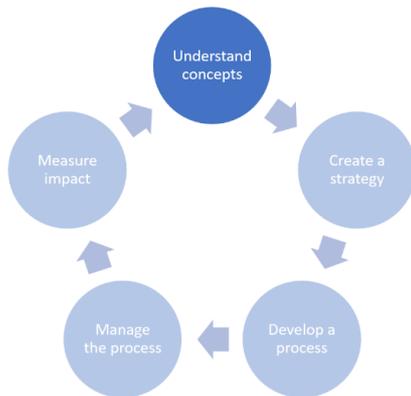


What is Creativity?



Creativity is the process of generating new ideas from original thinking. These ideas are the inspiration which, with some effort, can lead to innovation.

Creativity is the process of generating new ideas from original thinking. This picture shows the overall process for managing creativity.

The two concepts are different but linked. You might like to think of creativity as being the first step, where you identify problems and generate ideas to solve them whereas innovation is the second step.

Innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product, service, process or working practice. It involves selecting, developing and successfully implementing creative ideas. In other words, it is the practical application of a creative idea.

Innovation is the practical implementation of a creative idea

Creativity and innovation address ways of doing things better and differently. There are different theories around creativity. Understanding these theories will help you to decide how to harness it in your business. It will also help you realise that you can create conditions in your business which will help you (and your employees if you have any) to be more creative and policies to help you capture and develop creative ideas.

- In 200 employees, there are 10 natural innovators and 1 **really great** innovator. 55% can learn to be better innovators.

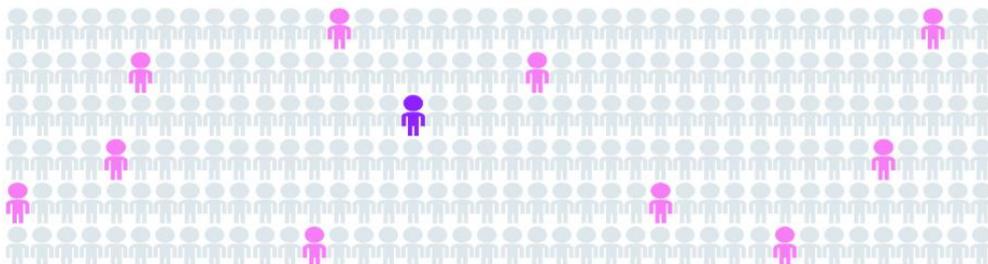


Figure 1: Innovators DNA

You can manage the support process and mechanisms around creativity but not the creative process itself.

But I'm not creative!

Many people think of creativity as being a mysterious and powerful process owned by a select and fortunate few. They think you either have it or you do not. In many parts of the world creativity is still associated with divine inspiration. Others think creativity results from good fortune; a case of being in the right place at the right time. What do you think about creativity? Are you creative? Why don't you try some of these puzzles to get your creative juices flowing and test yourself!

Creativity puzzles

What colour are the hats?



Evil warlock doesn't like people, so he chooses four of them and buries them into the ground so that only their heads are above surface. The people can't move at all and they can look only forward.

They're buried in a line and one of them is separated by a wall. They are all facing the same direction: first person sees two heads and a wall. Second sees only one head and a wall. Second last person sees only the wall and last is looking to the distance where there is nothing interesting to be seen.

Warlock explains the situation and says that he has placed hats on their heads - two green hats and two red ones. One of the people is supposed to say what colour is the hat he/she is wearing. If he/she says the right colour warlock will dig them out immediately. If he says something else all of them will stay there till the end...



How will the people solve this problem? Take a minute to work this out.

