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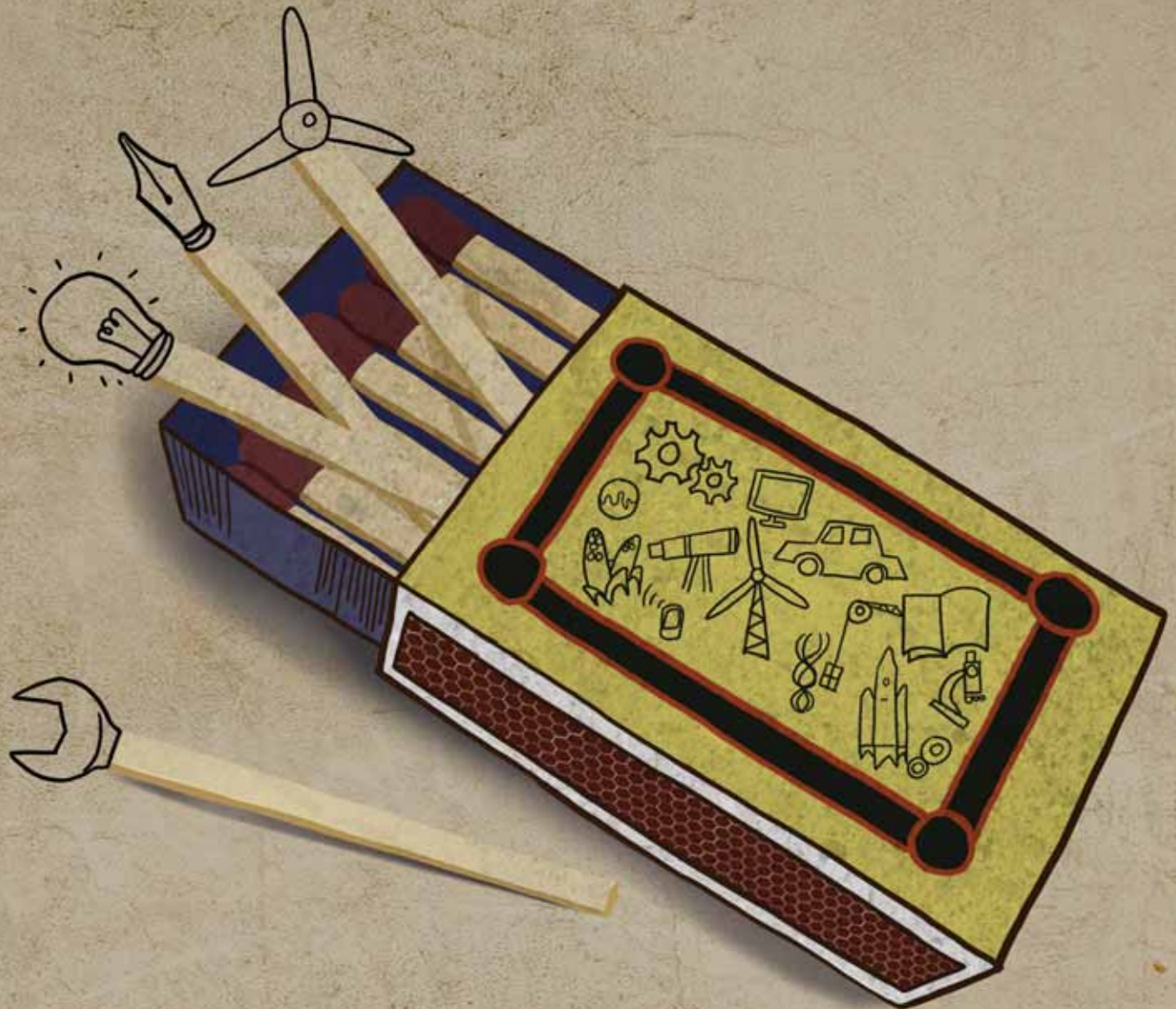
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INDIA'S FIRST MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO INNOVATION

CHANGE MAKERS 70 | Nylon net fence, Reverse Logistics Company, SPAT: Case studies.

INTERVIEW 31 | Garth Saloner: It is in the nature of innovation that it may not always succeed.

DEBATE 88 | Morgen Witzel and Anand Bajaj: Innovate indigenously or adapt ideas?



