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BLOGGER: Vanessa Gavan

January 14, 2013 By [Australian Business Solutions](#) [Leave a Comment](#)



"Figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics earlier this year from the Business Characteristics Survey show that innovation is slowing down. The proportion of businesses actively innovating fell nearly 5 per cent, to 39 per cent of businesses. Meanwhile, business sentiment as to how innovative we are is poor, with the GE Innovation Barometer earlier this year showing that when ranked by business sentiment as to how innovative we are, Australia ranks 16th out of 30 countries."

Kate Mills, BRW, 06 Dec 2012

As a Managing Director, I find these stats really concerning. Not only will this drop in innovation impact on organisational performance in the medium-term, it will have flow on consequences surrounding employee morale and engagement. People want to work for companies that are constantly evolving. Top talent want to participate in ideation, they covet accelerated learning and they need to be fast-tracked. There has to be a level of innovation, performance and growth for this to occur. Companies that fail to think creatively will find themselves at the back of the pack in the race for top talent.

This sentiment around innovation is a reflection of the times. What we are seeing is the typical knee-jerk reaction to increased scrutiny and pressure around company performance. The drop in corporate appetite for disruptive innovation, and a preference for more organic improvement, is not surprising, but it is somewhat disappointing. What I am surprised by is how Australia fares in relation to others. Australia has a natural flair for innovation and entrepreneurship; it is in our DNA. To rank only 16th out of 30 developed countries in this area indicates that we are losing our edge, reining in diverse thinking and potentially being dominated by global directives and risk mitigation strategies.

Innovating in the new world order will be dependent on leaders' ability to manage polarities and hold opposing ideas in their mind at the same time, while retaining the ability to function effectively. Examples include; investing cleverly through different market cycles while managing a lean core business; or, switching between strategic and tactical modes of operating.

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Simply turning off our innovation barometer is not a viable option. Today's leaders must operate in a multi-speed, multi-horizon, multi-discipline world in order to survive and thrive.

Vanessa Gavan is the Managing Director of Maximus International. For over 15 years, Vanessa has consulted to a range of leading Australian and international organisation to enhance business strategies, improve executive leadership capability, redesign organisation structures and deliver operational performance solutions. Maximus International is a niche organisational performance consultancy. An entrepreneurial business in nature, Maximus help organisations achieve specific business goals and have a strong track record in the leadership arena. **For more information, visit <http://www.maximus.com.au>**

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