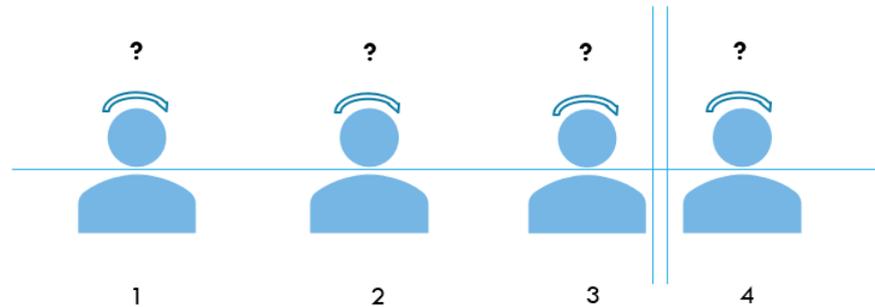
If you are stuck, here's a hint. You probably figured that if the middle two people are wearing same hats the last one will know the answer.

If this is not the case another person has to work it out. If you think that none of the remaining people can find out the correct answer, try to think creatively and imagine what each of the people is experiencing.

For example, it probably looks something like this.

2 Green

2 Red



If person no. 1 doesn't come up with the answer soon it means that persons no. 2 and 3 have different hats. Person no. 2 will simply say the different colour to the hat in front. Of course, he/she must give enough time to the first person to talk.

Which switch belongs to each bulb?



You are standing next to three switches. You know these switches belong to three bulbs in a room behind a closed door – the door is tight closed, and heavy which means that it's impossible to see if any bulb is on or not. All three switches are now in position off.

You can do whatever you want with the switches and when you are finished you open the door and go into the room. While in there you must identify which switch belongs to which bulb.

How will you do that?



Take a minute to work this out. If you are stuck, here's a hint. The bulb doesn't only shine or not-shine.



Turn on the first switch and wait for a while. Turn off the first one and turn on the second. Go into the room. One bulb is shining, the second bulb is hot and the third one nothing...

Can you divide a cake in 8 pieces with three cuts?



This is a short question. Can you divide a cake into 8 pieces with just 3 cuts?

How will you do that?



Take a minute to work this out. If you are stuck, here's a hint. Not recommended if you have several impatient children waiting and watching as the slices may not be even...



First cut the cake in half and then quarters. That makes four parts in two cuts. Now just cut the cake horizontally (split the bottom and top part). Done!

What does creativity mean to you?



If you tried the puzzles (and maybe even got one or two correct) you will hopefully have realised that the answers are clear once you open your mind to think in unconventional ways. You had all of the information you needed to answer each one but sometimes we get so used to thinking about common items in a set way, we need to start questioning our assumptions and remind ourselves that our brains are amazingly creative! Take a minute to think about how you felt doing the exercises and what types of characteristics can help you to be creative.

Openness to experience | Observance | Seeing things differently | Curiosity and persistence | Autonomy and self-reliance | **Not subject to group standards** | Willingness to accept risks | Ability to think outside of the box | **Good at finding problems worth solving** | Flexibility and originality | Not afraid of failure | Don't settle on a solution too soon (when there might be more useful ways forward)

Although we often talk about creative people, there is no standard way to measure what ideas are creative and which people are creative. Most people are good at developing existing ideas but not so successful at generating new and original ones. There are some suggested ways of considering creativity as follows:

Personality
 rrocess
 roduct

We can think of creativity as being a personality trait on a scale between innovators and adapters . Innovators are those who do things better and adapters are those who think differently. This difference however refers to the type of creativity a person possesses and at best, can only show which people are most likely to produce creative ideas. Which doesn't help in our search for the perfect creative employee!

We can also think of creativity according to the process of thinking which is associated with “imagination, insight, invention, ingenuity, intuition, inspiration and illumination”.

Other people define creativity by its output. Some researchers would say that in business having an original idea is not enough. “To be creative, an idea must also be appropriate, useful and actionable”.

This is a useful viewpoint because research also shows us that creative product is the result of the ordinary thought processes of ordinary individuals. This means like any skill it can be learned, practiced and improved.

Creative productcan be learned.

