

Why curious individuals need curious companies

October 2021
Stefaan van Hooydonk

HRcoreACADEMY SUMMIT

Stay curious

Global Curiosity Institute

About me



Stefaan van Hooydonk



Education

- Masters in Philosophy (ongoing)
- Executive and life coach
- Executive MBA (US/China)
- Post graduate degrees in Marxist economics (China) & cross cultural mgmt. (France)
- Masters degrees in Economics and Chinese (Belgium)



Professional experience

- Founder Global Curiosity Institute**
Co-Founder Earth Academy
CLO
- Cognizant (US)
 - Philips Lighting (NL)
 - Flipkart (India)
- Corporate University Head**
- Nokia (China)
 - Agfa (Belgium)
 - Philips (The Netherlands)
 - Aramco (Saudi Arabia)
- other**
- Investment consulting (HK/China)
 - Executive Education - China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) – Shanghai



Worked / lived in

- Belgium
- Hong Kong
- China
- France
- Finland
- India
- Saudi Arabia
- UK



More about me

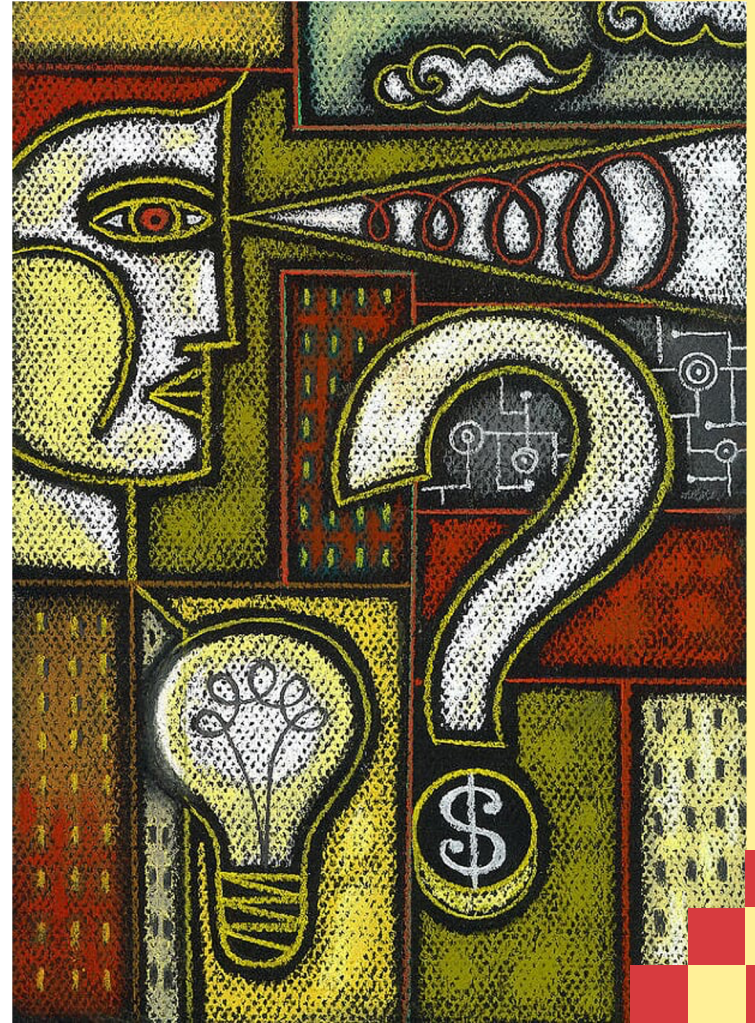
- Daily meditator
- Marathon runner
- Partner to Jeltje Peletier
- Father of 4 kids

What if we could
instill the mental
models and
behaviors of our
“A-players” into
all our
employees?



agenda

- The business case for intentional curiosity
- What is workplace curiosity
- Examples of HR and L&D teams embracing Intentional Curiosity at work



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 CLEARCHANNEL

Throughout history, Curiosity has been the engine of individual, organizational and societal progress

