

Why is an 'innovation mentality' essential for success in Createch companies?

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Imagination Labs
White Paper x Createch

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IMAGINATION

Beta

is

Better!

The Innovation Mentality

by
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With new technologies disrupting every industry sector, it has never been more important to be inventive, creative and innovative. Our Labs Programme means we exist in a constant state of testing and learning. It's what has brought us to the cutting-edge of the Createch industry. This is the case for why beta is best.



Go where there is no path and leave a trail.

At Imagination we have always been driven by innovation, design and entrepreneurship. Our company name reflects our creative spirit and keen understanding of what clients demand; it's a balance of creativity and commercial acumen that has characterised the organisation since being founded back in 1968. Our imagination is still what unifies, drives and defines us today.

Over the past 50 years we have built up a reputation for challenging the brief and pushing boundaries across all the experiences we create. From product launches to retail, exhibitions to pop-ups, brand identity to immersive content we

always seek to create a powerful emotional connection between brand and audience, and we have always pushed the envelope in order to achieve this. Whether we are launching the I-PACE concept car in VR for Jaguar, creating the Make the Future festival for Shell or reinventing Major League Baseball for European millennials in the form of MLB Battlegrounds – it's what clients have come to expect from us. They don't want to go down the path well-trodden and neither do we. Our modus operandi has always been to go where there is no path and leave a trail, because real innovation is about value creation and invention.

One of our key innovations has been the creation of a new technology platform called [XPKit](#), which we started building over a decade ago. It provides a digital software layer that connects and measures all the activations at our brand experiences and connects them to our clients CRM systems and marketing campaigns. Ultimately, it measures the success of our work. Our data strategists utilise the insights to drive innovation through behavioural analytics. Because of XPKit, we call the work we do –

'Connected Experiences'

Connected Experiences is how we harness the true power of experiential and supercharge engagement.

“We created XPKit to power smarter, measurable, transformational experiences that seamlessly blend the physical and digital worlds” – Anton Christodoulou, Chief Technology Officer.

LAB



Our Labs Programme is a natural development of the innovation mentality that already exists inside the agency. By taking all of our collective learnings we formalised a strategic creative innovation process for the Programme to embody.

Established as both a physical space in our London HQ and as a company-wide global innovation programme that draws inspiration and partnerships from outside and reflects our values from the inside.

We formalised the Labs Programme into distinct areas that form a virtuous circle, in order to encourage collaboration across agency teams. 'Hack' sessions are where we build prototypes and experiment, test and learn. This enables us to demonstrate the results and 'Showcase' the work we love (our own, our partners' and the wider industry's). 'Workshop' is where we co-create with clients and partners, using the Labs framework.

Ho-Yee Li, our Labs Programme Manager says, "We always dream big, then build working proof-of-concepts and test the idea. We push the boundaries of technology to develop the idea into its final form and then make it a reality."



Imagination Labs Open Day

"Our creative innovation process allows anybody to adopt an innovative mentality. To see the world from a different perspective and challenge conventions to produce unique ideas."