None of that would be possible without the brain. The brain has been described as one of the most complex things we have yet discovered in our universe. Studies on patients with brain damage have allowed scientists to uncover how each side of the brain controls different functions. The left hemisphere, for example, specializes in language skills and logic. The right hemisphere allows us to recognize shapes and faces and express and read. Most people are not likely to be strictly left-brain or right-brained - we use each side of our brain depending on the task we're dealing with. However, some theorists and researchers believe that there may be one side of the brain that we draw on more, which can in turn make the personality traits of that side of the brain more dominant than others. And we often also make assumptions about ourselves, deciding at a young age that we are not creative and so we favour a more logical approach to solving problems. But like anything if we don't use the power of our right brain, it may not work so well.

Both sides of the brain are used in creative problem solving:

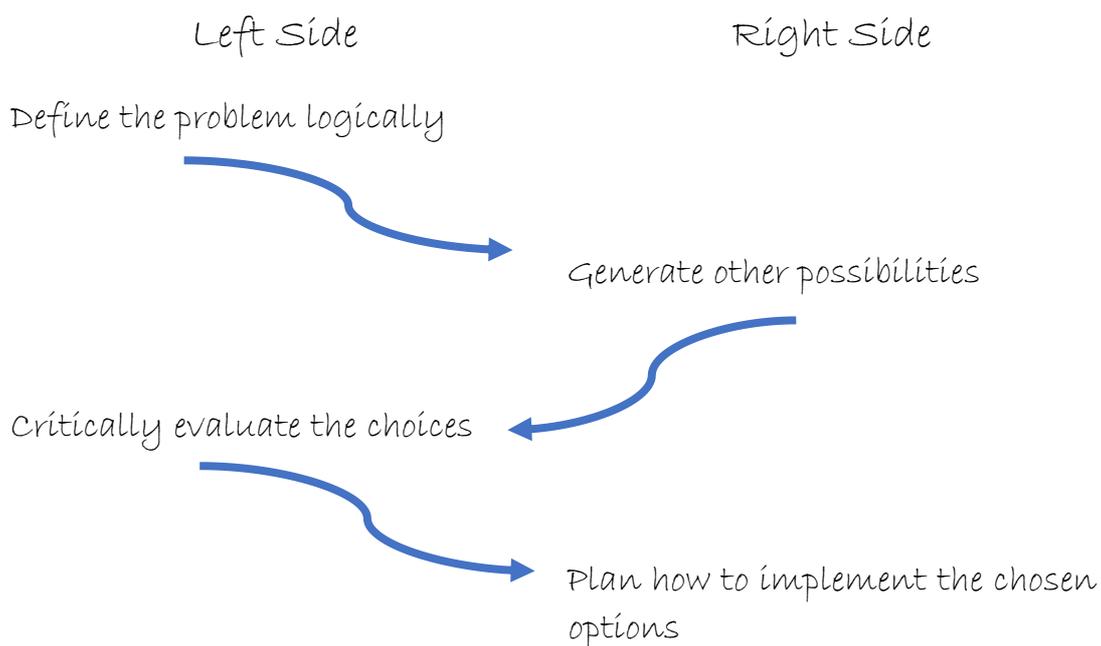


Figure 2: How your brain solves problems

It's important to fine tune your left brain, but don't overlook the opportunities to let your right brain make its mark. Tom Kelley, General Manager of IDEO (check him out on YouTube), also discusses the use of the "hare" brain, meaning the aspects of thinking that we can control, and the "tortoise" brain, meaning giving thought processes time to sit, ruminate, and percolate to slowly process creative solutions. Kelley claims this slower level of background thinking is even smarter than our cognitive problem-solving, and that it can be used to address dilemmas directly. He suggests that creative thinkers should schedule some time for daydreaming to give these slower mental processes a chance to be effective.

Creative thinking takes time and cannot always be accelerated. We all need time and space to day dream.

