

BSBSTR401

**PROMOTE
INNOVATION
IN TEAM
ENVIRONMENTS**

BSBSTR401

Promote innovation in team environments

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1



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BSBSTR401 Promote innovation in team environments, Release 1

© 2020 Aspire Training & Consulting
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First published October 2020

Cover design: Anne-Marie Reeves Design
Printer: Doculink Australia Pty Ltd, 1d/28 Rogers Street, Port Melbourne VIC 3207

e-ISBN 978-1-76075-789-2 (PDF version)
ISBN 978-1-76075-788-5

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBSTR401 Promote innovation in team environments*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprets and analyses textual information, from a wide range of sources, to identify information relevant to team activities
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses clear language and formats appropriate for the audience to highlight and present specific information
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participates in verbal exchanges of ideas and elicits the views and opinions of team members by listening and questioning Uses clear language to clarify rules and roles relating to team activities in formal and informal situations
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprets numeric information relevant to team activities
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects the appropriate form, channel and mode of communication for a specific purpose relevant to own role
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses inclusive techniques to initiate, contribute and promote discussion amongst potentially diverse team members Recognises the importance of establishing and building effective working relationships
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans, sequences and prioritises tasks for efficient and effective outcomes
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses problem-solving processes to address less predictable problems, and when appropriate, seeking input from others Contributes to continuous improvement of current work practices by applying basic principles of analytical and lateral thinking Reflects on outcomes and further explores own and the team's role in implementing innovation
Initiative and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the nature and purpose of own role and how it affects others in the work context

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Identify opportunities to maximise innovation	1A Identify team dynamics	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Identify opportunities to promote innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Organise an effective way of working	2A Identify ideas for ways of working better	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Delegate and agree on responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Schedule activities for working with the team	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Establish rewards	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Support and guide colleagues to promote innovation	3A Demonstrate behaviour that supports innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Create an environment where information, knowledge and experiences are shared	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Challenge and test ideas with the team and others	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 4: Evaluate innovation ideas and promotion	4A Review innovation and share successful examples	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Reflect on implemented innovation ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4C Seek and respond to feedback for discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4D Discuss the challenges of being innovative	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4E Document feedback for improvements in promoting innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1 | Identify opportunities to maximise innovation

- 1A Identify team dynamics
- 1B Identify opportunities to promote innovation

1A Identify team dynamics

Innovation starts with an idea.

Encourage each member of a team to contribute ideas. While it is not always possible for everyone's ideas to be put into practice, it is important that each person feels their contribution is valued. When team members contribute to ideas, the productivity of the team increases. People become motivated to explore better ways to do things and have a greater degree of job satisfaction.

The benefits of innovation

Innovation means doing things differently.

Innovation is finding the answer to a problem in your workplace. It means doing things better by implementing a new idea or a modification to an existing process. The problems a workplace experiences might involve needing to adapt processes to utilise new technology, or finding ways to work more efficiently to increase productivity and reduce costs. Whatever problem is identified, innovation should offer a way to solve it. The solution must offer value to your organisation.

Before any investigation gets underway, the reasons why things should be done differently need to be explored. People need to see how these changes can benefit the workplace and be able to identify the benefits to themselves and to the team.

Innovation can have the following benefits for a team:

- encourages the sharing of ideas and promotes collaborative working
- leads to saving time and reducing waste
- encourages team members to be proactive, and able to recognise and deal with change
- encourages team members to feel the work they do is important and valuable.

Types of innovation

The types of innovation you focus on will depend on your team and the problems you have identified.

Jay Doblin was an American industrial designer and educator who identified 10 areas of organisational innovation.

1. Profit model – how to make money and ways to make money from different avenues
2. Network – how to connect and network with others to use the capabilities and assets of other companies
3. Structure – how to organise and align talents and assets in ways that create value
4. Process – how to look at different ways of doing things using the company's unique capabilities
5. Product performance – how to develop distinguishing features and functions in new products or extend an existing line of products or services
6. Product system – how to create complementary products and services
7. Service – how to amplify the value of the offerings to customers
8. Channel – how to improve the way offerings are delivered to customers and users
9. Brand – how a business and its offerings are represented
10. Customer engagement – how to improve the customer experience and develop insights into connections with the company.

You can learn more about these types of innovation at the Doblin website: aspirelr.link/doblin-ten-types.

Identify team requirements

Consider the team requirements from several perspectives.

The starting point for identifying opportunities for innovation is to consider the team, the relationships in the team and what the team might require to be able to maximise innovation.

You can ask yourself and your team the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the team within the organisation?
- What are the objectives of the team?
- What does the team require to achieve these objectives?

The following table explores these questions.

Purpose of team	The purpose of the team is its function. For example, the marketing team exists to communicate with customers about the products and services of the organisation.
Team objectives	Objectives state how the team will fulfil its purpose. Many objectives relate to improving efficiencies in the team such as time, cost and processes. For example, the finance team may have objectives to complete monthly reports by a certain date, ensure data is accurate for quality assurance purposes, and manage cash flow and creditors.
Team requirements	Requirements are the resources a team needs to carry out its work and meet its objectives. These might include basic items such a desk, chair and computer, but also specific software, knowledge and training. It might also include access to resources to find information.

You may find that some team members are unable to answer these questions or that they provide different answers. To be able to innovate, the team members need to have a shared understanding, and a clear vision of what they are doing and what resources they need to achieve their objectives.

Team requirements can include physical resources, such as equipment and machines, to do their work. They can also include a range of human resources that each team member provides. These can be enhanced with training, and sharing of knowledge and skills among the team under the guidance and supervision of a team leader.

Initiatives will require a range of resources to achieve objectives. The requirement to work innovatively might mean the team needs:

- dedicated time to brainstorm, collaborate and problem-solve
- additional training for skills and knowledge development
- time and resources for testing new concepts and processes.

Example

Creating new product lines

A beauty product manufacturer wants to diversify its product range and asks its employees for their ideas. The organisation creates a team of people who represent different business functions (marketing, product, sales, production, distribution, customer service). They are provided with the following resources to create new products and processes:

- a dedicated two hours a week
- a specified budget to be spent as required
- access to experts or consultants for support
- additional training
- permission to fail.

The organisation does not expect every idea to be viable, but they want to encourage innovative thinking and collaboration. In order to do this, they have provided the teams with the resources required, assuring them that it is OK if their idea doesn't work, as long as they can learn something from the process.

Characteristics of the team

The relationship between members is a key factor in the effectiveness of a team.

In a typical team, you will find a mixture of skills and knowledge, personality types and cultures. The value of diversity is that minds that think differently can come together for a common purpose. Diversity within a team encourages people to think differently by hearing other perspectives, and this can challenge the way things are done. Perspectives and ideas can be too similar when a whole team has similar backgrounds, skills and experiences. Diversity in the team can include a variety of ages and life experiences, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, perspectives, languages, education, skills, abilities and knowledge.

Here are five areas to consider when identifying common and unique characteristics of your team:

Personal interests

It is good for people to spend most of their work time doing things they like, but through working with others they learn to operate effectively in other areas as well.

Knowledge, experience

Each team member is the product of past learning, skills and experience; they bring their unique perspectives to the work and can share these with other members of the team. This adds to the ability of the team to carry out its tasks and achieve common goals.

Work styles

A person's work style includes things such as what time of day they work best and how they like to get things done. For example, some people like a checklist to identify and work through their tasks. Others are keen to have variety and mix up their tasks.

Strengths, weaknesses

Finding out people's strengths and weaknesses helps identify situations where they can be relied upon to undertake certain roles or lead/train others.

Life roles

Each team member has a range of other roles in life, in addition to their work. All of these life roles should be seen as valuable when building an innovative team.

Team dynamics

Group dynamics are unconscious, psychological forces, or undercurrents, that influence behaviour and performance.

Each team member has skills, knowledge and experience to offer, but it is helpful to get the right mix to ensure the team can work effectively together.

People tend to be attracted to specific roles when working in a team, and adopt distinct roles and behaviours. Dynamics are created by the nature of the work, personalities within the team, their working relationships with others and the team's work environment.

Researcher and management theorist Belbin developed the Belbin Team Roles model to help identify and build strengths, and improve weaknesses in teams. The aim is to improve team contributions and performance. Belbin identified nine team roles and he categorised those roles into three groups, as shown below.

Action-oriented

- Shaper: challenges the team to improve
- Implementer: puts ideas into action
- Completer-finisher: ensures thorough, timely completion

People-oriented

- Coordinator: acts as a chairperson
- Team worker: encourages cooperation
- Resource investigator: explores outside opportunities

Thought-oriented

- Plant: presents new ideas and approaches
- Monitor-evaluator: analyses the options
- Specialist: provides specialised skills

Group dynamics can support team performance through positive behaviours, or hinder it through negative behaviours. Teams with positive dynamics trust one another, make decisions collectively, take responsibility for their individual and team performance, and hold one another accountable. Poor dynamics can disrupt work, impede decision-making and lead to poor choices.

Some behaviours that commonly affect group dynamics are listed here.

Negative behaviours	Positive behaviours
Giving too much advice or instruction	Promoting teamwork and shared problem-solving
Belittling or undermining team members	Accepting and welcoming diverse opinions
Attempting to persuade (without listening); the 'hard sell'	Employing and encouraging active listening
Censoring ideas and giving precedence to only one opinion	Conveying empathy and welcoming objective assessment of each idea
Talking too much or dominating discussion	Letting others speak and gently interrupting dominators to call on other individuals to present their views
Remaining silent and impassive	Contributing whenever possible and encouraging contributions by asking questions, boosting confidence and giving credit
Displaying negativity or lack of interest	Taking on more challenging and active tasks such as gathering information, taking notes or making presentations
Continually arguing with others	Encouraging positive attitudes, remaining calm, allowing everyone to contribute to discussion

Leader's relationship with the team

Team leaders can encourage their members to embrace innovation.

Team leaders must have a good understanding of the dynamic between team members and a clear way of communicating information to their team members. They can model positive ways of working to encourage the team members to do their best. You can ask team members what they think and how they like to work to determine the best ways to work as a team.

Characteristics of an effective team leader include:

- showing respect and support for others, their ideas and concerns
- sharing the responsibilities and planned objectives
- involving the team in decision-making
- showing support for changes within the organisation
- being prepared to invest time in their team
- understanding the benefits of innovation
- showing others how to question the norms and raise ideas.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedure documents form a framework for the operations of staff in their various roles.

A policy is a formal internal document that sets out the commitment, objectives, expectations and standards that need to be achieved in each area of a business.

Procedures are the steps that outline how to achieve the commitments set out in the policy statement.

Each team member must comply with the relevant policies to ensure there is accountability, compliance, consistency and quality. You may be required to assist in evaluating team requirements and relationships as a part of innovation. For example, when bringing about a change to the way people work, you need to follow the relevant policies and procedures.

You will need to check that requirements of the team, and relationships and reporting lines are correctly reflected in current workplace policies and procedures. If there are discrepancies, make recommendations to a supervisor so they can be adjusted in job descriptions and other documents to reflect current team requirements.

The table below lists some of the workplace procedures, processes and policies and that you may need to be familiar with when evaluating your team.

Policy or procedure	Description
Job descriptions	<p>Job descriptions outline the expectations, key performance indicators, reporting lines and objectives of a role. They may also outline the skills and knowledge required to carry out the role and the behaviour required of staff.</p> <p>Relevant documents include code of conduct, WHS policies and procedures, customer service policy, IT and email usage policies, complaints procedures, and fair work entitlements such as leave, work conditions and salary.</p>
Organisation chart	<p>The organisation chart shows the teams, line managers and management structure of an organisation. This indicates the reporting lines and level of responsibility of each department or team and their manager.</p>
Team, department and whole company meetings	<p>Meetings are scheduled to share information, and keep teams and departments updated. There are likely to be set agendas, and teams are expected to share information and participate in discussions.</p> <p>Relevant documents include minutes of meetings, code of conduct, conflict resolution procedures, and storing and sharing of documents.</p>
Terms of employment	<p>Terms of employment statements outline the tools required to fulfil the duties of a role and any working arrangements that have been negotiated.</p> <p>Relevant documents include fair work entitlements such as leave, salary and work conditions.</p>
Performance reviews	<p>Past and present performance reviews provide team leaders with insights into team member performance.</p> <p>Relevant documents include conflict resolution, complaints, fair work including unfair dismissal, and privacy policies.</p>
Reflecting legislation	<p>Policy review processes ensure the organisation remains compliant with legislative requirements, such as privacy, workplace health and safety and fair work entitlements.</p>

Example

Changing team requirements

Talia's manager, Sian, speaks to her about a proposal to integrate a new financial system into the business. It means their old, unreliable system will be replaced and the new one will offer many of the features the business has been waiting for. Talia is excited and Sian asks her to consider her team's requirements to implement the new financial system. Talia expresses concern that most of her team lack spreadsheeting skills, so Sian notes this as a training need. Together they look at the job descriptions for members and propose updating them to include spreadsheeting as a required skill.

Practice Task 1

Part A

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to team dynamics and requirements? Tick all that apply.

- Resources are what a team needs to carry out its work and meet its objectives.
- A team's objectives are also its purpose.
- Team dynamics are created by the personalities within the team and their relationships with each other.
- Policies ensure that the team knows the steps needed to achieve their responsibilities.
- A team leader can model positive ways of working to encourage innovation in the team.

