



ORGANIZING FOR DELIBERATE INNOVATION

A Toolkit for Teams

CCMD
Roundtable on
the Innovative
Public Service

CHAired BY
RUTH DANTZER

BY
GEOFF DINSDALE
MARY MOORE
ANDREW GAUDES



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*The Public Service of the future is
“...dynamic and adaptive, flexible and responsive.
It values and rewards excellence
and innovation.”*

Clerk of the Privy Council, Eighth Annual Report to the Prime Minister

WORD FROM CCMD

A Word from CCMD

A public service that continually learns is better equipped to seize the fleeting opportunities found in our rapidly evolving economy and society. Research is a crucial vehicle of learning, but not just any kind of research will do. Research to address management challenges needs to be timely and relevant and offer practical advice. This is precisely what CCMD's Action-Research Roundtable process sets out to accomplish.

This is the second wave of research we have conducted in this highly successful format. Our consultations with managers identified five topics which require immediate research:

- Workplace Well-Being
- Internal Service Delivery
- Public Service Innovation
- Horizontal Mechanisms
- Science and Public Policy

These topics are of strategic importance to Canada's public service as a whole, yet they speak to the lived experiences of our fellow managers and their staff.

The Action-Research Roundtable on the Innovative Public Service produced this research report. It is the result of the contribution of the Roundtable members who felt this issue important, and took time from their busy schedules to contribute to this project.

I would especially like to thank the Chair of the project, Ruth Dantzer. Her leadership and the time and personal attention she gave to this project were instrumental in ensuring the quality of this report.

Jocelyne Bourgon



President
Canadian Centre for Management Development

The Action-Research Process



CCMD's action-research process brings together practitioners and experts from both inside and outside government. The group develops practical advice for dealing with pressing management challenges. The research process revolves around the deliberations of a diverse roundtable forum ideally suited for rapidly pooling and scrutinizing knowledge, insights and experiences. The research takes place over a year.

The management challenges are selected by managers and senior executives according to their urgency and importance to the public service as a whole. The objective is to provide leading-edge, focused and practical products that public service managers genuinely value and actively use within their work.

The Roundtable is supported by a secretariat composed of scholars and public service researchers.

WORD FROM THE CHAIR

A Word from the Chair

The word “innovation” sparks images of new technologies, R&D activities, and radical departures from old ways of doing things. But stimulating as those images are, they can also be confusing. How can public servants turn the exciting concept of innovation into practical, useful approaches and activities in their workplaces? How can they make the concept a reality? These were the questions the Roundtable on the Innovative Public Service asked itself and set out to answer.

The experience of working through the Roundtable to address these points was extremely rewarding. The Roundtable brought together representatives of the public sector, the private sector, and the academic world, to share their different perspectives and experiences of innovation. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of each of the volunteers on the Roundtable, and to thank them for making innovation their priority over the past number of months. Our paper is the result of hours of animated debate on key issues with respect to innovation.

Through our discussions, we found differing approaches and varying views of what constitutes innovation. But we also found some significant areas of agreement. We all agreed that public servants—and indeed all Canadians—are facing new challenges these days, and that innovation is critical if we are to meet those challenges. We agreed that we already have some valuable models of successful innovation, because departments and agencies are already innovating to better meet their mandates. We also agreed that, important as these existing models are, we need more innovation, and more understanding of how to make innovation work.

The Innovation Toolkit—the product of the Roundtable’s work—is designed to reflect these areas of agreement. It recognizes the need for innovation. It draws from case studies of organizations that have innovated successfully, to recognize and learn from the models that already exist. Perhaps most importantly, though, it provides a practical, deliberate approach for individuals and teams that want to maximize their potential to innovate. In other words, it helps equip all of us to innovate, to meet the challenges of today . . . and tomorrow.

I am excited about the accomplishments of the Roundtable, and about the toolkit’s potential to make innovation a bigger part of our future. But a toolkit alone will not lead to innovation. The challenge facing us all now is to make the toolkit work, to build on it with our own insights and experiences. It is up to us to use the toolkit, and to learn more about making innovation happen. It is up to us to innovate.

In closing, I would like to thank Geoff Dinsdale from CCMD, who worked tirelessly to transform the Roundtable discussions into a practical document. His dedication to the project and constant good humour made the work fun as well as rewarding.



Ruth Dantzer
Chair, CCMD’s Roundtable on the Innovative Public Service

Acknowledgements

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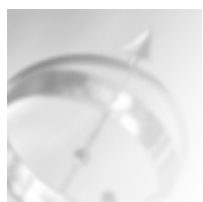


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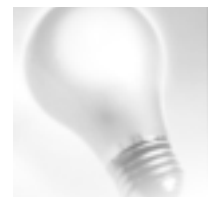
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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Our quality of life and standard of living during the next decade will depend critically on how innovative we are as a society¹. The public service will play a critical role in sustaining and improving the quality and standard of life for Canadians; our ability to innovate will be key in defining this role, given the direct impact it has on the lives of all citizens. For this reason, innovation in the public service is not just an option—it is essential to the well-being of Canadians. It cannot be left to chance, but should be pursued deliberately² and comprehensively.

Innovation has been described and defined in numerous ways. The Roundtable chose “**a transformative idea that works**” as its working definition. While there will always be active debate about what constitutes innovation, most people would agree that they “know innovation when they see it”. Innovation is about passion, purpose, and profound results.

This toolkit provides a powerful resource for group leaders to exploit the potential of their teams to generate transformative innovations. It provides teams with a practical and deliberate approach to innovation.

Innovation Defined



Innovation is the creative generation and application of new ideas that achieve a significant improvement in a product, program, process, service, structure or policy.

Simply put, innovation is about transformative ideas that work.

Roundtable Working Definition

¹ See Government of Canada, *Knowledge Matters: Canada's Innovation Strategy*, Ottawa, February 2002, www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca

² The need for innovation to be undertaken deliberately is noted in the 1998 *Innovation Survey*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, U.K. p. 22.

A Roadmap to the Toolkit

The toolkit is divided into five parts:

Part 1

Explores what innovation is, why it's important, and how it manifests itself.

Part 2

Explores the learning organization and how it provides the platform for innovative teamwork and thus innovation.

Part 3

Introduces the C-CAR (Common Purpose, Creative Ideas, Applicability and Results) model of innovation and a related tool to help teams identify areas where they can improve their approach to innovation.

Part 4

Builds directly upon Part 3 and provides the team with direct access to guidance and resources for identified priority areas.

Part 5

Explores key indicators of success and begins to move beyond teams to discuss organizational issues related to innovation.

Addressing Both “Big” and “Small” Innovations



There is much debate about how fundamental a change has to be before it is considered innovative. Does innovation include “smaller, incremental innovation” (e.g. a moderate advancement in how we do things), or just “big, transformative, innovation” (e.g. a ground-breaking advancement in how we do things or an entirely new way of doing things)?

While this toolkit focuses primarily on big, transformative innovations, the C-CAR innovation model presented in this toolkit applies equally well to big and small innovations.



The Challenge of a New Age

“...the complexity, unpredictability, and pace of events in our world, and the severity of global environmental stress, are soaring. If our societies are to manage their affairs and improve their well-being they will need more ingenuity—that is, more ideas for solving their technical and social problems.”

Thomas Homer-Dixon, The Ingenuity Gap, 2001

A DELIBERATE APPROACH...

Why is innovation demanding so much attention? Because the pace of change is increasing rapidly. The world is shifting from an industrial age to a knowledge age. Ideas have replaced money and muscle as the keys to success³. Issues are more interrelated, are characterized by risk, and are increasingly complex. As a result, solutions in every sector require ideas and information to be brought together in creative and fresh ways. Long-term effectiveness in this rapidly changing world requires moving beyond incremental improvements to transformative, ground-breaking improvements.

³ See Alvin Toffler, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century*, Bantam Books, New York, 1990.

Innovation extends beyond problem solving in at least two ways:

- **First**, problem solving often involves incremental improvements, whereas **innovation is defined by transformative or ground-breaking improvements**. If the “Wow, I can’t believe what we have done...I couldn’t have imagined it” factor is not apparent, the team may have solved a problem, but it likely has not innovated.
- **Second**, problem solving is often thought of as exclusively reactive—a problem is only addressed once it has been identified and the need to respond has become apparent. But in the public service, identifying opportunities before problems arise is critical. Failing to do so represents lost value for citizens. As a result, **innovation is not just about reacting to present problems, but seizing unique opportunities that can result in fundamental improvements**.

Innovation is a very broad term that captures a wide range of activities and outputs. In the private sector it is associated with:

- **products**, specifically new product lines;
- **services**, particularly in the form of improved service delivery; and
- **organizations**, with the capacity to take advantage of circumstance and seize opportunities to meet changing market demand.



“Innovation is not continuous change or improvement; it is a dissatisfaction with the present, and an excitement about the future.”

Steve Salmons, Windsor Public Library

Innovation in Government: Industry Canada’s SchoolNet*



Initially an idea generated between a manager and a co-op student, SchoolNet has evolved into a national, and multiple award winning, initiative. Its initial mandate was to move Canada’s 20,000 schools and libraries on-line by the end of the school year 1998-99, to better prepare Canadian youth for the emerging new economy.

SchoolNet worked in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, the education community and the private sector to support the connectivity of schools and the development of on-line educational resources and training models and to foster research on how best to integrate new technologies into the learning process. As a result of SchoolNet, on March 30, 1999, Canada became the first country in the world to connect its public schools, including First Nations schools, and public libraries to the Information Highway.

* This draws directly from a number of Industry Canada web-based sources, as well as from input from a former member of the SchoolNet project.

Part of what makes innovation such a powerful and important concept is that it applies equally to both the private and public sectors. Like the private sector, the public sector must seek new product lines in the form of new policies and programs. The parallels in terms of service delivery are obvious—witness E-government. The goal of having public sector organizations which are nimble enough to “seize the day” is one that we are continually striving for.

Given the importance of and demand for transformative innovation, and the fact that this type of change necessarily affects financial and human resources, it follows that the decision to innovate **should be deliberate**.

