TEI 092: Innovation mantras from R&D
Host: Chad McAllister, PhD
Guest: Dana Oliver

CHAD: Hi, this is Chad, your host. A lot of product managers want to deepen their knowledge and increase their influence and I help them do that by guiding product managers to become product masters. If you really want to stand out in your career in product management and innovation, head over to where the show notes are for this episode, at www.theeverydayinnovator.com/092. Also, get the Product Mastery Roadmap. It's there to help you learn how to become a product master. Now, this episode is about research and development. R&D is tightly coupled with product management and innovation. To learn how an R&D person thinks about innovation, I talked with Dana A. Oliver, who has an impressive 30 years of experience with R&D groups. He recently left Medtronic, the medical device company, where he was a senior director of R&D. He's now focusing on writing and coaching. He has two books available. His first book is *Mantra Leadership*, and his second and most recent is *Mantra Design*. In *Mantra Design*, he shares 14 principles, or mantras, for innovation and developing premium-priced, patent-protected and marketshare-leading products. We discuss a few of these mantras and then we explore the future of R&D in this episode. I hope you enjoy the discussion.

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CHAD: Dana, thanks so much for joining me and the Everyday Innovators.

DANA: Chad, thank you very much for having me as a guest on The Everyday Innovator. I very much look forward to our conversation today.

CHAD: Well, likewise. You have a deep background as an engineer in research and development organizations, been in R&D it looks like most of your career, and have good things to share. You most recently left, it was the Senior Director of R&D at Medtronic, right, I think was your last corporate position?

DANA: That's correct. I've only been retired now for about two weeks, so needless to say, I'm going through that adjustment phase, withdrawal, and it was a great run. I was at Medtronic's Surgical Technologies for 14 years, helped grow that business unit from 100 million to approximately 2 billion, so needless to say, it was a great ride.

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CHAD: We're talking about mantras that you have put together. You have a book called *Mantra Design*, and I love the subtitle: Innovate, Buy, or Die. I'll ask you about that too. This is a collection of 14 mantras, based on your experiences. I'm just curious how this came about. How did you decide on doing this and coming up with the 14 mantras?

DANA: Sure. Thank you for that, Chad. So *Mantra Design* is my second book. I started off with *Mantra Leadership*, and I think, what I found out very early is I've got 30 years of experience in research and development, and I started to use mantras on a regular basis. The reason I use them is that it allows for executive communication techniques. It's short, it's concise, it's consistent. I think part of being an executive is your messaging. You need to be all those things, so over time the mantras just turned into something that was great for me to lead my development teams.

CHAD: Excellent. The mantra book, there's the 14, and I would love to have time to talk through all of them, but also that's a good incentive for people to go check out the book if we don't hit them all.

There's good detail in there. You added a lot of detail to each one of these mantras. I do want to hit some that stood out to me. They just capture my attention. Let's dive in to some of these. Your first one, mantra number one, is the subtitle of the book. Your mantra is "Innovate, Buy, or Die." Tell us what that's about.

DANA: Sure. Thank you for that, Chad. To your point, just for listeners to understand, how we structured the book was each chapter is a mantra. Then I go into the favorable and unfavorable characteristics behind those leadership traits. So the subtitle is very purposeful and that it's me trying to emphasize the importance of organic innovation. When I look around at businesses, it's very common today that when a business starts and becomes successful, it's predicated on products they design internally and then the business grows on those. They get very customer-focused, they establish their brands, but then it's interesting to me. As they grow and get bigger, the innovative people begin to move out and more finance people come in. What happens is that the brands become less important. The customers begin to disappear and it becomes more of a portfolio focus. So, to me, I think what we've learned is after the Jack Welch era, is that when you look at companies that stay focused on their technology, it's what I call "dance with the girl you came with." You can be successful. So if you look at Intel, if you look at Victoria's Secret, if you look at Starbuck's, Michelin, these are companies that have a core technology, a core name, a core brand, and they remain true. Look at Gillette. How many times have they reinvented the razor? If you remain true to the girl you dance with and you invest back into organic development, you will keep your customers, you'll be the best in your space, and that's the essence of the subtitle, Innovate, Buy, or Die. It's a little bit of a parody. To me, the single best thing you can do as a business owner and as an innovator, is understand your customer and/or your technology and just continue to invest in that space.

