



Rotman School of Management
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Tapping the Power of Integrative Thinking



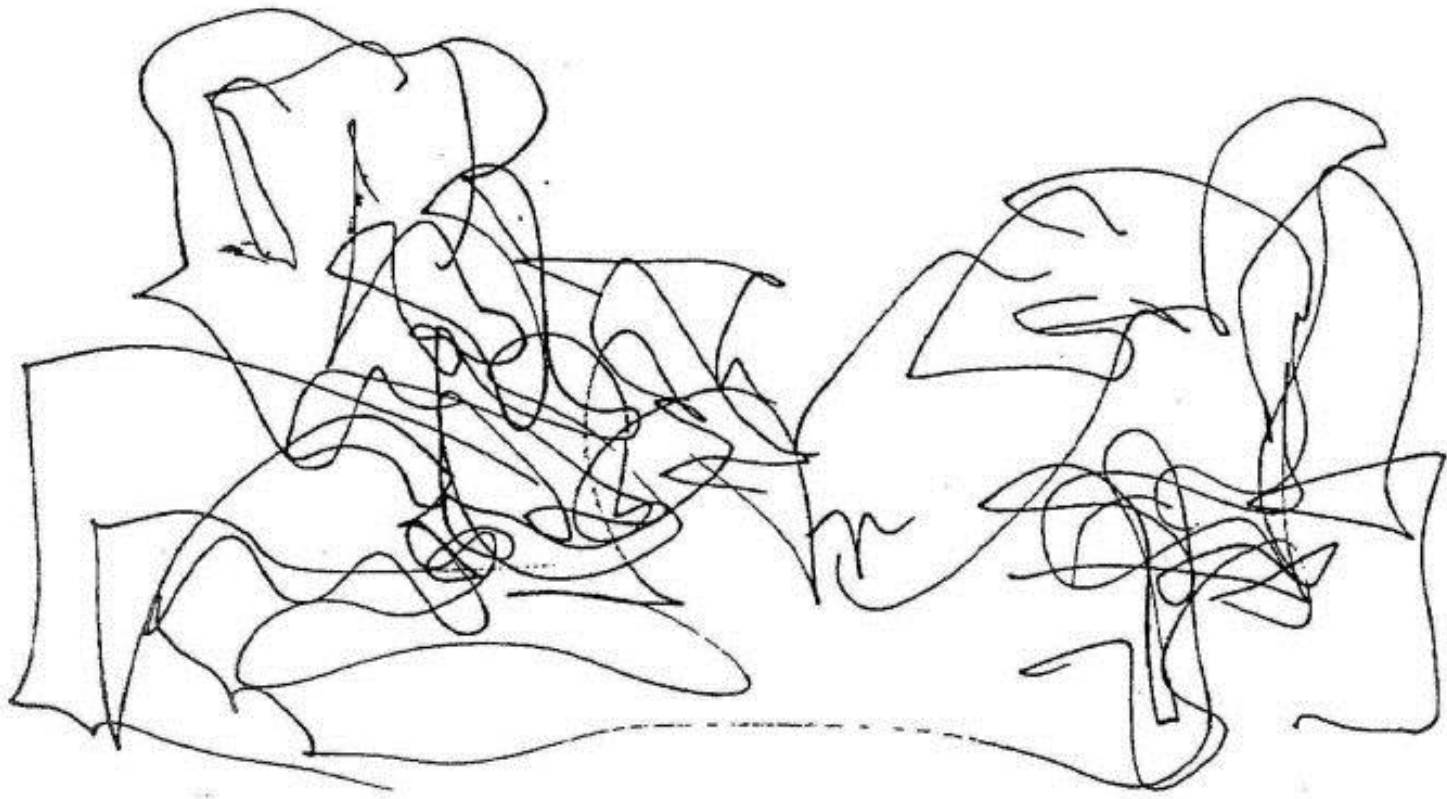
Jennifer Riel

Desautels Centre for Integrative Thinking

Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto

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Getting Started



case 1 on - not



Where We Began



*How do
successful
leaders think?*



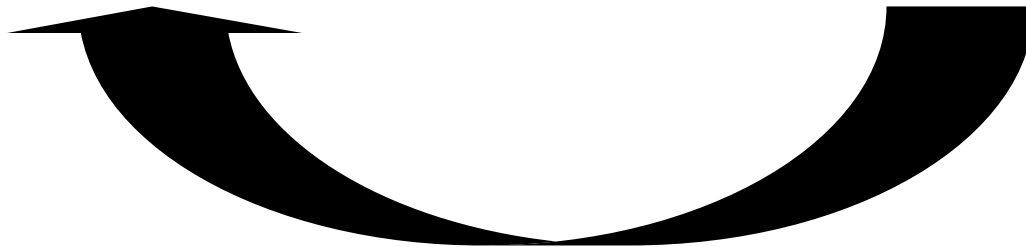
“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless, yet be determined to make them otherwise.”

~ F. Scott Fitzgerald

Making Sense of Our World



The Feedback Loop: Our Models Become Reality



We're All Modeling in Our Own Ways



