

Ten Behaviors Typical of Highly Innovative Leaders

Based on results from EmcArts' *Rubric of Innovative Capacity*, developed in collaboration with the James Irvine Foundation. EmcArts Inc. © 2009

- 1 As the leader, say that innovation matters, and explain why**
Make innovation central to your vision. Say it over and over. Praise it when you see it – and push people when you don't.
- 2 Support your innovators**
Support means resources, but also attention – have innovation teams “report to the top,” including access to the Board.
- 3 Measure differently, measure to learn**
You need to measure the success of innovations, but don't use “business-as-usual” indicators. Tailor them to the innovation, and use your metrics to learn and improve, not to evaluate effectiveness prematurely.
- 4 Describe the implementation process very carefully**
You are all really competent at your “business-as-usual” work – you do it almost without thinking. But innovation is different, and you need to pay more attention to what you're doing, especially at the beginning; so capture and document the processes, so you can use them again.
- 5 Get help to boost your capacity**
The best innovators realize that their people can't do the new thing without some outside expertise.
- 6 Look around for emerging trends and ideas**
Effective innovators are always scanning the environment for good ideas they can use, and staying current with external influences on their work.
- 7 Give consideration to everybody's ideas**
Good innovators welcome input from many sources, and actively seek out points of view that they know will be different from their own. They are comfortable being uncomfortable.
- 8 Communicate the benefit**
When you talk about your innovation (and you'll need to), tell people why it will help them, not that it's a really great new thing. Relate it to THEIR interests, not yours.
- 9 Actively resolve conflicts**
Innovations upset the apple cart. Move quickly and clearly to deal with conflicts threatening to stall the effort.
- 10 Get the Board on board**
Develop in the Board the expectation that you'll be innovative, and have the Board communicate those expectations to your staff.