

Measuring Innovation

Measuring our innovation capability

Getting meaningful feedback is a real challenge in any environment. How honest is the feedback? What do we use as a datum for measurement? What do we do about the feedback that we receive? These are all demanding questions. Yet, without feedback, we cannot know how we are doing, where we should focus our efforts, and what we should do to take performance to the next level. And this is made all the more difficult in the field of innovation where the goalposts are constantly on the move. There is, therefore, a pressing need to introduce some independent means of assessing performance and offering practical guidance about what to do with the resulting insights.

The i-zone psychometrics

It is with this background in mind that I developed three innovation psychometrics – tools that measure specific aspects of individual and organisational capability and behaviour:

- **I2Q™ (Individual Innovation Quotient)** measures ten key innovation attributes so that we can understand just how innovative an individual is and determine what he or she might do to become more innovative.
- **ICQ™ (Innovation Culture Quotient)** measures organisational behaviours around ten key dimensions of an innovative culture so that



we can identify those aspects of the organisation that need to be addressed to ensure that innovation can flourish.

- **ILQ™ (Innovation Leadership Quotient)** measures the extent to which individuals exhibit the fourteen key innovation leadership behaviours and offers guidance on how to address the blindspots that are highlighted.

All the psychometrics are spreadsheet based and take around 10 minutes to complete. They are designed to take advantage of 360-degree feedback where an individual's perceptions are compared with those of people who work for or alongside that person. This ensures that the feedback is as objective as it can be. This in turns helps everyone to invest effort in the most appropriate and productive areas. The critical thing to understand is that we are measuring relative values rather than absolute values. It is about helping people and organisations realise their full potential rather than making meaningless comparisons. We are, after all, attempting to measure perceptions, in the full and certain knowledge of how powerful these are.

I2Q™ - Individual Innovation Quotient

There is a common misconception that being an innovative person is all about knowledge and skills. There is no doubt that these are important contributors. However, being innovative is all about behaviours that are enacted to a high standard on a consistent and generally unconscious basis. When this is the case, we ascribe certain characteristics or attributes to a person. Becoming a more innovative person can then be achieved by identifying those attributes that are less well represented and then trying out alternative behaviours on a conscious basis until they become habit. The ten innovation attributes are:

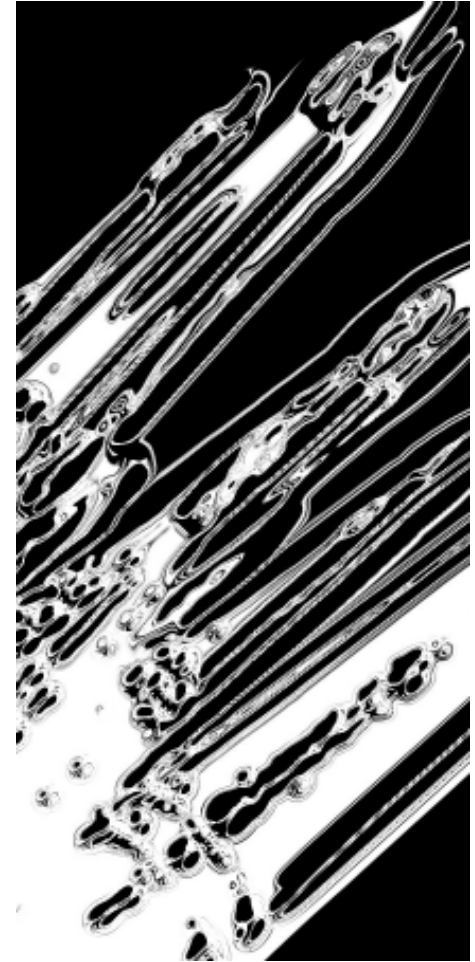
1. **Inquisitive:** exploring; learning; curious; inquiring; and investigating.
2. **Non-accepting:** challenging; critical; non-compliant; provocative; and discriminating.
3. **Non-linear:** lateral; wide perspective; tangential; flexible thinking; and broad-minded.
4. **Observant:** aware; acute; perceptive; attentive; and alert.
5. **Very positive:** irrepressible; energetic; enthusiastic; progressive; and constructive.
6. **Ambitious:** focussed; driven; goal-orientated; aspiring; and zealous.
7. **Tolerant:** robust; easy-going; thick-skinned; resilient; and open-minded.
8. **Imaginative:** visual; conceptual; ingenious; fanciful; and inventive.
9. **Versatile:** flexible; change-orientated; rule-breaker; and confident.
10. **Entrepreneurial:** risk-inclined; courageous; adventurous; resourceful; and experimenting.



