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# 15 Methods Leaders Can Use To Boost A Team's Curiosity And Innovation



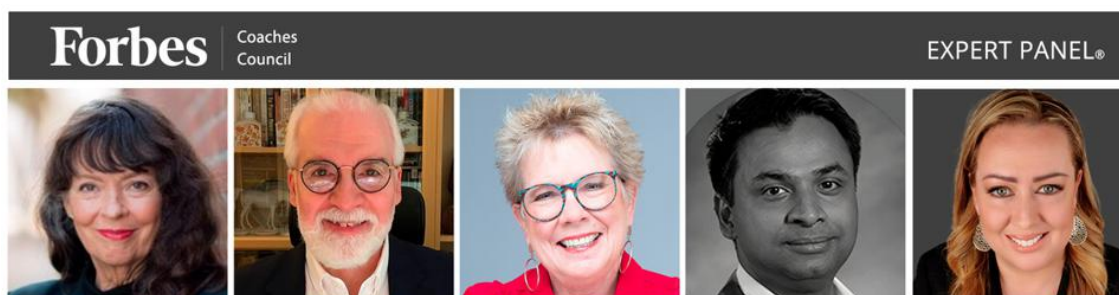
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Leadership

While necessity may be the mother of invention, many times, it's curiosity that sparks true innovation. A single, great innovation can have a ripple effect throughout a company, taking the business to the next level. And the most effective leaders know that it's up to them to pique their team's curiosity and motivate each member to approach their work in creative ways to spark innovation.

Whether you're a C-suite executive, a business owner or a team lead, your people need your support to foster a culture of curiosity, sharing, iteration and continuous improvement. To boost innovation in the workplace, you can use a number of methods to help team members bring a fresh outlook and an imaginative, experimental mindset to work every day. Here, members of [Forbes Coaches Council](#) share 15 of their favorites.





Forbes Coaches Council members share methods leaders can use to boost their team's curiosity and innovation. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

### **1. Lead By Example And Listen**

First, lead by example. Be curious yourself. Spend a percentage of your time trying new things. And most of all, encourage other people's curiosity and make it a conversation. Before offering an opinion about something, ask them about their approach. Listen. Learn. People who feel they have a voice are usually more creative and innovative. - [Maureen Taylor, SNP Communications](#)

### **2. Create Opportunities To Connect**

Create opportunities for the team to connect often, and always build in questions. Keep asking questions. Questions are essential for curiosity and innovation. Inject different perspectives into the conversation. Build "what if" moments. Assign roles on the team to people who are responsible for provocation and adding stimuli into conversations. Add multimedia elements through art, video and music to stimulate curiosity and innovation. - [Luis Costa, Luis Costa - coach · facilitator · speaker](#)

### **3. Take An 'Improv' Approach**

Teams that remain curious and humble will be innovative. Not being attached to your previous beliefs will support you in thinking differently and with a creative mindset. Taking an “improv” approach will help. - [Wendy Hanson, BetterManager](#)

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#### **4. Help People Find Their Purpose**

Show them the vision of the organization, help them get aligned with that vision, and then empower them to live that vision. To do anything, people want a purpose, and it cannot be someone else's purpose. They need to feel that it is their own purpose if you hope for them to keep figuring out what more can be done and how to look at new ways of getting there. - [Rajat Garg, Coach-To-Transformation](#)

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## **5. Be A Steward Of These Values**

It all starts with building a culture around these values and being stewards of them every day. I've witnessed engineers with innovative ideas being shut down publicly and the "why" askers silenced. Demonstrate the behavior, create channels for judgment-free sharing, and reinforce the values by engaging their ideas and questions with fervor. - [Susan Fessenden, ProfitLogics®](#)

## **6. Get Teams Involved By Sharing More Of Your Vision**

Just get them involved. Often, we want to keep the team innovative and curious, but we don't share enough of our vision or feedback on the results of their work beyond the expected. By making points about their successes, their failures and what they

can bring to the next project, you are training them to be excellent, and we all know that excellence is contagious. Fan their flames daily. - [Xavier Preterit, BIMR EDITION](#)

