

## Corporate Transformation for Innovation

Many senior management have asked me how they could bring innovation into their companies as they see the technology tsunami upcoming which may likely change and even disrupt many business ecosystems and business models. Some realize that innovation is becoming something not 'nice-to-have', but a matter of survival.

Innovation is not something that you buy from the shelf and plug for use. It is the establishment of a culture of a company involving transformation in many aspects. It revolves around the company's core values and is more than just a human resource issue.

If you would like to start innovating your company, you may want to start by considering the following areas. Seek professional help if necessary because their knowledge and experience in the relevant fields may very well add value to your important endeavors.

1. **Corporate goals:** Your corporate goals and missions may have to be realigned if necessary; Identify existing challenges and opportunities, your strengths and weaknesses and strategize what you want to be with more defined innovation goals.
2. **Organizational structure:** You may need to reorganize your company/department structure to allow more efficient communication and feedback processes, and to allow the innovators to stay away from unnecessary hierarchical roadblocks. Consider whether you need to adopt a flatter organizational structure from the current hierarchical structure or adopt some other modification.
3. **Staff configuration:** Map out the human capital configuration that you need to achieve the transformation; Be creative in making new positions. Conduct human capital audit to see if the existing personnel can achieve your corporate change goals.
4. **Recruitment:** Hire the right talents, hire fast. They are your critical resources so make sure you hire the right people quickly. Things are happening much faster than before and will even be faster in the future. Think outside the box and pay attention to cross-functional talents.
5. **Decision process:** Review the decision making processes. New idea generation should be emphasized and the reporting and decision making process should cater for this to happen.
6. **Participation:** Ensure staff buy-in and participation. Innovation is an attitude and culture and cannot be spoon-fed. It is a practice which should be led and driven consistently and persistently by senior management and bought in and practiced by all staff.

7. **Adoption:** Allow innovation to be experimented for proof of concept. If an idea fails, fail fast. Build the system on prompt actions and feedbacks. Share views with other companies since you don't know what you don't know. Adopt good practices because they do not have to be reinvented every time.
8. **Empowerment and recognition:** Empower and recognize your innovators. Establish compensation and incentive schemes to clearly reward innovators rather than followers. Setup benchmarks and targets, conduct objective and regular assessments and get support from independent professionals. Continuous monitoring commands continuous innovation.
9. **Environment:** Create an environment that allows generation and bouncing of ideas. Be open to untraditional office setup and practices, including flexible hours.
10. **Investment and training:** Be prepared to invest in tools, equipment and systems to facilitate the process. Provide adequate training to the people. Ensure awareness of external development trends and industry development.

Transformation does not need to be a big-bang or an all-in overhaul exercise for the whole company or the whole group. Implementation of changes can be introduced in existing and even newly created departments for the purpose, or even for selected corporate functions to start with.

Nevertheless, the transformation plan needs to be carefully strategized and steered by cross-functional members and professionals, led by the senior management team. Senior management should lead by example in embracing the innovation culture and welcome changes and not wait to be innovated.

**HAPPY INNOVATING!**