*Creative thinking takes time and cannot always be accelerated.
We all need time and space to day dream.*

And it's not all about the individual. The environment in which people live and work also affects their creativity. Since the 1990s, organisations have started to pay more attention to the effect that work culture and environment have on how creative people are in organisations. More recently the focus has shifted towards understanding creativity as a phenomenon that builds on what has gone before and arises from ongoing interactions.

*Creativity builds on what has gone before and arises from
ongoing interactions*

There are also signs that in several fields, working in an area for many years can help to produce exceptional creative achievement. Many business people who have successfully turned around organisations did so after working in their industry for many years e.g. Jan Carlzon, who rejuvenated Scandinavian Airlines, was years in the travel industry.

In this view, creativity comes from having enough expertise to recognise problems and solutions. This supports having a varied range of staff as more experienced staff might be more creative in the workplace than new-hires because of their years of know-how.

Of course, it's not just your staff who are creative as your expertise also helps you to see your industry in a creative way. Can you think of times in which this was true?

Think of times you were creative. What do you think helped you to be creative?



*Maybe it was the way ideas were handled, the people involved
and your dealings with them. Was it the working
relationships? What was the atmosphere in the group? How
did you set about solving the problem?*

Oh, we are all creative. What next?

To return to our questions from earlier, you can call the recruitment search off as you have already hired creative people. But you can learn to capitalise on their creative thinking.....along with your own.

We have just learned that having the skills to think imaginatively and the experience to identify problems and solutions are vital to successful creativity. But we also require a third ingredient, motivation. In other words, your staff will do a far better job if they are inspired by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction and challenge of the work itself rather than because you ask them to do something or because it's part of their job.

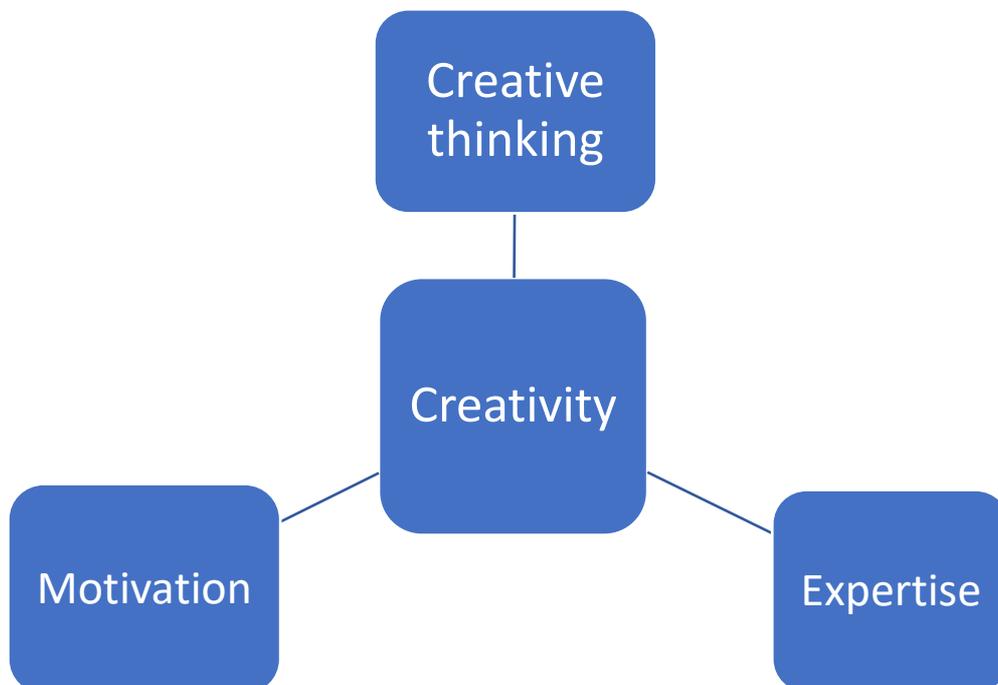


Figure 3: Components of creativity-creative thinking skills, expertise & motivation

If a person really cares about something, they are more willing to take risks to achieve it and both determination and risk-taking seem to be necessary for creativity. In other words, people are more likely to be creative in areas they are most interested in. This means you should allow your employees some freedom to work on the projects they are most attracted to and to determine how they do their work.

