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oes your workplace encourage innovative thinking, or does it stick rigidly to its rules, maintaining the status quo and discouraging a questioning attitude that sparks change? If the managerial culture is suppressing innovation and you want to do something about it, maybe it's time to grab a video camera and make a film. That, at least, is what Andrew Thomas did at NASA.

Thomas is an astronaut who has grown weary of the US space agency's intransigent attitude towards innovative thinking. So, with a few of his colleagues, he made a short film — based on true events — to highlight the way in which the agency's managerial culture was discouraging innovation.

The film, called *Barriers to Innovation and Inclusion*, tells the story of a young engineer who is frustrated at every turn as she tries to pitch an idea to improve the design of the spacecraft she is working on at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. The idea itself is broadly ignored, whereas the young engineer has her expertise questioned, is criticized by her managers for speaking out of turn and is told flatly that her idea doesn't 'fit in' with the organization. Fast-forward a year, and the engineer is now at Google, home to what the film-makers suggest is a more open style of management. There her boss takes an interest in her idea and suggests that they might be able to sell it to NASA.

The video was shown at a retreat for NASA managers, attended by at least one who admits that he has discouraged innovation at times in the past — and who has since posted the film online (www.youtube.com/watch?v=\_424YskAfew).

Could this sort of video enlighten managers at other science organizations? Possibly, although there is always the chance that the film-makers may face retribution for their efforts. Nevertheless, the film demonstrates something important. Video that can be made cheaply and shared easily can offer helpful insights into corporate cultures. Those frustrated by the lack of innovation at their own organization might consider passing Thomas's video to their colleagues. Or perhaps they should make their own.

# Gene Russo is editor of Naturejobs.

# CONTACTS

Editor: Gene Russo Assistant editor: Karen Kaplan e-mail: naturejobseditor@naturedc.com

### European Head Office, London

The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW, UK Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4961 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996 e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

### European Sales Manager:

Alexander Ranken (4944)

Dan Churchward (4966)
e-mail: d.churchward@nature.com
Assistant European Manager:
Nils Moeller (4953)
Natureevents:
Ghizlaine Ababou (+44 (0) 20 7014 4015)
e-mail: g.ababou@nature.com
Southwest UK/RoW:

# Northeast UK/Ireland:

Matthew Ward (+44 (0) 20 7014 4059) France/Switzerland/Belgium: Muriel Lestringuez (4994) Scandinavia/Spain/Portugal/Italy: Evelina Rubio-Hakansson (4973)

North Germany/The Netherlands/Eastern Europe: Kerstin Vincze (4970) South Germany/Austria:

Hildi Rowland (+44 (0) 20 7014 4084) **Advertising Production Manager:** Stephen Russell

To send materials use London address above. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4816 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996

e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com
Naturejobs web development: Tom Hancock
Naturejobs online production: Dennis Chu

US Head Office, New York 75 Varick Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10013-1917 Tel: +1 800 989 7718 Fax: +1 800 989 7103

e-mail: naturejobs@natureny.com
US Sales Manager: Ken Finnegan

### India

Vikas Chawla (+911242881057) e-mail: v.chawla@nature.com

### Japan Head Office, Tokyo

Chiyoda Building, 2-37 Ichigayatamachi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-0843 Tel: +81 3 3267 8751 Fax: +81 3 3267 8746

# Asia-Pacific Sales Manager:

Asia-Pacific Sales Manager:
Ayako Watanabe (+81 3 3267 8765)
e-mail: awatanabe@natureasia.com
Business Development Manager, Greater
China/Singapore:
Gloria To (+852 2811 7191)
e-mail: g,to@natureasia.com

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