[5:31]

CHAD: Yeah, it does seem, as organizations…so some listeners are in startups and part of that space and we have other Everyday Innovators who are leading the innovation groups of global organizations and a wide group here listening. The startups, I've been through four myself, they, as you said, start around an idea, a product that they create themselves. Over time, you shift to coming up with works and solves the problem for customers, to really focusing on operational excellence, and how do we make our business more efficient?

DANA: Yes.

CHAD: We need the innovation piece to stay in there, or we just have a more efficient operation that sooner or later we're going to fall out of sync with what our customers want, or a competitor is going to outdo what we're doing.

DANA: You know, it's funny, because, to your point, I've worked for both startups, small places, as well as some massive conglomerates. I have another mantra, which is, "Grow the top, and the bottom will follow." So I would send some advice or some caution to people that are in these bigger institutions that are worried about their quarterly earnings, is that, if you think about it, when you chase quarterly earnings, whatever your profit margin may be, you've already taken out those cost of goods. You've taken out your advertising. You've taken out your overhead. So let's say you're chasing another penny on a quarter. That's what happens when you chase earnings. Whereas, if you chase top-line corporate

growth, revenue growth, you're chasing a brand new virgin dollar. So to me, philosophically, I've always believed that I don't want to put any of my R&D people on earnings. I want to put everyone on top-line growth, because it's far more profitable. The reality is when you chase earnings, you still need to reallocate your research people, because it's always about cross-functional teams in order to even collect another penny. You're modifying a product, changing a bill of materials, changing a specification you need to requalify. Well, gees, why do that to chase a penny if I can go chase a dollar?

CHAD: Right. The dollar sounds better to me. The problem is, and for the leaders of organizations that are public organizations that are tied to this quarterly reporting responsibility to Wall Street, there is this enormous pressure that has been created, which I think is unfortunate in the system. We make short-term decisions to optimize reporting, as opposed to long-term decisions that really would be better for the business.

DANA: And I fully appreciate that and I understand the difference between a startup and a value company. I think, to your point, though, is what happens is these value companies become so fixated on their quarterly earnings, they no longer make the necessary investments. What's really interesting to me, so again, my 30 years in business, every one of the companies I ultimately worked for, it was an off-shoot of a technology that was abandoned from a bigger company. So to me, there are, it's funny. If everyone, talk about blue oceans, you have a lot of these big companies, right, they're so worried about their earnings and they believe in acquisitions, that what they do is they go out and look for blue oceans. But the fallacy of a blue ocean is that these companies all started from some fledgling space and if you just took that attention, instead of investing massive amounts of money into an acquisition, the reality is you're going to pay a 35% premium or not, you're going to bring them into an established company, you're going to stop investing in them in the same capacity, which means growth is going to naturally slow. They become part of a portfolio, they never grow at the same rate as they were when they were acquired or what your acquisition model said. To me, these companies would be better off, in my opinion, if they took those same monies and reinvested them, and even if you gave greater autonomy, so you begin to nurture these small little blue oceans and they'll grow into these 25, 50, 100 million dollar segments that you can then naturally grow into your business.

[9:30]

CHAD: Yeah. There's been some interesting partnerships, too, with this aspect of buying a startup or a smaller company with some interesting capabilities, or partnering with them and have that collaboration help infuse your organization. Seeing that happen more, and it seems like more larger organizations these days have a VC-like capability internally, where they're investing in startups to get the advantages of what they're doing. Not necessarily buying them, but creating partnerships.

