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## Focus on Innovation

Focus on Innovation is a monthly electronic newsletter designed to provoke thoughts and ideas on how to bring innovation to life within the organizations in which we work.

### For Those on the Run

Ask any head of an organization if he or she would like their organization to be more innovative and the answer is likely to be a resounding "yes. But for many organizations this is far as they get. Either they assume that innovation is exclusive to small or high technology organizations and seeing themselves as too big or in the wrong industry to innovate, or they just don't know where to start. This month's newsletter looks at what an organization can do to build an organization of innovation.

### Building an Organization of Innovation

*Innovation: the successful implementation of new ideas in any aspect of a business (and life) -  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2003*

An organization's ability to remain competitive and connect to the global knowledge economy has become increasingly dependent on its ability to generate new knowledge and understanding, and translate it into new products, services, processes, and policies. Companies that have been successful in this regard set the groundwork for innovation, initiate any required operational changes to foster the right culture, and continually guide the organization through the reoccurring periods of change.

The fact is, any company in any sector can be more innovative - the key is make innovation a priority and take steps to make it a day-to-day phenomenon in the organization. To get started the organization needs to determine how well it is doing towards fostering an innovative culture. From there the changes required to build an organization of innovation can be determined, actions can be developed and implemented. Here are two free innovation assessment tools to help you do this:

#### **IBM Innovation Assessment Tool**

This complimentary assessment tool can help determine if a company is on the right track to successful innovation. Based on insights of the Global CEO Study 2006, the tool analyzes responses to key questions about the organization's approach and compares results to those of the 750 study participants. This tool allows the organization to:

- Benchmark their responses against over 750 CEO Study participants
- Gain insight and recommendations based on 4 key areas of innovation
- Receive a report (PDF file) that can be printed or emailed

To launch the tool go to [http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/bcs/html/gbs\\_ceo\\_iat.html?re=ibmhome&sa\\_campaign=message/ideas/leadspace/all/innovationflash](http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/bcs/html/gbs_ceo_iat.html?re=ibmhome&sa_campaign=message/ideas/leadspace/all/innovationflash).

### **Mobile Services and Applications (MSA) Online Forum Innovation Assessment Tool**

This tool was designed by the SIMS (Supporting Innovation of SMEs in the Mobile Services and Applications Supply Business) project. It is intended to provide companies with a tool to measure how innovative they are. The aim of the tool is twofold:

- To provide an easy-to-use means of assessing the level of innovative practice at their company
- To stimulate thinking on how innovation is managed and thereby contribute to future planning for innovation

To launch the tool go to <http://www.sims-eu.com/MKSS/iat1a.php>

### **Using the Results to Build an Organization for Innovation:**

1. Once you have completed the innovation assessment, review and analyze the results. Ask the following questions:
  - What are our initial reactions to the assessment results? Where there any surprises?
  - What are our strengths and improvement areas when it comes to building an organization of innovation?
  - Are there any areas that need to be investigated further before making conclusions about what needs to be done?
  - What actions are needed to set innovation performance improvement in motion?
2. Consider having people in different roles and functions and/or key external partners and customers complete the test and compare results.
  - Hold working sessions where the results are reviewed and discussed; explore differences in thinking about innovation and how the organization is doing?
  - Develop a list of actions to set innovation performance improvement in motion.
3. Create an action plan to address the needed innovation performance improvements and implement it.
4. Re-take the assessment in about six months to identify what is working and what is not.
  - Identify the improvements that have been successfully completed. What can be learned from these successes that can be carried forward?
  - Identify the improvements that have not been successfully completed. Identify the reasons why. Identify what needs to be done to move forward on these improvement areas. Make adjustments to the action plan if needed.
  - Repeat the assessment every six months.

### **What's the Bottom line**

Innovative organizations take the steps to create the right foundation, enhance operations to foster innovation and manage ongoing change - all important steps to building an organization of innovation.



Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.  
If you would like more information about the ideas and topics listed in this issue, contact Judy Laws, Ph.D. at [jlaws@foursightconsulting.com](mailto:jlaws@foursightconsulting.com).

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