



We made it. It's the end of May and the end of the academic year has come to a close. For most individuals on campus, this means that jobs shift a bit: rather than being inundated with day-to-day responsibilities to make sure your team stays afloat, you may have some room to breathe and dream for the future. When you are able to find some downtime (or, better yet, are able to block it off in your schedule), I encourage you to consider how you can continue innovating in your role.

Innovation is more than just a buzzword; it's a mindset that fuels progress and propels institutions forward. With higher education in 2024, we exist in a rapidly evolving landscape in which it's expected to continue refining our processes and to think about what new traditions we can bring to campus to bring life to students, faculty and staff. Equally as important: how can you, as a supervisor, create an environment where your team can thrive and innovate alongside you? [Harvard Business Review](#) reports that 85% of employees remain silent on crucial matter because they worry about being viewed negatively. In order to create a space where we can create new initiatives, we need to create a culture of psychological safety.

Innovation is not a destination but a continuous journey of exploration. Let's embark on this journey together and discover how we can harness the power of innovation to drive meaningful change and create a brighter future. The future belongs to those who embrace change and dare to think differently.

Until next month!

Let us know what you think about the newsletter and what you'd like to see in the future!

[Jesse Heath](#)

Employee Relations Coordinator
[Human Resource Services](#)

[Feedback Form](#)

Innovation

"Listen to anyone with an original idea, no matter how absurd it may sound at first.

If you put fences around people, you get sheep. Give people the room they need."

William W. Knight

Cultivating a culture of innovation as a leader requires intentional effort and a commitment to fostering an environment where creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking are encouraged. Here are key strategies to help you cultivate a culture of innovation within your team:

Set a Clear Vision and Goals

Clearly communicate your vision for innovation and how it aligns with the organization's overall mission and objectives.

Define specific goals and metrics to track progress towards fostering innovation.

Lead by Example

Demonstrate a personal commitment to innovation through your actions and decisions. Be open to new ideas, embrace change, and encourage others to think creatively. Show enthusiasm for exploring innovative solutions to challenges.

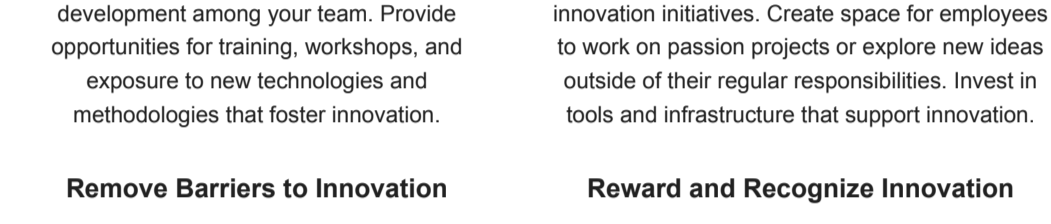
Empower and Trust Your Team

Empower employees by giving them autonomy and ownership over their work. Trust your team to make decisions and take calculated risks.

Provide support and resources to enable them to innovate effectively.

Encourage Open Communication

Create an environment where open idea-sharing is valued. Encourage employees to voice their opinions, share insights, and propose new ideas without fear of criticism. Foster a culture of collaboration and constructive feedback.



Promote Continuous Learning

Encourage ongoing learning and skill development among your team. Provide opportunities for training, workshops, and exposure to new technologies and methodologies that foster innovation.

Allot Time & Resources for Innovation

Dedicate time and resources specifically for innovation initiatives. Create space for employees to work on passion projects or explore new ideas outside of their regular responsibilities. Invest in tools and infrastructure that support innovation.

Remove Barriers to Innovation

Identify and address organizational barriers that hinder innovation, such as bureaucracy or fear of failure. Create a supportive environment where innovative ideas can flourish, where employees feel empowered to challenge the status quo.

Reward and Recognize Innovation

Recognize and celebrate innovative achievements within the organization. Implement rewards that acknowledge employees for their contributions to innovation, whether through incentives, awards, or career development opportunities.



Promoting Innovation at UNI

Utilizing Cross-Functional Collaboration

Break down silos between departments and encourage collaboration across teams. Identify how we can better serve students by working together. Cross-functional teams can bring together diverse skills and viewpoints, leading to innovative solutions that address complex challenges. Create opportunities for employees from various backgrounds to work together on projects and share knowledge.

Design Thinking Workshops

Implement design thinking methodologies to solve complex problems and generate innovative solutions. Identify ways in which our university can be providing more opportunities to equip students for success. Conduct workshops that involve cross-functional teams in empathizing with the student experience, defining problems, ideating solutions, and coming up with a game plan for a future launch of the idea.