DANA: Yeah. And I think a big reason for that is that these big institutions, like you said, become so myopic on their quarterly earnings. What happens is their infrastructures become bloated. Oftentimes, it's highly difficult to get product development done. What happens is the business is so worried about the business itself, all the procedures, all the prophecies are focused on keeping the business alive. You have people that they're worried about nothing but quarterly earnings and so what happens is your development people, the development process, all of a sudden it's found on the outskirts of a manufacturing process. It takes a long time to get anything done, it's not simple, it's inefficient. To me,

the more you can create autonomy for your research groups and the more focus you can continue to believe in them, the better off you're going to be. It's one of my foundational principles, and that is, I like to see that companies take no less than 10% of their total R&D dollars, excuse me, their total revenue dollars, and invest it back into organic research and development. For me, if you want to be growing at 10% or better, then you need to be willing to make that commitment. But yet, a lot of those dollars get carved off, and instead of organic investment, they get carved off to acquisitions. Like I said, if you're buying an acquisition, trust me, you're buying someone else's headache.

CHAD: It's a good point. It doesn't solve all our problems, right? Just as you helping companies, what I've seen, too, is I've helped companies in the past, it seems like, as the operations become more operationally effective, kind of move from what they started on, and they're doing what they do, better, which is something certainly to pay attention to, in the process, they create barriers to basically limit risk, because they want to improve operational effectiveness. I've been in organizations where the barriers are really the big things in the way. They do have people selecting good ideas, they're close to customers, you have the basics for creating ideas, getting them through a selection process, but the barriers don't let it actually happen. That's what's stalling actual innovation from occurring.

[12:03]

DANA: That's a very true statement. Think of it this way. When an institution starts to become exceptionally large, they invest a great deal of money into their capital, into their infrastructure. So, then what happens is, operations becomes a more important role, they have the ability to say no. So as an R&D person, you might find a better way to do something with that old product, but if the infrastructure's been so heavily capitalized, who wants to change it? It becomes not financially attractive when you look at it through a bookkeeper's eyes, or a financial person's eyes. So, to me, and that's the caution. This is what's…for some of these great big institutions, what's happening is that they're being overtaken and they're being out-innovated by smaller companies, because they don't have those same infrastructure and barriers. Their focus is on the customer or the technology and they are….and why it's safe to say no. I'm from Boston, and it was a great expression back then, Big Blue, it was safe to say no. So if you were a VP, it was like, why try anything new?

CHAD: It's a sad state of affairs. Let me ask you about another mantra that stood out for me. This one is called "Learn Your Customer's World."

DANA: Yeah. Thank you very much for that. To me, business begins and ends with your customers. So, if you ever want to be a true innovator, you have to get close to your customers. I have two mantras, and the first one is "Learn Your Customer's World", and the second one is "Innovation Begins with the Eye." Your eyeball, not the letter I. So what I mean by that is everyone talks about understanding your customer's articulated needs. That's dually important. However, you have to understand, if you want to have cutting-edge technology, if you want to get continued intellectual patents, if you want to have breakthrough technology, you need to get so close to your customer that you're on a near-peer level. That you understand their world so intimately that what you begin to see is understand the articulated needs, but it's the unarticulated needs. It's the frustrations, it's the pain points. That's what I mean about "Innovation Begins with an Eye." I fully prescribe to have a simulated environment in your research and development group. For me, I had a fully operating suite. So I would bring doctors in, they

would have all the tools of their trade, I'd bring in a hand full of guys, we'd have audio, we'd have mics and video equipment and we'd have a full cadaver set up, and we'd watch doctors. We'd put our new products in their hands and then we'd talk. But the best thing is that you'd quietly observe. It was funny. Even during a pre-interview, we'd ask some questions and they'd tell us how they might perform a particular procedure. Then when we got in the OR and we'd watch them, they'd do something very bazaar or very different. They'd find out that they'd been doing it for so long, it became second nature to them. They forgot about it. But yet, it might not be very efficient. So when you're beginning to observe them, you start to ask the question, "Hey, I saw you do that two or three times. Why are you doing that?" When you begin to pick up on that nuance that they didn't talk about, and this is what happens with focus groups, is that people will talk to you about something but the reality is you get great opportunities that are missed, but if you focus on those pain points, then that means if you solve them, you're doing something that your customers aren't, and if you're then doing something that your customers aren't, it's likely that you can get intellectual property around that. That's how you develop your intellectual property and develop products and brands that get differentiated, that you can establish premium pricing around.

