



► Would you recognize the innovation capabilities of your employees?

► How much more profitable could you be if you had all employees working together to support new, creative ideas?

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Innovation

Culture Leverages Innovation Capability®

Innovation Without Risk?

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The Need for Innovation

Innovation is no longer a nice to have, but a necessity for business success. In the old days, about 4 years ago, when you heard about innovation it was about creating a potential competitive advantage. Now, it is about survival.™

Organizations that are not continuously innovating will not thrive. Don't believe me? Yale professor Richard Foster said, "75% of the companies on the S&P 500 won't exist by 2020." Thomas Friedman, the NY columnist said, "7 years ago Facebook didn't exist; twitter was a sound; a cloud was in the sky; 4G was a parking space; being linked-in involved a prison; applications were something you sent to colleges, Big Data was a rap star; and Skype was a typo." And, I must point out, the speed of change is only increasing.

The big challenge for companies today is that they need not just AN innovative approach, but to build their organization to sustain a pipeline of new and unique ideas. It is too difficult for one person, or even one group, to anticipate the changes and be the lone driver of new thinking. It just is not possible anymore – no matter how smart, no matter what your title.

Organizations need an increasing number of people thinking about how to: be more efficient and accurate, anticipate customer needs, leap ahead of your competitors, and generate new markets. You need employees to think differently, be open to accept new ways of doing things and support rapid change. Nothing slows a project down and increases cost (risk) more than a whole lot of resistance. You need your teams to be ready to take advantage of opportunities. Finding the best way to build your organization into an innovation generating machine is important for your long-term success.

Building Innovation Capability from Within

Building an internal innovation machine is not easy and it often involves fundamental changes. Think about what it takes to create a sustainable environment of continuous innovation. You need to build the skills and capabilities of your people so they are able, and equally important, willing to generate new ideas. You also need a culture that will reward new thinking, challenge how things are currently done, take some risks, be open to accept new ideas and approaches, and able to quickly say no to some ideas. For a lot of organizations, that is a daunting amount of change.

The challenge that leaders face is they need to create an innovation culture to survive, but the risk of bringing about that level of change is high. Culture change is messy and typically takes a while, with uncertain business results and potential career impact. Not surprising, there are not many takers.

We asked a series of questions. Is there a way to build a momentum of change that is simple and would help the business get quick results? What would it take for employees to get on board and want to participate? After pondering these issues and trying different solutions, we developed a method to really jump start your organization's innovation potential.

Innovation Microcosms™

The new approach is what we call building Innovation Microcosms™. The key is to start small, with a group of business leaders from across the organization or even a disparate group. The individual leaders are assessed on their innovation approach, and provided a day of training that provides feedback and awareness, adds tools to build their skills, and enhances their innovation potential. To ensure the learning is practical and provides an immediate return on investment, the team tackles a business problem the organization is currently facing.

Innovation Without Risk?



Our experience shows that Innovation Microcosms™ create win/win/win scenarios. Employees learn new skills that enhance innovation capabilities and open up an attitude more receptive to change (win). They are more engaged since they help solve complex problems for the organization (win). The organization gets immediate, new thinking on how to solve a real issue (win). The culture starts to change because the language, tools and connections help create a new, effective and innovative business environment (win). Okay, so that is four wins!

The training investment is a mere day which makes it convenient, powerful and realistic. As more teams show success, the momentum builds exponentially. The individuals and teams become champions of change. Frankly, the teams we have worked with got WOW results.

So what is the process for building an Innovation Microcosm™ and culture of change in your organization?

What you need to do:

- Select a few leaders who take a validated assessment regarding their innovation style
- Outline a meaningful problem or opportunity the team can work through
- Provide a day for the team to train on innovation capabilities and tackle the problem or opportunity
- Demonstrate a willingness to be open to the suggestions or ideas generated by the team

What you get:

- Leaders who become aware of the different innovation styles and their strengths
- Increased skill development and new ways (tools) to solve complex business problems
- Increased engagement and participation
- A team that is more open to new thinking and can become your champion for constructive cultural change
- New ideas on addressing a problem or opportunity important to your business

Innovation Microcosms™ are successful because they are fast, concentrated and results oriented. They significantly lower the risk, time and capital investment required to build innovation capability.

Summary

As a leader you are responsible for ensuring the long-term growth of your business. As an employee, you need to think about how to remain relevant and value-added in the future. To achieve those goals and thrive, you need to continuously develop your individual and team innovation capabilities. Equally important, you need to ensure that the culture supports the new, innovative thinking. Instead of a messy, complex project with uncertain results, Innovation Microcosms™ provide a proven methodology with quick results.

Let's see, there is minimal risk with huge upside potential. Now that sounds doable and a career maker. Take some of the risk out of driving innovation and change. Start small, win big.

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