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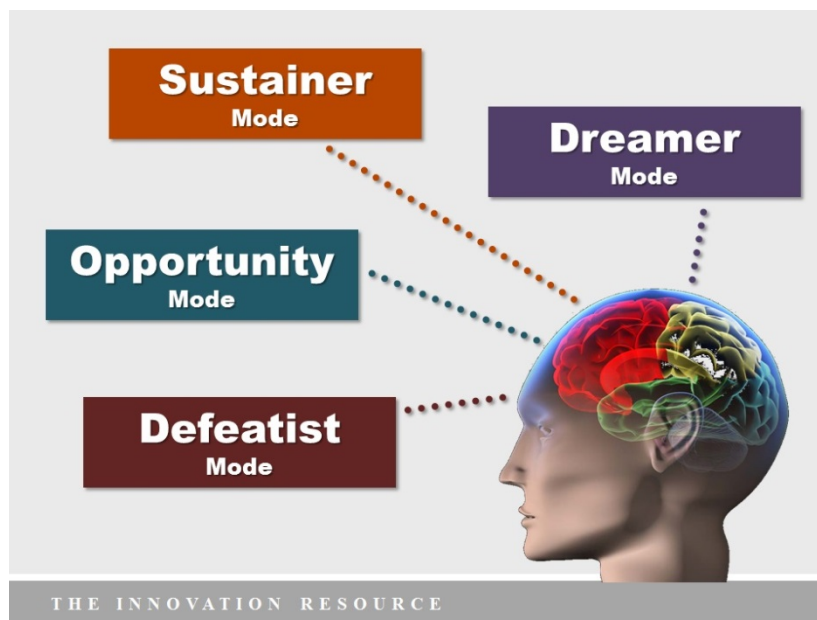
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Robert Tucker's "Driving Growth Through Innovation"

In today's ultra-competitive world, innovation is everyone's business. And during the keynote presentation at HMA's National Conference and Expo, **Robert B. Tucker**, president and founder of The Innovation Resource, outlined strategies to cultivate the innovation processes essential for growth and long-term survival.



Tucker defined **innovation** as "coming up with ideas and bringing them to life; creating new, unique or exceptional value for your customers and for your company." Whose responsibility is it and where within a company does innovation need to take place? At the top, sales, middle management, R&D, information systems - **all** areas of operation require innovation.

Tucker urged owners and managers to cultivate innovation by fostering a **risk-**

taking culture. When everyone knows that ideas are welcomed, supported and recognized, behavior will change. And behavior that is well recognized will be repeated.



A real part of risk-taking is failure. And for Tucker, to be inspired to think creatively, employees need to know that "risks associated with 'failure' must be born by the organization, not individuals in the organization."

Conducting regular **brainstorming** sessions is an integral part of the innovative "process." As the innovation catalyst, these sessions spark creative juices, inspire, and encourage. And very often, they will motivate the "we always did it this way" employees to think BIG.



Innovative thinking is often driven by market trends and needs. Tucker suggested thinking ahead of the curve through greater **collaboration** with customers. Identifying

their “unmet needs” and their unspoken requirements will result in creative solutions.

The Bottom Line

Innovation is a tool for long-term growth. “Your ability to innovate – to problem solve, experiment, ideate, dazzle customers, drive growth, collaborate, think ahead of the curve, and otherwise add value – gives you and your organization a competitive edge that can never be taken away.”

To view the complete presentation, visit the **Members Only** section at www.HMAMembers.org. Information on Robert B. Tucker and The Innovation Resource, a global consulting and executive development firm devoted exclusively to strategic innovation, can be found at www.innovationresource.com.