

## How do I implement the critical success factors?

If you have carried out the self-assessment and self-reflection exercises to broaden your understanding you will understand that your role as a leader is key in creating the conditions for creativity and innovation in the workplace and that you should

- Start with yourself
- Include everyone
- Encourage continuous learning
- Have an open attitude towards taking risks and making mistakes
- Use and share knowledge and information
- Conduct fair and informative evaluations
- Reward creative performance
- Offer management support to your staff
- Don't worry about implementation
- Create a culture that encourages staff people to share information with each other.

### Start with yourself

Think of the last time you made a real effort to make a real change in your behaviour or your business. Think of the investment and effort that went into identifying the first wave of improvements and changing how you and your people work and lead every day. Did it stick? Did the changes become part of your daily behaviour or the new culture in work? If not, it may be because you haven't fundamentally changed how you lead and manage. With any change you need to first consider your own attitudes and behaviour and make sure you are giving yourself the opportunities to make the new behaviour part of your routine.

### Include everyone

All of your staff have the capacity to be creative and hiring a broad range of staff will increase the diversity of ideas and solutions available to you. If they need help, encourage and teach them to be creative.

### Encourage continuous learning

You can alter culture by using formal and informal approaches and tools, such as training and education. A good place to start is with an introductory training session for all your staff to help them understand what creativity is and that your company is going to try to encourage it from now on. You can also teach your staff specific techniques and tools for problem identification and creative thinking. Research and knowledge are also key factors.

### Have an open attitude towards taking risks and making mistakes

You need to create a culture where your staff feel safe to try to be creative and innovative and know that there will be no negative consequence if they take risks and explore ideas. You can consider creating a playful office environment, install a breakout area to facilitate random conversations, discuss both good and "less good" ideas at staff meetings, with equal positivity towards both.

### Use and share knowledge and information

You don't just want your staff to have ideas but also to share them, with you and with others. Make sure your staff know that you encourage creative thinking and receiving suggestions for improving or altering the way things are done. If you think you may need

more help to change your own way of thinking to do this you might consider assigning the task to a staff member or getting an external consultant to assist. You can also help your staff by making decisions on what knowledge your company needs in the future i.e. what is strategically important and high added value.

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*The fourth chapter of Innovation Management standard on intellectual property management provides support for knowledge management.*

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#### Conduct fair and informative evaluations

Don't punish mistakes but try to learn from them. Otherwise your staff will stick with the tried and tested ways of working.

#### Reward creative performance

Consider introducing a drop-box for ideas and a celebration of or reward for any ideas that lead to innovation. Give your staff responsibility for their own work and if possible let them choose what to focus on as this will increase motivation.

#### Offer management support to your staff

Let them know that you support this new direction and are there to help. The most important keys to success are human factors: innovative thinking and charismatic leaders who support this work. A culture that supports innovation can be promoted by top management through supporting ideas, communication, openness, conflict consciousness and tolerating failure.

#### Don't worry about implementation

Leaders unknowingly weaken their team's creativity by focusing too early on implementation. The fastest way to kill the creative process is by requiring your team to produce tactical solutions at the same time as creative ideas.

#### Create a culture that encourages staff people to share information

If possible, give your staff a little extra time to complete their tasks so they have more down time to think about the process or to have conversations with others that might generate some insight or spark some ideas. Make the right information available to the right place, at the right time, and in the right format

There's lots of ideas about making your work environment more conducive for creativity on the web. You can read some at: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/alison-a-quirk/fostering-a-culture-of-cr\\_b\\_7615498.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/alison-a-quirk/fostering-a-culture-of-cr_b_7615498.html) and <https://www.inc.com/quora/how-to-build-a-work-culture-that-encourages-creativity.html>

Nothing kills creativity like a risk-averse, play-it-safe leader. To spark creativity, be curious and bring a beginner's mind to problems. Channel your inner life-long learner and ask appreciative questions, like: "What would we do if we knew we couldn't fail?" "What possibilities are there if we look elsewhere?" And then listen!