

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING INNOVATION STYLES®

For Insight, Versatility and Impact

The Innovation Styles Model

The Four Innovation Styles

Practical Applications

Enhancing the Innovation Process

Optimizing Group Innovation

Developing an Innovative Organization

The History of Innovation Styles

Updated: December 2007

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*The idea you're
looking for might
be right before
your eyes...*



Every person has the potential for being innovative. Bringing out that potential and focusing it on what really matters, with integrity, is the challenge we all face.

We are all unique individuals. Each one of us has different habits, talents, knowledge, values, interests, and ways of expressing ourselves. And, while we all have the capacity to be innovative, we approach innovation and change in different ways.

You may like to build on your past experience, or maybe you prefer a vision to guide you. You might enjoy putting together unusual combinations of things. Or perhaps you like to throw caution to the wind and explore the unknown.

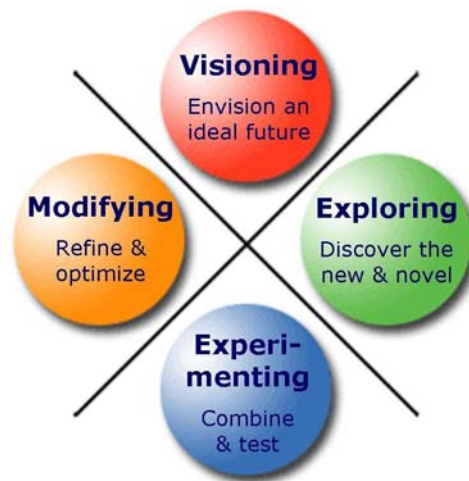
Our 20+ years of research and experience in the field of innovation has established that people approach innovation and change with a mixture of four distinct thinking strategies:

Visioning: to envision the ideal future

Modifying: to refine and optimize what has come before

Exploring: to discover new and novel possibilities

Experimenting: to combine and test many unique combinations



Recognizing the different ways we like to innovate is one of the keys to working together successfully – in a group or in an organization. Another is developing versatility in using all four Innovation Styles. As you invite a wider variety of ideas into your work, your work will be more productive and have greater impact as you seek to find innovative solutions to your work challenges.

The ideas and tools contained in this booklet will help you fully bring out and optimize your own innovativeness. In addition, it will guide you in developing the insight, versatility and impact you need to bring out the innovative best from other members of your workgroup and your overall organization.

Benefits of Understanding the Innovation Styles

By developing your awareness, knowledge and skillful practice of the Innovation Styles, you can benefit in many ways...

Strengthen your versatility and confidence

Each Innovation Style gives you a different way to meet new challenges. By learning to use all four styles, you will be more open, flexible, and self-confident when taking on a work challenge – and when designing your own career!

Build harmonious teams

Each member of your team has a different blend of Innovation Styles. Once you understand how these styles influence their innovativeness, you'll understand your teammates better. You'll be able to select an innovative mix of people, gain higher participation, reduce relationship tension, and build more synergy on your teams. You'll be easier to work with, and so will they.

Find innovative solutions to your everyday work challenges

No matter what kind of work you do – such as marketing, product development, customer service, operations, sales, etc. – there's a process for getting your work done. Innovation Styles can boost your success at each and every stage of those processes. You end up more engaged and enabled to find the innovative solutions that make the biggest difference for you and your organization.

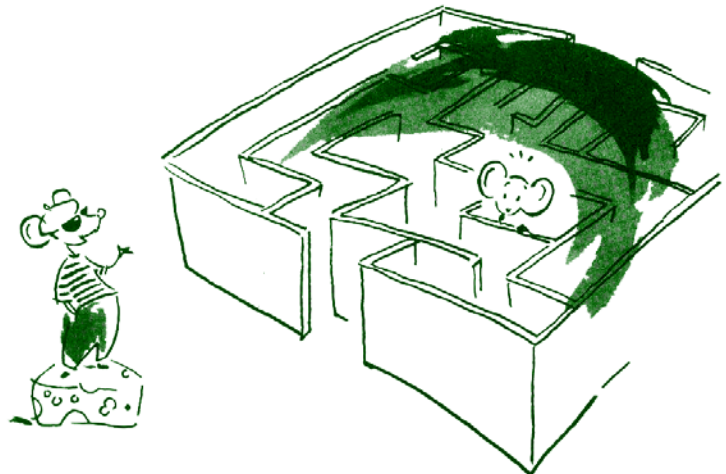
Sell your ideas

Building innovative relationships or having creative ideas is only the starting point – action is the key to making a real difference. Learn to speak other people's "language of innovation," and you'll be more effective in getting them to buy in to your innovation ideas.

Help your organization become more successful

Organizations have a blend of Innovation Styles too. Understanding your organization's style-pattern helps you to successfully plan and implement organization change and find ways to contribute to its overall success.

*You can innovate
your way out of any
difficult challenge!*



The Innovation Styles Model

Your own emphasis and blend of the four Innovation Styles is a way of describing how you prefer to bring about innovation and change in your work.

Overview

Innovation Styles is a model that provides you with the versatility of four distinct approaches to innovation... an *innovation-booster* to augment *any* process aimed at:

- Discovering innovative solutions to practical challenges
- Fostering high levels of innovative teamwork
- Developing an organization-wide culture for innovation

The concept of Innovation Styles is much broader than the creative thinking styles that teach “left-brain” and “right-brain” ways of thinking. Each of the four Innovation Styles is a *fundamentally different strategy for being innovative*. Each style is like a language: while you may most easily express yourself in one way, you can learn to “speak” all four.

Innovation Styles is not a model of the innovation process. Rather, it adds power and versatility to *each step of any process* of innovation or organization change. It gives you a flexible way to include everyone’s best contribution to defining your goals, focusing on key priorities, generating creative solutions, and implementing your plan.

Dimensions of the Innovation Styles

There are two underlying dimensions that form the four Innovation Styles:

What stimulates and inspires this style’s innovativeness?

Facts, details, and analysis
or *Intuition, insights and images*

How does this style approach the innovation process?