What do we mean by making innovation deliberate? There is an old saying that success is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. The same rule applies to innovation. While the single great idea—the eureka moment—is a thing of great value, the fact remains that much of getting to that moment is the hard work of putting the conditions in place for that moment to arrive.

A Focus on Teams...

Why are we focusing on teams in this toolkit?

Innovation has sometimes been hindered in the public service owing to incentives and structures focused on people working in silos where they manage their own assigned issues within specific business lines without the benefit of other perspectives and broader priorities. This model of work is highly effective for ensuring standardization and specialization and it can involve **teamwork**, but it does not generally involve **innovative teamwork**.

Many innovations are “sparked” by individuals. The lightbulb in the front of this paper is a reminder of the power of individual creative genius. In fact, the key to our future success as a nation is rooted in people’s skills, creativity, talents and knowledge⁴. However, given the complexity of the issues that the public service is addressing, the process of generating, assessing and implementing a transformative innovation is simply beyond the capacity of any single person.

⁴ This point is made in reference to all Canadians in: Government of Canada, *Knowledge Matters: Canada’s Innovation Strategy*, Ottawa, February 2002, www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca

At the same time, the focus here is not on organizational innovation either. While recognizing that there is nothing more powerful than a leader who can mobilize his or her organization for innovation, it is likely beyond the scope of an individual manager to carry out this kind of organizational change. In addition, in many cases bringing the staff of an entire organization to bear on an innovation can be unwieldy overkill and disrupt the conduct of day-to-day business.

Teams, however, overcome many of these challenges. First, teams are central to how public service organizations work and they have proven to be an effective way to conduct business. Second, teams can bring together a variety of people with diverse talent, perspectives, experience and skills in the knowledge that the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. In fact, recent research shows that approximately 50% of public service innovations originate from frontline staff and middle managers,⁵ and teams provide a uniquely powerful vehicle for bringing these individuals together and fostering innovation.

Innovation in Government: Town of Ajax*



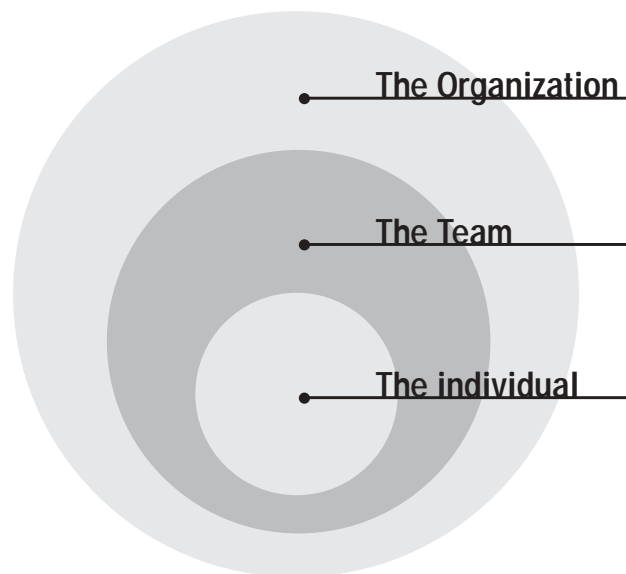
The town of Ajax is a rapidly growing community of 67,000 people just east of Toronto. During the budget squeezes of 1994 and 1995, Ajax introduced a program called STAR\$: “Saving the Town of Ajax Real Dollars.” To balance the town’s budget in an era of major cutbacks in provincial transfer payments, the town’s chief administrative officer challenged each employee to come up with at least two ideas for reducing costs or increasing revenues as part of the STAR\$ program. The 500 employees suggested over 3000 ways in which savings could be made and revenues expanded—an average of six ideas per employee. Over the course of 18 months, the implementation of the suggestions contributed \$1,600,000 towards balancing the town’s budget.

⁵ Sandford Borins, *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*, Feb. 2001, <http://www.excelsior.pwcglobal.com/knowledge/article.asp?artID=248>

* This example has been drawn directly from Kenneth Kernaghan, Brian Marson, and Sandford Borins, *The New Public Organization*, Institute of Public Administration of Canada, Toronto, 2000.

Three Levels of Innovation:

A FOCUS ON TEAMS



Third, *innovative teams* bring together talent and views from across the organization in new ways, while at the same time moving the team outside traditional constraints. Teams can be more nimble and creative by moving beyond the norms of routine business. By creating a team with a sense of common purpose and empowerment, the team will also have passion for the work they are doing. It is that very passion which will keep the team together and allow it to thrive.

The fact is that teams can boost the innovative potential of both individuals and organizations. They bring together creative individuals, freeing them to think beyond narrower perspectives and to find innovative responses to challenges. It is for these reasons that this toolkit focuses on teams. (References to various resources for both individual creativity and organizational innovation are provided in Appendix 2.)

To learn how to build and work with inter-organizational teams, see CCMD's publication *Moving From the Heroic to the Everyday: Lessons Learned from Leading Horizontal Projects* (www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca)



“None of us is as smart as all of us.”

Source: Unknown

Innovation in Government: The Ministry of Trade and Industry in Denmark*



In 1997 the Department of Trade and Industry changed from a traditional hierarchy into a project and team-oriented organization. Its old culture and organization were not handling new challenges well. As part of this process, nine separate divisions were dissolved, and three “competence centres” were created. People from these centres work in project groups and teams. Managers undertook new roles as coaches for project groups and teams. Coaching is generally provided if requested.

Decisions to initiate and staff projects are taken twice a year. Before starting projects, groups and teams have access to the organization’s MindLab, a group within the organization dedicated to helping teams maximize their innovation. This innovation has been such a success that it has now been adopted by the new and larger Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs.

* This information has been drawn from a paper presented at the Workshop of Peer-Reviewed Papers on Public Sector Innovation, held Saturday and Sunday, February 9 and 10, 2002 at the University of Ottawa Senate Chamber.

Laying the GROUNDWORK for INNOVATION



A Guide to the Learning Organization

CCMD has generated a practical guide for management called *The Learning Journey: A Guide to Achieving Excellence*. (www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca).

The Learning Organization

Many of the elements that foster innovative teamwork exist within the learning organization. The learning organization is in effect a collective process of reflecting on new ideas, knowledge and insights in order to continually improve its performance.⁶

Innovation and the learning organization are therefore inextricably linked, and can be considered companion pillars of high-performing organizations. The learning organization provides the supporting conditions for innovation, innovative teams generate significant leaps of progress, and the learning organization captures this new knowledge and integrates it throughout the organization.

⁶ This description draws from a working definition of the process of organizational learning used by the Learning and Development Committee, 2001.

The Learning Journey: A Guide to Achieving Excellence identifies the key elements of a learning organization, including:⁷

- **Common purpose** (expressed in the guide as a “shared vision”) can bring clarity to what members of a team or an organization want to accomplish together. It requires aligning the team’s values, principles and beliefs in terms of what the team wants to achieve and how it wants to achieve it.
- **Diversity** can help maximize creativity by bringing together people with differing skills, abilities and backgrounds. If everyone on the team is of like mind, opposition to the majority view can be considered troublesome and “buy in” can be considered excessively important.
- **Dialogue** helps to ensure that ideas are freely and candidly shared. It can help build awareness, understanding and commitment. It is about honest conversation, careful listening and open discussion. Team members teach each other new things and support each other. This is a true culture of learning.
- **Creative conflict** is designed to ensure that constructive and healthy conflict is not avoided because it can play a creative role, providing a means of challenging assumptions, revealing biases, scrutinizing evidence, and making arguments persuasive. Ideally, diverse views are brought to the table and new ideas flow from this creative conflict.
- **Humility** is about public servants recognizing existing limitations of the knowledge they have and being challenged to seek the knowledge they do not have.

The elements of common purpose and dialogue can be considered the glue that bind the team together and allow for healthy and effective diversity and creative conflict to propel the team—and by extension the organization—forward. The learning organization can also help senior management to effectively identify and select those fundamental and critical issues that justify a more comprehensive approach to innovation. To further build upon the innovative foundation provided by the learning organization and to make innovation more deliberate, the next part of the toolkit provides teams with a practical approach to innovation.

The Learning and Development Committee: Advancing Learning



Much work has been done to advance organizational learning principles within the public service. The Deputy Minister Learning and Development Committee (LDC) has suggested a continuous learning policy, highlighted potential initiatives to strengthen learning, and documented exemplary practices.

⁷ Canadian Centre for Management Development, *The Learning Journey: A Guide to Achieving Excellence*, Ottawa, 2000, and A Discussion Paper for the CCMD Roundtable on the Learning Organization, see www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca.



The C-CAR Model

Common purpose
Creative ideas
Applicability
Results

Using the C-CAR Model to Deliberately Organize for INNOVATION

Creating an environment to maximize your innovative ideas requires energy and commitment. But research shows that organizations of all shapes and sizes, public or private, can and do innovate.

The C-CAR⁸ model was created to provide a simple, practical and effective way to better organize teams for innovation. By deliberately organizing teams to take account of the following C-CAR characteristics, their **potential to generate innovative ideas that work can be maximized.**

⁸ C-CAR is pronounced “seek-er.” This model builds upon the “CAR” model of innovation created by Brian Marson, one of the members of CCMD’s Roundtable on the Innovative Public Service.

C

COMMON PURPOSE: ensures that the team members are clear about the issue they are tackling, and are confident that they are indeed tackling the right issue in the right manner. This involves conducting analyses to determine the exact nature of the issue and of the team's objectives. The team needs to determine what elements of the present approach don't work, what is driving the need for innovation (e.g. a change in policy, client demand, changing demographics) and what exactly are the criteria for a solution. As work progresses, it is also essential to revisit the definition of the problem to ensure the nature of the challenge is still the same as originally framed. The team needs commitment in order to ensure that energies are effectively and efficiently applied. By ensuring common focus, efforts to innovate will more likely be strategic, relevant and successful.

C

CREATIVE IDEAS: "Look-In and Look-Out": addresses three core areas. First, identifying characteristics of the team and its members (e.g. Do the competencies of team members match the issue being addressed? Do members of the team have different skills, learning styles and backgrounds?). Second, scanning and capturing ideas from inside and outside the organization (e.g. Does the team systematically track developments in its particular line of business?). Third, generating and sharing ideas (e.g. Are new ideas encouraged, supported, built upon, and welcomed regardless of seniority?).