Julian Baker, Chief Creative Officer

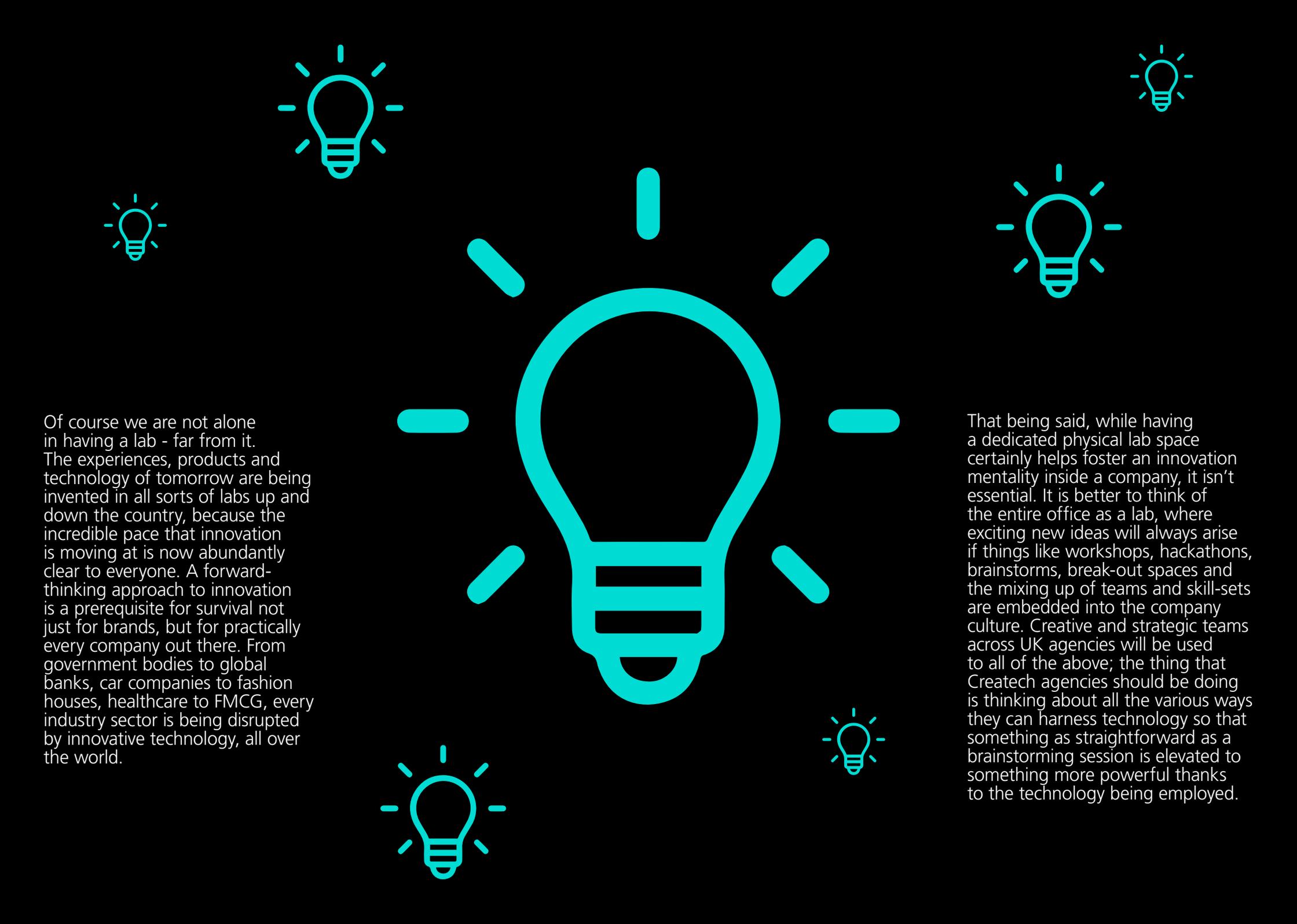


Labs Talks with Helen Lawrence from Twitter



Project Lume Meeting

Our Lab is where we go to co-create with clients, explore the future of experiences and is ultimately how we stay ahead of the game. The work we create there directly leads to the creation of unique products, software platforms and IP that all feed our global reputation and commercial success for our clients, fulfilling our promise of transforming business through creativity.

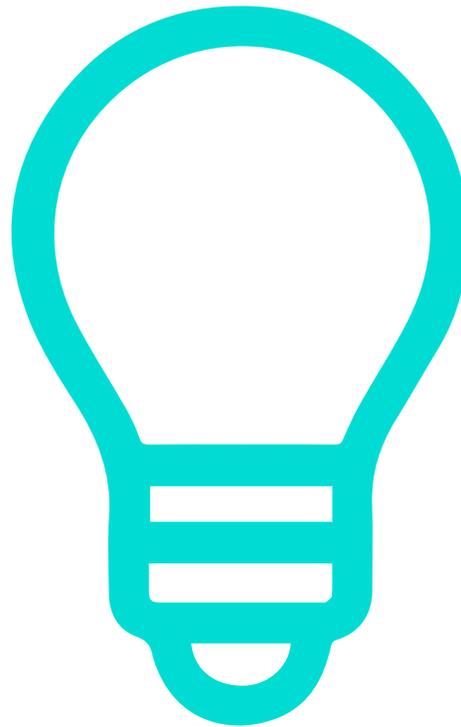


Of course we are not alone in having a lab - far from it. The experiences, products and technology of tomorrow are being invented in all sorts of labs up and down the country, because the incredible pace that innovation is moving at is now abundantly clear to everyone. A forward-thinking approach to innovation is a prerequisite for survival not just for brands, but for practically every company out there. From government bodies to global banks, car companies to fashion houses, healthcare to FMCG, every industry sector is being disrupted by innovative technology, all over the world.