Focused, well-planned, and outcome-oriented
or *Broad, perceptive, and learning-oriented*



Each Innovation Style combines these two dimensions in a unique way. These “X” sub-factors in the model help explain the similarities – yet differences – between neighboring styles. It also brings out the contrast between opposite styles even more clearly.

The Innovation Styles Model

The Innovation Styles Profile

The Innovation Styles Profile is based upon three premises:

1. Each of us has the ability to be innovative. Therefore, the main issue is not “*Am I innovative?*” but rather “*HOW am I innovative?*”
2. As individuals, we may have equal potential for being innovative, yet have different approaches to the process of innovation
3. We do not use a single approach, but a mixture of four different styles

Therefore, the profile does not measure your *level* of innovativeness. Rather, it measures your *tendency, disposition, and preference* to use the four different approaches to innovation and change. You might have a low tendency to use one style, yet still be quite capable of using that style when you choose to. Also, you can gain a great deal of versatility for using all four styles without having to change your preference for any one style.

The questions in the Innovation Styles Profile are asked with a specific context in mind:

“*How do you handle challenges best at work?*”

Why is this important? Sometimes, the pressures of a particular job, challenge, or work culture might demand a certain style. Sometimes, we may act differently at home vs. at work. And sometimes we might simply change over time. By answering the survey questions with respect to your recent work experience, your profile reflects a real-time “snapshot” of your preferred approaches to innovation within your present circumstances... and you can gain important insights and practical ideas about how to be successful right here, right now, with the people you work with.

Two Kinds of Feedback Graphs

From the Innovation Styles questionnaire, you will receive two different kinds of feedback graphs. The first, the Innovation Styles “Kite,” gives you a clear way to see the relative degree to which you prefer each of the four styles in relation to each other. The second, the “Point” graph, shows the average point between your Visioning / Experimenting and your Modifying / Exploring scores. It is like the “center of gravity” for your “kite” profile. When your “point” is put on a graph with other people’s points, you can gain insights on the group dynamics for innovation. (This is discussed in more detail in the section entitled, “Optimizing Group Innovation.”)

The numerical value of each score does *not* indicate a *level* of innovativeness. Rather, each score indicates *the strength of your tendency, disposition and preference* among these four distinct approaches to innovation. The higher your raw score for a particular style, the more strongly you prefer to use that style.



The Innovation Styles Model

- If a score is 44 or greater, you have a *strong tendency* to use that style
- If a score is 39 to 43, you have a *moderate tendency* to use that style
- If a score is 32 to 38, your tendency for that style is balanced by its “opposite” style (Visioning is opposite to Experimenting, Modifying is opposite to Exploring).

Remember, your score is based on a self-assessment at one point in time, within your present work environment. So, your results depend on your level of self-awareness. Though it is our experience that a major shift in profile is very rare, both your self-awareness and your preferences may change over time.

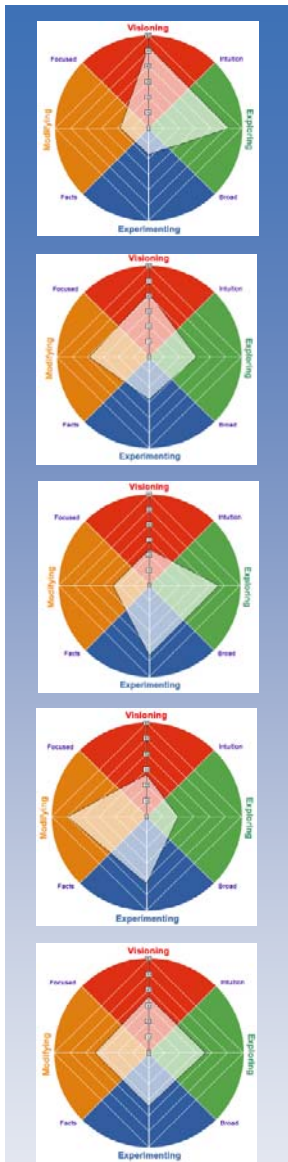
Nine Main Profiles

There are 9 basic profiles:



1. **Visioning:** Your profile is *Visioning* when it is the highest score (39 or higher) and your Modifying and Exploring scores are approximately equal. Visioning starts with *intuition* to develop imaginative ideas about the future and later gathers facts to support those ideas. Visioning is *focused* in its approach, looking towards a long-term outcome and a clear picture of the future.
2. **Modifying.** Your profile is *Modifying* when it is the highest score (39 or higher) and your Visioning and Experimenting scores are approximately equal. Modifying starts with *facts* to understand the priorities for improvement, and later uses intuition to see the whole picture. Modifying is *focused* in its approach, looking towards a specific, optimized, short-term result.
3. **Exploring.** Your profile is *Exploring* when it is the highest score (39 or higher) and your Visioning and Experimenting scores are approximately equal. Exploring starts with *intuition* to question assumptions and discover new and novel possibilities, and later gathers facts to support those insights. Exploring is *broad* in its approach, learning while frequently changing points of view.
4. **Experimenting.** Your profile is *Experimenting* when it is the highest score (39 or higher) and your Modifying and Exploring scores are approximately equal. Experimenting starts with *facts* to identify “leverage points” for innovation, and later uses intuition to make sense out of those facts. Experimenting is *broad* in its approach, learning while looking for new combinations to test.

The Innovation Styles Model



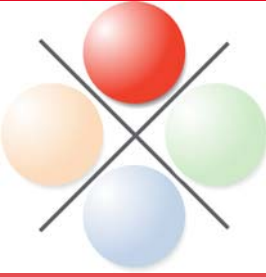
5. **Visioning-Exploring.** Your profile is *Visioning and Exploring* when these are your two highest scores (each 39 or higher). The innovative thinking of this combination is stimulated more by intuition than by facts. It is relatively balanced between being focused and broad in its approach to innovation.
6. **Modifying-Visioning.** Your profile is *Modifying and Visioning* when these are your two highest scores (each 39 or higher). This combination approaches innovation in a more focused rather than broad manner. It is relatively balanced between being stimulated by facts and intuition.
7. **Exploring-Experimenting.** Your profile is *Exploring and Experimenting* when these are your two highest scores (each 39 or higher). This combination approaches innovation in a more broad rather than focused manner. It is relatively balanced between being stimulated by facts and intuition.
8. **Experimenting-Modifying.** Your profile is *Experimenting and Modifying* when these are your two highest scores (each 39 or higher). The innovative thinking of this combination is stimulated more by facts than by intuition. It is relatively balanced between being focused and broad in its approach to innovation.
9. **Flexing.** Your profile is *Flexing* when your scores for each of the four styles range between 32 to 38 (inclusive). A *Flexing* profile means that you have relatively equal preference among all four styles – which often makes for a good facilitator or mediator who can easily empathize with varying perspectives and approaches to innovation.

