STRATEGIES FOR LEADING CHANGE AND DEVELOPING TALENT

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Outline of Presentation

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- Defining public sector innovation
- Innovation research
- Frontline entrepreneurs as leaders
- Political leadership
- Developing talent to innovate

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Defining Public Sector Innovation

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- **Initial adoption of a process, policy, or technology by a public sector organization**
- **Invention: first adoption of a process, policy, or technology by *any* public sector organization**

- **Private sector innovation motivated by profit, use patents to create monopolies**
- **Public sector innovation motivated by service and professionalism, freely shared**

Innovation Research

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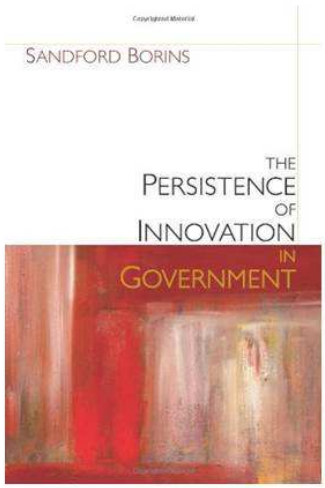
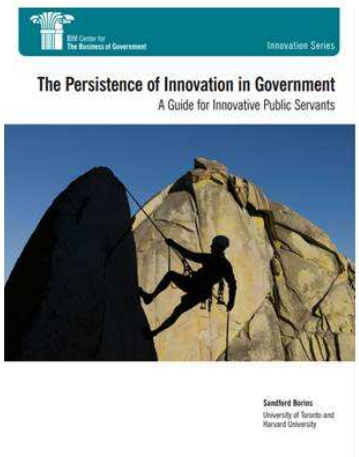


(Brookings, 2014)



(IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2014)

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Innovation Research

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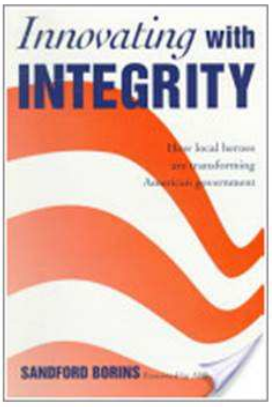

***Innovating with Integrity: How Local Heroes are Transforming American Government* (Georgetown, 1998)**

- **Explored previously unrecognized role of local heroes, or frontline entrepreneurs, in bottom-up innovation**

Innovation Research

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- **Studies of applications to Innovations in American Government (Harvard Kennedy School) Awards**
- **Initial research 1990s, replicated for 2010**
- **Both quantitative and qualitative**
- **Characteristics and process of psi**
- **What has and hasn't changed about innovation in government**
- **Guide for innovative public servants**

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Why Study Innovations in American Government Award Applicants?

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- Ideal data base for understanding PSI
- Prestige and energetic outreach attracts applications
- Open to all levels of US government and all policy areas
- Semifinalist application requires detail on process, characteristics, outcomes, assessment, replication
- 2/3 of applications first time, average age = 6 years

Innovation Research

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- Coded all 217 semifinalist applications in 1990s and 127 in 2010
- Research assistant and me, 90% inter-coder reliability
- Statistical analysis of coded results
- Qualitative analysis by policy area and interviews of selected applications
- Also studied innovation award applications from Canada and British Commonwealth (53 countries)

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Key Results

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- High incidence of interorganizational collaboration
- Importance of frontline entrepreneurship
- More often problem solving than crisis response
- More often planning than incrementalism
- Obstacles exist and were overcome
- Results achieved and innovations transferred

More Innovation Research

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- European Commission 2010 survey of 4000 public organizations in 27 EU countries
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) observatory of public sector innovation (280 + innovations)

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Frontline Entrepreneurs as Leaders

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- 50% of innovations originated from front-line public sector workers or middle managers
- Victor Grech
- Michael Fenn
- Sonya Meinert
- Allison Hamilton

Front-line Entrepreneurs as Leaders

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Political Leaders as Innovators

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Political Leaders as Innovators

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Different Innovation Paths

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- Political innovation as crisis response
- Frontline innovation as problem solving
- Political innovators look for support from other politicians, media, business
- Frontline innovators look for support internally, from their supervisors

Political Support for Frontline Innovation

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- Informal support (thank you letters, commendations, invitations to high-profile events)
- Formal support for reinvention labs (in the 1990s) or innovation labs (in the 2010s)
- Protection from external criticism

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Developing Talent for Innovation

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- Establish innovation labs (design thinking, big data analytics)
- Create community of practice in innovation (to cross organizational boundaries)
- Creativity training for public servants
- Hiring a new generation of public servants
- Establish innovation awards for public servants

Identify and Learn from Serial Innovators

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Identify and Learn from Serial Innovators

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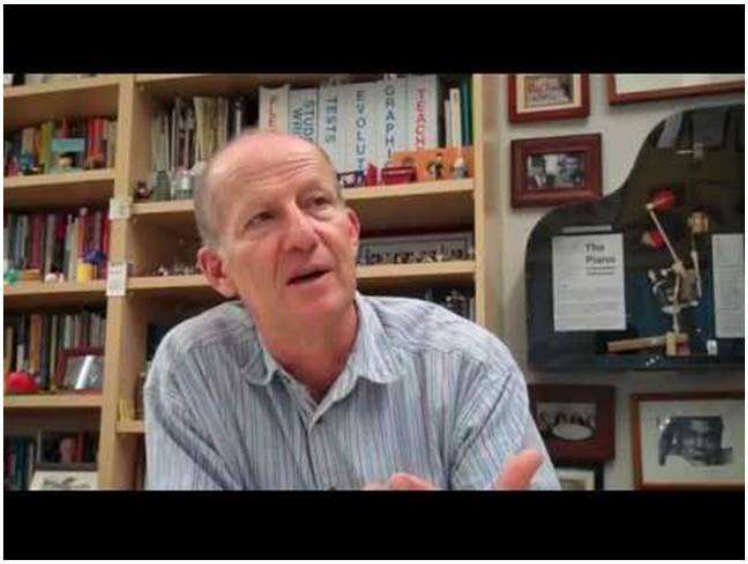

Openness to Society

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- Open data – make government data sets available to the public
- Challenges – public competitions to complete a project for the public sector (reengineered procurement)
- Hackathons
- Public service outreach

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A Culture of Public Service Innovation

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