

# HEAVY METTLE

Perhaps it is not an accident that this issue of *Innovate* – our second – should have a subliminal theme running through its bustling pages: the art of creative problem-solving. The prospect of taking a new, interdisciplinary, biannual magazine does tend to focus the mind on how to ensure that it will have a very long life. But the quotidian worries of our editorial work, lives pale in comparison to the tales of epic creativity and innovation that fill this issue.

The University of Pretoria's most important asset is not its state-of-the-art laboratories, its high-tech computer systems or its local and international credibility and influence. It is its creative capital – simply put: an arsenal of creative thinkers whose ideas can be turned into valuable products or services.

This issue showcases numerous examples of cases in which routine work is susceptible to enormous, sustained improvement when people look for creative, new ways of getting things accomplished. Furthermore value doesn't lie in rote work. Ideas and innovation are the most precious currency in the new economy – and increasingly in the old economy as well. Without a constant flow of ideas, a business is condemned to obsolescence. This again proves the fact that innovation takes place when different ideas, perceptions and ways of processing and judging information collide. That, in turn, often requires collaboration among various players who see the world in inherently different ways.

This issue also presents a number of exemplars of current architecture, exceptions to the often drab and dreary normalities that pervade much of the landscape today: norms still worth rebelling against.



Eugene van Rooyen

How does a magazine continue to improve upon itself? Largely by listening to its readers. We've been listening hard, both formally (from the excellent critique received from professional journalists, designers and publishers) and informally (via letters, e-mails, phone calls and face-to-face conversations). We've learned a lot from this concentrated listening.

We've learned that, of the different kinds of stories we offered in the first issue, those that focus directly on the technology/design rather than the people, organisations and strategies involved in innovation, resonate more strongly with our readers. And we've learned that the technology horizon is relatively circumscribed: most readers are interested in technologies/designs/innovations that will reach the marketplace in the foreseeable future – that being the next five years or so.

We are combining the above lessons into a plan of what we will offer you, our reader: a magazine focusing directly on emerging technology and design, with an emphasis on a relatively near-term time frame, and cutting-edge research and development in engineering, the built environment and information technology.

Innovators think differently to traditional researchers. Their intellectual combustion processes are not limited by the narrow confines of an ingot-sized speciality. Instead, these processes take place in a wide-open, holistic, interdisciplinary, and market-oriented environment. Their focus is on solving the problem; on figuring out how to do things better – and on how to better themselves. ➔

*Leon Liebenberg*  
Editor



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