

AM I AN INNOVATOR? Survey

Innovation has evolved beyond technology planning to embrace a broad array of strategy, market opportunity, and operational questions. The practice of innovation is continually defining itself in this new and changing business climate.

Our “Am I An Innovator?” survey measures the following elements of innovation:

- **Thinking** – How top of mind is innovation? Do you have the right focus?
- **Priority** – Where does innovation stand on your corporation’s priority list?
- **Frequency** – How often are you innovating? When was the last time you instituted change?
- **Follow-Through** – Are you implementing what you’re thinking?
- **Leadership** – Are you offering the right training to make your innovations work?

Take our survey to find out what kind of Innovator you are.

PART ONE: Innovation Questions

Please answer the following questions. Part two of the survey will give you an analysis of your specific answers and help you determine how to go forward in your innovation processes. Part three of the survey will assign a number value to each of your answers. Tally up your score and find out what type of Innovator you are!

1. How important is innovation to your organization?
 - a. Not important
 - b. It's moderately important
 - c. Within the top 5 priorities
 - d. It's our top priority

2. Which of the following answers do you believe summarizes an "Innovation Intent"?
 - a. A statement that conveys the valuable stretches and strategies needed in your company
 - b. A brilliant creative idea
 - c. A plan for how we will institute our innovative idea
 - d. A company pact you make to pursue an area of innovation

3. When was the last time you implemented a new core process?
 - a. 6 months
 - b. 1 - 2 years
 - c. 3 - 5 years
 - d. Not sure

4. You are looking to develop a new product or system and determine a plan for doing so. Your natural approach is to:
- a. Slowly introduce the product or system in phases
 - b. Make a rapid switch – one day off, the next one day on
 - c. I don't create the plan
 - d. Not sure
5. Your organization spends most of its innovation efforts on:
- a. Creating / reacting to change
 - b. Experimenting with change
 - c. Anticipating the need to change
 - d. Envisioning change
 - e. We do not spend any time on innovation
6. As a leader, I've introduced models for thinking, tools that foster innovation, and techniques/training to enhance our team's ability to build thinking skills. I take deliberate, observable steps to enhance creativity. Be honest!
- a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
7. Please indicate how much time is allocated as an organization for individuals to focus on informal idea generation, exploratory thinking, and experimentation.

1-5% 6-10 11-15% 16 +

8. Successful innovation matches the following statement best:
- a. Trying lots of new ideas – the more you try, the more hits you get
 - b. Building fewer but bolder concepts – the smaller the focus the more successful
 - c. Not sure
9. Out of the following countries, which is noted to have the weakest and most simplistic innovation patterns:
- a. UK
 - b. Germany
 - c. China
 - d. Canada
 - e. India

Part Two: Answers Analysis

1. How important is innovation to your organization?

If you responded A, B, or C, your answer might reflect your confusion over what innovation really is. According to *The New Discipline of Innovation*² presentation from Wisdom Exchange 2008, innovation has evolved beyond technology planning to embrace a broad array of strategy, market opportunity and operational questions. In today's business environment, innovation is seen in everything from business models to service channels.

Innovation means reacting to change in order to stay competitive and staying competitive is the number one success factor in today's business environment. If innovation is not your very top priority, it's a good thing you're here. Innovators Alliance will help shift that thinking.

2. Which of the following answers do you believe summarizes an "Innovation Intent"?

According to *The New Discipline of Innovation*² presentation from the Wisdom Exchange 2008, Innovative Intent is an arena of ascending importance that conveys valuable stretches needed that we don't know how to do today. Essentially, it's a point of view from which to reframe industries. It doesn't presume to know what you will do or how you will do it, but simply identifies the area that needs to be changed. To determine your Innovation Intent, characterize the next source of industry focus, stretch, and value to reframe all the current players.

If you chose A and already know that constructing a clear Innovation Intent is the first step of any successful innovation strategy, you're on the right path! If you chose another answer, you might be getting too ahead of yourself. While innovation is an exciting and fast process, it needs small, strategic steps to be successful. Don't worry – Innovators Alliance facilitates access to peers that have experience in innovative thinking and execution and are willing to share their knowledge in a trusted, secure, peer-to-peer networking forum.

