

# New Synergist Insights

Organizational Innovation

November 2015

Innovation is the life-blood of organizations, especially in times of significant turbulence and technology changes. Many organizational leaders agree that innovation is important but admit that their organizations are not very innovative.

Innovation is described in various publications as “something new” or a “significant and positive change”. Unfortunately the term innovation is probably overused, creating unmet expectations and general confusion.

Does your company have a mindset that supports innovation efforts? Is innovation a part of the strategic discussion of organizational leaders? How difficult is it for a new idea to gain traction in your organization?

Second, how are you supporting your employees’ innovation efforts? Are they taught to be innovative and is it ok to take risks? How much time is spent on techniques and training that can foster innovation?

Third, how do you measure innovation efforts? Metrics could include; revenue from new products (less than two years old), culture and climate, as well as leadership focus on innovation.

Finally, are your management and decision making processes “innovation friendly”. Rules, operating procedures, and other organizational issues can actually impede an organizations ability to innovate.

3M is a company that utilizes an innovation framework that makes it possible for new ideas to gain traction. The company allows employees to use 15% of paid time to pursue their own ideas. 3M’s culture also supports the principle that no end product is so small that it should automatically be ignored.

The results of 3M’s efforts include many “accidental innovations” including Cellophane tape, Scotchgard Fabric Protector, and Post-IT Notes. The company sets goals for revenue from new products and measures results. Would these “accidental innovations” survive in your organization?

At the other end of the innovation spectrum are examples of missed opportunities at powerful companies employing smart people. Some of their innovations are generating revenues at other companies or they are languishing inside the company.

Would you like more information to help jump-start your organizations innovation machine. Send me an email and I will share additional qualities that are typical of successful organizational innovation programs.

## Questions?

Contact New Synergist Consulting,  
don@newsynergist.com

**December New Synergist Insights:**  
The Power of Organizational Diversity