

# Enabling Inclusive Innovation in the Workplace



# ENABLING INCLUSIVE INNOVATION IN THE WORKPLACE

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We are continuing development and testing of the updated and expanded resources. We are also working with other institutions to adapt and customize the resources to other contexts as an ongoing collaborative effort. Feel free to contact us if you want to help.

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## Introduction

Leading-edge Ontario organizations recognize that a more innovation-capable workforce is a key factor in addressing our economic and social challenges. Higher Education institutions can support a more innovative workforce by ensuring that all students can develop inclusive innovation skills.

In our earlier modules on Understanding Workplace Innovation we focused on developing student capability to engage with employee-led innovation in the workplace. The current set of modules on Advancing [Employee-led Innovation](#) in the Workplace build on that foundation to prepare graduates to support other employees in engaging with inclusive innovation in their workplace (an emerging role also referred to as [Innovation Catalysts](#)). The aim is to prepare graduates who can assist businesses, public sector agencies and not-for-profit organizations in developing and leveraging more innovative workforces.

As with our previous OER content, the learning outcomes include Innovation Skills, Knowledge, Experiences and Mindsets. Each topic area includes workplace cases to illustrate the principles and practical exercises to test student capability.



# LESSON 1.1 - OVERVIEW OF INCLUSIVE INNOVATION IN THE WORKPLACE

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## Introduction

This first lesson introduces the goals and content in the *Enabling Inclusive Innovation in the Workplace* set of learning resources and activities. For maximum benefit from these resources, it is ideal that learners will already have developed initial capability for employee-led workplace innovation at the levels outlined in the text box below (based on the eCampus Ontario learning resources and activities on [Understanding Workplace Innovation](#)).

### **Suggested Prerequisite Capability in Understanding Workplace Innovation:**

Prior to engaging in the lessons and activities in this resource, learners will (ideally) have:

- Developed **knowledge** of the basic concepts of employee-led workplace innovation as a social process of creating value in the workplace by mobilizing new ideas. A guiding principle is to aim for improvement in both organizational performance and employee quality of work for employees.
- Engaged with exemplary workplace innovation practices to develop your **skills** in a progression of project **experiences** of increasing complexity, team size, uncertainty, and potential impact.
- Reflected on your own **innovation mindset**, including your identity, motivation, and capability as an innovator (in the workplace, but also in other roles as a community member and global citizen)

Outcomes of the learning resource *Enabling Inclusive*

## *Innovation in the Workplace*

1. Learners will broaden their capability in workplace innovation across more diverse activities and employee teams by:
  - Expanding their knowledge to include additional employee-led innovation activities and examples of the exemplary practices that have emerged to increase their effectiveness and impact.
  - Engaging with the growing body of research evidence which is helping organizations to provide a supportive infrastructure that encourages, enables and leverages employee-led workplace innovation.
2. Explore the emerging job roles of *Workplace **Innovation Catalysts*** (employees with special expertise in helping other employees increase the effectiveness of their innovation projects, e.g., by providing leadership for multi-employee innovation projects, serving as innovation project managers or facilitating the social processes involved in innovation teamwork).
3. Explore opportunities for **Innovation Catalysts** to facilitate the dissemination and adaptation of research insights and exemplary practices into new workplace contexts, as a catalyst for innovation knowledge mobilization by experiencing this role through an extended Applied Project, which will prepare learners for an external workplace project either in a work-integrated learning placement (for traditional students) or as part of an ongoing job (for working learners).
4. Apply Enabling **Inclusive Workplace Innovation** learning in other organizational roles such as:
  - an employee looking for the optimal practices and insights to support your own involvement in employee-led innovation projects in your workplace; or
  - a workplace leader or manager seeking to develop a supportive infrastructure to advance employee-led workplace innovation in your organization.
5. Recognize the value of their learning from the modules in this resource when seeking employment to engage in inclusive workplace innovation by being prepared to
  - understand and identify organizational policies; and

- support practice for **inclusive workplace innovation** by assessing the fit between their goals, strengths, and needs, and what the organization can and will provide.

## Overview

*Innovation is not neutral; it has both a rate and, crucially, a direction. The style of innovation frequently touted as the answer – the ‘move fast and break things’ Silicon Valley version is often not inclusive at all – it can increase existing social and economic inequality and have unintended environmental consequences.*

Strategies for Supporting Inclusive Innovation, United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2020)

Note the phrase “***Inclusive Workplace Innovation***” in the Introduction above. ***Inclusive Innovation*** addresses a broader range of social goals for innovation and asks both *who participates* in – or is excluded from – innovation activities and *who benefits* – or experiences loss – from innovation (Dutz 2007). This phrase is beginning to appear in Canada to highlight how our adaptation of the European concept of employee-led workplace innovation links to the larger body of research and practice on ***Inclusive Innovation*** beyond the workplace.

Bringing these two concepts together frames our workplace innovation activities in a larger context, working towards innovation that advances human well-being and the well-being of all life on Earth. This capsule summary is expanded upon in Lesson 1.2 and returns to specific topics in later lessons to highlight additional ways for employee-led Workplace Innovation to promote more inclusive workplaces (and for learners to serve as catalysts for more inclusive innovation).

## Overview of Learning Outcomes

In this learning journey, the goal is for learners to develop their **knowledge, skills, experiences, and personal mindset** to support inclusive workplace innovation. These outcomes will be achieved through a variety of experiences as described below.

I. Learners will develop their **knowledge** to support **inclusive workplace innovation** by:

- recognizing a broad range of components, issues, roles, and resources for Enabling employees, and organizations, to engage effectively in inclusive workplace innovation.
- developing an in-depth knowledge of one workplace context with its own distinctive combination of components, issues, roles, and resources by completing an Applied Project.

II. Learners will develop their **skills** and **experiences** to support inclusive workplace innovation by:

- applying their inclusive workplace innovation knowledge in an external work-integrated learning placement or an ongoing employee role, adding value to workplace innovation capability (e.g., through adaptation of research insights & exemplary practices).
- mobilizing their **knowledge** via scouting, curating, sharing, and adapting knowledge as well as evaluating impacts and planning further activities.

III. Learners will develop **personal mindsets** to support inclusive workplace innovation by:

- using their workplace experience in Inclusive Innovation to expand their own capability and career planning/pathways (e.g., “Personal Mindsets that will enable graduates to proactively act and adapt in diverse workplace situations – current and future” (Carey et al 2023)), and in their other roles as community members and global citizens).
- using **knowledge, skills, and experiences** to build a foundation for further development in professional learning or a field work internship.
  - *Note:* outcomes could apply equally to career paths enabling employee and/or organizational roles and capability (e.g., for B.A. and B. Comm. students respectively)



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=5#h5p-3>

## References for Lesson 1.1 Overview of Inclusive Innovation in the Workplace

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Dutz, Mark A.. 2007. *Unleashing India's Innovation: Toward Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. © Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/6856>

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# LESSON 1.2 ENABLING INCLUSIVE INNOVATION IN CANADIAN WORKPLACES

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## Learning Outcomes

After completing this lesson, you will

- Deepen your understanding of inclusive innovation and why it matters.
- Explore inclusivity in the context of workplace innovation at the organization level and in specific Canadian contexts.