3. When was the last time you implemented a new core process?

If you answered A – congratulations, you truly are on top of your game! Don't be alarmed if you scored anything less, you are in good company. Many executives have the right thinking but don't have the support to follow through on these ideas. That's why Innovators Alliance is here – to offer that much needed guidance and support in making strategic and timely decisions.

4. You are looking to develop a new product and determine a plan for doing so. Your natural approach is to:

If you answered A, you are focusing on Incremental Innovation. While this progressive approach can be a safer method of transition, feedback is often that the innovation failed to spark a revolution. If you chose B, you're focusing on the opposite approach, Breakthrough Innovation. Breakthrough Innovations tend to be those great Aha! moments where employees and customers see things done that they never before thought possible. However, you must have strong follow-through methods in place to monitor and measure the success of immediate and dramatic changes. Depending on the nature of the company, the leader and the people, either of these strategies can work if thought out properly.

If you chose C or D – you're not doing enough. The leader of the company should be driving innovation, not leaving it up to others or not thinking about it at all! Innovators Alliance will help shift this gear in your thinking and encourage you to consistently focus on innovation. The time for change is now!

5. Your organization spends most of its innovation efforts on:

Innovation comes in two parts – thinking and then practicing. If you responded A or B, you already know that. Innovation comes with trial and error and experimenting is a key part to seeing what will work. Responding and reacting to change is ultimately what innovation is all about, and if you answered so, you scored 5.

If you responded C or D, you are on the right track – thinking is the first step and just as important as doing.

If you answered E, you get no points for innovation. But that can change after you spend some time with Innovators Alliance.

- 6. As a leader, I've introduced models for thinking, tools that foster innovation, and techniques/training to enhance our team's ability to build thinking skills. I take deliberate, observable steps to enhance creativity.**

According to *The Quest for Innovation – A Global Study of Innovation Management*¹ by the American Management Association, leaders can make or break creating and nurturing a culture of innovative thought within any organization. They can help by developing the right strategies and setting up the right organizational designs or, they can derail organizational innovation by failing to support innovation efforts or exerting too much management control.

In the *2007 Business Pulse – A Survey of Corporate Canada*³ published by the Schulich Executive Education Centre, 67% of executives say they are innovative but only 24% of managers say that executives role-model innovation. The discrepancy shows a true need for leadership training.

If you answered Sometimes, Rarely, or Never, it's time to stand up and do an inventory check on your priorities. If leaders are not fostering change, you can't expect your employees to.

- 7. Please indicate how much time is allocated as an organization for individuals to focus on informal idea generation, exploratory thinking, and experimentation.**

According to the *The Quest for Innovation*¹, job design is very related to creativity via its impact on the internal motivation of employees. If you build roles to place importance on new ideas and growth, then you will inspire and motivate employees.

Companies implementing innovation programs often forget to focus on their employees. These programs are often top-down rather than inside-out trying to harness the innovation capacities of each and every employee in the company.

If you answered anything above 11% - good for you! You've already demonstrated that you want to inspire a culture of change. If you answered below 10% – we've got some work to do. Not to worry, that's exactly why Innovators Alliance is here.

8. Successful innovation matches the following statement best:

If you answered B – congratulations, you share an expert opinion. While it may seem that the more things you try, the more you can see what works, studies show it is more tactful to try fewer ideas but make them riskier. The riskier and more daring the chance, yes the greater the chance for failure, but also, the greater reward. Remember this when focusing on innovation.

If you answered C, shame on you! You should have at least tried to guess. There's nothing innovative in giving up. At Innovators Alliance we encourage you to share fresh thinking.

9. Out of the following countries, which is noted to have the weakest and most simplistic innovation patterns:

According to the *2008 Wisdom Exchange*², the only countries noted to exhibit rich innovation strategies are all those listed with the exception of Canada. Looks like we have some work to do.

The American Management Association report *The Quest for Innovation*¹ states that “(t)he U.S is in danger of losing its innovation edge to some other regions of the world that are starting to produce more engineers, researchers, and other specialists.”

It's time to stand up and make our mark in this competitive global economy and the best place to start is at Innovators Alliance.

