Successful innovation in organizations requires a combination of skills, supportive cultures and climates, structures and processes, and leadership.

The Innovation Skills Profile (ISP) isolates the unique contribution that an individual's skills, attitudes, and behaviours make to an organization's innovation performance by focusing on creativity and continuous improvement skills, risk-taking skills, relationship-building skills, and implementation skills.

The ISP is designed for employers and employees. It is relevant to all organizations—regardless of size, function, or sector. The ISP can also be applied beyond the workplace by educators and students.

Prepared with Support From: National Education and Learning Centre and The Employability Skills Forum

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For More Information on the Innovation Skills Profile

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Innovation Skills Profile

The Skills, Attitudes, and Behaviours You Need to Contribute to Innovation in the Workplace

The Innovation Skills Profile (ISP) isolates the unique contribution that an individual's skills, attitudes, and behaviours make to an organization's innovation performance.

Collectively, the skills of individuals create an organization's capacity to innovate.

The Conference Board of Canada invites and encourages employees, employers, educators, students, government, labour, and communities to use the ISP as a framework for dialogue and action.

INNOVATION SKILLS PROFILE

The skills you need to contribute to an organization's innovation performance—to produce new and improved products, processes, and services.

CREATIVITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SKILLS

THE SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIOURS NEEDED TO GENERATE IDEAS

You will be able to offer yourself and your organization greater possibilities for achievement when you can:

Act and Contribute
- Seek different points of view—explore options
- Be adaptable and flexible when challenging ideas
- Ask questions to assess situations, identify problems, and seek solutions
- Rethink the way things are done—break the mould
- Approach challenges creatively—think outside the box
- Look for surprising connections—be open-minded when exploring possible solutions
- Put forward your own ideas with confidence
- Look for new ways to create value in products, processes, and services
- Suggest alternative ways to achieve goals

Manage and Support Others
- Demonstrate trust in other people's ideas and actions
- Nurture and promote creativity and inventiveness
- Question and challenge the way you operate—think beyond individual and organizational comfort zones
- Project a vision of where you want to go—keep the big picture in mind
- Be open to new ideas and different ways of doing things—commit to continuous improvement
- Monitor success to find ways to continuously improve
- Recognize and reward original ideas and ideas for improvement

RISK-TAKING SKILLS

THE SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIOURS NEEDED TO TAKE CALCULATED RISKS AND BE ENTREPRENEURIAL

You will be able to offer yourself and your organization greater possibilities for achievement when you can:

Act and Contribute
- Envision a future in which your risk taking has paid off
- Be open to and respond constructively to opportunities for change
- Keep focused on what you are trying to achieve when suggesting alternative ways to get the job done
- Assess risk, and manage your approach to risk—take appropriate risks when applying new approaches
- Learn from your experiences—do not be afraid to make mistakes
- Be willing to experiment with new ideas—commit to an action without knowing every outcome or consequence
- Have the confidence to apply your skills in new and unfamiliar situations

Manage and Support Others
- Encourage individuals and teams to bring forward new ideas for action
- Support risk by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions
- Be resilient in the face of setbacks, mistakes, and potential mistakes
- Accept failures and learn from them
- Recognize and reward risk taking

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING SKILLS

THE SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIOURS NEEDED TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT SUPPORT INNOVATION

You will be better prepared to add value to a task, project, or activity when you can:

Act and Contribute
- Understand and work within the dynamics of a group
- Build and maintain relationships inside and outside your organization
- Engage others to make use of their skills, knowledge, and abilities
- Share information and expertise—explain and clarify new and different ideas
- Respect and support the ideas, approaches, and contributions of others
- Listen and ask questions to understand what is new and different about others' points of view
- Accept and provide feedback and guidance in a constructive manner
- Overcome barriers among people that may impede results—anticipate sources of assistance and resistance

Manage and Support Others
- Encourage, mentor, and coach others to share ideas and speak freely—foster an atmosphere of open-mindedness
- Involve others by delegating responsibility and supporting their efforts
- Make it easy for groups of people to collaborate and deliver new solutions
- Allocate resources for networking and sharing ideas, knowledge, and skills
- Promote personal development in others so they are better able to contribute to a team
- Provide honest praise and constructive criticism to teams
- Recognize and reward the success of teams and groups of people

IMPLEMENTATION SKILLS

THE SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIOURS NEEDED TO TURN IDEAS INTO PRODUCTS, PROCESSES, AND SERVICES

You will be better prepared to carry a task, project, or assignment through to success when you can:

Act and Contribute
- Access and apply knowledge and skills from across your organization
- Adapt to changing requirements
- Exercise ingenuity when devising, planning, and implementing solutions
- Use the right tools and technologies to complete a task, project, or assignment
- Plan for contingencies—be ready with alternative strategies
- Be tenacious—show initiative, commitment, and persistence to get the job done
- Accept feedback and learn from mistakes
- Use measurements to show the value of a solution
- Be accountable for what you and your group implement

Manage and Support Others
- Adopt and promote a "can-do" attitude
- Understand how change affects the performance of your organization
- Be proactive in leading and responding to change
- Empower employees to make decisions
- Tolerate mistakes when trying out new ideas
- Value, support, and reward initiative
- Make change visible—highlight new and improved products, services, and processes
- Measure the impacts of a solution on performance, productivity, and financial results