## **7. Show Them Examples Of Innovation**

Show them examples of innovation and encourage curiosity. Reward new ideas, encourage creative thinking, push beyond the first answer and be a curious leader. Great questions are a good way for leaders to push beyond the typical boundaries. Also, have team members create lists of innovative ideas for products and solutions to problems, and encourage them to go beyond the first ten ideas. - [Kimberly Svoboda, Aspiration Catalyst](#)

## **8. Give Separate Departments A Shared Problem**

Achieve cross-pollination by having teams solve problems with other parts of the company. Give separate departments a key problem to solve. For example, I had a life sciences lab group work with marketing to provide an insight on a new product release. The scientists brought the marketing team a fabulous new product spin. It got people working together and rooting for each other while improving product perception. - [John M. O'Connor, Career Pro Inc.](#)

## **9. Create A Psychologically Safe Environment**

Create a psychologically safe environment, then get seriously curious. When people feel safe to express seemingly “dumb” ideas, creativity flows. Ideas start bouncing off of ideas, team members ask for clarity, and thoughts and insights expand. When we feel part of a bigger purpose and team, and our ideas are valued,

anything is possible! - [Frances McIntosh, Intentional Coaching LLC](#)

### **10. Give Them Space To Work On Their Own Ideas**

Let them play to their strengths. You want your team to be curious and innovative? Give them plenty of space to work on some of their own ideas. Let them define a certain percentage of their own projects. Trust them. - [Rajeev Shroff, Cupela Consulting](#)

### **11. Shift The Daily Routine Toward Reflection**

Change it up. Routine is a killer of curiosity and innovation. Curiosity and innovation are built on reflection and seeing the world from a new angle. Help your team by breaking up the monotony and changing their daily routines. Use that new experience wisely by providing an opportunity for your team to reflect and digest the experience. A moment of reflection creates a world of possibility. - [Brad Federman, PerformancePoint LLC](#)

### **12. Ask A Mix Of 'What If' And 'Why' Questions**

The phrases “what if” and “imagine a future where” are useful thought-stokers. Asking a series of “what if” questions (similar to the “five whys” approach) can elicit deeper and broader thinking. Mixing “what if” and “why” questions and coming from a place of genuine curiosity on your part can be gold. Your curiosity can be contagious. Ensure all ideas are welcome and thoughtfully considered. - [Faith Fuqua-Purvis, Synergetic Solutions Consulting LLC](#)

### **13. Have Monthly 'Inspiration Ideation' Sessions**

We have monthly “inspiration ideation” sessions. Each person shares an article, talk, painting, story, sports example, company case study, experience in nature or “aha!” moment from time spent on a hobby, with a topline of what they picked and how it touched and inspired them. Better than cocktails, it’s an inspiration hour that we call “Zen’Tinis.” These ideas inevitably resurface in our work, both internally and with clients. - [Tevis Trower, Balance Integration Corporation](#)

#### **14. Set Up Formal PAM Meetings And Gather Insights**

Innovation is key for small businesses. Don’t rely on chance encounters. Formally set up [PAM meetings](#) to work on your company’s processes, accountability and motivation. Getting your team’s insights on these three areas will promote curiosity and innovation. Use the environment around you to stimulate ideas and consider that opportunity and challenges are just different sides of the same coin. - [Nick Leighton, Exactly Where You Want to Be](#)

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#### **15. Have Periodic Outlandish Idea Tournaments**

Have periodic tournament meetings where team members come up with the most outlandish ideas that, to the best of the teams’ knowledge, have not been thought of by anyone else inside or outside the company. The team is then asked to choose the most outlandish idea and determine what the next steps might be in creating an experiment around the idea. The team members then present their findings to the C-suite. - [Valerio Pascotto, IGEOS](#)

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