

Pioneers, Settlers, Town Planners

Innovative Change

How do you structure a large business for relentless, continuous innovation? Simon Wardley created Pioneers, Settlers, Town Planners Model which in turn was drawn from Robert X. Cringely's book Accidental Empires which describes companies in terms of Commandos, Infantry and Police. This framework is a way of understanding the unique combination of characteristics and aptitude that are needed to bring products and services to life. Simon describes them as:

"Pioneers are brilliant people. They are able to explore never before discovered concepts, the uncharted land. They show you wonder but they fail a lot. Half the time the thing doesn't work properly. You wouldn't trust what they build. They create 'crazy' ideas. Their type of innovation is what we call core research. They make future success possible.

Settlers are brilliant people. They can turn the half baked thing into something useful for a larger audience. They build trust. They build understanding. They make the possible future actually happen. They turn the prototype into a product, make it manufacturable, listen to customers and turn it profitable.

Town Planners are brilliant people. They are able to take something and industrialize it taking advantage of economies of scale. This requires immense skill. You trust what they build. They find ways to make things faster, better, smaller, more efficient, more economic and good enough. They build the services that pioneers build upon."

