

Managing Creativity and Innovation in the Cultural Industries: Evidence from Three Cultural Organizations in Canada

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ABSTRACT

In a changing environment, the survival of small organizations becomes critically important not only for themselves but for the competitiveness in an entire given territory. Thus, creativity and innovation in any organization are vital to its successful performance. Therefore, knowledge or idea exchange is an important function of groups in organizations. Idea sharing in groups can be productive under two conditions. One important factor is the extent to which group members carefully process the ideas exchanged in the group. Another is the opportunity for group

members to reflect on the ideas after the exchange process. Consequently, this research study aims to identify how organizational creativity and innovation contribute to the success of small organizations in the francophone linguistic minority region in Canada. We based our research on the case study analysis of three cultural organizations in New Brunswick, which allowed us to identify a triptych of organizational creativity and innovation based on employees, clients, and the local community commitment.

Keywords: Creativity, Innovation, Values, Flexibility, Very small businesses (VSB). New Brunswick

INTRODUCTION

Creativity is defined as an ability to link various individual elements together in order to form new or more complex ideas that have a scientific, esthetic, social, or technical value. Such a new combination is the result of the interaction between knowledge, intelligence, experience, interest, and enthusiasm (Carrier and G  linas, 2011; Leonard and Swap, 1999; Amabile, 1997). For Hills, Shrader and Lumpkin (1999), creativity must take into account the individual, the new product or service itself, the creative process, and the environment.

There are many definitions of creativity. Some researchers consider creativity as the generation of imaginative new ideas (Newell and Shaw 1972), involving a radical newness innovation or solution to a problem, and a radical reformulation of problems. Other researchers propose that a creative solution can simply integrate existing knowledge in a different way (Perking, 2017). In the context of organizational creativity, the most widely held

definition is the one stated by Amabile (1983). Amabile (1998) defines creativity as the generation of new ideas that are original and useful. In other words, creativity requires knowing how to find a solution or a new idea that can be adapted to organizational realities. Since creativity perceived to be an individual quality, it is then, modeled to work at the organizational level. We also propose that creativity, applied to an organization could be defining, as the ability to move and harmonize effectively within a group thus releasing the creative potential of an individual in an uncertain and ever-changing world. Therefore, the standard analysis of creativity within an organization is based on individual, group and organizational strengths (Prerry-Smith, Mannucci, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to learn how very small cultural organizations (VSB) manage their creativity and innovation in a Francophone linguistic minorities environment, considering that these organizations are facing with financial, resources and skills issues (Landry, 2014). A linguistic minority environment is a group of people who are a minority in their society to still speak a minority language. For instance, speaking French in Canada (except the province of Quebec) would be an example of linguistic minority (Landry, 2014). Thus, organizations operating in that context need more creativity and innovation to succeed. As mentioned earlier, creativity is the capability or act of conceiving something original or unusual (Amabile, Conti, Lazenby, Herron, 1996; Amabile, 1998). I tend to think of an innovation as a new product, but you can innovate with a new process, method, business model, and partnership, route to market or marketing method (Aldag, Fuller, 1993; Ahuja, 2000). Consequently, innovation is a process that transforms unique, creative ideas into new realities: products, services, or processes that deliver greater value or benefits (Berg, 2016). Such transformations can be

incremental, evolutionary or radical in their impact on the status quo (Craig and Kelly, 1999). Some authors have addressed the issue of creativity in SMEs (De Dren and West, 2001; Earley and Gibson, 1998), but some points have been neglected, and the research question that should be asked is: How is creativity manifested, structured and developed in small organizations in minority environment?"