The following pages give you more detailed information, stories, and analysis to help you understand the make-up of each of the four Innovation Styles. This can assist you to become more versatile in employing each of the four styles *without* having to change your basic style preferences.

*New discoveries
can sometimes
be shocking!*



The Visioning Style



“Let’s develop a clear sense of purpose and vision to meet this challenge.”

Some people like to focus on the long-term end-result. They have a vision of what they want to create and are comfortable letting their goals be their guide. They emphasize the Visioning style. People who favor this style are persistent, determined, hard working and visionary as they provide a group with direction, inspiration, and momentum. They trust their instincts and like to make decisions. Driven by their long-term goals and their organization’s mission, they seek solutions that focus on maximizing future potential.

When Stephen Arnold was General Manager of the Education and Games Division at Lucasfilm Limited, he used the Visioning style to meet his immediate business needs, to lead his industry, and to set the goals that could change the face of education:

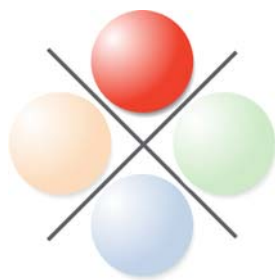
As a production organization, we’re trying to design and develop exciting and successful entertainment and education products using interactive technology. Our bigger business purpose is actually to evolve the state of the art in interactive media. I do in fact go out into the future and figure out what it ought to be like. Then I turn around and look back to see what the pathway is, from the present to that future.

A Great Visioning Moment in History

In 1213, a group of English barons banded together with a common vision: to limit the absolute power of the king and to promise justice to all free men in the kingdom. They presented a document to King John, who refused to sign it. It took two years and the force of an army to convince the king to sign this cornerstone of English liberty and democracy, the Magna Carta in 1215.

This dive will put me in the record books... the first of its kind!





Visioning Style At-a-Glance

With *Visioning*, you seek to see the ideal, long-term solution – you *envision* and *idealize*. Using this style means letting yourself have your dreams and vividly imagining what it would be like if that ideal future came true.

How does this style support innovation?

- By seeing the “big picture” and providing long-term direction
- By inspiring commitment and momentum towards a far-reaching vision
- By supplying bold, far-reaching, imaginative ideas

How can this style hinder innovation?

- By resisting options that don’t fit into the vision
- By focusing on the future and neglecting important details in the present
- By being unrealistic about the level of change and resistance involved in achieving a vision

What key questions does this style ask to stimulate new ideas?

- What is the ideal long-term solution?
- What if we started from scratch?
- What do we really wish we could achieve?

What stimulates and inspires this style’s innovative thinking?

- First prompted by intuition, insights, and images to develop future scenarios and generate imaginative ideas; and then gathers facts to support their insights

How does this style approach the innovation process?

- Focused, well-planned, and outcome-oriented: looking toward a specific long-term outcome and a clear picture of what the future will look like

What circumstances can constrain this style?

- When there is no opportunity to dream
- When there is not ample support for handling implementation details
- When the focus is on obstacles rather than opportunities

What can drive this style crazy?

- When others only want to focus on improving what is already in place
- When others are not open to envisioning the future
- When others say, “You’re dreaming and not being practical”

What does this style say when objecting to others’ ideas?

“That idea is too *timid*... not bold enough... too limited”

The Modifying Style



“Let’s refine and optimize what we already have and make improvements as needed.”

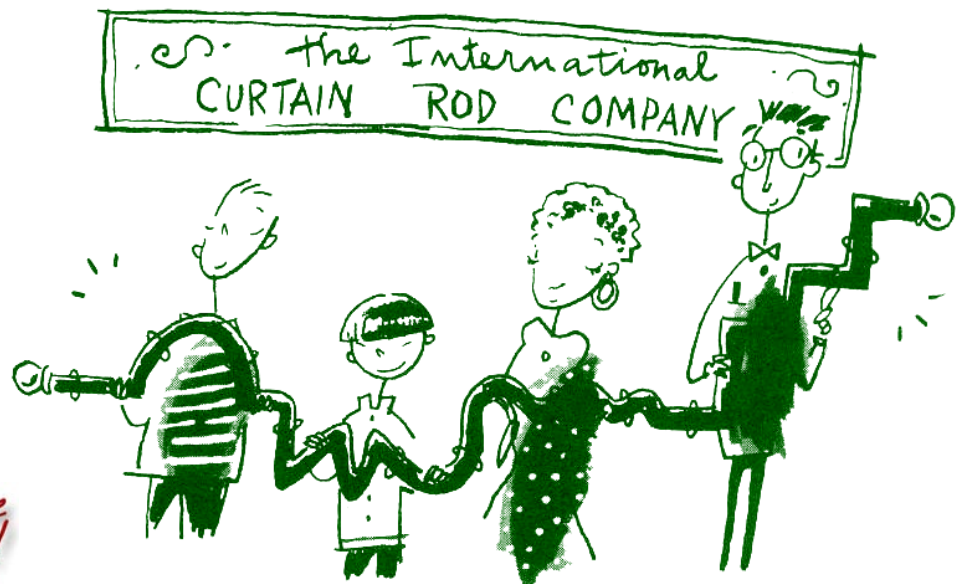
Some people like to move forward one step at a time. They like to solve problems by building on what they already know is true and proven. They emphasize the Modifying style. People who favor this style tend to be efficient and disciplined. They seek solutions by applying methods that have worked in the past. They provide a group with the stability and detail-orientation it needs to do a quality job, ensuring that the full potential of an idea gets developed.

