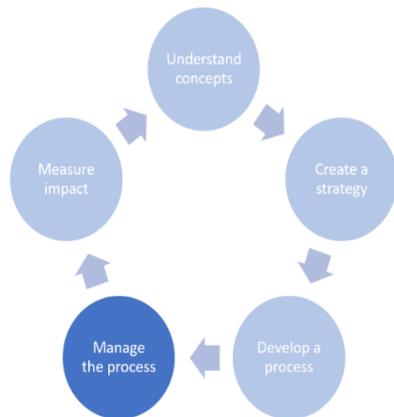


What makes it work? The critical success factors for managing creativity



After developing and implementing the process you need to manage it.

You can manage this whole process yourself or appoint a staff member, but without an owner the process will not run smoothly.

As with any change it will probably take a while to get it established as a business-as-usual activity and so you may consider implementing a change management plan to help your staff adapt. It's very important you show your constant support for the process.

A lot of the following advice refers to you and your staff but of course it is relevant if you are a sole trader without staff also.

Critical Success Factors

When managing creativity, you must consider the following 5 keys success factors:

Leadership Culture
Communication
Structure Motivation

Leadership

Effective leadership is important for successful idea generation and creativity. Leaders can influence a group to achieve their goals by:

1. establishing and communicating goals
2. building trust and inspiring teamwork
3. defining a clear purpose and strategic intent .

Culture

Companies that create a culture and climate for knowledge generation, transfer and use perform better. Culture is the collection of fundamental values and belief systems which give meaning to organisations and is created from a broad range of internal and external influences, some of which are difficult to manage. Your organisation's culture can either help or hinder creative practices.

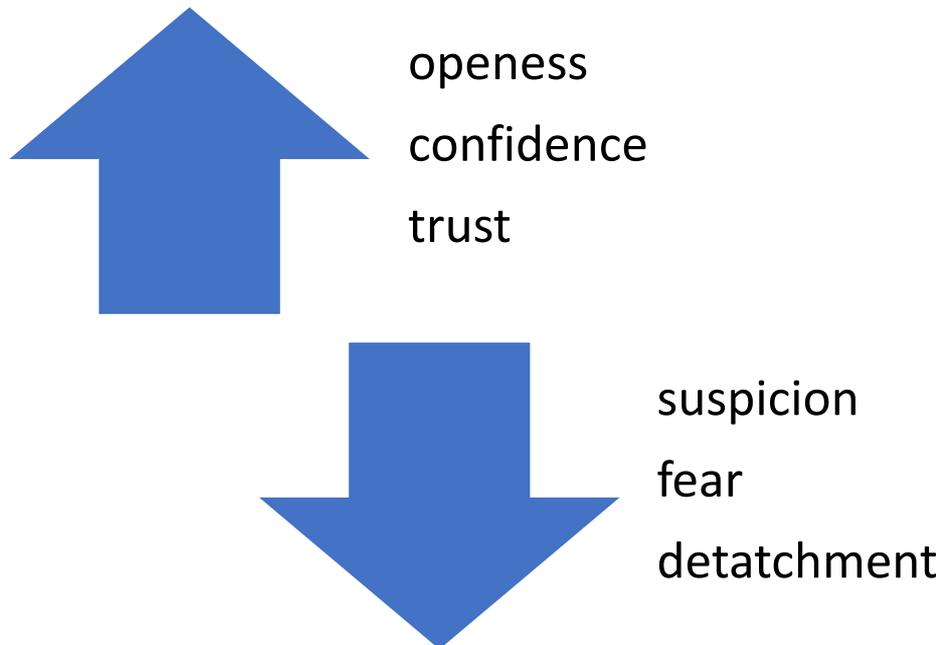


Figure 1: Factors that encourage and discourage creativity in organisations

An open culture is associated with sharing of knowledge. Companies that make knowledge available to staff are more likely to come up with new products than those that do not .

You can:

1. develop a visible connection between **sharing knowledge** and practical business objectives
2. integrate **knowledge creation and transfer** with an existing key business initiative
3. align **reward and recognition** structures to support knowledge transfer and reuse (as previously mentioned).
4. try to create an **open physical environment** with areas where people can have conversations without disturbing others.

Structure

The structure of your organisation is a critical success factors for knowledge-based work. Previously, companies had functional oriented structures which were effective and helped management have control. These no longer work today, when things change so quickly.

To create and transfer knowledge, different parts of the business or staff with different roles and skill sets need to communicate. Research also indicates that when staff collaborate, their individual talents add up to collective achievements. Work teams are emerging as the dominant organisational component of the new economy. They are more consistent with flatter, more flexible and more responsive organisations. Cross functional teams and Communities of Practice are ideal mechanisms for capitalising on multiple perspectives. They create value for their individual members as well as the organisation.

Even if they do not work on the same thing your staff can learn from each other's experiences and apply this new-found knowledge to their work. Mixing staff allows employees from all sorts of different social and work backgrounds to learn from their colleagues' experiences from a different perspective. Thus, they can bring fresh ideas to the project by thinking out of their comfort zone.

Research indicates that when staff collaborate, their individual talents add up to collective achievements

Motivation

As we talked about in the previous section, 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 it's part of their job. As a result, if you wish to encourage creative activities such as knowledge sharing and reuse you must design motivation and measurement systems that incorporate these activities.

Communication

The creative process is an information transformation process where information is gathered, processed and transferred. The right information must be made available to the right place, at the right time, and in the right format. Therefore, communication is vital. Frequent communication increases the amount of information directly in that more communication usually yields more information. Collaboration facilitates the cross fertilisation of ideas. Communication among employees and with outsiders stimulates their performance. Thus, the better that members relate to each other and with key outsiders the better their performance.

Make the right information available to the right place, at the right time, and in the right format