Innovation Types and Levels

Research into motivation suggests that people respond well when their achievement and performance is acknowledged and rewarded. Many innovative companies have implemented policies that allow staff to follow their own motivation to some degree. Once a month, LinkedIn holds an InDay, which is when employees set aside regular work to explore new ideas. SAS is noted for offering a high-trust environment and exhibiting a low turnover rate. Mentorships and open-door communication policies with leadership at BCG allows for creative freedom and the confidence to share ideas. At Marks & Spencer there is no such thing as too much communication.

3M Corporation excels in how it treats promising employees: give them opportunities, support them, and watch them learn and thrive. These policies have led to some very successful products for those organisations.

Now that you know how to encourage creative thinking, you should be able to increase the number of creative ideas produced by your staff. But as a business owner/manager you want more than ideas. Earlier in this guidebook we discussed that innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product, service, process or working practice. So, while creativity is a vital starting point, innovation is the hard work that follows!

There are 4 different types of innovation:

1. Product innovation - the creation of new or significantly improved goods, or services e.g. the MP3 player, or the GPS.
2. Process innovation - the development of a new/significantly improved production, or supply process, e.g. inserting a new automatic device in a production line.
3. Marketing innovation – the implementation of new marketing methods that bring significant changes in the design, packaging, positioning, advertising of a product, or in the pricing. Examples include using new mediums.
4. Organisational innovation means the implementation of new methods in the daily business practices, in work organisation, or in external connections, e.g. introducing a new training system.

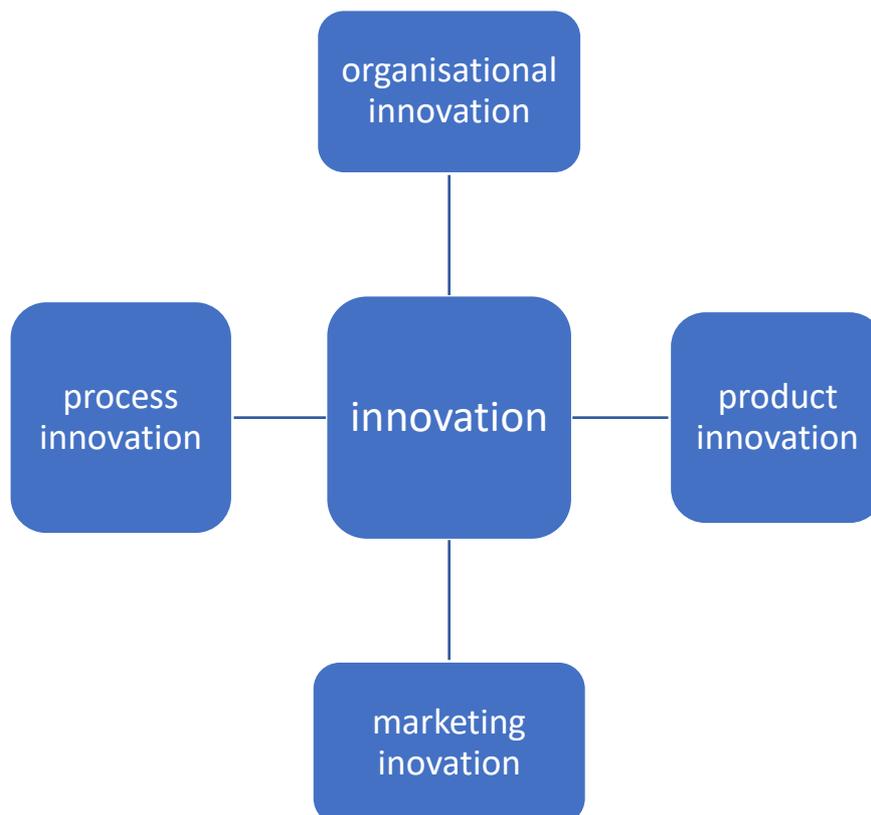


Figure 4: The 4 types of innovation

What type of innovation comes first to your mind?



