



Need to innovate? Try something radical: Be yourself

By Nancy McAllister

Your boss wants new ideas from you, and you're trying, but you just can't seem to get results. Here's a thought: Relax. Be yourself and see what happens. That's how actor Paul Newman developed a new type of philanthropy linked directly to conscientious consumerism.

For many years, Newman refused the salad dressings served in high-end restaurants. Instead, he requested servers to bring him oil, vinegar, mustard, and fresh pepper so that he could make his own dressing—much to the amusement of his family and friends. Then one day in 1980, he and a pal set out to make homemade Christmas gifts for their friends. In a cluttered barn basement, they blended their salad dressing recipe in an old tub—with a canoe paddle. The friend, author A. E. Hotchner, says he told Newman he was out of his mind—that what they were doing was unsanitary. But Newman wasn't worried. The pair poured the mixture into recycled wine bottles and slapped handmade labels on them.

After fulfilling their gift list, they took what was left of the dressing to some gourmet stores in Connecticut, where it began to sell. So they made some more. Newman, as Hotchner tells it, became obsessed with salad dressings, and for a while that's all he wanted to talk about with his friends—even calling from movie shoots to discuss the matter. As they prepared to expand their

market, they were advised to conduct test marketing—to the tune of \$400,000. Again, Newman opted for the simpler approach: He and Hotchner invited 10 friends over and poured the dressings into saucers for a taste testing.

And so began Newman's Own, a company which to date has donated all its profits to charity. Why? Because Paul Newman has finicky tastebuds and a penchant for the straightforward and simple approach to life. His brand of philanthropy has taken capitalism by storm—and all because he gave himself permission to be exactly himself.