Gretchen Price, Director of Finance for the Health and Beauty Aids Division of Procter & Gamble, used the Modifying style to develop a new financial planning system:

The area we focused on was our profit forecasting role, which is our primary financial planning vehicle. It all comes together in this forecast, and there are literally hundreds and hundreds of people who provide a piece of information. What we’ve been able to do is really streamline the process, allowing some simplification in functional areas. We even took what, for this particular area in our company culture, are radical steps – like eliminating the frequency of our forecasts. So we’re providing better information to the company for decision making purposes and people feel a lot better about it.

A Great *Modifying* Moment in History

Back in the gold rush days of the 1850s, a seventeen-year-old immigrant tailor noticed that miners quickly went through scores of their wool trousers. He went to work sewing overalls made of a stiff canvas that could stand up to wear and tear. Suddenly, his services were in huge demand. Several years later, he substituted the canvas material with a French fabric called *denim*, and dyed it indigo blue to minimize soil stains. Sales of his pants and overalls skyrocketed. He had invented blue jeans. His name was Levi Strauss.



There MUST be a simpler way!



Modifying Style At-a-Glance

With *Modifying*, you seek to improve and build upon what you've already done – you *refine* and *optimize*. Using this style often means valuing what has been done before and adapting expert opinion to fit a new purpose.

How does this style support innovation?

- By building on what others have done, without “reinventing the wheel”
- By motivating a group to focus on realistic, short-term success
- By being dedicated to keeping change relevant to current needs

How can this style hinder innovation?

- By being too tied to present circumstances and not seeing less-obvious opportunities
- By not questioning assumptions
- By not being open to radical new possibilities

What key questions does this style ask to stimulate new ideas?

- What can we do to refine and optimize what we've already invested in?
- What has been done before that we can improve upon?
- What would simplify this?

What stimulates and inspires this style's innovative thinking?

- First prompted by facts, observations, details, and analysis to understand past/present circumstances and to determine priorities for improvement; and then uses intuition to make sense out of the information

How does this style approach the innovation process?

- Focused, well-planned, and outcome-oriented: looking towards a specific, optimized, short-term result

What circumstances can constrain this style?

- When there is no history to draw from
- When there is a great deal of uncertainty
- When a radical invention is called for

What can drive this style crazy?

- When others challenge the way things are “just for the sake of change”
- When others change direction in midstream
- When others only want radical, “unrealistic” innovations
- When others say, “You're too set in your ways and not open to change”

What does this style say when objecting to others' ideas?

“That idea is too *crazy*... unlikely to happen ... based on unreal assumptions”

The Exploring Style



“Let’s question our assumptions and see what’s possible.”

Some people prefer to explore uncharted territory. They thrive on the unknown and unpredictable, often coming up with ideas from totally new assumptions and perspectives. They emphasize the Exploring style. People who prefer this style dislike routine and are enthusiastic in the face of uncertainty. They often try to re-open the idea-generation process, even when others might be trying to come to a decision. They tend to add a sense of adventure to any project and open up the potential for dramatic breakthroughs.

When John Gooden was Vice President of Design and Marketing for Design West Incorporated, he used the Exploring style to develop a new automobile seat for General Motors:

There was a particular ergonomic sports seat that had moving side-bolsters. These bolsters had the ability to “hug” the body, if you want that confined feeling for sports-car-like maneuvering. We were having a tremendous problem where a piece of plastic came together with a piece of material. If that area moved, children could possibly trap their hands. We were really at our wits end to come up with an idea.

To give himself time to think more clearly, John went sailing. He was pondering the problem, seeking some new insight. Suddenly...

A California gray whale came up beside the boat and took a big breath. That’s an awesome experience. And at the time that it surfaced, I glanced over and there was the belly of this whale with this fluted structure on it, expanding and contracting. And I said to myself, “That’s it!” We can have the side-bolsters move in the same fashion as the belly of the whale.

A Great Exploring Moment in History

Elias Howe spent years trying to invent a machine that could sew. He sacrificed everything he owned as he tried out many new ideas. Nothing worked. One evening in 1846, when he was about to give up his search, he fell asleep and dreamed of his creditors dressed as savages coming to avenge his failure.

They were attacking him with spears. But in his dream the spears had holes in their points. This image changed everything he had assumed in his designs, and he awoke knowing that he had found a solution to making a sewing machine work.



Discovering new territories means going into the unknown



Exploring Style At-a-Glance

With *Exploring*, you seek to question core assumptions and search for new and novel possibilities – you *challenge* and *discover*. Using this style often means using metaphors to gain a totally new understanding of a situation.

How does this style support innovation?

- By seeking new and novel breakthroughs
- By challenging assumptions to uncover new perspectives
- By being enthusiastic in the face of uncertainty

How can this style hinder innovation?

- By taking risks where they “leap before they look”
- By being too preoccupied with “speculative” ideas rather than focusing on results
- By frequently changing their perspectives and direction
- By not leveraging the value of work that has already been done

What key questions does this style ask to stimulate new ideas?

- How can we turn conventional wisdom upside down?
- What would be radically new and different?
- What is a metaphor for this situation that prompts new, unusual ideas?

What stimulates and inspires this style’s innovative thinking?

- First prompted by intuition, insights, and images to question assumptions and discover new and novel possibilities; then gathers facts to support those insights

How does this style approach the innovation process?

- Broad, flexible, and learning-oriented: stays open to new learning experiences while frequently changing perspective

What circumstances can constrain this style?

- When there is a tight structure for how work is organized
- When there is a lack of autonomy
- When there are standard procedures for solving problems

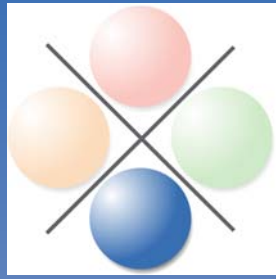
What can drive this style crazy?

- When others want to “overly” plan the work
- When others seem to be closed-minded and not adventurous
- When others say, “You’re not focused... always flying off in a new direction”

What does this style say when objecting to others’ ideas?

