



COMPANIES DON'T INNOVATE...

A photograph of three business professionals in a meeting. A man in a suit is in the center, looking thoughtful. To his left, another man is partially visible. To his right, a woman with curly hair is looking towards the center. The background is a whiteboard with red markings. A semi-transparent purple overlay covers the bottom half of the image.

...PEOPLE DO!

Eleven keys to unlock innovation
success in large and complex
organisations



Lead

It starts with the top. Strong leadership and a clear vision supported by great values unlock the paradox of value today versus value tomorrow.

In the battle of today versus tomorrow – today will always win – unless there is an element of tomorrow built into business plans and objectives.

Invest

There must be a clearly defined and protected budget for innovation to cover all aspects – training, communications, time to think, events, research, testing

Remember it's people first

It's all about the people. For innovation to thrive it is essential to get your culture right, ensuring that positive behaviours support new thinking. There must be psychological safety. Leaders must be multipliers of possibilities not diminishers.

Be aware that there is a proven unconscious bias against change and specifically against those change makers who may be mavericks and disruptors – you need them but how can you make them assets in your organisation?

Give time, permission, training and support

People need to be given the permission and the time to think. They should be given training, coaching and mentoring to enable them to understand how they think and give them the tools to think in new and different ways.

Be specific

When you ask people to think and be creative you must ensure that it is focused – David Ogilvy said, "Give me the freedom of a tight brief".

Another intriguing paradox – creativity thrives on restriction. An innovation programme should be shaped around a series of specific and well iterated challenges.

Open the doors

The best way to have good ideas is to have lots of ideas. When you generate lots of ideas there are more possibilities to harvest from. Ideas are what we shape into the innovations we require for the future. The best way to multiply the possibilities is to openly share your challenges with your supply chain, academia, government, all of your people and all manner of unusual suspects too!

With the internet the world's innovation landscape has changed and the 'invent it yourself' model is dead. Open innovation is the new way to ensure success.

Be consistent

Innovation should be always on and forever – it is not an initiative and it does not belong to one business unit. It is the way you do things.

Do not have a push for innovation and then stop. With Stop/Start you will get initiative fatigue and people will not want to participate in the future.

Have aspirational goals

Innovation can be slippery – it is important to have aspirational objectives, but they must also be measurable. Be bold and audacious.

Don't let the tail wag the dog

Don't restrict innovation to unrealistic time periods driven by annual budgets. If you are part way through a financial year and you need to invest in an emerging innovation, ensure the business can continue to support it over a realistic time frame.

Fail fast – Fail safely

Ensure everyone knows how to select the best ideas and reject the worst. Failure is important, but it is important to fail safely and fast.

Have fun

When people are enjoying themselves, they are more likely to create more opportunities and consider a wider range of possibilities. How can you enable your people to have fun?

