ENCOURAGING INNOVATION
Through 5 Key Conversations

SELF-ASSESSMENT

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Through 5 Key Conversations

AN EXCERPT FROM THE
FACILITATOR GUIDE

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HRDQ

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TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

During our 20 years of working in profit and nonprofit, small and large organizations, we began to notice that some workplaces seemed to sprout many ideas, patents, and new products, whereas others had less of a sense of how to reinvent and renew themselves over time. We were curious about what makes "strong cultures" (Jelinek & Bird Schoonhoven, 1993, p. 367) successful in creating high performance amidst massive change.

We found that innovation must be embedded in the values, structures, and systems of a company. But we also believe that these things are consciously or unconsciously communicated by leaders to their employees in their day-to-day actions. We reviewed the recent literature on creativity and innovation and discovered that it fell into two basic areas: advice on what the individual can do to become more creative and how organizations can build an innovative culture that maximizes success in times of rapid change and chaos. The backdrop of globalization, technological advances, and rapid change appeared to be an undeniable trigger for new ways of thinking and working. We saw an opportunity to link the development of individual creativity with the larger system needs for sustained growth. We developed a model that synthesizes both concepts by describing the role of a leader in fostering innovation through key conversations with employees. These conversations should serve to inspire employees, build systems and opportunities, and teach team members how to advocate for and implement new ideas, products, or services. Our model proposes that the manager or team leader represents the culture of the company and communicates the value of innovation. He or she is able to "meet employees at the intersection where chaos can be reduced to something manageable, complexity can be simplified, goals can be adjusted in real time, and the [creative] contribution of the individual can be maximized" (The Price Waterhouse Change Integration Team, 1996, p. xiv).

Our model went through several revisions as we refined the content and scope of the conversations. When we were comfortable with the description of the dimensions we developed ten items for each dimension. The 50-item assessment, which included interpretive information and action planning, was reviewed by innovation experts in the field. Their comments allowed us to weed out items that were either too specific or did not measure the conversation as well as other items. The final assessment contains 30 items. Normative data currently are being collected and will be made available in future printings of the Facilitator Guide.

About **HRDQ**

HRDQ is a trusted developer of soft-skills learning solutions that help to improve the performance of individuals, teams, and organizations. We offer a wide range of resources and services, from ready-to-train assessments and hands-on games, to facilitator certification, custom development, and more. Our primary audience includes corporate trainers, human resource professionals, educational institutions, and independent consultants who look to us for research-based solutions to develop key skills such as leadership, communication, coaching, and team building.

At HRDQ, we believe an experiential approach is the best catalyst for adult learning. Our unique Experiential Learning Model has been the core of what we do for more than 30 years. Combining the best of organizational learning theory and proven facilitation methods with an appreciation for adult learning styles, our philosophy initiates and inspires lasting change.

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