“That idea is too *conventional*... not expansive enough... too much like the status quo”

The Experimenting Style



“Let’s see what happens if we take existing elements and combine them in new ways.”

Some people prefer to experiment. Once they agree on a common process or approach to understanding a situation, they can troubleshoot anything. They emphasize the Experimenting style. People who favor this style are curious, practical, and good at getting input from everyone concerned. They contribute to a group by being systematic and thorough in formulating and evaluating new ideas – all the while building consensus for a practical solution.

Jerry Pierce was head of the Electronics Technology Laboratory for SRI International when he used the Experimenting style in the invention of an improved computer disk:

I had worked with both optical and magnetic disks for a long time. But this was not a planned invention. When I started using an optical disk to store information, I found out how much space was being used and how slow it was. So I knew it wasn’t going to work. Then in a meeting with a client, I began to invent as I went along. I said, “Why don’t you take the existing technology and combine it with the new technology, where the magnetic side would store the directory and current files and the optical side would store the massive archival data... and it’s transparent to the user. Then you would have a removable disk with the speed of the hard disk.”

A Great *Experimenting* Moment in History

In 1878, thirty-one-year-old Thomas Alva Edison announced to the public that he would invent a safe and inexpensive electric light in six weeks. However, it turned out that Edison worked for well over a year on the invention. He experimented with countless materials as filaments, including gold, fishing line, and even hairs that he plucked from the beards of unsuspecting visitors. In the autumn of 1879, Edison discovered that a charred cotton thread would burn for thirteen and a half hours. He invented what the reporters called “a wondrous bulb that lit without a match and glowed without a flame” – the electric light bulb.

It's bound to work... if we keep trying different things





Experimenting Style At-a-Glance

With *Experimenting*, you seek to combine various elements and test out novel solutions – you *combine* and *test*. Using this style often means trying out unusual combinations that would otherwise be overlooked.

How does this style support innovation?

- By finding ways to overcome barriers to progress
- By combining the ideas of many people for idea-generation and decision-making
- By being thorough in formulating and testing new ideas
- By providing systematic methods to take risks in stages

How can this style hinder innovation?

- By getting lost in the processes of investigation or implementation
- By losing perspective on what really matters long-term
- By overemphasizing the process of research and forgetting the goal
- By not being bold and imaginative enough

What key questions does this style ask to stimulate new ideas?

- What can we combine to put together a new solution?
- What are workable ways to make progress?
- How can we include a broad range of other's ideas?

What stimulates and inspires this style's innovative thinking?

- First prompted by facts, observations, details, and analysis to assess the interplay of key variables and identify "leverage points" for innovation; and then uses intuition to make sense out of the information

How does this style approach the innovation process?

- Broad, flexible, and learning-oriented: stays open to new learning experiences while looking for new combinations

What circumstances can constrain this style?

- When there is a need to act without first testing things out
- When information is not readily available, especially from diverse sources
- When there are intense work periods without time for study / reflection

What can drive this style crazy?

- When others ignore the risks of, and requirements for, implementation
- When others act without testing things out first
- When others say, "You're too cautious and not imaginative enough"

What does this style say when objecting to others' ideas?

"That idea is too *idealistic*... impractical... too risky without testing it first"

Practical Applications

As a quick summary, here are the four approaches to innovation and change:

Visioning: to envision the ideal future

Modifying: to refine and optimize what has come before

Exploring: to discover new perspectives and novel possibilities


Experimenting: to combine and test many unique combinations

While you may have your preference and tendency to use one or two styles, you can choose to employ all four when doing your work. Here are two examples of practical applications of the Innovation Styles.

Planning Your Career

When you plan your career, you are actually “innovating” your life, setting an all-important course for your future. Each style gives you a different perspective to consider.


When planning your career, ask...

<p>For Visioning... What would I ideally like to be doing ten years from now?</p>		<p>For Exploring... How can I challenge my assumptions about what's possible?</p>
<p>For Modifying... How can I build on the interests and experiences I've developed so far?</p>		<p>For Experimenting... How can I combine the best parts of all the jobs I've had into a new career?</p>

Delivering a Proposal (or Selling to a Customer)

New projects create change for the managers who approve them. New products create change for the customers who buy them. Whether you're proposing a new project to your boss or a new product to your customer, remember: *they* approach change by their own mixture of Innovation Styles. When you speak their “language of change,” it's more likely they'll buy in to what you have to offer.

When developing a proposal, ask...

<p>For Visioning... What solutions would tap into our client's aspirations?</p>		<p>For Exploring... What solutions would excite our client as radically new?</p>
<p>For Modifying... What solutions would build on what the client is now doing?</p>		<p>For Experimenting... What solutions would our client see as workable and credible?</p>

Starting today you can begin applying the Innovation Styles, even with people who have never heard of this model.

Enhancing Your Versatility: the “Compass” Exercise

Innovation Styles can boost your innovativeness in almost any process of innovation or organizational improvement. The following “Compass” exercise will help you generate a more comprehensive as well as creative set of ideas. It changes your starting points for innovative thinking, while breaking up any typical patterns that might limit you.

To start, identify a challenge for which you need an innovative solution. Then see the four styles as four directions of a compass, with your innovation challenge in the middle of a circle. Each style approaches the challenge from a different direction: Visioning from the north, Modifying from the west, Exploring from the east, and Experimenting from the south.

Use each of the questions in the left column as a starting point for generating at least 5 ideas. Thus, you will have 5 ideas based on the Visioning question, 5 ideas based on the Modifying question, and so forth. (For specific challenges such as strategic planning or work process improvement, you can also use the questions found in the boxes throughout this booklet.)

