Once we have a good portfolio analyst onboard, the next role I suggest filling is that of an innovation performance analyst. If you believe old Drucker axiom that you can’t manage what you can’t measure, then we need to get some performance dashboards in place as soon as possible. An innovation performance analyst is a critical early member of the corporate innovation team.

A measure as simple as incremental net revenue from new products becomes almost impossible to track when there are 39 different ERP systems, global unit of measure differences, hundreds of SKUs for the same thing, rolling launch dates, and currency translation issues.

Normalizing information and beating it into a form that resembles real metrics can be a long-term project that requires the cooperation of business units, regional leadership, IT and finance. It may take the performance analyst several years to perfect an innovation management dashboard.

It is the job of the innovation performance analyst to design the scorecard and then build the capabilities to collect the information necessary to feed the management dashboard. Creating this system is an incremental process that ultimately has no end. The more reliable information we can create, the greater the appetite for more and better performance metrics will arise.

While it might be viewed as self-serving to focus on creating a method for proving your value, I wouldn’t wait too long to put this capability in place. Innovation is the last great unmanaged business function. After all, you can’t manage what you can’t measure…and you can’t brag about it either.
What's your view? Add your question or comment
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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.