
Ten Commandments for Introducing Innovative Services

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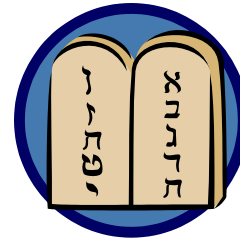


Source

These ten commandments were written by
Ben H. Weil (1916-1997)

He presented them at the Engineering Foundation
Conference on Innovative Management of
Technical Information in Industry, Aug. 14-19,
1977

I. Thou shalt lift thine eyes to the technological horizons, for from thence may come thy salvations. But be thou of reasonable patience unless thy need is exceedingly great, and unless thou canst command great resources, for he who is first to use an innovative development must often surmount great barriers of problems and expense. Thou shalt usually strive to be a close second, for they greater cost effectiveness shall bring thee rich rewards.



Watch for technological innovations that can improve your library – but keep in mind the high costs of being “on the bleeding edge” or an “early adopter”. If you decide to adopt a very new system, manage costs and risks carefully.



III. Thou shalt carefully watch for innovative developments in the business and office fields, for from them shall come systems and equipment that wouldst never have been developed for thee.

Don't just read the library science professional literature and go to library science conferences and shows. Pay attention to what's going on in the Information Technology industry and in computer science and technology research.

III. While thou shalt indeed search diligently for innovative systems, thou shalt not install one simply for the sake of change, for thou mayest not be able to change back if thou shouldst have been wrong.



Your decision to implement a new system must be driven by a business need. Show how your system contributes to the parent organization's goals.

Even more than the issue of 'changing back' are the issues of financial costs, staff frustration, and lost opportunities.

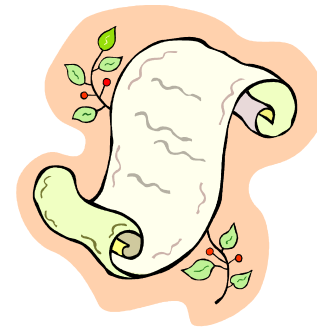
IV. If thou mayest choose between systems that art of equal merit, thou shalt choose that which shall be the most intriguing to thy users, so that thy peers shall call thee innobative.



Yes, you must understand your users' needs and respond to them.

Be market-centric!

V. Thou shalt not rest content that a problem cannot be solved, for the Lord will help those who help themselves. But sufficient until tomorrow that which thou truly canst not achieve today, for the light of a new dawn may bring thee technological or other inspirations.



Your choice of innovations must be realistic -- you can't be totally customer-centric. Priorities are formed at the intersection of business need, technical feasibility, cost, and user interest.

If something is not feasible today, it may become so by next year.

¶. Thou shalt work closely and constructively with the purveyors of innovative systems, so that they shall be optimized for all that shall be involved. But thou shalt not be passive if the price for an innovative service shall seem excessive, for the purveyor thereof may have been unnecessarily conservative. In that case, thou shalt be the squeaking wheel that gainest the grease.



This goes for working with your internal IT organization as well as external vendors. You need them, but you need to be an 'educated consumer' too.

Learn to negotiate!

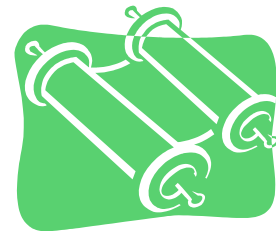
VII. Thou shalt not hide a new light under a basket, or show it only to a chosen few. Instead, thou shalt revealest it to all levels of thy corporate colleagues who can benefit from it and then support it, and thou shalt publish on it for the sake of thy colleagues elsewhere.



Part of Marketing is Publicity, or Promotion.

It's almost impossible to do too much communication – but also, think about the best ways to target your message so you don't waste your efforts.

VIII. Thou shalt praise him exceedingly who shall later suggest one of thy innovative ideas which thou hadst earlier failed to have accepted, and thou shalt not remind him or others that the idea first was thine. For thou wilt thus add to thy supporters and gain more of thy goals, and thy greater success shall outweigh the credit of the moment.



Sometimes it takes time for others in your organization to understand why your ideas are important.

Be patient.



IX. Thou shalt not insist on installing each new innovative system within thy own domain, for cooperation or centralization even with thy competitors may enable thee to do more with thy finite resources. Thou shalt not take exceeding pride in doing everything for thyself. Thou shalt advance thy organization's goals through the cost effectiveness of thy work, and not by pride in the size of thy staffs and the uniqueness of thy systems.

Don't be an empire-builder. Generally, they're not liked, and therefore not successful.

Paradoxically, the more tasks you give away, the more power and influence you accumulate.

X. In introducing a new system thou shalt ever be diligent early to involve and to give leadership status to those who will presently toil in the fields in which thou art planting. Thou shalt give them great praise and credit, and thou shalt encourage them exceedingly to take over such new projects at the earliest proper time. For otherwise thou wilt not thyself be able to undertake the next innovative project that challenges thy attention.



Take care of your people. Grow and develop your staff. Learn to delegate.

This too will contribute to your ability to develop new and effective systems and services.