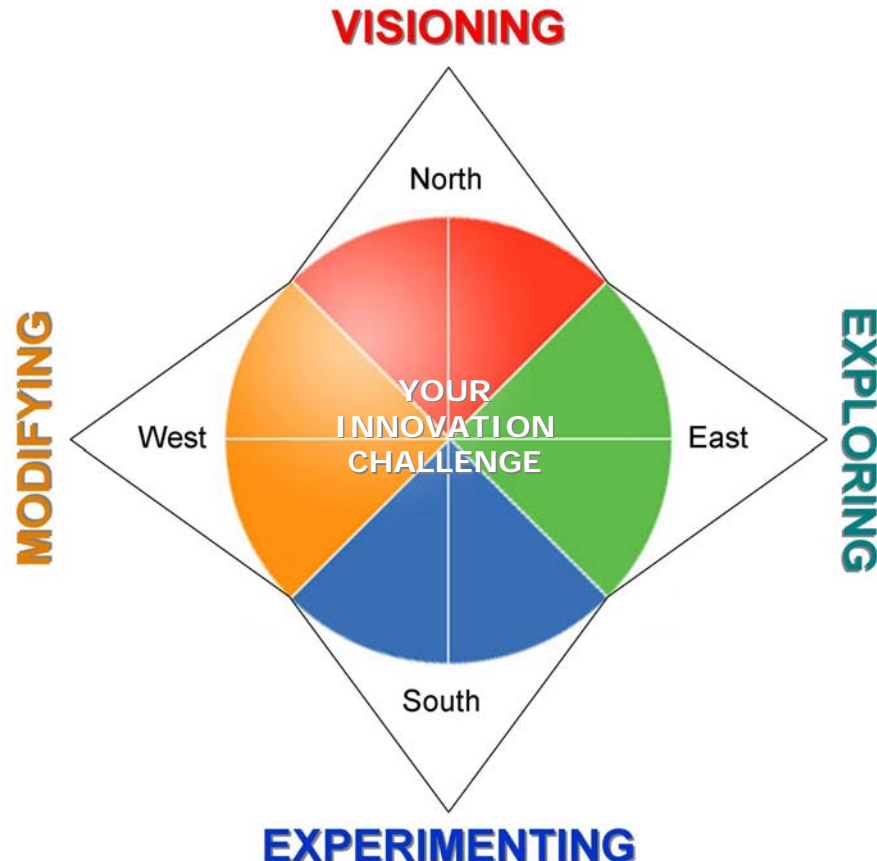
Start with any Innovation Style you wish. Stay with one style for a while, or “jump around” among all the styles. You will improve your group’s participation by making sure everyone’s favorite Compass question is deliberately used.

Visioning: What is the ideal long-term solution?

Modifying: What can we do to refine and optimize what we’ve done?

Exploring: What would be radically new and different?

Experimenting: What can we combine to put together a new solution?



Enhancing the Innovation Process

The Innovation Styles model provides its greatest benefit when you integrate it into your own approaches to handling your day-to-day challenges, building innovative teams, or fostering an organization culture for innovation.

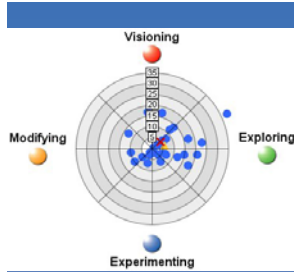
Boosting Each Stage of the innovation Process

You can incorporate Innovation Styles into your own organization processes or innovation process model. Or you can use our time-tested, four-stage model for the innovation process (called “The Creative Journey”) – which can apply to any organizational challenge, such as strategic planning, marketing, quality improvement, or organization change.

In the Creative Journey model, there are 4 stages to the innovation process, each with 2 steps. This model can be used to facilitate everything from creative problem solving meetings to long-term projects.* The following table shows how each of the four Innovation Styles makes a unique contribution to each stage.

The Creative Journey	Each style:	Visioning	Modifying	Exploring	Experimenting
CHALLENGE <i>Establish goals</i> <i>Assess risks</i>	<i>Excels at challenges that require:</i>	A clear vision and purpose to drive the creative energy	Refining and optimizing what has been done before	Going into new territory to see what is possible	Combining different elements to create many options
FOCUS <i>Tap into character</i> <i>Analyze issues</i>	<i>Understands the issues / priorities by...</i>	Using intuition to understand the future	Analyzing facts to decide on priorities for improvement	Using intuition to challenge assumptions	Analyzing facts to establish key factors and issues to address
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS <i>Generate ideas</i> <i>Decide on solution</i>	<i>Seeks ideas by asking:</i> <i>Evaluates and selects ideas by...</i>	“What is the ideal long-term solution?”	“What has been done before that we can improve?”	“What would be radically new and different?”	“What can we combine to put together a new solution?”
COMPLETION <i>Implement</i> <i>Celebrate results</i>	<i>Is best at implementing when...</i>	Working with a plan to track progress over the long-term	Working with a plan to achieve short-term results	Working with an eye on “what’s next” after implementation	Working with a process for learning and improving over time

* For more information about using the Creative Journey model, see *Flash of Brilliance: Inspiring Creativity Where You Work* (1999) or *The Flash of Brilliance Work book* (2000), both by William C. Miller (Perseus Books, Boston)



**A Group
“Points” Profile**
(showing the individual points for each team member plus the average “point” for the team as a whole)

Understanding the Group Profile

For your group, a “point” graph that includes *all* the members can give you great insight into how your group might work together to address innovation challenges. To interpret and apply the group profile, read the information on the following pages, consult the tables found in this booklet, and discuss the questions found in the last section, “Bringing Out the Best of Each Person.”

Putting Together New Teams

When people first come together to meet day-to-day challenges, they must establish how they can build strong relationships plus high commitment to being innovative. Each Innovation Style has a particular way of bringing people together for the first time. By using all four styles, you can minimize relationship stress while maximizing creative interactions.

When putting together new teams, ask...

For Visioning...

How can we work together as a ‘world class’ innovation team?

For Exploring...

What would be a revolutionary way of organizing ourselves as a team?

For Modifying...

What methods can we improve upon from successful teams we’ve been on?

For Experimenting...

What work practices can we combine, drawing from different sources?



Taking Advantage of Group Diversity

When there are people in a group with very different profiles, this can be either an advantage or a hindrance to the group. A key to dynamic and successful group innovation is to include the key perspectives and questions of each style.

If you use your style in isolation, you might...

For Visioning...