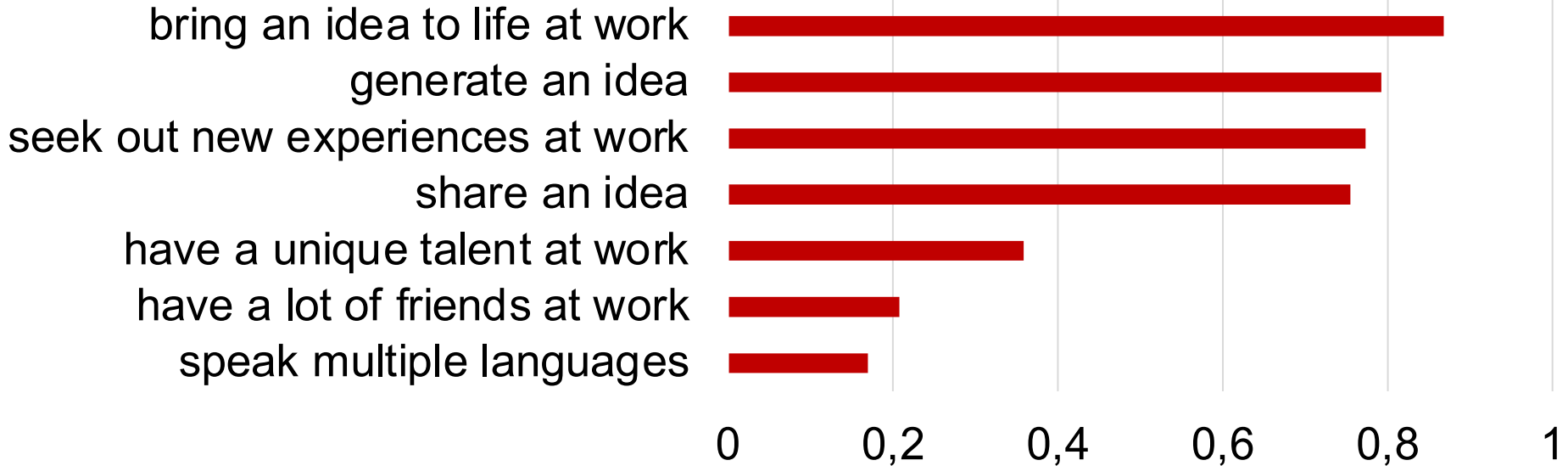
It all starts with a simple question explore the new:

‘Why’, ‘what if...’

- Fire
- Microwave
- Gps
- Mars rover
- Tools
- Relationships
- Spirituality
- ...



A curious professional is more likely to...



Source: global curiosity institute, 2021

How to recognize a curious professional

Curious professional	Incurious professional
Constant learner	Accidental learner
Goes deep and broad in the pursuit of new knowledge	If pushed, only deepens familiar territories
Adopts a growth mindset	Has a fixed & conformist mindset
Is proactive and open to novelty	Is reactive and closed with changes
Takes time and responsibility to keep with biz and colleagues	Relies on past knowledge
Co-creates the environment	Goes with the flow

Dimensions of individual curiosity at work



intellectual curiosity
"THE WORLD"



interpersonal curiosity
"OTHERS"



intrapersonal curiosity
"OURSELVES"

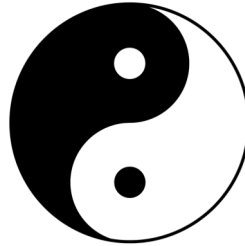


Find out your own free curiosity profile @www.globalcuriosityinstitute.com

Curious individuals need **a nurturing environment to thrive**

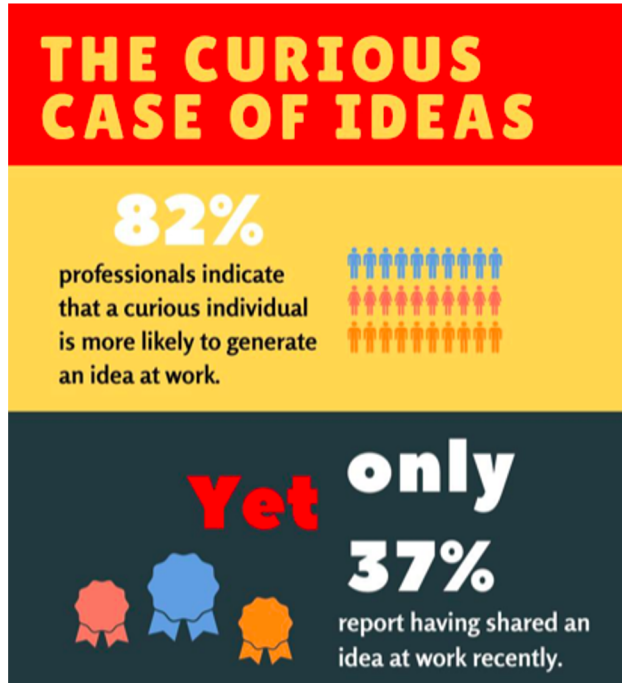


Individual component



Environmental component

The Curiosity 'Knowing-Doing GAP'