## What is Inclusive Innovation?

Inclusive Innovation addresses a broader range of social goals for innovation and asks about both who participates in – or is excluded from innovation activities and who benefits (or experiences loss from) innovation (Dutz 2007).

***Innovation is not neutral: it has both a rate and, crucially, a direction.*** The style of innovation frequently touted as the answer – the ‘move fast and break things’ Silicon Valley version) is often not inclusive at all – it can increase existing social and economic inequality and have unintended environmental consequences.

[\*Strategies for Supporting Inclusive Innovation\*](#),

United Nations Development Program



For a better understanding of the global scope of Inclusive Innovation in this [3-minute video](#) on YouTube (from King's College in London, U.K.)

There are multiple dimensions in which this broader range can be addressed. For instance, in a 2017 briefing on inclusive innovation policy for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Planes-Satorra & Paunov 2017), the following dimensions of inclusion are highlighted:

1. In **Demographic terms**, inclusion addresses the need to reduce the underrepresentation or exclusion of individuals according to characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and perceived disability status;
2. Inclusion is also conceived in **Geographic terms**, with efforts made to increase the innovation participation and benefit for regions. Often, it is rural areas and socio-economically disadvantaged places that are targeted by such approaches;
3. **Industrial and Sectoral** dimensions are also considered with the aim of including innovation participants and beneficiaries in more traditional sectors (i.e., outside of sectors such as digital technologies which many current innovation policies privilege).

Some of these broader aspects of Inclusive Innovation are discussed in a [blog post from the Workplace Innovation Network for Canada](#), looking at initiatives to foster Inclusive Innovation at the global, national, regional and city levels. In the sections that follow here, you will focus on the reframing of **employee-led innovation** as Inclusive Workplace at the Workplace Level and on the links between this work and other Canadian research initiatives on Inclusive Innovation.

## Inclusive Innovation at the Workplace Level

The label “**Inclusive Workplace Innovation**” is beginning to be used in Canada to highlight how our adaptation of the European concept of workplace innovation links to the larger body of research and practice on Inclusive Innovation – and to suggest additional ways for **Employee-led Workplace Innovation** to promote more inclusive workplaces.

The conception of **Employee-led Workplace Innovation** has implicitly inclusive elements, with its focus on win-win goals for both the organization and the workforce and on the broader inclusion of employees as both participants and beneficiaries.

Viewed in the context of the OECD report referenced above, this suggests another aspect of inclusion that should be added to the previous three:

4. In **Job Role** terms, Inclusive Innovation moves from a perception that innovation is a specialized role (restricted to certain job positions) toward an understanding that all employees can be empowered as contributors to innovation in their workplace. It should also be noted that past European research on employee-led workplace innovation has also explored

**Recap:** Workplace Innovation is the employee-led social process of mobilizing new ideas to create better work. The twin goals of employee Workplace Innovation are to improve both the quality of work life for employees and organizational performance for employers.

some of the broader aspects of inclusion described above. For example, promoting **employee-led innovation** within workplaces has been combined with advancing innovation activities outside major urban centres for Geographic inclusion (Totterdill 2017; Habibipour et al 2021) and with addressing other potential participants and beneficiaries of innovation activities beyond the workplace (such as “community development and environmental responsibility” (Mattieu et al 2021) and “sustained impacts at individual enterprise level and across the economy as a whole” (Pot et al 2023).

Some innovations to promote more inclusive workplace participation for Demographic inclusion have been employee-led initiatives. Some of these initiatives will be highlighted in later lessons such as:

- Lesson 3.1: Participation of neuro-diverse workers in collaborative innovation methods such as Design Thinking
- Lesson 3.2: Participation in workplace innovation projects by older workers (who are often excluded from innovation projects)



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=32#h5p-1>

## Inclusive Workplace Innovation in Canada

Canada already has strong research centres studying Inclusive Innovation, with strong links to the international research on Inclusive Innovation at the national, regional and city levels. These centres include the Innovation Policy Lab at the University of Toronto’s [Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy](#) (Zehavi & Breznitz 2017), the [Institute for Science, Society and Policy](#) at the University of Ottawa (Schillo & Robinson 2017) and the [Brookfield Institute for Innovation](#) (Munro & Zachariah 2021) within [The Dias](#) at Toronto Metropolitan University.

The concept has also transitioned into practice as a tool in policy formation. For example, a recent report for Employment and Social Development Canada on fostering innovation to achieve social goals called on the Government of Canada to embrace a more inclusive view of innovation and to value innovation for social and environmental good at the same level of ambition that it does commercial and technological innovation (ESDC 2018).

At the workplace level, the **Inclusive Workplace Innovation** theme has appeared in calls to foster more inclusive innovation in Canada by “Recognizing that any worker can be an engine of innovation”. This is Principle 5 in *Pathways to Inclusive Innovation: Insights for Ontario and Beyond* (Rivera et al 2018), which includes the following expanded commentary:

Workers from different educational and skills backgrounds can contribute to an innovation economy. Workforce training programs that provide foundational and transferable knowledge can prepare participants to adapt more easily to technological change and to directly contribute to process innovation and technology development. In turn, enabling workers to upskill for roles in innovative, technology-intensive firms benefits

these firms by increasing their efficiency, competitiveness, and profitability, and allowing them to remain viable in quickly evolving sectors.

There has also been recognition of the need – and opportunity – for Canadian employers to engage their workforces in workplace innovation to advance organizational performance, quality of work life and regional economic development through innovation outside major urban centres (with a special focus on employers in Atlantic Canada (Pascoe-Deslauriers 2020). And a recent study in Ontario analyzed gaps in Ontario initiatives to promote local Makerspaces as a means to advance inclusive innovation (Vinodrai et al, 2021).

## Case Study

*It should be noted that these goals for Inclusive Innovation as part of **employee-led innovation** activities are not always present in other conceptions of Workplace Innovation. The case study below illustrates this, via the observations of a group of European experts looking at workplace innovation through the lens of geographic and cultural contexts on a different continent. This also emphasizes the need for alignment: from high-level issues of culture and tradition through to the workplace level of job design and employee engagement.*

Our company hosts took us to a newly built 'smart factory' producing a variety of types of refrigerators. Some 250 to 260 refrigerators are assembled per hour, with robots undertaking the major and heaviest tasks. The company has done an impressive job in applying digitization, automation and reducing the ergonomic risks for employees. In terms of productivity, cost-saving, energy reduction and better services to customers the case is highly successful. And the company has succeeded in reducing the musculoskeletal risks for workers.

