

***“In today’s competitive and globalized marketplace, every company has a need for faster, more efficient innovation that provides stronger solutions. CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology based on TRIZ-methodology helps organizations manage their innovation and problem-solving in a systematic way”***

**Mathieu Mottrie, Chief Operating Officer, CREAX nv**

CREAX, an Innovation expert is a TRIZ based research organization providing consultancy, training and product development services for diverse global organizations. It helps organizations innovate products, services and processes in a systematic way. In this interview, Mathieu Mottrie, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of CREAX explains how innovation be approached and achieved through CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology (SIM).



**Mathieu Mottrie**  
Chief Operating Officer  
CREAX n.v.

**🗨️ Tell us briefly about the background of your company?**

CREAX, as innovation expert is a Patent and TRIZ based research organization providing consultancy, training and product development services for diverse global organizations. With the Head Office in Ypres (leper) Belgium, CREAX was incorporated in January 2000 by Simon Dewulf, Ph. D in innovation and creativity. Originally, CREAX started developing a state-of-the-art software for applying TRIZ. Soon, CREAX started updating the original TRIZ methodology through patent research and best practices, based on the knowledge and experience of innovation managers and engineers across every industry around the world. Today, by combining TRIZ with the best aspects of other creativity and innovation methodologies, CREAX developed the CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology (SIM). This methodology offers a systematic approach of innovation and problem-solving and a helicopter view on technology. Today, CREAX orients itself more and more as an innovation and engineering consultant applying SIM in partnership with its clients.

CREAX works with a total innovation team of 78 enthusiasts in departments in Belgium, India, UK, the Netherlands, Ireland, and France and re-sellers in Japan, Portugal, China, Korea and Singapore.

**🗨️ CREAX helps (individuals, companies and organizations) innovate products, services and processes in a systematic way, resulting in sustainable benefit, higher efficiency and reduced technical and financial risk. Can you throw some light on the processes and the methodology you adopt in achieving your objectives?**

In today’s competitive and globalized marketplace, every company has a need for faster, more efficient innovation that provides stronger solutions. CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology based on TRIZ-methodology helps organizations manage their innovation and problem-solving in a systematic way. Basically, we involve ourselves through:

- Working very closely with client’s R&D and Innovation Teams to solve tough technological, technical, managerial, management and patent related problems.
- Systematic Innovation Methodology (SIM) developed and practiced by CREAX is becoming a *de facto* norm in many of our client organizations.

### Profile of Mathieu Mottrie

Mathieu Mottrie is the Chief Operating Officer CREAX nv, Ieper, Belgium. Mathieu has worked for more than 7 years in the fields of organizational creativity and innovation management, implementation of MIS and Balanced Score Cards. He has been involved in business and finance strategies for innovation-based organizations. He has worked in diverse business consultancy organizations such as Ernst & Young Entrepreneurs in Gent (Belgium), SAIL, Port Western Europe n.v, Generate Bank in Belgium. He has provided multi-level consultancy services to various organizations involved in protecting innovation. He holds a masters degree in Applied Economic Science from Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

- The CREAX Innovation Suite (CIS), our software package, is helping many of our clients solve technological and other problems in a step-by-step manner on a scientific footing.
- Our worldwide workshops, seminars and courses have become a very active source of achieving collaboration with the delegates from multinational organizations who attend these courses.
- Actively researching and advancing TRIZ and other creativity methods.
- Collaborating with thought leaders across all fields of creativity.

#### What are your various products and services?

In general, CREAX is a soundboard for innovation, creativity, problem-solving and patent projects for companies and organizations. This means that is open to all possible questions and challenges in these domains.

CREAX, as technology provider, manages a continuous process of research in the field of Systematic Innovation and offers several TRIZ tools like books and the CREAX Innovation Suite, which is the state-of-the-art TRIZ-software. The Innovation Suite (CIS) software package can be used by any user without having much background in TRIZ to solve the specific problem.

CREAX, organizing a Master in Systematic Innovation program, also develops and offers learning packages to educational organizations.