Source: Global Curiosity Institute

“I am not good enough”

“What would people think of me’

“it’s better to be stay quiet rather than to suggest improvements/change”

"We always do it that way"

"Time is money"

"Nice, you might try it in your own time"

The shadow of a curious leader

poor leaders stifle curiosity - good leaders uplift the team

Cognizant

Linear & strong correlation of learning consumption of the team lead and that of the team. If a manager is a curious learner, the team follows this behavior (inverse is also true).



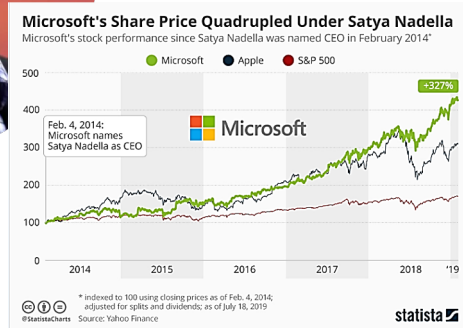
In engagement surveys, favorable managers score 3 points better than average, yet unfavorable leaders get 18 points lower on overall team engagement & 22 points on curiosity.



Traits of curious leaders

Curious leaders	Incurious leaders
Confident humility	Know-it-all mentality
Authorizes curiosity: celebrates challengers	Stifles curiosity: enjoys followers
The manager as enabler of the collective “we”	The genius white knight above the team
Guides: Gives and ask feedback, listens2learn	Judges: Gives feedback, listens2fix
Goes deep and broad: the expert explorer	Confused about whether to go deep or broad
Celebrates first-time failures	Avoids failure at all costs
Stretches the team with a growth mindset	Imposes a fixed mindset on self and the team
Embraces rejuvenation and innovation	Single focus on efficiency and exploitation

A case study: Microsoft



“ The one thing that I would say that defines me is I love to learn. I get excited about new things. I buy more books than I read or finish.”

Satya Nadella

CEO Microsoft

**Transforming
culture and
climate**

focus on workplace
curiosity

from know-it-all to
learn-it-all

embrace growth mindset
& explore biases

non-violent
communication



Business academics are starting to pay attention

1

Insight

curiosity is more important to an enterprise's performance than was previously thought

2

Insight

by making small changes to the design of their organization and the ways they manage employees, leaders can encourage curiosity and improve their companies

3

Insight

although leaders might say they treasure inquisitive minds, most in fact stifle curiosity

Source: Harvard Business Review

Curiosity Research 2021:

workplace curiosity can be a force to increase competitiveness, innovation, productivity, learning and engagement, yet is **is fragile if not managed intentionally**

Workplace curiosity research: Insight (1)

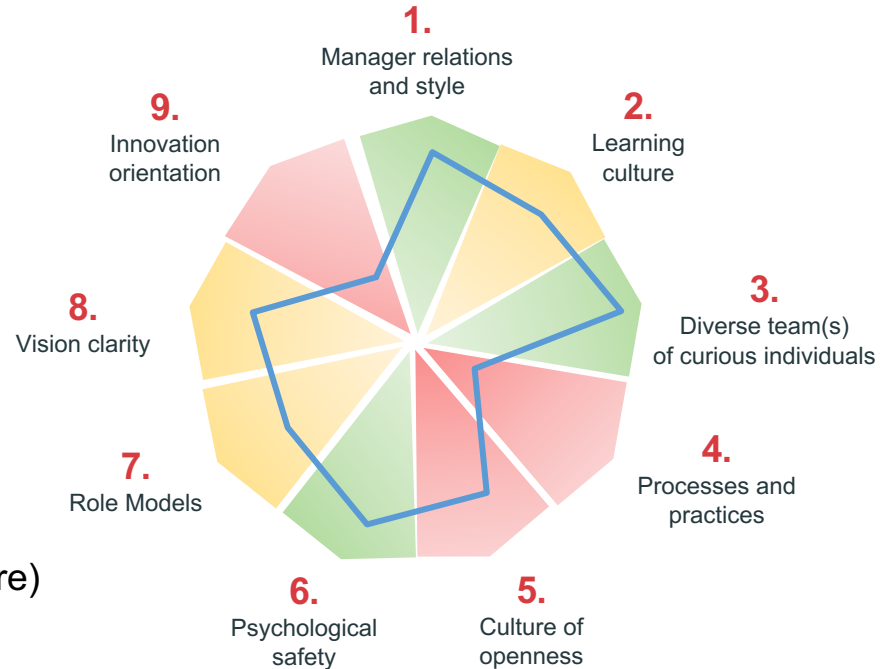
multinational companies have the basis to build on, yet create limiting barriers

