

Innovation Climate Questionnaire

What do we mean by "innovation"? Innovation is both the creating and bringing into profitable use of new technologies, new products, new services, new marketing ideas, new systems, and new ways of operating. Implementation is generally the bottleneck that limits the rate of innovation.

This survey consists of both multiple-choice questions and a place at the end to provide text responses.

1. Transmission of vision and strategic intent

Employees are more effectively empowered if they are given a clear vision of the future and where the company is trying to go. The need for innovation is then apparent to them, and they know how to direct their efforts.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ Our organizational vision and strategies are clear to me.
- ☐ The vision and strategies would work if applied, but management decisions don't fit with them.
- ☐ The vision and strategies often help me in setting priorities.
- ☐ Strategies are changed so often that no one at my level pays much attention to them.
- ☐ Our organization's announced visions and strategies inspire me.
- ☐ Little effort has been made to clarify what the vision and strategy mean to us in this area.
- ☐ My boss has created a reasonably clear vision and strategy for our area.

2. Tolerance of risk, mistakes, and failure

Both innovation and organizational learning require trying new things, seeing what happens, and learning from the experience. When those trying new ideas are punished for "mistakes," two things go wrong: (1) people stop experimenting, and (2) mistakes are covered up, so no organizational learning results.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ Honest and original mistakes are recognized as an indication of initiative and courage.
- ☐ Even minor mistakes are punished.
- ☐ Good management of projects involving risk and unpredictability is highly valued, even when things don't turn out according to plan.
- ☐ New ventures are held to the same standards of predictability as well-established businesses.
- ☐ Experiments are OK in the lab, but not in the marketplace.
- ☐ People who make mistakes are encouraged to share them widely so that others can learn.

3. Support for intrapreneurs

Intrapreneurs are employees who behave like entrepreneurs on behalf of the company. They are persistent visionaries who act courageously to turn ideas into profitable realities. They become the hands-on leaders of specific innovations within an organization. Intrapreneurs are an essential ingredient in every successful innovation process.

In your experience, how does your organization respond to intrapreneurs?

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ Effective intrapreneurs are generally rewarded.
- ☐ We so frustrate people who have the intrapreneurial spirit that most of them leave within their first five years.
- ☐ Many of our general managers, business unit managers, and directors have a prior history of intrapreneurial success.
- ☐ Even after success, the first conspicuous failure is a career-limiting event.
- ☐ I can think of a number of intrapreneurs who have survived and prospered at our organization.
- ☐ Even when the business results are good, the bold behaviors that lead to intrapreneurial success are punished.

4. Managers who sponsor innovation

Sponsors are people with power or influence who support, coach, protect, and find resources for an intrapreneurial project and its team.

What percentage of your organization's managers have the skills, power, commitment, and courage to be effective sponsors of intrapreneurial initiatives?

- ☐ 0-5%
- ☐ 6-15%
- ☐ 16-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ 51-75%
- ☐ 76-100%

5. Empowered cross-functional teams

Innovative organizations create cross-disciplinary project teams to implement innovation, and they empower them to make decisions. For example, a new product team might-at a minimum-include people from marketing, engineering, and manufacturing.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ Project teams in our organization have considerable freedom to make decisions and act on them without needing to ask for permission.
- ☐ Cross-functional team members come as "ambassadors" from their functional organizations-they negotiate with teammates, but functional bosses who are not part of the team generally make the real decisions.
- ☐ Project teams have considerable choice in recruiting and selecting new team members.
- ☐ We have some effective teams, but most so-called "teams" are really a bunch of individuals with rather different visions of where the project is going.
- ☐ We are using cross-functional teams well.
- ☐ We use teams effectively within functions, but we don't have many effective cross-functional teams or cross-business-unit teams.
- ☐ We rarely use teams effectively; bosses assign work to individuals, not to teams.

6. Decision making by the doers

Some organizations push most decisions up to a level way above the doers. Such organizations are not good at implementing innovation.

What percentage of your time is spent getting or waiting for permission to act rather than taking action or gathering information so that you and your team can make your own decisions?

- ☐ 0-10%
- ☐ 11-25%
- ☐ 26-40%
- ☐ 41-65%
- ☐ 66-85%
- ☐ 86-100%

7. Discretionary time

New ideas and hunches require exploration before their value can be demonstrated to others. Innovative organizations give people the freedom to use some of their time to explore new ideas and hunches without having to ask permission.

What percentage of your time at work can you safely divert from your assigned tasks to explore new ideas you believe have promise?

- ☐ 0-2%
- ☐ 3-5%
- ☐ 6-10%
- ☐ 11-20%
- ☐ 21-40%
- ☐ 41-100%

8. Attention on the future

What an organization becomes depends in part on how far ahead it looks. Innovation is more likely to occur when people are thinking well into the future.

In talking with me, my boss's attention rarely extends beyond

- ☐ The next day
- ☐ The next week
- ☐ The next month
- ☐ The next year
- ☐ The next five years
- ☐ The next twenty-five years

9. Self selection

Intrapreneurs appoint themselves to their role and then seek the corporation's blessing for their task. Intrapreneurial team members are recruited rather than told to join the team. Despite this, some corporations still appoint people to carry out innovations.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ Most people leading innovation projects are appointed without much concern for whether they are passionate about the idea.
- ☐ Most people leading innovation projects are self-selected intrapreneurs.
- ☐ Individuals have considerable influence on the selection of the teams and projects on which they serve.
- ☐ Team members are recruited by the team leader and may choose whether to join.
- ☐ Team members are appointed on the basis of availability, not interest, compatibility, or passion for the idea.
- ☐ It is often very difficult to get permission to leave one's current assignment to join an intrapreneurial team.
- ☐ If someone wants to join an intrapreneurial team and the team wants him or her, he or she is generally allowed to do so.

