What Vienna Made Visible

18.09.2026 17:27:46 | Management Insights, Lukas Michel | 0 Comments | Global Drucker Forum, Innovation

A reflection on the organizational conditions behind ingenuity

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A forum leaves behind more than notes. Certain sentences remain present. Separate conversations begin to connect. A question heard in one room changes the meaning of an example in another. What becomes visible is not only what speakers intended to say, but what participants are now able to see.

The theme of the 2026 Global Peter Drucker Forum places ingenuity at the center of next-generation innovation. The deeper contribution of Vienna is to direct attention beyond ideas themselves. Ingenuity may begin with human imagination, but innovation depends on the organizational conditions that receive it.

The recurring tension

Organizations need novelty and dependability at the same time. They must explore unfamiliar possibilities while continuing to serve customers, protect trust, manage risk and deliver today. Calls for greater ingenuity do not remove this tension. They make the quality of management more consequential.

Too much emphasis on certainty can close the new before it is understood. Too much emphasis on novelty can detach imagination from responsibility and execution. The task is not to choose one side permanently. It is to shape the relationship consciously for the situation the organization faces.

The questions beneath the solutions

Conferences are rich in answers: technologies, methods, cases and models. Their lasting value may lie in the questions those answers reopen. What is the organization currently prepared to notice? Which assumptions define what leaders call possible? Where does knowledge fail to connect? How does power influence the interpretation of the new?

These questions return attention to the organization as a living system. An idea that succeeds in one setting may fail in another because the surrounding relationships and routines differ. Transfer therefore requires interpretation, not imitation.

From inspiration to observation

The days after a forum often produce a familiar impulse: share the highlights, select the best idea and decide what to implement. A more useful first step may be to notice which thought continues to return and why.

What did it connect that had previously appeared separate? Which aspect of the organization does it make visible? What assumption does it disturb? Who else needs to see it? These questions allow inspiration to become an organizational inquiry rather than an imported programme.

Structured Reflection can capture the observation before it is converted into a proposal. The Organization Twin can locate it within the wider system. A Guided Clarity Session can bring the relevant perspectives together, not to reproduce Vienna’s conversation but to create the organization’s own.

Ingenuity as a management question

The series began by asking what ingenuity depends on. The answer is now clearer. It depends on attention, trust, difference, connection and the ability to act without pretending certainty. It depends on leaders who can keep a question open and who also

know when to choose. It depends on experiments that turn possibility into learning and on systems capable of carrying what has been learned.

None of these conditions guarantees innovation. They make responsible innovation more possible.

The most valuable outcome from Vienna may therefore not be a solution taken home. It may be a new capacity to see the organization to which we return.

Continue the reflection

What did Vienna help us see — and what are we still not seeing? What does this question make visible in your organization?
THE 3AM QUESTION

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