

A RECIPE FOR INNOVATION

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Cooking is one of my passions.

Contrary to my initial belief, it is, however, not easy to prepare a dish which both looks and tastes good. In addition, I found out that many dishes are actually very complex to prepare, requiring a longer preparation time and a large amount of effort to manipulate a variety of ingredients to make them taste and look good.

But, it takes only a few minutes for the food to be guzzled down and more often than not, it is also accompanied by an unappreciated response, or rather, a lack of response to your culinary delight.

Thus, I made it my goal to create a dish that requires the least amount of ingredients and time to prepare, and yet, is both presentable and sumptuous.

I believe this is what innovation is all about. It is about solving everyday problems by reducing the amount of time, effort and cost to execute menial tasks.

Take the computer as an example, I remember when I had my first computer, the ZX Spectrum, which I am sure nobody has ever heard of. I was elated that I could write a few lines in BASIC to solve an engineering problem and plot a graph. Back then, you would be considered a geek for knowing how to do this.



But, look at the computer now, plotting a graph is so simple using a spreadsheet that even secondary school students can do it. In fact, the computer is capable of solving complex problems like controlling robots as remote a location as on the planet Mars.

When we watch the film "Avatar", we are amazed as to how realistic the movement of the avatars and the objects in the movie. But, behind the scenes were computers solving the complex physical equations that produce the realistic motions.

Yes, innovation can come from everyday problems, but, the road to the solution is not as easy as one would think. An individual may come up with an idea and even build a contraption to illustrate the idea, but it is still a long way from the production being commercialized.

I remembered when an inventor came to me sharing that when he showed his invention to a major corporation, the first thing they asked was whether it has fulfilled all the necessary international standards. He said he never thought that he would need to fulfill such a requirement.

In an increasingly complex world of environmentally and safety conscious society, economics consideration is no longer the sole criteria for the commercialization success of a product.

Thus, any innovation must come with fundamental knowledge, experience and skills associated with the industry it is intended for.

An innovation starts with an idea, but, research and analysis is essential before its creation and finally, commercialization.

Research and analysis do not only cover the economics aspect, but also, the engineering, manufacturing, human factor and environmental aspects.

Like cooking, it can be complex and time-consuming for an invention to reach commercialization. And alas, the challenge is similar to cooking, how to come up with delicious and presentable food in the least amount of time!

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