

Tips on how develop a more innovative Team

Would you rather have a team that plods along with the status quo and gets caught by surprise when a change hits? Or a team that drives change by exploring new ideas?

Follow these **tips to create an environment that fosters innovation.**

1) Sharpen your team's view and help them drive changes for the biggest impact.

- **Encourage them to build relationships outside the team.** When appropriate, suggest that they reach out to colleagues who can broaden their view when they have a question
- **Keep them informed about what higher-ups are thinking.** Even if decisions aren't final, sharing details from above can spark valuable discussions about how your team might contribute and encourage them to think ahead about adjustments that will need to be made
- **Coach them to think about how their work connects to company goals, initiatives.** Consider regularly reiterating company goals and strategy in team meetings. And in their 1-on-1s, regularly talk about how their work supports company goals.

2) Promote a team culture of curiosity and continuous learning.

Routines are comfortable, but can be dangerously so. If your direct reports adhere rigidly to "that's how we do it here," they can become complacent or even resistant to changing things for the better. Create a culture that encourages **self-reflection, questioning the status-quo.**



3) Focus on only one or two improvement areas at a time.

4) Pick an idea to try, and start with a small experiment.

Innovating doesn't mean just trying new stuff and hoping for the best. It's a **deliberate process**: running small tests — for fast results so failures don't cause major damage — then learning, refining, and trying again until you're ready to launch on a larger scale.

5) Embrace failure, and change course cheerfully when things don't turn out as hoped. Effective change demands humility and agility. Here are ways to cultivate this agile, change-friendly mindset:

- **Express excitement when experiment results debunk your existing view.** Evidence that contradicts your expectations lets you course-correct before it's too late. That's gold.
- **Recognize team members for experimenting even (or especially) when the data points to failure.** For example, when a direct report's test email subject line reduces reader engagement, you comment, *"I'm so glad you tried that subject line — we've learned something about our users' top concerns."*

As a leader, if you don't have a sense of where things stand, then it's nearly impossible to determine what would be better and whether the change makes a difference. Consider measuring business impact, behaviors that influence results, and team collaboration. In other words, it is about challenging your team members to improve, not only their products or services, but also their day-to-day. It really is a whole mindset shift.