

Innovation *First* Strategy



What is Innovation First Strategy?

Innovation First strategy places innovation at the heart of organizational endeavor. It's a first principles approach to organizational development and starts with the true purpose of any modern organization - *to innovate*. Innovation First Strategy relies on three main pillars of individual cognitive and social-emotional skills, collaboration skills and organizational support.

Skills

Creative thinking skills are essential for innovation. Creativity is a cognitively demanding process that utilizes different mechanisms like associative, reverse or analogical thinking. In addition, cognitive-emotional skills like active listening and empathy are crucial to the process of innovation.

Read More:

- [Misconceptions About Creativity](#)
- [Associative Thinking](#)
- [Reverse Thinking](#)

Collaboration

In the context of innovation, collaboration skills are those that allow complex problem solving behavior to *emerge* in diverse groups. It goes well beyond putting people together in a room to brainstorm, and requires a few key conditions.

Read More:

- [Harnessing Group Intelligence](#)

Support

Continuous, long-term innovation is not possible without organizational support. These include tools and processes to capture how employees learn and apply creativity skills in their work, how managers support them and how they are rewarded.

“ Today, creativity itself has been elevated to a leadership style. Traditional approaches to managing organizations need fresh ideas—ideas that are intended to disrupt the status quo.”

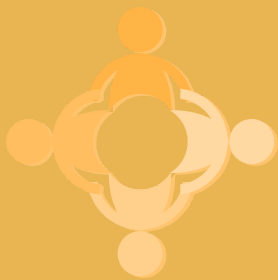
-IBM's Capitalizing on Complexity Report

Benefits of Innovation First Strategy

Adopting an innovation first approach provides many benefits ranging from higher profits to increased employee engagement and satisfaction. Most companies address organizational problems in an ad-hoc fashion creating unnecessary (and sometimes conflicting) processes. An innovation first approach allows fewer and simpler processes to address multiple challenging areas that plague most organizations.



Companies that embrace an innovation-focused culture are more profitable.



Group norms that improve creativity also improve inclusion and equity for minority groups.



Organizations that value employee driven innovation have increased employee engagement.

Increased Profitability

Firms that build internal innovation-friendly processes are substantially more profitable

Research study in the RAND Journal of Economics found that while specific innovations led to short term increase in profitability, creating internal processes that foster innovation led to substantially higher and long-term profitability. The indirect effect was as much as three times the effect of direct innovation.

“...the process of innovation transforms a firm, building up its core competencies in a variety of ways that make it quicker, more flexible, more adaptable, and more capable in dealing with market pressures that noninnovating firms.”

Read More:

- [The profitability of innovating firms](#)



more long-term profitability for firms that focus on innovation process

Improved Diversity and Inclusion

Processes to foster innovation also improve diversity and inclusion.

Our research study on gender bias in the technology industry revealed that women in technology roles face significant barriers in contributing to organizational innovation. Multiple factors interact to create subpar conditions where women's ideas are devalued or dismissed, including:

- Evaluation Apprehension
- Groupthink
- Tokenism
- Cognitive Dissonance

As a result, companies lose millions of dollars in operational costs and lost revenue.

Read More:

- [How Gender Bias Limits Innovation And What Technology Leaders Can Do About It](#)

Inclusive firms are



more likely to be innovation leaders in their markets

Higher Employee Engagement

An innovation-focused culture leads to higher employee engagement.

Creativity enhances employee satisfaction and engagement; and engaged employees come up with more innovative ideas.

*When employees perceive that their ideas are valued, they find work more meaningful and go the extra mile to ensure success. A survey commissioned by the UK government found that **92%** of managers who perceived their organizational management style as innovative, felt proud to work there.*

Read More:

- [Deloitte Study: Becoming Irresistible](#)
- [Engaging For Success](#)



higher engagement and retention rates in innovation-driven learning organizations

Interested in learning more? Email us at

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