

# Why IT Needs Artistic Sensibilities



Royalty, Lenora Clark **Benoit Mandelbrot Fractal Art Contest 2007**



# Some assembly required



- We do build things
  - But according to rules
- We copy eagerly
  - Even if it is not quite right
- We need an example
  - Before we start
- We want the requirements
  - Written down
- We hate not knowing
  - What to do
- We seek competency
  - In repeatability

# Geekness



IT people speak in codes

About abstract concepts

That only those who study IT

Actually know

We cannot easily express

In other languages

This abstract knowledge

Even to our spouses

And we get used to it

# Stability

- Change is effortful and hard yet we often implement change
- We then work to stabilize the change
  - *To preserve the investment*
  - *Because everyone wants us to*
- Since tool and tool maker shape each other, we acquire a deep, bodily attachment to the tool and the product
- Because some changes are spurious, or perceived as such
  - *Changes are often treated with skepticism*
- Because we are the tool
  - *Changes are sometimes consciously and non-consciously resisted*

# IT: We put the 'No' in Innovation



# What the little art education I had has taught me

**“That’s too visual. I can’t talk about it.”**



Wit, childlike, old, worn,  
organic, man-made,  
geometric, textured,  
nuanced, deep colors

# Creativity

- Generate or recognize patterns, ideas, alternatives, possibilities (strange)
- Fusion: bringing together disparate parts in novel, surprising and *appropriate* solutions. Rethinking the parts. Synthesis.
- While some of this may be explicit, it is usually implicit, non-conscious, but definitely influenced by experience, training and thought
- Counterfactual thinking, thinking about what is NOT there, or thinking with relaxed rules of construction
- Seeking to eliminate constraints to thoughts

# Ask a 14 year old...

- How do you do it?
  - “I don’t know. I just look inside myself.”
- Do you copy?
  - “No!”
- Does it take courage?
  - “Yes.”



# IT and art share some things

- Tool identification and a reluctance to shed the tool
- Procedural skill: craftsmanship, knowledge of the materials
- Public critiques of concrete, observable artifacts
- Difficulty with personal re-invention

# Theorizing about future states

## ■ Common

- Understand the goal
- Understand the current constraints
- Connect the dots around the constraints

## ■ Uncommon

- In a constant cycle
  - Invert, move or remove the current constraints
  - Experiment with designs
  - Understand and redefine the goal

# Mood and creativity

- Negative mood encourages externally driven, focused on threat identification, aggressive searching of problem states/solutions (Outward-in, bottom-up)
- Positive mood encourages application of more automatic, internal views of things to be applied to our actions (Inward-out, top-down)