Become so focused on an ideal goal that you don’t see other points of view

For Exploring...

Become too preoccupied with revolutionary ideas and ignore practical details

For Modifying...

Become too tied to present circumstances and not recognize far-reaching opportunities

For Experimenting...

Get lost in the trial and error process and forget the ultimate goal



Alexander Graham Bell once said, "Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds."

Fostering a Vibrant Climate for Group Innovation

For anyone responsible for solving creative challenges, the question arises: "How can we foster the best possible climate for group innovation?" Each Innovation Style offers a particular answer to this question. When you incorporate the strengths of each style into the group climate, you strengthen the level of collaboration while bringing out the best of each style.

One step is to use the Innovation Styles to bring together the right people and right mix of style profiles to address an innovation challenge. Whether or not all four styles are strong in your group, style diversity can still be effectively introduced by consciously fostering a vibrant climate for group innovation.

Remember, fostering such a climate is not just the responsibility of the group's leadership, but also of every member of the group. Based on the information contained in the Innovation Styles Profile questionnaire itself, plus related experience working with innovation groups, the table that follows points out key elements to consider when operating as an innovation group:

- Introducing innovation challenges
- Generating solutions
- Providing learning opportunities
- Making decisions
- Empowering and gaining commitment

The table can be used in two ways:

1. To design and implement a climate for group innovation that addresses all four Innovation Styles, even with varying preferences.
2. To determine how to bring out the innovative best of someone who prefers a particular style or two.

You can even use this table to give you insights into situations where you are interacting with other people who are *not* members of your group or team – people in other departments, or divisions, or even customers. They too have their Innovation Style preferences. Even if you have no idea what those preferences are, you can be sure to "reach" each person by being aware of and addressing the preferences of each style.



Innovation takes courage... not just brains!

Fostering a Vibrant Climate for Group Innovation

The most vibrant climate for innovation includes elements from each Innovation Style

		Visioning	Modifying	Exploring	Experimenting
Introducing innovation challenges	<i>Introduce challenges that require...</i>	... well-planned progress to meet an ideal long-term goal	... standard approaches with a single, best solution	... novel approaches to handling a challenge	... practical ways to overcome barriers to progress
	<i>When initiating assignments and projects, accentuate...</i>	... futuristic independent, thinking	... applying expert opinion to improve a situation	... venturing into unknown territory to see what's possible	... thinking through and giving careful consideration to various ideas
	<i>When presenting a proposal, include...</i>	... how it achieves an ideal future	... how it builds on core capabilities	... how it goes where no one has gone before	... how it provides workable ideas and solutions
Generating innovative solutions	<i>Ask...</i>	"What does my intuition tell me about the future?"	"What are the most important priorities for improvement?"	"What assumptions can we challenge?"	"What are the key factors and issues we need to address?"
	<i>Ensure that there is a focus on...</i>	... opportunities rather than obstacles, with a clear sense of purpose	... refinement and incremental improvement	... novel perspectives and imaginative solutions	... unusual combinations that would otherwise be overlooked
	<i>Also be sure to...</i>	... imagine the best possible outcome	... apply expert opinions in new ways	... use metaphors for new insights	... combine the best ideas from many people
	<i>Seek ideas that are...</i>	... bold, far-reaching, imaginative	... realistic, optimizing, relevant	... unique, adventurous, rule-changing	... verifiable, workable, with multiple views
	<i>Be...</i>	inventive	evolutionary	revolutionary	practical

Fostering a Vibrant Climate for Group Innovation

The most vibrant climate for innovation includes elements from each Innovation Style

		Visioning	Modifying	Exploring	Experimenting
Providing new learning	<i>Ensure job assignments and learning opportunities that...</i>	... are directly related to a bold vision for the future	... build upon and refine well-practiced skills	... provide the opportunity to learn new skills	... offer practical, up-to-date knowledge
	<i>In reaching a decision, be sure the decision...</i>	... incorporates unique, visionary solutions	...emphasizes step-by-step improvements	...incorporates many new perspectives, alternatives	... has been shown to be workable
Empowering and gaining commitment	<i>Develop ways of working together by asking...</i>	... "How can we work together as a world class innovation team?"	... "What work methods can we adopt and improve upon, from successful teams we've been on?"	... "What would be a revolutionary way of organizing ourselves as a team?"	... "What work processes and practices can we combine, drawing from many different sources?"
	<i>Ensure that there is ...</i>	... a long-term strategy for achieving the group goals	... a detailed plan by which work is managed	... freedom to respond to unplanned situations	... a process of continuous learning in the group
	<i>Provide...</i>	... ample help for implementation details	... a rich history to draw from	... flexible structures for organizing work	... a balance of intense work and time for study/reflection
	<i>Foster commitment to...</i>	... realizing a vision	... valuing what already exists	... discovering new territory	... making things work
	<i>Promote a sense of...</i>	bold achievement	security	autonomy	thoroughness

Bringing Out the Best of Each Person



**A Group
“Points” Profile
(showing the indi-
vidual points for
each team member
plus the average
“point” for the
team as a whole)**

Whether you belong to a “group” or a “team,” and whether there is a single designated “group leader” or shared leadership among many people... bringing out the innovative best of each person is a task for everyone. Use the following questions to stimulate a group discussion for how to optimize your group innovation.

Using the “points” profile for the group, discuss...

1. How might the group as a whole support innovation, and how might it hinder innovation?
2. What questions might the group emphasize, or neglect in generating ideas? What type of ideas might the group find “less attractive”?
3. Which group members have “strong” profiles? What is the potential advantage or disadvantage of this for the group?
4. Which group members have opposite profiles? What could be the potential conflict? How can the group take advantage of this diversity?
5. Which group members have Flexing profiles? What is the potential strength of having these people in the group?
6. What are the most likely and least likely characteristics of the group climate for innovation? (initiating challenges, generating ideas, learning, deciding, empowering and commitment)?
7. Using these insights, how can the group bring out the innovative best from each person and from the group as a whole?

Using the group leadership’s personal profile(s) along with the group’s “points” profile, discuss...

