Balancing Production Capability

by Bill Poston

I teach a leadership class at Trinity University on Thursdays. Early in the semester, I was rereading Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* in preparation for class. We have a lot of fun talking with student leaders about time management and “putting first things first.”

In the book’s overview, Covey introduces the concept of differentiating “production” from “production capability.” Production equates to golden eggs and production capability is the goose that lays them. He warns that we must balance our attention between the two or risk killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

In innovation, we spend the vast majority of our money, time, and management attention on the outputs of our product development processes. We are focused on production. However, today’s success is tomorrow’s base, so we never get a break that allows us to pay attention to our production capabilities. I call this the “too busy to get better” problem.

If you want to develop the ability to produce golden eggs on a daily basis, I suggest that you start to balance your investment and attention between the things that are in your innovation pipeline and the capabilities that are required to sustain the productive capacity of your innovation engine over time.

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For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill's latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.