[15:47]

CHAD: Yeah, it's that ethnographic research where we're actually observing our user, observing our customers, and trying to gain new insights from what they're doing. I love the example you gave that, you know, you see a doctor do something three times, or three different doctors do the same thing, but you wonder why they're actually doing it because they don't need to anymore or something. We can gain insights in that, and there's a quote that product managers frequently use and all know, which is, "If I had asked what customers wanted, they would have told me a faster horse." It's attributed to Henry Ford and there's actually no evidence he said it, but it's a great quote regardless, that if you ask, you get the articulated needs, but not real insights. We need to find other ways, and I love the mantra that you shared about the eye: "Innovation Begins with the Eye." It focuses on…pay attention to what you see.

DANA: Right. I think too, the other thing is, that for anyone that has an innovation group, they need to be cautious about this, because in particular with younger innovators, when they have something to share…example—I've seen this many times with my guys when they're wanting to share something with a doctor. They're so anxious to provide their own feedback and to show this new feature or the new products, that they stop listening to the feedback. What happens is then very important information gets lost. That's what I mean about quiet observation. You have to put your product in the hands of your users, then you need to quietly observe. Then you can pick up these subtleties of things they like versus things they don't like.

CHAD: Yeah, and you put together simulated environments so you could see that. You could see doctors performing what they do. I'm curious, for Medtronic and other medical device manufacturers, there's also often a role that is in the OR in hospitals, which is the technical rep for that device. I would think, they're there to help the surgeon or the doctor if there's any questions about using the device and make sure everything's ready and things are done right, but I would think also, that's a channel for them to be observing and feeding information back to the product managers. I'm curious in your experiences, if that indeed was a channel that was used.

DANA: Yeah. To me, you have to have your commercial team has to be so exceptionally understanding of what the doctors are performing, not only the doctors, the techniques, the procedures, because when they do that, then they can see these subtleties that they can translate back. One of the problems that I found and that I have, is that, and you're absolutely correct, you have to balance between simulated environments and real environments, but with real environments, what happens is, doctors are there to perform a task. Oftentimes they are there to…they're very focused on the task at hand, and there's a lot of variables going on. It's very important that they get it right. What happens is they don't take the time to think, so it's hard to sometimes talk with doctors while they're in the middle of a procedure. They're so focused on the procedure at hand, they're not focused about all the subtleties outside of that procedure. I mean, they can still talk and you hear them and a lot of them play music, but the other thing, too, is that the environment is, there could be 10 or 20 people in an OR, depending on what the procedure type is. The beauty of getting a doctor back into my environment is that doctors love to teach, and so, if you're having a cadaver and you're simulating the environment, they'll stop in the middle of that procedure and they'll say, "Hey, Dana, come over here. Here, let me show you, take my hand, or try do to a little bit of this procedure so that you fully understand." That's the beauty of the cadavers; they're not afraid of hurting somebody. They're not afraid of the outcome. They're not afraid of blood loss, they're not afraid of recovery times and the importance of OR times. So yes, Chad, you got it right. It's a balance, and we pick up a lot of good information. To me, I love the simulated environments just because of the venue, and the learning opportunity that it provides.

[19:56]

CHAD: Yeah. And they certainly have their place, where life and death would be a consequence of making a mistake. That's why we have flight simulators that we use instead of teaching people to go take an aircraft off the ground the first time. It makes good sense in those situations. There's another mantra I was curious about. This one kind of helps address the speed to market issue and kind of flies in the face of that. You said, "It takes a long time to get to simple." As product managers and innovators, we feel the pressure of needing to get products out more quickly and it's hard to slow down. Talk about what you mean by, "It takes a long time to get to simple."

