Can You Conquer the Corporate Pyramid, and Make Innovation an Enduring Capability?

Corporate innovation is the toughest adventure in the business world. And often, innovation leaders set out on this journey solo — with a mandate from the C-suite, but no team or resources.

Success requires relationship-building, resource-gathering, and constant learning to make it past the traps and pitfalls you'll inevitably encounter.

This discussion guide is informed by conversations with corporate innovators and recent InnoLead survey data. Use it with your team and senior leaders to discuss what it will take to get to the top of the pyramid — and ensure that innovation becomes an enduring part of the corporate

The Summit

Kudos to you: you got the resources, built the capability, delivered the results, and earned the respect of colleagues up and down the org chart. No one thinks innovation is a passing fad. It's part of the company's culture and DNA.

Report on metrics and communicate success. This is where innovation truly transforms into business impact.

f you're working on internal nitiatives, focus on driving even broader engagement

Restart?

Bask in your success... until there's a revamped strategy rolled out, a merger announced, or a new CEO named. (In our survey, respondents said that the most common cause of a setback was a lack of leadership commitment or change in leadership.) Those can send you back to the start — or on to your next career adventure.



The Innovation Game isn't easy, but those who master it can leave a lasting legacy.

As you navigate the pyramid, you may meet key allies and gather ideas for new initiatives. Tuck them in your backpack

External Partners

Jump to the next level with solutions delivered via open innovation, startup collaboration, or a venture studio partnership.



Key Pitfalls



Hidden Perils



Power-Ups



Quick Wins

Level 4: Scale-up and Survival This is often where a hand-off happens —

which can be tricky! How can your team support the new offering and ensure that it has got the

Delivering results on a near-term project — and communicating the impact — helps you build

credibility and move faster.

Level 3: Prototyping and Piloting

A consistent process, methodology

ISO 56001 — that make innovation

— and potentially standards like

perform like other parts of the

company.

Corporate re-orgs;

high-profile project

resource constraints;

Test and refine your ideas whether for internal programs or new offerings.

Design MVPs (minimum viable products, in "lean startup" lingo) to help you validate a concept and get real feedback about whether people will buy it or engage with it.

he ability to move quickly from concepts and slide decks to prototypes - and iterating to improve them. This nay require new tools or outside help.

Lack of direct access to customers and their feedback; weak pilot execution — especially around sales and marketing support

Business Unit Amnesia A business unit helps bring your project o market — but forgets about its origins. "Auxiliary Resource" Vortex You get typecast as a team that can help others with projects they don't have time for. That scores you points, but also pulls your focus away from higher-impact projects in your own portfolio.

Creating "lightweight" partnership agreements; building networks of colleagues who can help you identify and vet potential partners as champions for getting to the next lev

Embarking on too much scouting or partnership work, without a clear path laid out for how pilots and eventual scale-up will work.

Bureaucracy Trap

Red tape (often from Legal or Compliance) delays progress. Can you get them working with you, and brainstorming possible solutions?

Find the most relevant outside startups, consultancies, software suppliers, and

academic labs who align with your

objectives and can accelerate your work.

Level 2: Scouting and Partnerships Identify internal and external partners who can provide input and support.

Level 1: Laying the Foundation

Start by understanding your company's capabilities. What are the strengths and gaps in innovation?

> Get aligned with the overall corporate strategy. 52% of leaders we surveyed described that as low do colleagues describe the culture's response to new ideas? essential to long-term success.

Corporate "immune response"; leaders protecting their turf or feeling that they're already doing enough innovation.

Getting everyone to use the same language, and agree on the right metrics for tracking progress.