Allow Time for Passion Projects

Allocate dedicated time for employees to work on passion projects or explore ideas outside of their regular responsibilities. While staff may be feeling overloaded with their current workload, encouraging them to make time to show their creativity could be a good outlet to boost their performance in other aspects of their position. Allowing for "innovation time" can spark creativity and lead to breakthrough innovations, helping your staff boost efficiency or create meaningful experiences for those connected to the team.

Reward and Recognition for Innovation

Establish a formal system to recognize and reward employees for their innovative contributions. This could include incentives, awards, or public recognition for individuals or teams that generate impactful innovations. Nominate them for a [Panther First](#) award or consider providing a SPOT Performance Award as part of the [Staff Variable Pay Programs](#) through Human Resource Services.

Additional Resources for Innovation

Articles

[Encouraging Innovation in the Workplace](#) / *Indeed*

"Innovation in the workplace is important because it challenges employees to think differently, which can inherently promote growth. If your company continues to take the same approach, and avoids trying new things, they may miss important opportunities."

[The Discipline of Innovation](#) / *Harvard Business Review*

"How much of innovation is inspiration, and how much is hard work? If it's mainly the former, then management's role is limited: Hire the right people, and get out of their way. If it's largely the latter, management must play a more vigorous role: Establish the right roles and processes, set clear goals and relevant measures, and review progress at every step. Peter Drucker, with the masterly subtlety that is his trademark, comes down somewhere in the middle. Yes, he writes in this article, innovation is real work, and it can and should be managed like any other corporate function. But that doesn't mean it's the same as other business activities. Indeed, innovation is the work of *knowing* rather than *doing*."

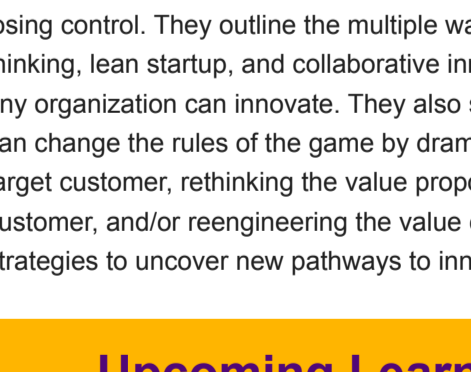
[10 Steps to Unlocking Innovation at Your Organization](#) / *SHRM*

"Generating and executing fresh ideas is also a factor affecting an organization's long-term survival, says Jack Phillips, co-author of *The Value of Innovation* (Wiley-Scrivener, 2018). He notes that in 1935, the expected life span of a company was 95 years; by 2005, that average had fallen to 15 years. So how do companies that have lasted for more than a century, such as 3M and Johnson & Johnson, continue to thrive? They innovate."

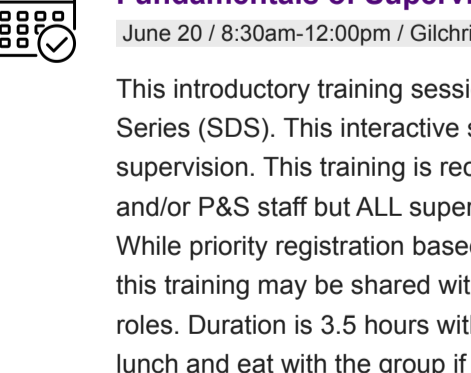
[Creating and Cultivating An Innovation Agenda](#) / *Forbes*

"Irrelevancy is death. Just ask Kodak and Blockbuster, Tower Records, or Borders Books. To accomplish change—to create and cultivate innovation—within an organization takes commitment, a clear-eyed focus on our objectives, and a strategy for meeting them. In short, we need an agenda."

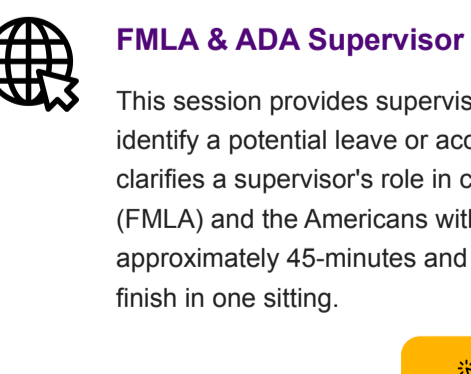
Videos



How Apple Is Organized for Innovation (2:03)



How To Workshop Innovative Ideas (6:52)



The Surprising Habits of Original Thinkers (15:24)

Deciding how to organize areas of expertise to best enable collaboration and rapid decision-making has been an important responsibility of the CEO. The adjustments Tim Cook has implemented have ensured that Apple continues to be leaders in the field of technology and an outstanding organization.