A

APPLICABILITY: involves assessing creative ideas for their relevance and practicality, and answering the question: "Will this new idea work?" This can include proof of concept tests, business cases, consultations to ensure client needs are being met, or cost benefit analyses. In some cases the task may be achieved by including someone on the team who is intimately familiar with the practical and operational realities of the issue.

R

RESULTS: means that team members have a shared and clear idea of what success means and have the passion and commitment to get there. By having a clear understanding of what the team is trying to achieve, it is possible to develop useful indicators of success and measure actual progress against these indicators. Lessons learned are shared throughout the organization, and successful innovations are disseminated across the organization and the public service.

Did you know...

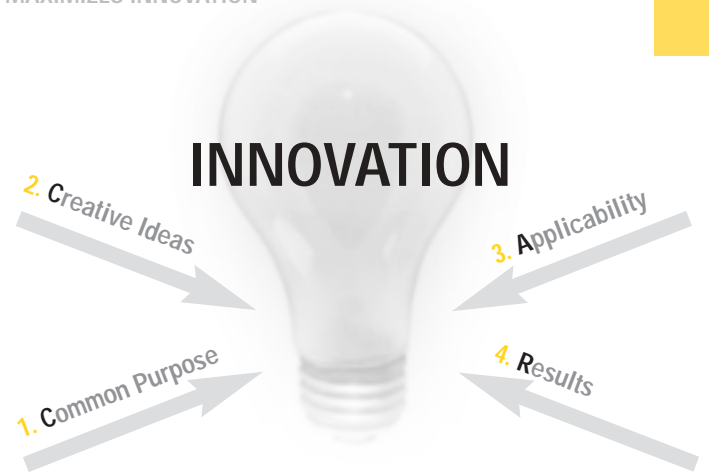


...that of fifteen case studies on continuously innovative public sector organizations, all attributed some part of their success to self-consciously visiting and revisiting their ultimate goals—questioning them, clarifying them, communicating them and working towards a common purpose?

Peter Buker, Case Studies of Continuously Innovative Public Sector Organizations (Draft), 2002.

Figure 1

THE SYNERGY OF C-CAR ELEMENTS
MAXIMIZES INNOVATION



As graphically represented in **Figure 1**, it is the synergy of these four elements that creates an environment which maximizes the potential for innovation. When innovation is purposeful and strategic, these elements are not left to chance but are actively managed and supported.

The **C-CAR Tool**: A Checklist and Self-Assessment

In this section, the C-CAR model has been transformed into a tool to help teams be deliberate about innovation; to help them organize to generate innovative ideas that work. To this end, this tool can be used as both:

1. **A checklist** to help new teams prepare for each element of the C-CAR model; and/or
2. **A self-assessment** to help teams *that have already started to work on elements of the C-CAR model* to identify areas of relative strength and weakness.

Using the **C-CAR Self-Assessment**

When administering the C-CAR instrument, it is possible to use the entire assessment or just specific sections. For example, if the team is at the stage of establishing a Common Purpose, it may be premature to administer the Results section of the instrument. But remember, even if the team has already completed certain C-CAR elements, the team should still assess them. For example, if the team has already established a Common Purpose and is now scanning the environment for ideas, it is still useful to assess the Common Purpose to determine whether there is a need for the team to revisit it.

Instructions for scoring the assessment and initiating a dialogue based on the results appear at the end of the self-assessment.

Directions for Administering the C-CAR Self-Assessment

There are four steps involved in applying the assessment instrument:

1

Assemble the team and distribute a copy of the questionnaire to each member. To help ensure candour, respondents should not write their name on the questionnaire so that responses cannot be attributed to particular individuals.

Two terms are used very specifically for purposes of this assessment, and each should be made clear before respondents fill out the assessment:

- **Team** refers to the group of people that work on a specific problem or opportunity.
- **Organization** refers to the larger enterprise in which you work, such as a government department or agency.

2

Respondents should be informed that if they do not know the answer to a question or if it is not applicable to them, they should leave the question blank.

3

Each team member should fill out the questionnaire. It should take approximately 15 minutes for the entire questionnaire.

The total at the end of each section should not be tabulated by respondents but by the staff carrying out the post-assessment analysis.

4

One person should administer and collect the questionnaire and lead the dialogue about the results.



COMMON PURPOSE

SECTION 1:

The Organization's Mission

In the following space, write down what you believe to be the key aspects of your **organization's** mission. *(Feel free to use point form.)*

SECTION 2:

The Team's Objective

In the following space, write down what you believe to be the key aspects of your **team's** objective. *(Feel free to use point form.)*

Directions: for each of the following sections, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

SECTION 3:

Mission and Objective

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|----------|-------|----------------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | I understand my team's objective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | My team members have a shared understanding of our objective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | I understand how my team contributes to my organization's mission. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | My team has fully discussed its objective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E | My team regularly revisits the central question it is addressing to see if it needs refining (i.e. the team revisits and if needed refines the question in light of new information or developments). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| F | I felt that there was an open dialogue within the team to establish our common purpose. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| G | I am committed to my team's objective. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] | | | | <input type="text"/> |



CREATIVITY “LOOK IN—LOOK OUT”

SECTION 4: Team Characteristics

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|-------|--|--|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | Team members have an appropriate mix of skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | Team members have diverse ways of thinking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | Team members challenge each other in constructive ways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | Everyone gets a chance to contribute at team meetings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E | Everyone feels comfortable contributing ideas at team meetings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| F | Someone with experience in implementation (e.g. works with the issue in the field) is on our team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] <input type="text"/> | | | |

SECTION 5:
Environmental Scan

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|--------------|--|---|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | Team members continuously scan the environment (for emerging ideas, threats and opportunities). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | Outside experts are brought in to talk to the team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | Team members stay abreast of the most current knowledge within their field of work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | The team strikes strategic partnerships with other organizations to actively share knowledge. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E | Clients are consulted regularly to ensure a better understanding of their needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| F | There is a process in place to capture ideas from both inside and outside the organization (e.g. promising ideas are stored in a common location such as a shared file). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| G | Team members can easily access captured ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;"> <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid gray;" type="text"/> </div> | | | |



SECTION 6:
Idea Generation

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|----------|--|--------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | I am encouraged to propose new ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | I am encouraged to look at problems in radically different ways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | I am encouraged to share ideas broadly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | I am encouraged to collaborate with other team members. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E | The resources (i.e. knowledge and tools) required to generate ideas are easily accessible to team members. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| F | Team members are free to bring ideas forward, regardless of their formal position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| G | I am able to take “acceptable risks” when necessary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| H | I have sufficient time to define problems before taking action. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I | Team members regularly employ techniques to boost their creativity (e.g. brainstorming sessions). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Cont'd on p. 32

(Cont'd from p. 31)

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|--------------|--|---|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| J | The ideas I generate are judged fairly and constructively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| K | Team members build upon each other's ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] | | | |
| | | <input type="text"/> | | | |



APPLICABILITY

SECTION 7: Applicability of Creative Ideas

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|--------------|--|---|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | Potentially innovative ideas are not dismissed prematurely (i.e. ideas are nurtured before being rigorously assessed). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | Constructive and critical analysis is conducted to determine if full implementation of an idea is viable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | Ideas are discussed with a focus on client needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | Applicability of a new idea is discussed with those responsible for implementation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E | The risks involved in applying the idea are considered (i.e. what could go wrong?). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] | | | |
| | | <input type="text"/> | | | |

RESULTS

SECTION 8: Identification and Celebration of Results

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | My team has a clear understanding of what success will look like. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | My team is confident that the innovative idea represents a fundamental improvement over the status quo. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | Specific indicators of success are developed for the innovative idea (e.g. to ensure the idea is simple, appealing, and executable). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | The suitability of the idea is checked against the indicators of success. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| E | Team members celebrate their innovative ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| F | My team is recognized for its successful innovative ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] <input type="text"/> | | | | |

SECTION 9:
Dissemination of Successful Innovative Ideas

| | | LEVEL OF AGREEMENT | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| A | Information about successful ideas is disseminated throughout the organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| B | Information about successful ideas is disseminated to other areas of the public service. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| C | Information about successful ideas is disseminated to other governments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| D | Information about successful ideas is disseminated to other sectors (i.e. private and non-profit). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | [Post-assessment tabulation: add up the values, divide by the number of questions completed, and write the total in the box.] <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; margin-left: 10px;" type="text"/> | | | | |

Scoring the Assessment

Once all the assessments are received, they should be identified by a number (e.g. Respondent 1, Respondent 2)—not by name. This will help ensure respondents' anonymity. To score the results, we suggest the following:

- For the open-ended questions in sections 1 and 2, compare each of the responses to the “actual” mission of the organization or objective of the team. Also compare responses to see if they are consistent or not. The purpose here is not to generate a sophisticated scientific analysis of the responses (although this could be done), but to conduct a simple analysis that identifies gaps and insights that can fuel useful debate and discussion among team members as to the exact nature of the team's common purpose.
- For the closed questions in sections 3 through 9, enter the section totals for each respondent into the table below⁹ and follow the directions provided. By following the directions you will generate section totals, which will point to areas of relative strength or weakness.

Following this exercise, turn to page 38 for further directions.

⁹ This table draws from an illustrative table provided in *Inventaire des styles de groupe, Guide du participant*, Human Synergistics Inc., Quebec, 1997, p. 60.

TABULATING SECTIONS 3-9: CLOSED QUESTIONS

Respondents (Write section totals for each respondent in boxes below)

| Respondent 1 | Respondent 2 | Respondent 3 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|

COMMON PURPOSE

Objective and Mission / SECTION 3

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 3}$$

CREATIVITY: "LOOK IN—LOOK OUT"

Team Characteristics / SECTION 4

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 4}$$

Environmental Scan / SECTION 5

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 5}$$

Idea Generation / SECTION 6

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 6}$$

APPLICABILITY

Applicability of Creative Ideas / SECTION 7

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 7}$$

RESULTS

Identification and Celebration of Results / SECTION 8

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 8}$$

Dissemination of Successful Innovative Ideas / SECTION 9

$$\square + \square + \square = \square \div \text{by \# of respondents } \square = \text{Total of SECTION 9}$$

Discussing Your Results

and Planning Action

- Once the scores for each section have been tabulated, your team may find it useful to discuss the findings and identify a limited number of areas for action. These areas will be the two or three sections where you scored the lowest out of a possible score of 4. For each of sections 1 through 9, you will find guidance to direct your improvement efforts in Part 4 of this toolkit.

