BEYOND INNOVATION AWARDS

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Value of Innovation Awards for Learning

- What is asked (award criteria, innovation process)
- Award repeated frequently
- Case studies
- Basic application data (who, where, what, application history)
- Trends in innovation (all policy areas, within each area)
- Self-monitoring for award managers
- Study innovation process
- "Serial innovators"
- "Hotbeds of innovation"
- International comparisons

Learning about Innovation

- Innovations in American Gov't Awards (Harvard Kennedy School)

- Annual competition since 1986

- 500 initial applications from all levels and policy areas (prestige and outreach)

- Detailed questionnaire about process of innovation for approx. 125 semifinalists

- 2/3 of applications each year new

- Average of 6 years since innovation introduced
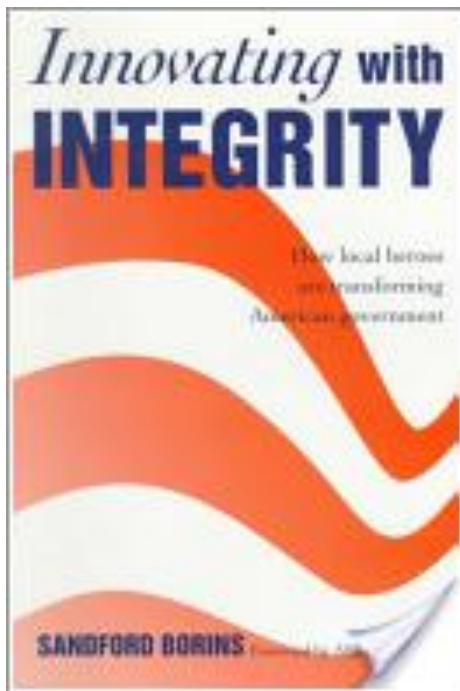
Latest Book and Report
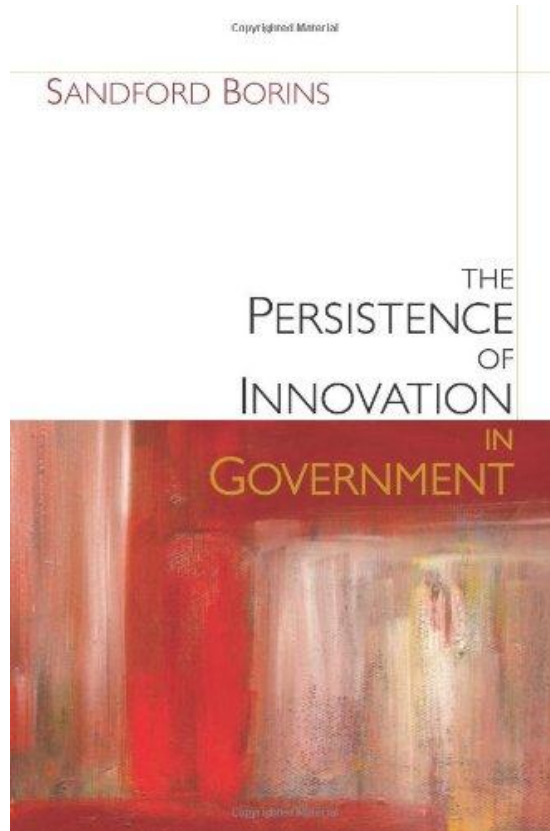
(Brookings, 2014)

(IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2014)

Previous Research on Innovation

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

- Influenced by the NPM debate
- Innovators (esp. public servants) NOT rule breakers, loose cannons, self-promoters, power-grabbers
- Unrecognized role of local heroes in bottom-up innovation
- Evidence of integrity in innovation

Latest Book and Report

- Study of applications to 2010 HKS innovation award

- Replication 20 years after original study (applications from 1990 to 1994)

- Comparisons with Commonwealth (CAPAM) and Brazil awards, Eurobarometer 2010 survey, Australian Public Service survey

- Both quantitative and qualitative

- What has and hasn't changed about innovation in government

- Implications for practitioners

What's Changed?

1. More interorganizational collaboration (80 % of 2010 semifinalists involved collaboration within government or between government and business or non-profit sector; 30 % in 1990-94)

1A. Greater diversity of funding (average of 2 sources per 2010 semifinalist; federal, state, local government and non-governmental sources all fund 50 % of the innovations)

What's Changed?