However, we observed that little thought has been given to the quality of work from the perspective of 'active / complete jobs' – jobs that offer learning possibilities and which enhance the employability and sustainable skilling of workers. 'Full workplace innovation' requires taking an integral, systemic look at the full picture of what happens on the shopfloor.

At a second company, our hosts showed us an assembly line for washing machines parts...We viewed a very efficient and digitalized assembly line, but the remaining human work, done mostly by a flexible layer of migrant labourers under contract to an external subcontractor, comprised low skill, repetitive tasks.

Whilst the hosts were convinced that they were showing us a work environment which embodied the 'utmost respect for humans', we need to convey a still stronger message by demonstrating what we really mean by 'fully inclusive workplace innovation'.

Adapted from (Totterdill & Oeij 2023)



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=32#h5p-2>

## Key Takeaways

In this Lesson you have explored a broader view of Inclusive Innovation and reframed **Employee-Led Workplace Innovation** as a fundamental building block.

The Case Story in Lesson 1.3 illustrates some of the factors that need to be considered in achieving **Inclusive Workplace Innovation** in particular workplace contexts – you will learn more about this Case Story in future Lessons.

(The Case Story in Lesson 1.4 illustrates the creative activities that await you in supporting and enabling other employees engaging in **Inclusive Workplace Innovation**.)

## Further Learning

If you would like to learn more about the factors involved in Inclusive Innovation on a larger scale than individual organizations, you can find some applicable resources in the following blog posts from the Workplace Innovation Network for Canada:

- [Highlights of Inclusive Innovation initiatives at national, regional and city levels](#) (which includes quotes from the people who created the video cited earlier in this Lesson)
- [National and regional policy initiatives in Europe for Inclusive Workplace Innovation](#)

## References for Lesson 1.2 – Enabling Inclusive Innovation in Canadian Workplaces

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Employment and Social Development Canada (2018). *Inclusive innovation – New ideas and new partnerships for stronger communities*. Recommendations of the Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy Co-Creation Steering Group.

Habibipour, A., Lindberg, J., Runardotter, M., Elmistikawy, Y., Ståhlbröst, A., & Chronéer, D. (2021). Rural living labs: inclusive digital transformation in the countryside. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 11(9/10), 59-72.

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Rivera, D., Villeneuve, S., Breznitz, D. and Zehavi, A. (2018). *Pathways to Inclusive Innovation: Insights for Ontario and Beyond*. Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Schillo, R. S., & Robinson, R. M. (2017). Inclusive innovation in developed countries: The who, what, why, and how. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 7(7).

Totterdill, P. (2017). Workplace Innovation as Regional Economic Development: Towards a Movement? *IJAR–International Journal of Action Research*, 13(2), 9-10.

Vinodrai, T., Nader, B., & Zavarella, C. (2021). Manufacturing space for inclusive innovation? A study of makerspaces in southern Ontario. *Local Economy*, 36(3), 205-223.

Zehavi, A. & Breznitz, D. (2017). Distribution sensitive innovation policies: conceptualization and empirical examples. *Research Policy* 46, no. 1 (2017): 327– 336.

# LESSON 1.3: INTEGRATING INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES – THE ENWIN WORKPLACE INNOVATION CASE STORY

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## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, learners will have the opportunity to:

- Identify the innovation catalyst roles in this case story.
- Analyze the three strategies used by ENWIN to create an innovation culture.
- Recognize the potential for organizational innovation leaders to engage in Innovation Adaptation with research insights and exemplary practices from external sources.

## Background for the ENWIN Case Story<sup>1</sup>

ENWIN is a municipally owned and operated energy and water services utility for the greater Windsor region in southwestern Ontario. Part of the organization’s vision is “to be a trusted leader in providing exceptional value and services to customers (90,000) and stakeholders” by engaging its 320 employees in continuous improvement and innovation.

In 2018, ENWIN identified the desire to engage its employee base and build a culture that encourages, promotes and values innovative problem-solving. Grassroots initiatives were supported and shared through the organization’s first ENnovation Day. Two senior Innovation Catalysts served as co-leaders of the ENnovation

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1. Adapted from Future Skills Centre report, Inclusive Workplace Innovation and Quality of Work (2023) Annex 1

initiative: ENWIN's manager of human resource services (Rosana Kemsley) and the director of operations (Barry Leavitt, whose position was subsequently retitled to include both operations and innovation).

Over the next three years, employee teams participating in the ENnovation program produced 13 design innovation project proposals. This included 18 employees who became innovation project leaders, 50+ employees involved in the annual ENnovation Ideation Day to share ideas across teams, and over two dozen additional employees who received training in innovation and design thinking. The team tested the ENnovation model for three years via independent research, third-party advisors and continuous engagement and consultation with employees to support their efforts.

## Adapting an external Innovation Practice for the ENWIN Context

ENWIN recently began to enhance its culture of innovation by transitioning from program-based to culture-based innovation strategies, including building design thinking and other innovation activities into the existing performance management ecosystem, and incentivizing the right solution over the immediate (short-term) solution. As the ENnovation leaders, Barry and Rosana were keen to adapt exemplary practices and insights from beyond ENWIN. Along with their industry association, Electricity Human Resources Canada, they participated in an applied research project sponsored by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre which also included a team of external Innovation Catalysts who had special expertise in adaptation.

One of the ideas that particularly interested them was a model of a complete organizational infrastructure for advancing workplace innovation by employees. **The Fifth Element model** from Europe, shown in the Figure below (EIPA, 2019), highlights four key elements supporting workplace innovation: Employee Capability, Job Design, Employee Voice, and Organizational Processes and Policies (WINEU, 2023).



Figure 1. The Fifth Element Model (EIPA, 2019) (of Organizational Capability for Workplace Innovation)

The model also highlights the crucial need for connections to align innovation *planning* across these four elements – i.e.; a Fifth Element, shown in the centre of the figure, and to *integrate* the other strategic elements. (further learning will be available on the Fifth Element model in Lesson 2.2 to enable you to apply these insights in your own future workplace, and you can learn more about it on the [Workplace Innovation Europe website](#).)

Barry and Rosana used this external insight to reframe a disconnect they had previously observed between the *ENnovation* initiative (in the top right corner of the diagram) and the existing *Stretch Goals* Human Resource management process at ENWIN (in the bottom right corner). *Stretch Goals* had been implemented as an employee career development and performance improvement tool. In the *Stretch Goals* process, each of the 100 employees in the central administration and leadership team agreed with their managers on annual personal goals in three areas:

- **Build the Tools:** If you've found a better way to do something, make it into a tool that other employees can use (e.g., add it to a manual of procedures or a webpage)
- **Make it Better:** If you see a way to reduce our costs or improve our services to customers, contribute



the idea to our employee suggestion system or talk to your work team colleagues about how we could move it forward.

- ***Move the Needle***: If you see a way to contribute to one of ENWIN’s strategic goals through your work, be sure to highlight that with your manager or connect with the team pursuing that goal within ENWIN.