Once the team has identified the sections where it wants to focus its efforts, you will want to approach Part 4 of this toolkit in one of two ways:

1. **A general approach:** Read the guidance provided for the entire two or three sections that the team has agreed to focus on. This will provide you with a broad base of information from which the team can work to further optimize its capacity to innovate.
2. **A strategic approach:** Go back to the assessment, and in those sections that the team identified as a priority, tabulate the totals for each statement. This will involve adding together the total responses for each statement (e.g. questions “a” through “d” in section 9) and then dividing the total for each statement by the number of people that responded to it. This will give you a score out of 4, and will allow you to identify the specific statements for which the team scored the lowest. Instead of focusing on entire sections, the team can then strategically focus its improvement efforts on specific statements within sections.

To assist you in finding the guidance you need with respect to these specific statements, Part 4 has been designed as a quick reference resource. Under each of the four elements of the C-CAR model, the guidance provided corresponds directly to the sections (1 through 9) and statements (e.g. “a” through “g”) of the self-assessment, allowing the team to go directly to the sections and statements that concern it most.



Strengthening your **Approach** to **INNOVATION**

Strategic Guidance and Resources for Teams

This section is a resource for each of the four C-CAR priority elements. The material presented here draws heavily from the literature on innovation as well as on a study of 15 continuously innovative public service organizations authored by Dr. Peter Buker.¹⁹ Building upon these sources, this section offers advice and guidance on to how deliberately organize teams to maximize their innovation potential. This guidance is not exhaustive, but a useful launching point for you and your team.

As noted earlier, this part of the toolkit corresponds directly to the C-CAR model and the sections and statements of the self-assessment tool.

¹⁹ Peter Buker, *Fifteen CIPDs: Case Studies of Continuously Innovative Public Sector Organizations (Draft)*, Institute of Public Administration of Canada for the Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2002.

COMMON PURPOSE

SECTIONS 1 – 3:

Mission and Objective

Common purpose is vital to innovative organizations and teams. It is necessary to ensure that the team is clear in terms of its objectives, the threats it is facing and the opportunities it wants to seize.


If your team outlined different perceptions in sections 1 and 2 and/or indicated low levels of agreement in section 3 (“a”, “b”, “c” and “d”) it is important that time be spent discussing your common purpose. The questions in section 3 provide an appropriate framework for re-engaging the team in discussing common purpose.

“The starting point for the journey to greater innovativeness is to ask hard questions and provide honest answers about why the organization [in this case team] exists, whom it serves, and how it will know if it is succeeding.”¹¹ Asking these questions and regularly discussing what the team is trying to achieve, even if it is tackling the right issues/questions, is a healthy process that keeps the team relevant and ensures that everyone is and remains “on the same page”.

Statement “e”: Revisiting Your Common Purpose

If your team indicated low levels of agreement for statement “e”, you need to remember that regular discussions about your team’s common purpose are essential. Missions and objectives are not static; they are continuously evolving as a result of changes in the internal and external environments.

Not only do regular discussions help ensure that your team shares a common purpose, but they also serve as a forum for the initial stage of the innovation process: the recognition of a need, be it a threat or an opportunity. Revisiting this issue will help ensure that the nature of the issue being addressed is still the same as when originally framed.



“Innovation means ‘Nothing is out of the Question!’”

Rob Deyman, City of Waterloo

¹¹ See Paul Light, *Sustaining Innovation: Creating Nonprofit and Government Organizations that Innovate Naturally*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1998, p. 60.



Statements “f” and “g”: Ensuring Team Members are Involved and Committed

If your team members indicated that they did not feel as though they were involved in developing the team’s common purpose, or that they were not committed to the team’s common purpose, it might be useful to spend some time discussing personal missions. As Paul Light noted after a study of 26 organizations, “the question ‘Why am I here?’ is just as important in building an innovative organization or team as ‘Why are we here?’”¹² The fact is that all public servants share a common purpose of providing the best advice to ministers and the best service to Canadians. This is where public servants derive passion and commitment for their work. But the ways in which individual organizations and teams advance this common purpose will differ depending on their unique mandates and circumstances. As a result, discussing personal, team, organizational and public service-wide objectives is a useful investment that can help to create a climate of shared understanding, unity and purpose within the team.

For further information concerning common purpose see:

Chartier, Bob. *Tools for Leadership and Learning*
http://leadership.gc.ca/static/leaderskit/tools_e.shtml

Light, Paul. *Sustaining Innovation: Creating Nonprofit and Government Organizations that Innovate Naturally*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1998.

Mumford, Michael. “*Managing Creative People: Strategies and Tactics for Innovation*,” *Human Resource Management Review*, Volume 10, Number 3, 2000, pp. 313-351.

Walters, Jonathan. *Understanding Innovation: What Inspires It? What Makes It Successful?* PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, December 2001.

¹² See Paul Light, *Sustaining Innovation: Creating Nonprofit and Government Organizations that Innovate Naturally*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1998, p. 60.

CREATIVITY: “LOOK IN – LOOK OUT”

SECTION 4:

Team Characteristics


Statements “a” and “b”: Creating Diversity

The characteristics of the team are vital to its creative output. One way to foster creativity and address the issues identified in statements “a” and “b” of section 4 is to build teams with membership from diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking, as well as from different levels within the organization.¹³ This is critical for ensuring that new ideas are brought to the table, and that assumptions and biases are challenged. In addition to having a diverse team, it is also important to share excitement about the team’s goals and demonstrate a willingness to help each other and to recognize the uniqueness of others. Acceptance of diversity may be difficult but it is an essential ingredient for success.

In considering the characteristics of the team, it is also useful to select employees who are “*comfortable with ambiguity*”. This will help the team and organization to pass through the early stages of innovation.¹⁴ Other research has found that team members who are curious and persistently interested are also an asset.¹⁵

Our case studies found that, when innovating, employees show certain characteristics that appear related to motivation:

- pride in work;
- passion for work;
- fun at work;
- affinity for challenging work; and
- enjoyment of a healthy sense of competition.



“The one universal and ‘special’ competency area shared by all the staff in Newfoundland’s Centre for Learning Development is that they have ‘comfort with ambiguity’. This one psychological characteristic is key to innovative thinking.”

Roma Bridger, Centre for Learning and Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

¹³ Sandford Borins, *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, February 2001, p. 7.

¹⁴ Peter Buker, *Fifteen CIPOs: Case Studies of Continuously Innovative Public Sector Organizations (Draft)*, Institute of Public Administration of Canada for the Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2002.

¹⁵ Michael Mumford, “Managing Creative People: Strategies and Tactics for Innovation,” *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 10, Number 2, 2000, p. 317.



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Statement “c”: Leveraging Diversity so Team Members Challenge Each Other Positively

“The reason that many organizations find diversity difficult to handle is the obvious one—people with viewpoints and preferences that are too far apart find it difficult to work together.”¹⁶ However, it is possible to harness and embrace diversity. “The art of making this tension creative is to work with climate and process to minimize the interpersonal conflicts and maximize productive dissent.”¹⁷ In order to do this, an environment of trust must be cultivated between group members and with leaders. This will encourage people to freely share ideas and will help build a sense of unity.

Statements “d” and “e”: Maximizing Contributions and Comfort

Having a diverse team drawing on employees from all levels in the hierarchy and ensuring they are comfortable and contributing involves thinking in the “Bigger Box”. The “Bigger Box” phenomenon is about moving beyond each team member’s roles and responsibilities in the hierarchy. It is about embracing a broader view as to what is possible regarding the issue being addressed. Further techniques for thinking in the “Bigger Box” include:

- making “everyone a leader” by redefining leadership so it applies to everyone;
- nurturing a culture of support (and potentially supplementing this through in-house courses on leadership); and
- using “high quality” communication or face-to-face interaction with leaders.

This process can involve “floor walking” and “open-door policies” on the part of leaders.¹⁸ By thinking in the “Bigger Box” and cultivating an environment which emphasizes encouragement and support, the level of comfort and unity within a team can be strengthened. It is also critical to ensure that team members feel there is a climate of trust—trust that fellow team members will genuinely support and encourage them, that their ideas will be received positively, and that they work in a healthy and constructive environment. This can help to ensure that team members feel comfortable moving beyond their traditional confines, and speaking out at meetings.

Statement “f”: Including Someone with Implementation Experience

In considering statement “f” of the questionnaire, you need to ensure that someone that works with the practical dimensions of the issue being addressed on a day-to-day basis is part of the team. For example, in the creation of a new policy, you will want to ensure that someone involved in the operations or service delivery end of the policy participates in the idea generation stage. This will bring a practical perspective to the table, and will help keep the group rooted in the realities of the issue.

¹⁶ 1998 Innovation Survey, PricewaterhouseCoopers, U.K, p. 20.

¹⁷ 1998 Innovation Survey, PricewaterhouseCoopers, U.K, p. 20.

¹⁸ Peter Buker, Fifteen CIPOs: Case Studies of Continuously Innovative Public Sector Organizations (Draft), Institute of Public Administration of Canada for the Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2002.



The 15 case studies show that diversity among team members and crossing thought boundaries increases the probability of innovation. “Leadership has hired people who have huge diversity in disciplines, in styles, in ages, and in backgrounds - they don’t suffer from ‘group think’; this leads to a lot of innovative thinking you generally wouldn’t find in other organizations.”

Peter Larose, Strategic Policy, HRDC

For further information concerning creativity and team characteristics see:

Amabile, Teresa. “How to Kill Creativity,” *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998, pp. 77-87.

Borins, Sandford. *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*. PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, February 2001, <http://www.excelsior.pwcglobal.com/knowledge/article.asp?artID=248>

Canadian Centre for Management Development.
The Learning Journey: A Guide to Achieving Excellence.

