How to organize creativity time to maximize creative output?

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2021 IRI Annual Conference - 05/17/2021

#IRIannual

If you were offered a choice between two lotteries, one where you could win money and one where you could win time, which one would you pick?
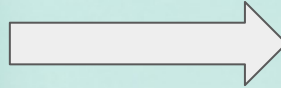
TIME MANAGEMENT

TIME PRESSURE
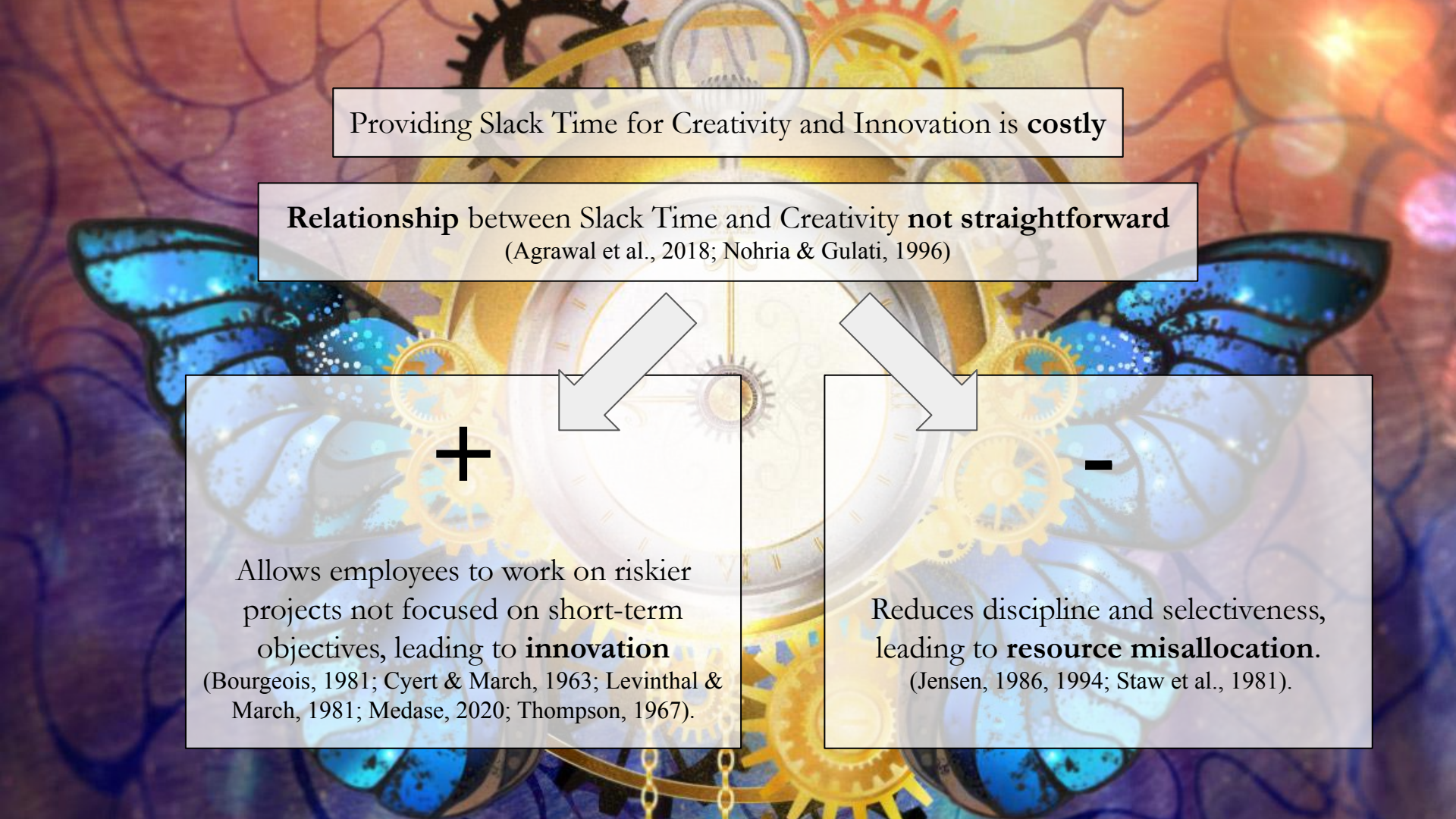
JUST-IN-TIME

TIME IS MONEY

?