8. How is the group leadership’s profile similar to or different from the group profile?
9. What are the group leadership’s most-likely tendencies to influence how the group innovates?
10. What must the group leadership concentrate on to bring out the innovative best from each group member?
11. How can the group members support the group leadership in this effort?



*Innovation is a
team sport...*

Developing the Innovative Organization

Diversity means more than culture or gender differences. Our distinctive talents, styles, and perspectives offer something of value when we're innovative. In this context, each style has something of value to bring to an innovation challenge. So does each person.

The Cycles of Innovation and Change

Products, services, technologies, work processes, organizational structure... all of these go through cycles with two fundamental degrees of change: breakthrough and incremental. Breakthrough change revolutionizes, but creating breakthrough change exclusively leads to *exhaustion*: not consolidating one change before another takes place. Incremental change optimizes, but creating incremental change exclusively leads to *extinction*: not keeping up with the times. Using all four styles helps to manage the entire cycle of innovation and change.

Organizational Change

Changes in organizational culture and structure involve a cycle of breakthrough and incremental change. If a change process is directed only by a "new vision of the future" (Visioning), people who best deal with change by Modifying or Experimenting may be disenfranchised. If the process is directed only by "improving current efficiency", it may not inspire the involvement of people who prefer Exploring and Visioning. For full participation in designing and implementing organizational change, use all four Innovation Styles.

When undertaking organizational change, ask...

For Visioning...

What could make us the 'organization of choice' to work for and buy from?

For Modifying...

What could improve on the way we currently do things?



For Exploring...

What could 'unfreeze' the organization to see what emerges?

For Experimenting...

What could give us the best synergy among our units and capabilities?

Strategic Planning

There are many popular philosophies to strategy development: "aim for a bold vision"; "build on what you know"; "change the rules"; "give your customers a choice." Each of these, by itself, tends to employ just one Innovation Style; using only one or two approaches may omit other important considerations.

When developing strategic alternatives, ask...

For Visioning...

How could we be ideally positioned within our industry?

For Modifying...

How could we build upon our core strengths and competencies?



For Exploring...

How could we rewrite the rules of competition?

For Experimenting...

How could we synergize different technologies, markets, or partnerships?

Developing the Innovative Organization

R&D and New Product Portfolios

Tough times can affect the ways in which new products and technologies are developed. During an industry slump, a company might focus its new product portfolios to using “off-the-shelf” technologies in “new and improved” products – an Experimenting and Modifying strategy. In better times, the emphasis might shift to a more Visioning and Exploring strategy for revolutionary new products and technologies.

When developing new products, ask...

For Visioning...

What could represent the ideal wishes of our customers?

For Modifying...

What could improve on or extend our current offerings?



For Exploring...

What could break the rules of ‘how things must be’ in our industry?

For Experimenting...

What could be the best mix of features and benefits?

Work Process Improvement

Programs to improve work processes involve breakthrough change (Re-engineering) and incremental change (Total Quality, Six Sigma). Re-engineering relies on Exploring and Visioning to revolutionize a work process. Total quality and Six Sigma rely on Modifying and Experimenting to refine and optimize current work processes. Using all four styles gives you the flexibility to manage breakthrough and incremental change.

When improving work processes, ask...

For Visioning...

What could give us a ‘world class’ process?

For Modifying...

What could simplify, add to, or build upon our current work processes?



For Exploring...

What could totally re-engineer our processes and practices?

For Experimenting...

What processes could we combine, integrate and synergize?

It takes everyone working together... to make innovation happen!



The History of Innovation Styles

The story of Innovation Styles begins with the pioneering work of Michael Kirton in the late 1970's, who first established that people could be equally creative yet have two different approaches to creative problem solving (which he called Adaptor and Innovator). Then, in the second half of the 1980's, William Miller established the second breakthrough while he was head of the Innovation Management Program at SRI International (formerly Stanford research Institute).

Using proprietary data from SRI's "Values and Lifestyles" Program, William first saw there were actually four creative problem-solving styles, not two. What he called the *Modifying* style was similar to Kirton's *Adaptor* style and what he called the *Exploring* style was similar to Kirton's *Innovator* style. The discovery of the vertical dimension provided the other two styles – *Visioning* and *Experimenting* as distinct from *Modifying* and *Exploring*.

In 1987, William left SRI and started his own consultancy, the Global Creativity Corporation. There, he finished formulating the model, realizing that his four styles applied to more than just creative problem-solving. They were integral to the entire process of innovation, which includes steps such as: setting a goal, assessing risks, developing confidence to overcome barriers, analyzing key issues, generating creative options, making decisions, implementing solutions, and evaluating results. Thus, he termed his discovery *Innovation Styles* to reinforce how they can be applied throughout the entire innovation process, not just generating creative ideas.

Also in 1987, while teaching a course on "Creativity" at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business, William began to create and validate an Innovation Styles self-assessment with clients in Canada, England, Singapore, and the USA and had the results analyzed by a well-known specialist in social research: Paul Ray, author of *The Cultural Creatives*. In 2006, a second validation study was conducted using a data base of over 4,000 corporate professionals who had taken the ISP on-line. The results reconfirmed the Innovation Styles model. New items, based on observations of individual and team tendencies related to the Innovation Styles, are currently being tested as possible additions to the core ISP items.

The Innovation Styles have been highlighted in William Miller's book *Flash of Brilliance*, selected by Soundview Executive Book Summaries as among the top 30 business books of 1999. Today, William Miller is an internationally recognized expert on values-driven innovation who was named by *Leadership Excellence* as one of the top 30 thought leaders worldwide from 2004-2007.

A special feature of the Innovation Styles model and profile is its applicability in multi-national settings and in multi-cultural, "intact" work teams—having been successfully applied in over two dozen countries and cultures, including:

Shell Oil (Canada)
Motorola (China)
Eli Lilly (England)
Marion-Merrill Dow (France)
ACC Cement (India)
Starwood Hotels (Mexico)
Philips (Netherlands)
Overseas Bank (Singapore)
Hewlett Packard (Spain)
ATT, IBM, Kraft, P&G,
DuPont, and Schwab (USA)