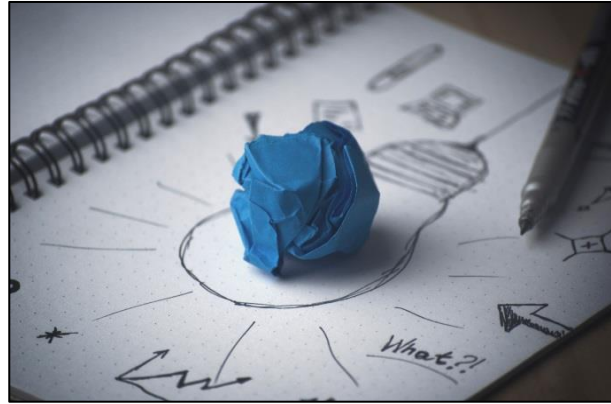


Innovation is Motivation – *How two innovative athletic trainers are turning heads and taking the profession to new heights.*

By Scott Mullett, M.A., AT, CEFE

We think of innovation as a new technology, a light bulb, Henry Ford, or specifically, new surgical techniques which have improved medicine. Every profession has its innovative revolution. As industries grow and change, key thinkers go against the grain, challenge the status quo, and encourage others to embrace thinking outside the box to create a movement.



Athletic training is no different. Throughout the more than six official decades of existence, many innovators have changed the perception of the profession and worked countless hours making the profession what it is today. But how does one find the motivation to innovate? What is innovation in athletic training? What does it look like? How does it happen?

If you look up innovation, you will come across more than 40 different meanings. In the scheme of what we create, innovation will have many different meanings. As the profession of athletic training continues to progress, many new waves of ideas, practices, and thinking are evolving daily. For instance, look at how the professional aspects of our education have changed. Masters entry level positions and evidence-based practice are now the primary methods of developing further.

These changes would not have been possible without the collective forward-thinking movement of amazing athletic trainers. These individuals identified a need and made strides to accomplish this goal and implement it into everyday practice. As great and innovative as these practices are for the profession, a reality presents itself. These examples were considered and implemented by other allies within the healthcare field many years before. So, initially, these innovative practices were following the lead of others.

Innovation can be specific to what one is focused upon, and generally it's ideal to be leaders, and cause change which others will want to follow, to take risks and not be afraid to fail. Innovation is the method and action of creating excitement and enhancing what's been in front of us the whole time, but most importantly, innovation is being a step ahead.

To explore further, it's important to look at current innovators: This brings us to David Gallegos and Adam Halpern, the founders of Innovate AT. These two have developed

something truly special by creating a movement of forward-thinking athletic trainers who are engaging in dialog to make amazing changes.

To innovate AT, David and Adam feel that we need to analyze as much as possible, then think of ideas from there while building on our current structure of thought and respecting that past by establishing a means to develop the future. These thoughts are profound in their own sense. Innovation is all around us, but creating a different dialog, taking a risk by asking questions, and exploring new possibilities that have been established by the past, offers a new insight to innovate AT.

“Understanding what’s going on around you and make small changes”

– David Gallegos

With any innovative revolution, a movement is created, and with this movement, trends are established. Adam Halpern discussed, that with Innovate AT, “We’re seeing individuals engaging in forward thinking dialog who are 5 - 20 years post AT education. There is a ground swell of individuals who are asking what else is out there? These professionals may feel ostracized by the area in which they practice, and Innovate AT provides that voice to feel welcomed, that no one will judge them based on their ideas or discussion, and that no negativity is present.”

A driving force is necessary to propel ideas forward. Most often, all it takes is a spark of motivation to get started. From their perspective, innovate AT was created based on good mentoring, personality, passed failures while building upon success, and a single question: how to define AT value. David Gallegos is running with that and pursuing a second master’s degree which focuses on population health, economics, and the value of healthcare. David and Adam have structured Innovate AT to challenge professionals regarding their ideologies as athletic trainers, and promote education as motivation to ascend.

As with any profession, there are improvements that can be made. Prompting this discussion, Adam had an interesting outlook:

“We’re a unique industry and we try to be too tied down to a particular setting, not skill set. We need to utilize our skill set with the general public, not only athletic populations.”

– Adam Halpern

So, where does Innovate AT go from here? At this point, sky’s the limit, but as Innovate AT evolves, more tools and resources will be available to assist an athletic trainer to

grow as a professional. In the short-term, the goal is to identify what we have as a group and demonstrate what we share with each other, David Gallegos said.

This highlights efficient professionals performing great things within the athletic training profession. David and Adam teach us that there is much more out there, and that we shouldn't settle for one role. Great accomplishments can and will be achieved in the near future. We control our own destiny and Innovate AT is the perfect platform to initiate these changes.

Join the movement: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/innovateat/>



DAVID GALLEGOS, MA, ATC, CERT. MDT, PES

Mr. Gallegos is the Deputy CEO for Southwest Sport & Spine Center, Inc. and NATA's incoming district 7 director. David is 1 of 6 Athletic Trainers credentialed in Mechanical Diagnosis & Therapy (MDT) in the world and the only American Physical Therapy Association Certified Private Practice Administrator with an Athletic Training background in the country. David specializes in sports medicine, orthopedics, and the McKenzie Method. He is active in state, regional, and national level Sports Medicine & Athletic Training Associations.



ADAM HALPERN, MA, ATC, CSCS

Mr. Halpern is passionate about preventative health care. As an experienced brand builder, he has created and scaled innovative high-end, niche concepts in the athletics and rehabilitation markets. He maintains a positive track record of building visibility, recognition, and positive market presence for diverse products, services, and programs. Mr. Halpern is a professional presenter with 15+ years on related topics and concepts while gaining regional exposure across fitness, athletic and health industries and qualified professionals. His professional career ranges from Stanford University, US Ski Team, Kinesio, Dental Cooperative and currently Kosh Solutions which focuses on the importance of technology within healthcare.