SCAN THIS TO STAY CONNECTED

INNOVATIONS THAT WILL CHANGE INDIA

Pankaj Ghemawat, Keki Mistry, Alok Mittal, Sam Pitroda, and The Great Indian Consumer

(Five innovative ideas chosen through INNOVATE FOR INDIA—a nationwide social media contest)

Tata Innovista is about defining, recognising, rewarding, and celebrating innovation within the Tata group. Most importantly, it's about instilling self-confidence to innovate among all employees.



Bombay House, headquarters of Tata group.

Tata Group

A valuable VISTA



Ravi Arora
Vice President,
Innovation, Tata Sons.

Ratan Tata became Chairman of the Tata group in 1991. One of his prime objectives was to facilitate Tata companies become a globally competitive and cohesive group. In 1994, he led the creation and introduction of the Tata Business Excellence Model (TBEM), which played a key role in guiding many Tata companies to achieve industry benchmarks in terms of business excellence.

Although innovation was an integral part of TBEM, Tata strongly believed that it needed a different mindset and culture. The innovation movement at Tata was a result of this seminal decision. It was not as if innovation was alien to Tata. The earliest Tata ventures—be it in textiles, steel, hotels, power, or offshore software—were trendsetters in their times. But the objective was to make innovation pervasive and not limited to creating new companies and products. It was decided that the best way to go about this objective was to learn from others.

In the first learning mission, a team comprising senior leaders from many Tata companies visited some of the most innovative companies of the world such as 3M, Microsoft, Intel, HP, Raytheon, and institutions such as Harvard Business School, etc.

The birth of Innovista

One simple learning that stood out was that companies with a heritage of innovation also had a strong recognition platform for

innovation. These companies, unconsciously, gave a lot of importance to cultural elements of innovation, and would hold individual innovators in high esteem.

Back home, structured interactions with Tata managers were revealing. Most Tata companies had several platforms for rewarding and recognising employees, but few would recognise them for innovation. Interestingly, fewer companies had defined innovation. Another study, during the same time period, revealed that almost every Tata company felt they were less innovative than the rest of the Tata group. This lack of self-confidence among employees with respect to innovation was because of a lack of structured motivation, celebration, and recognition of efforts and initiatives, specific to innovation. The circle was vicious!

This small insight gave birth to Tata Innovista in 2006, a group-wide programme held annually to encourage, recognise, and showcase outstanding innovations by Tata companies across the globe. The idea was to capture as many innovations as possible from as many Tata companies, recognise, and celebrate them, thus building a sustainable source of inspiration and self-confidence among Tata managers.

Tata Innovista has been nurtured carefully and has grown from strength to strength with the subsequent formation of Tata Group Innovation Forum (TGIF) in 2007. Comprising senior Tata leaders and innovation champions from different Tata companies, TGIF's

“ Tata Innovista is a movement.
I find it very impactful. ”



Chairman, Tata Group Innovation Forum
and Director, Tata Sons: R Gopalakrishnan

mandate is to encourage, inspire, and create a culture that promotes innovation within Tata companies. From 101 entries from 35 Tata companies in 2006 to over 2,150 entries from 70 Tata companies in 2013, Tata Innovista has grown exponentially, signifying a growing culture of innovation and risk-taking within the group.

Most innovation awards tend to be for successful product innovations. So, going a step forward with Tata Innovista, we have created categories of recognitions, and awards at different stages of an innovation lifecycle. These are explained below:

Promising Innovations

This category recognises innovations that are successfully completed and have achieved demonstrable results and benefits to the target customer. This category has the following subcategories:

Product innovations: Applicable only to tangible products, intangible products such as software, financial services, etc., do not come under this subcategory. All new products and

variants of existing products, if the change is significant and has helped extend the product to new markets/customers, are invited.

Intangible products and service innovations:

Dominantly targeted at service sector companies and their products, this subcategory is also applicable to product companies that provide services to support their products. For example, innovations related to customer service implemented by a consumer product or automotive company. The following qualify for this subcategory:

- A new product from a financial service or IT company
- A new service from a retail or hospitality company
- A new/enhanced product from a consumer product company, where the perceived differentiation is due to innovations in the service component of the product.

Business model innovations: New business model innovations that have changed the revenue or cost structure of the company or product.

Innovation in (core) operational processes: Core processes are directly involved in the creation/production of the product or service. This category is applicable to all companies. Innovations in all processes, excluding those mentioned in the support process category, qualify for this subcategory.

Innovation in support processes: Support processes are those that support the core processes of a company. This subcategory is open to all companies, and all innovations that have created/enhanced support processes are eligible. Processes like HR, finance and accounting, taxation, legal, sales, marketing, supply chain, branding, advertising, internal IT, CSR, administration, etc., are included.