ICQ™ - Innovation Culture Quotient

Innovation does not take place in a vacuum – it occurs in a specific environment or culture. Where this environment is supportive, innovation can flourish. Where it is not, innovation will struggle. People’s views about culture are formed over a substantial period of time based on what they see happening, not what they hear people saying. So, the ICQ™ measures organisational behaviours around ten key innovation dimensions:

1. **Tolerant:** we value ambiguity and different perspectives.
2. **Open:** we share information willingly and there are few secrets.
3. **Honest:** we seek and value the truth, even when it is unpalatable.
4. **Learning:** we acquire, value and share knowledge.
5. **Supportive:** we provide help, guidance and feedback.
6. **Nurturing:** we protect and develop individuals and ideas.
7. **Empowering:** we give and accept the authority to act.
8. **Exploring:** we are always on the lookout for new ideas.
9. **Challenging:** we happily question everything that we hold dear.
10. **Enterprising:** we take sensible risks and accept mistakes.



ILQ™ - Innovation Leadership Quotient

Innovation is a risky undertaking. Where it succeeds, we can usually find individuals who have provided real leadership. Individuals who: promote innovation through their actions rather than their words; take risks rather than avoid them; look after people who innovate; provide the tools to do the job; and help to create an environment where anything is possible. The ILQ™ looks at 14 key innovation leadership behaviours:

1. **Taking an active interest:** knowing what your people are doing without getting so close that it feels as though you are interfering.
2. **Giving people the authority to act:** delegating full responsibility for the delivery of important tasks, defining any limits to that authority, and ensuring that the individuals are happy to accept.
3. **Leaving people alone to get on with the job:** maintaining some distance from delegated tasks, without allowing individuals or the organisation to get into a position of risk.
4. **Eliminating obstacles:** dealing with issues or difficulties that individuals are unable to resolve for themselves, but doing so by invitation and avoiding a situation of dependency.
5. **Raising people's ambitions:** agreeing stretching targets that are just the right side of unreasonable.
6. **Offering guidance:** providing a view, by invitation and in a way that can be refused.



7. **Keeping a finger on the pulse:** understanding the status of all important tasks without making people feel that they are constantly being checked up on.
8. **Providing support:** offering tangible resource and emotional support without needing to know why it has been requested nor to what use it will be put.
9. **Encouraging people to broaden their perspectives:** helping people to see that there are many different ways of looking at things without telling them what to think or where to look.
10. **Demonstrating personal commitment to innovation:** participating in the innovation process, letting your actions speak for themselves.
11. **Challenging conventional wisdom:** finding opportunities on a personal basis to break with custom and tradition, without changing things for the sake of it.
12. **Demonstrating that you are happy to change:** participating in the change process vigorously, whilst understanding that others may find it frightening.
13. **Tolerating ambiguity and failure:** demonstrating that you understand that things cannot always be defined precisely and that failure is an inevitable part of the innovation process.
14. **Recognising effort as well as achievement:** taking pleasure in, and rewarding, activity that yields limited results as well as things that are outstandingly successful.

Using the innovation psychometrics

The process is very straightforward. You identify up to five people that you would like to get some feedback from and invite them to participate in the process. Feedback is anonymous – so they have nothing to fear from being totally honest. You complete the psychometric as well. I can then consolidate the feedback from the group of people you chose and relate it to your own perceptions in each of the dimensions that are being measured. This yields a series of outputs:

- **An explanation of the psychometric** and how it has been administered.
- **A brief report on the conclusions** that we can draw from the analysis.
- **Comparative scores:** here we can compare your raw scores for each dimension with that of the group you selected. The primary thing that we are looking for here is the degree of match in overall terms. We tend not to pay too much attention to absolute scores because the real goal is to lift performance rather than make comparisons with other people who have used out the same psychometric.
- **Comparative ranks:** we pay more attention to rank as this is where we can gain real insights into which dimensions are perceived to be most important. This in turn enables us to highlight four categories. The first category represents those dimensions where both the respondent and the group rank highly – these are dimensions to celebrate and enjoy. The second category represents those dimensions where the group ranks



high but the individual ranks low – all that is required here is a change of perspective on the part of the respondent. The third category represents those dimensions where both the respondent and the group ranked low – these will need to be worked on at some stage, but the common perspective suggests a lower degree of urgency. The final, and most important, category represents those dimensions where the respondent ranks high but the group disagrees – these are the true blindspots that need to be worked on first as they are likely to be those that stand in the way of real progress.

- **A four-box summary of the results** for ready reference.
- **Initial guidance** on how an individual might respond to the feedback.

Each psychometric includes a one-to-one explanation of the results and some discussion about potential responses.

Each psychometric can be used on its own or as part of a wider innovation programme. The I2Q™ and the ILQ™ can be used to help select people for innovation activity and indeed for promotion to more senior posts where innovation is going to be a central part of the mix.

So what do I do now?

The answer to this question is very straightforward. Decide which of the i-zone psychometrics you feel is going to meet your particular need and get in touch with me...

Alisdair Wiseman – The Innovation Zone.