

INNOVATION (INN)

Innovation indicates an effort to improve performance by doing or promoting new things, such as introducing a previously unknown or untried solution or procedure to the specific area or organization.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acknowledging the ideas of others and incorporating them into performance improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> being overly committed to conventional methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and weighing alternatives to conventional thinking before settling on a solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> going with what has worked in the past without questioning if that approach still makes sense
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> constructively challenging existing processes and procedures on the job and developing original approaches to improve or replace them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> criticizing existing processes or procedures without offering alternative solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> looking at what other ministries or organizations are doing successfully and determining what you could transfer to your organization or to the government sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assuming that if there is not a problem, there is no need for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taking a calculated risk to improve performance by introducing something new and unique to the public sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introducing something new and unique without thinking through the implications and assessing the risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showing foresight, encouraging new ideas and helping others to see new possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaving the job of fostering a creative working environment to chance or to someone else

Developmental Activities

Level 1-2) Activities

Keep an open mind.

- Resist saying “no” to suggestions or ideas from others before you have appraised them fully.
- Chart the pros and cons of the ideas and weigh them.
- Determine if the suggestions are consistent with strategic or operational priorities.
- Ask others how they would implement the suggestion.

Do something dramatically different to improve your creativity.

- Three or four times a year read something that is dramatically different from the material you normally read.

OR

- Participate in an activity that you normally don't do.
- Make a conscious effort to broaden your perspective or thinking.
- Think of ideas, approaches or contacts that might be useful to you or your organization, to help develop business opportunities.

Reflection Tip:

- * Make an effort to incorporate something new into your own approach.

Examine your basic mode of operating.

- Routinely check your assumptions. Work with others in your function or related areas of responsibility to identify the main paradigms and assumptions that are guiding your operations, and to determine if those assumptions are still appropriate and relevant.
- If not, determine a more appropriate set of guiding principles and adjust your strategies and plans as necessary to be consistent with your new assumptions.

Reflection Tip:

- * Ask yourself how long you have been following a particular way of doing things. Is this still the most efficient way? How can you use technology or teamwork to improve your effectiveness?

Seek out creative thinkers.

- Identify people that are considered highly creative within or outside of your organization.
- Arrange a meeting(s) to discuss how they approach issues and identify new ideas. Incorporate some of their ideas into your own work.
- Read about creative thinkers from the past and present, e.g., Einstein, Galileo, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, etc.

Reflection Tip:

- * Look for new creative thinking techniques.

Reflect on your decisions before you implement them.

- Once you make a decision or come up with a solution to a problem, step back and evaluate whether the decision still feels right for you.
- Put the decision aside for a few days and then come back and re-evaluate it. If it does not feel right at that point in time, make a list of the issues or problems with the decision and attempt to come up with a solution that addresses those issues and problems.

Reflection Tip:

- * How consistent is your decision with the conclusions you normally come to?

Avoid the temptation to go with the first solution that comes to mind.

- Work on generating alternative before settling on a solution. Spend some time brainstorming either individually or with a group to generate a number of possible alternatives. Do not worry about the feasibility of the alternatives while you are generating them.
- List the alternatives you or your group has come up with.
- Develop a set of criteria to evaluate the alternatives.
- Assess the alternatives against the criteria and select the best option.

Reflection Tip:

- * What do you notice about your colleagues' approach to brainstorming?

Incorporate new habits into your regular routine to stimulate your creative thinking.

- Whenever you think of or hear a good idea, write it down and save it for future reference. Occasionally review your list or file of ideas and look for opportunities to implement the idea.
- Research relevant books and journals and select an exercise on creative thinking that you can apply to the next problem you encounter.
- Attend conferences and develop a network of people working at the creative edge of your function.
- Identify someone, either in your organization or another organization, who performs a similar function to yours. Offer to meet with them to exchange ideas on how to approach your work.

- If you run out of ideas, take a break and come back and attach the problem later. Choose a time during the day when you won't be distracted.
- Think about how you can incorporate and build on other people's ideas.

Reflection Tip:

- * Is there a particular time of day when you feel more creative?

Level 3-4 Activities

Flow chart a process in the organization.

- Draw a flow chart or diagram of all the steps involved in a business process.
- Identify the individuals or groups involved in each step of the process and make an effort to learn more about all of the individuals or groups involved in the process.
- Examine the process to see if it can be changed or streamlined to be more efficient.
- Present your recommendations to the key stakeholders for feedback and support.
- Develop an action plan for any decisions based on your recommendations.

Reflection Tip:

- * What objections do you anticipate from existing process owners?

Identify innovative approaches for learning and development from other ministries or outside the public sector.

- Look for new advances in learning in other ministries and business sectors, as well as schools, colleges, and universities.
- Review popular games, films, and books and identify ways they could be adapted as a method to enhance learning in others.
- Consider how these approaches could work in your organization's environment.
- Build these ideas into your approaches for working with others.

Look for an opportunity to improve upon a procedure or process in your branch.

