

INNOVATION CHEAT SHEET

Innovation doesn't happen just because you want it to.

You need to create the right environment and culture to help people feel confident and excited to explore individually and together. And you need to support them to develop the tactical skills to do it well.

Here are some ideas to get you going!

1. FOCUS ON DEVELOPING CORE SKILLS FOR INNOVATION

According to Harvard University there are 4 key skills required for innovation:

1. Questioning skills
2. Observing skills
3. Networking skills
4. Experimentation

Consider how you can encourage this in your day to day work.



2. QUESTIONING SKILLS

Ask lots of questions of your team. Encourage them to explore why they do things in a certain way. Help them to deepen their ability to reflect for themselves.



3. OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

Having keen observational skills comes from a sense of curiosity. Developing curiosity is a habit that can be enhanced by encouraging reflection, asking questions of others and challenging them to consider consequences of



4. NETWORKING SKILLS

Even working remotely you can encourage and support new relationships. Split the team into smaller groups and set them a challenge to consider. Bring in people who can support them from other departments to act as their guide. By giving a focus for the activity you are creating more safety than just 'meet someone'



5. EXPERIMENTATION SKILLS

Get your team obsessed about your customers. Explore with them how successful they think you are at giving them what they want and what you could do better. Encourage them to think continual improvement.



6. ENCOURAGE SHARING

Ask team members to share. Set a challenge e.g. book review /podcast or video review and then to share their summary with the rest of the team or digitally with the rest of the organisation.



7. CREATE OPPORTUNITY

Create more time for thinking, incubating and exploring. As far back as 1920 3M set a culture that allowed 15% of employee time to engaging in the opportunity to develop new ideas, why not follow that lesson?



8. BE CONSISTENT

Innovation takes time and practice. The most valuable thing you can do as a leader is to be consistent. Keep developing your team's skills, keep challenging them and reward their efforts. Over time this will pay huge dividends.



9. BE OPEN

Keep communicating, not just telling them things but sharing company information and your take on it, asking them for their views



10. PROVIDE ENERGY

Energy gets the creative juices flowing. It ignites your brain moving it from passive to active. So stand up, move around, use post its/flips, provide objects or photos to stimulate debate - anything and watch the difference it makes.



11. KEEP YOUR TEAM HAPPY

No-one will innovate if they don't want to. Your job is to get results through others so focus your attention on understanding what your team need to keep them engaged and content.



12. SYSTEMATISE

Create a straightforward and transparent system to support collaboration. This ensures people can participate confidently, safe in the knowledge of what's expected.