

Cheat Sheet

Jump-start Your Climate of Innovation



© 2005–2015/16, Future Think LLC. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. futurethink clients may make one attributed copy or slide of each figure contained herein. Additional reproduction is strictly prohibited. For additional reproduction rights and usage information, go to www.futurethink.com. Information is based on best available resources. Opinions reflect judgment at the time and are subject to change. To purchase reprints of this document, please email support@futurethink.com.



Quick Tactics to Build a Thriving Work Environment

We live in a world where the new replaces the old very quickly. Solutions are quickly commoditizing, competition and customers are rapidly changing, and product and service lifecycles are swiftly shrinking. Only organizations that keep pace with the changing marketplace will be able to stay ahead. So, how do the best companies adapt? They maintain a climate where employees are encouraged to innovate in a continuous and consistent manner. The companies that stay ahead have made innovation part of their DNA. How can you do the same? Try some of these tactics for a start:

- **Investigate innovation outside of the office.** Take your team on an innovation fieldtrip, visiting three to four destinations that make you think in new ways.
- **Do something different.** Get coffee from a new place. Walk or drive to work using a different route. Visit Web sites on topics you know nothing about or places you've never had time to check out but want to.
- **Put innovation on the calendar or meeting agenda.** Add "Share a New Idea" as a 10 minute item on your monthly staff agenda. Use it as designated time to innovate. Try a "ten by ten" challenge—make yourself visit ten new Web sites by 10AM one day.
- **Highlight a recent innovation in your internal communications.** Tout a success, progress on a project, or a new idea submitted.
- **Invite management to your next brainstorm.** Make them part of the process.
- **Find a younger mentor.** Ask one of the newest recruits in your organization to show you how to use some of their favorite technologies, learn the places they go online, and learn how they communicate in general.
- **Abolish the fear of failure.** Your team will naturally be afraid of making mistakes—so you, as an innovation leader, must continually reinforce the idea that experimentation leads to innovation; and failure is a by-product of experimentation. Here are some other ways to encourage your team:
 - Make risk-taking, experimenting, and innovation criteria part of performance reviews.
 - Showcase risk-takers on your intranet or internal newsletters (you can call it "Experimentation Excellence.")
 - Reserve a portion of your innovation budget for smart but "absurd" ideas that might just pay off.
- **Create a common space.** It can be either online or offline, and it's a place where employees can share their work with one another. Encourage everyone to contribute to this "work-in-progress" library. By sharing work, you'll increase knowledge transfer, get valuable feedback during new project development, and speed up development cycles.