

Innovative Leadership Guide

Innovation is best supported by leadership style combined with the right workplace culture for it to succeed. An overview of what these are and how they can support innovation is given below. Both the below leadership styles have their place in innovation processes to stimulate creativity and to ensure useful implementation of the outcomes.

Transformational Leadership Style

A transformational style works with teams to identify needed change, creating vision to guide the change through inspiration and executing change alongside the team. It is a 'selling' style that emphasises motivation and inspiration, prioritises group progress with proactive leadership.

Ways to adopt this style include: having a clear vision of the future, communicating this well, providing purpose, sticking to a set of standards, knowing your people and motivating them according to individual need, willingness to take risks, involving others in decision making, inspiring confidence and providing intellectual stimulation.

Transactional Leadership Style

A transactional style focuses on supervision, organisation and performance to get results. Compliance is promoted through reward and punishment. It is a 'telling' style that features positive and negative reinforcement, appeals to the self-interest of the individual with reactive leadership.

Ways to adopt this style include: provide external reward for desired performance, enforce rule following, efficiency and doing things correctly, directive approach to managing, focus on short term goals and put in place structured policy and procedures.

Innovative Company Culture

A supportive company culture has been shown to be key for innovative activities to succeed. Your culture is the standard beliefs and shared behavioural expectations in the business. For innovation you should aim to build a culture that **encourages creativity, autonomy, provide resources and pressure.**

- **Encouragement of creativity** needs to occur at all levels (organisational, line manager and team):
 - at an organisational level you can encourage risk taking, idea generation, fair and supportive evaluation of activities, collaborative ideas and recognition and reward of creativity
 - at a line manager level encourage clarity of goals, open interaction between manager and employee, and support of employees work and ideas
 - at team level encourage diverse backgrounds and an openness to ideas
- Give **autonomy** to employees which gives a sense of control and ownership over work, ideas and how goals are accomplished
- Ensure availability of **resources** which directly relates to whether individuals think ideas have any possibility of being implemented
- Provide an amount of **pressure** which can be stimulating from the challenge, however too much or excessive workload pressure will have a negative effect on innovation

This model by Hunter and Cushbery shows ways leaders can influence innovation directly and indirectly.

