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# Innovation.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

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### **An opportunity to become better.**

Over the past four weeks, my life at home has changed dramatically. About a month ago, my girlfriend and I were lucky enough to welcome Arlo to our family. Arlo is our new, English Cream Golden Retriever puppy. We picked him up at just 8 weeks of age, and he is now a 12-week-old 30 lbs. bulldozer, with an adorable little face.

In my mind, I've always associated the term innovation with change, and as I'm sure many of you are familiar, bringing a puppy into our home has been a major catalyst for change. It was during this period of innovation in my personal life that I began thinking about the components that drive successful, positive innovation – the stuff that lets you come out the other side better-off than where you began.

While breaking innovation down into a set of components was tricky, it was even more difficult to identify which parts

are most essential. Whether acting as an individual or as an organization, I believe these three components are crucial for successful innovation:

1. **Communication** - I feel like every business article ever written could boil down to this one lesson: better communication. Communication drives everything we do. What is expected? Who is responsible? When does it need to be done? These questions are no different whether you are raising a puppy or running a million-dollar project. Constant communication is a necessity.
2. **Process** - Putting a method to the madness. Sure, we could all just do what we want, when we want, however we want, but what would we accomplish? Imagine a puppy with unlimited freedom... Process mechanics are instrumental in keeping efforts focused on the task at hand. Like everything else, innovation must follow a structured process to deliver real value.

3. **Consistency** - If the past three weeks of puppy class have taught me anything, it's that consistency is key! Whether we are trying to encourage a behavior or eliminate one, the path to success is consistency. The same is true for innovation. For changes to take hold and embed themselves in your practices you must have consistency in your governance and execution.

We live in a world that encourages and promotes innovation, but that doesn't mean it will always work to our benefit. With innovation comes change, and change requires management. Reinforcing these components is what allows us to continue getting better.

***The better "you" is waiting.***

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