Part B

Reflect on your present team or another team you have worked in and answer the following questions. Answers will vary based on personal experience.

Question 1

What was the purpose of your team?

Question 2

What was your role in the team?

Question 3

Identify the requirements of your team.

Question 4

Describe the relationships among the team.

1B Identify opportunities to promote innovation

Take time to watch the way your team works together before you begin identifying opportunities for innovation.

Workflow processes

Your team will work to a plan and follow processes to achieve their objectives.

A workflow process and the ways of working should be documented so everyone has a clear idea of how work is to be carried out. If it has not already been documented, arrange a team meeting to discuss it, or have individual team members or small groups work together to document the process they use to carry out work tasks. A workflow process doesn't need to be overly detailed, but it does need to capture the actions required to complete a task, who carries out the actions and an estimate of how long each action typically takes.

Documenting workflow processes makes it easier to identify where there could be improvements in ways of working, and can lead to ideas on how to work better or more efficiently. A workflow shows:

- transparency of who is doing what within the team
- an increased understanding of the activities required to complete a task
- greater visibility of overlap in activities, doubling up of work or other inefficiencies.

Encourage input relating to team roles

The innovation process must belong to the entire team and you will be responsible for creating the right environment to promote innovative thinking.

Encourage the team to make suggestions affecting their work role, including planning, key decisions and other operational aspects of their role.

The team members are well positioned to recognise issues and factors that affect their own performance. You can ask them how they would like to share their ideas, provide comments, show their initiative and raise any concerns about work-related issues.

Issues relating to work roles may include:

- too much or not enough work
- requests relating to work hours, rosters, leave, work arrangements, remote working etc.
- environmental factors such as office space, furniture, heating, noise levels
- training needs or skill gaps
- workplace health and safety
- work task performance, such as different ways to perform tasks
- equipment needs, such as being under-resourced and working with out-of-date technologies or equipment.

Ideas for innovation may come from customers, stakeholders or management, as well as from team members themselves. You should work to see that all ideas have potential merit and are not dismissed or taken up without proper investigation.

The nature of work-related issues will vary according to the industry, roles and responsibilities, and the working environment. Typical examples are discussed below.

Identify opportunities in areas for innovation

Innovative ideas can come from anyone in the team.

Before you begin discussing opportunities for innovation, you need to have created processes that allow team members to suggest innovative ideas.

The work you have carried out in identifying team requirements, relationships and ways of working, may have signalled a number of issues or problems that need to be resolved.

Internal forces can drive change in the way the team operates. This might be as a result of new leadership and a restructure, changes in staff performance or resignation of key staff members.

Areas where opportunities for innovation can found include:

- improving budgetary performance
- developing new services or products
- implementing projects
- investigating ongoing ideas
- improving or changing work processes
- improving outcomes from the work that is done
- creating a broader social or community impact beyond the workplace.

External factors influencing innovation

Innovation is the solution to an existing or potential problem.

Businesses need to be aware of and monitor the external environment in which they operate. Broader environmental factors can affect the organisation's ability to achieve its objectives. These can have both positive and negative impacts on organisational performance. Industry trends or changes in government policy or legislation can affect the need for and type of innovation required from a team. Here are some examples:

- change of government
- change in industry standards
- increases in interest rates
- change of legislation such as taxation
- natural disaster
- civil or international conflict
- economic performance / exchange-rate fluctuations
- increased use of social media by customers
- shifting demographics, such as ageing population, increased immigration
- changing fashion trends
- change in competitor presence or activity.

Continuous improvement cycle

Innovation and implementation form a continuous process because there are always new challenges to be met.

You need a process that allows you to measure the team's performance before and after new ideas are implemented, so you can gauge the effectiveness of the ideas.

One way in which ideas can be assessed is by using a continuous improvement cycle. A want or a need is identified. As each idea is formed, its merit is evaluated. Ideas that have merit are then implemented. After a period of time, they are reviewed to assess effectiveness. When team members see that their ideas have been taken seriously and tested, they will be encouraged and motivated to identify further innovations or ideas.

Below are some steps in a continuous improvement cycle for innovation.

The continuous improvement cycle for innovation
Come up with an idea to solve an existing or potential problem.
Evaluate and reflect on that idea.
Implement changes to accommodate the new idea.
Review all of the above.
Identify business issues and needs.

Create processes that encourage suggestions

Processes can be built that will allow team members to contribute to an innovative environment.

These processes may need to be innovative as it may require changing the way you and your team work and the way everyone interacts and shares information. In order to create processes, you need to consider the following:

- Does your team currently have the ability to work innovatively?
- How can you encourage innovative and collaborative contributions?
- What changes do you and your team need to make to the way you work?
- What will be the process for sharing and acting on innovative ideas?

Below are five areas with questions for assessing a team's ability to work innovatively in each area. The answers to these can be used to develop processes that suit the team and will enable them to better identify innovation opportunities.

Communicate openly and effectively

- └ How easily do people share information about themselves, their roles, their needs and their wants?
 - How well do they listen to others when they communicate?

Resolve real and potential conflicts

- └ How well do team members work together to overcome problems, see others' points of view and account for differences?
 - How do they minimise tension and conflict?

Generate ideas

- └ How are people's ideas received in the group situation?
 - Can all ideas that are presented be discussed and extended by the group?
 - Is there sufficient knowledge and experience in the group to provide input at the ideas stage?

Make decisions

- └ Can the group reach the decision stage at an appropriate point?
 - Are decisions based on compromise, incorporating the best of each person's contributions?
 - Are decisions made in line with common goals and stakeholder expectations?
 - Are decisions agreed on, or are they forced on people?

Carry out necessary activities to a high standard

- └ What is the skill base of the group?
 - Are all the skills and capabilities required held by the group or do new members need to be enlisted?
 - What training and development are required?

Encouraging contributions

People have different strengths that can be used in different ways.

Ensuring team members and others feel they can contribute is very important, but not everyone will contribute in the same way.

Benefits to the team of contributing to innovation

- Collaborating requires respect to be shown to each other.
- Team members feel good when they contribute to the success of the team.
- Team members are more proactive, sensing changes and developing new ways to tackle tasks.
- Team members feel closer bonds with each other and this builds a positive team spirit.
- Team members feel that the work they are doing is important and valuable.
- Team members are more likely to be commended for their work
- Teamwork skills are developed that will equip them for other roles.
- Empowerment is fostered and encouraged within the team.

Individuals who often share ideas are usually people who enjoy being active and vocal in the group, thinking about all the possibilities. Less vocal people generate ideas too, but may need more encouragement to share them. Others may excel at seeing various points of view and accounting for differences, and these people often work to minimise tension and conflict.

Below are some different ways team members contribute to team innovation.

Motivating and energising the team

These team members are positive and energetic, with an interest in team cohesion; they also provide an element of fun.

Mapping concepts and seeing possibilities

These team members are good at visualising and creating flow charts, mind maps, diagrams and other pictorial representations of ideas.

Playing the devil's advocate

These team members can take an opposing view and ask the hard questions; this ensures all aspects of an idea have been considered before the team decides to act.

Articulating the direction of the team

These team members are good at bringing together ideas and strategies so they make sense; they have good analytical skills and a high level of literacy.

Making links and tapping into networks

These team members are good networkers and come into their own when negotiation is required.

Providing technical input

These team members understand the organisation's processes and systems, and can advise on how new processes and systems might be incorporated. They can provide historical information about previous successes and failures.

Problem-solving

These team members ensure new ideas are implemented with a minimum of fuss. They meet challenges and overcome hurdles to facilitate the process of change.

Consider the way information is shared

Consider the way you currently share information as a team and how this could be improved.

You've already identified the way your team works to achieve objectives, but you also need to consider the way you currently share information as a team. Here are some things to consider:

- Meetings – If you have regular meetings, look at the agendas for those meetings and determine if they allow for the exchange and discussion of innovative ideas. It may not be appropriate in certain meetings, so you may need to set aside specific time for sharing of ideas.
- Discussions – How do you normally discuss ideas and issues? Does everyone contribute? What activities do you use to generate ideas and how do you evaluate these? Think about what processes you may need to change or introduce to ensure discussions are fruitful and effective.
- Actions – What happens to ideas after they have been generated and evaluated? Who keeps track of these and oversees implementation of these ideas? Innovative thinking might quickly deteriorate if team members can't see that good ideas are being acted upon, so consider how you will share the progress of innovation implementation with your team.
- Collaborative communication – Does your team prefer to communicate via email, rather than talking face-to-face? For those who work remotely, email may be the most common means of communication. However, ideas are more likely to stem from conversations than emails, so encourage team members to talk, even if it's via video conferencing or phone.

Example

Being innovative is more than working together

Over one week, each member of a customer service team working in isolation produces a certain amount of work. This may include responding to a number of sales inquiries. Multiplying this output by the number of people working individually, in this case four, provides the total number of sales inquiries responded to.

When group members form an innovative team they can achieve more because they are not simply adding together their individual efforts, but combining them. This productivity is gained through team dynamics, which refers to the ways team members interact with each other and work together to combine their talents, abilities, personalities and interests, so they work cohesively as one entity.

Individuals working innovatively respect each other's different ways of working, their different personalities, strengths and weaknesses, and they look to learn from one another to lead to a higher combined work output.

In an innovative team, each member contributes in a way that enhances the capability of every other team member, multiplying the possibilities for work output for each member.

Practice Task 2

Reflect on your present or previous workplace and answer the following questions.

Question 1

Describe the workflow or process you have used to complete a work objective.

Question 2

Identify an opportunity for innovation either in the workflow you've just described or another area of work.

Question 3

Which of the following statements will encourage team members to contribute ideas for innovation? Tick all that apply.

- Ask team members to explain factors affecting their work role and their work tasks.
- Encourage group discussions that allow everyone to be heard.
- Dismiss the bad ideas and encourage the good ideas.
- Examine how decisions are currently made in the team.
- Create a conflict and see how it is resolved by the team.

Summary

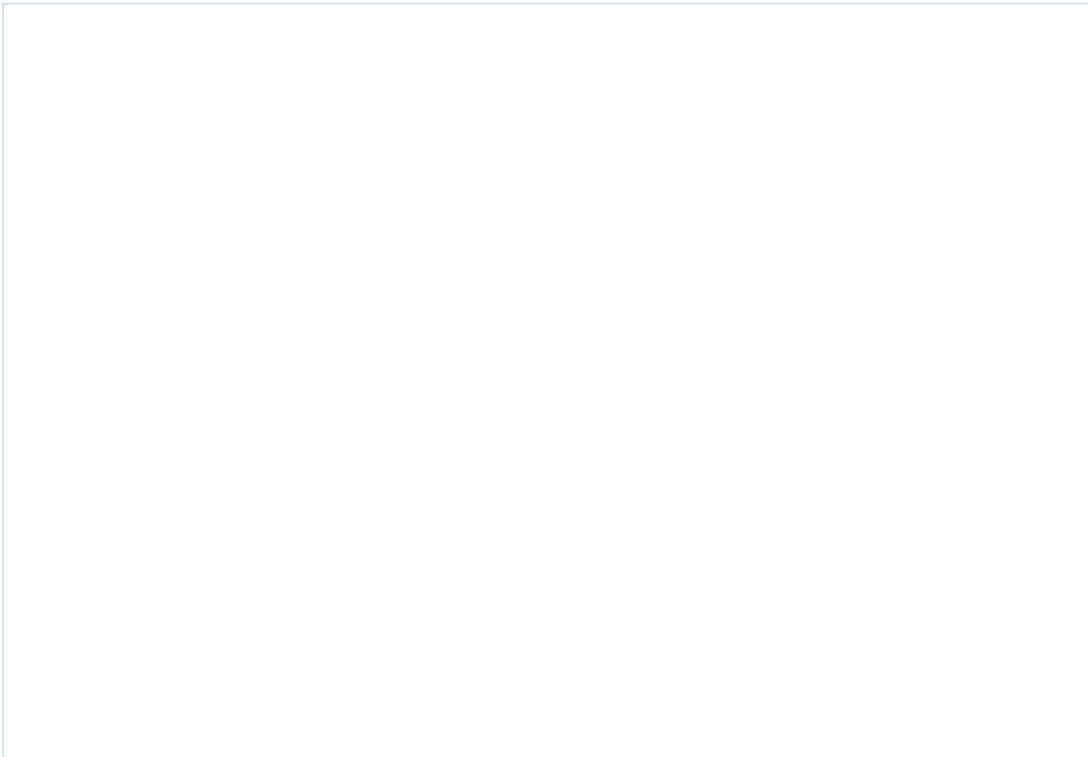
- Innovation is a new way of doing things to solve a problem.
- Identifying team requirements will confirm the purpose of the team and what the team needs to carry out their duties.
- Understanding the team relationship will provide insights into individual strengths and weaknesses and how these are combined as the team members work together.
- Any changes to team requirements and relationships need to be reflected in workplace policies and procedures.
- Identifying the way teams work towards objectives will provide greater transparency and uncover where efficiency could be improved.
- Creating processes that allow for collaboration and the sharing of ideas will promote innovative working within teams.