- Identify any areas where problems or issues reoccur in your unit.
- Pull together a small task force to assess the problem beyond the surface and determine the root cause(s).

- Generate a set of options to address the problem and improve the procedure or process.
- Balance the attention you give to integrating the big picture and analyzing the detail.
- Consider the cost/benefit, select the best option and develop a plan to pilot the option.

Reflection Tip:

- * Think about how your manager, your direct reports, your customers and other internal individuals or groups would view the issue or problem.

Test a new idea or concept with others that would be unique or different in the marketplace.

- Determine its application within the industry overall by following the steps below:
 - ⇒ Develop a plan for its implementation, even if you believe the idea may not be supported
 - ⇒ Test the plan with people you trust and get their feedback.
 - ⇒ Identify key learning's from the exercise.
 - ⇒ What changes are necessary to your plan to make it viable?
 - ⇒ Assess the feasibility of the plan and determine if there is merit to proceeding further.

Reflection Tip:

- * Get feedback from creative thinkers.

Develop a new concept or transform an idea that would significantly impact the industry.

- Investigate and develop different approaches for developing the concept or idea.
- Develop a business case that supports a change including such things as strategic repositioning and leverage, resource utilization, cost/benefit impact, and so on.
- Examine the pros and cons from the perspective of each stakeholder group (e.g., sales, marketing, senior management, etc.).
- Create a draft implementation plan. Include a transition plan for migration or conversion to the new approach, a communication plan for positioning the project and updates to stakeholder groups.
- Present your ideas and case to the appropriate groups.

Reflection Tip:

- * Think about how you can present your business case and implementation plan in a creative way.

Look at the effectiveness of your team or branch and assess if the current approaches are still the best way to get the job done.

- With your team members or colleagues, review and analyze the operation and processes performed by each functional area. Identify the major operations and goals of each function.
- Examine each operation's current approaches. Ask the following questions:
 - ⇒ How did the current structure develop the way it is?
 - ⇒ Are there any roles and/or functions that no longer serve any purpose?
 - ⇒ What is currently working, and why?
 - ⇒ Where are the bottlenecks, duplication of effort, and potential problems?

Look at your organization relative to the service or people it serves from another perspective.

- Get a sense of how others (peers, stakeholders--internal or external-- and competitors in the private sector, if applicable) see your organization, by asking how they view your operations and deliverables.
- Examine your business objectives, processes, people capabilities and technology in light of the information you gather.
- Share this information and any recommendations you have for changes based upon this information with the appropriate group(s).
- Incorporate any feedback and develop an action plan based on decisions made.

Reflection Tip:

- * What perceptions were you surprised by?

Know your competition in the private sector, if applicable.

- Gather and summarize information about your major competitors.
- Examine their strategies and tactics and develop counter tactics if appropriate.
- Present this information to the appropriate group, along with your recommendations for what, if anything should be done as a result of examining this information.
- Set up a "think tank" on how to position your services vis-a-vis any competitors.

Reflection Tip:

- * Challenge your assumptions about what is and is not appropriate in the public sector.

Level 5 Activities

Try this approach to encourage creative thinkers.

- Write down a clear statement of a problem or situation you are trying to resolve.
- Describe what the ideal solution would look like. Identify the three or four key elements that define your ideal solution.
- Put your problem aside. Think about a topic completely outside your current situation (e.g., sports, politics, ancient history, travel).
- Identify something in the topic area that has similar key elements of your ideal solution. Make a list of its characteristics.
- Return to your original problem. Does the exercise provide you with additional insights to come up with a more innovative solution?

Reflection Tip:

- * What factors encouraged creativity? What inhibited it?

Share your vision for innovation.

- Express your thoughts about the future innovations and possibilities for productive change in the company to individuals who would typically resist change.
- Understand their apprehension(s).
- Take time to ask questions that make people see things differently.
- Select someone you want as a supporter on an upcoming event.
- Express a significant business idea in a way that allows others to own it.

Reflection Tip:

- * Consider what people stand to gain or lose from innovating.

Promote innovation within your team

- Recognize small incremental improvements observed within your work group.

- Commit resources to idea(s) that have an appropriate level of risk and good potential for the successful implementation of the idea(s). Invest some of your budget and/or time in this idea(s).

Reflection Tip:

- * What constraints might you be inadvertently placing on your team?

Apply innovative thinking and quality improvement.

- Develop a new business idea in partnership to present to a group within the organization that could offer feedback as well as authority to allocate resources.
- Invent a new job for yourself by applying your skills to innovation and quality.
- Champion an innovation project - new product, features, services, production team.
- Invite customers/stakeholders to meet with your team to discuss new services or quality improvement opportunities.

Reflection Tip:

- * How did you identify innovative thinkers to support you?

Solicit input and expertise to help shape the Government's innovation focus.

- Talk to senior officials on how they would set a climate to promote innovation within the public sector.
- Invite innovative thinkers from other ministries outside the public sector to talk to your organization.
- Arrange a forum with internal and external experts together to talk about the affect of innovation on the government's future mandate and strategic direction.

Reflection Tip:

- * How will you measure your success?