After the ENnovation program had been running for some time, Barry and Rosana realized that there were opportunities to merge ENnovation activities and employee Stretch Goals and leverage the established incentivized stretch goal program to help embed the steps of the innovation process (or design thinking).

In November 2022, Rosana and Barry made a proposal to ENWIN’s executive team to revise *ENnovation* and *Stretch Goals* to enable better integration. They received enthusiastic approval from the executives and the enhancements to both programs were implemented in 2023 with successful outcomes. Employees were able to fulfill a *Stretch Goal* requirement through a variety of innovation projects, including:

- “Build the Tools – *To Innovate*” employee goal/objective was focused on engaging in a supporting role, such as volunteering to be an Innovation leader, Innovation mentor, sitting on a process improvement committee.
- “Innovate and Make it Better” employee goal/objective was important as it intended to encourage employees to identify an area of interest and move through the design thinking steps to solve a problem OR employees could become a suggestion program ambassador and partner with someone who made a suggestion to move it through the design thinking process
- “Move the Needle” – joining a corporate project team OR taking on incremental work to support a colleague who is dedicating time to a strategic innovation project

Employees could also choose to ‘Move the Needle’ by taking on incremental work to support a colleague who is dedicating time to a strategic innovation project.

## Practice Exercise: Reflecting on the Innovation Catalyst Roles in this Case story

**Use the following prompts to reflect on the Innovation Catalyst Roles in this Case story.**

**Enter your thoughts in the Response box below each question, and then we'll share some of the insights we gained from working with Barry and Rosana.**



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=103#h5p-4>

## Results and Lessons Learned

When asked to reflect on the evolution of ENWIN's strategy for workplace innovation, Barry and Rosana shared the following:

*"ENWIN has learned that buy-in is vital. Leadership must support and reinforce the investment of time, resources, and money. Those staff members who are enthusiastic must be encouraged to lead. They must have the time to learn and grow, be open-minded, and approach challenges with a beginner's mindset.*

*Psychological safety is a key pillar in building an innovation culture. More specifically, the culture must welcome new ideas, encourage divergent opinions, and be willing to empower team members at all levels and with all outcomes (e.g., surprising outcomes must be applauded).*

*Celebration is a tenet of ENWIN's approach to innovation, which includes having fun! Collaboration with peers and celebration of 'a-ha' moments and learnings are important, as is taking the time to support team building."*

As this Case Story illustrates, ENWIN believes in integrating innovations into established systems and processes to support **systemic change** and in recognizing that the expectations must be built into the systems rather than being above and beyond employees' work. Rather than dictating to employees the types and forms of innovation that are acceptable, they must have the opportunity

to choose innovation activities that are comfortable for them. While ENWIN encourages stretching, the element of psychological safety in doing so is paramount for all.

## References for Lesson 1.3: Finding Innovation Opportunities – The ENWIN Workplace Innovation Case Story

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# LESSON 2.1: ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEES TO ENGAGE WITH WORKPLACE INNOVATION

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## Introduction

**Tip:** In the innovation context, “organization” is a broad term that reflects many types: companies, public-sector agencies, and social or community organizations.

As observed in the [ENWIN Case Story in Lesson 1.3](#), organizations supporting employee-led workplace innovation encourage employee ‘ownership’ of innovation projects. Rather than having specific innovation activities assigned as part of their day-to-day work assignments, employees are expected to decide on their own about innovations to pursue:

- Identifying opportunities for workplace innovation and initiating an appropriate project (in cooperation with their managers, including other employees as team members, and using the support of organizational innovation resources); and/or
- Choosing to take on self-selected roles in innovation projects initiated by other employees or made available as part of the organizational innovation strategy (as discussed in [Lesson 2.2](#)).

Encouraging and supporting this employee-directed innovation process requires an understanding of the day-to-day factors which motivate employees to engage in workplace innovation (or that hinder that motivation). Using that knowledge about employee motivation to innovate, workplace conditions can be created which will enable full employee engagement in Innovation activities and determine the optimal methods and tools to support each type of employee-led innovation activity (in later Lessons).

In this Lesson, two complementary knowledge perspectives on employee motivation to innovate will be encountered. The first is from Canada: recent research by Dr. Terry Soleas at Queen’s University which used data from employees identified as innovation leaders in their workplaces. The research process is summarized in a text box below, and results are presented as a five-point checklist of *Factors that Influence Employee Motivation for Innovation*.

The second part of the lesson details research insights on exemplary practices and methods to increase those factors that are associated with more motivation for innovation and decrease the impact of factors associated

with less motivation for innovation. Most of this research comes from Europe, and which will be explored later how to help workplaces in Canada to adapt and customize these exemplary practices for our contexts. An opportunity to apply this knowledge comes in a Practice Exercise (with the [Case Story in Lesson 2.3.](#))

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, learners will have developed the capability to:

- Identify the variety of factors known to increase or decrease motivation for innovation
- choose, from a set of research insights and exemplary practices, the most promising to be explored further to inform how innovation leaders and catalysts could address specific issues in employee motivation for innovation in their workplace contexts.

## Workplace Factors that Influence Employee Motivation to Engage in Innovation Activities

**Research Process Summary:** Dr. Terry Soleas clarifies the factors that influence employee motivation to engage with workplace innovation (Soleas 2020, 2021). This research adapted a common framework used for assessing motivation in the workplace, the Expectancy-Value-Costs model (Flake et al 2015), beginning with an initial study of 30 recognized Canadian workplace innovators. The resulting prototype survey instrument, the [Motivation to Innovate Inventory](#), was then iteratively refined in prototype tests with another 500 Canadians identified as leading innovators in their workplaces. The Case Story of a Canadian workplace in [Lesson 2.3](#) illustrates how these results can be applied.

In Dr. Soleas' research, the following factors were shown to have *positive* associations with increased motivation to innovate:

1. **Positive Self-Concept as an Innovator** (i.e., Identity and **Self-Efficacy**) raises expectations for the success of innovation and can help motivate initial and ongoing engagement in innovation projects. Conversely, if you do not think of yourself as an innovator then you are not likely eager to initiate an innovation project or volunteer your time on someone else's proposed activity.

2. **Personal Enjoyment of the innovation process** helps to sustain energy and engagement during an innovation project and can increase motivation for future innovation activities. Since inclusive workplace innovation is an inherently social process, collegial teamwork practices are critical to personal task enjoyment and engagement.

3. **Direct Benefit from the changes resulting from an innovation project** is embedded in the definition of Inclusive Workplace Innovation: as “both participating in and benefiting from innovation activities”. The primary benefit is typically an improvement in employee quality of work life; there are other examples where an improvement in efficiency or product quality has helped the organization to be more competitive and thus helped to preserve employee jobs.