Learning Checkpoint 1

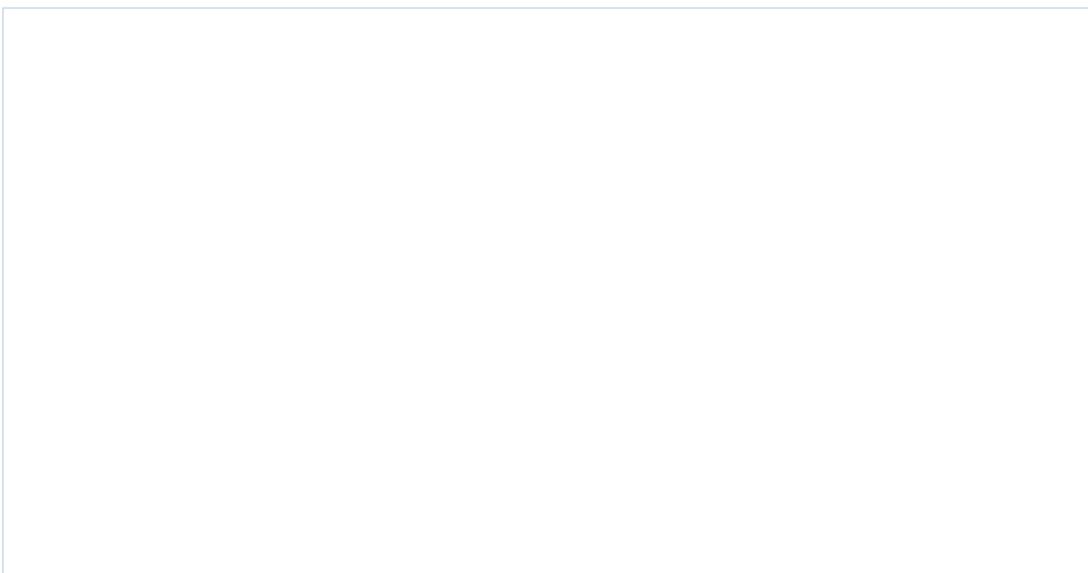
Identify opportunities to maximise innovation

Part A

1. Explain what innovation is and provide two examples of the benefits it has to an organisation.



2. What type of information can you collect to learn more about your team members?



3. Provide an example of how knowledge of workplace policies and procedures are needed when evaluating your team's requirements.

4. List three examples of the information a workflow process can provide about the ways a team works to achieve its objectives.

5. Explain three benefits to the team when team members are encouraged to suggest innovations and new ways of doing things.

6. Identify three ways that teams can be encouraged to identify opportunities for innovation.

7. Provide two examples of broader environmental factors that can impact on the need for an organisation to innovate.

Part B

Write a report about a team you are, or have been, part of. Choose a work, class, family or social team that works together to achieve a common goal.

Use the following topics to explain how the team created an environment to maximise innovation.

1. The purpose of the team

2. What the team needs to achieve its objectives

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3. The team dynamic and their areas of skill and expertise

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4. Innovative ways the team identified and achieved its goals

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Topic 2 | Organise an effective way of working

- 2A Identify ideas for ways of working better
- 2B Delegate and agree on responsibilities
- 2C Schedule activities for working with the team
- 2D Establish rewards

2A Identify ideas for ways of working better

Innovation can be challenging.

It is quite common that when someone new joins a team and asks questions about processes, they are told, 'It's the way we always do things'. This response will prevent innovative working and ideas, as it does not allow for teams or team members to change the way things are done.

Here are some ways to get your team to share their working practices, learn from one another and provide support for better work practices.

- Ask team members to document and share their work practices to identify if there are inefficiencies.
- Ask them to identify the work tasks that take the most time and discuss if the tasks can be approached differently.
- List all the ways the team carries out their tasks then discuss what would happen if things were not done that way. Lead the discussion on ideas for new ways of working.
- Listen to the feedback from team members. Discuss whether the right tasks are allocated to the right staff, or if other team members could help get the job done more efficiently, either by working more effectively or sharing their skills and experience.

The changing way we work

Innovation can mean that job descriptions and ways of working change.

The way people work should be flexible enough to accommodate changes in priorities and changes to the team composition. Staff often move around within a company or on to new employment opportunities. As team members enter or leave the team or their roles change within that team, adjustments need to be made to the way a team operates to accommodate staff with new skills and strengths as well as changes in projects and priorities.

Many businesses are thinking about new ways for their staff to work that are more flexible and increase productivity. Some examples:

- Working hours – Many staff work flexible hours to fit in with family commitments and requirements of their job. For example, they may leave early on some days but begin work earlier on other days. This improves work/life balance, which goes a long way in motivating people. Some staff may need to log in late at night to have some thinking time or connect with a business contact overseas.

- Working space – Many businesses use hot desking where people don't always use the same desk but move around the seating provided in the office. This allows for better collaboration by getting people out of their own space and mixing with other staff they may not have worked with otherwise.
- Agile working – This could be working remotely and using video conferencing to communicate with others in the team. It can decrease costs for the business but also increases productivity, and adds more flexibility to arrange tasks and think creatively.

One common way working conditions change is through the introduction and use of technology.

Here are examples of how technology is changing the way people work, where and when they work, and the nature of employment itself.

Casualisation and contracting

Employers call in casual employees or contractors only when the organisation needs them. This allows employers to minimise wage costs, roster workers around peak periods, and save money by not having to invest in training and development activities.

Casual staff need to have flexible work hours and be available if required.

Outsourcing

The contracting out of non-essential and non-core functions to independent providers can mean that some of the areas or departments of a business are working from a remote location.

Common outsourcing tasks include:

- administrative work such as accounts and payroll
- information technology services
- customer service and call centre operations
- human resources functions such as recruitment and selection, and training and development.

Telecommuting

Working from home or in a remote location is popular because it can increase productivity, lower costs and give team members greater satisfaction. It may also mean staff need to work flexible hours and can complete tasks outside of standard work hours.

Telecommuting such as video conferencing is only effective if time and resources are invested to set up the required systems. These include:

- audits to ensure the home working environment meets WHS standards
- investment in technology such as software and cameras
- ensuring that internet connections are secure, especially shared-access and cloud-based systems
- training staff to work with the software and staying connected with others in the team
- training workers to work productively at home and to close the office door at the end of the day.

Changing the ways people work

The rules that govern the way a team operates may need to change based on innovation and the incorporation of new ideas.

Establishing the ground rules places the team in a better position to work collectively to meet deadlines and work objectives. Guidelines should not be too prescriptive about exactly what is to take place or how the work is to be done, because this may discourage innovative practice.

Any change to the responsibilities in a job role should be done in consultation with each team member and confirmed with a supervisor or area specialists such as a human resources manager. Any change must also be reflected in the policies and procedures.

Examples of the type of ground rules that might be needed to accommodate changes in work practices are listed here:

Boundaries

These include the kind of work, the scope of the job role, accountabilities and outcomes of work. Boundaries may also cover areas not to be dealt with by the team if they need to be clarified.

Example: 'This team does not process payments to staff, whether these are wages or sundry items.'

Confidentiality

- Team members must follow policies and procedures to ensure individual, group, client and other stakeholder privacy and confidentiality are respected.
Example: 'All correspondence related to specific clients will be centrally maintained with limited access.'

Communication

- Set guidelines for how often people need to communicate and what methods are to be used such as meetings.
Example: 'Team members are expected to attend the staff meeting on the third Thursday of each month.'

Key roles and responsibilities

- The general duties and authority/knowledge base of each team member regarding meeting the team's common or project goals need to be clear.
Example: 'Maria is to respond to all inquiries about the project from within the organisation.'

Relationships

- Coordinate with the other teams and individuals that are critical to the work of the group – either inside or outside the organisation – and how the team is to relate to them.
Example: 'The sales team is to supply updated figures to the finance team each month so they can incorporate the figures into the monthly report.'

Timelines

- Clarify any critical deadlines that the team must meet.
Example: 'Customer orders must be processed and dispatched within one week of receipt.'

Example

Develop rules and ways of working collaboratively

Team A decides to have an all-team meeting to develop group ownership of ground rules. Each person is asked to come to the meeting with a list of what they require from others in order to perform their role. During the meeting, team members conduct a brainstorming session to identify ideas for ways of working better and set ground rules to implement the new ways of working. They also identify other key people in the organisation whose work affects theirs and each person is allocated a person to speak with about the similarities of their roles or where their roles overlap.

After two weeks the team has a follow-up meeting to review the guidelines they established, ensuring all the information they have obtained is included.

Practice Task 3

Imagine you are organising an event at work, such as a social event or a seminar.

Question 1

How will you establish who will be involved in the organising?

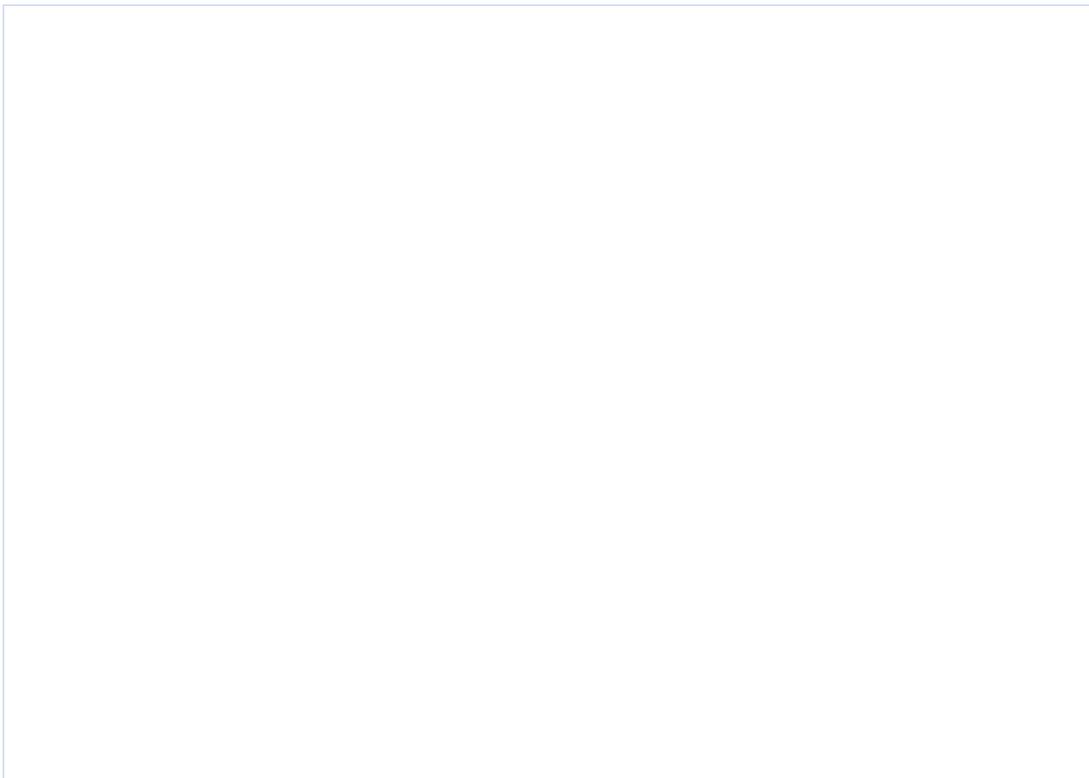
Question 2

What can you do to ensure a set of rules is agreed to by every team member?



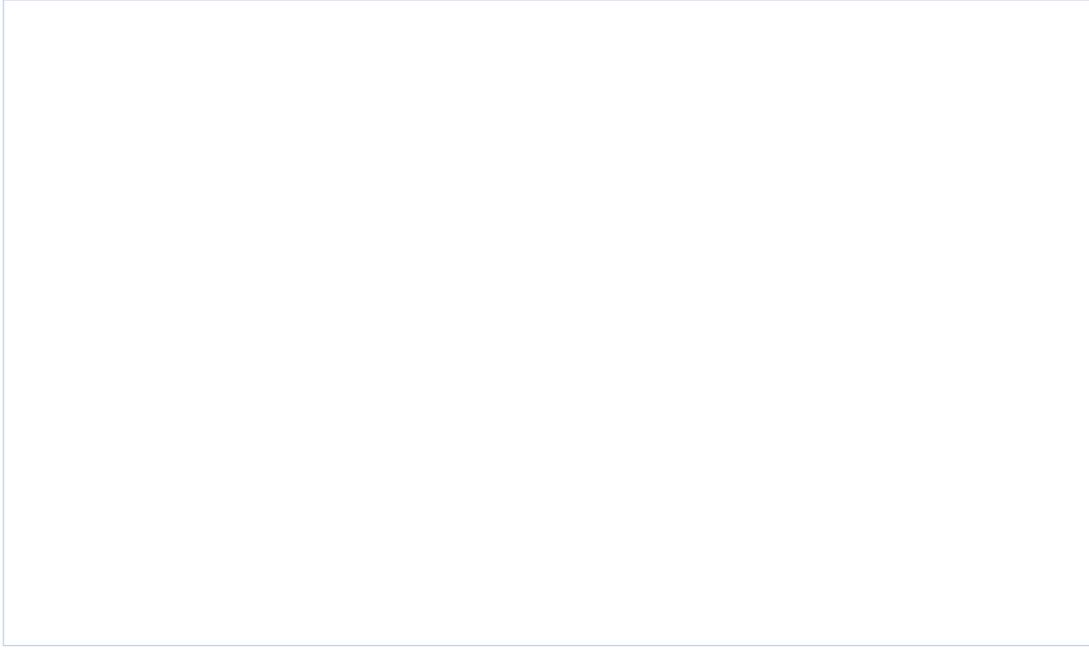
Question 3

Explain how you would ensure a collaborative environment where each person is given the opportunity to be part of the process.