The main business of CREAX is its services to companies and organizations. By applying SIM, CREAX offers:

- Innovation studies: Determining the next generation of the company's products or services and optimizing processes.
- Technical problem solving projects: Solving concrete problems, technical or other, the client is facing.
- Corporate trainings, workshops and seminars. We work on long-term relationships with our clients on this, e.g., we can have a contract with company XYZ to train 1500 of their R&D scientists and engineers on TRIZ in one year.
- Patents research related project – We do novelty searches for the inventions, we carry out technological alternatives studies around the existing patents, we help inventors draft stronger claims and also 'future-proof' their patents from the point of view of possible competition designing around their patents, based on our in-house experience and consulting experience of last three years with almost more than 50 large clients, we help in better Patent Portfolio Management.
- CREAX has become a worldwide reference since the publication of the book *Matrix 2003* which advanced the work done by original TRIZ creators by analyzing Patents from 1985-2003. Besides

### About CREAX nv

CREAX nv, headquartered at Ypres (leper), Belgium was founded on January 1, 2000 and is a rapidly growing SME that employs science, engineering and business innovators around the globe. It works with a total innovation team of 78 enthusiasts located in Belgium, UK, the Netherlands, Ireland, France and India and re-sellers in Portugal, China, Korea and Singapore. The TRIZ research (Russian acronym for Theory for Inventive Problem Solving) ended in 1985. CREAX updated the methodology, analyzing over 5,000 patents per month. CREAX combines TRIZ with other important innovation and creativity methods, establishing the standard in the CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology. CREAX has a fast growing list of clients which includes ABN-Amro, Allen & Overy, Atofina, BAE Systems, Boeing, Corus, Dow, DSM, Electrolux, Ernst & Young, Halliburton, Heidelberg, HP, Ilford, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, Philips, Pilkington, Rolls-Royce, Sanyo, Sara Lee, Gillette and United Utilities.

that the *Hands on Systematic Innovation* book by CREAX Director and the worldwide authority on TRIZ, Darrell Mann, has become the basic textbook on TRIZ. We publish and sell these books as well.

**☞ You are also offering courses on Innovation at university level. Can you elaborate on this endeavor?**

- The university level courses that we already offer are in University of Bath, UK. Besides, recently we have started a complete Master Program in Systematic Innovation. This is a course for students and professional people. Ninety percent of the course content is a self-learning package. Ten percent is a contact program.
- In India, we are already in the process of launching the courses and in fact, we have in talks with universities and colleges who would be interested in these courses.

**☞ Can you tell us more about TRIZ and its developer? How different or innovative, if I may, is your solution as compared to the existing concepts of TQM, QFD, Genetic Algorithms in New Product Development?**

TRIZ stands for *Teoriya Resheniya Izobreatatelskikh Zadatch* a Russian acronym, approximately translated as Theory of Inventive Problem Solving. TRIZ research started in 1946 when engineer Genrich Altshuller began studying successful patents. Later, other sources of 'success'—technical journals, text books, etc., were also studied. TRIZ thus represents a distillation of the best practices of successful inventors and problems solvers from across all fields of human endeavor. Using TRIZ is like having every one of these people sitting next to you, offering their best advice. TRIZ research has shown that, at a certain level of abstraction, everyone is facing exactly the same sort of challenges, and that exactly the same strategies that other people have used to resolve such challenges can be applied to our specific challenge situation. Abstraction thus plays an important role in TRIZ. If we can make our situation look like someone else's, then TRIZ allows us to access their best solutions.

The original TRIZ research ended in 1985. Since, CREAX updated the methodology, analyzing over 5,000 patents per month. CREAX combines TRIZ with other important innovation and creativity methods, establishing the standard in the CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology (SIM).

The TQM, QFD and even six-sigma, are methodologies related to delivering quality products and services with respect to the existing services. SIM developed around TRIZ and as pioneered by CREAX, provides a systematic problem-solving methodology for generating multiple ideas in a very short span of time and then looking at these ideas to create new(er) products and services. In this regard, we operate in a different space altogether. However, there are multiple synergistic opportunities to be exploited by combining TRIZ with these methodologies. In fact, CREAX is already working on integrating TRIZ and six-sigma as an end-to-end methodology. Genetic Algorithms (GA) and other soft-computing techniques can also be combined with TRIZ as part of evolving ideas. TRIZ can help in generating multiple ideas, which can be coded as bit strings as per the GA methodology and various operators—crossover, mutation etc., can work on these population of ideas to create better (in terms of defined fitness function) ideas through the process of GA. However, these are research areas where CREAX is actively involved.

