

# Q-light

*Spending Quality Time on Quality Issues*



*Relax, it is not questionnaire time, neither evaluation time!*

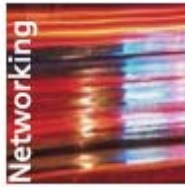
We are here to introduce to you **Q-light**, the new, bimonthly, quality initiative that aims at providing a platform for discussions on **quality and innovation issues**. Q-light will be a mean to **enhance communication** among us, through **articles** of our network's experts and practitioners, **open to comments** and replies. You will find news on the distinctive characteristics of our community, and a short **"webography"** with interesting links to the rest of the innovation and incubation world. We hope you'll enjoy Q-light, and contribute to it actively to turn it into a lively and animated tool!

*Giordano and Gonçalo*

## IQ | Perspectives on Innovation from Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley is known for its innovation and being the birthplace of successful start-ups like Google, Yahoo, eBay and more. The more tangible drivers for this success include an extensive and nurturing eco-system for entrepreneurs (especially with universities like Stanford and UC Berkeley), numerous sources of start-up venture capital, a global market approach, and R&D (research & development) focused on commercialization. However, the factors that set Silicon Valley apart from most other innovation centers and have resulted in many more mega-successful start-ups are the less tangible or "soft" drivers. These "soft" drivers include 1) Risk-Taking, 2) Open-ness/Accessibility, 3) Culture of Collaboration, and 4) Integrity. Many regions around the world – in Asia, in Europe, in the Middle East, Africa – have strived to build their own super innovative and entrepreneurial centers but none has achieved the level of success of Silicon Valley because they haven't recognized the importance of the soft drivers and implemented them. To start with, **RISK-TAKING** is an integral part of the true entrepreneurial experience. Risk-taking encompasses trying new things that have not been tried before. Often times, it doesn't work, but the mistakes and dead ends often provide the experience to then develop another new technology or business model that will be successful. Risk-taking may also mean leaving a secure job with secure income to focus on the new venture. The 100% dedication of the entrepreneurs to a start-up can make the difference between the enterprise being just a part-time hobby versus becoming a mega-successful start-up that we have so often heard about.

A second driver for the success of Silicon Valley is the **OPEN-NESS AND ACCESSABILITY** of the industry leaders and established successful entrepreneurs. These industry luminaries often make themselves available to speak at industry events and to be available to network with the community. In addition, with social networking tools liked



LinkedIn and Facebook, almost anybody can reach out to try to connect to the top people. Because of the culture of openness and accessibility, the chances are pretty high of making the connection. This culture provides entrepreneurs valuable access to experienced resources that can help them grow their new ventures through mentoring or even angel funding.

**COLLABORATION** is a pervasive element in Silicon Valley. People are often meeting to discuss new ideas. Lots of successful start-ups have been created from ideas sketched on a napkin over a coffee or a glass of wine. Competitors especially in a new market will even collaborate to address a market problem or need. One perspective by the people is that their companies may eventually merge or be acquired by the other so it's better to build relationships and start by collaborating. There are also many industry forums (like the MIT/Stanford Venture Lab) which put on seminars and conferences for presenting and sharing new technologies and business models and while also providing a platform for people networking. This culture of collaboration allows budding entrepreneurs to more quickly build a network of people and resources to help them grow a start-up venture.

Lastly, there is a high level of **INTEGRITY** in Silicon Valley interactions. Without this assumed integrity, there wouldn't be the spirit of collaboration that is seen. Signing an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) when sharing ideas or technologies is a standard practice to illustrate the intention to respect others' intellectual property. In addition, there is often an attitude of "win-win" where people try to make sure that each and every party is getting equitable value from a relationship – whether it be a customer/vendor, a partner/partner, a start-up/investor, mentor/mentee type of relationship. This "win-win" attitude can also be interpreted as a form of integrity which has been very instrumental to Silicon Valley's success.

In summary, though the tangible drivers for innovation and entrepreneurship like access to funding and a nurturing education eco-system are important for helping to create successful start-ups, it's the less tangible "soft" drivers that lead to the mega-successful start-ups. As innovation centers are popping up around the world and often aspiring to be like Silicon Valley, it's important for them to incorporate the "soft" drivers described here to create even more highly innovative and commercially successful regions like the Silicon Valley.