Businesses often focus on product innovation as this gives the biggest opportunity to get advantage over competitors. But now you can see that innovation can be found in not only the products, processes, methods developed by a company but also those taken from other companies, organisations or research institutions etc., and applied in the company.

There are also different levels of innovation:

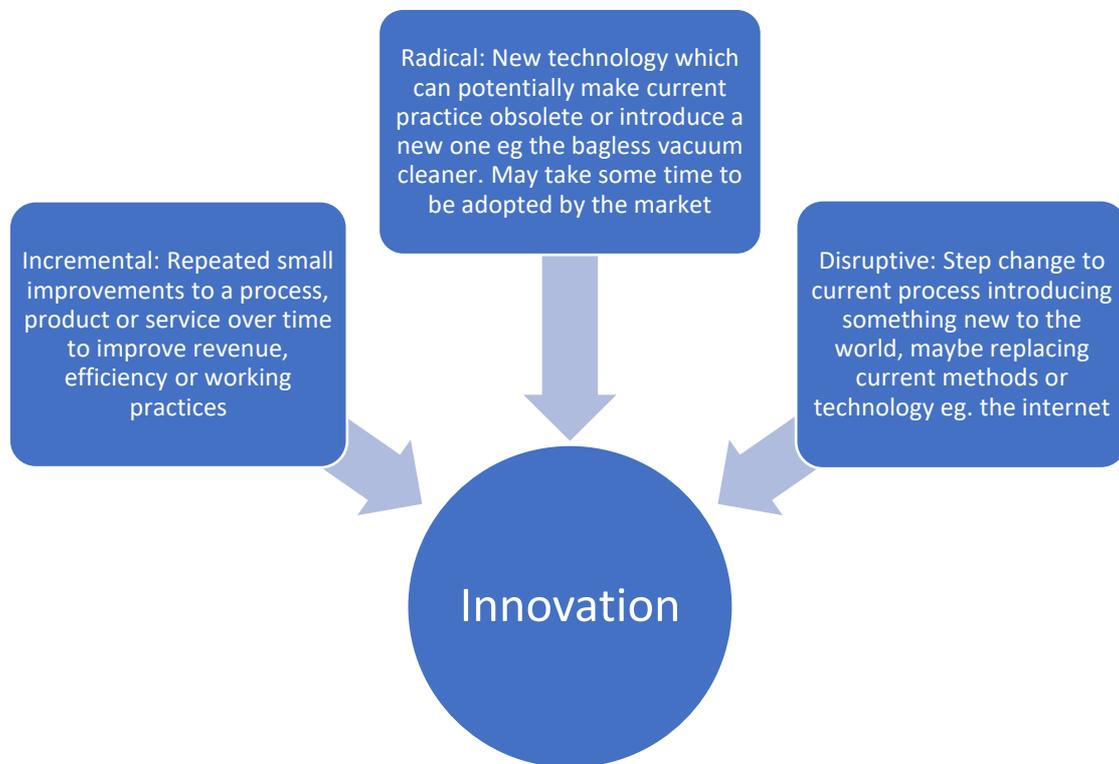


Figure 5: Incremental, radical and disruptive innovation

Of course, you can't just say, "Be creative," and expect yourself or your staff to magically produce innovative ideas. A creativity-driven work environment must be carefully cultivated and encouraged, and it starts with you and your plan. To get help with creating a plan, why don't you download the information on How do I manage creativity in the workplace?