As such, the study of creativity effects through cultural innovation teams is an important research field. Yet, little is known about cultural innovation teams and their creative potential (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Kirkman and Shapiro, 2005; Cox et al., 1991; Dahlin et al., 2005). Our study therefore aims to explore effects of cultural differences in teams on creativity and innovation (Hofstede, 1983, 1984; Hall and Hall, 1990).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creativity and innovation

Creativity and innovation are two largely interwoven concepts (Boudreau and Lakhani, 2015; Gibson, 1999; Janssen et al., 2004; Kim, 2018; Miron et al., 2004). Creativity is produced at the individual level and refers to new products and ideas, whereas innovation is the successful implementation of those products at an organisational level (Sanjiv and Gneezy, 2016; Gibson, Vermeulen, 2003; Oldham and Cummings, 1996). However, this conception of creativity and innovation does not consider that a new product emerges from a complex process on experimenting and implementing solutions to new problems. Therefore, creativity explicitly has to be extended by the reconfiguration of known approaches into new alternatives (Kim and Phillips, 2013; Perry-Smith and Shalley, 2003). Ideas or components of innovations can come from many sources, often from experimentation,

environmental changes, developments by other firms (Hasan, and Koning, 2017; Jansen and West, 2004; Kurtzberg, 2005).

Levels of creativity

Individual creativity

As old products are replaced by new, creativity is the identifying factor changing the way we do things (Mathisen, Einarsen and Jorstad, 2004; Oldhan and Cummunings, 1996). Whether radical or incremental innovation, creative dynamism at the individual level has a cumulative effect on the innovation process (Perry-Smith and Shalley, 2003; Van de Van, 1986). The idea of a lone genius distracts us from the more useful focus on the higher potential source of creativity: the organization as a collective of creative people working as a team (West, 2002). To promote organizational creativity among individuals, attempt to remove barriers and obstacles that hinder creativity and denote the lone inventor as a myth (Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin, 1993; Xiao and Tsui, 2007).

The unique psychology of every individual plays an important role in individual creativity. Nonetheless, according to Amabile (1997), the required creativity skills can be improved by learning and practicing techniques that aim to increase the cognitive and intellectual independence of the individual. For his part, Lubart (2003) identifies six-character traits, both theoretical and empirical, that are significantly related to creativity: perseverance, tolerant of ambiguity, open to new ideas, individualism and risk-taking. Besides, several studies have shown correlations between intrinsic motivation and creative performance of individuals. For example, Amabile (1997) finds that the motivation to realize a task can make the difference between what an engineer can realize and what he will realize. What he can realize depends on his level of

expertise and his ability to formulate ideas in a creative fashion. However, it is his motivation and drive to succeed in a given task that will ultimately determine to what degree he will fully use his expertise and abilities to follow through in a creative way that bestows credit to the creative performance of the organization. Individual creativity also depends on cognitive style that influences the nature of creative realizations (Cook, 1998). Considering the above statements, we propose the following research proposition:

Proposition 1: The foundations of creativity are individual cognitive and psychological aptitudes.

Group and organizational creativity

It is helpful to describe creative organizations as complex, social, political and technical systems (Perking, 2017; Hasan and Koning, 2017). In order to identify creative outlets and implementation a set of mechanisms, the leadership in organizations must have the skills to appreciate knowledge at the individual, team and organization levels simultaneously. Organizational creativity is linked to a risky balance between complexity, compromise and choices (Craig and Kelly, 1999; West, 2002). The creative organization needs to be flexible while controlling entrepreneurial risk but provide the freedom to search for new knowledge through learning and experimentation (Kato, 2016; Xhang and Zhou, 2014; Zhou, 2003). All aspects related to stimulating creativity in groups by means of structured interventions is done according to the creative approach to problem resolution (Rickards and Moger, 2000). Group creativity depends, in part, on the individual creativity of its members. To this end, Amabile (1997) suggests that it is essential to group together individuals who have different personality traits, cognitive styles, and skill profiles. In addition to

having diverse profiles, creative groups must be guided by management staff who have clearly identified the project objective and granted the group the necessary autonomy and leeway to freely accomplish their assigned tasks (Amabile, 1997). In creative groups, it is always desirable to have a team leader who can stimulate other members through lively animation and establishing a proper framework and orientation.

