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Leading Innovation by Gary Bertwistle by Glenn Farrier

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Management has a key role to play in leading and creating a culture of innovation and creativity where people are encouraged to think differently and put forward their ideas. In your role as leader, particularly in leading innovation, there are several ideas for you to consider to help you foster an environment of creativity, innovation and thinking differently within your organisation:

Remove constraints:

If you are going to lead an innovative organisation, one of your key objectives should be to remove the constraints in your company that are hindering people from thinking differently. Many people feel constrained because of too many meetings, too many processes, too much paperwork, too much hierarchy, lack of resources, too great a workload and no recognition for new ideas or different thinking. If you are a good leader, you could look at these issues and take some action, rather than dismiss them and essentially do nothing. Which leader are you?

Ignite new ideas:

Unfortunately some leaders believe it is their job to walk around the office, hear a spark of an idea, and then tip a bucket of water over it. This can come in the form of a sideways glance, a shake of the head or a snide comment. These leaders believe their job is to judge and evaluate peopleâ€™s thinking for whatâ€™s wrong rather than whatâ€™s right or what potential an idea might have. A leader wh wants to encourage innovation and a culture of thinking differently will instead carry a bucket of petrol to really ignite the spark of an idea. They will have their eyes and ears open for the opportunity to acknowledge the effort someone has put into challenging an existing way of thinking.

Make Time:

Given the importance that thinking plays in the success or failure of your business, it is vital to analyse how much time you and your team put aside to really think. Most of us are too busy in meetings for 8 or 9 hours a day, bogged down in emails and phone calls to return. With schedules like these, there is very little â€“ if any â€“ room for thinking. It is a brave executive who will truly lead from the front and allow people to take time to think. Give both yourself and your executives the chance to work ON the business as opposed to always IN the business. Many of Australiaâ€™s best organizations are increasingly allocating days where there are no emails or appointments allowed. This is time for teams to sit, ponder and discuss different ways of doing things. Remember, itâ€™s the thinking behind the doing that will ultimately win the war against your competitors.

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