When Everything Depends on Ingenuity What Does Ingenuity Depend On

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The 2026 Global Peter Drucker Forum places ingenuity at the center of next-generation innovation. The choice is timely. Organizations face questions for which established answers are no longer sufficient, while artificial intelligence makes possible answers available almost instantly.

Yet the phrase “everything depends on ingenuity” contains a second question. What does ingenuity depend on?

We usually locate ingenuity in the individual. We imagine the perceptive founder, the inventive engineer or the leader who sees what others have missed. Individual imagination matters. But an idea does not enter an empty space. It enters an organization with established priorities, routines, power relationships, measures, language and expectations. These conditions influence whether the idea will be noticed, explored, reshaped or quietly removed.

The organizational side of ingenuity

A person may notice a weak signal, connect two previously separate developments or question an assumption that everyone else takes for granted. The first response from the organization is

decisive. Does curiosity follow? Is the thought required to arrive as a finished business case? Can it cross functional boundaries? Is there time to test it? Can the person who raises it remain credible if the idea proves wrong?

These are not questions about creativity training. They are questions about management. Ingenuity needs attention that is not entirely consumed by the urgent. It needs trust so that unfinished thoughts can be voiced. It needs access to different knowledge. It needs choice rather than automatic compliance with precedent. It needs a way to connect the unusual idea with the organization’s purpose and capability.

This is why calls for more entrepreneurship often disappoint. Leaders ask people to be bold while systems reward predictability. They invite experimentation while budgets require certainty. They celebrate cross-functional innovation while accountabilities remain narrowly local. The formal message encourages ingenuity; the operating pattern filters it out.

Clarity before the innovation programme

The usual response is another intervention: an innovation lab, idea platform, accelerator or set of incentives. Any of these may help. The prior task, however, is to understand the conditions into which the intervention will enter. What happens today when someone brings an unfamiliar thought? Where does attention move? Which ideas travel and which stall? What do leaders do when evidence is incomplete?

Clarity Before Change begins here. It does not ask whether the organization is innovative enough according to an external scale. It makes recurring patterns visible so leaders can understand their own situation. Structured Reflection gathers observations before they harden into judgment. An Organization Twin can show relationships among strategy, leadership, culture, work, organization and operations. A Guided Clarity Session allows the people involved to interpret what they see and choose what deserves movement.

Ingenuity is therefore both personal and organizational. The spark

may belong to one person. Whether it becomes useful knowledge, a credible experiment and eventually innovation depends on many people and on the conditions connecting them.

The leadership task

The leadership task is not to manufacture originality on demand. It is to become more conscious of the environment in which originality must survive. Before asking for more ideas, leaders can examine what their organization does with the ideas it already receives.

Continue the reflection

What conditions allow ingenuity to emerge here — and which conditions suppress it?

What does this question make visible in your organization?
THE 3AM QUESTION

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