Besides the group and its composition, it is important to emphasize other characteristics that contribute to the creative result. For example, the size of the group influences the interaction and collaboration between members (Lubart, 2003). In larger groups, members have difficulty expressing themselves because of problems due to personal interaction. As well, the cohesion of the group reflects directly on its creative performance. Moreover, since the creativity of members in the same group is not due solely to contact between colleagues who have diversified profiles, it is thus necessary to create a means of communication to understand each other. From this viewpoint, we conclude that the characteristics of members weigh significantly on the dynamics and sound functioning of creative groups. An environment that does not offer the proper stimulation does not lend itself to creativity in groups. In order to foster creativity, group members must be interdependent and work together as a team. Creativity within an organization can be influenced by numerous factors such as the climate at work and the level of confidence between members of the organization. According to Sternberg and Lubart (1991), the environment at work encompasses the principal levers of creativity within the company and includes the mechanisms for developing new ideas. For example, honing communication skills and having in place a method for rewarding and recognizing all creative initiatives will have a positive impact. Furthermore, besides the importance of fostering a climate favourable to creativity, we also

need a collective management approach that favours creativity as well. Besides the management style, the resources and abilities of an organization also determine the creative performance or net result. According to Amabile (1997), this notion includes all the mechanisms that favour creativity, especially in the particular domain targeted. The resources include, among others, the time required to produce a new product, the expertise required by its employees, the amount of funds invested, material resources, management systems and procedures as well as training (Meunier, 2007). In addition, the research studies of Cook (1998) suggests that creative organizations must make a genuine effort to attract, retain, and develop their highly talented creative human resources. Hence, we propose the following research propositions.

Proposition 2: The group size and the interactions within the group influence the ability to be creative.

Proposition 3: The context at work influences creativity in organizations.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

The case study method was chosen as a means to further examine the objectives in our study (Yin, 1994). To this end, we have chosen a theoretical approach rather than statistical (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman suggested the choice and the number of case studies that met our sampling criteria. In order to understand the mechanisms that facilitate a creative environment, choosing a case study method appears to be the most appropriate when we examine the conditions for creativity in small cultural organizations that exist in such a constrained environment. To proceed, we conducted semi-controlled interviews

with managers and employees of these organizations, each of which lasted an average of 45 minutes, which allowed us to determine the individual, group, and organizational creative mechanisms.

Description of Case Studies

Case 1: « Acadian Historical Village » is dedicated to preserve, maintain, and promote Acadian culture and heritage ». Acadian Historical Village (The Village) is a living museum that represents the daily lives of Acadians living in New Brunswick from 1770 to 1949. Located on the Rivière-du-Nord, near the village of Caraquet in the Northeast of the Province, The Village opened its doors in June 1977. Since opening day, the organization seeks to inform and educate visitors, including residents, about the life of Acadians from the end of the 18th century to the mid- 1950s in the 20th century. The Village interprets the actual history of Acadians who lived throughout that period using artifacts in a recreated historical environment. The period lifestyle is reflected by actors in costume, living and working alongside the more than 60 structures and artifacts onsite. In addition, we can observe traditional types of work, cultural and folklore exhibitions, as well as recreated historical events. Visitors can further enjoy themselves by staying at the Château Albert, a fully functional period hotel/restaurant with 15 rooms. Apart from the amenities, The Village has a welcoming station, a conference / event room with a capacity for 200 people, a boutique, and a cafeteria.

Case 2: « Lefebvre Monument Society » (SML) was incorporated on June 2nd, 1998. The society was created by a group of Acadians who felt deeply about the importance of recognizing a new renaissance in Acadian culture that is beaming with pride. Their first objective was a success; namely, having Parks Canada designate the Lefebvre Monument as a national historical site in

1994. Fortuitously, the designation was announced during the very first Acadian World Congress (CMA) being held in the Southeast of New Brunswick.

Established for more than a quarter century, SML knew how to fine-tune its project with just the right amount of polishing and thus continue its mission, specifically, to “Promote the heritage of the Acadian renaissance and the resurgence of a rich Acadian culture”. This mission can then be divided into two general objectives; namely, at first to “Develop the full potential of the national historical site of the Lefebvre Monument” and later, to “Develop the full potential of the Lefebvre Monument Society”. Six organizations comprise the membership of SML. They are the « National Society of Acadie » (SNA), the « Société Nouveau-Brunswick Acadie Society» (SANB), the « Memramcook Village», the « cultural society of Memramcook valley », the « historical society of Memramcook valley», and the « Abbey-Landry School». Each member organization designates a person to sit on the board of directors of SML. These six members name three other representatives from the community at large to complete the 9-member board of directors.