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Reacting to Model Clash

The Conventional Choice

Fear & Avoid



OR

Choose & Move On



- Deny/ignore/avoid existence of clash
- Crush opposing model or cave in
- Re-confirm there is no real model clash

- Lay out the set of options
- Evaluate each of those options
- Choose the “least worst” option from the set



An Alternative Approach: Seek & Leverage



- **Seek out the tension of clashing models**
- **Enjoy experiencing the tension**
- **Drive for new insight before proceeding**

Isadore Sharp, Four Seasons

Competing Models

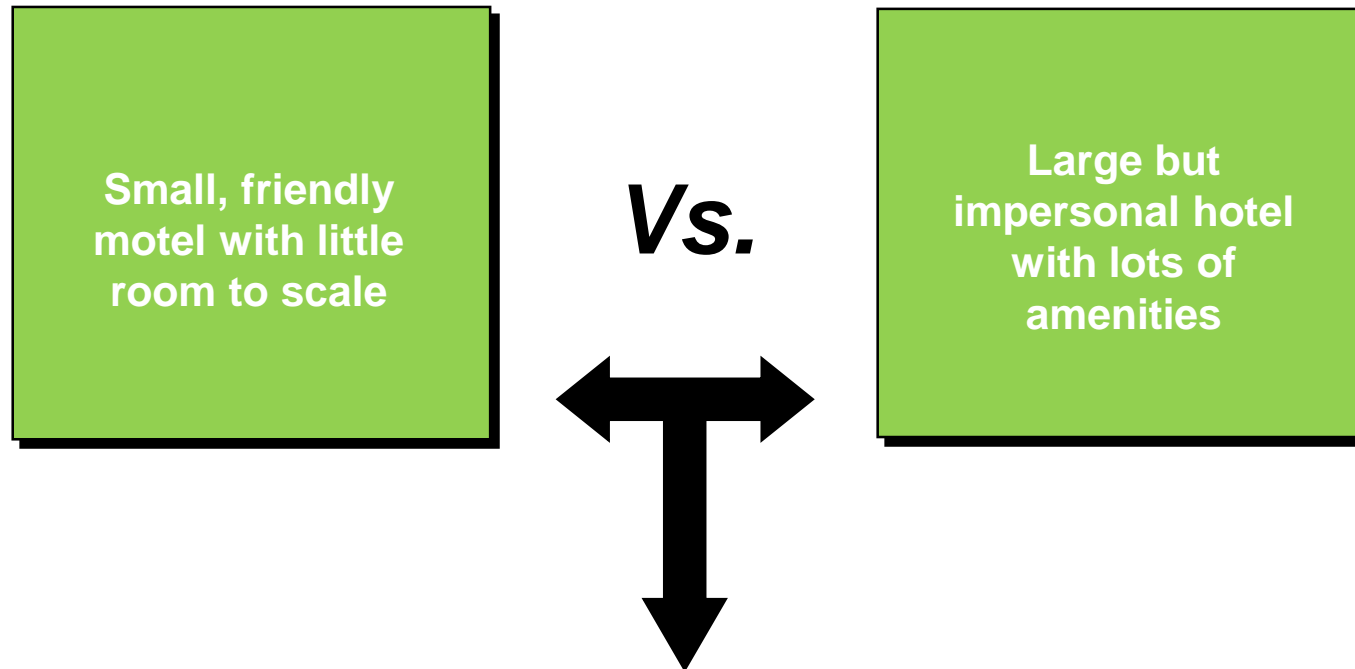
Small, friendly
motel with little
room to scale