4. **Personal Value from the further impacts of an innovation project** also has a positive association with employee engagement in workplace innovation. This could be at a personal level – e.g., receiving recognition, prestige or a financial reward based on the results of the innovation. The personal value to employees could also be derived from the wider impacts of an innovation, such as environmental or social impacts.

And one *negative* factor that emerged in the research study with Canadian workplace innovators is associated with lower motivation to engage in innovation activities (and therefore is something that Innovation Catalysts will want to reduce as much as possible):



Figure 2.1.1 – Positive Associations with Increased Motivation to Innovate

5. **Personal Costs of the innovation activity** (expected or experienced) involves the psychological and contextual demands of innovation activities which an innovation team member finds noticeable arduous. Here are some examples (to be explored further below):

- Different innovation activities involve varying levels of uncertainty and risk. Some team members may find a particular level of uncertainty to be stressful, e.g., in a Design Innovation activity where the original stated goal of a project changes as more information becomes available.
- On the other hand, some innovation team members can find the innovation process more exciting than their day-to-day tasks and commit extra time or energy to these novel activities. That can have repercussions on their other work commitments and their work-life balance, with negative effects on their future motivation to engage in workplace innovation.

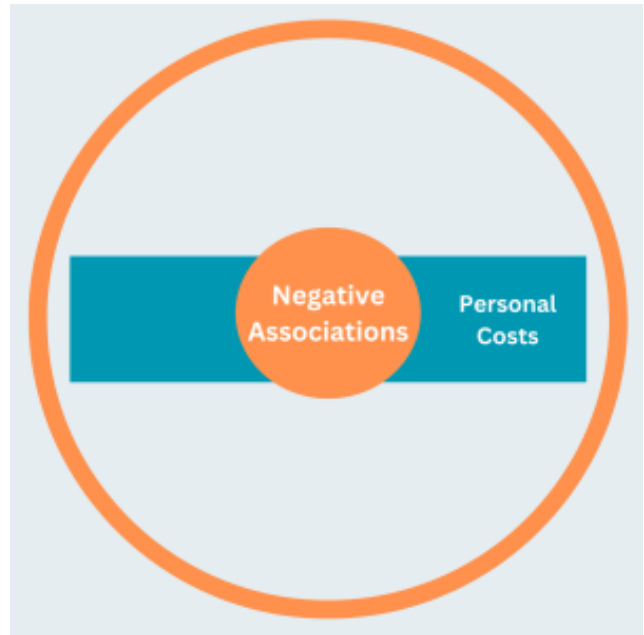


Figure 2.1.2 – Negative Associations with Increased Motivation to Innovate

## Exemplary Practices to Foster Employee Motivation for Innovation Activities

Moving from research-based understanding of underlying factors to practice-based improvements in innovation processes and support, one can identify practical methods which workplace innovation leaders and team members can apply to fire up and sustain engagement in workplace innovation – across a broad range of employee roles, capabilities and mindsets. In this section, learners will have the opportunity to develop their capability in relating research insights to issues in motivation to innovate in workplace contexts.

### 1. **Enhancing Self-Concept as an Innovator: building identity and self-efficacy**

Engaging a broad range of employees in workplace innovation often requires reaching out to people whose initial conceptions of innovation – and of themselves as innovators – leads to ruling themselves out (“just not me”). Research in Europe has shown that a progression of workplace innovation activities can begin with simple examples that workers who have not thought of themselves as innovators can easily relate to and see themselves taking on (Høystrup 2012). Through a step-by-step progression, they can develop more confidence

in their ability and identity as innovators, with assurance that they will be the ones to decide their own comfort level in terms of the complexity and uncertainty they take on.

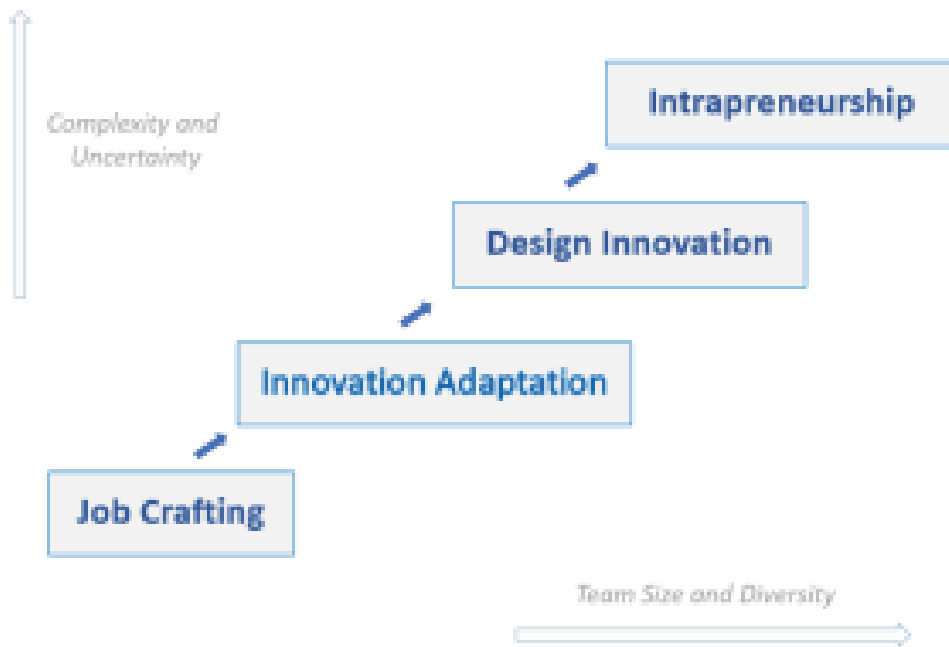


Figure 2.1.3 – A Progression of Workplace Innovation Activities

Learners may have already encountered this concept of a progressive sequence of innovation activities in a previous study of [workplace innovation](#); it has also arisen in [research with Canadian employers](#) to help employees develop identity and self-efficacy as innovators, using the progressive sequence in Figure 2.1. This particular progression begins with Job Crafting, an exercise which has been undertaken by employees across a wide range of occupations (Dutton & Wrzesniewski 2020) but has not often been positioned as a first step in engaging with workplace innovation. Once employees develop capability and confidence from their experience with Job Crafting, they can build on that foundation as they stretch further into Innovation Adaptation and Design Innovation activities.

## 2. *Engaging in an appealing social process and personal development in innovation*

One key incentive for employee engagement in workplace innovation is a rewarding personal experience with the work process of an innovation activity. Innovation Catalysts and innovation project leaders can ensure employees have a positive and wholesome experience through:

- Their personal involvement in innovation task processes
- A sense of community from the social aspects of the process
- Respect, recognition and appreciation for their personal contributions
- A sense of accomplishment in developing their own personal capability



To foster an engaging innovation process, each employee can be helped to focus on roles where they can contribute the most and achieve optimal satisfaction (e.g., Julian 2016; Liedtka et al 2022) by leaders, Innovation Catalysts and coaches. Project leaders can also facilitate a sense of community amongst team members.