Case 3: The Frye festival is a bilingual literary event. It is an inspiration by one of the best worlds- renowned thinkers among literary critiques, Northrop Frye, and was founded in 1999 in the Moncton area. The festival aims to encourage people to discover the pleasures of reading and writing through activities that unite the public by inviting the best-known authors and writers from the region or nationally / internationally. The non-profit organization succeeds in attracting between 15,000 and 17,000 people per year, in addition to the 10,000 students from schools in the region that participate in the school-youth program.

The festival encourages the population to discover the world of literature with the help of close to 400 authors from around the

world that have participate in the festival from the very beginning. More than 50 activities are available to the public during the year, particularly during the weeklong festival held every April. During that particular week, the organization generates more than a million dollars for the local Greater Moncton area. It also plays an important role in the community and provides it with a sense of belonging by bringing together authors, participants, volunteers, community partners, business sponsors, benefactors, and the media, to name a few.

Data collection and analysis

The data was collected by means of semi-controlled interviews, direct observations, and pertinent documentation (Yin, 2003). The majority of those interviewed were seen several times but, in such cases, they were counted as a single interview. The interviews were generally of short duration, between 30 and 45 minutes. They covered topics such as the description of a typical workday, motivation, and the types of collaboration that exist. In case #1: the four interviews cover the quasi-total of existing jobs at The Acadian Heritage Village: General Manager, Commercial Manager, administration, artistic director, and employees. In case #2: the four interviews cover all the existing positions in the company (100% of resources): management, administration, and volunteers. In case #3: the four interviews cover the entire knowledge-based society and include management, marketing, etc. ...

The data was analysed according to the principal of thematic content analysis. We grouped various segments of the interviews as a function of generic themes that appeared emergent; then allowed us to extract progressively the means by which values and associated mechanisms are selected by individuals and organizations, thus forming the very basis for creativity.

FINDINGS

The proposition 1, the foundations of creativity are individual cognitive and psychological aptitudes is validated. Most employees at the Acadian Heritage Village attend a daily briefing of about 30 minutes before the site opens during the height of tourist season. The briefing sessions allow management and employees to:

- Exchange ideas through a give and take.
- Discuss the comments, suggestions, and preoccupations of tourists/visitors to the Village to improve the product offered.

The general manager emphasizes that the employees through their morning briefings relay the needs of visitors to management. After all, the employees speak directly to visitors at the Village every day. The briefing sessions thus constitute an important forum by which to receive feedback from visitors. Management attends these briefings to solve problems but also to obtain and discuss viable solutions proposed by their employees. This approach is very gratifying for employees who see first-hand that management does indeed care about their preoccupations and that it listens to their suggestions. Therefore, the briefings are a source of motivation for management and staff. During these morning briefings, major innovations are not specifically on the agenda. The Director General, Mr. LeBreton, states the goals: "It's the small details that can greatly improve the visitor/tourist experience". He cites the following example:

"During one such briefing session, the employees mentioned that visitors were complaining about not having enough places where they could sit down or rest. Thus, The Village installed more benches throughout the site."

At the Lefebvre Monument Society (SML), employees initially are recruited for their passion of Acadian culture and history. Afterwards, as noted by the General Manager Claude Boudreau, they become sources of creativity. He cites the example of a new employee who, on his first day at work, suggested changes to the confusing traffic signalization that leads to the Monument and to potential changes or modifications at the boutique located in the Monument. The employee explains that he noted such issues when he first visited the site with his parents.

Moreover, employee creativity is related directly to the interactions that they exchange with visitors. One day, the assistant general manager began an informal discussion with visitors from Louisiana. Like Acadians, many are interested in their own history and they told me that they only discovered the existence of the Monument by attending the last Acadian World Congress (CMA). As a result, we created an event dedicated to attracting tourists and heritage / historical minded travellers from Louisiana to Nova Scotia to New Brunswick. For the last two years, this activity accounts for a third of the Monument budget, proof positive that interaction between employees and visitors represents an important source of creativity. Such small details often go unnoticed in the eyes of visitors, but they allow us to improve our services.

