

Ideas into Action: From Creativity to Innovation

Preview

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Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you'll be able to:

- Recognize common myths and misconceptions about innovation.
- Use multiple intelligences to generate a variety of ideas.
- Apply the characteristics of creative people to any problem or issue.
- Follow a four-step process for team innovation.
- Promote innovation without regulating it.
- Use cross-functional teams to foster innovation.
- Spot sacred cows in your organization.

Ideas into Action

Chapter One: Myths and Misconceptions

What Is Innovation?

Innovation is any idea that improves the cost/benefit ratio, either by increasing benefits or decreasing costs. At its essence, the goal of innovation is to make something better.

Increase benefits

- Effectiveness
- Speed
- Pleasure or fun
- “Coolness”
- Safety
- Health

Reduce costs

- Money
- Effort
- Complexity
- Skill level
- Risk
- Inconvenience
- Boredom
- Pollution



What Is Innovation? (cont.)

Innovation can be applied to any aspect of running an organization—its products or services, internal processes, individual tasks, etc. A good place to begin looking is wherever you hear people saying, “If only...” Whatever that “if only” is, it could probably benefit from innovation.



“Creativity is not the finding of a thing, but the making of something out of it after it is found.”

James Russell Lowell

Myths and Misconceptions

Increasing benefits or decreasing costs seems like a pretty simple proposition. So why does innovation seem irrelevant or impossible to many people? We'll look at some common myths that contribute to that mindset.

Myth: Only creative people can be innovative

- Some people are naturally creative and full of ideas, and it is important to recognize them and tap into their ideas. However, one person is rarely single-handedly responsible for fostering all the innovation in any organization.
- Everyone can be creative and have good ideas. What does it take? Motivation, practice, access to a variety of knowledge resources and perspectives, and the ability to express ideas.



Myths and Misconceptions (cont.)

Myth: The “revolutionary” idea is the only way to be innovative

Many small, continual baby steps can take an organization farther than one rare, giant step.



- Revolutionary ideas can have a huge impact on an organization or entire industry; however, they are hugely disruptive and usually take years to reach their full potential.
- Small changes, pilot projects and new networks of collaboration help ensure the long-term success of an organization as much as a revolutionary idea.



Myths and Misconceptions (cont.)

Myth: People like innovative ideas

Truth: People don't like change, especially if they feel it has been forced on them. Change involves risk and the unknown, and some people are especially resistant to both.



Typical criticisms:

- “This will never work.”
- “It’s working just the way it is.”
- “What’s the point?”

What’s behind the criticism?

- Fear: “I’m afraid of change.”
- Envy: “I’m jealous I didn’t think of it myself.”
- Laziness: “I don’t want to learn something new.”

Myths and Misconceptions (cont.)

Myth: If an idea is good, it will stand on its own merits

“Don’t worry about people stealing your ideas. If your ideas are any good, you’ll have to ram them down people’s throats.”

Howard H. Aiken, inventor

- Many people feel that once they have thought of a good idea, the hard work is done. Or, if the idea is worthwhile, it will sell itself and everybody will recognize its value.
- Unfortunately, thinking of a good idea doesn’t guarantee that it will be accepted and implemented. It can take a great deal of time and persistence to sell an idea.

