

- 1. Does My Organization Have a Tolerance for Risk?**
 There is risk in any change, even innovation. Many resources are tapped in the innovation process which does not guarantee success. There is not only the risk of financial loss but a loss of reputation, credibility and even technology. The organization needs to provide an environment where employees feel free to pursue the risky, but potentially highly rewarding, innovation projects.
- 2. Does My Organization Have the People Who Believe in Innovation?**
 Strategic innovation projects need people behind them, and those people need the organization's support behind them. Innovation cannot be just a buzzword on a pretty poster. The organization's leadership needs to see the vision and value of innovation and then encourage employees to solve problems in new ways.
- 3. Does My Organization Encourage the Sharing and Exchange of Knowledge?**
 No longer a product of the internal R&D department, innovation requires openness and the free flow of information around solutions. Multiple individuals, teams, departments and even outside resources spanning a wide range of competencies need to be actively aligned and engaged in knowledge exchange. Innovation is a group effort.
- 4. Does My Organization's Innovation Board/Council/Team Involve Outside Experts and Resources?**
 It's important that the innovation strategy and vision, and the team entrusted with it, also utilizes experts and voices outside the organization. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to go down a path that makes sense to the internal team but might not incorporate critical external cultural, governmental, technological or environmental issues or perspectives. Ultimately products are released to the external "world" and need to be successful in that context.
- 5. Does My Organization Partner with Other Innovative Organizations?**
 Often the best innovations involve outside partners supplying critical goods or services. From fabricators to system integrators these partners need to be viewed as members of the organization's success team and need to be selected based on their fit. Do these partners share the organization's vision, creativity, and mindset? Are they a good fit with the organizational culture? Sometimes individual egos can get in the way of selecting the best partner, so it's important to limit individual bias during the selection process. If selected, the partner relationship needs nurturing. These are valuable partners, not adversaries.
- 6. Does My Organization Inspire Innovation Excellence?**
 The most successful organizations not only support innovation but inspire it through continued professional development such as outside innovation training and internal innovation research and competitions.

Obstacles

How many times did you answer yes? Your score indicates your organization's innovation readiness.

- 6 – Ready—Congratulations!
- 5 – Near Ready—Fine tune to boost readiness
- 4 – Not Ready—Secure internal and external support
- 3 – Tentative—Look for and clear obstacles
- 2 – Weak—Find mixed messages and blockages
- 1 – Very Weak—Start an overhaul and adjustment of vision

Observations