A LOCAL newspaper recently reported that out of 100 medium- to small-sized firms surveyed, only 10 per cent were willing to create an innovative plan. The survey was in response to recent enhancements made to the Productivity and Innovation Credit Scheme (PIC) by the Singapore Government.

While some argued that there was a need to frame what constitutes innovation, others felt it would be rigid if a prescriptive method was adopted. We are all familiar with global brand names like Facebook, Google and Apple and their impact on our business and personal lives. Does it mean that if we are not thinking of creating anything earth-shaking or globally recognised, it is not regarded as innovation?

Marketing guru Philip Kotler said more than 30 years ago that “the company has only two functions — marketing and innovation”. According to him, innovation is required to create a product that will radically change the company’s business and personal lives.

Henry Ford said that thinking is the hardest work and that only the work engages it. It is crucial that bosses pass judgment at this stage, rationalise why an idea won’t work or voice their “sure-to-fail” theories. There is room for debating ideas later, but not at this early stage.

Dealing with idea killers may have about getting the seeds of an innovative idea...