



Why Using the Creatrix® Makes A Difference in the Innovative Capacity of Organizations, Teams and Leaders

By Jacqueline Byrd, Ph.D. & Sarah Miller Caldicott

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Creating and then sustaining innovation momentum stand as two of the biggest challenges faced by business leaders today. The search for tools, methods and processes to assist in addressing these challenges can seem like the search for the Holy Grail itself.

Forty years ago, Dr. Richard Byrd began researching the qualities of successful innovators. His findings prompted him to identify two constructs that measure innovation—creativity and risk taking. From these core insights, Dr. Byrd developed a robust assessment tool called the Creatrix®. The Creatrix is a 53-question assessment designed to provide insight into the innovative capacity of individuals, teams and organizations.

Today, the Creatrix reflects data captured from over 70,000 executives in organizations of all sizes, from every industry, all over the world. The database represented by the Creatrix is highly robust, and has been normed three times over the years. Today, the foundational principles of the Creatrix are being continued by Dr. Jacqueline Byrd, author of *The Innovation Equation*.

This article briefly: describes the underpinnings of the Creatrix; offers evidence of how individuals, teams, and organizations have been positively impacted by data generated from the Creatrix assessment; and shows visual examples of Creatrix charts used by individuals and teams.

Baseline Measures of the Creatrix

Over the last decade, Dr. Jacqueline Byrd added another dimension to the Creatrix assessment. The Creatrix now includes diagnostic output to guide teams and organizations on how they can ignite and sustain innovation over the long term. She has delved deeply into both creativity and risk taking, discerning that Creativity is comprised of four core “drivers” and Risk Taking is comprised of three. They are as follows:

CREATIVITY DRIVERS

Ambiguity
Independent
Inner-directed
Uniqueness

RISK TAKING DRIVERS

Authentic
Resilient
Self-acceptance

(Note: Definitions of each driver are included in the Appendix to this article.)



By taking the Creatrix assessment, individuals can determine whether Creativity and/or Risk Taking are stronger for them. This in turn enables individuals – and their leaders – to assess which aspects of the innovation process and which areas of the execution process are strongest for them.

Individual results from the Creatrix can be aggregated in any way the organization desires. Creatrix results can be clustered by work team, groups of “high potential” employees, senior leadership staff, and virtually any other combination that the organization wishes to

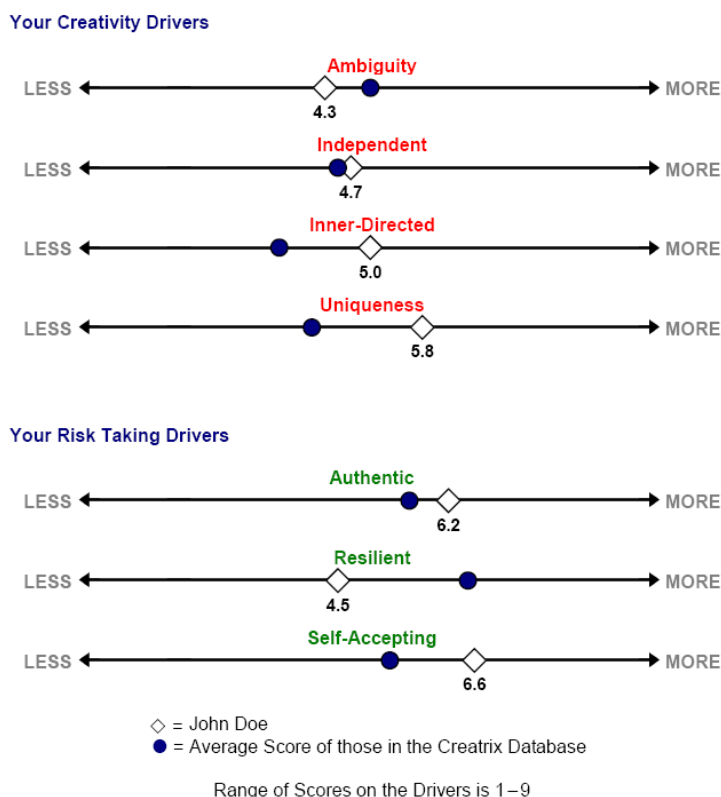
Creatrix Chart of an Individual Whose Profile Is “Synthesizer”

understand in more depth. Clustering of this nature can be highly revealing of where problems lie in the ability of organizations to drive innovation forward successfully. The Creatrix can also identify issues with the way the organization is selecting leaders for the innovation process, or how future innovation leaders are being groomed.

Many high-impact charts – such as those shown above and on the following pages – are generated by the Creatrix. These charts allow individuals to see how they score on Creativity and Risk Taking, and how they can shift to increase the presence of particular drivers with lower than average scores. After working with diagnostic data for a period of three to six months, it is possible to see movement in an individual’s Creatrix scores. Through skilled coaching, employees can learn to think and operate differently, and develop a greater sensitivity to how their Creativity and Risk-taking drivers impact others around them.