Providing Slack Time for Creativity and Innovation is **costly**

Relationship between Slack Time and Creativity **not straightforward**
(Agrawal et al., 2018; Nohria & Gulati, 1996)

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Allows employees to work on riskier projects not focused on short-term objectives, leading to **innovation**
(Bourgeois, 1981; Cyert & March, 1963; Levinthal & March, 1981; Medase, 2020; Thompson, 1967).

Reduces discipline and selectiveness, leading to **resource misallocation**.
(Jensen, 1986, 1994; Staw et al., 1981).

How should companies organize slack time for creativity to maximize creative output?

The Team

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Creativity slack time is defined as time "during which employees choose what projects to work on and how to complete such projects." (Burkus & Oster, 2002, p 49)

Two *Foundational* Time Models

Continuous Time
(e.g., Innovation Week)

Discontinuous Time
(e.g., 15% rule)

Unstructured

Structured

Hybrid Time Models

20%Project ➡ Area 120

Early-stage ideas   *Full-time projects*

Hybrid Time Models

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Instructions for Breakout Rooms (10 mins)
Please turn your cameras on during breakout sessions

If you need us, go to More -> Ask for help

Whose birthday is closest to today? Use month & day (not the year).	This person is the scribe. Take notes in this Google Slide deck on the slide assigned to your breakout group.
Of those remaining, whose first name ranks first in alphabetical order?	This person is the facilitator to keep the conversation going and to make sure everyone has a chance to share.
Of those remaining, who has the greatest number of pets?	This person will be the timekeeper. Set a timer and remind the team
Everyone	Actively contribute to the conversation

Breakout Team 1

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization
RTI International	Working within a non-profit government institute. Billing and time is so related to a specific topic or project associated with a grant or funding. With us being thought leaders, we would look into more so professional development to stay up to date on trends but no set time.
Vitro	Informal policy to spend about 10% of our time to work on new concept. More of a guideline than an official policy. Driven by inspiration, time, and interest when they have time around their business driven project
James - Throughout Various Companies	R&D Labs to bring ideation. It is built in, but never a formal designated time to say 10 or 15% of time.

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 2

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization
Synthomer	Not formally organized, monthly meeting to discuss the ideas and vote on top ones to focus together, and leave individual to go try it, target 15-20% time, move some projects to SG based on business partner discussion and acceptance
Vitro Glass	Use formalized gate process, gate 0

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 3

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization
National Gypsum	Don't really have organized slack time
Kennametal	Independently managed by individuals - unstructured
Babson	Slack time is aspirational
Boeing	Don't really have slack time

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 4

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 5

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization
Continental	Do not do this - some roles have 100% time spent on creativity; have seen Innovation Week used
Hess	Do not have this explicitly bc we have a central tech/innovation team, who uses a part of their time on creativity informally
Vitro (PPG)	Unstructured 10% of time with goal to have an annual project
Johns Manville	Previously used to 15%; do not have anything formal, expect researchers and engineers to manage their own time; leaders reinforce (what
Boeing	Unstructured without a time target, expected to be innovative (safety, cost reduction) across the company (even if not new product development); pop-up Innovation Hackathons

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 6

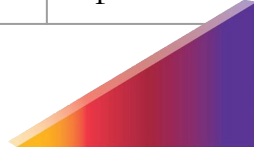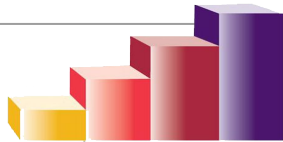*How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?*

Company	Slack Time Organization
GE Research	No slack time. Need to meet billable hourly requirements. Only after this. Need approvals and existing processes but cumbersome.
ICL	There is slack time built into R&D but not used by all.
TCS	No slack time. Billable hours. Identifying a problem with business unit and solving. Very little slack time.
CMU	No organized slack time. But 1400 independent researchers who can do projects at their own discretion.
Notes	Culture shifts - passion and engagement of researchers before hours were tracked. Models were every hour has to be accounted for has created a shift. Slack time is more aspirational.

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 7

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

Breakout Team 8

How does your company organize slack time for creativity and innovation?