**☞ Since you are in the business of selling “idea generation”. How do you plan to sell this completely new idea and concept? How has the response been from the market?**

CREAX commits itself to deliver tangible benefit. Ideas are just at the beginning of the innovation process. Systematic Innovation Methodology starts with idea generation and ends at practical ideas and solutions, possibly in the form of a strong “future-proof” patent. So we are really looking at end-to-end and not only at the idea generation part. The end-to-end systematic innovation process is really our strength. It is surprising that besides our workshops, seminars etc., we have not done any specific selling. It has been the pull from the market, as more and more companies show great interest in Systematic Innovation. Our clients have come to us with difficult problems and we have been able to satisfy them with SIM. Because of this, the value of CREAX services has spread by client references. Market response has been tremendous. In fact in a short span of three years, CREAX has become a worldwide reference in the Systematic Innovation space.

**☞ In today’s economy, the marketing of innovative technologies is of critical importance. Innovations succeed or fail in the marketplace based not just on the soundness of the technology, but also on a company’s skills at bringing that technology to market and getting it adopted by customers. What strategy you have adopted to counter this risk?**

The market is the final frontier for any innovation. Innovation talks about an idea transformed into a service or product that is valuable for the user. In the SIM trend analysis, we also look at the market trends. Hence market possibilities are part of SIM anyway. Still there are many stochastic factors that define the value of innovation in the marketplace. The strategy to counter these fluctuations lie in taking into account the market forces or the need at the idea generation phase itself. SIM exactly does that.

**☞ What have been your major achievements so far? Who are your major clients? What sort of solution you have offered them?**

In a short span of three years CREAX has become a worldwide reference on TRIZ and pioneered the SIM methodology.

CREAX is becoming a worldwide global organization leveraging strengths from all parts of the world in serving our clients in the Innovation space. In fact, we are just starting the

exponential growth curve. We serve major players in multiple industries offering them innovation solutions, patent-based research services, patent portfolio analysis and other related services. With most of our clients, we establish a long-term cooperation. We look forward to longer, stronger and strategic relationships with our clients, rather than one of solution provisioning. In fact, we are forging closer and stronger ties with major players in diverse industries.

**☞ What are the industries that you are focusing on? Specifically, what is your plan for the Indian market?**

A major unique selling proposition of the CREAX Systematic Innovation Methodology is the fact it offers a helicopter view on technology. As a consequence, SIM is applicable in all sectors and domains. Rather than focusing on specific industries, CREAX focuses on companies with strong and determined strategies, realizing the growing importance of innovation in an increasing globalize world.

CREAX recently started offering its services from its Bangalore office to Indian and India-based companies and organizations, as the Indian market offers huge opportunities. It is CREAX's goal to establish long-term relationships these companies in India.

**☞ Who are your major competitors? How does your product/service differ from companies like Ideation?**

We have two kinds of competitors: General innovation consultants and other TRIZ-based companies.


We differ from the first category offering a systematic approach of innovation, creativity and problem-solving. A second major advantage is the helicopter view on technology CREAX offers, applying its cross-industry methodology.

As for the TRIZ-based companies, the other major players in the market are the US-based Invention Machine and Ideation. CREAX, however, is the only organization having updated the original TRIZ methodology. The commercial strategy of CREAX is completely different, not only offering TRIZ-tools and -software, but also applying the methodology in close cooperation with its clients.

**☞ Where do you see yourself (CREAX) in the next 4-5 years down the line?**

An important target is to develop even further the methodology by integrating other domains, for example biology. The methodology will find its way to education, not only business schools and universities, but also technical schools, high schools, etc.

In the near future, CREAX wants to extend its reputation as global reference in systematic innovation and creativity. We will achieve this by extending our worldwide presence through strategic partnerships and long-term partnerships with our clients.

In the near future, innovation and creativity will become even more important than it already is. Knowing this, along with the growing trend of outsourcing innovation, we strongly believe in a great future for CREAX, its employees and partners. 

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*The interview was conducted by Rajesh Kumar Singh, Assistant Consulting Editor, Global CEO, ICFAI Press and Surya Kumar Pala, Faculty, ICFAI Knowledge Center.*