Part 3: Results

Please total your score based on the numbers provided here and find out what kind of Innovator you are!

1. How important is innovation to your organization?

SCORING:

- A - 0
- B - 1
- C - 3
- D - 5

2. Which of the following answers do you believe summarizes an “Innovation Intent”?

SCORING:

- A - 5
- B - 0
- C - 3
- D - 1

3. When was the last time you implemented a new core process?

SCORING:

- A. 5
- B. 3
- C. 1
- D. 0

4. You are looking to develop a new product and determine a plan for doing so. Your natural approach is to:

SCORING:

- A. 5
- B. 5
- C. 1
- D. 0

5. Your organization spends most of its innovation efforts on:

SCORING:

- A. 5
- B. 5
- C. 3
- D. 3
- E. 0

6. **As a leader, I've introduced models for thinking, tools that foster innovation, and techniques/training to enhance our team's ability to build thinking skills. I take deliberate, observable steps to enhance creativity. Be honest!**

SCORING:

- A. 5
- B. 3
- C. 1
- D. 0

7. **Please indicate how much time is allocated as an organization for individuals to focus on informal idea generation, exploratory thinking, and experimentation.**

SCORING:

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 3
- D. 5

8. **Successful innovation matches the following statement best:**

SCORING:

- A. 5
- B. 3
- C. 0

9. **Out of the following countries, which is noted to have the weakest and most simplistic innovation patterns:**

SCORING:

- A. 1
- B. 1
- C. 1
- D. 5
- E. 1

What kind of Innovator are you?

Champion of Innovation: Analysis (Total Score: 30 - 45)

In this day and age, who doesn't want to be on the leading edge of innovation performance? More importantly, who can afford not to? Congratulations – you have proven that you are a Champion of Innovation! You are among the Canadian business leaders who have acknowledged that innovation is a strategic corporate priority and you will benefit from doing so. Welcome to Innovators Alliance.

Innovator in Training: Analysis (Total Score: 15 - 30)

You have the right thinking and you're employing action. But if you're in this group, you might find that it's not always catching on or making that much of a difference to your organization. This could be from lack of leadership training on how to successfully implement and maintain innovations. In the Schulich School of Business Survey, *2007 Business Pulse – A Survey of Corporate Canada*³ only 32% of Executives and 30% of Managers participate in training programs to help them promote and improve innovation. This is fewer than one in three. All serious literature on innovation agrees that innovation begins with the leadership team.

Good thing you're here! Being a member of Innovators Alliance gives you the right training to support your staff and team and solicit fresh thinking ideas.

Innovative Junior: Analysis (Total Score: 0 – 15)

While you are clearly interested in innovative practices – you're here, aren't you? – you might not be doing enough about it. Don't be alarmed! You're actually in the norm. According to the *2007 Business Pulse – A Survey of Corporate Canada*³, 88% of executives say innovation is important for the future success of their organization BUT only 33% of executives actually think their company is effective at innovation.

What does this mean? The one thing that has proven to keep businesses successful is their willingness to change and adapt to changing circumstances of business landscapes. We are in a climate of uncertainty and what will keep you successful is applying fresh thinking to your business problems.

By being a part of Innovators Alliance, you are getting access to the minds of the leaders of innovation. You, in turn, will become innovative and be challenged to share these new best practices. Congratulations, you've taken the first step!

References

1. Bear, Donna J., Wanda V. Chaves, Ph.D., Susan Conte, Ph.D., Donna J. Dennis, Ph.D., Jack Hipple, Dr. Mary B. Lippitt, Rick Riesenber, Ph.D., Dr. Glen Taylor, and Mark R. Vickers. The Quest for Innovation - A Global Study of Innovation Management 2006 - 2016. Human Resource Institute (HRI). New York: American Management Association, 2006.
2. Keeley, Larry. Ontario. Min of Small Business and Entrepreneurship. The New Discipline of Innovation – Wisdom Exchange 2008. Ottawa: Doblin Inc., 2008.
3. 2007 Business Pulse - A Survey of Corporate Canada. The Globe and Mail, Leger Marketing. Toronto: Schulich School of Business York University, 2007.