DANA: Yeah. So I guess the best example I like to use is if you think about a living room set in someone's house. They buy a new house and maybe they buy all this furniture. How many times do you and your spouse move the furniture around the living room? The reason you do this is that you're trying to find the right balance between, hey, this a good place for most people to be able to view the TV, or this allows for the greatest conversation, this allows for the most occupancy. Anyway, when it's all said and done, you look at the living room and you go, oh, this is great. But you may have moved it ten times. So, when I say it takes a long time to get to simple, developing a product is no different. That's why it's so easy to be a Monday morning quarterback. You shouldn't have thrown that pass in the Superbowl, you should have run the ball. Well, everything is 20/20 hindsight. Engineering is no different. Engineers learn to engineer. So they solve one problem at a time. The problem is, when you get into certain technologies that are very complex, you might solve 10 or 20 or 30 or more problems. When you finally get done solving all those problems, you might go, I can incorporate problem 1, 5, 10 and 12 with this one solution had I done it a little differently. You see? So when it takes a long time to get to simple, the best products are so seamless, but seamless comes after countless iterations. So the caution I try to use

with people is that they shouldn't be…product managers in particular, let's not be in such a hurry to get to market that you lose out if you just take a little longer to make it seamless. If you make it seamless, you will get your customers. The reality is if your product is not easy and seamless to use, your customers will abandon you quickly.

CHAD: I think a lot of us are familiar with the example of the iPod. We lived through, you know, maybe having an mp3 player before iPod. I had a couple lying around, I remember the Rio was one. Then the iPod comes along, and they just made the whole experience seamless. It was an easier experience to play music, and then when they added iTunes, they made it easy for me to get music onto my iPod, and now we had a whole product that was really solving a lot of problems for people, which was, you can take your music with you and it's easy to do so.

[22:54]

DANA: Right. And to me, that goes back, again, to keeping focus. You dance with the girl you came with. I mean, no product is invented, I mean, everything is reinvented. I used to have an instructor that she'd tell me all the time, "Dana, nothing is written, it's rewritten." So every time you write something down, every time you do something, there is always a better way to do that. To me, that's the key of when I go back and I talk about a foundation of principle and reinvesting back into organic research and development. When you focus on your core brands and you develop those products through the eyes of your customers and you focus on those strategically few, what that allows you to do is that you can create a cadence. You develop a product that your competitors do not have, you introduce it to your customers, you continue to work with your customers, which then leads to improvements and advancements, and this is a never-ending trend. It'll happen perpetually. Look at the car industry. So we talked briefly about the Model T. Imagine if the Model T said, well I'm done developing cars. You think about power steering, you think about automatic transmissions, power windows, electric seats, air bags, GPS, cup holders, all these things are part of…it's a natural evolution that continues and continues. To me, this is…when I talk about staying close to your customers and innovating, that's…boy, you can have a lifetime of products. I mean, my 14 years there, when I was at Medtronic Surgical Technologies during this growth, we didn't change our customers. We knew who our customers were and we just kept on innovating and developing our customers. There's more than one way to grow a business. To me, it's very much customer-focused.

CHAD: Yeah, and you stress this relationship between, "It takes a long time to get to simple," and "Innovation begins with the Eye." It's through observing our customers, through understanding our customers and their problem, and I think sometimes it doesn't get to simple because we focus on the solution and we don't have as clean and as insightful understanding of the problem to help our customer really solve it, right?

[25:04]

DANA: Yeah, and I think, to your point, you have to be careful about asking your customers, because they're going to say, "Give me a faster horse." The reality is that when you get into engineering, in particular, R&D, you begin oftentimes, a lot of people that thrive in this business are the people that can see things that is not pragmatic and practical to the average person. When you talk, depending on your customers, you might have some pretty creative people that can think and view three-dimensionally in

their brain, but that's what really good innovators do. So what happens is, when you talk to too many of your salespeople, you talk to too many of your customers, if you ask them, "Hey, what's neat or new?" They'll just look at one of your competitors and say, "Well, I like this feature." And then what happens is that feature now is the calling cry between your commercial team that are saying, "I need this feature." Here's the problem, is that, and this is a difference between when you have your salespeople and you have your product managers. Your product managers need to be thinking further down the road. Because if you just start doing me-toos, just because the competitor had it, then all of a sudden, you can never leapfrog them. So what you need to do is you need to be the one driving the bus. You need to be playing long ball. You need to be talking to your customers and thinking about and developing that next generation feature. If you stay on top, then you can determine how frequently you want to obsolete your own technologies and platforms, because you've got something new in the background.