Mumford, Michael. “Managing Creative People: Strategies and Tactics for Innovation,” *Human Resource Management Review*, Volume 10, Number 3, 2000, pp. 313-351.

1998 Innovation Survey, PricewaterhouseCoopers, U.K.

SECTION 5:

Environmental Scan

Statement “a”: Scanning the Environment

Scanning the environment and formalizing a form of fact-based feedback is crucial to innovation. If the team does not agree with statement “a” of section 5, there are many options to consider. Team members could scan the environment for emerging threats and opportunities by making site visits and by participating in professional



Most innovation comes from chance encounters with an event, person or situation. Scanning your environment can increase these encounters.

Peter Buker, Case Studies of Continuously Innovative Public Sector Organizations (Draft), 2002.



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networks.¹⁹ This could also be done through employee exchanges and by having employees “crossing boundaries”—working horizontally within and across organizational units. These types of approaches can help reduce the tunnel vision people have from working in “silos” or “stovepipes” and release their synergistic creativity. Scanning the environment is important as it exposes team members to potential opportunities and threats, as well as new knowledge. This can be useful in helping teams refine or, if needed, redefine, the issue they are addressing and their common purpose.

Statement “b”: Involving Outside Experts

As indicated in statement “b” of section 5, bringing experts in to talk about a diverse array of subjects is also useful. It can facilitate an understanding of various initiatives that might be utilized elsewhere and can help to identify some barriers that might be faced when attempting to undertake certain initiatives. This may also help the team to further refine their approach to problem solving.

Statements “c” and “d”: Staying Abreast of Developments and Striking Partnerships

Outside experts may also be useful in keeping team members abreast of the most current knowledge within their fields of work, as indicated in statement “c” of the questionnaire. Another way to keep people abreast of their field is to encourage them to read materials relevant to their area of business (such as academic journals), and to let them know that reading is an important part of their job—not an add on—to which they should dedicate time. It is also beneficial to strike strategic partnerships with organizations, or enter communities of practice such as professional or functional networks, in order to facilitate knowledge sharing (see statement “d” of the questionnaire). This is one of the best strategies for staying abreast of current developments in an ongoing fashion.

Statement “e”: Knowing and Understanding Your “Clients”²⁰

Scanning the environment is useful in helping the team get in touch with their clients (see statement “e” of the questionnaire). Consulting clients regularly can help the team to better understand and meet their needs.²¹ More information on how to tap into client needs and expectations is provided in section 7, “c” below.

¹⁹ Sandford Borins, *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, February 2001, p. 7.

²⁰ ‘Client’ may not be the best term to use here. There is much debate as to the labels of people that receive services from the public service. For further information on customers, clients, citizens, beneficiaries and stakeholders, see Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Quality Services Guide XII: Who is the Client?* - A Discussion Paper (Ottawa: June 1996), and Canada, Privy Council Office/Canadian Centre for Management Development, *A Strong Foundation: Report of the Study Team on Public Service Values and Ethics* (Ottawa: 1996), p. 39.

²¹ For an informative article on working with customers to make innovation “a manageable, predictable discipline.” see “The Customer Knows Best? Better Think Again,” *HBS Working Knowledge*, March 4, 2002, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/pubitem.jhtml?id=2815&sid=0&pid=0&t=customer>.

Statements “f” and “g”: Capturing and Accessing Ideas

In order to make the most of innovative ideas there must be a process and a place established (see statements “f” and “g” of the self-assessment) which enable team members to easily capture and access ideas that are harvested from within or outside the organization. It is therefore crucial to ensure that information concerning new ideas, and information that helps team members to stay up to date with the knowledge in their field, is kept in a central and common location so that it is easily accessible.

For further information concerning creativity and environment scans see:

Amabile, Teresa. “How to Kill Creativity,” *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998, pp. 77-87.

Borins, Sanford. *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*. PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, February 2001, <http://www.excelsior.pwcglobal.com/knowledge/article.asp?artID=248>

Canadian Centre for Management Development. *Moving from the Heroic to the Everyday: Lessons Learned from Leading Horizontal Projects*.

Delbecq, Andre and Peter Mills. “Managerial Practices that Enhance Innovation”, pp. 24-34.

Mumford, Michael. “Managing Creative People: Strategies and Tactics for Innovation,” *Human Resource Management Review*, Volume 10, Number 3, 2000, pp. 313-351.

Treasury Board Secretariat. *Quality Services Guide XII: Who is the Client?—A Discussion Paper* (1996-08-16), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/opepubs/TB_O/siglist_e.html

Tushman, Michael. “Communication Across Organization Boundaries: Special Boundary Roles in the Innovation Process,” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, December 1977.

Did you know...

... that Veterans Affairs has its own virtual Innovation Centre?



SECTION 6: Idea Generation

Statement “a”: Proposing New Ideas

“Creative thinking refers to how people approach problems and solutions—their capacity to put existing ideas together in new combinations.”²² Given this, it is necessary that people be encouraged to propose novel ideas, as indicated in statement “a” of section 6 of the self-assessment. In discussing encouragement, it is also important to discuss motivation as this “determines what people will actually do.”²³ Teresa Amabile provides a good example of the importance of motivation. When discussing the situation of a scientist, she states that “the scientist can have outstanding educational credentials and a great facility in generating new perspectives to old problems. But if she lacks the motivation to do a particular job, she simply won’t do it; her expertise and creative thinking will go untapped or be applied to something else.”²⁴ There are two types of motivation that can be identified—extrinsic and intrinsic. While the first includes such things as externally oriented rewards (e.g. financial rewards), it is intrinsic motivation that may be considered most important in encouraging the generation of new ideas.²⁵ Intrinsic motivation refers to people’s passion, interest and internal desire to do something. “When people are intrinsically motivated, they engage in their work for the challenge and enjoyment of it. The work itself is motivating.”²⁶ The key is to determine how your team, and individual team members, are motivated, and then to align incentives with this as best as possible.

Statement “b”: Looking at Problems in Different Ways

Encouraging people to look at problems in radically different ways, as indicated in statement “b” of the questionnaire, is also vital. Over time, competencies, processes and mental models that have proven successful in the past can become a habit and embedded within an organization. This can undermine staff’s ability to generate and implement new ideas that depart from past ways of operating. For this reason, it is necessary for organizations to be able to “forget” or “unlearn” the way things have been done in the past.²⁷

Statements “c” and “d”: Sharing Ideas and Collaborating with Others

If your team indicated low levels of agreement with statements “c” and “d” of the questionnaire, warning bells should sound. If people are not encouraged to share ideas and collaborate with others the chance that innovation will occur becomes less likely. As is mentioned throughout this toolkit, there are many ways to encourage collaboration and the sharing of ideas, including the use of electronic mailing lists, where people can share ideas and information they feel may be useful to the team, as well as shared electronic or paper files and “open door” policies.

²² ²³ ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ Teresa Amabile, “How to Kill Creativity”, *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998, p. 79.

²⁷ See for example, Eric Clemons, *Innovation and the Learning Organization*, September 18, 2001.

Statement “e”: Ensuring Necessary Resources Are Accessible

Electronic bulletin boards and websites are ways to ensure that the knowledge required to generate ideas is easily accessible to team members, as is pointed out in statement “e” of the questionnaire. This is important because it doesn’t matter how much knowledge is captured, if it is not easily accessed by members of the team its potential will go unfulfilled. Again, you may want to ensure that there is a central location for resources that is accessible to all team members. In addition to access to ideas and knowledge, team members need access to appropriate tools, such as library services, the Internet, techniques for idea generation and diagnostic instruments. The easiest approach is to simply ask your people what they need.

Statement “f”: Providing Freedom to Bring Forward Ideas

To encourage the sharing of innovative ideas, managers and leaders must play an essential role by facilitating open communication. There are two different types of interaction up and down the chain of command—one is about authority and accountability, and the other is about information and feedback. Innovative organizations and teams remove information flows from the “chain of command” precisely to enhance the flow of information and to tap into the whole organization for innovative ideas. This approach ensures that one person cannot “stop” an idea, because it easily reaches a range of audiences and decision makers who can benefit from it. Possibilities include:

- the use of “open forums” via electronic mail that involve communications up and down the hierarchy, skipping rungs in the organizational ladder;
- incorporating people into *ad hoc* teams or networks based on their experience and skills and not on their position;
- having leaders consistently and frequently communicate broad organizational plans to *all* employees; and
- having senior leaders actively solicit candid input and feedback in frequent contacts with all levels of the hierarchy (e.g. via “suggestion box” programs or employee surveys).



“... in a crude sense, the statistical odds of finding creative individuals or their innovative ideas are increased phenomenally by accessing the *whole* organization.”

Peter Buker, Case Studies of Continuously Innovative Public Sector Organizations (Draft), 2002

When pondering how to foster creativity, it is important to remember that serendipity matters. Like all creative activity, formal structures tend only to set the scene for innovation; most innovative ideas come from chance encounters with an event, person or situation. Those chances can be significantly increased by utilizing mechanisms that involve all employees in the organization's greater vision, by ensuring that team members and all members in an organization, regardless of their level or position, feel free to bring ideas forward, as indicated in statement "f" of the questionnaire. Building fluid structures within the organization that get people from different parts of the organization working together within well-defined mandates can also increase the chances of serendipity.

Statement "g": Taking Acceptable Risks

To further foster the generation and sharing of novel ideas, people must be encouraged to take "acceptable risks" when necessary. This requires a common understanding by team members of what an "acceptable risk" is. To feel confident in their actions, you need to ensure there is a shared understanding of what is acceptable and what is not, when permission is needed to take a risk and when it is not.

Statement "h": Providing Time To Define Problems

It is also critical that people have enough time to define problems before they take action, as outlined in statement "h". "Organizations routinely kill creativity with false deadlines or impossibly tight ones. The former creates distrust and the latter causes burnout. In either case, people feel over-controlled and unfulfilled, which invariably damages motivation. Moreover, creativity often takes time."²⁸

Statement "i": Employing Creativity Techniques

Defining problems might be facilitated by having team members regularly employ techniques to boost their creativity, as indicated in statement "i". This can include such things as "brainstorming sessions", "mind mapping", "creative problem-solving techniques", "taking time to reflect", drawing the problem or creating a metaphor for it, or continuing to ask "why" in order to drill down into the issue. For additional information and techniques regarding individual creativity, see the resources provided in Appendix 2 of this document.

