

# Four Behaviors that Fuel Innovation

## Unleash Commitments, Requests and Offers to get the Innovation Results you Seek

by Michael Glessner

Getting innovation right is a challenge for most businesses and leaders. There are [specific actions an innovation leader can encourage](#) to help guide the organic efforts of their firm. Yet if bad habits or poor execution exist, most of these efforts will fail to produce the step change in sustained innovation results that are the goal. My colleague Scott Gamble advocates [learning from past projects](#) and this series of articles will demonstrate that concept.

The most logical place to start this discussion is with several of the key behaviors needed to win at innovation over the long term. In effective organizations, these behaviors are evident within new product development (NPD) projects, at gate reviews, at portfolio reviews, and during process improvement projects driving systemic change. Lack of these behaviors will inhibit innovation results again and again.

### Four Behaviors that Fuel Innovation

1. **Make commitments** – “What, from me, by when” as a means to directly communicate what you are doing for the effort. Commitments are a basic building block of successful planning and execution. No plan is complete if the elements are not committed to by individuals who will deliver.
2. **Make requests** – “What, from whom, by when” is the most direct path to create commitments for the proactive manager. Anyone in the organization can make a request of anyone else. The response by the recipient of a request is either to accept it (new commitment), decline it, or counter the request. This dialogue is a fundamental element of successful execution.
3. **Use escalations** as a key behavior to rapidly resolve a situation where two parties cannot agree on a commitment to meet requirements or lack the knowledge or skills to do so. Speedily resolving any disconnect is crucial to adhering to an aggressive plan. There is always a way forward - even in conflict - and such situations provide context for individuals to really resolve matters without the situation getting nasty or personal.
4. **Make offers** – “What, from me, by when” that take the game to a totally different level. The person offering leverages what they know about the situation and what’s possible to provide a creative solution that addresses the need in the best possible manner.

Collectively, if an organization embraces these behaviors to ground their innovation efforts, they often achieve amazing results. Without them, an innovation effort can flounder in a sea of uncertainty and disappointment. This performance gap can be quite large. I have repeatedly witnessed the impact these behaviors can have on the performance of an innovation team tackling a complex task.

Future posts in this series will dive into these behaviors in more detail.

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### More Reading

[Behaviors that Fuel Innovation #1: Make Commitments - The Corner Stone of Results](#)

[Behaviors that Fuel Innovation #2: Make Requests - The Direct Path to Commitments](#)

[Behaviors that Fuel Innovation #3: Escalate for Rapid Conflict Resolution](#)

[Behaviors that Fuel Innovation #4: Make Offers to Take the Game to a Whole New Level](#)

Kalypso's [Innovation Results Transformation methodology](#) relies on these innovation behaviors and a structured approach to bring about innovation results over extended periods of practice. [Click here to learn more.](#)

For a deeper review of these concepts I recommend Tracy Goss' book, [The Last Word on Power](#), which tackles several of these concepts in detail.

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## About the Author



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Michael is a Director with Kalypso. His areas of expertise include new product development, business and innovation strategy, large-scale organizational change leadership, and open innovation. Michael recently restored a 1969 Camaro that he has owned for years.