Top 3 enablers

- High individual curiosity levels
- Psychological safety
- Management style of the direct supervisor

Top 3 distractors

- Internal processes and practices
- Innovation mindset (incl. acceptance of failure)
- Culture of openness



Source: global curiosity institute, 2021, review of 16 MNCs

Workplace curiosity research: Insight (2)

Some demographics are more sensitive than others

Under 30 of age

represent the future of the workforce, yet they feel 2x less empowered to act and are 2x less certain about their organization's desire for innovation

Mid management

Devalues exploration at the expense of exploitation and are 4 times less sure that curiosity is important for the organization (vs front line and senior management)

People > 3 years in same role

Are 2x as critical to their curious environment vs freshers & people > 5 years in the same role volunteer even less ideas at work and become overly careful

Female professionals

report to have less time to be curious at work and indicate to receive less support for professional development vs their male peers

Workplace curiosity research: Insight (3)

The shadow of the leader can positively influence the team, or otherwise stifle a healthy culture of curiosity

77% of front-line management is not using reverse feedback as a way to learn about their own functioning

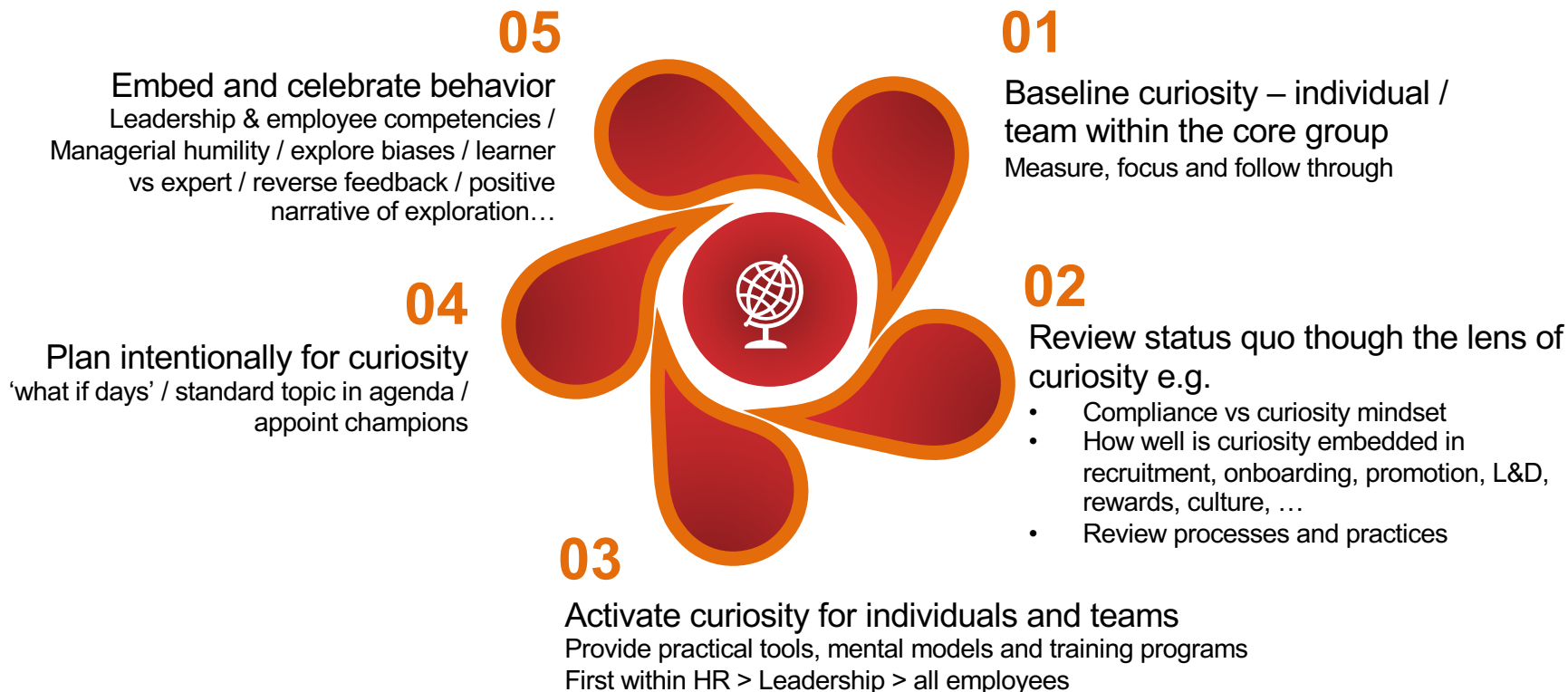
For individual contributors, the two biggest barriers for curiosity are