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"Sometimes you get a brainstorm,
sometimes you just get the clouds."

²⁸ Teresa Amabile, "How to Kill Creativity", *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998, p. 82.

Statement “j”: Judging Ideas Fairly and Constructively

It is also crucial that ideas put forth by team members be judged fairly and constructively, as indicated in statement “j” of section 6. If they are not, people will not feel motivated to seek new ideas or to share them with the team. This is detrimental as “when creativity is killed, an organization loses a potent competitive weapon: new ideas. It can also lose the energy and commitment of its people.”²⁹ It is also important to emphasize persistence. If an idea is not well received by one person, it does not mean the idea does not have potential and will not be well received by another.

Statement “k”: Building Upon Each Other’s Ideas

Finally, as noted above and indicated in statement “k” of the questionnaire, it is important that team members not automatically “shoot down” new ideas. It is easy to respond to any new idea by finding what is wrong with it. The greater challenge is to explore the art of the possible, to generate creative synergy, and to see how the idea can be built upon and strengthened.

There are many different tools and approaches for doing this, such as dialogues. As William Isaacs points out, a dialogue is “a shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something you do to another person. It is something you do with people . . . Dialogue is a living experience of inquiry *within* and *between* people.”³⁰ A dialogue is not about proving others wrong or responding with polite diplomacy. It is about frank and open conversation, the respectful exchange of ideas, the suspension of rash judgments and perhaps, most importantly, careful listening. To use Isaacs’ phrase, dialogue is a “conversation with a center, not sides.”³¹ Ideas can also be developed through techniques such as Edward De Bono’s Six Thinking Hats. Among other things, this technique can help ensure that both the benefits and disadvantages, as well as strategies for overcoming the disadvantages of an idea, are addressed when it is being considered.

Once team members have had sufficient time to contribute to an idea and it has been nurtured to its full potential, the idea can enter the applicability stage, at which time its strengths and weaknesses can be considered in a more rigorous fashion. If ideas are to spring from the team, its members need to be able to trust that their new ideas will be both welcomed and nurtured.

²⁹ Teresa Amabile, “How to Kill Creativity”, *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998, p. 87.

^{30 31} W. N. Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, Currency, New York, 1999.



CREATIVITY
"LOOK IN – LOOK OUT"

For further information concerning creativity and encouraging idea generation and sharing see:

Abra, J. "Collaboration in creative work: An initiative for investigation," *Creativity Research Journal*, Volume 8, 1994, pp. 205-218.

Amabile, Teresa. "How to Kill Creativity," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998, pp. 77-87.

Amabile, Teresa, Robert Burnside and Stanley Gryskiewicz. *User's Manual for KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity*. Greensboro: Center for Creative Leadership, 1998.

Amabile, Teresa. "Entrepreneurial creativity through motivational synergy." *Journal of Creative Behavior*, Volume 31, 1997, pp. 18-26.

Backer, T. E. "On work place creativity: Psychological, environmental and organizational strategies," *Creativity Research Journal*, Volume 5, 1992, pp. 439-441.

Borins, Sandford. *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*. PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, February 2001, <http://www.excelsior.pwcglobal.com/knowledge/article.asp?artID=248>

Canadian Centre for Management Development. *A Foundation for Developing Risk Management Learning Strategies in the Public Service*, 2001.

Chartier, Bob. *Tools for Leadership and Learning*, http://leadership.gc.ca/static/leaderskit/tools_e.shtml

De Bono, Edward. *Six Thinking Hats*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

Delbecq, Andre and Peter Mills. "Managerial Practices that Enhance Innovation", pp. 24-34.

Mumford, Michael. "Managing Creative People: Strategies and Tactics for Innovation," *Human Resource Management Review*, Volume 10, Number 3, 2000, pp. 313-351.

APPLICABILITY

SECTION 7:

Applicability of Creative Ideas

Statement “a”: Nurturing—Not Prematurely Dismissing—Ideas

Building upon statement “k” of section 6, support should be given to nurture the potential of an idea before it is rigorously assessed.³² It is easy to undermine ideas with simple “Yes, but...” The real challenge is to focus the energies and talents of the team on the idea and explore the “What ifs...”. As noted, the art of the possible can be explored through various techniques such as brainstorming and dialogue sessions.

Premature evaluation has the potential to discourage and kill innovative ideas. To avoid this, it is useful to employ a two-stage assessment process.³³ During the first stage, ideas should be broadly supported and developed before proceeding to the evaluation stage where they are more rigorously assessed and evaluated. This may be done in the form of risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses. Using this two-stage process “tends to encourage both a higher flow of new ideas and new knowledge and a greater spread of applicability.”³⁴

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“The committee met to approve your idea. But first we had to approve the approval, providing everyone agreed to disagree to approve the agreement which approved the approval agreement. After that, things got complicated.”

³² ³³ ³⁴ 1998 *Innovation Survey*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, U.K, p. 43.



APPLICABILITY

Clearly, a willingness to take risks can be an important factor in entertaining departures from past practice and exploring and building new ideas. Leadership can sanction risks associated with innovative initiatives by accepting responsibility for failures of innovative initiatives. This provides protection for their employees. The team can also share the risk, thus providing a structure to circumvent individual blame for failure. Leaders should also communicate to the team that there are two classes of mistakes: mistakes made attempting an innovative initiative are treated as “learning opportunities”, while mistakes involving laziness, incompetence and so on are handled in a traditional manner. Another way that team members can be encouraged to take risks is to celebrate failed innovative attempts by giving out a “Bloopers Awards” or by encouraging the individuals involved to try the innovation again using a different approach.

Statement “b”: Ensuring Viability

If your team indicated a low level of agreement with statement “b” of the questionnaire concerning the need for constructive and critical analysis of the idea, it would be useful to consider using a variety of approaches. Business cases and discussions with experts and relevant practitioners are ways to test viability.

While a full cost-benefit analysis to determine the applicability of an idea may not be warranted, you should consider its strengths and weaknesses and explore how different stakeholder groups would receive the potential innovation.

Pilot projects (or virtual scenarios) are another possibility, and have the advantage of exploring an innovative idea, through all its implementation and evaluation stages, with little political risk and minimal use of organizational resources. They also provide teams with a chance to work out any “bugs”, to work more closely with a given client group and thus better determine their needs, and to develop appropriate training materials.

Statement “c”: Focusing on Client Needs

As indicated in statement “c”, it is important to explore and discuss the needs of clients. Basing your discussion on direct feedback (e.g. interview or survey information) can be particularly valuable since research has shown that what clients want, and what managers think they want, are often two different things. The key is to consider all aspects of the potential innovation through the eyes of your clients—to view the innovation using an “outside-in perspective.” The Treasury Board Secretariat (www.tbs-sct.gc.ca) and the Canadian Centre for Management Development (www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca) have numerous reports, case studies, tools and guides to assist you in identifying the needs of your clients.

Statement “d”: Involving People Responsible for Implementation

As when identifying client needs, don't assume you know how the idea would work on the ground without talking to the people who would be responsible for implementation. Discussing the novel ideas with those people, as indicated in statement “d” of the questionnaire, is one of the best ways to determine its applicability. To this end, you may wish to establish a feasibility group, which includes operational people, to work with the advocates of innovative ideas on strengthening their proposals.

Statement “e”: Considering Risk

A willingness to manage risk is also important when assessing the viability of ideas. Risk is the “expression of the likelihood and impact of an event with the potential to influence an organization's achievement of objectives.”³⁵ The negative aspects of risk include such things as injury or death, loss of money and damage to reputation. Managing risk requires a deliberate and systematic approach to managing the likelihood or severity of unwanted consequences. “Consider, for example, snowboarding as a personal risk management problem. The activity has both upsides (i.e., the exhilaration and thrill of snowboarding) and downsides (i.e., the potential for injury or accident). One can make decisions to reduce the likelihood of an accident (e.g., riding on designation runs at your skill level) or the severity of a potential accident (e.g., by wearing appropriate protective gear).”³⁶

At a different level, the negative aspects of risk within the team, as perceived by individual team members, might include such things as a reprimand by supervisors, denial of a promotion or other advancement, loss of reputation among colleagues, a reputation for being wasteful of resources, and a whole gamut of psychological and sociological consequences associated with failure. Thus, risk management is not just about trying to decrease the possibility of failure of the innovative initiative itself. It is also very much about trying to avoid negative consequences for the individuals involved with it if it should fail. Unless risk to individuals is managed to ensure fair recognition of their efforts in the event of failure (and few innovative initiatives fail completely), the organizational culture will not easily support other attempts at innovation.

A formal and rigorous risk assessment of the innovative initiative may not be warranted. Rather, as indicated in statement “e”, innovators need to consider the probability and severity of negative consequences along with the process of implementation, and create strategies to mitigate them at that juncture. Guidance on risk management can be found in the Treasury Board Secretariat's *Integrated Risk Management Framework* (www.tbs-sct.gc.ca).

³⁵ Treasury Board Secretariat, *Integrated Risk Management Framework*, Ottawa, 2001

³⁶ Canadian Centre for Management Development, *A Foundation for Developing Risk Management Learning Strategies in the Public Service*, Ottawa, 2001.



It is also important to assess the risks of potential barriers and be flexible when encountering unexpected challenges. This is an important point as innovators can encounter numerous obstacles when attempting to implement a novel idea.

There are many tactics that can be used in addressing obstacles, and they require greater consideration as you move into the implementation stage of your work. Among the two most common are “persuasion—showing the benefits of an innovation, establishing demonstration projects, and social marketing,—and accommodation—consulting with affected parties, co-opting affected parties by involving them in the governance of the innovation, and providing training for those whose work would be affected by the innovation.”³⁷ In addition, demonstrations that highlight the benefits of the innovation can also help to overcome obstacles.³⁸ It is important to remember that innovation is achieved through commitment and persistence. “Leading up to every ‘Eureka!’ there are days, weeks, even years of effort....”³⁹

For further information concerning applicability and assessment see:

Borins, Sanford. *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*. PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, February 2001, <http://www.excelsior.pwcglobal.com/knowledge/article.asp?artID=248>

Brodtrick, Otto. *Risk, Innovation and Values: Examining the Tensions*. Final report for the Risk Management Division, Comptrollership Branch of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1999.