Question 4

What can you do to identify ways of working better to organise the event?



2B Delegate and agree on responsibilities

If individuals fail to take responsibility for their roles, collaboration on projects and the achievement of team objectives will be difficult.

Team responsibilities are different from role responsibilities. When someone is appointed to their role, they are advised about their role responsibilities as outlined in their position or job description. Every job requires that people work as a team, so they need to understand the expectations of their work and how it affects others and the broader team objectives.

Team responsibilities are those responsibilities that do not fit precisely into anyone's job role but are shared among the team. Examples of team responsibilities include doing tasks that contributes to the work of everyone by making tasks easier or quicker. Examples in an office may include putting paper into the photocopier when it is getting low, reporting damage to the scanner, answering the phone when others are busy or tied up doing other tasks, taking it in turns to record the minutes of team meetings.

Delegate team responsibilities

Taking responsibility means you are in charge of the problem and solution. Responsibility means to own something, as opposed to denying, rationalising or passing the buck.

During periods of innovation, new responsibilities can arise or the team members need to change their responsibilities. This might be a new set of responsibilities or they may have had to pick up responsibilities that were once another team member's.

Delegating responsibilities needs to be done in way that is transparent, inclusive, fair and equitable. Failure to be transparent can lead to confusion and misunderstandings where staff feel they are being overlooked or a taking on more of their share of work. Those involved need to be provided with information and aware of discussions and how tasks have been allocated.

The following conditions will help with delegating responsibilities to staff in a smooth way.

Ground rules

Ground rules need to be explained so team members know where they fit into the team and what is expected of them now they have a different role or set of responsibilities.

Individual ownership

Team members need to be given some control of their own role and that they can bring their own individual influence to the responsibilities and contributions.

Collaboration

Team members need to be involved in discussions so they can appreciate each other's roles and effectively support each other.

Agreement

The team needs to work in an environment of mutual respect and willingness to compromise, if agreement and sharing of responsibilities is going to occur.

In some situations, as team leader, you may need to make the decision on the responsibilities for each team member with little consultation. This may be because of an urgent priority or as a result of a staff absence at short notice.

Decisions about who will take on certain responsibilities will depend on the task or objectives involved and the skills or strengths of the team. It is likely that certain team members will be better suited to certain responsibilities based on their skills, knowledge and personal characteristics. For example, a member who is a good communicator may be better at seeking advice from others in the organisation. A team member who enjoys solving problems, may like to lead the group in a problem-solving brainstorming session.

Ways to successfully delegate responsibility

- Match the skills, knowledge and attitude of team members to the tasks.
- Match the level of responsibility of the person to the amount of authority they have.
- Provide training and development activities if required.
- Discuss timelines and schedules.
- Think about the time required to complete the tasks and if the amount of work will mean reshuffling other tasks or backfilling for their original role.
- Consider the level of independence of the staff member and their work style.
- Provide support or 'buddy' systems so team members develop confidence in new tasks.
- Reward contributions and behaviours that show responsibility has been taken.
- Monitor the progress of each team member.

Using the team's strengths to divide up tasks

Identify the strengths of your team so that you can use them in the most effective way.

Observe the people in your team as they complete a range of tasks and responsibilities. See the way they interact with each other, make decisions, find a consensus and share information with others in the team.

- What are their strengths?
- How do these characteristics add to the strength of the team?

Here is a list of key team characteristics and a brief description of what each brings to the team.

Type of team member	What they bring to the team
Coordinator	Gets things started and keeps things on track
Inspirer	Motivates others to contribute
Creator	Comes up with new and innovative ideas
Reflector	Consolidates themes and ideas, feeds back to others
Organiser	Puts ideas into a logical or easy-to-use form
Enabler	Makes ideas practical, finds ways to make concepts work
Harmoniser	Makes sure everyone is happy and is having their needs met, defuses arguments
Questioner	Asks the hard questions, checks the legitimacy of statements
Completer	Decides when enough has been done and brings things to a conclusion
Leader	Maintains an overview, does not get actively involved in discussions but ensures a satisfactory outcome is obtained

Make the best use of strengths and abilities

Strengths tie in with people's personalities, abilities and interests.

Before allocating roles to team members, determine the skills and strengths of each team member. If the strengths of the team are known, then the team can tap into its internal resources.

If you have a team where everyone has similar strengths, you may need to consider what new skills are required for a team project. You can also arrange for new members to join the team. New skills can be developed in a team by arranging for formal training opportunities, on-the-job training by more experienced staff or by coaching or mentoring. Here are some features of coaching and mentoring:

Coaching	Mentoring
Focus of development is on technical, process and job skills.	The focus of development is on life skills and soft skills, such as relationship building, leadership, interpersonal communication, problem-solving conceptual and contingency skills.
The approach is task-driven, to achieve a set outcome.	The approach is relationship-driven to achieve improvements in problem-solving skills.

It is not always practical or easy to divide tasks up according to the individual strengths of each team member. This can be a particular problem if it is a small team. Here are some other ways to share tasks and responsibilities among the team:

- Rotate responsibilities around the team.
- Arrange for external staff to help out in busy periods or for a special project.
- Have several team members share a set of responsibilities.
- Divide up the less popular responsibilities so each team member has only a small share.

Reinforce innovative teamwork

Opportunities to share new ideas and innovative processes need to be available to the whole team.

You may need to actively encourage and reinforce team-based innovation so that your team members learn to share and act on their ideas.

Here are some tips for encouraging collaborative and innovative teamwork.

- Ensure team members have time to meet and discuss issues and share solutions.
- Encourage active listening to everyone's views.
- Ensure levels of autonomy are established and are clearly understood so the need to ask for permission doesn't prevent innovative ideas from being trialled or implemented.
- Identify obstacles that stand in the way of effective teamwork and/or innovation.
- Ask team members to come to meetings prepared, but if ideas don't flow then don't persevere for too long. Innovation can't be forced.
- Encourage each team member to offer their ideas. Give people enough time to formulate their ideas.
- Ensure you have agreement before moving on. Avoid asking for a vote, as this will create tensions and promote black-and-white thinking.
- Do not try to reach agreement too quickly or compromise too early in the process. Rushing to agree without sufficient thought or consideration may lead to problems later.

Obtaining agreement

Before team members are delegated tasks, they need to agree to take them on as additional responsibilities or to reduce some of their existing responsibilities.

Here are some strategies to use when getting agreement from the team on the sharing of responsibilities.

- Agree on a time frame for discussion ahead of time.
- Allow each person equal time to put forward their point of view or ideas, and listen to each person before proceeding.
- Identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Encourage everyone to think outside the square. Avoid team responsibilities being allocated purely based on their similarity to work roles.
- Explore each person's ideas, discussing their pros and cons as a team.
- Reach a solution, ensuring all team members have the same opportunity to fully express their opinions.
- Ask each person individually if they agree to and support the group decision.

Example

The benefits of having a team

Sharon's role in her team includes keeping track of the number of customers who phone each day and the purpose of their calls: new inquiries, follow-ups and complaints. As the receptionist, Sharon doesn't handle the calls herself, but passes them onto the relevant sales and support team member. These calls have always been recorded in a log before being used in a monthly report. This seems to Sharon like too much handling of the same information and she wants to find a more efficient way to get the call figures into a report.

Practice Task 4

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to delegating responsibilities to a team?

Tick all that apply.

- Setting ground rules means the team knows where they fit and what is expected of them.
- Ensure the whole team is aware of discussions on responsibilities and how tasks have been allocated.
- Team members have the right to control their work role and reject any new responsibilities.
- Responsibility means to own something and not to 'pass the buck'.
- Match the amount of authority to the level of responsibility of the person.

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

- a) Encouraging innovative teamwork involves giving the team notice and enough time to formulate their ideas. >> Yes >> No
- b) In a team where everyone has similar strengths, consider what new skills are required for the purpose of a team project. >> Yes >> No
- c) When gaps in the skills for new responsibilities are identified, arrange for replacement staff to be employed. >> Yes >> No
- d) Encourage the team to accept new responsibilities based on their similarity to current responsibilities. >> Yes >> No
- e) When getting agreement from the team, explore each person's ideas, discussing their pros and cons as a team. >> Yes >> No

Question 3

Identify three ways you can encourage collaborative teamwork.

2C Schedule activities for working with the team

Being innovative means being proactive.

Taking positive steps towards achieving more at work and doing better can come from allowing time for thinking, challenging and collaborating with others.

Thinking

Thinking is an internal process; you look inward to make sense of things and formulate ideas. Critical thinking is reflecting on one or more possible solutions to a problem and evaluating or comparing them against criteria to judge their validity or likelihood of success.

Challenging

Challenging is not about arguing points with others, but questioning our own thoughts and ideas, and those of others. Challenging activities include debating issues, testing theories and ideas, and combining and re-formulating ideas into other possibilities.

Collaborating

Collaborating with others helps us understand how they think and gives us new ideas to think about. It also helps others feel involved and that their contributions are valued. This is especially important in teamwork.

Build innovative practices into team practices

Planning and scheduling thinking and challenging activities can be done around core activities.

Time for building innovative practices into the workplace is not usually written into a timetable or a job description. To make innovation happen, time needs to be created and allocated to the development of and collaboration over new ideas.

Setting priorities is about allocating time for the work that needs to be done but also allowing time for important activities such as exploring new ways of doing things with the team.

Activities that support innovation need to encourage independent decision-making and avoid groupthink. 'Groupthink' is the name given to the desire for group consensus at the expense of critical thinking. When groupthink occurs, the desire for the group to agree with each other to maintain cohesion overrides the ability of team members to challenge the group or offer an unpopular alternative view.

Thinking is not a passive activity but requires focused energy. Thinking activities that include the whole team working together can include brainstorming and critical thinking.

Brainstorm new ideas

Brainstorming is the free flow of ideas around a particular subject or topic. One method is to list keywords and ideas that come to mind when thinking about a certain topic.

The brainstorming environment should foster an uninhibited, burst of ideas where all contributions are valid. No idea is judged and there are no right or wrong answers. Brainstorming sessions in a group can generate ideas, raise concerns and allow discussion of issues in a direct yet informal setting.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking involves reflecting on possible solutions to a problem and evaluating them against criteria to judge the validity of each possible solution. It involves looking carefully at an issue and making a decision based on what you know from by questioning your own and others' ideas.

Critical-thinking skills are important because they help solve problems, identify solutions and generate new ideas. Many workplace issues such as process inefficiencies, resource allocation and workplace safety can be improved by using critical thinking.

Another activity is the Six Thinking Hats exercise, based on Edward de Bono's work on lateral thinking and problem-solving. In this activity, you and your team put on various 'hats' in order to examine a problem.

The White Hat

The White Hat calls for information known or needed: just the facts.

The Yellow Hat

The Yellow Hat symbolises brightness and optimism. Under this hat, you explore the positives and look for value and benefit.

The Black Hat

The Black Hat is the devil's advocate. Under this hat, you spot the difficulties and dangers – where things might go wrong. The Black Hat is probably the most powerful and useful of the hats but should not be used too often.

The Red Hat

The Red Hat signifies feelings, hunches and intuition. Using this hat, you express emotions and share fears, likes, dislikes, loves and hates.

The Green Hat

The Green Hat is about creativity: possibilities, alternatives and new ideas. Using this hat provides an opportunity to express new concepts and new perceptions.

The Blue Hat

The Blue Hat is used to manage the thinking process. It's the control mechanism that ensures the other hats are being used.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following are activities that allow time for a team to explore new ideas?
Tick all that apply.

- encouraging groupthink to encourage team cohesion
- setting aside time for a critical-reflection session to evaluate decisions against set criteria
- arranging for decision-making activities to find possible solutions to a problem
- conducting a brainstorming session to generate ideas and raise concerns
- arranging for a team-building activity including a social activity with the team's families

2D Establish rewards

No matter what we do, we are driven to activity for a reason.

As an employee, we carry out our duties in a way that is valuable to our employer, who provides us with an income and other benefits. Some of the rewards we seek from our work are instant, while others provide longer-term benefits.

Personal rewards from work include:

- a sense of personal satisfaction
- the opportunity to interact with others
- a pleasant work environment
- the opportunity to use different skills and strengths
- more interesting and challenging work roles, including promotion.

Reward and recognition

People need to be rewarded in ways that are meaningful and useful to them.

We do not all feel motivated and rewarded in the same ways. What motivates you will not necessarily motivate others.

Certain rewards lose impact over time if over-used and instead of providing motivation, they can come to be expected as an automatic return for their efforts. Bigger rewards are important and valued and can give a team something to look forward to, such as a bonus, a day off or a gift voucher. Smaller, more frequent rewards are also valued, such as saying 'Thank you'.

A team that is recognised for its efforts and for achieving what it set out to achieve can be more willing to take on new and exciting challenges, ideas or activities. Rewards can increase the confidence level of each team member and this will often be demonstrated in their willingness to undertake tasks.

Here is a list of staff characteristics, the types of things that motivate each person and what a suitable reward might look like. Notice that very few of the rewards relate to money.