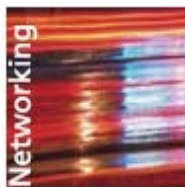
Gigi Wang

Board Member & Chair Emeritus

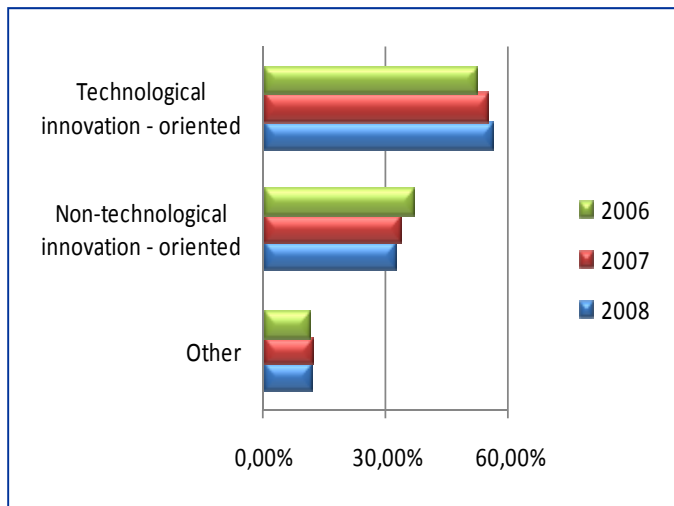
MIT/Stanford Venture Lab

*Send us your comments for the next publication on [q-light@ebn.be](mailto:q-light@ebn.be)*

*On the next IQ: Peter Harman, Deputy Chief Executive of UKBI*



## QI | Quality Info



Did you know that the 2008 data from our Quality System confirms a shift towards technological innovation – oriented projects?

Did you know that this trend confirms the observations made in the previous 3 year?

The data show a significant amount of innovative technological projects related to the ICT sector, followed by Energy and Environmental technologies.

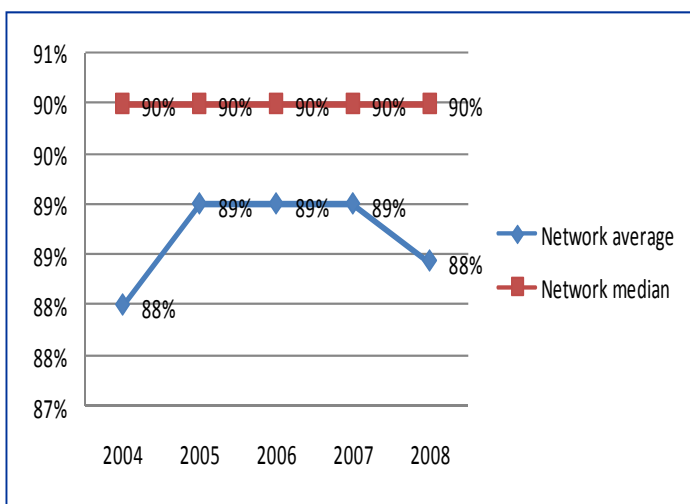
Did you know that Spain and the UK are the countries with more projects in the Environmental sector? Don't miss the Country Observatories in the next Q-light!

Did you know that, in average, **88%** of the entrepreneurs supported by BICs **survive** during the following 3 years after creation?

And did you know that EBN is the only organization which monitors (European-wide and yearly) this key indicator?

Did you know that if you type "enterprise survival rate" + "Europe" in Google, the EBN Annual Observatory ranks in the 3rd position?

Did you know all of this? And your stakeholders, clients and partners? Don't hesitate to inform them.



For further information download the [EBN 2009 Annual Observatory here](#)

## eQ | webography

1. Judy Estrin, CEO of JLABS: Don't Take Innovation for Granted
2. Watch the winner videos of the 2009 "European Entrepreneurship Video Award"
3. Charles Leadbeater: The rise of the amateur professional