Behaviors That Lead to Disruptive Innovation

By Rick Denley   November 13, 2025

Disruptive innovation doesn't start with a breakthrough product—it starts with a mindset. Whether you're designing products or improving client services, certain behaviors can help you lead and create real change. Here's what successful leaders are practicing:

1. Champion Customer-Centric Thinking

Encourage your team to deeply understand and empathize with customers. Leaders can:

- Organize regular sessions where employees interact directly with customers or observe their experiences.

- Challenge teams to use customer language and test ideas in real-world environments.

- Make customer experience the guiding principle for decision-making. This ensures innovation is always relevant and impactful.

2. Cultivate Curiosity and Collaborative Problem-Solving

Create a culture where questioning the status quo is valued and diverse perspectives are sought. Leaders can:

- Reward curiosity by celebrating employees who ask "why" and dig deeper into problems.

- Facilitate cross-functional brainstorming sessions to intentionally mix ideas from different fields.

- Encourage research and exploration beyond immediate responsibilities. This approach sparks new insights and drives breakthrough thinking.

3. Normalize Experimentation and Resilience

Empower teams to try, learn, and iterate without fear of failure. Leaders can:

- Set expectations that not every attempt needs to succeed; every experiment is a learning opportunity.

- Share stories of setbacks and persistence, showing that rejection is part of the journey.

- Provide resources and psychological safety for ongoing experimentation and adaptation. This builds a resilient mindset and accelerates the path to successful innovation.

Cheers for now,

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