Type of team member	Motivation	Reward sought
The relater	Social interaction	Being liked
The source	Meeting new people and making social links	Wider networks, more contacts or resources
The missionary	Community service	Serving or helping others
The adventurer	Challenge	Overcoming adversity
The leader	Empowering others	Helping others fulfil their potential
The learner	Knowledge	Personal fulfilment
The guru	Wisdom	Being sought for advice
The craftsperson	Competence	Being respected for high-level skills
The interpreter	Communication	Being seen as socially adept
The citizen	Participation	Belonging to a group
The hedonist	Pleasure	Fun and interesting environment
The pragmatist	Money or other tangibles	Personal or financial freedom

A rewards program

A rewards program can provide the necessary boost for many team members, build spirits, inspire creativity and increase motivation.

A rewards program can give the team more exposure in the organisation and recognition of their work. Rewards can include the act of publicly recognising outstanding efforts in front of the rest of the team or wider organisation. The key is to ensure that every team member has a reasonable opportunity to achieve a reward.

Principles of an effective rewards program:

- The system must be fair and achievable for all employees, not just the high achievers.
- It must aim to motivate workers and be relevant to the objectives of the team.
- It must be based on clear targets that are known to the team to avoid conflict when one member feels another is being given preferential treatment.
- It must support the organisation's core values.

Examples of rewards:

Email notification	Email is sent to the team/department/senior manager acknowledging a result or outcome.
Half-day reward	Staff can leave early if they meet their targets.
Parking space for a month	Reward a team member with one paid parking space for a month.
Gift vouchers	Give an online or retail shopping vouchers or movie tickets.
Allied health appointment	Arrange for a massage or other body treatment.
Travelling trophy	Organise a trophy for the best performer that sits at each person's desk for a set period, and is then rotated around the team.
Time off in the field	Offer access to a specialised conference, training event or seminar.
Certificates	Create paper-based certificates acknowledging high achievements and improvements.
further training	Provide payment for a short course or formal training qualification

Example

Benefits of rewarding your team

The management at BizOps encourages staff to be community-minded and to feel rewarded by serving and helping others. It also places emphasis on fun and wants staff to enjoy their time at work. The workers fulfil these criteria, but a backlog of office tasks is becoming a problem.

The team holds an early-morning brainstorming session and each person brings a plate of breakfast food. As a short-term fix, they come up with a game that chooses six team members who will work on the administration tasks each week with a reward at the end of each week.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Identify three benefits to a team of getting a reward of recognition for their work.

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to a rewards program? Tick all that apply.

- The program must be fair and achievable for all employees, not just the high achievers.
- The program must be aligned to the objectives of the team.
- A 'Thank you' is appreciated as recognition of a job well done.
- An increase in salary is considered the best reward.
- Before a reward is given, an organisation will want evidence on how practices have helped it achieve its objectives.

Summary

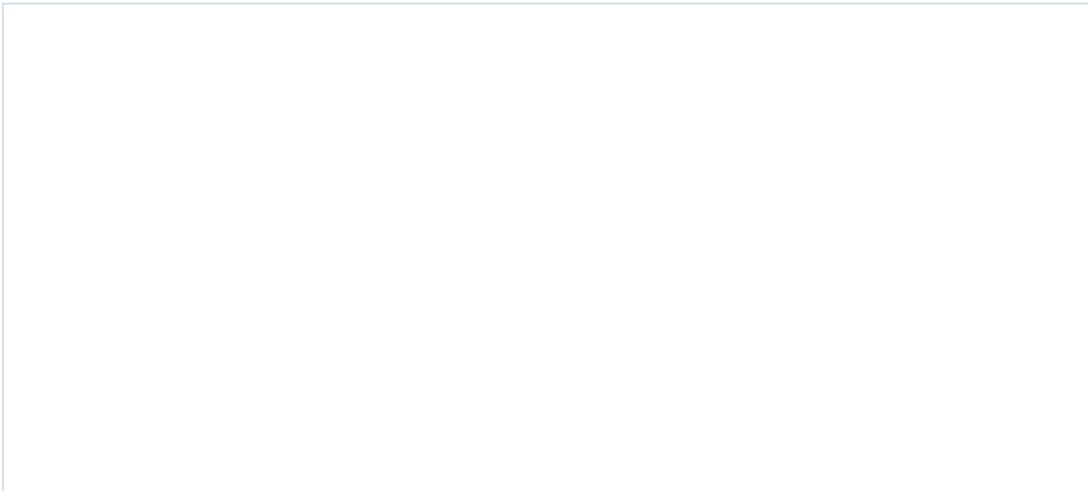
- The team can share their working practices, learn from one another and provide support for better work practices.
- Developing ground rules for the team can help identify ways of working better.
- It is important to be transparent, inclusive, fair and equitable when allocating team responsibilities.
- Before allocating roles to team members, it is critical to determine the skills and strengths of each person.
- Thinking, challenging and collaborating are important proactive aspects of innovation and time needs to be set aside for them.
- For innovation to happen, it is essential to plan and schedule thinking, challenging and collaborating activities in and around core activities.
- Individuals and teams need to be rewarded in ways that are meaningful and useful to them.

Learning Checkpoint 2

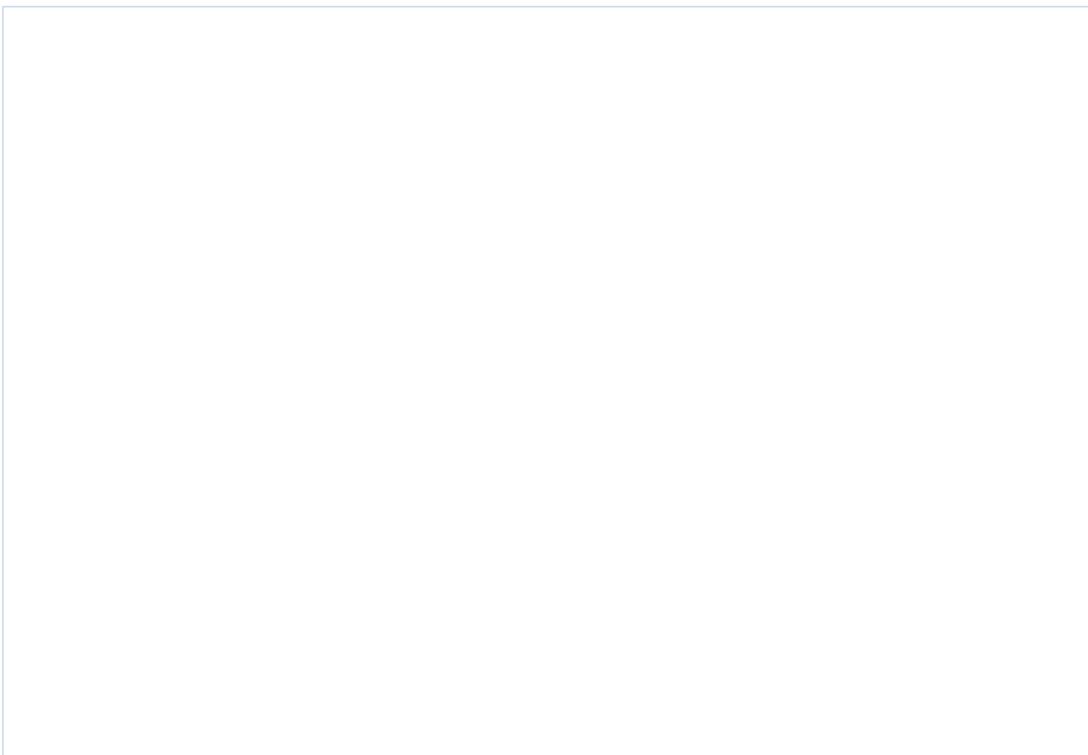
Organise an effective way of working

Part A

1. Give three reasons for having ground rules about how a team operates.



2. What effect can rewards have on a team? Provide two examples.



3. Which of the following statements relate to different ways of working in a team?
Tick all that apply.

- Examining work practices can indicate if tasks are being performed efficiently.
- Flexible work hours mean a team member can be on call 24 hours a day.
- Working remotely means the team is not physically together in the workspace at one time.
- Office technology has greatly contributed to a more agile workforce.
- New ways of working mean less time spent collaborating as a team.

Part B

Read the scenario, then complete the tasks that follow.

You have been asked to lead a team that has been operating for six months. Productivity and morale are down and absenteeism has increased. Your goal is to take the team from under-performing to innovative.

Six strategies for making the team more innovative are listed below. Complete the table by explaining the purpose of each strategy and how it will benefit the team.

Task	Objective/s of task	Benefits to team
Develop ground rules.		
Set up rewards.		
Identify individual strengths.		
Delegate team responsibilities.		
Schedule activities for developing new ideas into work practices.		



Topic 3 | Support and guide colleagues to promote innovation

- 3A Demonstrate behaviour that supports innovation
- 3B Create an environment where information, knowledge and experiences are shared
- 3C Challenge and test ideas with the team and others

3A Demonstrate behaviour that supports innovation

A team leader should behave in a way that demonstrates qualities and encourages others to adopt these behaviours.

You will be familiar with modelling desirable traits to your team, such as politeness, punctuality and accountability. This is leading by example and demonstrating expected behaviours. There are also behaviours that will encourage and support innovation among the team.

Workplaces are not static environments. Work teams face different challenges at different times and you need to be ready to adapt your behaviour style as required.

Depending on your personality and work style, you will find some behaviours more natural and easier to model than other ones.

Supportive

Supportive behaviour provides empathy and encouragement and offers understanding and concern. This behaviour works well during times of change and when team members are trying new tasks and building new skills.

Participative

Participation is a collaborative behaviour. It involves activities such as consultation, sharing fears, encouraging team problem-solving activities, and asking for and considering suggestions. Participation is best modelled when teams are thinking and behaving innovatively, such as in creative activities when considering new things to do and new ways to do them.

Achievement-oriented

Achievement-oriented behaviour is focused on goals, continuous improvement, quality and best practice. This behaviour is best modelled when teams are working well, consistently and with high-level skills, and when large-scale change is not taking place.

Directive

Directive behaviour is task-related behaviour (sometimes called micro-management). It includes activities such as organising work rosters, setting and advising on standards and benchmarks, setting timelines and directing others to carry out their work roles. This behaviour is best modelled when staff are learning new tasks, and in high-pressure situations such as peak workload periods or when deadlines are tight.

Here are some characteristics that you can display in your interactions with the team that allows for innovation.

Collaborative

Ensure that a wide range of viewpoints are presented and considered.

Equitable

Give equal consideration to all team members and all ideas.

Fair

Don't offer a judgment on any idea or contribution too quickly or without giving sufficient attention to it.

Fun

Suggest interesting ways to accomplish tasks.

Hard-working

Demonstrate a willingness to put in whatever effort it takes, which helps others see that their efforts will also be valued and rewarded.

Reflective

Take the time to understand all ideas and viewpoints.

Responsible

Show maturity and the ability to acknowledge personal successes and failures.

Example

Encouraging ongoing participation from team members

At a national fast-food restaurant chain, shift managers are trained to coach and mentor their teams to raise issues about process and customer service difficulties. Each team member is responsible for following the processes and systems that are in place, but are also accountable for meeting customer satisfaction targets and service level agreements.

Each Friday before the lunch time shift, the shift manager meets with the team to discuss issues experienced throughout the week. This allows team members to raise their concerns, contribute ideas and agree on improvements to existing processes and systems.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Draw a line to match each term about behaviour that supports innovation to its description.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| » Supportive behaviour | » Focusing on goals, continuous improvement, quality and best practice |
| » Participative behaviour | » Providing instructions on tasks like organising work rosters, setting and advising on standards and benchmarks, and directing others to carry out their work roles |
| » Achievement-oriented behaviour | » Showing encouragement and offering understanding and concern |
| » Directive behaviour | » Encouraging team problem-solving activities and asking for and considering suggestions |

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to modelling behaviours that encourage innovation in a team? Tick all that apply.

- Demonstrate the team qualities or behaviours that you want them to adopt.
- Watch the team carefully so they do what you say.
- Give your full attention to new ideas and do not judge them too quickly.
- Don't give too much praise or the team will expect it.
- Show equal consideration to all team members when they suggest a new way of working.

3B Create an environment where information, knowledge and experiences are shared

The right work environment is crucial for the development of innovative working.

Innovative ideas need to be shared. You need to create an environment that allows staff to proactively and effectively communicate. It needs to be a place of trust where the team know that their contributions are valued. Sometimes, the information being shared needs to be kept confidential; for example, when seeking an honest response to questions about performance of others or the way things are done. If information is sensitive, you will need to seek the person's permission to disclose it or not reveal the source of the information; for example, you could get feedback through an anonymous survey.

Exploring new initiatives as a team will:

- allow ideas to be thoroughly challenged and tested
- offer insights and suggestions that may not have been considered
- promote collaborative teamwork and diversity
- ensure buy-in if the idea is adopted because all team members have contributed to the discussion

Encourage sharing of knowledge and information

Staff need to feel they can share knowledge and experiences without judgment.

Some team members may be hesitant about sharing ideas; for example, if they are new to the team, or they are unsure of how others will respond.

