

The Innovation Sophistication White Paper

How can you assess how innovative your business is? The Innovation Sophistication Index is a list of statements which will help you to determine how advanced your organization is compared to others. There are 30 items listed in this paper. For each statement you score one point if you largely agree with it for your organization. Please print off this document and work your way through the list below.

Innovation Sophistication Index



The List of Statements

A. Launch

1. Leaders recognise and communicate the need for innovation.
2. There is an agreed vision statement for a better future, understood by all staff.
3. You have carried out an innovation audit to assess the current barriers to innovation.
4. A budget is allocated for innovation training and initiatives.
5. Entrepreneurship, empowerment, diversity and risk taking are seen as core values in the desired corporate culture.
6. Innovation ambassadors are appointed in different departments to co-ordinate and stimulate innovation initiatives.
7. You encourage ideas from customers and suppliers as well as staff.

B. Progress

8. An internal suggestions scheme is in place with resources to evaluate ideas and implement the best.
9. Regular brainstorm meetings are held with diverse teams, clear objectives and expert facilitation. Resulting ideas are implemented.
10. Targets are set for key metrics including number of ideas submitted and implemented and for revenue projected and achieved from innovation projects.
11. Training is carried out for senior executive team and for innovation ambassadors.
12. Innovation is an agenda item at board meetings.
13. Corporate innovation KPIs (key performance indicators) have been set and are monitored.
14. Innovation goals are included in people's objectives and appraisals.
15. Innovation successes are broadcast and celebrated.

C. Acceleration

- 16. An Open Innovation strategy is agreed and initiated.
- 17. An Innovation Incubator Unit is up and running.
- 18. Approval processes are streamlined to speed implementation.
- 19. More than 2 suggestions/employee/year are implemented.
- 20. Corporate culture has been changed to be more open, challenging and empowering.
- 21. The Minimum Viable Product concept fully adopted.
- 22. A hackathon or similar exercise has been tried and the results evaluated.

D. Achievement

- 23. Open Innovation program is fully implemented and integrated. A significant proportion of innovations originate from outside.
- 24. New products and services represent a major portion of revenues.
- 25. Employees are empowered to try new initiatives and they do so.
- 26. Design thinking has been taught and design sprints undertaken successfully.
- 27. People are trained in advanced innovation methods including Six Hats and Triz.
- 28. Risks are encouraged, failure is allowed, and lessons shared.
- 29. More than 5 suggestions/employee/year are implemented.
- 30. You are recognised as an industry leader in innovation and as a dynamic and rewarding place to work.

If your score is less than 8 then you are probably at Stage 1. This is the Launch phase where the need for innovation is recognised but not much has been achieved so far. Many public sector bodies and staid companies are at this stage. They believe that they need to be more innovative but are so busy meeting the needs of customers that they have not made innovation a priority. The resources and commitment to make innovation happen have not been allocated.

If you score between 8 and 15 you are most likely in Stage 2 – Progress. You are taking serious steps to change the corporate culture and practices in order to generate and implement more ideas. Most companies are probably at this level.

A result between 15 and 22 indicates that you are at Stage 3 – Acceleration. Things are really happening with innovation and you are starting to see real results and improvements in performance. You are implementing modern concepts of Open Innovation and the Minimum Viable Product. Innovation can now become a serious competitive advantage for you.

If you score over 22 then congratulations. You have reached Stage 4 – Achievement. You are in the Premier League and playing with the big boys. You are reaping the rewards, revenues and recognition that befits an innovation leader. This is where Apple, Google, Amazon and others appear. You are among the sophisticated innovation elite.