



innovation

Evaluating Innovation

A Self Evaluation Activity

Introduction and
Facilitation Notes

Introduction

This activity is based around a set of 9 Question Cards, which are themed, ordered and designed to prompt discussion and reflection about your innovation project. Completing the activity will support you and your colleagues to:

- review your starting point and success criteria
- evaluate plans and progress to date
- revisit and revise plans in the light of progress and changes in context or priorities.

Purpose

The activity will be useful to you at any time during your innovation project. If you complete it near the beginning, you will find that the questions help you to reach decisions about priorities and help you to plan a fit-for-purpose approach to gathering evidence for baselining and demonstrating impact. If you complete the activity later in your project, the questions will help you to evaluate and review your decisions as the project unfolds.

In the activity, you will work with a small group of 2–5 colleagues (ie a minimum of 3, maximum of 6 including yourself), using the cards to structure a discussion around key issues relating to launching and leading an innovation project.

The questions on the cards support you to reach agreement in 3 significant areas:

- needs analysis
- charting progress
- building ownership and support.

In addition to the 9 Question Cards, there are 5 Process Cards, which distribute practical responsibility for managing the activity between participants (eg introduction, timing and note taking), and a template for recording the outcomes of your discussion.

You will use the template booklet to reflect on the implications of the outcomes of your discussion for how you plan and lead your innovation project. You may find it helpful to involve a wider group to build ownership and for succession-planning purposes.

Preparation

You will need:

- the Self Evaluation Activity resources incorporating
 - 9 Question Cards
 - 5 Process Cards
 - Template for recording responses
- 2-5 colleagues who have been involved in the project for some time, ideally from the outset
- any documentation you hold that is relevant to your project (*nb* this is for reference only and you need only one copy of each item for the group)
- a quiet room with a table
- pens and paper (and you may find a flip chart useful)
- approximately 2 hours uninterrupted time to complete both parts of the activity.

Your role

in the activity is:

- to arrange the meeting at which the activity will take place, in particular organising a suitable space and inviting the right people
- to engage with colleagues in free and frank discussions about what you have achieved so far in relation to your own plans and criteria for success
- to agree with colleagues a common position on what has been achieved through discussion and reference to evidence
- to reflect with colleagues on the implications of what you agree for the future of your innovation project.

Evidence base

for this activity comes from an external evaluation of The Innovation Unit's Next Practice Programme. You can find out more about The Innovation Unit and Next Practice at www.innovation-unit.co.uk. Around 50 Next Practice field trial sites completed an earlier version of this activity, which has since been adapted and refined in response to their feedback.

Getting started

- 1 – Distribute the 5 Pink Process Cards amongst you and your colleagues so that each has at least 1.
- 2 – The person with Pink Process Card 1 in their possession starts the activity.
- 3 – Make notes of the key aspects of your discussions and follow the direction at the end of each card until all 5 Process Cards and all 9 Question Cards have been used. Each person will lead part of the discussion as directed on Pink Process Card 5.
- 4 – Complete the Template for recording responses based on your discussion. This can be done during your discussion.

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