Once the Frye Festival ends, management and employees meet to have debriefing sessions whose principal objective is to propose more audacious ideas and concepts to surprise visitors attending the next festival. In addition, certain employees are responsible for scrutinizing other similar-type festivals to unearth new ideas and better ways to improve the Frye Festival. As a result, the idea was born to create an animated web site, including social media platforms, about all the activities that occur yearlong at the Festival. For example, we can obtain information on the festival,

the literary news, and the monthly events such as reading clubs on our website. There are also contests open to the public, especially the youth, with a number of prizes and rewards given to the winners.

Regarding the proposition 2, the group size and the interactions within the group influence the ability to be creative, is confirmed. One of the competitive advantages of The Acadian Heritage Village is the authenticity offered that is seen and felt by visitors, from the period actors that recreate the lifestyle between the years of 1770 to 1949 years, to the maintenance of the various buildings. The general manager emphasizes that at the Village:

- The actors are not allowed to walk fast onsite. They must walk more slowly and quietly that reflects the pulse and rhythm of a more relaxed lifestyle that characterized the 18th century.
- Hair color dyes must be of natural colors.
- Body piercings are not allowed, and tattoos must not be visible.
- The restauration of heritage buildings must be done with manual tools only (or other types must not be seen).

Furthermore, the visitor who chooses to stay at the Château Albert period hotel will find it very difficult to charge an iPhone or a Blackberry (no electrical outlets) and it will be not an alarm clock but the sounds of a rooster that awakens him.

The willingness to integrate authenticity with the tourist experience in all activities has won the acclaim of the Society of American Travel Writers and in 1996, the Village was the recipient of the Phoenix Award. This expertise allows The Village to innovate the product and services it offers to visitors. The Village intends to offer special tourist packages that will consist of training programs for visitors who wish to learn certain trades or traditional labour such as learning the blacksmith trade. The visitors could stay at the Château Albert. Such packages would be

offered during autumn, a quiet time for The Village, as a means of prolonging the tourist season.

Regarding SML, the choice of a small and flexible structure helps it to generate innovative proposals regarding activities. For example, an online web boutique is about to be launched, new programming for summer and winter specials will be introduced and thus help the SML organization stay active and financially afloat all year, and summer camps will allow young minds to learn Acadian history thus preparing them for future leadership roles. In fact, management has noticed with apprehension that the average age of visitors to SML is 50 years and over. Younger people do not seem interested in the activities of SML, notwithstanding that they were designed specifically to appeal to upcoming generations. SML also planned other activities such as a semi-marathon or a guided tour of cemeteries to discover the monuments of illustrious Acadian ancestors. These activities never saw the light of day because of a lack of collaboration by employees and the local community. The general manager states: “The local community that actively participates in our activities is regularly invited to attend our focus groups and offer its suggestions and critiques. I can state unequivocally that they are not silent partners and they tell it like it is when things go wrong. All the better since we learn from our mistakes.”

At the Frye Festival, the flexible organizational structure is responsible for most of the group creativity. The general manager confirms that she must find new creative strategies to succeed in planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating the success of the festival, which, in the context of financing, has become more and more rare. As she says, “We go far with what we have”, Danielle LeBlanc, General Manager (GM).

For example, the organizational structure is horizontal with committees and subcommittees that all have mandates and

specific responsibilities. Decision-making is decentralized thus allowing members and chairs of each committee or subcommittee to make functional decisions according to their mandate. Each committee or subcommittee must be creative in order to successfully be innovative, be it in programming, activities, or even in company operations.

