InnoWise™

How InnoWise™ can help you contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals

I was recently asked to write about how InnoWise™ will contribute to the achievement of two UN Sustainable development goals (SDGs). Given my history in water, my first pick was, SDG goal 6: Clean water and sanitation. My second pick, also not overly surprising, was Goal 9: Infrastructure, Industry and Innovation. Here's how InnoWise™ can contribute to these awesome goals.

At Innovating Wisely, our goal is to help the water industry feel safe about innovation which is related to SDG 9 – Building a resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

We also understand that 'Water **is** Life', it is not a nice to have and as such, SDG 6 - water and sanitation for all - is central to all other goals.

I am a trusted water engineer with over 25 years of experience in the water industry. This foundation combined with my research involving innovation and knowledge management, I can provide a framework and tools that supports managing innovation in a safe way in the water industry. An example of how this may be applied to recycling water for potable use follows.

Change is the only constant in life. If organisation's cannot adapt to change, then the future is not bright. The climate crisis is looming and ever present, therefore having a solid platform to support change is very important.

Water utilities and providers are in a unique, monopoly like position where they are assured an income, however, they are not assured a resource. To innovate requires a driver and money is not their driver. Being able to adapt to change in our physical and political environment is a must have. This aspect was documented by others during the last millennial drought in QLD and which formed the basis of my research that sits behind InnoWise™.

In this article, I wonder if we will learn from that experience? Given the recent press about starting the Western Corridor (purified recycled water scheme in South East Queensland), one does wonder.

We believe applying the InnoWise™ measures through the KnowledgePulse™ would help decision makers like the Minister make the difficult decision. The KnowledgePulse™ product is designed to test the level of trust and energy for the change. It is similar to a poll of voters but would be specific to finding out aspects like:

- what is it that is stopping people from trusting the decision to start
- what is stopping them from being motivated or enthused about the idea
- at what point will voters endorse a decision and why?

They, as well as the decision makers, need to be motivated enough to accept the need for

the change – ie, using recycled water in a potable supply.

Part of the decision making needs to involve looking at options. In the business case, you would expect there to be options for the minister and others to consider. What does it look like if we don't start the recycled water scheme and what other options are there? By applying the KnowledgeCanvas™, the options would be mapped out with how they would proceed by asking these questions:

- what are the expectations of each option
- how would each option be rolled out
- what activities are needed to motivate the customers and stakeholders
- what knowledge do they need to understand the need for this change
- what are the likely roadblocks
- how can they prove that the option is fit-for-purpose and reliable
- what kind of feedback process do they need
- what benefits would be realised, not only for the organisations concerned, but also for the community and not just about water security, what about new knowledge that might be gained through the process?

With this approach to option mapping, our proposition is that the path forward becomes clearer and is not just driven by dollars. The option with the least number of roadblocks (ie resistance or risk) rises to the top.

And if we have measures that are testing the trust and motivation aspects of that option along the way, it provides a lead indicator of issues that require a focus in the next phase.

By using lead, rather than lag indicators, will provide comfort to the decision makers that roadblocks are being managed and the risks are being mitigated.

For instance, with the Pulse answers, the delivery or communications team can modify how the next phase of the scheme development and delivery will be managed and what will be the focus:

- is it the taste
- is it the fear of contaminating our water resource
- is it the money best spent elsewhere
- is it not understanding the time and effort required to restart the scheme
- is it understanding the benefits?

It is a lot of money, it is a big decision and there are many competing issues (eg Covid). Therefore, the driver to make the decision, to enable the change, needs to be big enough to accept any negative consequences that might follow and cause a roadblock. However, by planning ahead, the team delivering the option will be ready to address these roadblocks and the decision makers will have comfort that it is all in hand.