Vs.

Large but
impersonal hotel
with lots of
amenities



Competing Models



Creative Resolution

Medium-sized luxury hotel redefined by service and funded by a massive price premium



What is Integrative Thinking?

"The ability to face constructively the tension of opposing models and instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, to generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new model that contains elements of the individual models but is superior to each."

~ Roger Martin, *The Opposable Mind* (2007)



One More Example

Competing Models

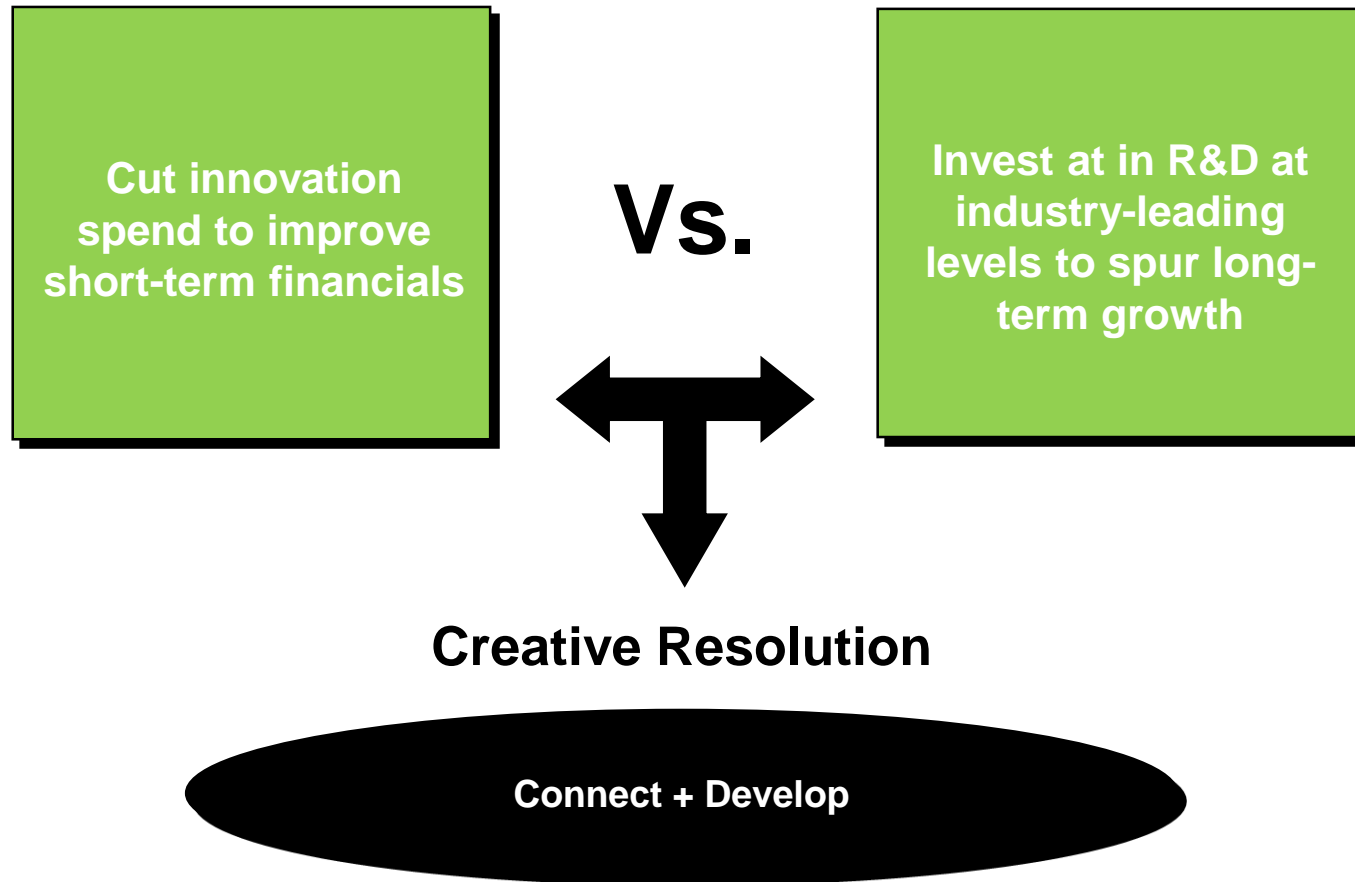
Cut innovation
spend to improve
short-term financials

