

OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKERS



We Need Them, But Do We Really Want Them?

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Out-of-the box thinking and innovation are hallmarks of successful companies around the globe. Changing market conditions, trends and competition require companies to be able to change and adapt for continued success. Yet with success comes growth and the need for formal structure, processes, controls—which can stifle change and innovation. The dilemma is how to balance innovation and change with the organization’s need for quality implementation and execution of that innovation and change.

So what is a leader to do when faced with a culture that is moving away from innovation and inventiveness and moving toward familiarity and the status quo? Well, one answer of course is to get some “Out-of-the-Box Thinkers” on board. These are people who can think creatively and have a willingness to bring new and ‘innovative’ perspectives to the day-to-day work. They have no problem *doing things differently*, and *doing different things*. Problem fixed, right? Well, not exactly.

The good news first: Getting the “out-of-the-box” thinkers onboard really isn’t as difficult as it might appear. The Predictive Index® can provide you with the insight needed to hire or promote that right someone with the out-of-the-box edge.

Now the bad news: There is more to it than just hiring or promoting these out-of-the-box thinkers.

To save your company from the world of status-quo, you must ensure that the right foundation is in place. In other words, the organization must commit to welcome and support innovators and change-agents. Innovative cultures require at least some of their people to seek new opportunities, accept risk and change, work cross-functionally, and benchmark new ideas. Innovative companies require leaders (across the board) to create the right environments that will guide and promote inventive behavior. Innovative cultures have a performance appraisal and reward system that actually supports those trial-and-error attempts at being creative!

Understand that creativity and innovation can be the lifeblood of any organization. However, not every person in the company should be a change-agent or chaos would ensue. These creative thinkers are critical for success, but it is also critical that their contributions be integrated appropriately through a diverse (in PI terms) and balanced workforce. They are the leavening in the bread, not the entire loaf. Fortunately, sophisticated use of the PI® can help to place these change agents in atmospheres where they can flourish and feel appreciated, while still staying within the boundaries of the overall organization.