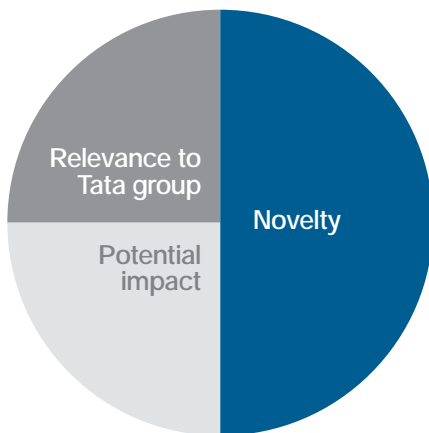
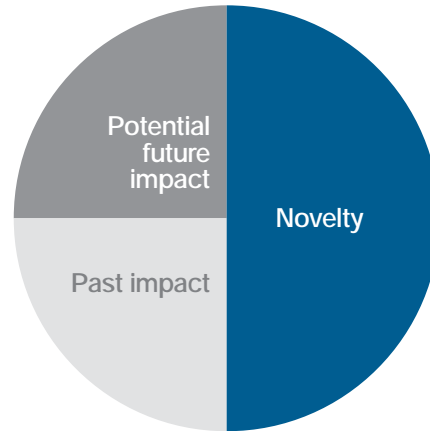
Proven Technologies

This category recognises new technologies that are successfully developed, and tested, by Tata researchers and technologists, but have not been commercialised yet. The idea behind this category is not only to promote useful cutting-edge research by recognising researchers, but also create a pull for technology development by business managers of various Tata companies.

CRITERIA TO PARTICIPATE

Promising Innovations

- Novelty: How novel is the outcome?
- Impact: What has been the impact so far on the company, and its customers?
- Likely impact: What is the likely impact of the innovation? Is the innovation supported by the right business model?

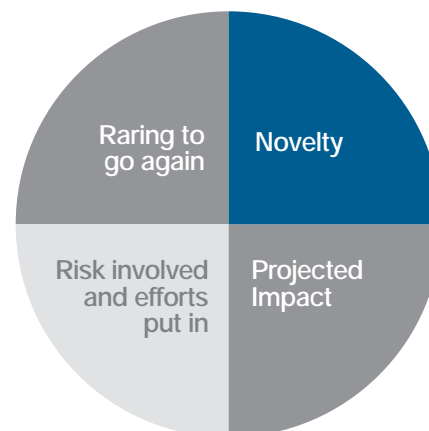


Proven Technologies

- Novelty: How novel is the technology?
- Potential impact: What is the likely impact?
- Pull to use: How easy will it be for the technology to get commercialised (embedded in product/process)?

Dare to Try

- Novelty: What was the novelty in the project?
- Potential impact: What impact will it bring to the company and its customers?
- Risks involved and efforts put in to de-risk: How risky was the project? What was the quality of effort put in to de-risk the project?
- Raring to go: Did the project have leadership mindshare? Were the learnings new? Is the project/team continuing to pursue the project?



Dare to Try

It is not possible for all innovation attempts to be successful. The 'Dare To Try' award has been set up for the most audacious, sincere, and wholehearted attempts at innovation that did not achieve desired results. The award is to encourage the culture of risk-taking, perseverance, and find unknown reasons for failure.

Innovation is not limited to R&D, and Tata group's efforts are to make innovation part of its DNA. This requires, among many things, a certain degree of willingness to accept creative failures. Unfortunately, the reality that everyone confronts is that organisational rewards go to those who adopt well-proven trusted methods, and deliver fault-free work.

This category received sceptical response in its first year (2007) when we had only 12 participants, a majority from Europe. In 2013, there were 248 cases from 31 Tata companies. Some of the winning entries in the recent past in this category include: a plastic door developed by a JV of Tata AutoComp Systems (TACO) for the Tata Nano car. This door successfully passed all safety tests, but could not go into production due to consumer perception issues; an attempt to create self-cooling tiles for buildings by Tata Steel; and, a research project by Advinus Therapeutics to discover a low-cost drug for visceral leishmaniasis (a prevalent disease in the developing world).

An analysis revealed that the main reasons for such failures and the lessons learnt are:

Technology advancement: The attempts have helped teams uncover blind spots on the roadblock for technology progression.

Business model: Not all innovative products could be commercialised with the same old business models of the company.

End consumers: In case of breakthrough industrial products, perception, and experience of end-consumers while using the product are extremely critical.

