



INNOVATION SKILLS PROFILE 2.0

The Skills, Attitudes, and Behaviours You Need to
Contribute to Innovation in the Workplace



The Innovation Skills Profile (ISP2.0) isolates the unique contribution that an individual's skills, attitudes, and behaviours make to an organization's innovation performance.

The Conference Board of Canada and the Centre for Business Innovation invites and encourages employees, employers, educators, students, government, labour, and communities to use the ISP2.0 as a framework for dialogue and action.

Collectively, the skills of individuals create an organization's capacity to innovate.

INNOVATION SKILLS PROFILE 2.0

The skills you need to contribute to an organization's innovation performance—to produce new and improved strategies, capabilities, products, process, and services

CREATIVITY, PROBLEM-SOLVING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SKILLS

The skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to generate ideas

You will be able to offer yourself and your organization greater possibilities for achievement when you can:

Act and Contribute

- Look for new ways to create value in products, processes, services, strategies, and capabilities
- Identify problems and potential solutions—question assumptions, recognize opportunities for change and improvement
- Seek different points of view—ask questions, explore options, solicit feedback
- Be adaptable and flexible when challenging ideas, seeking solutions, and solving problems
- Rethink the way things are done—break the mould
- Approach challenges creatively—think outside the box
- Look for surprising connections—be open-minded, seek and apply knowledge from a wide variety of fields
- Put forward your own ideas with confidence
- Suggest alternative ways to achieve goals
- Evaluate solutions to make recommendations or decisions

Manage and Support Others

- Demonstrate trust in other people's ideas and actions
- Nurture and promote creativity and inventiveness
- Question and challenge the way you operate—think beyond individual and organizational comfort zones
- Project a vision of where you want to go—keep the big picture in mind
- Be open to new ideas and different ways of doing things—commit to continuous improvement
- Monitor successes and failures to find ways to continuously improve
- Recognize and reward original ideas and ideas for improvement

RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK-TAKING SKILLS

The skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to take calculated risks and to be entrepreneurial

You will be able to offer yourself and your organization greater possibilities for achievement when you can:

Act and Contribute

- Be comfortable when pursuing new opportunities—tolerate ambiguity
- Assess and manage risk—be able to identify, quantify, and qualify a risk
- Take appropriate risks and keep your goals in sight
- Be diligent—identify, control, and avoid dangers and threats
- Keep focused on what you are trying to achieve when suggesting alternative ways to get the job done
- Envision a future in which your risk-taking has paid off
- Learn from your experiences—don't be afraid to make mistakes
- Be willing to experiment with new ideas—commit to an action without knowing every outcome or consequence
- Have the confidence to apply your skills in new and unfamiliar situations

Manage and Support Others

- Encourage individuals and teams to bring forward new ideas
- Support risk by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions
- Be resilient in the face of setbacks, mistakes, and potential mistakes
- Do not penalize unforeseeable mistakes
- Accept failures and learn from them
- Recognize and reward the pursuit of new opportunities and calculated risk-taking





RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships that support innovation

You will be better prepared to add value to a task, project, or activity when you can:

Act and Contribute

- Engage others to make use of their skills, knowledge, and abilities
- Build and maintain relationships inside and outside your organization, and with people from diverse backgrounds
- Recognize that relationships are reciprocal—invest in building and maintaining relationships
- Understand and work within the dynamics of a group
- Share information and expertise inside your organization and among your business partners—explain and clarify new and different ideas
- Respect and support the ideas, approaches, and contributions of others
- Listen to and value diverse opinions and perspectives
- Accept and provide feedback and guidance in a constructive manner
- Overcome barriers among people that may impede results—anticipate sources of assistance and resistance

Manage and Support Others

- Encourage, mentor, and coach others to share ideas and speak freely—foster an atmosphere of open-mindedness
- Involve others by delegating responsibility and supporting their efforts
- Make it easy for groups of people to collaborate and deliver new solutions
- Allocate resources for networking and sharing ideas, knowledge, and skills
- Promote personal development in others so they are better able to contribute to a team
- Provide constructive feedback, guidance, and honest praise
- Recognize and reward the success of individuals, teams, and groups of people

IMPLEMENTATION SKILLS

The skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to turn ideas into strategies, capabilities, products, processes, and services

You will be better prepared to carry a task, project, or assignment through to success when you can:

Act and Contribute

- Set realistic goals and priorities
- Access and apply knowledge and skills from inside and outside your organization
- Exercise ingenuity when devising, planning, and implementing solutions
- Plan for contingencies—be ready with alternative strategies
- Adapt to changing circumstances
- Use the right tools and technologies to complete a task, project, or assignment
- Be tenacious—show initiative, commitment, and persistence to get the job done
- Accept feedback and learn from mistakes
- Check to see if a solution works, and act on opportunities for improvement
- Use metrics to measure and show the value of a solution
- Be accountable for what you and your group implement

Manage and Support Others

- Adopt and promote a “can do” attitude
- Understand how change affects the performance of your organization
- Be proactive in leading and responding to change
- Empower employees to make decisions
- Tolerate mistakes when trying out new ideas
- Value, support, and reward initiative
- Make change visible—highlight new and improved products, services, processes, strategies, and capabilities
- Measure the impacts of a solution on performance, productivity, and financial results

The skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to produce new and improved products, processes, services, strategies, and capabilities

SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION...

Successful innovation in organizations requires a combination of skills, supportive cultures and climates, structures and processes, and leadership.

The ISP 2.0 isolates the unique contribution that an individual's skills, attitudes, and behaviours make to an organization's innovation performance by focusing on creativity, problem-solving, and continuous improvement skills, risk assessment and risk-taking skills, relationship-building and communication skills, and implementation skills.

The ISP2.0 is designed for employers and employees. It is relevant to all organizations—regardless of size, function, or sector. The ISP2.0 can also be applied beyond the workplace by educators and students.

The skills, attitudes, and behaviours found in the ISP are not discrete, and should not be considered as independent or isolated attributes—they are overlapping and synchronous. Various combinations of skills may be used simultaneously and in various combinations throughout the innovation process.



Prepared with Support from Centre for Business Innovation Members:

- Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada
- Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)
- Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec
- Canada Foundation for Innovation
- Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)
- Celestica Inc.
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About the Centre for Business Innovation

The Conference Board's Centre for Business Innovation (CBI) is helping to bring about major improvements in firm-level business innovation in Canada. The CBI's mission is to learn why Canada is not a leader in business innovation, to create insights for firms and capital markets that will improve firm-level innovation, to generate evidence and track our performance, and to formulate public policies that will successfully stimulate business innovation.

For more information on the Conference Board's Centre for Business Innovation visit www.conferenceboard.ca/CBI

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