An environment where communication flows among the team would have the following characteristics:

- Respect and support are shown to each other.
- Messages are received as they were intended.
- Responsibility is shared, and the all people in the team have a common purpose.
- There is joint decision-making between the leader and the team members.
- Change and new ideas are supported in the organisation.
- There is a high level of synergy and collaboration between different teams and departments.
- Conceptual thinkers and problem solvers in the organisation are recognised and given credit.
- Time is invested in brainstorming and other activities to bring forth new ideas and ways of working.
- Staff understand the benefits of innovation.
- Staff are encouraged to question the norms and raise ideas.

Communication strategies

Sharing ideas in a team can involve a number of steps.

Steps for sharing information or knowledge or ideas might look like this:

1. A discussion is initiated, such as organising a meeting.
2. Background information is provided, such as a work issue or opportunity for improvement.
3. Information is shared, such as insights, experiences and thoughts on continuous improvement processes and systems.
4. Evidence is presented that supports the rationale for a new idea or a change in the way things are done.
5. Responses, reflections and feedback from the team are provided, such as email suggestions, insights and input where possible.

Sometimes a team member may initially discuss their ideas with one other team member who does the same work. Then they may choose to share this information with the whole team.

Different communication strategies are suitable at the various stages of the innovation process.

Identification of the problem

- Brainstorming
- Questioning

Clarification of the issue

- Probing
- Active listening

Troubleshooting and contingency planning

- Exploring options
- Challenging
- Creative thinking

Overcoming obstacles and challenges

- ↳ Collaborating
- ↳ Providing positive reinforcement

Examining successes/failures in overcoming challenges

- ↳ Debriefing
- ↳ Obtaining feedback

Involvement of team members

Participation can be the sharing of ideas and insights in areas that impact on people's job roles.

Team members' level of involvement with innovation will depend on the extent to which they can participate in the analysis of work-based issues. Including the team gives you a different perspective based on their experiences and insights in their day-to-day work.

Involving staff in decisions, encourages responsibility and initiative. It will also build on improving knowledge and abilities. This in turn contributes towards greater performance and innovation.

You can make arrangements for a time and place where innovation can be discussed and ideas shared. The environment you set up for these sessions, will be determined by the size of the team and the size of the issue or scope of the innovation opportunity being discussed. In some cases, a session might be used as an introduction into innovation processes or as a starting point for communicating the experiences of the team.

It may be appropriate to introduce an informal segment to each team meeting when each team member is encouraged to put forward their ideas. Or you may introduce another forum for idea-sharing among the team.

Forums

A forum is a meeting that aims to promote open discussion. These involve a group of participants led by a facilitator such as a team leader or other invited guest. A digital forum can be used if team members are spread across different locations.

Meetings

Meetings can be either formal or informal. Formal meetings are planned to gather information or feedback. Informal meetings may be a discussion between two members of the team, or a quick discussion before a shift.

Newsletters

A newsletter can be paper-based or delivered in digital format. The aim of most of these formats is to reach as many of the stakeholders as possible to ensure that team members are supplied with up-to-date information.

Reports

Reports are based on agreed reporting systems. For example, they could provide research into an area where opportunities have been identified or they might report on advice about ways to enhance processes and systems.

Using respectful communication

To establish an innovative culture, respectful and professional communication is required.

Start any communication with the purpose of the information and the expectations of what the receiver will do with it. To ensure good understanding, examine your audience and their level of language and literacy skills. Every team will be made up of people from a range of diverse backgrounds and this may affect how they understand and participate. This can be particularly important when technical terms and industry jargon are frequently used.

Here are some strategies to adapt a communication style to different audiences, and ensure that your message is communicated in an effective and respectful manner.

Understand the audience

- What does your audience already know?
- What is the demographic profile and how will this affect understanding?
- Will they understand jargon and technical terminology?
- Do they have any needs to be addressed, such as a hearing or visual impairment?

Plan methods

- Will it be spoken or written?
- Will it be formal or informal?
- What are the main points that need to be covered?
- What media will you use?
- Will diagrams and visuals help comprehension?
- Is the environment too noisy?
- Do you need a private area?

Communicate clearly

- Repeat and restate in verbal communication.
- Use plain language in written communication.
- Make eye contact in verbal communication.
- Use sequence signal words – such as first, second, then – when giving instructions or writing instructions.
- Use appropriate tone, pitch and intonation.
- Consider your pace when speaking – not too fast or too slow.
- Be conscious of which words/parts of the communication you emphasise.

Check for understanding

- Ask direct questions to ensure the audience understands the message you are communicating.
- Rephrasing a question can make it clearer to understand.
- Allow time for people to think before responding.
- Take into account the language and literacy skills of the audience to ensure they understand the whole message.
- Consider cultural aspects; in some cultures it is insulting for people to say 'no' and so they would rather tell you they understand.
- Actively listen.
- Consider body language – non-verbal communication accounts for up to 70 per cent of meaning in spoken interactions.

Written communication

- Use straightforward, simple language.
- Order information logically.
- Give context.
- Anticipate readers' questions.
- Invite readers to reflect.
- State and exemplify key points.
- Address potential objections.
- Provide alternative explanations.
- Summarise key point at the end.

Example

Using appropriate media and language

Greta is the team leader of a diverse group of people working within a manufacturing organisation. She is preparing to explain a new process that the teams will need to implement. She considers that many in her team do not speak English as a first language. Greta adopts the following communication strategies:

- Uses simple/plain language.
- Avoids jargon and overly technical language.
- Chunks information and deliver small bits of information at a time.
- Uses pictures, diagram and other visuals.
- Ensures messages are delivered in a space where she can be clearly heard.

Practice Task 8

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You are working in a team of support personnel in a medium-sized business. Your whole team regularly sends emails to current and potential customers. Each week, key information about products and services is updated and you must ensure you are sending out the most up-to-date prices.

You have been thinking about a new way of setting out the email and its attachment using a template you have seen developed by a different department. You know this will save time, but you have some ideas for improving it further and you need the input of others in your team.

Question 1

Identify three ways to encourage staff who may be reluctant to put forward their ideas.

Question 2

Which of the following describe a work environment where staff are more likely to share their ideas, knowledge and insights? Tick all that apply.

- All ideas are sent to the director before they are discussed by teams.
- Brainstorming sessions for new ideas occur frequently.
- Innovation and change are common topics across the organisation.
- Joint decisions are made between the leaders of each department, and the teams are then asked to brainstorm.

3C Challenge and test ideas with the team and others

Team members feel ownership of a process when they use skills to challenge and test ideas.

Challenging and testing ideas should be done after sufficient opportunity has been given to the presentation of ideas and before final decisions are made.

You may decide to arrange a meeting where team members can pitch ideas and other members ask questions. A follow-up meeting can be held after everyone has had a chance to consider the idea. At this second meeting, the idea can be discussed, thoughtfully challenged and tested. Following this process ensures that innovative ideas aren't quickly dismissed without proper consideration.

A team can come up with new ideas at any time. In innovative practice, new ideas must be captured so they can be evaluated and reflected upon. Developing ways to note and explore these ideas helps a team remain consistently innovative.

These mechanisms include:

- regular staff meetings or innovation sessions
- suggestion boxes or other avenues to lodge ideas
- special competitions and games that encourage team members to work creatively and innovatively.

Challenge ideas

For some, having an idea challenged by a work colleague can be a negative experience.

Challenge should be seen as a way of turning an idea into reality. Challenging and testing are not about arguing, or about winning or losing; they are about ideas.

Individual team members will have their own ways of thinking. People who develop ideas easily might enjoy brainstorming activities and interacting with others. Others may think better on their own and find it hard to come up with ideas under pressure.

The team as a whole needs to make allowances for different interaction styles to ensure everyone is able to participate. To do this, set up activities or sessions that include a range of different strategies for collecting ideas, such as small group activities, one-on-one activities as well as verbal and written tasks.

Activities to test and challenge ideas need to allow time to explore things in detail. The information around the idea needs to be checked that it is reliable and trustworthy, and tested for its practicality or appropriateness as a solution.

Strategies to use with a team to challenge and test ideas can involve one or more of the following:

Soliciting other perspectives

Get a 360-degree perspective on an idea to see if it is sustainable. Seek a wide range of feedback to examine different perspectives.

Taking opposing sides

This may involve setting up a debate between team members or engaging in a 'believing and doubting' conversation with yourself. This involves questioning assumptions that are made. It is like a debate where each side has to justify its reasoning.

A pros and cons investigation

Based on the premise that no idea is all good or all bad, this is a great way to find out what is good and what is bad about an idea. This can also be used as a way of comparing competing ideas.

A SWOT analysis

This is a matrix used for identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the internal and external environment. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organisation and define what the organisation is good at and where help is required. Opportunities and threats are external to the organisation and although the organisation cannot control them, they may influence the situation.

Example

SWOT analysis

The following is an example of a SWOT analysis for the introduction of a new product. The analysis provides information in terms of change requirements.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong team with experience in managing new products ▪ Sales team with the appropriate knowledge and experience ▪ Good supplier networks ▪ Technological resources ▪ Up-to-date set of processes
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited budget for marketing activities ▪ Technological resources that need replacing in 12 months ▪ Warehouse concern about additional workload and space required
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth in existing number of clients ▪ Access to new markets ▪ Increased uptake of social media (use for promotional activities)
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pending changes in consumer legislation that may affect e-commerce activity ▪ Possibility of competitor getting to market first, affecting sales volumes

Practice Task 9

Consider an idea for innovation, either one you have already thought of or something new.

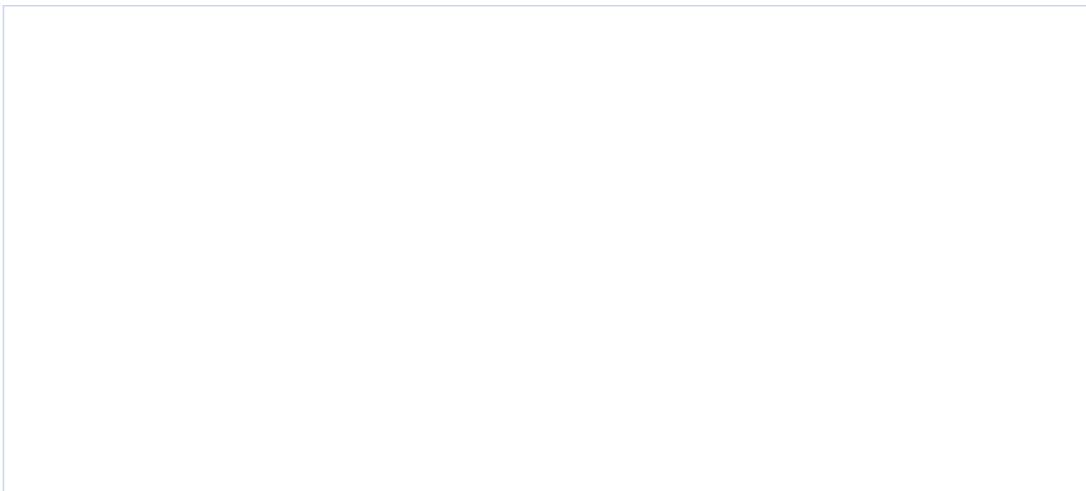
Question 1

Make a list of the pros (positive aspects) and cons (negative aspects) of your idea. You can do this on your own or in a group.



Question 2

Identify two strategies that can be used to challenge and test ideas.



Summary

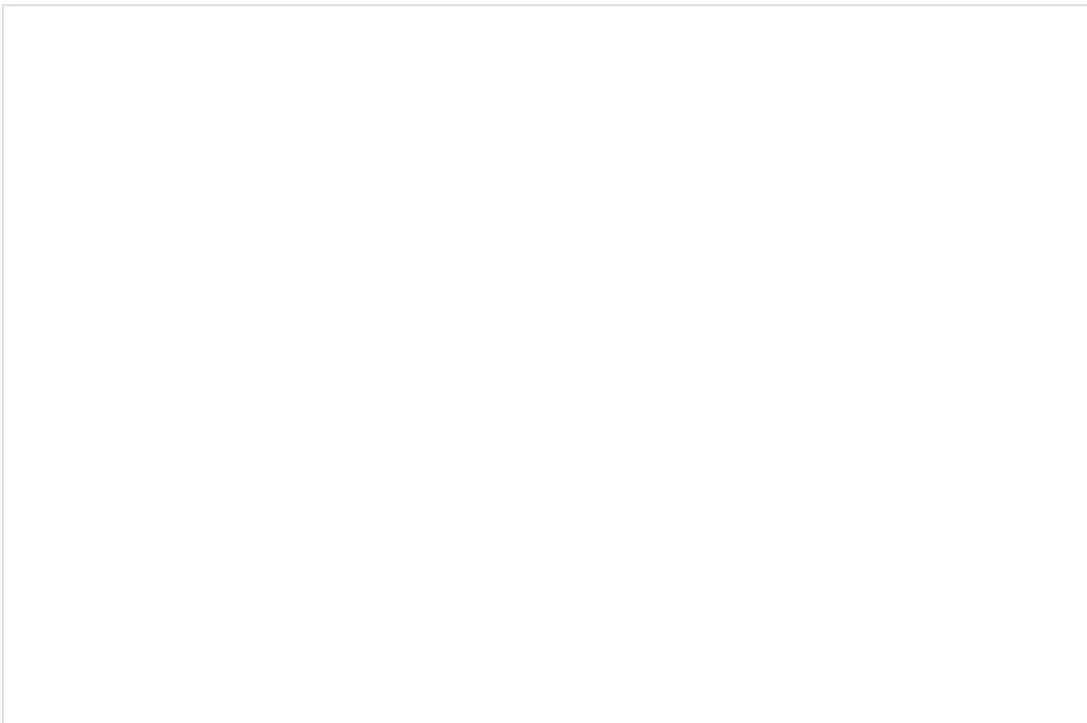
- Demonstrating appropriate behaviours is vital in supporting innovation.
- To support innovation, you need to encourage participation, treat people equally and not rush to judge them or their ideas.
- Innovative ideas are more likely to succeed if a team is allowed dedicated time to challenge and test the ideas.
- Knowledge and ideas should be communicated proactively and openly to others.
- Ideas need to be explored and challenged in a collaborative environment.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Support and guide colleagues to promote innovation

Part A

1. Identify three examples of communication strategies that demonstrate respect for the team.



2. Draw a line to match each leadership behaviour style that supports innovation to its description.

» Achievement-oriented

» Encourage the team to build on their strengths and try new tasks.