The sense of accomplishment from personal capability development within a particular activity can also be enhanced through “stackable” capabilities as shown in Figure 2.1 above, where the Skills and Knowledge for more complex, uncertain, and impactful innovation activities build on the capability developed for simpler innovation activities with smaller teams (Nobis et al 2022).

Employees also note how their involvement in workplace innovation results in personal development beyond the workplace: “Going deep with design requires more than changing the activities of innovators; it involves creating the conditions that shape who they become. Individuals become design thinkers by experiencing design...Ultimately, innovators need to see themselves becoming someone new as they create something new”. (Liedtka et al 2021)

### 3. *Benefiting Directly from Changes arising in an innovation*

The European conception of Employee-led Workplace Innovation emphasizes “*win-win outcomes for companies and people: high levels of economic performance, high quality of working life and a high skill equilibrium*” (Totterdill & Eyton 2021). A growing body of evidence indicates that workplaces can adopt practices which promote these multiple goals and that these transformed workplaces can provide mutual gains for employers and for employees. As the text box below illustrates, innovation project leaders and their supporting Innovation

Catalysts will want to ensure that this win-win approach is central for innovation projects.

*Workplace innovation projects typically address problems that emerge in the course of everyday work as workers encounter conditions ‘on the ground’ that are complex, situated, and emergent. The knowledge of these problems is often tacit...deeply embedded in ‘street-knowledge’ and therefore difficult, costly, and time-consuming to transfer to individuals not engaged in the particular front-line practices...When employees experience these problem situations, they often do so personally and directly. **This means that the primary incentive for employee innovation to overcome these problems will therefore typically be to benefit from using the solution themselves.***

(Hartmann & Hartmann 2020)

### 4. *Valuing the Further Impacts of an innovation project*

When the organizational culture supports employee identification with the success of the organization, employee innovation can be increased through the beneficial impacts of the innovation results within the organization. Employee motivation can increase when they see the impact of their innovation projects can include bolstering the economic and social well-being of the company or agency or preserving local jobs and contributing to community prosperity.

As noted above, some workplace innovation projects will also align with larger employee goals beyond the firm. For example, environmental impacts of workplace activities are a growing concern for many employees. The promise of more sustainable communities through related workplace innovation projects can therefore increase the value perceived by employees and boost motivation for their further engagement.

We should note that one practice often suggested to increase employee motivation is financial incentives for project success. Research on special innovation-specific financial incentives for engaging in innovation projects suggests that this can be counter-productive, because it can diminish the cultural expectation that “innovation is everyone’s job” (Karin et al 2010; Sanders et al 2018; Dehvari & Wenner 2020). As well, when financial incentives are linked to the “success” of an innovation project – as defined by its original proposed goals – then employee motivation to tackle more ambitious and uncertain projects can be diminished (Fernandez & Moldogaziev 2013; Sanders et al 2018). This topic will be addressed again later in a deeper discussion of Organizational Culture and Workplace Innovation.

### 5. *Reducing Perceived Costs in workplace innovation projects*

Some of the negative Cost factors raised above are generic to demanding work conditions, such as work engagement disrupting work-life balance. The focus here is on scenarios more specific to innovation projects and suggests practices that can be used to help mitigate potential negative effects on motivation to innovate. (A third scenario will arise from the Case Story in [Lesson 2.3](#)),

Here are two scenarios that have been raised with us by workplace partners as potential sources of discouraging results and employee concern:

- When employees experience ‘negative results’ arising during a workplace innovation process, e.g., when a key hypothesis for the current design approach is proven to be faulty and the resulting innovation project pivot seems to be a step backwards to redo work that was thought to have been completed. This concept will be discussed further in a later Lesson about how to plan early prototype tests for the most critical hypotheses in a project rationale (an innovation practice called Hypothesis-driven Prototyping)
- When employees experience apparently ‘negative results’ as a conclusion to a workplace innovation process, e.g., a project concludes without reaching the goals the innovation team had hoped for (as in “we now know that our organization should not be pursuing this direction at this time”). This scenario will be addressed in further detail in [Lesson 2.3](#),

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# LESSON 2.2: SUPPORTING AND ENABLING ORGANIZATIONAL WORKPLACE CAPABILITY

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## Introduction

Lesson 2.1 focused largely on employees and their capability for workplace innovation, with a special focus on Motivation for Innovation as an element of employee innovation Mindset. This lesson has a complementary focus on organizational capability to enable, support and leverage employee-led workplace innovation. Positive expectations concerning employee innovation need to be prominent in the [organizational culture](#). These cultural expectations must be backed up by supporting resources, routine practices or processes and management systems in the **organizational infrastructure**. And unless “all these gears mesh together” in seamless ways, the organization will only achieve low rates of innovation and will fail to create lasting value from even the most well-intentioned innovation efforts by employees.

The seamless integration of innovation culture and innovation infrastructure forms the organization’s *Innovation Capability*. In this lesson, we will explore key principles and strategies to cultivate a strong organizational innovation capability by focusing inclusive innovation. We’ll begin by exploring the research insights on **organizational innovation capability** as a foundation for transforming new ideas into end results (Lawson and Sampson, 2001). Following that, we’ll dive more deeply into **The Fifth Element Model**, a lens we have used with workplace partners to examine and enhance their organizational innovation capability. This framework outlines four key pillars that, when effectively integrated, create both the organizational culture and infrastructure to foster employee creativity and engagement, and to leverage those elements into **enhanced performance and improved quality of work (Pot et al, 2016)**.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Discuss organizational innovation capability and its various dimensions.
- Recognize the importance of developing workplace innovation capability to promote inclusion.
- Identify numerous strategies that, when adopted properly, lead to capability in workplace innovation.

## Innovation Capability (IC)

IC is a company's power to transform ideas into tangible results: new products, ways of working, and improved systems that benefit the company and its stakeholders (Lawson and Sampson, 2001). Lawson and Sampson further highlight that IC development requires the amalgamation of two operating paradigms:

- **Run a successful innovative business:** Create and launch new projects or products.
- **Manage mainstream capabilities:** Take care of everyday business operations that keep things running. (2001)

A recent study (Mendoza-Silva, 2021) identifies three distinct dimensions that make up an organization's **IC**: managerial, intraorganizational and interorganizational. Table 1, below, offers more details:

*Table 1: Dimensions of IC (Mendoza-Silva, 2021)*

<p><b>Managerial</b></p>	<p><b>Management Style &amp; Leadership:</b> Commitment, positive attitude, and support for innovation initiatives by top management.</p> <p><b>Corporate Strategy:</b> Shared vision, strategic direction, and alignment with innovation activities.</p>
<p><b>Intraorganizational</b></p>	<p><b>Resource Management:</b> Effective use of human, financial, and physical resources for innovation.</p> <p><b>Work Climate:</b> Positive and supportive culture that encourages innovation.</p> <p><b>Ideation &amp; Structure:</b> Flexible structure that facilitates knowledge sharing and collaboration between different departments.</p> <p><b>Technology:</b> Utilization of technology to support innovation behaviour.</p> <p><b>Know-how Development:</b> Generation, management, and transfer of knowledge within the organization.</p> <p><b>Individual Activity:</b> Employees' personal characteristics, motivation, and involvement in innovation.</p>
<p><b>Interorganizational</b></p>	<p><b>External Relations:</b> Collaborative partnerships with other organizations to acquire and develop new knowledge.</p> <p><b>Network Characteristics:</b> Patterns of connections, relationships, and shared understanding between organizations within a network.</p>

Cultivating strong IC within an organization unlocks powerful potential for success. This manifests in two keyways: **innovation performance** and **firm performance** (Mendoza-Silva, 2021).