CHAD: Yeah, this issue with me-too products, and unfortunately some product managers never get out of their office. They never engage with customers. A lot of us want to engage with customers more than we do and we just simply don't have the time to do so. But I do know some just don't at all. And their job really is to create me-too products. The problem there is there's no guarantee that your competitor that you're copying actually solved the problem correctly. They probably left something out that could add enormous value and if you had the insights from the customer, like you said, that's the option, you leapfrog them. More importantly, it's the opportunity to provide more value that the customer really needs.

DANA: Yeah. And to your point, if someone's a product manager and they're telling me they're not in front of their customers, unless you're someone like Coca Cola, who, you know, you have this tremendous brand name behind you and God forbid you're the product manager that, you know, went away from Coke Classic…New Coke, colossal mistake. But to me, most companies are not Coke. They're far smaller than that. They don't have that franchise name behind them and that brand. So, you have to be in front of your customers, and if you're not, then you're dying. Or trust me, then you're probably dealing in a red ocean. You're competing on price. You're competing on trying to establish some relationship. But my guess is I can assure you what you're not competing on is innovation.

[28:05]

CHAD: Yep. That's a good point. With your vast experience in R&D, I just want to get some insights about where you think R&D is going. There's lots of debates about this. We've seen companies that have moved from pretty independent organic R&D groups to maybe even breaking them up and aligning them with product groups or having them more driven by product, and I don't know if we have found the happy, right balance yet, but where do you think R&D is going in the next few years?

DANA: I think to me, what's funny is all these models, what they do is whether, to me, I believe in autonomy. What I mean by that is when you become a big institution, first off, I prescribe to, I believe that you do not, should not have a business unit greater than 500 million dollars in size. If your business unit begins to grow beyond that, then you should split it out into its own little business. Because what happens is, then you can remain customer focused. You can remain small. You can remain outside of this manufacturing infrastructure. So all these models that you're seeing, you take a big group and you begin to carve it down into smaller size groups, what are they doing? They're acting more like a startup.

They're creating these R&D groups that they have a very narrow focus. To me, if you want to be successful at any given product, you need to be the best in your space. The only way you can be the best in your space is to continually innovate in that space, which means you have to know your customer, and you have to be continually developing next generation technology in collaboration with your customer. It's what I call friends, foes, and average Joe's. Too many companies are, when they get really big, they rely on these KOLs (key opinion leaders). But the key opinion leaders, what happens is they take you down a wrong path. So you have to get out there and talk to your key opinion leaders who are key opinions for other companies, because that's only when you are going to find the real truth. That's the only time you're going to begin to develop product and understand really what works and what doesn't work.

CHAD: Talk to those average Joe's.

DANA: Talk to the average Joe's.

CHAD: I really like your focus on innovation as the answer here, and not research and development itself. I'm sure you're aware of the PricewaterhouseCoopers' group, Strategy& that does the annual, what is it called? It's the 1000 most innovative companies, or I forget what it's called, but it's their 1000 Report they do each year. One thing they looked at for the last 12 years is R&D spin versus innovation ranking. There's no correlation. The most innovative companies don't necessarily spend the most in R&D. You can be innovative having an R&D group, but that doesn't mean you have to spend a lot on R&D.

