

# Why Innovation Is Crucial To Your Organization's Long-Term Success

We hear the term “innovation” everywhere and are made to believe in its importance. For many of us, innovation means providing ideas out of the blue, leading to significant discoveries and achievements. However, there's more to it than that.



## What Is Innovation?

First, we need to decide on a definition. Innovation isn't solely represented by new devices, ideas or methods, but also by the process of uncovering new ways to do things. It can also pertain to modifying business models and adapting to changes to achieve better products and services.

Let's take a look at the formal definition of both “creation” and “innovation,” since most people will mistakenly use them interchangeably.

According to Merriam-Webster, the term creation means having the quality or power to create, and is the act of making, inventing or producing.

Innovation is defined as the introduction of something new or different. The act of innovating leads to the introduction of new ideas, devices or methods.

In short, creativity plus work results in innovation. Therefore, being innovative means you harness your creative ability.

## How To Utilize Innovation

In the business world, for an innovative idea to be useful, it has to be replicable without being too expensive and it has to resolve a particular need. Innovation is achieved by providing something original and is often seen to produce efficiency, leading to an idea that significantly affects the general society.

For example, in the past year, the United Kingdom's Hampshire County has implemented an [innovative approach](#) to road repair and maintenance.

Originally, highway maintenance crews were forced to visit individual production plants before starting road repairs in order to collect fresh, hot asphalt materials. This not only used up valuable time, but also led to wasted material because of particular temperature requirements.

Innovation sparked an idea to develop a mobile unit that mixes the key road-surface ingredients on-site, resulting in more efficiency. This method costs about the same, saves the company and crews time, and the repairs are completed sooner for residents. Notice how compelling and effective this is for anyone who drives on these streets.

Innovation doesn't have to be the next Google or Microsoft with massive public relations behind it. A quote from a *CIO Magazine* article called "[What Really Makes Something Innovative?](#)" reads, "Sometimes it's those quiet achievers who can make just as big an impact without having to be ostentatious about it."

In other words, just because something makes front-page news doesn't mean it has more impact. Some companies, products and ideas revolutionize certain aspects of our lives more quietly.

[Sense-T](#) is an intelligent farming initiative that utilizes sensor data to optimize farming operations. Haven't heard of them? Neither had I. But they have a massive impact in the world of sensors and the internet of things.

WeWork is another innovative concept, providing entrepreneurs a place to work when their home, the public library or Starbucks won't do any longer. The company has [174 office locations](#) in 46 cities around the world.

And [Feed Supper](#) turns a casual dinner party into a philanthropic event to raise money to buy millions of meals per month to underprivileged children around the world.

## **Why Innovation Is Important**

Innovation is vital in the workplace because it gives companies an edge in penetrating markets faster and provides a better connection to developing markets, which can lead to bigger opportunities, especially in rich countries.

Innovation can also help develop original concepts while giving the innovator a proactive, confident attitude to take risks and get things done.

When a company has an innovative culture, it'll grow easily, despite the fact that the creative process isn't always simple. Tried-and-tested methods may be reliable, but trying out new things is a worthwhile experiment.

## **What It Is And What It's Not**

Aside from products, innovation can also pertain to new services, business models, processes and functions.

Companies such as Google and Starbucks have implemented game-changing innovations in small ways that add to the big picture.

Notice Starbucks doesn't do small, medium and large cups. They have their own language such as grande and venti. They even have their own [payment app](#) designed with PayPal.

If you use Google, you may start with search but end up using Google Docs or Google Hangouts.

As a professor and trainer who teaches a series of innovation and creativity programs, I can tell you from observation that innovation is not for geniuses working alone. It is a group activity and is definitely a teachable skill.

Being innovative should always be a part of your approach. With creative thinking, problems can be solved differently and strategically.

The right innovative techniques can help you save precious time and money, and give you a competitive lead in expanding your business.

Tremendous efficiencies are experienced because of the development and use of new strategies. One way to experience this is when distinctly different ideas come from different minds. Don't be afraid to surround yourself with people who have ideas that differ from yours. You'll come up with diverse ideas that you can pool to achieve a different approach from what has always been done -- and that is what you call motivation. Now go get innovative!