Vs.

Invest at in R&D at
industry-leading
levels to spur long-
term growth



Competing Models



Why Integrative Thinking?

“We weren’t going to win if it was an ‘or.’ Everybody can do ‘or.’ That’s the way the world works – you trade things off. But you’re not going to be the best in your industry. You are not going to win if you are in a trade-off game.”

~ AG Lafley, past Chairman and CEO, P&G



Exploring Opposing Models



Tension Between Opposing Models

Strategy in the Film Festival World

Inclusive community
model

Or

Exclusive industry
model

What is the logic behind each model?



The Central Importance of Stance

“Stance is how you see the world around you, but it’s also how you see yourself in that world.”

~ The Opposable Mind

“[Stance] is the orientation for practice. This kind of overarching knowledge includes cultural and disciplinary paradigms, social identities, values, roles and motivations. It is in large part tacit and deeply embedded. It rarely bears scrutiny, except in times of transformational change within a personal practice or practice community. [Stance] is quietly developed and is often taken for granted.”

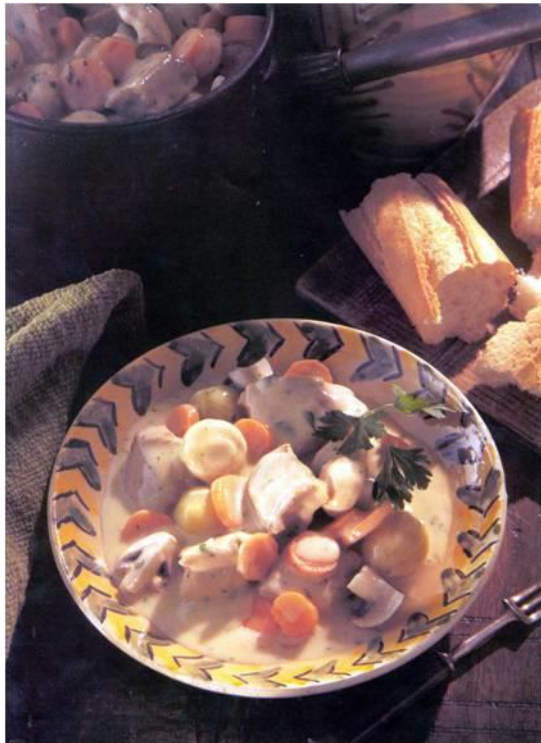
~ Dr. Hilary Austen



Different Stances, Different Results

Two chefs, one with a rustic Italian stance and one with a classic French stance, acquire the tools and experience to make braised veal:

Traditional Italian



The French Laundry's version



Source: Hilary Austen

An Integrative Thinking Stance

About the world:

- 1) Existing models do not represent reality;
they are constructions
- 2) Opposing models are to be leveraged,
not feared
- 3) Better models exist that are not yet
seen

About my role in it:

- 4) I am capable of finding a better model
- 5) I wade into and get through the
necessary complexity
- 6) I give myself time to create and develop
a new insight before proceeding