10. No hand-offs

The knowledge generated by an intrapreneurial project is stored in its people. Despite this, when an intrapreneurial project becomes successful, corporations often take it from those who created that success and give it to "professional managers." In general, each early-stage hand-off has a 90 percent chance of killing the project.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ Our development process includes a series of planned hand-offs from stage to stage.
- ☐ In theory, we honor the right of intrapreneurs to manage the projects they have created, but in practice, once they succeed, other managers generally take over.
- ☐ Intrapreneurial leaders and at least half the core team frequently stay with the project from near the beginning to full implementation.
- ☐ Intrapreneurs and key team members are frequently transferred to other assignments.
- ☐ We get good team continuity up through the launch of a new product, but around that time, the team often moves on and new people take over.
- ☐ People come and go in development teams, but there is always a good overlap of project old-timers who maintain memory of the team's past learning.

11. Boundary crossing

New ideas generally don't fit the existing organizational pattern. Therefore innovators have to cross boundaries to get help and support. But bureaucratic managers often say no to people from outside their area, just to demonstrate that they are in control.

What percentage of your time and resources is spent helping people outside your area in ways that are not part of your assigned responsibilities?

- ☐ 0-2%
- ☐ 3-7%
- ☐ 8-15%
- ☐ 16-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ 51-100%

12. Strong organizational community

In companies with a strong organizational community, people take care of each other and help each other out. They think in terms of the good of the whole rather than just the agenda of their area. Organizational community provides a base of support for innovators and a force to direct freedom toward worthwhile ends.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ People feel a strong desire to make contributions to this company and to the people in it.
- ☐ People are very cynical about the company as a whole and are guided by selfish concerns, including concerns for their immediate area.
- ☐ Many of us are proud to be part of this company.
- ☐ I feel a sense of community with my unit or function, but not with the company as a whole.
- ☐ I don't trust this company or the people in it to support me in times of trouble.
- ☐ When I ask for help in some other part of the company, people there generally say they're too busy.
- ☐ There are people in the company who always lend a hand, and we honor them regardless of their rank.
- ☐ People here feel a strong sense of membership and mutual support.

13. Focus on customers

Refocusing on how to better serve customers drives organizations toward productive innovation. Focus on internal politics tends toward conservatism, mistargeted megaprojects, and failure to exploit genuinely superior technology.

When decisions are made in your organization, what percentage of the criteria (implicit or explicit) relates to understanding and better meeting customers' or users' needs, as opposed to satisfying internal politics and defending turf?

- ☐ 0-5%
- ☐ 6-20%
- ☐ 21-35%
- ☐ 36-65%
- ☐ 66-85%
- ☐ 86-100%

14. Choice of internal suppliers

When an intrapreneur faces many internal monopolies for essential services and permissions, the chances are that any truly novel project will be stopped. The most innovative companies provide more than one place to go for most things, so intrapreneurs can "wire around" people who are blocking them.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ There are many internal monopolies in our company; this causes complacency and forces us to use internal service providers that are not up to the highest standards.
- ☐ Teams often have a choice among several internal suppliers of services such as IS, training, sales, manufacturing, and software engineering.
- ☐ If we can't get "what we need when we need it" from inside suppliers, we are generally able to go outside to get it.
- ☐ Choice exists in the informal systems of our organization, but the formal systems are biased toward internal monopolies.
- ☐ A team with a new product or service will be told what sales force to use, even if the assigned salespeople are not really interested in selling the new offering.

15. Measurement of innovation

Innovation is frequently discouraged by the way performance is measured. The most innovative organizations develop measurements that encourage innovation.

In what areas do the current measurement systems of your organization do more to encourage than to discourage innovation?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Incremental innovation.
- ☐ Breakthrough innovation.
- ☐ Process innovation.
- ☐ Product innovation.
- ☐ Marketing and sales innovation.
- ☐ Support group innovation.
- ☐ Technical invention.

16. Transparency and truth

Information is useful to an organization only if the people doing the work and making the decisions have it. In the most innovative organizations, information flows freely, both horizontally and vertically.

Check the statements that are more true than false in your organization:

- ☐ People here tell the truth, even if it is painful or not what someone wants to hear.
- ☐ The truth is hidden; people say what bosses want to hear.
- ☐ We hit a good balance between truthfulness and tact.
- ☐ Information is closely guarded as a political resource.
- ☐ We share information about customers freely across organizational boundaries.
- ☐ We share information about technology freely across the boundaries of the organization.
- ☐ Fear of leaks to competitors keeps us from sharing information with others in the company who might need it.
- ☐ At least once a month, we get detailed financial reports on our business.

17. Good treatment of people

Companies that treat employees well gain a competitive advantage: employees are more loyal, and they have a greater sense of safety, which gives them the courage to innovate. When you observe managers of this organization making decisions, what do you see?

Check the items that are more rather than less characteristic of your organization:

- ☐ A tendency to see all people as people, not as cogs in the machine?
- ☐ Indifference to the effect of decisions on people's lives?
- ☐ Willingness to take a short-term earnings hit to protect employees' jobs?
- ☐ Concern for people as long as there is little cost attached?
- ☐ Genuine concern for employees, backed up by supportive actions?
- ☐ Rewards for brutality and intimidation?
- ☐ Real respect for others, even when they are of lower status in the organization?