

Mini-Guide to Innovation in the Workplace



Innovation has become such a hot topic that its true meaning is lost. As a term, it is often misused. As an activity, it is misunderstood. It's used as a buzzword for exploiting the latest technology or making meteoric radical transformation in the market, invoking thoughts of becoming the next Uber or AirBnB.

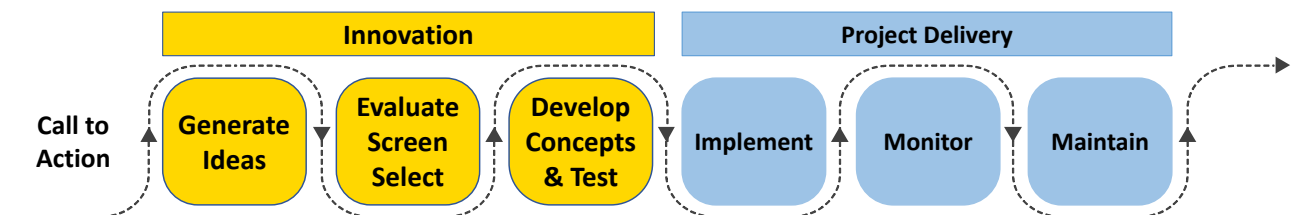
But in reality, Innovation is a lot more down to Earth... and the benefits are much more realistic!

What is Innovation in Business?



A workforce with a culture of innovation helps you address business challenges in an original way, creating a process & stimulus to capture and introduce new ideas into your products, services, processes and the way you approach your market and customers.

It focuses on solving real problems, meeting customer needs and outperforming competitors to drive growth and profitability. Often associated with start-ups, workplace innovation can drive a growth-oriented proactive mindset into all companies.



Innovation techniques slot into the front end of a business change process, giving structure to how you scope and review the challenges that are impacting your company now and in the future.

Call to Action – Being alert for signs of challenge by understanding & assessing your industry & market.

Generate Ideas – Using internal & external collaboration to generate ideas to solve challenges.

Evaluate, Screen and Select – Evaluating on feasibility, viability and desirability, as not all ideas are equal.

Develop Concepts and Test – Turning ideas into concepts and ensure they meet their objectives.

and finally **Delivery**, because an innovation is not an innovation until it is brought to life!

Recognising the need

When you need to boost productivity: Innovation can help streamline processes and utilise new/emerging technologies.

When you've got stiff competition: A culture where the whole business gets involved to propel growth and help you surpass competitors by keeping the improvements coming.

When you need greater resilience: Companies experience disruption in various ways, and the more adept your organisation is at managing this disruption, the greater your chances of survival and the greater the chance of seizing unexpected opportunities.



Why go to all this trouble?

- Innovation brings together your workforce, with all their diverse opinions and ideas, to create solutions & assemble a force for improvement.
- It builds a new way of working with employee empowerment and agility
- It makes your workforce feel more invested, giving them the opportunity to grow and develop, be creative and contribute new ideas and see them brought to life.
- It will help you attract and retain the top talent needed for the digital era.

The Benefits

Innovation is a key driver for success and growth in organisations competing in markets defined by rapid change and disruption, helping you:

- Develop new and unique products and services that your customers need, setting you apart from your competitors and staying ahead of market trends.
- Meet customer needs by continually improving your products and services, providing a better customer experience and building stronger customer relationships.
- Encourage and utilise relevant new and emerging technologies in product, service, process and business model innovation.

"Innovation is the unrelenting drive to break the status quo and develop anew where few have dared to go." Steven Jeffes



Mini-Guide to an Innovation Culture

A workforce with a culture of innovation helps you address business challenges in an original way, creating a process & stimulus to capture and introduce new ideas into your products, services, processes and the way you approach your market and customers. But how does it manifest itself in business?

Building an Innovation Culture

For an innovation culture to thrive in your company, it must align with the corporate vision and mission within a supportive framework, encompassing processes, governance, structure, clear objectives, and well-defined individual roles. Essential traits of a successful innovation culture encompass several ways of working.

Openness to New Ideas

In a psychologically safe environment, employees should feel at ease expressing their thoughts and perspectives with their colleagues, free from the fear of criticism or reprimand.



A Collaborative Environment

Innovation cannot happen in isolation - you need diversity of ideas to get breadth into ideation. Develop cross-functional teams, where each member can provide a view of a challenge through a different perspective and collectively develop innovative solutions

Empowerment and Accountability

Employees need the autonomy to make decisions and pursue their ideas, as individuals with personal accountability or as part of a team with joint collective accountability, but within an environment with a governance structure that sets the boundaries whilst maintaining creativity.

Permission to Experiment

The workforce needs to be encouraged to be inquisitive, try new things and test different approaches, seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning & growth.



Respect and Inclusion

Appreciate each other's talents, abilities and views.



Supportive Leadership

Strong, supportive and inclusive leaders who actively promote innovation and provide support for new initiatives and promotion of new thinking through an inclusive environment.

Getting Started – the Three “Must Haves”

There are **Three “Must Haves”** you need to create an environment where innovation activities support the change and transformation initiatives across the organisation. Ensure Employees have the:

1. Ability

- Give individuals greater innovation potential through specific training and knowledge transfer.
- Collaborate internally to bring cross-functional knowledge into the innovation process and collaborate with external parties to see different perspectives and ideas.
- Support capability through tools and frameworks that provide innovation with structure and governance.
- Provide the physical and psychological environment for great idea generation.

2. Opportunity

- Align your innovation strategy with your wider transformation strategy developing an Innovation Portfolio where innovation techniques can be used to solve specific challenges and opportunities
- Build capacity into the working day for employees to get involved in practical innovation in the workplace, involving cross-functional creative teams from the start that support business change activity.

3. Desire

- Encourage employee participation, fostered by enthusiasm and support from all levels of management.
- Be open to employee ideas, encourage sensible risk-taking and motivate through appreciation and incentives.

The components work together to underpin an innovation culture with each influencing the others and only once the conditions for Ability, Opportunity and Desire are established can innovation be truly effective.

In Summary: An innovation culture is one that visibly and honestly values people prepared to think outside the box, to experiment and collaborate with their colleagues - to innovate the products and processes of the company, and hopefully, provide real and tangible benefits to the organisation.