

Dear Diary

January 2nd.

Met new boss today. Seems to be an oil guy – kept telling me that my pipeline wasn't full enough due to an inadequate funnel. Follow up e-mail was about innovation – crazy guy!

Jan 3rd.

Convened the Marketing and Sales team to discuss ramping up innovation. I asked where we could get some more ideas from - all the usual suspects put in an appearance. Research said we should segment the market then head for the white spaces; HR said to launch an employee suggestion box; Technical said to ask our suppliers who was doing anything new; Brand team said we should copy last competitors launch; Sales said to ask customers what they wanted. Had to take a break at that point as my sides were hurting. Got an e-mail afterwards from Manufacturing asking if anyone had thought of just selling more of what we already make. Ha! As if.

Jan 17th.

Just back from a day's off-site brain-storm facilitated by an Innovation consultant. He turned on the ambient music and had us think of ideas that began with the letter F. When I woke up, I was disappointed to see only one idea on the board – “Fuck this, I'm going” – and no-one knew where the Sales VP was.

Jan 30th

We now have 52 concepts. Today we tried to hone them down against our consultants criteria of new consumer, new channels, new needs, which actually didn't reduce the list at all. Which is great – 52 killer ideas! Just when I was feeling good; our Finance VP e-mailed me his criteria which he called the 3 P's: Popular, Practical, Profitable. This ruled them all out, so I told him we needed filters, not blockages.

Feb 2nd.

Just back from seeing Red Adair – I told him we had some doozies and we're good to go.

Feb 7th.

I accompanied our Innovation Director to today's Sales Management team meeting where she presented our chosen idea, and did a terrific job showing how it was the best thing ever. This being her first such meeting, she took the responses badly. I told her that them throwing their pens down on the table and staring at the ceiling en masse muttering “I don't believe it” was a good sign; when I did that job they once threw my laptop out of the window. Also, I loved her response to their first question of “So which of our long-standing, famous brands are we going to de-list to make space for this pile of crap?”, “Well, err...

I thought you might, umm, try to get one of the competitor products de-listed” – I thought such naivety had long since died out.

May 23rd.

We’re off to the races and did a “preview presentation” to our biggest customer today. All we have to do is drop our corporate colour and make it green to suit their shelving, and it’s a definite listing. Slam dunk!

Jan 3rd.

Met the new boss today. He seems to be another oil guy, so he’ll be used to cleaning up messes then, I joked. Not sure we hit it off.

Jan 4th.

Reluctantly tried another approach today – polled the entire department to ask their parents, partners and children what had been the best innovations in recent times. Pathetic list came out of it:

- Food & Drink: chopped lettuce
- Household items: Swiffer
- Alcohol: Light beer
- Health & Beauty: Whitestrips

Like, what is so innovative about salad, dusting, and beer that don’t taste of beer???? Anyway, brainstorm session tomorrow, where we have to look for ideas in ink-blot pictures. I can’t wait.