



LEADERCAST

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FRANS JOHANSSON

Executive Summary

I wrote *The Medici Effect*. The idea for the book is based on intersection. The best way to come up with groundbreaking ideas is to combine very different ideas – like *termites and architecture*; *ice and beds*; and *bikinis and burqas*. Diversity drives innovation.

A man was commissioned to build the largest office building complex in Harare, Zimbabwe without air conditioning. He did it by combining the ideas of architecture and termite houses. Termite houses open and close vents to regulate heat and cold. He combined these ideas to build a comfortable, energy efficient office complex.

At the intersections of different ideas and cultures, the Medici effect happens. *The Medici Effect* is named after the Medici family in Florence, Italy. Hundreds of years ago they brought together leaders in different disciplines and ushered in one of the most creative eras in Europe's history. They had the same resource as others – people. The only difference is how they collaborated.

The best ideas emerge when very different perspectives meet. Then an idea can change the world. A lady moved to Australia where the normal female swimwear was bikinis. Many traditional Moslem women go swimming in burqas. She combined the ideas of bikinis and burqas – and made a burqa out of bikini material.

People that change the world try far more ideas than others because we are horrible at predicting what ideas will work. Einstein published over 240 papers, many of which not a single person referenced. Google has launched hundreds of products. To be successful, you have to accept that you won't always be successful.

How does this play out? Maybe you have an idea. Often from an idea you create a large goal and then you use 100% of your resources (your money and your reputation) to reach it. After all that work and effort, you now realize how you should have done it. You realize what would have been a better goal or a better way to do it.

Here's a better way. For example, a guy in northern Sweden saw a future with the cold and snow. First, he had an idea to "sell" the winter. His first idea was to fly in some ice sculptures from Japan. He had an ice exhibition. It wasn't successful because the ice melted. Next, he tried a snow gallery and had paintings hung in an ice building.

Then he created an event hall with everything made out of ice, including a movie screen. A few backpackers who saw it said they would like to sleep on a bed made of ice. He made a bed of ice and they loved it. Then he created The Ice Hotel. Everything is made out of ice – the walls, beds, tables, etc. It is one of Sweden's largest tourist attractions. This is the path of ANY successful, innovative idea.

You have to start with an idea – a step. The best way to come up with this idea is at the intersection of different cultures and ideas. Figure out something you can do and make it happen. The world is connected – there is somebody making those connections and it should be YOU!

ACTION ITEMS:

- ❖ What innovative idea do you have? What is one thing you can do to make it happen? Remember your end goal may change along the way. Be open to where the process takes you.
- ❖ What challenge are you facing in your organization or with your team? Bring together people from different areas or backgrounds. Brainstorm a solution from combining diverse ideas.