As we get older, the work we consistently do builds "rivers of thinking." These give us a rich knowledge of a certain kind of area. The problem with this, however, is that as those patterns get deeper, we get locked into them. When this happens it becomes a challenge to think differently — to break from the past and generate new ideas.

How do creative people come up with great ideas? Adam Grant studies "originals": thinkers who dream up new ideas and take action to put them into the world. In this talk, learn three unexpected habits of originals — including embracing failure.

Read Recommendation

The Creative Mindset: Mastering the Six Skills That Empower Innovation

by Jeff DeGraff and Stanley DeGraff

The Creative Mindset brings how-to advice, tools, and techniques from two master innovators who have taught and worked with over half of all Fortune 500 companies. Jeff and Stanley DeGraff introduce six essential creative-thinking skills that can be easily mastered with limited practice and remembered as the acronym CREATE: Concentrate, Replicate, Elaborate, Associate, Translate, and Evaluate. These six skills, sequenced as steps, simplify and summarize the most important research on creative thinking and draw on over thirty years of real-world application in some of the most innovative organizations in the world.

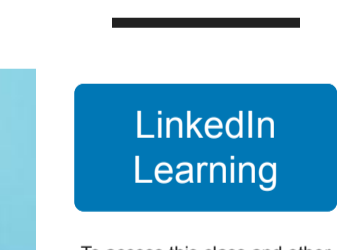
Notable Quotable: "The Creative Mindset often starts out with one person's unlikely, outside-of-the-box idea, but it requires the support of a team, and the willingness of others to experiment, to fully realize its magic."

Not available at Cedar Falls, Waterloo, or UNI's Libraries.

Available for purchase [here](#).

JEFF DEGRAFF AND STANLEY DEGRAFF
AUTHORS OF THE INNOVATION CODE

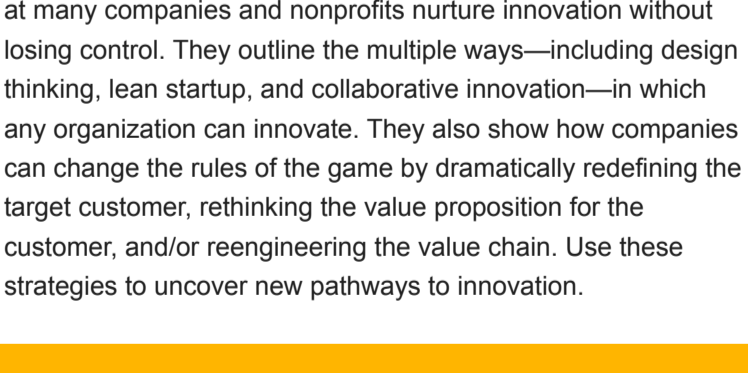
THE CREATIVE MINDSET



MASTERING THE SIX SKILLS THAT EMPOWER INNOVATION

LinkedIn Learning: Class Highlight

Leading With Innovation / Anil Gupta & Haiyan Wang

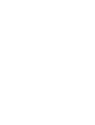


[LinkedIn Learning](#)

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No company can survive without innovation: all organizations need to keep morphing to succeed. But how do you nurture nonstop innovation? Strategy experts Anil Gupta and Haiyan Wang outline the core logic of innovation and show how leaders at many companies and nonprofits nurture innovation without losing control. They outline the multiple ways—including design thinking, lean startup, and collaborative innovation—in which any organization can innovate. They also show how companies can change the rules of the game by dramatically redefining the target customer, rethinking the value proposition for the customer, and/or reengineering the value chain. Use these strategies to uncover new pathways to innovation.

Upcoming Learning & Development



Fundamentals of Supervision // *Supervisor Development Series*

June 20 / 8:30am-12:00pm / Gilchrist Hall 009

This introductory training session is the first in the Supervisor Development Series (SDS). This interactive session will focus on the fundamentals of supervision. This training is recommended for those who supervise Merit and/or P&S staff but ALL supervisors are encouraged and welcome to attend. While priority registration based on capacity is given to current supervisors, this training may be shared with employees looking to promote into leadership roles. Duration is 3.5 hours with a 10-minute break. You can also bring your lunch and eat with the group if your schedule allows!

[Register Here](#)



FMLA & ADA Supervisor Responsibilities // *Online Learning*

This session provides supervisors with high-level information about how to identify a potential leave or accommodation request from an employee, and clarifies a supervisor's role in complying with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This training takes approximately 45-minutes and will save your progress if you are unable to finish in one sitting.

[Access Here](#)

Our Vision

All employees will be positively engaged in achieving their greatest potential while contributing to the success of the university.

Our Mission

Human Resource Services fosters an environment of integrity and collaboration through innovative solutions and communications contributing to the successful recruitment, development, and retention of university employees.



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