The purpose of the award is to encourage responsible risk-taking. The criterion discourages unreasonable attempts and opportunistic behaviour that may otherwise get driven. Prakash Iyer, Managing Director, Kimberly Clark Lever, and one of the jury

members at the finals of Tata Innovista 2013, says, "From the outside, it often looks like Tata is a large group, but I think the truth is that it is a collection of small companies where lots of people think entrepreneurially. For me, the highlight really was 'Dare to Try'. I think it is a fantastic idea and if you have to reward innovation, you can't do it in any better way than rewarding failure, or rewarding attempts that didn't actually meet success. Through this award, the culture gets engrained where people are not scared to dream big and fail. People feel that they are going for it because they have an organisation which [asks them to] go for it."

Participating in Innovista

Tata managers make their submissions through an online system every year. The first level of selection is done by almost 300 senior Tata managers from around 30 Tata companies. This is managed through an online system, designed to achieve a very high level of objectivity.

The second level is at a regional level, and is conducted in nine cities across India, South East Asia, China, Europe, and the US. Tata companies participate in the regional rounds to qualify for the national round and the entries are reviewed by non-Tata senior executives.

The finals are held in Mumbai on April 25 every year, where the finalists are judged by a panel. In the past, this panel has included renowned names such as Dr. Ramesh Mashelkar, the former Director General of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research; Dr. K Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation; Arun Maira, Member of the Planning Commission; and Kiran Karnik, former President at NASSCOM, among others. Tata Innovista awards are organised on April 26 every year to commemorate the death anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan, the great Indian mathematician.

Towards an innovative future

Over the years, Tata Innovista has caught the imagination of colleagues across Tata companies, and it has become one of the most inspiring programmes in the Tata group.

Growth at Innovista

2008 to 2013

Innovation projects

12 x

Dare to Try

15 x

Jurors

100 x

Innovista Movement

Tata companies

75 +

Tata managers touched

20,000 +

Countries

20 +

The subject of innovation, which is quite nebulous, not only needed a group like Tata to develop a common language but also wanted a large number of people to participate and use the language. This was important in order to develop a common vocabulary and also to understand the complexity, uncertainties, and importance of this subject in order to create differentiation in the world that has plenty of forces to reduce the differentiation. The Tata Innovista movement has helped us achieve this substantially.

The database of Tata Innovista projects could become a rich source for triggering innovations among Tata companies, enhancing collaborations, and also for knowledge sharing (KM). A KM programme typically has two engines: an exploitation engine that mines the existing knowledge of a company, and leverages it by increasing reuse; and, an exploration engine that creates new knowledge for the company.

The second engine of exploration creates new knowledge and feeds the first engine, lest it run dry. A majority of knowledge is created through experiments and innovations. A good capturing mechanism like Tata Innovista is well-poised to augment collaboration and knowledge-sharing on common topics and themes.

The quality and quantity of innovations together form an Innovista Quotient (IQ). Such quotients could be used by companies to form a baseline and introduce interventions to target a quotient that will take it ahead of the competition. Tata Innovista, by design, compares innovations across Tata companies; therefore, a few of them have started using Tata Innovista to monitor their IQ year on year. We feel this will lead to better understanding of the subject, and will enable Tata companies to create their own innovation definitions, awards and criteria, appropriate for their industry, markets, and customers. ★

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The Rallis story

Pendimethalin is a herbicide that protects crops like wheat, corn, soybean, potato, cabbage, peas, carrot, and asparagus. An overseas customer of Rallis needed this product to be delivered in a free-flowing form to them, as compared to the regular solidified form. The team from Rallis India took up the challenge.

Their project, which was abandoned on safety grounds and presented under the 'Dare to Try' category at Tata Innovista 2011, won the award under the Promising Innovations category at Tata Innovista 2013. This was made possible only because the team continued to pursue their project, and after multiple trials, it succeeded in converting the product into free-flowing flakes.

After receiving the award, the project's team leader said, "Tata Innovista is a very inspiring and impactful platform for researchers like us. Every year, we eagerly look forward to participating in it as it is a golden opportunity to present our efforts before a very accomplished set of jury members and senior Tata leaders. When we went back after the 'Dare to Try' presentation more than a year ago, we were happy but felt that we could have been happier if it was successful. So we brainstormed further, wearing different hats, and toiled as a team to make the project successful. We felt proud when our project was announced as a winner this year. Our success in Tata Innovista bears mute testimony to the support and motivation we get from our senior leadership. I thought laughter is contagious, but Tata Innovista is making innovations contagious in Tata companies."