# What is happening today?



Lots of moving parts

Quick change

Unanticipated events

Fear

# Complexity of IT

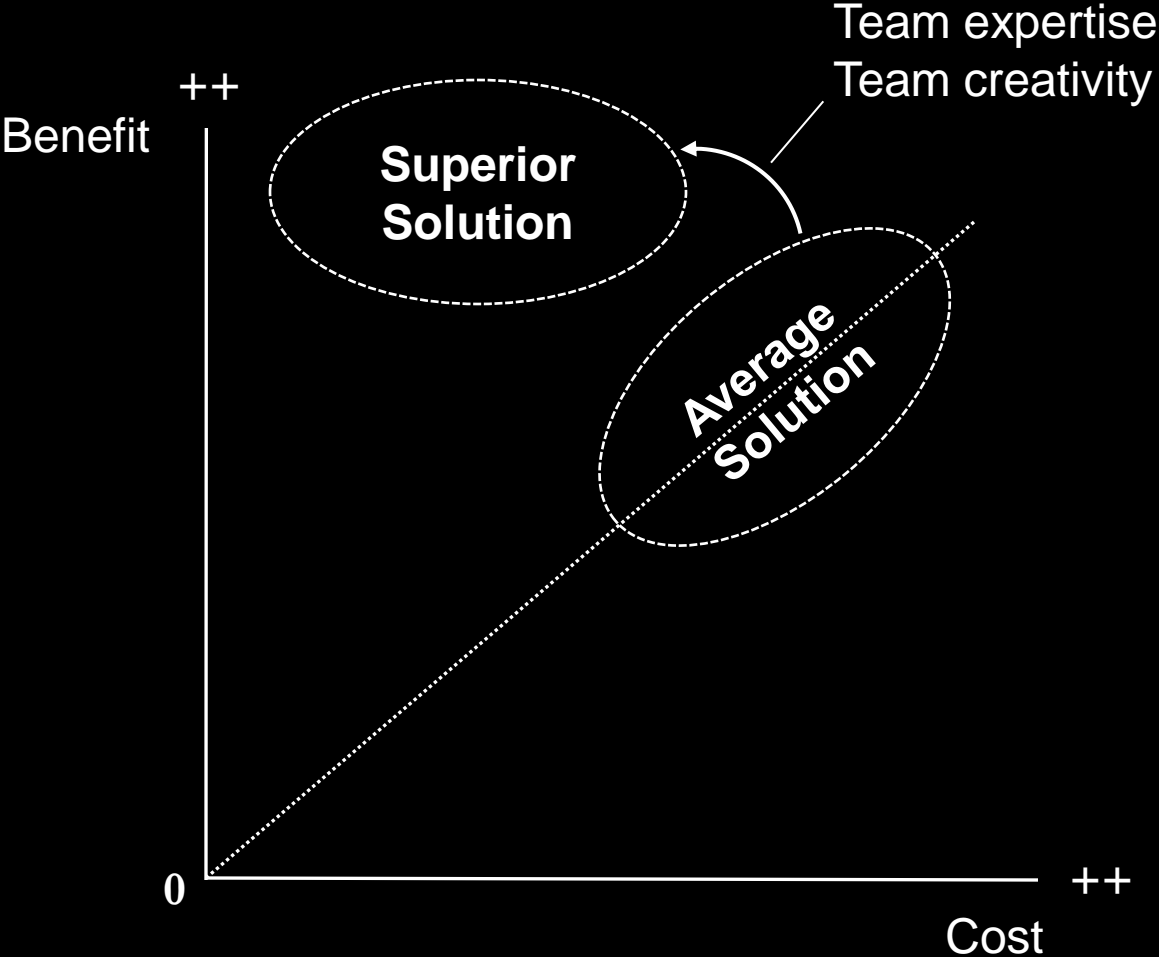
One must fit many, substitutable, overlapping parts together:

- While the parts are constantly changing and evolving
- While the organization is learning and adapting to IT
- While external pressures 'force' even more adoption
- And internal forces are increasingly conflicted

# What do we need?

- Novel ways of reframing constraints
- Novel ways of reframing parts: IT, individual, organizational
- Novel ways of reorganizing parts and constraints
- Ability to detect our own and others' dogma
- Ability to inspect and unpack rules
- Ability to communicate different concepts, methods
- An openness to entertaining different concepts, methods
- Suspension of disbelief

# What makes the great great?



With EpicMix, all your activity on the slopes is automatically captured and uploaded to your EpicMix dashboard. Now you can follow your days skied, track your vertical feet, see where you rode, earn EpicMix pins for your achievements, and collect points. You can also connect with your social networks like Facebook and Twitter and share your stats, pins and points. All this is possible because of Radio Frequency scanners at the base of every lift, and RF technology built into every Vail Resorts season pass, and PEAKS lift ticket.



IT is quickly evolving from largely an analytic, solution-fitting skill  
to a rule-bending, integrative and creative skill

As more IT can be packaged and outsourced, we need people  
who can re-conceptualize more than just the technology parts

We need people who can re-imagine multiple future states  
across human-technical lines

Who can easily listen to and learn from others

Who can inspire others to participate in this dialog

# Thank you! Questions?



**“The secret to creativity is knowing how to hide your sources.” A. Einstein**