Overview

**Innovation and Creativity**

The Innovation and Creativity Café is a short blended learning experience oriented around the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic. The learning experience consists of three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Objectives

At the conclusion of the blended experience, participants will be able to:

* **Unlock curiosity** to surface new ideas and opportunities
* **Collaborate** to expand their capacity to innovate
* **Take smart risks**

Part 1: Self-paced, Individual Preparation

Before the Café, participants should:

* Complete all lessons in the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic:
  + Innovation for All
  + Unlock Curiosity
  + Make Creative Connections
  + Take Smart Risks
  + Collaborate to Innovate
* Complete the “Worksheet for Unlocking Curiosity” and “Worksheet for Taking a Smart Risk” from the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic.

Part 2: Live, Group-based Café Session

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The session provides an opportunity for participants to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with each other
* Discuss how key concepts and skills apply in their own workplace
* Practice relevant skills
* Build momentum for applying the concepts and skills after the session

The Café session is designed to take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific activity, they can choose to cover only the activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | * Show icebreaker question while participants are arriving to the session:   + How does our organization foster creativity and innovation?   Introduce facilitators.   * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Debrief ice breaker question. * Set context: Too often, we consider creativity and innovation as special-occasion skills or relevant to only a few high-profile departments. But the truth is, for our organization to succeed, innovation and creativity have to be on everyone’s agenda. * Review session objectives. | 10 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Unlock curiosity** | * Debrief tool from the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic: “Worksheet for Unlocking Curiosity.” Participants:   + Share things that they are curious about or that they take for granted, and any “why…?” questions that were prompted by the worksheet exercise.   + Discuss how this activity unlocked ideas or opportunities they otherwise wouldn’t have noticed.   + Share suggestions about how they might build these prompts into their and their groups’ daily work. * Facilitate practice activity: Encourage curiosity. Participants:   + Review a scenario and discuss what team members could do to encourage each other’s curiosity.   + Reflect on whether curiosity and asking questions is encouraged in their role/work area. Review tips for supporting curiosity and share what they do to encourage curiosity within their own groups. | 17 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Collaborate to innovate** | * Facilitate practice activity: Creating diversity of insight. Participants:   + Identify who they would typically collaborate with when developing an innovative idea.   + Assess how diverse that group of collaborators is and identify strategies to increase diversity where necessary. * Facilitate reflection exercise. Participants:   + Consider experiences where they’ve collaborated both successfully and unsuccessfully with others.   + Reflect on the conditions and factors that must be present to collaborate to innovate. | 14 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Take smart risks** | * Facilitate reflection activity: Attitudes to risk. Participants:   + Consider how comfortable they are taking risks at work. Share stories of when they took a risk by trying out something new, and what they learned from the experience (whether a success or failure).   + Share practices they use (or will start using) to support their group in testing new ideas and taking smart risks to innovate. * Debrief tool from the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic: “Taking a Smart Risk.” Participants:   + Reflect on the five steps to make risks as smart as possible (defining goals, considering resources and feasibility, identifying valuable outcomes, assessing personal belief, and considering organizational risk tolerance).   + Discuss what participants learned from completing the exercise.   + Consider if systematically assessing smart risk in this way makes them more or less inclined to pursue their idea.   + Brainstorm ideas to become more confident in taking smart risks on an idea. | 16 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | Review session objectives and skill areas discussed.   * Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan. * Close the session. | 3 minutes |

Part 3: Self-paced, Individual Application

After the Café, participants are expected to:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill. *Note:* If your organization does not include the On-the-Job section in your configuration of Harvard ManageMentor, ask participants to think of two things they can do over the next 90 days to further apply and develop their skills in this area.
* Execute their action plan over a specified timeframe (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified timeframe (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Innovation and Creativity topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.