

# SUPPORT YOUR TEAM!

10 tools to help business owners, managers and supervisors encourage innovative and passionate employees

TOOL 1 of 10

▶ SHARE THIS TOOL WITH YOUR CO-WORKERS AND COLLEAGUES

▶ POST THIS TOOL IN THE STAFF ROOM FOR "BREAK TIME LEARNING"

# Innovative thinking

## SPARKING ON-THE-JOB INNOVATION

- Set aside time to brainstorm as a team
- Promote the innovative ideas of your employees
- Use music to encourage creative energy
- Reward new thinking and originality
- Ask your employees to share their thoughts

### Consider this . . .

Allow your employees to use some of their time at work to pursue projects that interest them. This unstructured time can provide employees an opportunity to solve a difficult customer problem, learn a new skill or develop a plan to improve productivity. This concept promotes employee innovation while allowing your company to benefit from the great ideas generated.

## TOOL OVERVIEW

In your company there are employees who want to be innovative. There are employees who have creative ideas that could benefit the workplace. There are even employees who possess an **entrepreneurial mindset** with no interest in running their own business.

The fact is, many of your employees do innovative things every day. They are volunteers with creative ideas, board members with fantastic solutions and participants in unique hobbies.

**So, why aren't more people innovative at work?** The answer is simple. Most employees don't feel they can be creative on the job. The only way to change this thinking is to become a supporter of innovative thinking from the bottom up!

### Entrepreneurial Mindset

An employee who thinks like an entrepreneur by attaching a sense of ownership to their work. This employee has a genuine interest in the success of the company even though they aren't running it.

## If you find yourself saying . . .

**"Why change? We already have something that works."**

Keep in mind what is working right now will most likely not be competitive in the future. Change is inevitable in the business world. So why discourage an employee who is trying to stay ahead of the curve?

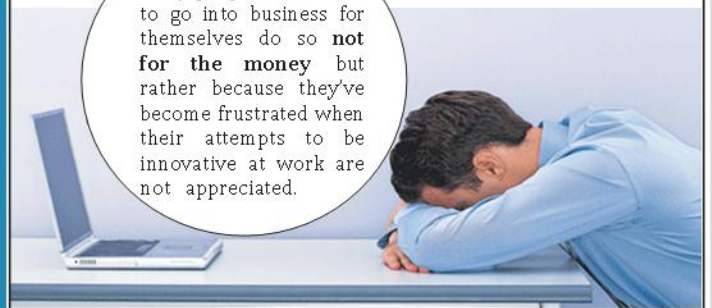
**"Customers aren't complaining. Everything is fine as it is."**

Remember, customers don't need to complain. There are so many options out there, they can simply move on if they don't find what they are looking for. Share customer feedback with your team and let them work to figure out the best way to provide great service.

## IF YOU DON'T USE IT YOU'LL LOSE IT!

### Reality Check

Many people who decide to go into business for themselves do so **not for the money** but rather because they've become frustrated when their attempts to be innovative at work are not appreciated.



YouTube it: *Google's "20% Time" Initiative*

## SURVEY SAYS!

A 2011 survey of HR Professionals in Windsor-Essex revealed that more than 90% of respondents believe that most employees have the potential to develop innovative ideas that can positively impact their company.

## Want creativity? Hire a student!

The **Centre for Career Education** at the University of Windsor offers great experiential learning programs, like *Co-operative Education* where employers utilize students for short-term projects and new ideas and the *Volunteer Internship Program* to help employers in the non-profit sector with their staffing needs.

Let the **Centre for Career Education** assist you in promoting your career-related programs and services by hosting information sessions to build your brand, collecting job applications on your behalf and scheduling interviews with potential employees on campus.

**Want to hire exceptional students and recent grads for full-time and part-time employment?** Check out the **myCareer** on-line job posting database for more details.

myCareer: <https://career.uwindsor.ca>

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