire order/delivery process. From this little idea sprung several more gems, including different colored dots for various delivery days: blue (Thursday); yellow (Friday); green (Saturday); red (Sunday). The new system gets especially heavy use during the holidays when an exhaustive number of advance orders are taken.

"The new system ensures that we get everything delivered on time," Paul explains. "Even handwriting the delivery time or typing it on the card had no effect. But that little orange dot was like a beacon. Now the driver knows, *Oh yeah, there's a problem with this little sucker. There's an orange dot on it. That stupid little dot has made a tremendous impact.*"

Stupid? We should all be so stupid. Since the advent of the dot, Jacque's flowers has sprung into the ranks of the top 65 FTD florists in the country. What used to be a small, two man operation has now blossomed into a 33 person, lean, mean, flower power machine.

"You never stop learning, and there's always a better way of doing it," Paul says. "No matter how you've done it in the past, and even if you've been the most successful florist in the history of floristry ... there's still a better way. You just have to be out there, constantly, everyday, trying to figure out what that better way is."

Sometimes, that "better way" is a tiny thing that makes a huge difference.

So I wonder—what might a little orange dot do for *your* business?

## Teach by Example *(continued)*

Ekvall, the CCQ is grounded in some basic construction principles. First, it is an organizational measure, not an individual one. The respondent is addressed as an observer of the life in the organization. She is asked to tell how people in the workplace usually behave; she is not to report about her own behavior, nor communicate her personal feelings. This questionnaire is not a job satisfaction inventory. There is no "I" or "me" in the items. A consequence of this objective conception of climate is that the respondent is requested to report on common behavior, not on common opinions. A typical item might be phrased, "It is common here for people to take initiatives of their own."

### Start at the Top

In attempting to apply creativity skills, it is crucial that top management is trained first. They should also be trained the most. This involvement is important because when top managers are trained, they are then in a position to teach their subordinates, coach the application, and reinforce the use of creativity skills.

As a supervisor or as a manager, it's important that you walk the talk (not the *Emperor's March*) and that you model the behavior you are trying to create. If creativity is important to you, then you have to be creative.

You need to struggle with the crazy ideas and show your people that it is acceptable not to have the "correct" answer all the time. In this way you encourage your staff to experiment with novel ideas. Your people are watching you lead, and however you lead, they will follow. By not having all the ideas, all the time, for all situations, you create a sense of purpose and a need for others to develop their abilities.

### The Mazda Connection

In the summer of 1986, I received a call from Ken Kumiega, who had just been hired as director of training and development for Mazda Motor Manufacturing, USA. As the sixth person hired among the launch team of this new organization, it was Ken's job to develop a work environment and to train the anticipated 3,500 workers that Mazda would hire to build the MX-6, the Ford Probe, and the Mazda 626. The Flatrock, Michigan plant would

be Mazda's first auto manufacturing enterprise in the U.S. As such, Japanese management had some concerns, along with excitement.

Mazda wanted to create a new culture for building cars. It intended to do this through extensive training and development, an organizational system based on teams, and through innovative screening and hiring practices. The workers hired to build the cars would come from three areas: (1) individuals with previous experience in the automobile manufacturing industry; (2) people with unrelated experience in the industry (i.e., individuals in leasing or car sales); and (3) people with no experience in the industry. It would not be uncommon for a housewife to be hired to run a state-of-the-art automatic transfer steel stamping press.

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## The Ten Factors of the CCQ *(continued)*

### Six: Playfulness/Humor

*The spontaneity and ease displayed in an organization, characterized by a relaxed atmosphere with jokes and laughter.* The opposite: prison. Work should not be prison. It shouldn't be a comedy club either, unless, of course, your company's product is making comedy recordings.

### Seven: Debates

*The interaction and clashes between viewpoints, ideas, and differing experiences and knowledge.* Whenever someone mentions the word "debate," most people automatically assume the worst. Hostility. Tension. Migraine, but this does not have to be true. Much like the art of conversation, people in your office need to master the art of debate and understand its mechanics and functionality. Debates should lead to new discoveries, not to the Rocky theme.

### Eight: Conflicts

*The presence of personal and emotional tensions (in contrast with idea tensions) in the organization.* Conflict. Drama. It's all the same. Learn how to control it and it won't control you.

### Nine: Risk-Taking

*The tolerance for uncertainty in an organization.* Risks are what this country was founded on. They're also what a lot of successful companies have been built on. If an organization can begin to understand how to take healthy risks, it will develop stronger trust in itself and in the idea of exploring new territories—like its own Plymouth Rock.

