

“The Value of an Idea Lies in the using of it”...Thomas Edison

According to the World Economic Forum 10 innovative jobs that didn't exist 10 years ago included: application developer, social media manager, Uber driver, driverless car engineer, cloud computing specialist, big data analyst/data scientist, sustainability manager, YouTube content creator, drone operator, millennial generational expert. How do those jobs come about? How do organizations drive innovation ?

Here are some things organizations do to drive innovation:

- *Embed innovative roles in commercial teams*
- *Create insulated innovation team* (e.g., Google X) or *innovation labs* (e.g., Lowe's)
- *Rotate business-side people through the innovation group* – often to provide commercial expertise, or help make introductions to customers who might be willing to test something new and provide feedback

- Or the reverse – *export innovation team members* to the business unit that will be responsible for launching a project, so there's someone involved who is knowledgeable and passionate about it.

So why do attempts to implement innovation often seem to fail?

According to Scott Kirsner in an April 2017 HBR article, [“The Stage Where Most Innovation Projects Fail,”](#)

most innovative **projects tend to fail when the effort is made to transition them to the commercial team.**

So why do these transitions seem to fail? Several reasons, including:

1. A lack of accountability & incentives,
2. Lack of prioritization by leadership; lack of ownership by the business team
3. Inadequate communications & measurements of success: not factoring in inadequately funded projects
4. Little to no help with roll-out: no teams moving from the innovation lab to the commercial side
5. Insufficient resources to solving issues that arise

In McKinsey's, "[Creating an innovation culture](#)," the author Dr. Waguih Ishak suggests that an innovation culture needs to be created—not become part of the existing process per se. Rather, authors Steve Blank and Pete Newell suggest in a September 2017 HBR piece, "[What Your Innovation Process Should Look](#)

[Like](#)," you need a process that operates with speed and urgency—a process that curates and prioritizes problems, ideas, and technologies. Very different from many corporate processes that are based on ensuring consistency, and adherence to regulatory and legal standards.

As it's starting to get a bit confusing, let's step back a bit. Perhaps just ask what the process is that [Google](#) uses. I highlighted the points I particularly like as they *challenge traditional corporate thinking*.

1. Let your mission guide you
2. Think big, start small
3. Strive for continual innovation, not instant perfection – Google wasn't the first to "search," but they did it better
4. Look for ideas everywhere
5. Share everything – Google shares the entire Board Letter with all employees quarterly & presents the same slides presented to the Board of Directors in a company-wide meeting

6. Spark with imagination, support with data – Data should substantiate your idea
7. Be a platform – Let independent developers broaden the idea
8. Never fail to fail

So, based on all of the above, here's some guidance on how to address corporate innovation. Good Luck!

5-Step Guide to Innovate:

1. **Innovation team and lead should report to Senior Leadership:**
This best ensures accountability, ownership, resources
2. **Rotate team members:**
Team members need to be continually rotated in/out from various functions within the company. Consider it investing in your high performers.
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Team members need to be continually rotated in/out from various functions within the company. Consider it investing in your high performers.
5. Embed project into existing organization with **'start-up' mindset**

Key Take-Aways:

Things to Keep in mind during & after the meeting:

1) Be clear

Always state the meeting's objective; throughout, refer back to why the meeting was called; and take notes!

2) Keep, keep, keep to the agenda

Everyone will appreciate it.

3) Follow-up after the meeting

- Assemble notes in an actionable way; be very clear about outcome and next steps.
- Sent to attendees; people want to know that you value their time at the meeting.
- Thank them again & drop them a note with any updates

Hold to these concepts

–people will then appreciate meetings.