Fighting the Fear of Change and Innovation

Article

Does your company have a fear of change?

Our previous articles mention how to include innovation in a company's management and culture. But what if it's more basic than that? What if fear of change is holding your company back from meeting its full potential? Time and money play a large role in what management might be willing to spend to go to the next level. If fear is getting in the way, it will slow progress even more. According to the article on Conquering Enemies of Innovation posted on Harvard Business Review, fear is the top inhibitor to innovation.

> Fear of innovation and change is holding your company back.

Thirty percent say they fear making mistakes, making it the top barrier to innovation due to fear. Second is getting fired or appearing less dedicated. Other factors inhibiting innovation include, fear of dealing with difficult customers or clients, conflict with managers, speaking in front of a group and disagreements with coworkers.

With odds like that, it's no wonder there is serious lack of innovation within our companies or industry. So what can we do?

1. **Trust.** It is key in opening the door of communication. It seems that it applies to everything aside from communication, and it's true. Lack of communication can lead to lack of innovation, and trust might be an issue that impedes good communication. Instead of killing the messenger, we need to be open and inviting to new ideas. Communication requires trust. Trust that their ideas will be listened to instead of immediately shot down, and trust that they won't be in trouble if the idea fails.
2. **Get Organized.** Break down the task into smaller and more doable chunks. At each step, whether it's success or failure, you learn something. If you succeed, it boosts your confidence and you can apply the same thinking later on. If you fail, it's a lot easier to analyze that step, figure out what you did wrong, rather than do everything at once and not know where you went wrong.
3. **Encourage experimentation.** An environment to cultivates fear probably doesn't encourage positive learning experiences or experiments. If encouraged to take risks, there is no limit to what a group of individuals can accomplish together. Some of the best inventions were made by learning from mistakes.
4. **Cultivate Talent.** Some people are born with exceptional talent, but that is the exception not the rule. Most people have to work on fine tuning their natural abilities until progressively getting better at said skill. Having a management team that is willing to invest in building up its employees will see immeasurable benefits in the long run, especially when it comes to bringing in new innovative practices.

5. **Change Your Perspective.** It's not failure if you learned something, right? So, ask yourself these three questions:
    1. What did I learn from this situation?
    2. How can I grow as a person from this experience?
    3. What can I do differently next time

Even Thomas Edison failed, but he kept learning and made one of the biggest breakthroughs of all time. Not only did he give us light, but people are constantly using his story as motivation not to give up. You might never succeed how you think you should, but with a slight tweaking of perspective, then maybe you can accomplish something you never even thought of. Check out our other information on how to lead an innovative company and how to bring innovative culture to your company.