» Directive

» Encourage the team to take part in creative activities that illustrate new ways of doing things.

» Supportive

» When the team is working well, remind them of how the work they are doing will help achieve their goals and produce quality results.

» Participative

» Micro-manage the team during busy periods to help them meet deadlines.

3. Which of the following are activities that allow time to challenge and test ideas among the team? Tick all that apply.

- Schedule regular innovation sessions as a part of team requirements.
- Arrange activities that will suit the team, such as brainstorming as a group as well as smaller group activities.
- Make clear the ways new ideas can be put forward, such as writing down suggestions.
- Review the strategic plan and the external environment in which the business operates.
- Offer activities that include debates to test ideas and gather a wide range of perspectives.

4. Provide three examples of an environment that will encourage the team to share information, knowledge and experiences.



Topic 4 | Evaluate innovation ideas and promotion

- 4A Review innovation and share successful examples
- 4B Reflect on implemented innovation ideas
- 4C Seek and respond to feedback for discussion
- 4D Discuss the challenges of being innovative
- 4E Document feedback for improvements in promoting innovation

4A Review innovation and share successful examples

Evaluating ideas involves identifying what successful innovation looks like.

In topic 1, innovation was defined as a new way of doing things to solve a problem. The way things are done may have changed in your organisation or team, but has it been effective and successful?

Here are some criteria to identify what successful innovation looks like.

Was the idea new and original?	For an idea to be innovative, it's not a case of trying something that may have failed before.
Was the idea implemented as planned?	An innovative solution needs to be put into practice for it to be successful. If it can't be implemented or there are issues in implementing it, then it is not a successful innovation for your workplace.
Did it address a real challenge?	Innovations need to provide a solution to an actual problem. Identify the problem the innovation aimed to address and consider whether the innovation has resolved that problem.
Does it add value to the team?	The team needs to benefit from the innovation for it to be viable and considered a success. This may be evident in time or money saved, increased morale and/or productivity. This criteria that will need to be monitored and measured to determine success.

Establish criteria

Benchmarks are criteria that can be used to evaluate the innovation's successes.

A review process will determine whether a change process is working properly to achieve its objectives. Improvements need to be monitored to determine if there is benefit and the initial problems have been rectified.

Measure of improvements may fit under one or more of these categories:

Financial	Have the implemented improvements and innovation resulted in financial gains for the organisation, such as increased revenue or decreased costs?
Productivity	Has the innovation increased productivity in the team or in their output?
Individual and organisational performance	Has the innovation improved individual performance and overall organisational performance?

Data as evidence

To support your evaluation, you need evidence of improvements.

You can collect the data through review of documentation and figures, or interviews with and questionnaire responses from staff or other stakeholders, such as customers and suppliers.

Look for valid data and information that is:

- accurate (calculated correctly)
- current (related to the period of time you are investigating)
- reliable (from a reliable source, such as an internal sales figures from the marketing department).

This will ensure you get a clearer picture of the success of the innovation. If the data you use is poor quality, it will be difficult to identify, compare and report on actual performance. Examples of data you might collect include timesheets, maintenance reports, WHS incident reports, waste reports, stocktake reports, customer feedback, budget reports and system user reports.

Example

Approaching work problems differently

When Jenni started a new job at a marketing company, she found that her team was overwhelmed with work and looking to her to reduce their workload. Jenni listened to her team and then spoke to the other teams who assigned work to them, and discovered they had to find a way of becoming more efficient.

Jenni could see that the team was being held back by processes that failed when workload increased. It was a clear example of the 'we've always done it this way' thinking that was holding the team back.

Jenni held a meeting with her team to ask for ideas on how they could approach the workload differently. One team member suggested pairing a copywriter with a designer so they could work more collaboratively and efficiently, instead of all the copy hitting the designers at once and creating a bottleneck. The copywriter could schedule and prioritise the work for the designer and better communicate what was needed, so there would be fewer rounds of corrections and work was likely to be completed faster. Other team members were very receptive to trying this idea and Jenni gave them permission to try it.

Within a week, the team was starting to make a dent in their workload, the team members felt they had more control over their work, and morale had improved.

Share examples of successful innovation

Announcing an innovation's success and promoting the results sends a message that the organisation acknowledges the effort and congratulates all who participated.

When sharing the outcomes of an innovation, emphasise the activity and its outcomes as much as the individuals who carried it out. If a particular team member has achieved outstanding success, a special reward may be appropriate. If outcomes are due to team efforts, acknowledge the whole team rather than individual efforts.

Sharing examples of successful innovation in the workplace has the following benefits:

- It shows the benefits and the improvements that result from innovation.
- It increases morale by celebrating the success of the staff involved.
- It establishes a benchmark of success for others to follow.
- It demonstrates that the work environment encourages innovation.
- It stimulates innovative and creative thinking in others.

All stakeholders need to be informed of any potential changes that will affect their job roles. This includes staff who are affected by the change and/or are involved in the implementation and management of the change within the organisation. These may be the team members, staff from other departments or senior management.

The way the information is shared might include a presentation or a written outline.

Electronic	Email, messenger apps, webinar, podcast, video-conferencing session
Non-electronic	Demonstration of the new way of doing things, speaking to a group meeting, in a poster, signage or flow chart
Written	Email, business report, board paper, internal staff newsletter

Practice Task 10

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

The Big Country Real Estate management team has noted a decline in sales and asks staff for ideas on how to improve. One staff member suggests highlighting key properties through social media and the management team agrees to try the idea. In the next team meeting, the management team is pleased to note that after the properties are featured on social media channels, inquiries from potential buyers increase by 25 per cent over the following 30 days. Additionally, buyers come from all around the state, when previously they had only come from the local region.

Although it is too early for an exact measurement, properties also seem to be selling more quickly than they used to. Several other staff members have suggested ideas that build on these improvements, and management is considering them.

Question 1

List the measures of success from this case study.

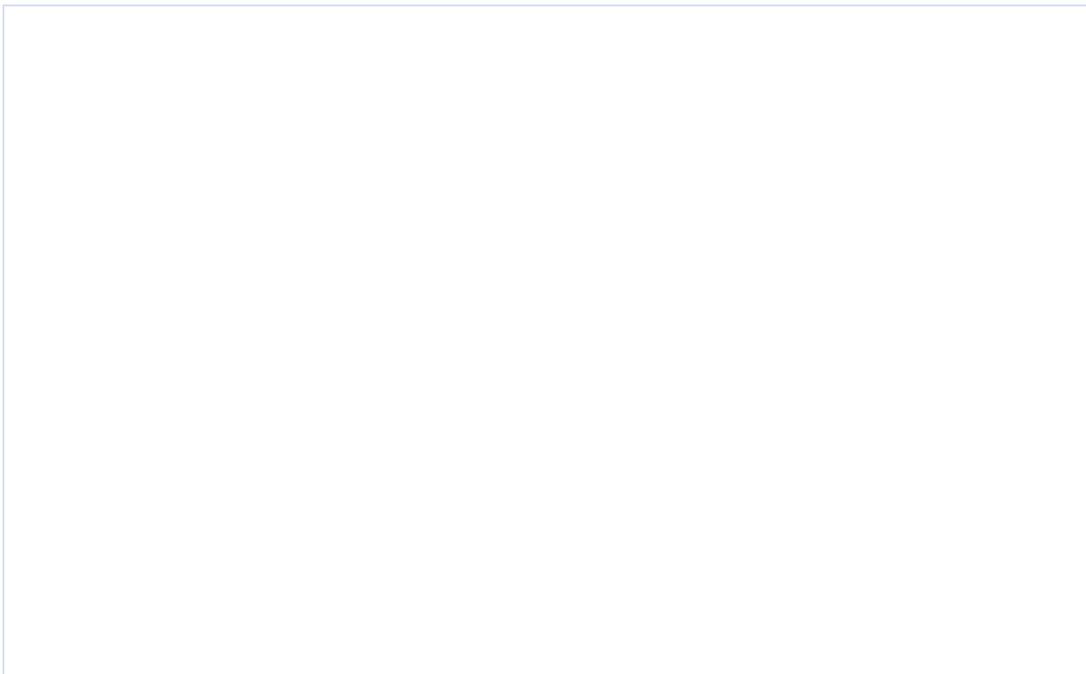
Question 2

Describe the benefits to staff that have come from implementing this innovation.



Question 3

Provide three examples of how the success could be shared with the rest of the staff in the organisation.



4B Reflect on implemented innovation ideas

Reflection allows you to consider the decisions made, how they were implemented and what did and didn't work.

Reflection is essential for continuous improvement, but first you need to gather all the facts to ensure you are considering the whole picture.

Take time to debrief

A debriefing session provides everyone with a chance to discuss what went well and what could be improved.

Team members have the opportunity to give feedback about a project, including their views of how it went and how it affected them.

Team leaders have the opportunity to delve into any issues that have arisen and to learn about the causes of the issues and what effect they had on individuals and the team.

Debriefing is generally a formalised process that takes place as a separate and scheduled activity, whereas feedback is more informal and occurs naturally as part of general collaborative work. Both have a place, but the more formal debriefing process ensures every team member is given equal opportunity and a structure to provide their thoughts and reflections, as well as to air concerns and achieve closure.

Debriefing can be verbal or written. Usually there are set questions so the information from the responses can be used in meaningful ways. This structure helps team leaders to measure satisfaction and outcomes over different time periods and to compare team outcomes.

The aims of debriefing are:

- to determine what problems arose and how these might be prevented in future
- to identify areas for improvement
- to identify and quantify successes, and give recognition to team members for a job well done
- to reinforce ideas and reach decisions
- to identify team and individual strengths and weaknesses
- to inform the planning of further development activities for individuals and the group.

Effective debriefing

Here are some strategies for ways to carry out effective debriefing.

Have whole-group meetings

— This is a democratic approach, but some people may not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in an open forum.

Conduct one-on-one meetings

— This approach that allows for greater self-disclosure, but it can create barriers to communication if it is not managed well.

Use evaluation forms

— These can generate useful information, but can also generate too much or too little information, depending on how questions are framed and how team members respond to them.

Arrange meetings with external debriefers

— This is an objective approach, but it can make the process less friendly and more clinical.

Solicit narrative-style reflections from individuals

— This approach allows for greater creativity and personal preferences, but makes it harder to compare responses.

Reflect on activities

Reflections can be based on personal performance, team performance or both.

Reflection activities need to be managed carefully – you want team members to be honest and open about their experiences, but you do not want them to focus on the performance of other team members. Each person must take personal responsibility to ensure the atmosphere remains positive and helpful. Positive statements about the way others worked or contributed are appropriate. Pointing the finger at someone who did not pull their weight or achieve outcomes is not.

All team members should participate in debriefing and reflection activities, regardless of their role; they should also encourage and support others during the process.

Examples of reflective questions

- What was your experience (your thoughts, feelings, reactions, level of control, overall satisfaction)?
- What did you learn about the work, yourself and others in the team or organisation?
- How could things be improved next time?
- How can you review, analyse and measure your performance against standards or benchmarks?

Example

Reflection provides valuable insight

The Greenside Shire Council by-laws team has been holding regular meetings for six weeks to come up with ideas for streamlining the way it processes parking-permit applications.

Several ideas have been adopted and the changes implemented. Team members are now engaged in debriefing sessions where they reflect on the experience. In the first part of the session, they rate their overall learning and satisfaction on a Likert scale.

The Likert scale was invented by organisational psychologist Rensis Likert. It is used to measure how people feel about an experience or product. It uses a scale or rating where the person indicates the extent to which something was achieved or their feelings of satisfaction.

Once the team members' rating data is collated, it provides a useful record for the team and others. The results will also form the basis for future innovation in the team.

In the second part of the session, team members reflect on how they feel about the change process and what they have learnt. This is done in a guided one-on-one conversation with the human resources officer. Below are some of their responses.

Learning	'I have learnt a great deal about the organisation and that some people in it have great organisational skills we can tap into.'
Feelings	'I feel much happier at work knowing I can accomplish so much more in a day.'
Environment	'The idea of having music playing in the background is a great one and it has a positive effect on everyone's mood.'
Self-knowledge	'I realised it doesn't matter how much we improve this area, this is not the kind of work I will ever really enjoy. It has been good to see there are other teams and places I can work in at the council.'

Practice Task 11

Create a Likert scale to be used in a debriefing process. You can use the case study from this section on the Greenside Shire Council by-laws team or another example. Remember that each of the Likert items (the questions that make up the scale) must relate to the overall theme – how the team members feel about the innovation process. The first item has been provided as an example.

