

## **What Are Innovative Thinking Skills?**

Innovative thinking is a highly valued skill in today's workplace. Those with the ability to think creatively to provide solutions to business processes are sought by employers. Nurturing skills like critical thinking and creativity can help you grow your innovative thinking capabilities and bring new ideas into your workplace. In this article, we explain the traits of innovative thinking and share ways you can demonstrate these skills while at work.

### **What is innovative thinking?**

Innovative thinking is a creative thought process used to generate ideas and solutions. It is a complex task that involves finding new methods to approach problems or procedures. Innovative thinking produces results that change or challenge the status quo. In the workplace, this means looking for ways to think differently to produce better business practices for both employees and customers.

#### **Creativity**

Creativity is often associated with artistic talents, but being creative can be a mindset or a way of looking at the world differently. Creative individuals generate ideas through multiple methods like brainstorming and group input. They also implement methods to put new ideas into practice.

#### **Originality**

Innovative thinkers find new ways to express their ideas. They change the status quo with their inventiveness, conceiving unique ideas to share with others. Innovators are often the first ones to come up with a new approach because they look for ways to do something different.

#### **Problem-solving**

Those who practice innovative thinking naturally find ways to solve problems. By seeking alternative ways to make something work, they often learn from failure and aren't afraid to take risks. Instead of seeing an impossible task, they find the challenge invigorating. Innovators might change a process or come up with another solution half-way through a project because they refuse to give up.

#### **Critical thinking**

Innovators use inductive and deductive reasoning to analyze a situation and arrive at a solution. To innovate, these thinkers synthesize information and make connections to interpret information and draw conclusions. Critical thinking also means evaluating ideas and reflecting throughout the process. Innovators look at a problem by thinking about how one part affects the other or the whole.

## **Curiosity**

Innovators ask lots of questions about the world around them. They keep asking "Why?" and "How?" because they want to know the result of their idea. They also question conventional methods of doing something if they think the process can be improved.

## **Collaboration**

Innovators get others involved in their plans. They are willing to make compromises to fulfill a common goal. They share responsibility for success and failure. Innovators see the potential in others and use the skills of their peers to help turn an idea into a reality.

## **Communication**

Those who innovate can share their ideas effectively. They can communicate and elaborate on their own creative thinking. Innovators are also able to motivate and foster innovation in others.

## **How to improve innovative thinking skills?**

Everyone has the potential to be innovative. Here are some ways you can improve your innovative thinking skills:

### **1. Nurture your creativity**

Look for opportunities to get creative at work and in your personal life. When you're faced with a challenge, make a list of solutions. Use your imagination to brainstorm ideas that start with "What if?" Read advice from other creative thinkers in your industry and in other disciplines that interest you.

### **2. Learn to use failure**

Many innovators believe that failure is the best teaching tool. Giving yourself the room to fail and evaluating mistakes can increase your ability to think creatively. Think of failed attempts as a way to test an idea and move on to the next solution.

### **3. Consider every idea**

Innovative thinkers let their ideas flow without limits. Create a mindset for yourself where every concept has potential during the initial thinking process. Input from others can also be an important part of forming ideas.

### **4. Widen your knowledge base**

Those who innovate recognize that ideas can come from any source. Increase your knowledge through professional and personal development. Find opportunities to learn and advance your skills.

## 5. Recognize innovation

Celebrate innovative thinking in others. Explore their methods for creative problem-solving and find out how they generate their ideas to help inspire your own creativity.

### Innovative thinking skills in the workplace

Employees who innovate are valued for the way they actively pursue initiatives that improve efficiency and bring new offerings to customers and clients. Their innovative thinking often invigorates the work environment.

Here are some ways to demonstrate innovative thinking at work:

- **Be the first to provide a solution.** If you notice a problem that needs to be fixed or a process that can be enhanced, speak up. Respectfully share your ideas about how to improve the situation with a team leader or manager.
- **Write down new ideas.** Keep an idea list or journal. When you need to remember or share important ideas, refer to these notes. Reading your creative ideas is also a great way to prepare for a performance review or self-assessment.
- **Act on your ideas.** Practice innovative ideas by creating new processes or solutions within your own position to impact your company for the better. Your management will likely notice when you demonstrate your innovative skills.
- **Share innovative ideas with management.** Whenever you have a formal meeting with your manager, ask for a chance to share your innovative ideas. If you have an idea and it's been a long time since you've had a meeting, request a feedback session.
- **Learn and incorporate new skills.** Learning contributes to innovative thinking. When you put knowledge to use by trying out new skills, you show that you are innovating your own work processes.
- **Ask for input on new ideas.** Innovative thinkers rarely work alone. They need help to carry out new ideas with skills they may not possess. Brainstorm innovative ideas with coworkers and make a plan to accomplish a common goal.

### How to highlight innovative thinking skills?

Include highly valued innovative thinking skills on a resume or cover letter and discuss these skills during an interview. Below are tips on how to feature these skills:

#### Innovative thinking skills for a resume

You can emphasize innovative thinking throughout your resume by listing skills like creativity and problem-solving. When you list job experience, give a specific example of how you brought a new idea to the workplace in a previous job, or explain how you helped solve a problem at a past

position. You can also choose a resume template that allows you to express your creativity while still presenting a professional format.

### **Innovative thinking skills for a cover letter**

A cover letter is a good chance for you to demonstrate that you are an innovative thinker. Try to bring a unique perspective to their job search by sharing your interest in the company and stating how your creative and critical thinking can bring value to the position and the organization as a whole. Show that you come to the job with a unique perspective.

### **Innovative thinking skills for an interview**

Show your creative thinking abilities in an interview with unique answers to their questions. Prove that you can offer solutions by giving examples of how you've used innovative skills in past positions. Let your interviewer know that you are excited to use your creative thinking to help bring new ideas to the workplace. Be ready to discuss the examples you provided on your resume.