*Innovation performance* reflects an organization's ability to effectively translate ideas into reality, generating additional value. This can be measured by factors like the speed of bringing ideas to market and the value they create.

*Firm performance*, on the other hand, reflects the organization's overall health, often measured by increased competitiveness, profitability, and market share. Ultimately, a strong IC paves the way for both effective innovation and a thriving business.

Recognizing the importance of employees in developing IC has led to many initiatives to foster environments that enable autonomy and engage employees in innovation (e.g., see the case story in Lesson 1.3). More recently, several studies have emphasized the importance of inclusion in boosting IC (e.g., Le and Le 2023; Lei and Le, 2023). For example, when leaders practice **inclusive leadership** and promote open communication, employees are more engaged and innovative, suggesting that traits like trust, courage, humility, empathy, and gratitude are essential in creating an inclusive environment that drives business success (Vladić et al 2021).

### **The Fifth Element Model**

One way to promote inclusion in the organization is to promote and develop capability for workplace innovation that focuses and empowers the individual employee. To do so, organizations should build a culture of innovation that not only involves fostering individual capabilities, but also develops strong organizational support systems. This section explores the **essential Fifth Element Model**, developed by Dr. Peter Totterdill, which outlines four key pillars. When implemented together, these pillars lead to workplace innovation capability.

Watch this [video](#) with Dr. Totterdill where he explained this model. The graphic is also included as Figure 1, below:



The Fifth Element Model (EIPA, 2019)  
(of Organizational Capability for Workplace Innovation)

1. **Encourage Employee-Driven Innovation:**

Empower and encourage employees to experiment, share ideas, and collaborate. This can involve practices like dedicated innovation workshops, [intrapreneurship](#) programs, and peer-to-peer learning initiatives.

2. **Foster Engaging and Empowering Teams:**

Create an environment where employees feel engaged, satisfied, and empowered to reach their full potential. This includes facilitating the formation and operation of self-managed teams, encouraging collaborative learning within functional teams, and providing ongoing learning and development opportunities.

3. **Enable Co-Created Leadership and Employee**

**Voice:** Implement shared and distributed leadership

practices to ensure all employees can contribute their ideas and expertise. This can be achieved through conducting employee surveys, empowering employees to participate in projects and decisions, and fostering a culture of mentorship and coaching.

4. **Streamline Structures and Processes:** While complete restructuring might not always be feasible, organizations can simplify procedures, align appraisals with innovation capabilities, and flatten hierarchies wherever possible. This helps remove unnecessary hurdles, incentivize innovative contributions, and empower employees at all levels.

By implementing these pillars together, the essential fifth element framework helps generate a culture that fosters innovation, engagement, and ultimately leads to enhanced performance and a more fulfilling work life for **all** employees.

[Accenture](#) is an example of a company that places high emphasis on inclusion to increase workplace innovation. Accenture is a multinational [Fortune 500](#) professional services company, widely recognized as a leader in the field with over 770,000 employees. Accenture places high value on inclusive innovation



throughout their organization and in Canada, and as a result has been repeatedly ranked high on [Refinitiv's Diversity and Inclusion Index](#).

Bill Morris, Accenture Canada's President, highlights the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion to boost innovation (amongst other corporate goals):

**"At Accenture, we know that our diversity makes us stronger, smarter and more innovative, which helps us better serve the needs of our clients, our people and our communities" (Ebden, 2024)**

By embracing diversity to drive innovation, Accenture has adopted a multifaceted approach centered around their **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** as presented in Table 2, below. To learn more about Accenture's perspective on inclusion and diversity, follow this [link](#).

*Table 2. Representation of Accenture's multifaceted approach to diversity and inclusion to drive organizational innovation (Accenture, 2023).*

Focus Area	Key Components	Accenture's Approach
<b>Leadership</b>	Fostering a culture of equality	Leaders expected to champion inclusion and diversity.
	Transparency	Setting and sharing goals, reporting progress on inclusion and diversity initiatives.
	Belonging and trust	Creating an inclusive environment with strong allyship.
	Zero tolerance	No tolerance for discrimination of any kind.
<b>Culture</b>	Learning	Providing resources and opportunities for understanding and appreciation of diversity.
	Employee networks	Supporting vibrant employee networks based on various identities.
	Accessibility	Designing workplaces accessible and inclusive for all.
	Cultural observances	Recognizing and celebrating diverse cultural identities.
	Data-driven approach	Measuring progress through data and monitoring processes for equity.
	Self-identification	Encouraging voluntary self-identification to understand workforce demographics.
<b>Processes</b>	Diverse talent pool	Actively seeking and attracting talent from diverse backgrounds.
	Equitable benefits	Offering equitable and inclusive employee benefits.
	Diverse leadership	Building a more diverse leadership team.
	Career support	Providing support for all career journeys regardless of background.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Partnering with clients and communities	Working with clients and communities to advance inclusion and diversity initiatives.

<b>Clients</b>	<b>Engaging clients in creating diverse and inclusive workplaces.</b>
<b>Communities</b>	<b>Partnering with communities to promote inclusion and address systemic barriers.</b>

**Notice the overlap Accenture's strategy and the Fifth Element model where both are centered around principles of inclusion.**

## Practice Exercise: Reflection Opportunity

Think about your own professional workplace (for working learners) or your learning environment (for students, i.e., your institution's teaching and learning environment) and how it could adapt existing "resources, routine practices or processes, and management systems" to include a broader range of "workers" in innovation activity (see Accenture's strategy presented in Table 2).



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=116#h5p-7>

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# LESSON 2.3 “ENGSERV” CASE STORY: ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE INNOVATION

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## The EngServ Case Story<sup>[1]</sup>

“EngServ” is an engineering services company in Western Canada that focuses on offering progressive solutions to complex challenges. As a group of “passion-fueled engineers, designers, technologists, and city-building experts,” the EngServ team consistently strives for agility and sustainable performance.

With approximately 270 employees across five offices in Canada and the United States, EngServ has built 147 services for the last 12 years in the following key areas: bridge engineering, building envelope, construction engineering, expert advisory services, fire engineering, restoration services, special projects, structural engineering and sustainable performance.

