

## Three themes for improving corporate innovativeness

Understand the current situation. Start by knowing where you are.



**Check list for testing your corporation's current culture for innovation! If these things are taking place:**

- ✓ your company **does not have a tradition of innovation** (F#22<sup>1</sup>) i.e. the founders were not innovators, customers do not see the company as innovative, or there are no initiatives and the company follows 'the industry leader',
- ✓ **innovation** in your company **seems to be going downhill** rather than improving (F#24),
- ✓ **innovators are leaving** the company (F#21),
- ✓ there is a **scarcity of career opportunities for innovators** in the company and little recognition of the their work (F#7),

**you probably should think about why this is happening.**

**Maybe the problem can be traced to:**

- 1. leadership,**
- 2. organization and management of day-to-day affairs, or**
- 3. the approach to generating and realizing ideas.**

**Use the Worksheet to isolate the issues.**

The following worksheet sets out a number of Factors, grouped under the topics noted above, and provides a column for identifying whether the statement describes a problem, or not, in your opinion. Note these are all negative statements – the opposite infers a culture which is supportive of innovation.

Does this help identify whether the problems lies with leadership, with organization and managing day-to-day affairs, or in the treatment of idea generation and realization, or all of the above?

**For ideas which might help to address the problem, or if you wish to 'profile' the pluses and minuses of your culture for innovation, please go to: <http://www.corporateinnovationonline.com>.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Reference; [www.corporateinnovationonline.com](http://www.corporateinnovationonline.com) for details.

<b>Worksheet</b> <i>To help isolate the problem</i>	<b>Factor#<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>No problem</b>
<b>1. Perhaps it's leadership</b>			
Management (and Board) do not explicitly look for innovation. The subject of innovation is not high on the agenda for Board meetings, management meetings, conferences, etc.	2		
Senior management's emphasis is on achieving short-term profit at the expense and priority of long-term goals.	1		
Planning; business/strategic/planning/budgeting all emphasize cost cutting or rationing of resources rather than finding opportunities.	4		
There is little tolerance for risk assumption in the planning process.	9		
<b>2. Maybe it's how the company organizes and manages day-to-day affairs</b>			
Management does not place sufficient emphasis on people, on human resources and people interaction.	6		
There is too high a degree of formal communication in the company.	10		
It is not common to use of independent (groups with authority to make changes) work groups to accomplish projects and special tasks.	11		
Decision making is driven from the top and there is insufficient input from relevant sources in the company.	12		
There is too much staff (as opposed to line) involvement in decision making.	20		
The decision process is highly formal.	13		
The organization is highly centralized with little decentralization.	18		
The organization action is moribund in planning processes and not action oriented.	15		
<b>3. Maybe it's the approach to idea generation and realization</b>			
There is little tolerance for mavericks.	3		
Management has a low tolerance for failure.	5		
There is little tolerance for variances from a defined or undefined corporation norm.	8		
Reward mechanisms for innovators/innovations are lacking.	14		
A sense that resources are unavailable even if attractive ideas/projects are identified.	19		
R&D spending levels are not at the same level as the competition.	23		

<sup>2</sup> For explanation of Factors; go to: <http://www.corporateinnovationonline.com>.