Importantly, it is also possible to use output from the Creatrix to shift the composition of teams, reflecting a better balance of the innovation-driving or execution-driving skills required by that team. As new people are hired, the Creatrix can be offered to ensure that individuals are receiving the type of development and project exposure they need most to fulfill the needs of the organization, and to ensure there is a diversity of profiles represented within the operation.

The following chart illustrates the Creatrix Driver Table for John Doe. It clearly shows where John is strong and where he might need assistance from others who are stronger in drivers that he is not. For example, John (scores shown by the diamond-shaped icon) is strong on the Inner-directed Driver. This means that he can come up with new ideas—ideas that other people may not think of. But, he may need a little help in being Resilient when his ideas are not readily embraced by others. As well, John scored lower than average on Ambiguity, signaling a need to increase his comfort level working in situations where a pathway forward may not already be prescribed. Understanding how to leverage insights generated by the Creatrix can make a team stronger throughout the innovation process.



How Creatrix Can Change the Culture of an Organization

One of the largest privately held corporations in the world has used Creatrix for over 6 years. This organization has concluded that because of Creatrix...

- Awareness of the importance of innovation across the organization has grown significantly.

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- People and teams have gained an understanding of the behaviors that lead to innovation.
- Employees have realized that they all own innovation—it is not just R & D's job.
- Barriers that previously inhibited innovation have been removed.
- Powerful teams have been assembled to work on innovative solutions to solve the organization's most pressing problems.

Creatrix Can Be Used by Teams to Strengthen Operating Style

One of the most powerful areas of impact generated by the Creatrix is its ability to create team scores. In many cases, teams believe they are well-suited or well-aligned to address the problem(s) they have been given. This is often particularly true of highly technical teams, where individual members have extensive training or education. These individuals often believe they are pushing forward proactively to solve problems in innovative ways.

The Creatrix offers objectivity in such situations. This objectivity can be particularly helpful when a team is not performing well, but refuses to acknowledge there is a problem. For example, an engineering team in Europe couldn't believe their eyes when they saw their Creatrix profile. The team scored low on both Creativity and Risk Taking, and yet they considered themselves a highly innovative group. Because they were working on what they considered to be innovative technology within an innovative company, they considered themselves to be innovative!

However, the Creatrix revealed that this team was primarily guided by knowledge associated with past technical training. It was not creatively pushing the boundaries of possible new solution sets. The Creatrix helped them see their results in a new light. They were convinced when they saw their team's data displayed graphically. For employees, who prefer to have data available as part of their work style, the Creatrix proves powerful because it generates robust data sets for every individual and team assessment.

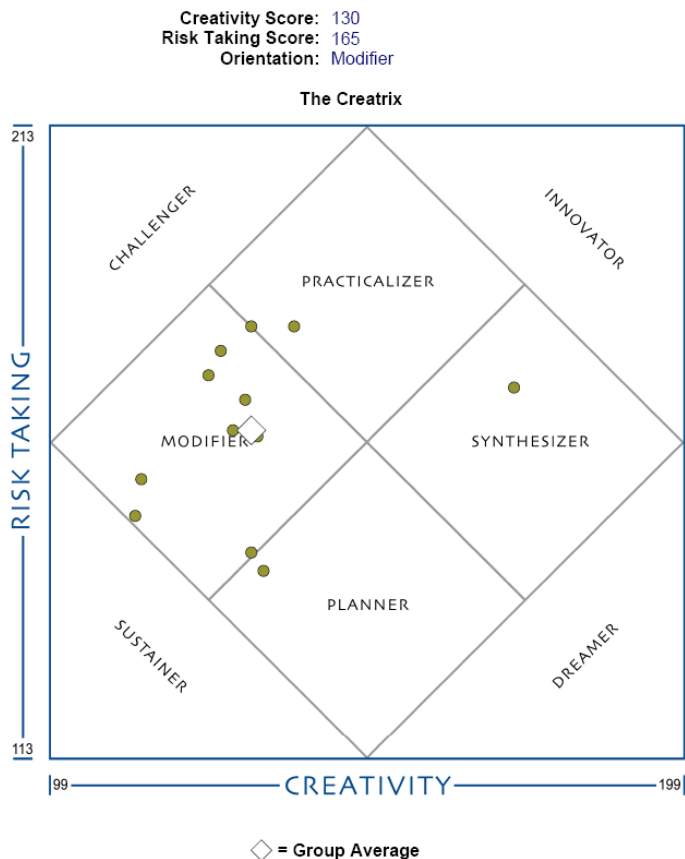
Creatrix Can Be Used to Enhance Leadership Development

While Creativity and Risk Taking have always been critical to effective leadership, they are particularly crucial during tough economic times. Creatrix can help leadership teams pinpoint their propensity for Creativity or Risk Taking, and understand how the leadership team scores in the underlying drivers of each.