That being said, while having a dedicated physical lab space certainly helps foster an innovation mentality inside a company, it isn't essential. It is better to think of the entire office as a lab, where exciting new ideas will always arise if things like workshops, hackathons, brainstorming, break-out spaces and the mixing up of teams and skill-sets are embedded into the company culture. Creative and strategic teams across UK agencies will be used to all of the above; the thing that Createch agencies should be doing is thinking about all the various ways they can harness technology so that something as straightforward as a brainstorming session is elevated to something more powerful thanks to the technology being employed.



Whether mindset or lab, it's hard to underestimate the importance for the Createch industry of having an innovation mindset that leads to creation value. As Klaus Schwab, the German engineer and head of the World Economic Forum says, we are in the middle of the Fourth Industrial Revolution where the speed of current breakthroughs has no historical precedent. It is estimated that the next 20 years will see as much change as the preceding 60 years combined. This will mean exponential progress on a scale that mankind has never witnessed before.



This revolution is characterised by an incredible fusion of technologies that blur the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Technologies such as Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence and 3D Printing are increasingly commonplace and already affecting our experience of entertainment, music and sport and are improving all aspects of life, from healthcare to education to transport..

From Virtual

Our first high-profile success born out of the Labs Programme was in 2016, with the launch of Jaguar's all-electric I-PACE concept car. The Lab's 'prototype' mentality meant the team took some previously untested VR technology concepts from the Lab and applied them creatively to form the best possible experience in order to show Jaguar what was possible and take them with us on this intrepid new journey.



To Reality



Jaguar Concept I-Pace Launch



Press and VIP immersed in group VR
Jaguar Concept I-Pace Launch



James Corden , Comedian
Jaguar Concept I-Pace Launch

Then through the Lab's approach of forming partnerships, we worked collaboratively with technology partners HTC Vive (VR headsets) and Dell (computer hardware), and production company Rewind. The end experience was groundbreaking. The Jaguar I-PACE made its debut in virtual reality, floating in space as viewers watched in 3D on two continents simultaneously. It attracted a brand new audience and reinvented the car launch for a new motoring age. The world media's jaw collectively dropped and the reviews were unanimously positive, so we knew we had achieved our goal and created the futuristic launch that the I-PACE deserved. It was a validating moment for the Labs Programme and demonstrated how effective it is in taking both us and our clients to places that are genuinely brand new.



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Our innovation journey into diverse new sectors that fuse technology and creativity is continuing. Right now for example, Ho-Yee and her Labs team are working with Cambridge University. They have developed the world's first multi-user VR software for scientists to better explore, manipulate and share their 3D point cloud data of white blood cells. It's the sort of tool that academics simply don't have the time to build themselves, but we do and it will no doubt assist them in making further important breakthroughs in their research.

**We exist in
a constant
beta phase.**

Test and learn – Make and play –
Test and learn – Make and play –
Fail and break – Make and play –
Test and learn – Make and play –

It's a continuous feedback loop that feeds innovative thinking. An embedded innovation mentality is at the heart of our success and is what keeps us thinking big, inventing and creating. It's a mindset that all Createch companies need to have in order to thrive, not just survive. Technology is taking us to incredible new places creatively, and that's the journey we are excited to explore every day we come to work at Imagination.

In partnership with

createch

IMAGINATION

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Imagination Labs

Imagination is recognised as the world's leading experience agency. We solve problems with creativity, and use experiences to amplify great ideas.

Imagination Labs is where we explore the future of experiences. A space driven by possibility. Designed to help our clients explore new ways of thinking, stay constantly curious and adapt for the future.

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