Finally, the proposition 3 who pointed out that the context at work influences creativity in organizations is also confirmed. The Village maintains a positive work environment during both the seasonal period and the winter months. With less than a dozen workers, the number of permanent employees is quite small. Consequently, management encourages not only the sharing of ideas but also the sharing responsibilities in order to maximize the skills and abilities of the entire team. As is the case with the Village, SML believes that a team/group management approach creates an environment that stimulates and rewards innovation. By offering the best salaries, retaining personnel is greatly facilitated from season to season. The ability to increase the retention of seasonal employees allows management to invest in the professional training and development of their employees. Beyond learning the basics of customer service, some Village actors must learn to how to work in the traditional trades such as a blacksmith or sheet metal worker that they themselves must demonstrate in front of visitors using period tools, applying dye to wool, and making bread in outdoor ovens. These trades are not learned by simply viewing a video or attending a seminar course. Individual training sessions are required to allow employees to master their respective techniques. Training can last from two weeks to a month under the guidance of trainers who live in the community and practice and have mastered the traditional trades.

Danielle LeBlanc, GM of the Frye Festival, points to the problematic of financing such an organization. She prepares 25

requests for financing per year in order to obtain a major part of the funds necessary to run the festival. As for the remaining amount, creative minds are required and that is exactly what management uses to succeed. For example, every January the management team organizes a large financing campaign in the community. The GM mentions that you must not feel embarrassed about soliciting funds and donations from the public because the festival could not operate without such aide. Because of these increased efforts focused on campaign financing and subsidies, the organization has a considerable rate of retention of 80% to 85% of its sponsors from year to year.

Furthermore, the GM explains that they must maximise what little resources are available. She explains that one of the creative methods undertaken by the organization to be fiscally responsible was to create partnerships with other organizations in the cultural field. For example, there is a partnership with the Acadian International Francophone Film Festival « Festival international du cinéma francophone en Acadie » (FICFA) to share human resources such as the personnel required for the first week of the festival. Other partnerships also exist with literary festivals in Quebec and Ontario that take place within a 2-week interval with the Frye Festival. In this case, they might be able to share travelling expenses when both organizations collaborate and together invite national and international authors. The GM added that this was the way the organization operated a few years ago when they invited renowned international authors to the Moncton Festival, something they normally could not have afforded on their own. Festivals such as the FICFA and the International Writer's Festival of Ottawa as well as the Metropolis Bleu from Montreal are excellent partners for the Frye Festival.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we presented various types of creativity and proceeded to analyse each one as it applied to organizations: specifically, as individual, group, and organizational creativity. Thus, to grow and stay competitive, we must innovate and develop a strategy of differentiation. This requires one to exploit his organizational creativity. Creativity thus constitutes a managerial tool that requires the implementation of new tools to manage and direct them. However, our results have shown that the management of creative processes in VSB revolves around three elements we refer to as triptych: employees, clients, and local communities. Employee interactions between

each other and with management, clients in close proximity having informal interactions with employees, and local communities involved because of their feelings of belonging are all essential elements that, if sufficiently driven, lead to creativity. Moreover, these results show that locating these organizations in a minority setting further increases the pride of the local community and encourages them to participate in the creative process, which differs from other organizations whose involvement is primarily for financial or other types of compensation. Nevertheless, despite our work, our research has an obvious limitation in that it relies only on three case studies. The research would benefit if the sample size was enlarged to encompass other VSB in a minority milieu elsewhere in Canada.

Implications for theory

The results obtained in these three cases show that when very small cultural organizations are faced with problems of financing or innovation, creativity is seen as essential to their survival. In so

doing, it highlights a creativity triptych comprised of employees, clients, and the local community.

Creativity attributed to employees

In order to encourage individual creativity, companies develop a certain number of tools such as idea management or brainstorming (Zhou and George, 2001). However, with individuals, there may be sociocultural obstacles that are rooted in social resistance, education, culture, traditions and conformity. In general, our education shapes our way of thinking, from judging to perception. We tend to rely on previously used tried and true solutions when confronted with a problem. Now, creativity requires one to be audacious, energetic, and have a strong desire to get things done. Creativity does not solely depend on individual abilities but essentially on managers who can create an environment in which employees feel at ease to propose ideas. In the case of VSB, creativity manifests itself differently than in large companies where creativity depends on financial compensation. In VSB, when financing problems present themselves, employee creativity stems from the organization's small size (Zhou et al., 2009; West, 2002), its flexibility, and the informal relationships forged between employees and management. As all three cases showed, employees in these organizations are motivated by the cause itself that they must face together. We observe in these organizations a creative process that first includes employees who are advocates of such causes, then a shared sense of confidence bestowed by management, and finally individual responsibility (Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017).

