

The Innovation Road Map: A Guide for Nurse Leaders



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1 The Characteristics of Innovation

Promote Five key characteristics:

To promote a culture of innovation, healthcare leaders must exhibit foster, promote, and reward five key characteristics: divergent thinking, risk taking, failure tolerance, agility/flexibility, and autonomy/freedom.

Divergent Thinking

Divergent thinking allows for the connection or consideration of unrelated matters while contemplating a specific problem

Risk Taking

Divergent thinking can produce ideas that seem risky to implement. Put simply, risk-taking is engaging in a behavior that involves risk in order to achieve a goal.

Failure Tolerance

Failure tolerance is accepting that the path to success is paved with many failures. Without failure tolerance, there can be no risk-taking behavior. There are many examples of individuals whose serial risk taking and failure tolerance led to enormous success.

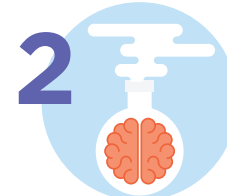
Autonomy & Freedom

Giving employees freedom to complete tasks as they see fit produces the autonomy they need to become more confident about their abilities and decisions.

Agility & Flexibility

The ability to adapt quickly to rapidly developing trends, treatments, regulations, and changing market conditions. Agility is defined as the capability to adjust swiftly in response to global market changes. Flexibility describes the ability to provide different outcomes with the same resources by expanding, contracting, and shifting them to meet emerging needs.

The Components of Innovation



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Components for promoting innovation:

Transforming an organization from one that resists innovation to one that embraces it requires a variety of organizational components. As with any solution, once size does not fit all. Leaders must be willing to try, test, adopt, or adapt components until the right combination is found. Innovative leaders also are ready to engage in this process repeatedly, as the organization continues to evolve. Nurse leaders can consider several organizational components for promoting innovation.



Employee Feedback

Asking employees at all organizational levels to complete frequent confidential surveys is a simple way to gather invaluable information that can be used in many productive ways.



Protected Time

While creating a culture of innovation may not require creating a dedicated committee, it does require having processes in place to determine rules for piloting/testing, funding, disseminating, and celebrating innovations.



Role Filling

While every organization seeks employees that fit its culture, many make the mistake of continuing to hire the same type of person for a role that could be considered outdated in an innovative work environment.



Technological Support

Access to a hands-on learning lab that offers the technology needed to develop their ideas into concepts also can be an invaluable resource for staff who want to contribute to workplace innovations.



Role Modeling

Because nurse leaders have the ability to foster new thinking styles, their behavior can play a critical role in their organization's transformation (Blakeney et al., 2009).



Rewards

Innovation prizes also are used to promote result-based financial incentives that reward successful commercial and social innovations, which address health and other humanitarian problems in a way that is financially sustainable and supports economic development (Dubé, 2014).



Employee Engagement

Compared to only 9% of disengaged employees, 61% of engaged employees feed off the creativity of their colleagues. 50% of engaged employees believe their job brings out their most creative ideas, compared to only 3% of disengaged employees (Krueger & Killham, 2006).



"IDEO" Methodology

The "IDEO" method finds solutions mainly by observing user behavior, putting oneself in the user's situation, and trying to feel what the user feels (Lanoue, 2015).



Education

Staff often must be educated about concepts that may be new to them, such as innovation processes; brainstorming; Lean techniques (creating more customer value with fewer resources); design thinking; intellectual property, patents, and trademarks; testing and validating concepts or devices; and the attributes of a sustainable organizational culture.



Budgeting

Creating an innovation-conducive environment requires an investment in education as well as time dedicated to brainstorming and creative problem solving.



Leadership

Whether it is from a chief executive officer, chief nursing officer, chief clinical officer, chief operating officer, or research dean, support for an innovative culture starts at the top level and filters down through all levels of an organization.



3 Team Collaboration: Innovation in Action

Five strategies that promote innovative team collaboration:

Producing innovations is not a solitary sport, but rather a team endeavor. The value of a team approach to innovation has become so pervasive that literature on the topic refers to an open innovation concept in which the greatest innovations are produced by teams of individuals from across markets and disciplines.

Unlikely & Diverse Team

In essence, including team members who do not think alike creates the friction that produces innovative solutions.

Play

Play promotes an easygoing atmosphere where ideas can flow in a non-rushed, lighthearted environment. Playing and being creative ignores rules, practicality, and the idea of being wrong.

Productive Interaction

A member not sharing ideas does not indicate that he or she does not have them. Leaders can promote productive interaction and cohesiveness among team members by having them engage in team activities.

Pauses & Breaks

While humans naturally do this after becoming frustrated with a task, the practice does not carry over to teams. Like individuals, teams also need pauses and breaks to interrupt faulty thinking and logic.

Skillset Development

In essence, the innovation team leader must allow each member to develop within his or her role, while providing feedback and kudos during this process.