Company	Slack Time Organization
Arkema	10% totally unstructured
DuPont-	10% but it's really dependent on the manager if people really have this
European Training Foundation	No slack time agreed/allocated - up to individuals/teams
Henkel	10% for core Product Development team (chemists), but it's rarely used. My opinion, chemists seem to need structure and targets. A blank page is difficult for them to work with.

Use the building blocks if you wish, or create your own.

	Continuous Time (e.g., Innovation Week)	Discontinuous Time (e.g., 15% rule)
Autonomy To Schedule Time	-	+
Incubation	-	+
Flow/Concentration	+	-
Perceived Time Pressure	**High**	**Low**
Time as Network Good	+	-

Instructions for Breakout Rooms (12 mins)
Please turn your cameras on during breakout sessions

If you need us, go to More -> Ask for help

Who has the longest first name?	This person is the scribe. Take notes in this Google Slide deck on the slide assigned to you.
Of those remaining, who has the highest street number?	This person is the facilitator to keep the conversation going and to make sure everyone has a chance to share.
Of those remaining, who speaks the most languages?	This person will be the timekeeper. Set a timer and remind the team
Everyone	Actively contribute to the conversation

Breakout Team 1

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
Without formal, how do you designate the time?	Idea bank - area to record ideas that would bring awareness to new topics
Expanding beyond the designated work hours	Passion drives innovation
Conditions change how to keep ideas at the forefront for your business	

Breakout Team 2

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
Time Pressure - balancing priorities (creative work vs. objectives)	Not real solution yet
(P&G) Balancing priorities, time gets absorbed by what is need vs. creative thoughts (creative work time feels like luxury)	
	Put it in as an "objective" creates pressure, people still will be pulled to priorities, maybe cancelling meetings for a day
	Useful way might be rewarding the creative activities
	"slack " time might not be same time for all, slack time should be called "creative" time or something similar to better connotate the value of it

Breakout Team 3

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
Manufacturing support displaces scheduled slack time	Company IT policies may limit/restrict creative exploration and searching
Must organize the time yourself	
Slack time is "unpaid/unrecognized"	
Some people abuse the slack time	

Breakout Team 4

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
Do you have time to take your 10% time?	Workshops can work well because they are scheduled time/tasks
It's hard to take a break and think about what to work on, even during longer workshops	Hold longer breakout sessions, do things like wear clothing items/change appearance/office postings to make a mental and physical transition to working on slack time
Hard to come up with meaningful content on the spot in ideation sessions	Have people prepare in advance on specific subject matter or problem statement
Hard to supervise employees and have them take effective slack time	Hands off can give freedom, but doesn't work with individuals who don't innovate naturally or don't work well in an unstructured environment

Breakout Team 5

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
Management support - High level support for continuous time and lower level management for discontinuous time	Management support for innovation concept
Pulling in other people in a continuous method to get feedback from experts	Have continuous
Time zones and groups for innovation	Continuous events with teams in mind from all regions
Identify at what stage of innovation the project is -- me too or breakthrough	Define the scope of innovation to create the correct method for creative time - incremental would be continuous process, breakthrough would be more

Breakout Team 6

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions

Breakout Team 7

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions

Breakout Team 8

1) What challenges have you faced related to organizing slack time for innovation?
2) What solutions have you seen or experienced that ameliorated the challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
People have different talents & for creativity & innovation	Flexibility in time allocation for individuals (but accountability is a must) Better managers coaching skills to understand what are the 'talent' of people in this regard
Staff ask for free time, they get the 10% and nobody does anything	Provide them with some kind of framework + target
People are diverse, 'starters' are good in innovation and need time for creativity, finishers are good in finishing	They need just freedom and space, not being organised in many meetings & structure (tip: use Don Clifton- Strengthfinder fr identifying them and put them in teams)

How will **participating** in this study **help you**?

- Everything people do, involves time
- Time is key resource
- Difficult to "sell" creativity time to top management
- Understand how to structure creativity time to maximize creative output
  - Catalogue existing models including hybrid solutions
  - Understand the advantages and disadvantages of each model
  - Design a model that works for you

Thank you for your *TIME*.

Would you like to be involved?

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https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexanderbrem/?locale=de_DE

- **We will be in touch with people who attended the session**

- **Contact us:**
  CreativitySlackTime@gmail.com

- **Stick Around:** We can *STAY* a little longer!

The End