Senior leaders often have a deeply entrenched idea of what they believe their strengths are. It can be hard to shift these perspectives without compelling data. The Creatrix can serve as a powerful tool and process to help reassess the viewpoint of senior leadership regarding their postures toward Creativity and Risk Taking.

Recently, the leadership team within a high-profile Civil Engineering company conducted a Creatrix assessment within its own senior ranks to determine why the organization was not able to make better progress in its innovation initiatives. For over two years the company continued to have its business slowly eroded by their primary competitor.

The Creatrix chart below displays the scores of this senior leadership team:



The chart reveals that most of the team members fall into a more execution-oriented profile than an innovation-driving profile. The "group average" (see diamond above) places the team's average score in the "Modifier" section of the chart. This is typically a profile which excels in incremental change, but not breakthrough change. By noting that the group had a cluster of scores in the Modifier area, the team realized that they lacked the creativity, as a group, necessary to really drive innovation the way they wished.

The Creatrix opened up a completely different discussion for this leadership team and changed the way they operated together, almost immediately.

- First, the leadership group recognized that the one individual who scored as a Synthesizer often had really creative ideas, but they had been dismissing his ideas as 'too different.' When they saw his results and recognized their own behaviors, it changed not only the way they saw him but how they saw themselves in relation to him.
- Second, the CEO of the organization - who scored as a low 'Modifier' - realized he was less risk-oriented than virtually all the other team members. His risk profile was getting in the way of moving the business forward. He knew that he'd have to trust others' risk-taking abilities and be prepared to stretch his Creatrix Drivers for the sake of growing the business.
- And probably the most significant insight for this team was that they needed to depend on others within the organization that might be more creative to help ignite new ways of thinking.

Conclusion

In a recent IBM study of 1500 global CEO's, two of the conclusions offer important capstones to this article:

- Creativity has to be instilled throughout the organization because of the highly complex and global business environment we live in today. Every individual needs to be made more aware of his or her own creative capacities, and to leverage these in daily work activities.
- New perspectives are required to develop creative and innovative ways of managing an organization's structure, finances, people and strategy. The ability of leaders and managers to operate innovatively, leveraging their creativity and risk taking within an organization is a crucial source of success today.

The IBM study offers organizations a call to action. Creativity is crucial to an organization's long term survival and ability to thrive in a complex world. As we've illustrated throughout this article, the Creatrix provides not only the necessary insight and understanding of the innovative capacities of an organization, it offers teams and individuals the ability to delve into multiple facets of creativity and risk taking to drive stronger individual and team performance.

Data from the Creatrix offers insight into how teams can be better balanced to deliver greater innovation power and sustain innovation momentum, driving innovative-capacity over the long term.

Note: Sarah Miller Caldicott, co-author of this article, is a certified Creatrix consultant. She is a great grandniece of Thomas Edison, MBA, and co-author of "Innovate Like Edison," released by Dutton Penguin in October 2007.

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Appendix

SUMMARY – THE SEVEN DRIVERS WITHIN THE CREATRIX®

Below is a summary of the seven drivers which shape the 8 Orientations tracked by the Creatrix innovation assessment. The seven drivers map out along two core vectors: Creativity and Risk Taking.

The Creatrix helps individuals and groups determine where they score relative to each driver.

CREATIVITY

1. **Ambiguity** – Individual possesses the ability to operate within a context of uncertainty or vagueness. Individual can achieve success without significant infrastructure or pre-existing resources.
2. **Independent** – Individual can move forward without being solely subject to the control, influence, or determinations of others. Individual can generate ideas or concepts without input from others, but is willing to share such ideas when asked.
3. **Inner-directed** – Individual sets personal goals and determines personal expectations of performance rather than solely relying on others to set goals and expectations for them.
4. **Uniqueness** – Individuals appreciate and value the different qualities within his or herself, as well as observes and appreciates the unique qualities of others.

RISK TAKING

1. **Authentic** – Individual supports his or her words with actions (ie. “Walking their talk”). Individual is willing to express his or her opinion on subjects even when such an opinion may cause controversy.
2. **Resilient** – Individual has the capacity to rebound, learn, and successfully adapt even when faced with adversity and stress.
3. **Self-accepting** – The individual recognizes strengths as well as gaps in his or her own character. Individual is willing to move on when he or she has experienced failures, versus dwelling unduly on past errors or faults. Individual learns from synthesizing difficult experiences versus getting caught up in a cycle of self-blame.