

How to Make an Idea

Written By: Chris Kortschot

In our most recent [Video of the Week](#), Matt Ridley discusses the most significant factor in human progress; the ability to communicate ideas. If you have not already seen this video I strongly urge you to find a few minutes and listen to the lecture.

Contrary to what most of us would expect, the measure of human progress is not the aggregate intelligence of a particular society, it is the ability to share ideas. This is because when we share ideas we are not simply bettering others, we are actively generating new ideas. New ideas are a direct result of combining past ideas, meaning that there is no way to generate new ideas if communication is restricted or inhibited.

The reason that we have made more progress in the last hundred years than in the previous 10,000 is because of a snowball effect with regards to sharing thoughts. It was not very long ago that the only mediums for sharing ideas were printed materials such as books, newspapers and magazines. This severely limited the rate at which people were able to learn and there is evidence of this everywhere.

Today, we have the most interactive, rapidly changing information medium the world has ever known and we are progressing faster than we were 20 years ago because of it. The strongest piece of evidence for this is that there has never been a more affluent generation of children than there is today which is something that will probably be true for every subsequent generation hereafter.

Increasing the efficiency at which information is spread is the primary goal of Web 2.0 developers today. Facebook's mission statement is to 'give people the power to be more open and connected.' Digg's mission is providing 'a place for people to discover and share content from anywhere on the web.' The list goes on, but the main theme within all social media mission statements is the idea of sharing content.

Although Facebook's and Digg's motivations for sharing may be something other than making the world progress at a faster rate, the fact remains that when we are given the tools to share information we do so willingly and eagerly, and we are better off for it.

So now that we understand that sharing ideas is the best way to create new ideas, how can this accelerate business growth and help organizations become more responsive at the same time.? In our opinion, here are some concrete suggestions:

- Model your office space as Google does; open floor plans with no cubicles or walls to limit creativity. The old management model was to put up barriers both physical and virtual which restricted employee communication.



- Instead of making your IT department block MSN chat from all computers tell them to set up a company chat that is enabled and encouraged at all times. Chat is an extension of email but its value is in its ability to allow users to collaborate and share ideas. Chat = bursts of thought. Email = formalized communication.
- Create a corporate culture of shared and collaboration ideas and forums which accelerate positive expression. The reason the most successful and progressive companies all have a positive corporate culture is because it is that very culture that made them progressive. Positive culture should not only be thought of as a perk for employees, it should also be thought of as an asset to management. Employees will be better able to reach their true potential if they feel comfortable expressing their ideas to their coworkers.

These are just a few ideas that will help organizations become better able to manage change. We're sure there are countless others and if you have suggestions and recommendations, we'd love to hear about them. If Matt Ridley was on to something in his TED talk then you have likely generated a few ideas of your own while reading this opinion. Find out what ideas they will give birth to and share them with the world on our new [blog](#); human progress depends on it!

