

**Creative culture:**

# Thinking outside the dodecahedron



by Louise Webster

The only difference between a person that is creative and one that isn't is that creative people believe that they are creative – a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Donald W. MacKinnon – Director of the Institute of Personality, Assessment and Research, University of California at Berkley – is a leading psychologist and globally recognised for his work around creativity. He spent many years researching and developing theories about creativity and found that the only difference between people that were creative and those that weren't, was that steadfast and unwavering belief.

If you think you are a creative person, you will be because you will act like a creative person. If this sounds too easy, it really isn't. Each of us has formed a solid set of self-perceptions. Some of these began when we were children, while others developed during adulthood, thanks to the experiences we have had and the feedback we've received from bosses, co-workers, family, friends and others.

There are many myths that have built up around creativity; what it is, why it's useful and

what types of people are creative.

Many organisations view creativity as fluffy, intangible and a little bit weird. The premise for this is that creativity is fun and engaging but doesn't really deliver any tangible results. It's often rolled out at team-building days and is treated as an entertainment rather than a business tool.

Admittedly, this is largely due to the way creativity has been delivered in the past. Like any business tool it needs to be targeted, customised, relevant and actionable in order to deliver tangible results and drive strategic outcomes for your business.

## Focussed on goals

To derive value from creative thinking within an organisation, that thinking must be focused on the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation in order to deliver results. Whether these objectives are focused on developing new products, services or improving the performance of people and teams, you can derive value from these areas by using creativity tools and techniques to add value.

As people and performance specialists you will know that

any organisational training has a much better chance of success if people have an opportunity to use the training in their day-to day work. As such, it is important to start training by forming a better understanding of the working profiles of ourselves and others. This enables us to appreciate and value the different perspectives and skill sets that each team member brings to the conversation.

## Several benefits

The value that creativity brings to an organisation is largely through the collaboration of people and teams. This collaboration when focused can have several benefits;

- identifying problems and opportunities within the organisation that need to be solved;
- generating and developing ideas focused on solving these organisation issues;
- assessing and evaluating these ideas as a team;
- developing, implementing and selecting ideas in order to deliver the very best results.

Making time to spend on solving business problems will encourage and empower staff to contribute to the future of your organisation and develop solutions that fit both the customer and the organisational objectives.

Traditional measures of creativity focus solely on measuring the outputs of creative thinking; the products, services, patents, and revenue generated from the development and launch of 'innovations'. However,

measuring creativity in this way doesn't give us an understanding of what we can change to make our organisations more innovative. Merely measuring the outputs doesn't provide us with an understanding of the attitude and aptitude of people within the organisation towards innovation activity.

When measuring innovation performance, two main areas that need to be considered:

1. The key characteristics, actions and behaviours that drive innovation activity .
2. The development and performance of new and improved products and services, system and processes.

By understanding the culture and climate, the aptitude and attitudes towards innovation, and the barriers that inhibit innovation from prospering, we can quickly identify areas to improve our innovation performance. Developing an innovation culture is a big part of breaking down the organisational barriers to innovation.

One way of doing this is by using the Innovation Monitor®

survey to measure the culture climate of innovation in your organisation as viewed by staff, and how this impacts on the development and performance of new and improved products, services, systems and processes.

Key benefits of the Innovation Monitor®:

- provides a quick diagnostic of the current state of innovation (results online);
- identifies key factors that will increase innovation performance and drive growth;
- provides a smart checklist of recommendations for improving innovation performance;
- measures innovation culture and aptitude within your organisation;
- benchmarks your results against best practice innovation performance (based on OECD measures of best practice innovation);
- provides detailed results about the performance of your divisions, departments and teams;
- provides a report with recommendations for action and next steps.

### Climate factor rating

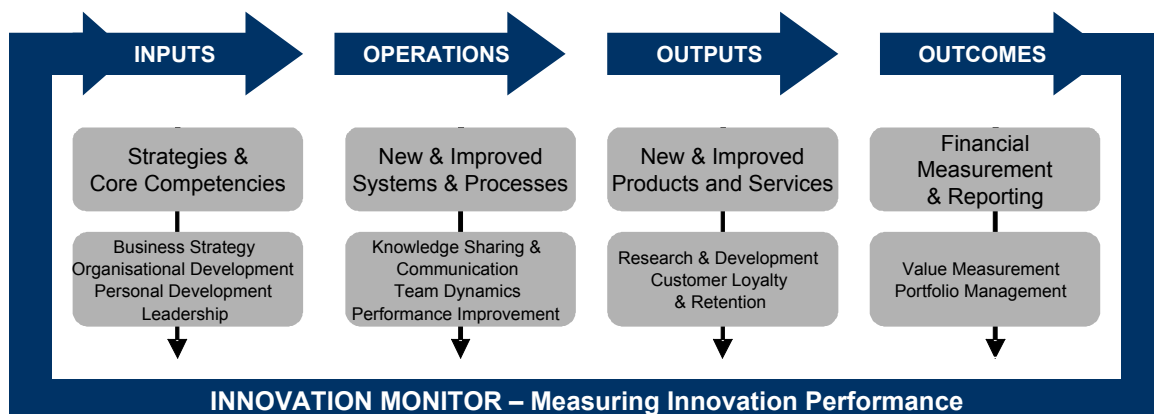
Measuring innovation in this way provides us with a climate factor rating, or rating average. This provides a very accurate representation of the 'goodness' or otherwise of your results, because it takes into account the distribution of responses across the entire rating scale.

Innovation is a key driver of business performance – the way, in which our people think, work and behave always impacts on customers, their purchasing decisions or channels to market.

So... in order to use creative thinking within our organisations and develop a culture of innovation performance, we must focus our innovation activities on strategic areas of value and measure the results. If we can measure it ,we can manage it. If we can manage it, we can profit from it.

*Louise Webster is director of Ideas Accelerator Ltd. She can be contacted on [louise@ideasaccelerator.com](mailto:louise@ideasaccelerator.com). [www.ideasaccelerator.com](http://www.ideasaccelerator.com)*

**The Innovation Monitor® measures innovation performance via an online survey across four key areas and 11 sub areas.**



Innovation Monitor® is a registered trademark of Ideas Accelerator Limited.