[30:46]

DANA: I think that's a very true point. To me, I have a rule and that's called my 85/15 rule. For me, I would make sure I took my budget and allocated 85% of my research and development budget toward protecting the core brands. So this way, I assured continued growth, top line growth which then pulled the bottom and delivered the earnings. But you have to take the lion's share of your money and invest it on protecting the core product brands that you have. Now, conversely, that meant, and I've found this through experience, that if I could tap about 15% of my R&D team, 15% of my budget, I'd be building that funnel. I'd be working on all these neat things in the background and I found that with that allocation as a percentage, I could more than happily make sure that funnel was continually full so that I could keep on allocating to those core product brands.

CHAD: That's a good percentage for us to be aware of, the breakout there for running an R&D group. I also asked you about an innovation quote. I always like to share innovation quotes with my listeners, and what's an innovation quote that you chose to share with us, and tell us about why you picked that.

DANA: Yeah. I think for me it's, "Successful people aren't afraid to fail. They're afraid of not trying." To me, what's funny is, too many people are afraid to fail. In R&D, in my group, we would fail once a week. I mean, I had over 100 scientists and engineers and that's okay. The last thing I would do is not, you know, get upset with that. You live with that. If you're not afraid to go out and try things, you can't ever think that you're going to make a significant change or make a new discovery or a finding. The reality is sometimes failure is what takes you down a very different path. You know necessity is the mother of invention. So to me, failure is a very good thing. The key, though, is understanding why it failed. So you

have to establish your limits so that you know, did you have a failure you expected or did you have a failure that might lead to a new discovery?

CHAD: Yeah. There's been some happy, accidental failures, like gorilla glass on the front of all of our smartphones was an accident.

DANA: There you go—Kevlar.

CHAD: I love this idea of those failures. For me, it's a really simple relationship that innovation fundamentally means we're doing something new. We're not doing operations that we've always done, we're doing something new. Anytime any of us do something new, my son is studying math today, and was complaining some about trying to figure out the concept. Anytime we do something new, we're going to be learning and we're going to be failing as part of that process. We don't get it right the first time.

[33:24]

DANA: You know what's funny is that all these big businesses and institutions, how they establish the core competency was all the failing before that. That's how they establish core competency. So yeah, to me, and there's a big difference, you know, it's what I call ideation. Ideation is coming up with ideas. Innovation is the distillation of practice of those ideas.

CHAD: It's a good distinction. I'll have to add that to my growing list of innovation definitions. There are several to choose from. I really do like this quote about successful people not being afraid to fail. They've got to take those steps and keep trying. Very good. So deep experience in research and development, obviously. How can listeners find out more about the work you're doing, get a hold of the books you have written and learn about how you can help them?

DANA: Thanks for that, Chad. The best way is my website, which is www.mantraleadership.com. What's great is I have my books posted, you can take a read of the books, as well as interviews like this, Chad, will get posted to my site. There's lots to read, lots to listen to, so people can get a sense who I am and if they like it.

CHAD: Very good. I'll make sure that's in the show notes. Also, do you have information on www.mantraleadership.com for contacting you directly?

DANA: Yes, you can contact me directly through that site.

CHAD: Do you want me to share your LinkedIn profile in the show notes?

DANA: That would be fantastic. I'm all over the place on social media.

CHAD: That's a good way for a lot of us to stay connected. Everyday Innovators, I will put those links in the show notes, along with the summary, of course, of what we've talked about. Dana, I appreciate you taking time for this. So much deep experience and I know we only touched on a few things. I recommend the Mantra book for people learning more about innovation and a lot of the key insights there for being close to the customer and getting the problem correctly addressed and satisfying adding value to customers.

TEI 092: Innovation mantras from R&D
Host: Chad McAllister, PhD
Guest: Dana Oliver

DANA: Chad, it's been an absolute pleasure, being on this show.

CHAD: Thanks, Dana. So glad you were. Have a great day.

DANA: Excellent. Have a great one, sir. Thank you very much.

CHAD: Thank you for listening and for sharing this podcast with other product managers and innovators. Find the summary of the discussion with Dana, the transcript, and my Product Mastery Roadmap that shows you how to double, or more, your product success at www.theeverydayinnovator.com/092. Keep innovating!