Canadian Centre for Management Development. *A Foundation for Developing Risk Management Learning Strategies in the Public Service*.

Delbecq, Andre and Peter Mills. “Managerial Practices that Enhance Innovation”, pp. 24-34.

Treasury Board Secretariat website containing publications regarding risk management, including the Integrated Risk Management Framework, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubpol_e.html

Walters, Jonathan. *Understanding Innovation: What Inspires It? What Makes It Successful?* PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, December 2001.

³⁷ ³⁸ Sanford Borins, *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, February 2001, p. 21.

³⁹ *1998 Innovation Survey*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, U.K, p. 22.

RESULTS OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS

SECTION 8:

Identification and Celebration of Results

Statement “a”: Knowing What Success Will Look Like

As is indicated in statement “a” of section 8 of the self-assessment, it is important that all team members have a clear understanding of what success will look like and be confident that the idea advances the mission of the team or organization. This will evolve from the common purpose established earlier. Using this foundation the team should have a strong and shared understanding of exactly what it is trying to achieve and why. If this is not the case, it may be necessary to return to the Common Purpose section of this toolkit.

Statement “b”: Being Confident the Idea Will Lead to Fundamental Improvement

As outlined in statement “b”, at this stage the team should feel confident that the new innovative idea will constitute a transformative improvement over present practices. Such confidence largely comes from sufficient analysis, a shared understanding of what “transformative” means for the group, and open communication.

Statements “c” and “d”: Developing and Applying Indicators of Success

When discussing the success of an innovative idea it is important to recognize that because innovation can disrupt the accepted wisdom within an organization or team, achieving consensus as to the success of the innovative idea can be difficult. One way to address this is to seek general agreement regarding specific indicators of success. If this can be done, then it is possible to “measure” these indicators against actual results and thus determine success in a more objective fashion. In considering the characteristics of successful innovations, you should remember that the most successful innovations are those that are simple in concept, easy to execute, and appealing to the widest constituency possible.⁴⁰ No matter how successful the idea is, it is also important to ensure that lessons learned from the experience are captured and shared across the organization.

Statements “e” and “f”: Celebrating and Recognizing Innovative Ideas

In addition to understanding and measuring success, it is also necessary for your team to celebrate successful innovative ideas, as noted in statement “e”. Celebrating success not only helps to create a sense of pride and unity within the team, but helps to motivate the team as well. The team should also be recognized for its

⁴⁰ Jonathan Walters, *Understanding Innovation: What Inspires It? What Makes It Successful?* PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, December 2001, p. 26.

successful innovative ideas, as mentioned in statement “f”. Such recognition can take many forms, including spontaneous, informal and formal awards. Informal and spontaneous recognition can include a “pat on the back” by senior management, written words of praise or non-monetary rewards from coffee cups to learning opportunities. More formal recognition can involve award programs for which people apply. Of course, team achievements should be recognized via team—not just individual—recognition and rewards. Such recognition helps to encourage teams to continue working collaboratively and to seek and share novel ideas. It is also important to recognize when an idea works—and thus is technically successful—but must be put on hold for budget or timing reasons.

For further information about measuring and celebrating success see:

Walters, Jonathan. *Understanding Innovation: What Inspires It? What Makes It Successful?* PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, December 2001.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Internet subsite on results-based management, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/subsites_e.html

SECTION 9:

Diffusion of Successful Innovative Ideas

Statements “a” – “d”: Maximizing Diffusion

Innovative ideas should be shared broadly as they hold the potential to create value across organizations, governments, and sectors. This is how little successes can be leveraged to more broadly advance the public good. Like innovation itself, the diffusion of innovative ideas should not be left to chance, but should be deliberate. Given this, statements “a”, “b”, “c”, “d” of section 9 of the *self-assessment* should receive high levels of agreement. The crucial question is: What actions have you taken to diffuse your innovative ideas?

Drawing from and building upon aspects of Everett Roger’s work on the diffusion of innovations, this section provides some insights into how innovative ideas can be diffused. If an innovative idea is to spread and be adopted, people must first become aware of it. Once they are aware of the innovative idea, they must evaluate its perceived characteristics, such as its relative advantage and complexity. Depending on whether they give it a positive or negative evaluation, and whether or not there is some motivation for them to adopt it, they will decide to adopt or reject the new idea.⁴¹

⁴¹ Everett Rogers, *The Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th edition, New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Given that the first step in the diffusion of an innovation is to make people aware of the innovation, communication is crucial. Ideas can be diffused in many different ways, such as through print (e.g. letters and newsletters), verbally (e.g. meetings and presentations) and electronically (e.g. websites, listservs and email). In fact, electronic channels of communication provide a uniquely powerful way to quickly and broadly disseminate information about an innovative idea. But given levels of increasing information overload, information should be strategically packaged and written if it is to capture the attention of intended audiences.

For more ambitious diffusion efforts, one basic technique is to create a “diffusion network” that has strong opinion-leadership, which is the “degree to which an individual is able to informally influence other individuals’ attitudes or overt behavior with relative frequency.”⁴² A strong diffusion network is also characterized by a solid bond between the opinion-leader and the change agent, the individual who influences clients’ innovation decisions. The change agent differs from the opinion-leader in that he or she has a strong expertise regarding the innovative idea being diffused. The success of change agents in ensuring that an innovation is adopted is dependent on the extent to which they are:

- client oriented;
- able to contact clients;
- empathetic;
- perceived as credible; and
- able to foster a client’s ability to evaluate innovations.⁴³

For further information concerning the diffusion of innovative ideas see:

Becker, Marshall. “Sociometric Location and Innovativeness: Reformulation and Extension of the Diffusion Process.” *American Sociological Review*, April 1970.

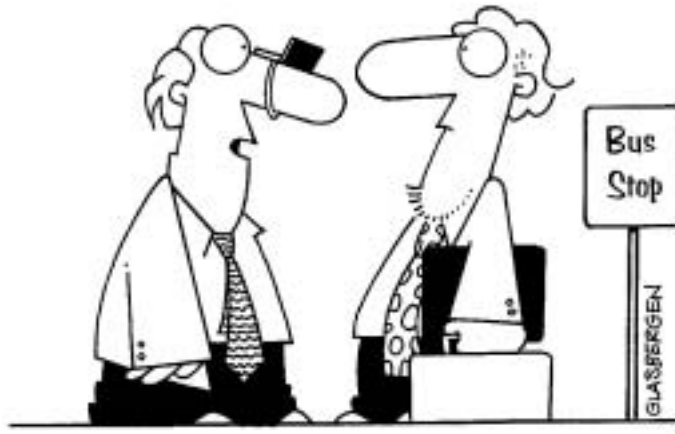
Rogers, Everett. *The Diffusion of Innovations* (4th edition). New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Zaltman, Gerald et al. *Innovation in Organizations*. John Wiley and Sons, 1973.

⁴² Everett Rogers, *The Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th edition, New York: The Free Press, 1995. p. 281.

⁴³ Everett Rogers, *The Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th edition, New York: The Free Press, 1995. p. 369.

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"I introduced the world's first nose-top computer 18 months ago. Sales are slower than originally anticipated."

Having Reviewed **Part 4...**

Now that you have reviewed this guidance regarding the four elements of the C-CAR model, it is important to remember that you will need to develop an implementation plan to improve your approach to generating innovative ideas. Your plan should encompass good project management principles, and thus include specific and achievable objectives, address issues of who will do what and by when, and provide for follow-up, feedback and recognition. Do not forget that the most innovative organization or team is one where innovation is made a collective responsibility, so we suggest you involve the entire team in some way.

Remember, this is not a one-shot fix. Innovating over time means regularly checking your approach, and making adjustments as you go.



To obtain more information on performance measurement, see the Treasury Board Secretariat sub-site on results-based management at http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/rma_e.html.

Checking your **Progress** and moving beyond **TEAMS**

Indicators of Success— How to Know If You Are on the Right Path

As your team works with this toolkit to build its innovative capacity, there are certain signposts of success to watch for:

- **Elements of process start to be left behind.** The team's focus is on its common purpose, objectives and results, not process.
- **Powerful ideas are created through synergy.** After expending time and effort to build the team, the team members have come to feel the energy that creativity engenders, fostering even greater commitment, investment and energy. The team creates ideas that are greater than the individual contributions each member brings to the table—the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
- **A climate of trust exists.** Staff are confident that co-workers will share information and judge their ideas fairly, and that management will support innovative behaviour. They feel that the organization is a safe place to work innovatively.
- **Borders are crossed regularly.** Borders are crossed within the organization (e.g. between groups and branches, and headquarters and regions) and between organizations.
- **Innovation becomes part of the team's DNA.** Innovation becomes more than an add-on to what is already done. It is not seen as the “flavour of the month”, but permeates all aspects of the organization.

As you move towards implementation, depending on the scope of your initiative, you will likely want to establish a more rigorous and customized performance measurement system that involves:

- clearly identifying and articulating the key results you expect;
- measuring performance against the expected results; and
- reporting on how well you achieved the results as well as capturing and sharing lessons learned.⁴⁴



In many ways, what followed is analogous to the ‘everyone is a leader’ theme of other continuously innovative public service organizations; in this case, the slight variance is that ‘everyone is the City Manager’.

Elizabeth Bourns, City of Hamilton.

⁴⁴ For more information, see *Managing For Results 2000*, Chapter 3, Chart 4, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/govrev/00/mfr-gar-1_e.html#_Toc496349843.

Supporting Innovation

at the Organizational Level

Teams ultimately exist within a larger organization. Passionate teams can innovate within the worst of organizational structures, but teams are far more likely to succeed in organizations that support and encourage innovation.