### Ten: Idea Time

*The amount of time people can use (and do use) for developing new ideas.* A must. Compared to the other factors, this issue is a learned discipline. Making time to develop new ideas is not a natural office experience, but if you are willing to set aside company time to ponder such new concepts and "what ifs," the results could be downright explosive. You'll never know unless you try.

## How to prevent a mailbox from exceeding its full potential

Most of us will experience a variety of growth spurts throughout our lives. We'll outgrow our clothes. Outgrow our shoes. Outgrow our beds. Our toys. And, if we're not too careful in establishing a good rapport and a healthy relationship with our readers, our welcome.

This we do not want to do.

So in an attempt to avoid overstuffing your mailbox with any more unwanted pearls of wisdom, we here at I3 offer this creative two-part solution to preventing further spillage from your plump mail receptacle:

1. Contact us by phone, fax, mail or e-mail (information at the bottom of each page of this highly-cultivated text) and ask us to keep our deeply-rooted wisdom to ourselves. Do that, and we'll be sure to immediately correct the delivery error and make certain your consumer-driven, drivle-filled junk mail receptacle never again comes face to face with our beknighted publication.

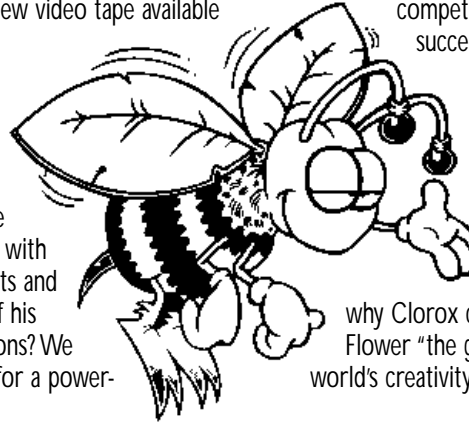
2. Dispose of the rubbish outside in an area where you do not want to reap any growth.



## Get a little taste of honey

Ummmmm, ummmmm, *good!* That's what the honey bees would say if they could get a snootful of the heavenly nectar served up by our own Dr. Roger L. Firestien in a preview video tape available to you for the asking.

Send for the tape today, and you'll quickly find out what sweetness is really all about. Why not plant yourself in front of the tube for a few delightful minutes with Mr. Fun himself as he delights and informs audiences at one of his popular seminar presentations? We think it'll wet your whistle for a power-



packed personal appearance, full of all the energy and idea-generating inspiration that helps businesses across the globe find the competitive edge they need to succeed.

To get your copy of the no-obligation demo tape, just write or call one of the numbers listed in the copyright line at the bottom of the page. And soon you'll see for yourself

why Clorox calls our Fragrant Little Flower "the gold standard" among the world's creativity experts.

## Teach by Example *(continued)*

Every one of the 3,500 employees was to be trained in a number of programs: quality tools, continuous improvement, how to work effectively in teams, Creative Problem Solving, along with job-specific technical training. My role was to develop a one-day training program in Creative Problem Solving to be delivered to members of the training staff. They, in turn, would train all the new hires.

Ken spent close to \$37 million of his \$42 million budget to train members and prepare the organization to be a world leader in automobile manufacturing. So what did he get for his money?

The first production model of the 1988 626LX came off the line at 9:01 A.M. on September 1, 1987—right on schedule. Later, when I interviewed Ken about his work at Mazda and asked him to relate it to the use of creativity, he gave me what is today Kumiega's model for "creative output": "Creativity Skills + Environment + Application = Creative Output."

"When we evaluated the effects of this approach," says Ken, "we found that 'creative output' people came up to speed faster in terms of meeting productivity and quality levels by days,

not simply by minutes." Member contribution was key to the overall approach to continuous quality improvement, Ken said.

"When you look at a company such as Mazda that values improvement in terms of minutes and seconds—and when the organization was able to reach quality and productivity target levels in fewer days—these results are significant," Ken concluded.

That's what consciously developing a creativity-friendly environment did for Mazda. And there's no reason it can't do the same for you.

But you've got to choose to make it happen. Otherwise . . . is that the Emperor's March I hear?

Nothing has ever  
been learned without a  
risk being involved.

