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Does 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.

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