



balance³ update

Welcome to our January 2012 update. We wish you all good things in this fresh new year. Enjoy:

- Systems, sustainability and potato chips; and
- Three keys to successful innovation adoption.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

We're going to the grass-roots with an evening community education program. "[Introduction to Sustainability at Work](#)" is running at two locations in Melbourne's eastern suburbs in Term 1.

Come and join us, and invite anyone you think would be interested in finding out more about the opportunity side of business sustainability.

Register your interest NOW at:

<http://www.balance3.com.au/community2012-1.html>

Systems, Sustainability and Potato Chips

(Adapted from "The Innovator's Way" www.innovators-way.com)

A sustainability colleague recently reminded me of the story of Walkers Crisps and the systems thinking change that will substantially reduce their environmental footprint.



Leigh Baker is a professional coach and regenerative business educator. She works with sustainability practitioners at all levels of business to increase their success as change-makers.

Her clients get more done more easily, allowing them to turn their ideas into reality more effectively. Leigh has a particular passion for developing the conversation skills that support innovation adoption and the development of regenerative business strategies and practices.

Balance³ runs **workshops** and **coaching programs** on practical techniques for turning ideas into action. We use the advanced technology of [Ontological](#)

Systems and Feedback

Systems thinking is the process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole. When we fully understand a system and the feedback loops that influence it, we can often identify small shifts that generate big results. This can be particularly powerful in the feedback loops that connect different parts of the system.

Potatoes, Weight and Water

Potatoes are 80% water, so turning them into crisps (or chips as we call them "down under") is about removing water. But how are potatoes sold? Usually it's by weight, and that was the case with Walkers and their suppliers. The key feedback loop between the potato growers and the chip manufacturers was in terms of price per kilo delivered.

So if you're a potato farmer and you're paid by gross product weight, what will you aim to do? Maximise the weight of your product. You'll refrigerate your crop in humidified cold-stores and deliver it in refrigerated trucks.

Is Efficiency the Answer?

Many sustainability programs have historically put their focus on efficiency - improving the performance of the plant and equipment. But in this case there's a simpler approach that's a game-changer - to change the feedback mechanism. In this case, by paying for the dry weight of the potatoes instead of the gross weight.

The Impact of Changing the Feedback Loop

If you're paid for dry weight (which is the value to the manufacturer), then you no longer need to store your product in humidified, refrigerated warehouses, so your costs go down and so does your resource usage. And from the manufacturer's perspective, you get drier raw materials that cost you less to process.

Win/Win/Win for Small, Local, Smart Thinking

[Coaching](#) to develop mastery of the communication, innovation and change-making skills that increase their career success AND their sustainability.

Our Programs

This month's featured program is our executive briefing:

["REGENERATIVE BUSINESS: What You Can't Afford NOT to Know About Business and the Environment"](#)

NOTE: The price of your first regenerative business briefing will be credited against subsequent coaching or education programs.

Explore our range of regenerative business, innovation and communication programs at: www.balance3.com.au/programs.html

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Seeing the full system and shifting a straight-forward feedback loop produced a win/win/win result with an expected 30% reduction in environmental impact. (And it won't do any harm to the careers of the initiators, either.)

It's a great example of Principle #7 of Deep Green Profit - think small, local and smart. It didn't require complicated technology or mystical tree-hugging ideals, just a creative application of mainstream business development tools for understanding systems and analysing value. So next time you find yourself looking at diminishing returns on an efficiency program, step back and look for a broader systems perspective.

Find out more about the straightforward principles of sustainability for fun and profit in "The Deep Green Profit Handbook", available in PDF or paperback from www.deepgreenprofit.com.

Three Keys to Successful Innovation

So you've got a great idea, and you've come up with a proposal that will meet the needs of the people you want to use it. Your work here is done... isn't it?

Well, no - not until you have your invention turned into an adopted practice - that's the real work of innovation. Your proposed change requires a community of people who do things in a particular way to change how they work together - there's a process to this.

Consider, Trial, Sustain

There are 3 distinct phases in the adoption process that need to happen in order to get your result :

1. Obtain commitment from your community (or its leaders) to **consider** the change you propose.

2. Obtain commitment from your community to **trial** the new process for the first time.
3. Obtain commitment from your community to **sustain** the new practice for its useful life.

This is where many innovations can fall over. You present your innovation and they say "It looks great" - and you think that means they're going to do it. But what they mean is something else - anything from "no way" to "if I had any time I'd try (but I don't)". It's not a yes till you see the change happening - repeatedly.

The Process of Adoption

You've just begun an extended sequence of conversations and negotiations towards the result you want. Your offer will evolve through the process of considering, trialling and sustaining. So the better you communicate, particularly in **listening** to your community, the better the results you'll get.

Learn the anatomy of making offers, the art of conversations for commitment and possibility and the confidence to make a stand for the changes you want to see in the world. Build your communications effectiveness and your understanding of innovation and you can make a real contribution to your work and your life.

Explore our group and individual **Innovation and Communication** programs at:

<http://www.balance3.com.au/programs.html>

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