

Chapter 1

Technology Innovation and Adoption in the Modern Workplace: Resistance, Ethics, Reassurances, When to Say “No”

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the various types of innovation technology that are currently disrupting organizations around the globe is an important endeavor. Various innovative technologies are defined, and related ethical challenges are explored that organizations face in today’s technology climate. Additionally, key methods are examined for an organization to manage employees when they refuse to change, including unfreezing, transition, and refreezing. The importance of alignment of innovation strategy to organizational resources is reinforced, with the best methods to align organizations with innovation success, including when it is okay to say no to innovation within an organization.

INTRODUCTION

Before an examination of the various ethical concepts within innovation, it is important to define what innovation is (and what it is not). Per Yermak and Lisnichenko (2016), innovation considers the aspects of intensity and complexity, effectively improve profitability, and organizational competitiveness through technology means. Pinheiro, Merino, and Gontijo (2016) mention that innovation is the socially acceptable alternatives of current technology to enhance current organizational concerns and risks. Rejon-Parrilla, Espin, and Epstein (2022) define innovation as a step-change improvement, which causes additional convenience through evidenced based efficiencies. Regardless, in the various ways that innovation is defined, a consistency in the definitions is that innovation allows for greater organizational efficiencies

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through modifications of current process which results in process effectiveness that presents positive monetary gain for the organization.

Ethical concepts within the innovation landscape are an important concept. Organizations are faced with making moral decisions based on their needs and these ethical decisions are being made quickly due to the rapid advancements in the current technology landscape (Özsungur, 2019). Lei, Ha, and Le (2019), note that ethical leadership is imperative to successful incremental innovation and is achieved through tacit and explicit sharing of knowledge. There are multiple ethical aspects that need to be considered when dealing with implementing innovation technology in any organization. For example, cyber concerns are constantly changing, so the way people think about innovation must also change. Various concepts in innovation are impacting how consumers (of products) think about innovation and how it will impact them. One major aspect to ponder is the actual innovation technology that organizations are considering implementing. The specific technology must be understood and defined as the ethical concerns that are present are unique with each specific technology.

Various environmental aspects must also be considered, such as industry that can be greatly influenced (both negatively and positively) by innovation. Strate (2020) notes that just because people can perform certain innovations does not mean they should. Strate (2020) also notes the environment in which innovation is an important aspect to answer the question of whether or not innovation is warranted. Yaghmaei and van de Poel (2021) mention companies must be responsible with innovation. The assessment of responsibility includes reviewing benefits, costs, and risks. Additionally, there are various factors to consider such as social, environmental, scientific, and economic impacts when performing the assessment (Yaghmaei & van de Poel, 2021). The environmental factors (both internal and external) that can influence organizational decisions to implement an innovation technology must also be considered. Once the environmental factors are defined, ethical considerations for the internal and external forces that impact the success of the innovation technology must be explored.

How organizational culture influences the effectiveness of the innovation implementation and how ethical leadership behaviors drive strategic alignment can affect successful innovation implementation. Also significant for exploration are innovation in the workplace, innovation technology occurring in the workplace and their ethical factors, reasons for resistance, and the ethical concerns when there is a resistance to change, and when to say “no” to innovation. Specific innovation tools (such as an Acceptable Use Policy) and technologies that organizations implement can lead to potential ethical concerns. Tools and technologies must be recognized and explored for ethical consideration. These considerations help to lead to a final answer as when to say no to innovation and the ethical implications of doing so.

ALIGNMENT OF CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCES

Before analyzing the various innovation technologies and tools that organizations are considering and the ethical implications of each tool, a company must first address strategy alignment and the impact to ethical practices. Ethical leadership transforms organizations to think differently (Le et al., 2019). Organizations must implement a culture of change to be successful in advancing innovation technology (Stauffer & Maxwell, 2020). Organizational culture is governed by the concepts of organizational identity and how it transforms over time (McDevitt, 2020). McDevitt (2020) states leadership drives the behavior of employees as employees typically shadow the actions of leadership. When leaders are seen as unethical or make unethical choices when it comes to strategy, employees replicate this behavior.

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