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## What Do Today's Leading Innovators Suggest Are Some Actions Your Company Can Take *Right Away* to Stimulate Creativity and Innovation?

When over one hundred high-level innovation professionals in many of today's leading companies were asked the question, "What are some actions your company can take right away to stimulate creativity and innovation?" they responded with hundreds of answers a wide array of categories, ranging from needing more resources or experts to innovation at all levels.<sup>1</sup>

### **Resources:**

As expected, these leaders recognize the need for physical space resources, from the more expensive "build an innovation lab" to "create a more exciting team workspace" to "create a space to think." They also see the benefits in adding human resources, including "engaging other countries in our innovation," "bring in more experts" and "Get an instructional designer and an MBA on staff."

Other resources requested are related to management and leadership's commitment to innovation by providing incentives and rewards, "Reward creativity," "Reward failures" and "Reward ideas."

### **Leadership:<sup>2</sup>**

A majority of the ideas had to do with leadership, either in terms of setting strategy and making decisions or relating to communication and behavior. "Be consistent in direction," "Build innovation into key strategies," "Link ideation to strategy," and "Create a visionary mission statement and a revolutionary plan to achieve the vision" are all examples of their quest to incorporate innovation into strategic planning.

Specific strategies suggested include "Develop strategic alliances" and "Embrace open innovation" as well as "Actively seek ideas from everywhere" and "Align business unit innovation efforts."

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<sup>1</sup> These ideas were generated from a DrawSuccess Group Event presentation at a conference for senior innovation managers and executives in 2008. For more information about using DrawSuccess in a group event, see: <http://www.drawsuccess.com/Speaking%20Program.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The DrawSuccess Program offers Leadership a great way to start creating a culture of innovation at all levels and ensure that teams throughout the organization have a safe way to share their ideas and solutions to all kinds of business challenges.

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And requests such as “Empower others,” “Don’t hold us back,” “Invest in people’s ideas by giving them time to work on them,” “Celebrate/reward innovation” and “Give people 10% of time for new ideas” demonstrate their plea to leadership to encourage innovative thinking.

**Attitudes:<sup>3</sup>**

Many of the responses related to a desired change in attitude and behavior, not just in management but throughout the organization. Being open to risk was mentioned in various forms, from specific areas like “Convince sales to take more risk” or “Allow for more risk in marketing department”

Comments relating to change in general included, “Be okay with change,” “Create a culture that embraces change,” “Abandon old assumptions” and even “Embrace the inevitable” “Stop stupid stuff” and “Stop talking – just do it!”

More specific changes they recommended were, “Focus on the right reasons to make decisions,” “Enable me and others to do something I couldn’t before,” “Stop thinking our processes are perfect” and “Start the 10% blue sky rule.” Other attitude shifts suggested include, “Get more confidence,” “Honesty,” “Share,” “Better collaboration,” “Be Bold,” “Support my team more,” “Be curious” and “Provide a safe zone.”

**Activities:<sup>4</sup>**

The group got creative when it came to the activities they suggested implementing: “Idea Summits,” “Day field trips,” and “Retreats” of all kinds, plus “Change everyone’s job for a day,” “Ethnographics,” “Have everyone act as consumers trying products, experimenting” “Send more people to innovation conferences,” “Swap ideas and people with other companies,” “More global face time and collaboration,” “Run more experiments” and “Share success stories.”

Other ideas include having an “Innovation wall,” creating “Virtual communities” and hiring “Provocative speakers.”

**Meetings:<sup>5</sup>**

One thing that was interesting was the number and tone of the responses when it comes to meetings. “Less meetings!” many of them cry. But they also ask for more meetings and

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<sup>3</sup> DrawSuccess helps a lot to change attitudes and behavior throughout your company, addressing topics such as Opinions and Honesty, Conflict Resolution, Unity and many more. And because the program creates reports of everyone’s ideas, they can feel confident that their opinion counts!

<sup>4</sup> The DrawSuccess Game is a great activity to use to not only stimulate creativity and idea generation, but it also helps transform teams in nineteen other categories as well!

<sup>5</sup> Two of the twenty criteria measured and solved by the DrawSuccess Program are in the arena of meetings, both meeting effectiveness and meeting productivity – plus ways to make meetings more creative and fun!

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opportunities to connect – just different. They want brainstorming, sharing and collaboration. Reading between the lines a bit, it seems what they’re saying is that they want the meetings to change, be more productive and allow time to be creative and come up with new solutions.

For a complete list of all responses, contact your local DrawSuccess Facilitator Coach or DrawSuccess at [Info@DrawSuccess.com](mailto:Info@DrawSuccess.com).

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