2. More external evaluation: from 38 % in 1990-94 without external evaluation to 28 % in 2010 without external evaluation; more external evaluation by external policy analysts, internal reviewers, and academic researchers

3. More transfer (from 42 % to 58 %)

4. More media attention (from 54 % in 1990-94 to 91 % in 2010) including local (70 %), professional media (76 %), and national media (49 %)

What's Changed?

5. Shifts in the innovation agenda in each policy area

- Fewer community policing applications and more corrections reform (public safety area)

- Fewer water and soil pollution and more greenhouse gas emission applications (environment area)

What's Remained Constant ?

1. Local heroes still matter: 46 % of innovations initiated by middle manager and/or front line staff in 2010, 48 % in 1990-94

2. Problem-solving still a more important antecedent than crisis response (74 % problem, 14 % crisis in 2010; 49 % problem, 30 % crisis in 1990-94), opportunities also important (25 %)

What's Remained Constant?

3. Comprehensive planning still employed more often than incrementalism (70 % planning, 17 % incrementalism in 2010; 59 % planning, 30 % incrementalism in 1990-94); often innovators do both; pilot studies (40 % in 2010) and public consultation (35 % in 2010) also frequently used

What's Remained Constant?

4. Obstacles to change most often internal to the organization(s) (50 % in both 2010 and 1990-94) and shortage of resources (20 % in both) and less frequently external to the organization(s) (30 % in both)

5. Obstacles to change overcome most often through persuasion (20 % in both) and accommodation (30% in both); also through finding resources, persistence, building political support, staying focused, but very rarely through "hardball" tactics (firing unsupportive managers)

What's Remained Constant?

6. Innovations continue to produce verifiable results (people made better off, satisfaction increased, more people using the program, cost reduction, productivity increase) …

6A. and to meet innovators' goals (smooth implementation, facilitating collaboration, implementing conceptual models, stimulating public discussion)

Advice for Practitioners

At Conception

- Prepare to collaborate

- Look for a variety of funding sources

- Proactive beats reactive: better to solve problems than confront crises

- Start with a comprehensive plan but be willing to adapt it

At Implementation

- Anticipate obstacles

- Use the tactics to respond (persuasion, accommodation, persistence)

More Advice for Practitioners

In Operation

- Establish performance indicators and pay attention to them
- Find outside eyes (formal external reviewers)
- Recognize that the media are watching: know whom to approach and the nature of story they are looking for
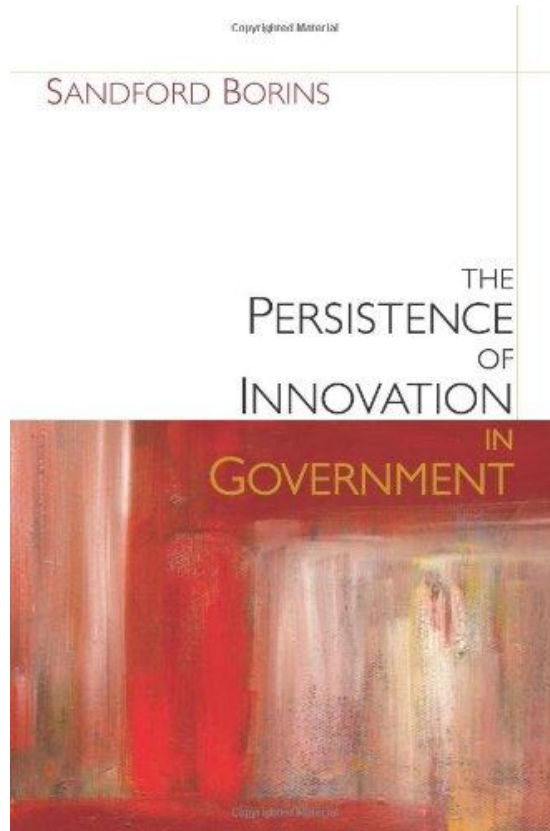
Building an Innovative Government

- Support the local heroes (time, resources, protection, access to networks)
- Innovation teams with funding and access to the political leadership
- Leadership commitment to innovation

Latest Book and Report

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