

FOSTERING WORKPLACE INNOVATION IN YOUR BUSINESS



INNOVATION – A VALUE ADDING APPROACH

Innovation is about taking creative ideas and using them to leverage value through products, services, people or methods of operation. Benefits can be gained across all aspects of business from structure and strategy to processes and products.



LEAD INNOVATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Successful innovation comes from an environment where individuals and teams are encouraged to think creatively and implement great ideas that drive positive changes. Innovation requires a shared understanding of business goals, a high tolerance for 'outside the box' thinking and support for this approach in the workplace. Employees can develop great ideas and concepts, and a process for managing innovation from idea to inception is important for achieving successful outcomes.

Successful integration of innovation approaches can:

- generate a culture of enquiry and participation, increasing quality and responsiveness to opportunity;
- lead to proactive business approaches, matching the changing needs of customers and industry;
- build highly valuable skills that enable rapid response to change in the workplace;
- create a high level of motivation, engagement, ownership and teamwork, improving retention of valuable employees;
- generate a strong narrative for use in marketing and business strategy; and
- provide purpose and compelling insights to drive change.



CREATE AN INNOVATION READY WORKPLACE

Innovation will thrive in an environment where it is not only encouraged and accepted, but promoted, recognised and celebrated. Some points to consider in making innovation a part of the workplace include the following.

1. **Set the scene.** Introduce information about innovation into the workplace. If need be, bring in an expert in this area to help introduce the concept.
2. **Lead by example.** Invest in and allocate resources to innovation efforts and ask managers to participate in brainstorming discussions.
3. **Invest in resources.** Source interesting materials about innovation to ensure opportunities to refine skills are available and supported.
4. **Establish an innovation space.** Create a place that is available for use where individuals and teams can leave suggestions, meet, write ideas, expand on the ideas of others or gain inspiration.
5. **Develop an innovation process.** Document the pathway and process for receiving and considering ideas through to implementation.
6. **Build an innovation mind set.** Create opportunities for working in an innovation space and to develop competencies for participation in such activities.
7. **Reward and recognise.** It is important to build momentum by recognising participation and effort as well as successful contributions.

DEVELOP AN INNOVATION READY WORKFORCE

Innovation might be new to many employees so investment is necessary to establish these competencies in the workplace.

Some areas to consider include:

- delegate a suitability skilled innovation leader to initially push the approach and provide guidance;
- include innovation skills into recruitment strategies and induction processes;
- incorporate innovation into routine training programs to expand thinking skills and ways of looking at the workplace differently;
- foster teamwork through team building days that include innovation content;
- don't discourage ideas as it is important to develop tolerance for some unsuccessful attempts in building a strong innovation culture; and
- keep good records about innovation activity so that knowledge of the efforts and outcomes is available for reflection, learning and ongoing recognition.



For more information, resources and practical tools to help you plan, attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce, visit:
workplace-essentials.dtwd.wa.gov.au



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