Creativity attributed to clients

In our times, the client is considered as one of the players in organizational creativity. Consequently, certain researchers are

asking themselves precisely what role clients can play in organizational collective creativity (Drucker, 1985; Gibson, 1999). A review of literature shows numerous forms of collaboration between clients and organizations. We can therefore identify co-innovation when creative clients are involved in design activities (Ford, 2000), co-designer when the client is involved in the creation and personalization of a public tender (Scott et al., 2000), and co-promotion to designate the production of campaign publicity with audio-visual material destined for consumers (Kao, 1998). However, most collaborations are the result of deliberate intent by organizations who are officially associated with the client in the creative process. These types of collaborations usually result in the organization providing a reward or some form of acknowledgment of the client. In the case of VSB, there are no intentional cooperative manoeuvres between organization and clients (Perking, 2017). The creative process is born out of proximity between employees and the client. It can also be the result of informal contacts between management and the client or a spontaneous initiative by the client towards the organization or its employees (Berg, 2016). Because the initiative is informal, the personnel must be well trained and ready to react accordingly by taking comments, suggestions, or complaints and turning them into constructive creative results. In addition, when the organization is a cultural entity, the majority of clients are passionately involved in promoting and ensuring the continuity of these dedicated endeavours.

Creativity attributed to local communities

The concept of « community work group » (Goury and Spalanzani, 2005) is increasingly studied in literature. It can be defined as a group of players within the same organization who have a common history, who interact frequently, share knowledge and encounter

similar problems. In practice, the community relies on a synergy in the structure of the activities, and the relationships between players that was built over time and conflictual in nature. Moreover, it identifies with a mutual commitment by its members, by a common project, by the usage of the same tools, symbols, resources, and the same professional practices in a situational context referred to as “situatedness” (Craig and Kelly, 1999; Hasan and Koning, 2017) These community work groups form the basis for creativity in certain companies. However, they require a convergence with the companies or their managers and involves the implementation of the means and the resources that VSB do not possess. This explains why VSB tend to put into place a local community support system in which they live. In the case of the Frye Festival, management aligns itself with the local community for support by using focus groups to determine what is going well and especially what needs improvement. The local community involves itself for the simple reason that it feels a strong sense of belonging to the cultural values shared and promoted by this organization. It plays the role of guardian and protector of the cultural work by visiting the site and by involving itself in all the activities that concern creativity and improvement (Ahuja, 2000; Jansen and West, 2004). This particularity is present with cultural organizations when they are located in a minority area such as the cases presented in this article located in New Brunswick.

Implications for practitioners

A company should carefully plan the kickoff of the innovation project. If resources are scarce, spending enough time in the evening for informal talks, which will affect group cohesiveness positively, should be given. To help less experienced team members, a system can be implemented that identifies cultural wise experts in the company who can function as a mentor. Furthermore, the

team composition should at least mix team members with a high and a low innovation experience. This dimension is also the only one where we suggest a dominating tendency of team members. Moreover, team leaders with teams from mixed cultural experiences have to be sensitive to different needs in delegation and task explanations. Here the team leader has to identify team members in conflicting situations and agree with the local supervisor upon decision spectrum and field of responsibilities of the team member.

Limitations and further research

This paper is based on a qualitative research within a real-life context of small cultural organizations. As such, it is one of the first papers of its kind based on small cultural organizations. Hence, our results have a high relevance for firms of different categories. So far, our study is lacking quantification and thus empirical testing, although the large number of interviews offers some possibilities that have to be taken in further steps. Moreover, diversity in values might differ in the context of different countries. Thus, our research could be replicated in organizations who are located in non-Western countries. Further insight might be feasible through longitudinal studies.

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