

## THE RECIPE

## FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

By **PREMA JAYABALAN**  
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**T**ALK about creativity and innovation, and you have entered his territory. Ranked as one of the top management thinkers in the world and profiled for generating one of the best ideas of the year by the *New York Times* in 2004, Charles Leadbeater is a leading authority on innovation and creativity.

He is adviser on innovation strategy to a diverse group of clientele that comprise governments and companies around the world. These include the Department for Trade and Industry and the European Commission, the government of

Shanghai, BBC, Vodafone, Microsoft, Ericsson, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and many more.

Besides that, Leadbeater is also a highly-acclaimed author of best-selling books on innovation and technology.

"Most of the big companies I work with are concerned that they are too slow moving, cumbersome and inward looking. They have an inbuilt tendency to become quite conservative and cautious, which means they can be outwitted by nimbler, fleet footed competitors.

"So the senior leadership of many large organisations often want to find ways to shake them up, to get new energy into them.

"I often say that entrepreneurs are usually ideas in search of assets, whereas large companies are often assets in search of new ideas," explains Leadbeater when asked on the main concerns of companies today.

This renowned adviser believes that innovation is about coming up with new recipes and new blends of ideas for services, goods and technology, which create better solutions and value for consumers and the wider society.

Creativity, to him is a vital part of most innovation and it is the ability to spot new combinations and ways of seeing things, on which innovation thrives.

However innovation involves a lot more than just creativity. Coming up with ideas is one thing, but making a product work takes technical skills.

Understanding how consumers will

use it takes skills in marketing and social understanding. Working out how to make money from a good idea takes innovation in business models.

Context is as crucial as creativity. According to Leadbeater, it is essential to be innovative but it has to be in a way that works for the company and the market. He says that there is no point in trying to be completely innovative in a slow moving market with conservative consumers.

When asked if creativity and innovation can be learned and how, this is what he had to say:

"Obviously, some people are more open to new ideas and new ways of thinking. They are more curious and more open. It is difficult to take someone who is naturally very cautious and not very curious about the world and make them innovative.

"However, I find that if you can create the right conditions, pose the right challenges, get people to collaborate in the right way, give them time and resources to experiment, then most people enjoy being creative and coming up with new ideas.

"In other words you can create the conditions in which people will allow their innovation to come to the fore.

"Employees often have more good ideas that companies realise. It's just that they do not create the conditions for employees to express and articulate those ideas."

To create and cultivate the culture of innovation and creativity, Leadbeater says that you have to keep people open to the world. This will trigger

**THERE IS NO POINT IN TRYING TO BE COMPLETELY INNOVATIVE IN A SLOW MOVING MARKET WITH CONSERVATIVE CONSUMERS.**

them to be curious and inquisitive.

When this happens, you have to create a highly collaborative culture inside the company so that people with different ideas and insights can come together to mix and blend their thinking.

Being collaborative is critical to most innovation, he says. Companies that are very rigid and hierarchical will find it hard to innovate.

Leadbeater adds that just having good ideas is not enough. They have to be turned into products that people want to buy. So innovative companies need a culture of action to turn ideas into products and services.

For all this to take place, there must be good leadership. He defines good leaders as attractors who pull and attract people to take on bigger challenges which they never thought they could handle.

■ Charles Leadbeater will be in Kuala Lumpur on April 3. He will be speaking at *The Business of Innovation* forum organised by The London Speaker Bureau. For more information, visit [www.bizofinnovation.com.my](http://www.bizofinnovation.com.my) or call 03-23010988.



Charles Leadbeater, a leading authority on innovation and creativity.

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## PROGRAMME

Date  
**Thursday, 6 March 2014**

Venue  
**Impiana Banquet Hall, Impiana KLCC Hotel**

Time  
**9.00am - 3.30pm**

9am - 9:30am  
Registration

9:30am - 9:45am  
Opening Remarks

9:45am - 10:30am  
Flexibility in the Workplace

10:30am - 11am  
My Experience in Returning to the Workforce

11am - 12:30pm  
Tips on Returning to Work

12:30pm - 3:30pm  
Networking and Lunch

Brought to you by TalentCorp Malaysia in partnership with myStarJob.com and HEARTS

## THIS BRAIN FOOD TREAT IS EASY TO FORGET

By **TERRY SMALL**  
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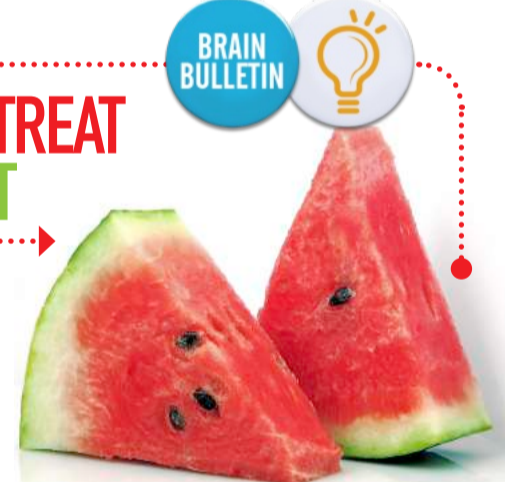
SOME foods are fun to eat. It's even better when they're good for your brain. Food has the power to heal your brain. The chemical components in what you eat have powerful effects on the way your mind works.

My favourite hot weather brain food treat is watermelon. They are a virtual warehouse of nutrients essential for a healthy brain and body.

Mark Twain said this about watermelon: "It is chief of this world's luxuries. When one has tasted it, he knows what angels eat." He was right. Children eat a lot of watermelon. Adults, not so much...

**Here are the surprising benefits of watermelon:**

- ▶ High in vitamin B6, which helps brain function
- ▶ Contains the amino acids arginine and citrulline which help maintain your arteries, blood flow, and cardiovascular function
- ▶ A good source of potassium which helps muscle and nerve function
- ▶ Has the highest concentration of lycopene (a powerful antioxidant) of any fresh fruit or vegetable
- ▶ Contains anti-inflammatory properties
- ▶ Enhances immunity
- ▶ Hydrates you and your brain
- ▶ Helps regulate brain chemicals
- ▶ Normalises sleep patterns
- ▶ Alleviates stress and depression
- ▶ Increases your "feel good factor"
- ▶ Improves your skin
- ▶ Filling and low in calories... Hmm.
- ▶ B6, B1, magnesium, and potassium combine to boost your energy



- ▶ Watermelon is a certified heart healthy food by the American Heart Association. And, what's good for your heart is good for your brain. ... and the list could go on.

**And, if that's not enough:**

"For three centimes I can eat, drink, and wash my face, all by the means of one of those slices of watermelon you display there on a little table," says Anatole France in *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* (1881).

Watermelon can be put in salad, smoothies, or you can have it as a quick snack.

Or, you could purée watermelon, cantaloupe and kiwi together. Swirl in a little plain yogurt and serve as refreshing cold soup. Remember, what you eat literally becomes you. You have a choice in what you are made of.

Congratulations on learning something about your brain today. *The Brain Bulletin* is committed to help to do just that.

Always remember: "You are a genius!" Enjoy your brain.

■ Terry Small is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that anyone can learn how to learn easier, better, faster, and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire. To interact with Small, email [mystarjob@leaderonomics.com](mailto:mystarjob@leaderonomics.com)