



CREATIVITY

Time to Reinvent: 5 Tips for Boosting Creativity and Innovation

Here's how creativity and innovation can give you a competitive advantage.



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Creativity and innovation go hand in hand. Creativity unleashes the potential of the mind to conceive new ideas. [Innovation](#) is the work required to make that idea viable. Often innovation involves introducing change into relatively stable systems. So first you come up with a great idea. And then you take it to market. We are in an unprecedented time. To withstand new market demands and crushing losses, nearly every industry is having to reinvent.

Here are five ways you can rewire your company's well-worn pathways to jump-start creativity and innovate to become part of the change.

1. Boost creativity

When preparing to innovate, creativity comes first. Creativity allows you to brainstorm new ways of thinking and doing. You can boost your brain's creativity with games, playfulness, and — did you know this one? — being around water in nature. Being near water in nature, such as a lake or an ocean, has been shown to lengthen brain waves and put us into a state of resting neocortex. This also happens when we take a break, daydream or find some quiet. These elements are important precursors to creativity. When you're stuck, take a break, enjoy a shower, play a board game. See what insights are sparked when you give your thinking brain a rest.

Related: [9 Ways to Rewire Your Brain for Creativity](#)

2. Find inspiration

Look at other groups who are innovating. It doesn't have to be in your industry. In fact, watching how other industries solve problems is fascinating research that can spark similar action in yours. Are there research universities in your town publishing new findings? What businesses are currently *opening* around you and what new needs do they serve? Don't be afraid to encourage your teams to let personal creative time inspire, as well. I love to bake, and my daughter has enjoyed learning, as I learned from my mom. When we take the downtime to bake together, I get inspired by new recipes, new dietary parameters that affect ingredients we can use, and the chemistry that shows me where I can push the limits and have to follow the rules. I also get inspired by my teen daughter's developing mind and the joy I feel inventing with her. When I head back to work, I'm invigorated with new ways of thinking, relating and engaging new ideas into existing systems.

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3. Invest in a sprint process

To help yourself and your company break out of old patterns, invest in a [sprint process](#). Jake Knapp's book *Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas in Just Five Days* gives you tools to lead short-burst creativity sessions. The accompanying website supports the process with the tools necessary to run a remote sprint. I encourage you to roll it out in every function in your company. This modality works again and again.

4. Be willing to fail

True innovation requires breaking some glass, so give yourself permission to test a few options to find the best ideas. Consider FAIL to mean your First Attempt In Learning.

This may be a challenge since typically we do our best every day to succeed. So try some new things with your company or team and fail together on the way to innovation. Consider challenging each team member to come up with four new ideas, at least three of which will fail. Give the event a set number of weeks and book a conference call at the end of each week to compare efforts and results. Give fun awards for the most spectacular fails and the most creative efforts. Integrate conversations along the way into the innovation process. Watch how the space to try and the space to fail opens new ways to think about possibilities.

Related: [Why Embracing Failure Is Good for Business](#)

5. Question your assumptions

We often do things a certain way because they have always been done that way. This is a great time to question every belief you have about how things are done. If you want to make this a purposeful, regular exercise, practice with a conversation partner. Set up some themes to talk about, have your partner prompt alternatives to your statements, and then follow each new alternative to its logical conclusion. What conclusions differ from your existing beliefs or patterns? Practicing thinking through different perspectives creates a great opening for a whole new approach.