1 = Disagree 2 = Disagree somewhat 3 = Unsure 4 = Agree somewhat 5 = Agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoyed working with others in my team on this project.					

4C Seek and respond to feedback for discussion

Feedback is a mechanism used to gather information.

As a result of feedback, people perform better, feel better about themselves and are encouraged to try new things. Feedback can be used to point out errors, mistakes, problems and inadequacies.

In innovative teamwork, feedback can help enlighten and highlight the team's movement towards reaching its goals, and often helps identify barriers and roadblocks along the way.

Where to get feedback

Feedback can come from inside and outside the team, from another part of the organisation, from management or from clients, community groups and other stakeholders.

It is good practice to seek feedback from a range of key stakeholders in order to gather a variety of opinions from a range of experiences.

Feedback can be sought from the following stakeholders:

- the team
- customers or clients
- customer service team
- managers and supervisors
- other departments whose work aligns or is affected by the team
- human resources team members
- WHS team members
- consultants
- subject matter experts.

It is important to ensure the person asked to provide the feedback is qualified to do so. For example, there is little point in asking a customer whether they like the fact that you invested in a faster printer, but they can comment on the speed of your service.

Feedback may be given without being asked for, such as when a customer complains about the service they received. In this case it would be good to follow up with the customer and ask further questions or find other ways to ensure the person provides the right kind of information.

How to gather feedback

Methods of seeking and responding to feedback can be formal or informal. Utilising multiple sources of feedback provides a more balanced view.

Focus groups

Focus groups are used to consult with groups of stakeholders. They are often the most efficient method for obtaining information from large groups. When facilitating focus groups, prepare questions to promote discussion in the areas that feedback is required. The facilitator, or a note-taker, is responsible for taking notes throughout the discussion to capture the feedback.

Surveys

Surveys are an excellent tool for obtaining feedback from large groups of stakeholders, particularly when they are situated across a number of locations. Surveys typically involve preparing a questionnaire for respondents to complete.

Interviews

Formal interviews are very similar to focus groups except that they are conducted one-on-one. As with focus groups, it is important to prepare a set of questions to obtain feedback in the areas required.

Team meeting

Facilitating a meeting with team members provides an opportunity for ideas, issues and experiences to be discussed in an open forum. During the meeting, solutions and lessons learnt can be identified and actions put in place to correct any problems with processes.

Informal discussions

Informal methods of gathering feedback can include the following:

- holding ad-hoc conversations with team members, customers and other stakeholders
- requesting feedback during formal meetings and events
- asking stakeholders to respond to an email, asking for their feedback
- following up complaints and feedback with a telephone call, email or text message.

Observations

This is a remote or real-time observation in which outsiders stay in the background to passively observe and take notes on their observations of aspects of a project.

Active observation is when some participants focus on a task and other members of the team observe; at the completion of the observation, the two groups interact as internal/external observers.

Example

Gathering stakeholder feedback

The Greenside Shire Council by-laws team decides to collect feedback on its innovation project from a range of stakeholders, including customers, management and other teams. For people in the organisation, the team holds informal guided conversations, based on the following topics:

- Have you noticed any changes in the way the team is operating?
- Do you have any comments about the team's work output?
- Do you feel working with the team is easier or harder since the changes have been made?

How to use feedback

Feedback can be used immediately or stored for future use.

The feedback needs to be organised in such a way that it can be shared and used for discussion. A summary feedback report might be sent via email, or a presentation to a group may be required. Whatever the method chosen for collecting feedback, sharing the feedback with others is an opportunity to clarify where things worked.

Feedback might be used:

- immediately, to correct mistakes and improve ways of carrying out tasks, which would be important if the feedback related to a WHS issue where safety of staff needed to be addressed
- short-term, to allow time for others to respond to further discussion and debate, challenging ideas and moving a project forward or changing the direction/focus of a program
- longer-term, for setting new goals, benchmarks and standards, designing future programs and projects and creating new activities.

Respond to feedback

You should welcome any feedback and respond with respect and courtesy – regardless of whether the information is positive or negative.

When you receive feedback, try to understand clearly what the other person is telling you. Assess the information on its merits to determine its validity and use your wisdom to determine whether it can help you to improve in the areas suggested.

You may have to share the feedback with others in a report or by giving a verbal presentation with a summary of your reflections.

Although you don't need to take on board and agree with every piece of feedback you receive, you do need to consider its merits in an analytical and unemotional way.

Follow these guidelines when responding to feedback:

- Ask open and closed questions to better understand the feedback.
- Clarify the action steps you need to take to make improvements based on the feedback received.
- Show that you value the comments and points of view given to you.
- Stay humble and be open to change.
- Do not be defensive on behalf of your team or take negative feedback as a personal attack.
- Acknowledge what's been said, even if you don't immediately agree.
- Ask for positive suggestions on how to address feedback that is negative.

Example

Sample employee feedback form

Please complete the following in relation to your current role in the workplace.	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
1. Do you feel the new process has made your job easier?				
2. Were you provided with sufficient support, such as training and information to follow the new process?				
3. Were you given an opportunity to contribute to the development of the new process?				
4. Are there opportunities to develop and apply new ideas to this process?				
5. Do you feel that you are listened to and things are being done to improve the success of the workplace?				

Practice Task 12

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to seeking feedback to identify improvements?
Tick all that apply.

- Collect feedback from a limited range of people so as to limit the amount of data to analyse.
- Feedback can be given without being asked for, such as via customer feedback or as a compliant.
- When preparing for an interview, develop the questions ahead of time.
- Feedback is important for correcting mistakes and improving ways of carrying out tasks.
- Always defend the team when negative feedback is received.
- Organise feedback so that it can be shared with others and used for discussion.

Question 2

Identify two key principles you need to follow when responding to feedback.

4D Discuss the challenges of being innovative

When implementing innovative processes, investigate challenges and what causes them.

The implementation of a new idea or initiative has meant an investment of time and money. There may have been some challenges arising from the innovation process or from the people involved. Identifying the challenges can mean there is an opportunity to improve the new initiatives or the way the organisation views innovation.

The challenges of being innovative may relate to resource constraints within the organisation, time pressures and competing demands on personnel, or the culture of the organisation. It may mean that staff feel under pressure to come up with new ways of working or feel they weren't consulted enough during the implementation of new ways of working. Challenges will occur as a result of the external environment in which the business operates, such as changes to the industry, an increase or decrease in demand for a product or service, changes in customer behaviours or increased competition within the market.

Identify challenges and reviewing risks

Risk is defined as any potential threat to the organisation achieving its goals. In this case, risk is identifying the potential threats that arose during the implementation of the innovation.

In identifying and dealing with challenges, open communication is essential. This means everyone has the chance to offer their opinion without fear of hiding mistakes or making suggestions that affect other people in the team.

The process of discussing innovation involves reviewing the risks that arose as a result of the innovation and developing ways to responsibly manage these. If this does not occur, risks can continue and become barriers or even roadblocks to successful ongoing change or improvements.

When discussing the challenges and risks, consider the following:

- Arrange discussion sessions with key stakeholders, such as the team members, managers and any other consultants or experts in the area.
- Review any documents related to the innovation or change, such as policies, procedures, work processes and feedback.
- Discuss both positive and negative impacts of the innovation on the organisation.

- Discuss if the risk is too high and the consequences too damaging. If so, determine ways to avoid the risk, such as looking for alternative processes.
- Develop a contingency plan as a way of managing the negative consequences or impacts.

To manage the challenges that have been identified, there may be suggestions to limit the risk or make sure failures are not repeated. This may include actions such as arranging for training or team-building exercises to improve collaboration and trust within the team.

- Actions arising from discussions may also involve:
- regularly monitoring and evaluating systems and processes
- monitoring the external operating environment for the business
- continuing to encourage innovative thinking among staff to identify ways to improve performance
- continuing to capture, assess and implement innovative ideas.

Example

Challenges that arise from innovation

Big Cattle Meat Supplies sells meat to small butchers and supermarkets. Management has asked the administration team to come up with a way to sell their products direct to homes. The team decides they need to set up an online store, but one of the challenges is that no-one on the team knows how to do this. Another challenge is financial – the team does not have a large enough budget to pay someone outside the organisation to set up the online store. One of the staff could be sent for training to learn how to do it, but that would create other challenges: how would that person's work get done while they were not in the office? These challenges are potential risks to the project's success.

Practice Task 13

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to discussing challenges of innovation?
Tick all that apply.

- It is an opportunity to make small amendments to improve the new initiatives.
- Risks need to be reviewed so they don't become barriers to success.
- The positive impacts of the innovation need to be discussed as a priority over the negative aspects.
- Open communication is needed so each stakeholder can honestly discuss mistakes.
- Challenges can be discussed but innovation needs to be encouraged.

4E Document feedback for improvements in promoting innovation

Once you've implemented the innovation, document all of the activities so you have a record. Documenting feedback and debriefing ensures you capture not only your reflections but the input of others.

You may be required to provide a report for your manager on your role and the team in implementing the innovation or you may need to capture the improvements that have resulted.

If you used feedback forms or surveys, you should summarise these and include the forms and surveys as appendices. Minutes of meetings where the innovation has been discussed could also be used to document the feedback you have received.

For a more formal report, here are some questions that might be helpful to ensure you fully capture the innovation process you followed:

- Identifying the problem
 - What was the problem that needed to be solved?
 - How were ideas generated to solve the problem?
 - What was your role in choosing the idea to solve the problem?
 - What was the innovative idea?
- Implementing the initiative
 - How was the idea implemented?
 - Who was involved in the implementation?
- Measuring success
 - What was your criteria for measuring the success of the innovation?
 - Was the innovation successful? Why or why not?
- Learning lessons
 - What would you have done differently?
 - What feedback did you receive from stakeholders?
 - What were the challenges of being innovative?
 - What changes will you make to how you promote innovation to your team in future?

Example

Documenting feedback

One of Joel's objectives for the year was to promote innovation within his team. Joel has worked actively on this throughout the year and has a number of examples to discuss with his manager during his performance appraisal. Joel has collected feedback from team members and stakeholders, minutes from meetings and financial data, along with his own reflections, to discuss with his manager. Joel is prepared to talk about his successes, but he has also documented the lessons he has learnt and where he thinks he can improve in future. His manager is impressed with the work he has done to prepare for his appraisal.

Practice Task 14

Question 1

Number each step from 1 to 6 in the order you would follow to document the innovation process.

- Was the innovation successful? Why or why not?
- What were the challenges of being innovative?
- What was the problem that needed to be solved?
- What would you have done differently?
- How were ideas generated to solve the problem?
- How was the idea implemented?

Summary

- Criteria needs to be established for what makes a successful innovation.
- Sharing innovation successes fosters a positive work environment and sets a benchmark for others.
- Individuals and teams need to give themselves opportunities to debrief and reflect on innovation processes and their outcomes.
- Feedback is important in order to ensure innovation is working in the best interests of common goals and stakeholder interests.
- Identifying risks and meeting challenges are important parts of innovative practice.
- Feedback needs to be documented so lessons are learnt and changes implemented in future activities.

Learning Checkpoint 4

Evaluate innovation ideas and promotion

Part A

1. Which of the following are criteria to measure the success of an innovation? Tick all that apply.

- There has been a decrease in costs and an improvement in the budget.
- We can measure success even though it's not fully implemented.
- The team has benefitted from the changes.
- The innovation created a solution to the problem.
- The team has seen the benefits, but the organisation is not affected.

2. Provide three reasons how reflection on the feedback received and the challenges faced during the development of an innovation help identify ways to improve.

3. Explain the benefits of sharing the success of an innovation and communicating improvements within an organisation, and an example of how this might occur.

Part B

Case study

Read the following letter to all staff from the CEO of a large corporation, then answer the questions that follow.

Letter to all staff: Stephen Kingsley, CEO, AQY Worldwide

Dear staff members,

I am proud to make an announcement about work that has been done in our Dunston office.

A small group of people, headed by Mary Samuels, has been working on the Community Connect project. This started out as an idea by Shona Cjengla, who sought a more environmentally friendly way to dispose of paper waste. It ended up as a major project that saw our organisation lead a whole town into a major recycling enterprise. The knowledge gained through this project will be adopted by recycling agencies worldwide.

This project has not been without its challenges, including opposition from the wider community related to cost, and reluctance from the local council in terms of recycling management. However, getting feedback from individual staff and clients was perhaps the greatest boost to the whole enterprise. After all, if people on the ground floor were not willing and able to cooperate, success would have been unlikely. Shona took a pivotal role in this, taking the time to interview people and get their views and ideas about what was working and what was not. Without this effort, we could not have achieved the success we see today. Through tenacity, employing best practice principles, using the advice of experts and spending many hours in negotiation and working towards consensus, Mary and her team can now be proud of their achievement.

We at AQY Worldwide should also feel proud of our team and our successes. Mary and her team remind us how innovation can bring about change and improvement to an organisation and to a community and its people. AQF Worldwide encourages innovation and welcomes more of it. On Friday, 25 March at 12 noon, I will present Mary and her team with an award as a gesture of recognition.

1. What feedback did the team gather and what use did it make of this feedback?

2. Give two examples of how challenges were overcome.

3. Provide a list of the information they should include in their report to management on the project.