- unknown

# Feels like your company's all thumbs? Why not have the Green Thumb pay a visit?

When it comes to creativity, doesn't it seem as if some companies get all the breaks? (No, I'm not referring to extended lunch breaks or coffee breaks here.) I'm talking about luck, those genuine moments of inspiration filled with moments of great insight and vision. Why is that? Why do some people get all the luck while others, well, don't? Do they possess more talent, more skills, better confections in the breakroom?

Or ... maybe it's because they don't look at their problems through the same colored glasses as others. Maybe it's because they invited some fresh eyes to take a look at their puzzling dilemma. Maybe it's because they discovered someone who has a green thumb for creativity

Maybe it's because they've gotten to know Roger L. Firestien, Ph.D.

If you're willing to roll up your sleeves and get some real dirt under your nails for a creative session or two, then consider scheduling Dr. Firestien for your company's next meeting. When it comes to inspiring companies to become more creative in the workplace, Roger knows the secrets that really work. He not only has lovely, verdant digits, he is a noted speaker, author, and consultant



who annually trains thousands of people throughout North and South America and Europe in the uniquely effective techniques of Creative Problem Solving. His interactive programs help participants to

harness and utilize their innate creativity.

Roger is President of Innovation Resources, Inc., and Associate Professor at the Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, NY. Through forty years of



intensive research, Roger is convinced that everybody is creative and that everybody can learn to be even more creative if they just give themselves a chance to discover those greener pastures within. His love for developing Creative Problem Solving sessions has inspired countless numbers to help weed out the challenges and apply business-enhancing knowledge in the following areas:

- Strategic planning
- How and when to reward achievement
- New product development
- Problem solving
- Marketing planning

Dr. Firestien also assists business people to:

- Generate lots of innovative ideas that create results
- Understand and clarify problems to solve the right problem
- Strengthen solutions and plan for implementation
- Make efficient and effective use of meeting time
- Lead teams and groups creatively and effectively

For more information, call 716-631-3564 (e-mail: [Inov8Group@aol.com](mailto:Inov8Group@aol.com)).

## Visit us on the web!

This just in . . .

Somewhere in Cyberspace (UPO) — A breakthrough website has been detected on the worldwide web, according to experts surveying the Internet.

"Yah, dat's sum goot place, ya know," said Olaf Svenburgh of the Uppsala Institute for Discovery of Really Cool Websites. "Ve haven't seen nothing like dat since, vell, for a long, long time. Ya can't beat it, ya know."

Svenburgh was referring to the site found at [www.RogerFirestien.com](http://www.RogerFirestien.com), a collection of outstanding resources and creative wisdom seldom encountered anywhere in the Milky Way galaxy. The site updates readers on current seminars and programs offered by Dr. Roger L. Firestien, Ph.D., and also offers information on how to acquire valuable books, videos and other business-enhancing paraphernalia.

"Ve just can't say enough about dis place," Svenburgh concluded. "You just have to see it for yerself. You betcha."



**Credits:**

## Grower's Market

Roger L. Firestien, Ph. D.: Green Thumb  
Deb Wirth: Green Thumb's fiancée  
Steve Halliday: Weedy word wacker  
Lisa Halliday: Martha Stewart of Weed Editing  
Shane Ewald: Copy grower  
Krieg Barrie: Produce Illustrator  
Lois Donovan: Quality control engineer  
Gary Gorski: E-Gardener  
Blair Miller: Windy City gardener  
Sara Thurber: Gardener's consultant  
Bruce Kratzenberg: Cleary and Company  
Travel: For those who can't grow wings  
Tracey Jung: Farmer's Town Runner  
Jerry Mach: Gardener of Music  
Steven Fox: Vintner & Winemaker  
Jonathan Vehar: West Coast gardener  
Sharp Printing: Publishes Farmer's Almanac  
Dave Schutte: Cultivates produce for  
Creekview Restaurant  
Chris Grivas: Prevents nasty green things  
from growing in New York University  
Hospital

# Fall back? Spring ahead? Oh, heck, just fall into this forward-looking edition of I<sup>3</sup>!

- Learn how to cultivate a creative work culture that produces high results!
- Discover how Dr. Firestien's seminars planted one nugget of an idea for a blossoming small business!
- Find out what the heck is a CCQ!
- And still more great sunlight from today's top grower of creativity, Mr. Green Thumb himself!



The perfect compliment for onrushing holidays!

Looking for something yummy to read while breathlessly awaiting the delicious holiday season? Then look no further! Plunge right into this sweet new edition of *Insights Into Innovation!* It's totally scrumptious, totally energizing and totally what you need to prepare for all your end-of-the-year festivities!

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