The reality is that many organizational issues are beyond the direct control or influence of individual managers and team leaders. Nonetheless, middle managers and teams can access tools for understanding the climate within their organization.⁴⁵

In order to leverage transformative innovation throughout organizations, senior managers must help create and protect “space” for staff and project teams to innovate. This space is needed to free the people driving innovation from the demands and responsibilities of their day-to-day work as well as from the norms and mental models of their routine business. Once this fundamental issue has been addressed, senior managers should then turn their attention to issues of people, process and culture, and ask themselves:

- Have I ensured that the **people** in my organization have sufficient support to innovate? (e.g., Do staff have access to information and resources from across the organization? Do they have access to developmental opportunities to build their creative abilities?)
- Do I actively nurture a **culture** that supports innovation? (e.g. Do I continuously and committedly communicate my desire for innovation? Do people trust their ideas will be welcomed and judged fairly? Do I work with management and staff to remove barriers to innovation?)
- Have I ensured my organization has a **process** to facilitate innovation? (e.g. Is there an organization-wide mechanism for ideas to be captured and accessed by staff? Is there a system for ideas to reach the top of the organization? Do sufficient funds exist to invest in promising innovations?)

The annotated bibliography at the back of this document as well as Appendix 2 provide several sources that can help you to address innovation at the organizational level.

“Innovators are not dictatorial but are participative; you can’t move anything ahead unless you bring people with you.”

Ben Levin, Manitoba Department of Education

⁴⁵ For example, as part of her research into identifying patterns of innovation in the public service, Eleanor Glor has developed a process for considering staff motivation, organizational culture, and the challenge presented by an innovation. Her process suggests the kind of innovation, ranging from reactive innovation to transformational innovation, that is likely to emerge from different environments. She also describes the kinds of challenges innovators are likely to face and the kinds of solutions that are likely to be helpful. These ideas are particularly helpful for new professionals in the public service. E.D. Glor, “Innovation Patterns”, *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, <http://www.innovation.cc>, under Peer-Reviewed Articles, July 2001.

CONCLUSION

Given the growing complexity of Canada's social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges, the need for innovation in public administration has never been greater. It is necessary for the public service to fulfill its core functions and for managers to deliver on their key responsibilities. Simply put, many new challenges require fundamentally new ideas and approaches that work.

But innovation will not emerge from wishful thinking, nor can it be commanded. However, you can increase the chances of innovation occurring. You can ensure that conditions are in place to support a climate of innovation within your immediate sphere of control (e.g. your branch, unit, group or team) by fostering the principles of organizational learning. And around targeted issues, you can deliberately construct teams to maximize your innovation potential by using the C-CAR tool (checklist and/or self-assessment). This will help you determine your innovation readiness, and thus provide you with a strong and strategic rationale for taking targeted actions to strengthen your innovation capacity. Once you have maximized innovation at the team level, you may then want to move to the organizational level. This will involve the commitment of senior leadership.

In the end, there is no recipe for innovation, but its probability can be increased. The key to maximizing your innovation potential is not to hope for more innovation, but to take concrete action.

Annotated Bibliography

This annotated bibliography summarizes those sources that the Roundtable found to be practical in orientation and particularly helpful in its work.

1. "Assessing the Work Environment for Creativity", T. Amabile and R. Conti, *Academy of Management Journal*, Oct. 96, Vol. 39, Issue 5, p. 1154.

Summary

The authors describe the development and validation of a new instrument, KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity, designed to assess what enhances and impedes creativity in organizations. The authors focus on three main units of analysis: the organization, the supervisor and the work group.

Relevance

This survey helped the Roundtable's secretariat decide which units of analysis it should focus on in designing the assessment instrument. Managers will find it useful to review what impedes and enhances creativity and what they can do to support a creative workplace.

2. "How to Kill Creativity", T. Amabile. *Harvard Business Review*, Sept/Oct. 98, Vol. 76, Issue 5, p. 76.

Summary

This article discusses the critical role managers play in either enhancing or impeding creativity.

Relevance

The discussion in this article reinforces the themes of other articles offered in the annotated bibliography in this toolkit. According to the author, managers can enhance creativity by matching employee skills to the right assignments, setting clear goals but allowing employees to decide how best to accomplish those goals, ensuring that proper resources and time are committed to successfully completing the project, valuing diversity within the department, and recognizing and rewarding creative work and the importance of top management support.

3. *The Challenge of Innovating in Government*, S. Borins, The Pricewaterhouse-Coopers Endowment for the Business of Government, Feb. 2001:
<http://www.excelsior.pwcglobal.com/knowledge/article.asp?artID=248>

Summary

Borins' report identifies common obstacles to innovating in the public service as well as the major characteristics shared by innovative government organizations. Such obstacles include bureaucratic attitudes, turf fights, and middle manager opposition. Organizations who successfully innovate share several key characteristics including interdisciplinary approaches, new information technology, process improvements, private-sector involvement in program delivery and public consultation.

Relevance

Borins' work is useful for managers looking to identify the possibilities and challenges involved in promoting innovation in their organizations. By reviewing both the obstacles and success factors at a macro level, managers will be better prepared to innovate.

4. "Managerial Practices that Enhance Innovation", A. Delbecq and P. Mills, *Organizational Dynamics*, Summer 1985, Vol. 14, Issue 1, p. 24.

Summary

This article shows the difference between high and low innovation organizations in how they treat new ideas.

Relevance

The article contains many useful tips for managers who would like their departments to become more innovative. By providing separate funds for innovation, ensuring extensive consultation with clients to assess feasibility, ensuring the project is adequately resourced in terms of both funding and personnel, and conducting a pilot phase to correct any glitches, a manager may increase the chances of implementing a successful new idea.

5. “When a Thousand Flowers Bloom: Structural, Collective and Social Conditions for Innovation in Organization”, R. M. Kanter, (1988), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 10, pp. 169-211.

Summary

The role of the innovative individual is explored in this piece. The work undertaken by individuals is either hindered or supported by supervisors and the organization.

Relevance

Consistent with other authors in this annotated bibliography, Kanter highlights the central role of the supervisor in supporting innovation by creating the right conditions for individuals to engage in innovative behaviours. Through effective idea generation, coalition building, and balancing autonomy with accountability, managers can help create the right conditions to innovate.

6. *Sustaining Innovation: Creating Nonprofit and Government Organizations that Innovate Naturally*, P. Light (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998).

Summary

This book is based on the “Surviving Innovation Project”—a five-year study of 26 organizations in Minnesota where innovation became ordinary good practice. Using these case studies, the book highlights characteristics which help innovation to become “more natural and therefore more frequent” (p. xi).

Relevance

This book helps those who wish to increase the innovative capacity of their team or organization by highlighting the characteristics of innovative organizations and discussing the “preferred state of organizational being”. For example, in chapter one, Light discusses the type of environment that fosters novel ideas, focussing on various components of leadership and the role of managers at the developmental stage of innovation. In doing this, he outlines an “ecosystem in which an organization’s innovativeness depends on four factors which ignite and sustain new ideas”. Those factors are the external environment, internal management systems, leadership, and internal structure (p. 12). Over the course of the book, these four factors are explored in depth.

This book is also useful as it discusses various myths and barriers which are often thought to be impediments to innovation and helps to deconstruct them to show how innovation is possible.

7. “Managing Creative People: Strategies and Tactics for Innovation”, M. Mumford, *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 10, Number 3, 2000, pp. 313-351.

Summary

Mumford reviews the literature on the nature of creativity to identify the conditions that influence innovation. Mumford develops a variety of propositions about how the interventions of human resources can contribute to innovation. These propositions take into account the critical role played by the individual, the group, the organization and the strategic environment in attempts to enhance creativity.

Relevance

This article is very useful for managers trying to promote a more creative workplace. Many of the tips offered are based on commonly known effective human resource practices, but the document serves as a valuable reminder. The key contribution of Mumford’s work is the recognition that a systematic approach is required when supporting creativity.

8. *Diffusion of Innovations*, E. Rogers (4th ed.), (New York: Free Press, 1995).

Summary

Rogers’ work examines how and why innovations are diffused. Rogers sees diffusion as a process “by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 5). He discusses not only the processes of innovation but also the individual characteristics of innovators. Five key topics addressed are: the innovation-decision process, innovativeness and adopter categories, diffusion networks, the change agent and innovation in organizations.

Relevance

Unique to Rogers’ work—in comparison to other works described in this annotated bibliography—is the discussion of the role of the change agent in the innovation process. The change agent performs many valuable functions including: developing a need for change, diagnosing problems, creating an intent in the client to change, stabilizing adoption of the innovation and ensuring there is no return to the previous practices. The practical implication for managers is how to use change agents effectively in government, and Rogers’ work provides some food for thought.

Another contribution is his categorization of when individuals adopt innovations. He suggests there are five categories of adopters including: the Innovators, the Early Adopters, the Early Majority, the Late Majority and the Laggards (p. 264). This categorization has implications for managers seeking to ensure their staff comprises at least some innovators and early adopters.

9. "Understanding Innovation: What Inspires It? What Makes It Successful?", J. Walters, The PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, December 2001.

Summary

Based on lessons from organizations that have won awards for innovation, this paper examines and discusses two important questions. First, it asks "What inspires innovation?" Second, it wonders "What makes innovation successful?"

Relevance

This article is helpful to those attempting to identify where novel ideas come from. After exploring hundreds of innovative initiatives, Walters identifies the primary motivators of innovation as:

- frustration with the status quo;
- response to crisis;
- focus on prevention;
- emphasis on results;
- adaptation of technology;
- an inclination to do the right thing. (p. 6)

In addition to identifying the "driving force" of innovation, this article also provides comprehensive guidelines, or criteria, to help determine whether an innovative idea will be successful. Walters characterizes successful ideas as those that:

- are simple in concept;
- are relatively easy to execute;
- yield quick results;
- do not cost large amounts of money to implement;
- have a broad appeal;
- are not tied to one political party or person. (p. 6)

References for Individual Creativity and Organizational Innovation

This section builds on the sources provided in the Annotated Bibliography in Appendix 1.

Individual Creativity

These sources primarily address the issue of generating new and creative ideas (e.g. techniques for brainstorming). Many tools and techniques for boosting individual creativity can now be found via a simple Internet search.

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