- (1) top-down decision making by the manager
- (2) lack of time to be curious at work

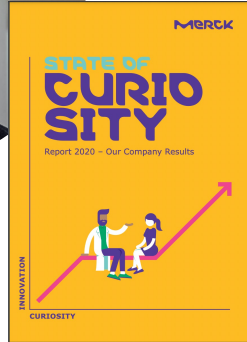
Results from previous research (2019)

There is a linear correlation between the learning behaviour of the manager and that of the team

What can HR teams do to create a more Curious workplace



A case study: Merck



“At Merck, we believe that curiosity is key to driving scientific exploration – and, ultimately, the innovations that address society’s current and future needs. This is why we continually seek answers to an important question: What is key to driving a culture of curiosity?”

Stefan Oschmann

Chairman of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck

**Transforming
curiosity’s nature
and nurture**

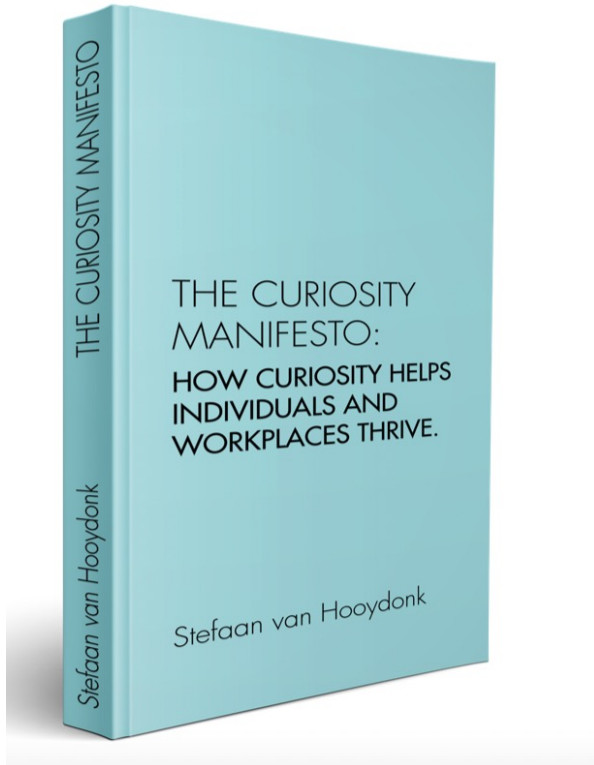
curiosity the silver
lining between
strategy and values

extensive
curiosity research

creating a
conducive
environment

training individuals
and teams on meta-
curiosity

Book announcement - April 2022



Company cases

- Amazon
- Area9
- Baobab Express
- Fiskars
- Google
- Grundfos
- Kodak-Eastman
- McKinsey
- Merck
- Mercuri Urval
- Novartis
- Pepsico
- Pratt and Whitney
- Quickrelease
- Sber
- Tonos Care
- Zurich Insurance
- ...

Expert input from

- Scientist thought leaders
- Corporate executives
- Start-up entrepreneurs
- Artists
- Olympic gold medallist

Detractors to curiosity

Intrinsic - *From within*

Detractors

- Anxiety
- Judgment
- Confidence / arrogance
- Apathy and lack of interest
- Limited knowledge



Extrinsic - *Environmental*

Detractors

- Company culture
- Processes and practices
- Non-conductive energy from individuals around us
- Stress
- Society
- Internet technology



Contact information

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