

Experimenting with the KAI

The story of how one organisation looked at the impact innovative, adaptive or mixed teams had on pitching an idea.

“In an experimental exercise with Open University MBA alumni, we set up groups of strong adaptors, strong innovators and a diverse group.

These were people who’d already encountered A-I theory through their programme, had received personal KAI feedback and reflected on the implications.

We gave them the task of pitching to a panel an idea for a new business, including some elaboration on how the business would make money. The panel’s role was to choose their preferred idea using three criteria: idea novelty, the potential for the idea delivering profit and which team they trusted to deliver the idea to the marketplace. The panel itself comprised a diverse team, using KAI scores.

Typically, the most innovative team delivered their presentation with brio and flair. Their idea was, without fail, highly novel, while the detail on how they’d bring it to the marketplace was usually unconvincing. And, often, their delivery was accompanied by laughter, high volume and awareness of their lack of interest in detail. The adaptive group gave a solid, credible plan for bringing their idea to market, usually presented in a more measured way. The idea itself was invariably feasible — a workable solution of novelty within existing parameters. The mixed group was often more interesting, more considered and a combination of greater novelty and greater depth of detail.

On around three quarters of these occasions, the panel awarded the diverse team the ‘prize’ (a box of chocolates) for best idea. They seemed to combine greater breadth of novelty, with more detail, and somehow generated trust in their capacity to deliver.

When a diverse team sets out, with prior learning around A-I, and an intent to use the best of their mixed styles, they increase the odds of success.”



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