How to Succeed in Workplace Innovation

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Agenda

• Define innovation
• Understand why workplace innovation often fails
• Show how workplace innovation can succeed
SO,

WHAT IS

INNOVATION
NEW!  ?  NOT QUITE
Ideas

Implementable

Relevant

Impact
Workplace innovation efforts often fall short.

Why?
What Goes Wrong When We Attempt to Innovate

• Change imposed (top down)
• Reluctance to reconsider “the problem”
• Lack of awareness of or insight into what’s really “the problem”
What Goes Wrong When We Attempt to Innovate (continued)

• Push for premature “solution”

• Failure to solicit input from those knowledgeable and/or impacted
START

THE PROBLEM

Take a look...
Definition of Problem (fr. Oxford Languages)

A matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome.
In fact, the way we see the problem is the problem.
Individual Example

“I cannot complete all my work on any given day”

What’s the problem?

• Too much work
• Not equipped to do work (education/training/ability)
• Should not be doing work at all
• Receives poor or no guidance
• Not productive or efficient in doing work
• Not enough staff
So, What’s the Problem?

we don’t know.
WHAT TO DO?
Big Picture Questions to Answer

• What’s the problem (according to “management”)? Why?
• Is management’s assessment complete? Accurate? Why or why not?
• What’s really the problem(s)? How can we understand it better?
Big Picture Questions to Answer (continued)

• What are strategies to address the real problem?
• Which of these strategies (one or more) makes most sense?
• How do we pursue these strategies?

What information do we need to answer these questions (on this slide and the previous one)?
How can we collect this information?
• Is it feasible to address the entire problem?
• Would tackling a smaller piece of the problem make more sense?
What We Need to Proceed
To Answer Questions, Collect Data Through Interviews
Meetings
Observations
Third Party Data
Use Data Collected to Experiment
Change

1. Adjust
2. Shift
3. Transform

New

Modify

Transition

Wrench
See

so, how does it work?
Then

Wash
Rinse
Repeat
In Short, Successful Innovation Results from an Iterative Process
But Wait, THERE'S MORE!
The Focus Thus Far Has Been On
Whack a Mole Management a Close Cousin to Problem Solving Focus

Manager waits for something he or she believes to be wrong to happen, and “whacks” behavior with words and/or actions.
You Might Want to

THINK ABOUT THINGS DIFFERENTLY
LOOKING
ONE STEP BEYOND
Move from “Problem Solving” to “Appreciative Inquiry”

• Rather than “fixing” problem (or “whacking the mole”), seek what is good, true, better, possible; look to expand vision of future

• Seek strengths rather than problems
Appreciation Inquiry

A positive model for helping people, teams and organizations to develop. It invites people to focus on specific topic they want to explore.
Appreciation Inquiry Helps Participants to Clarify

• When they have performed brilliantly
• Principles they followed to perform brilliantly
• How they can follow these principles - plus add other elements - to perform brilliantly in the future
Appreciation Inquiry Guiding Questions (1)

• “What is the challenge we want to tackle?”

• “What is the theme we want to explore?”

• “How can we frame the question in a positive way?”
Appreciation Inquiry Guiding Questions (2)

• “What are the real results we want to achieve? What is the picture of success?”

• Can we define the challenge, topic or specific results we want to achieve in terms of: “How to ...?”
For More Information on Appreciative Inquiry See

• https://www.davidcooperrider.com/ai-process/

• https://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/resources/what-is-appreciative-inquiry-ai/
THE END