The EngServ innovation team mandate includes both a scouting role for opportunities and talent, and a broker role to help teams come together and engage in the two innovation pathways described below. The lead Innovation Catalyst at EngServ, “Leslie”, works half of their time as the workplace innovation coordinator and the other half as the lead in another work area. They are supported by two other (more junior) part-time innovation specialists.

EngServ identified the need to develop strategies to encourage all employees to engage willingly in the two formal innovation activity pathways supported by the firm:

1. Idea Hopper, an Idea Management System for employees’ suggested innovation issues, opportunities, and projects (in a later Lesson, we will review research on this as an innovation activity pathway)
2. Design Challenges that lie outside of the employees’ day-to-day assigned duties (and often outside of their formal engineering training).

In both activity pathways, EngServ hoped to improve employee participation and results (i.e. the “solutions” identified through either pathway), while also embedding the expectation that every employee in the organization has the capability to be an innovator. Innovation opportunities are open to everyone.

Both initiatives have demonstrated success, along with challenges related to participation and the potential for actual solutions to perceived issues.

- (1) **Idea Hopper**: By using a collaborative software system for the Idea Hopper (similar to an old “suggestion box” model), contributors are asked to add their ideas to the open web space for consideration <sup>[2]</sup>. The person who inputs the idea is asked to identify the value proposition of the idea (categorized within EngServ’s three “strategic innovation drivers” as a framework: revenue

generation, efficiency/effectiveness, social culture). At the time of preparing this lesson, there were 360 items that individuals had contributed to the Idea Hopper.

Not every idea can be actioned, so as part of the Idea Hopper, every idea is categorized using a T-shirt analogy: XS (extra small) to L (large). If the idea can fit into XS (equivalent to 8 hours of time) then the person is empowered to create a prototype (i.e., “go do it!”) to ensure that participants are motivated to try new ideas and to find out quickly whether the idea has potential. Conversely, if an idea is estimated to take more than 6 months, then the contributor is coached to find a portion of the idea that can be tested to move the concept forward in less than six months. This strategy supports quick testing of ideas and efficiency in addressing the potential of Idea Hopper submissions.

The openness of the Idea Hopper allows everyone in the firm to review others’ ideas. Often, this results in cross-collaboration and creative additions to submitted ideas. Active projects are also visible so that others can contribute along the way.

- (2) **Design Challenges:** The Design Challenges are larger innovation projects that focus on finding solutions to bigger problems. Different challenges are posed by management and employees ask to join a specific team to address that Challenge. The program provides a “matching” system where employees can ask to work with others on teams that cross working group boundaries within EngServ.

Although there was greater participation in the Design Challenges than expected (i.e., 30 employees asked to be added to one of the teams), several concerns emerged related to the Design Challenge initiative:

1. Of the 10 Design Challenge project teams established in the two years this pathway has been in place, only 3 teams have moved on to the proposal presentation stage.
2. The large number of interested employees required unanticipated effort by the Innovation Catalyst team to match the interested individuals’ strengths and preferences with members of the organization.
  - Some employees raised concerns such as “My boss might not like me doing a Design Challenge project” or “I don’t have enough experience to take on a Design Challenge.”

Overall, the workplace innovation strategies that EngServ employed were not fully addressing the firm’s goals for inclusive workplace innovation. The project management for innovation projects was much different than typical project management that employees knew. Also, there was not a clear connection between the innovation strategies and established Human Resources management processes.

For example, one strategy was expressed informally as the “three times rule”: if an employee is dissatisfied with a work process three times, they should report it to the team lead to stimulate rethinking of the process.

However, this rule was not applied consistently and there was no formal tracking of the results from the reports that were made.

The focus of EngServ's Innovation Catalyst efforts has coalesced around two enhancement goals:

- empowering employees to “build the work they would like to be doing” by engaging in collaborative, employee-led innovation; and
- enabling support for the employee teams in doing that work.

Supplementary goals for these workplace innovation initiatives include building an innovation culture that would help EngServ attract the best engineering talent and creating social impact by establishing a more inclusive and diverse team.

## Practice Exercise:

You will be returning to the EngServ case story – and the two enhancement goals listed above – as a testing ground for various topics in Enabling Inclusive Workplace Innovation. This practice exercise focuses on applying ideas from **Lesson 2.1** on enhancing employee motivation for innovation. When you have entered your Reflections, you will be shown some of our suggestions for the EngServ Innovation team.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=118#h5p-5>



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online*



here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/inclusiveinnovation/?p=118#h5p-6>

[1] Adapted from Future Skills Centre report, *Inclusive Workplace Innovation and Quality of Work* (2023)

[2] When submitting an idea, there are 4 questions the contributor must answer: (1) Provide an overview/background of your idea, (2) Which lever does this idea address? (3) What T-shirt size is this idea?, (4) Is there anything else you'd like to share about your idea? (e.g., a video, image, document)



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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## Design Thinking

A methodology that encourages teams to engage in an iterative process to engage users, question assumptions, define and redefine problems, and generate innovative solutions that can be produced as prototypes to test. The five phases of DT include Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test.

## Employee-Led Workplace Innovation

The social process by which employees of an organization mobilise new ideas to create better work. A guiding principle is to aim for improvement in both organizational performance and employee quality of work for employees.

## Fortune 500

Fortune 500 is a U.S.-based ranking system that ranks U.S. companies by their revenue. For the last 70 years, Fortune 500 has highlighted the most successful companies.

## Inclusive (Workplace) Innovation

Innovation activities that address and question the exclusion/inclusion of participants in innovation practices. In addition, the concept addresses who might experience barriers to (or experience loss from) innovation activities.

## Inclusive Leadership

Leadership that fosters inclusion and results in better work experiences and improved performance.

## Innovation Catalyst

A person who supports other employees in engaging innovation in their workplace.

## Innovation Mindset

The collection of identity, motivation, and capability as an innovator (in the workplace, but also in other roles as a community member and engaged citizen).

## Intrapreneurship

Entrepreneurship within a well-established organization.

## On-ramp

An on-ramp is literally a roadway lane (or ramp) that allows traffic to merge onto a highway or other road. In a business contexts, an "on-ramp" can refer to a process by which individuals are supported to engage in new work. Sometimes this takes the form of a person re-entering a workplace after an extended absence or even the training that provides specific support to a person shifting roles within an organization.

## Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that define and influence employee behavior.

## Self-Efficacy

A personal perception or belief in one's ability (and capacity) to engage in strategies or behaviours that will help the person achieve goals, improve performance, etc.

## Systemic Change

Change at the system level means that most parts of a system (e.g., of an organization, of a social issue, etc.) experiences the change. This can take the form of most or all employees participating in innovation projects. In general, systemic change can be witnessed when the behaviour of the entire system shifts from the norm (typically the change improves the system).