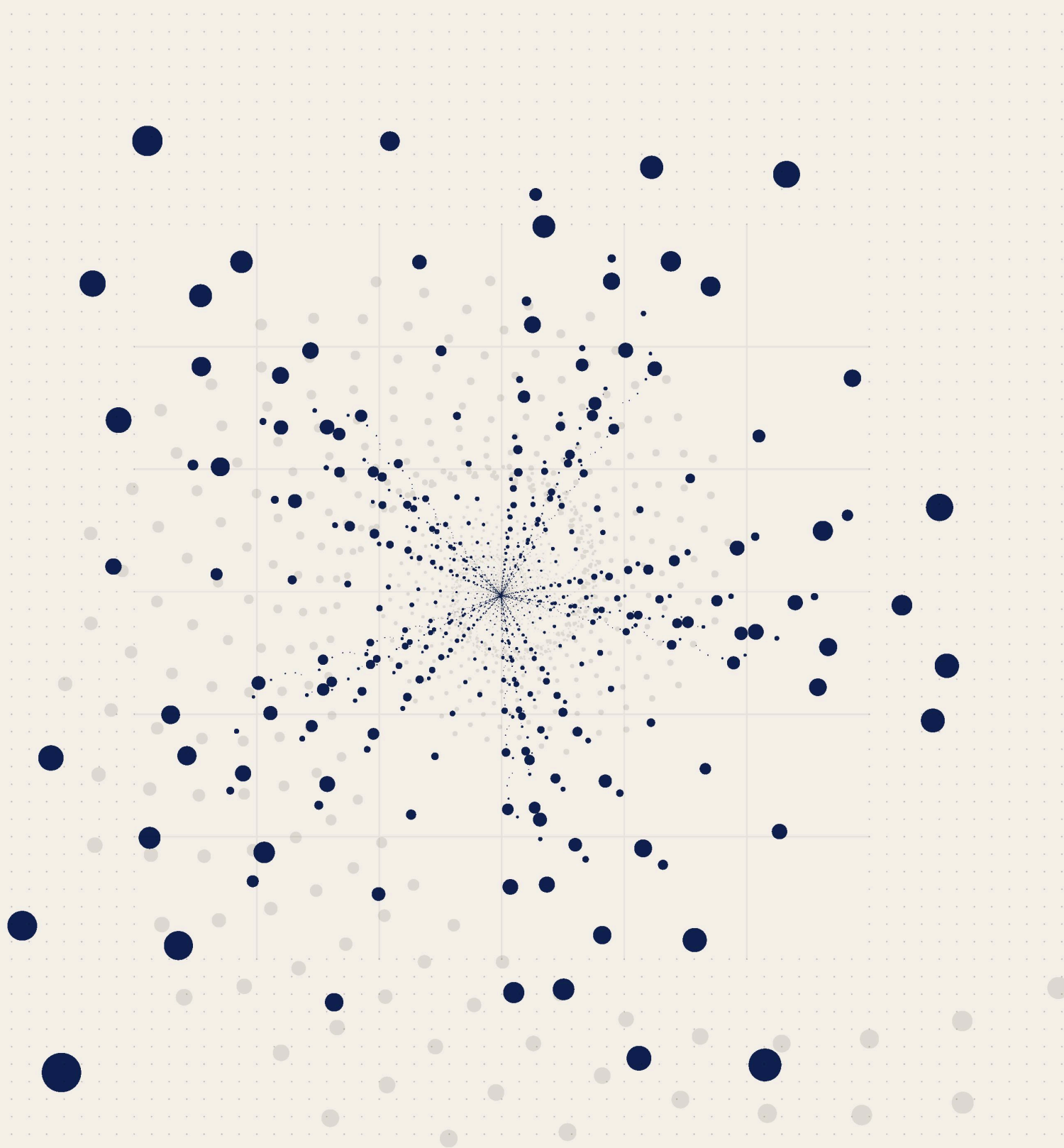


EXEC PEDIA

A Know-how Compendium of Experienced
Executives on Managing the Next.





EXECPEDIA

A Know-how Compendium of Experienced Executives on Managing the Next.

© 2026 Techni Methods Ltda. All rights reserved.

This work was developed based on contributions from invited executives, who participated as co-authors in each chapter of the content presented herein.

Edited by

Martin J. Eppler

Júlio Melo

Isabella Vallejo

Thais Fernandes

Bruna Silva

Bernardo Menegale

An initiative of *A Diretoria*, by Techni Methods

Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Produced by



Sponsors

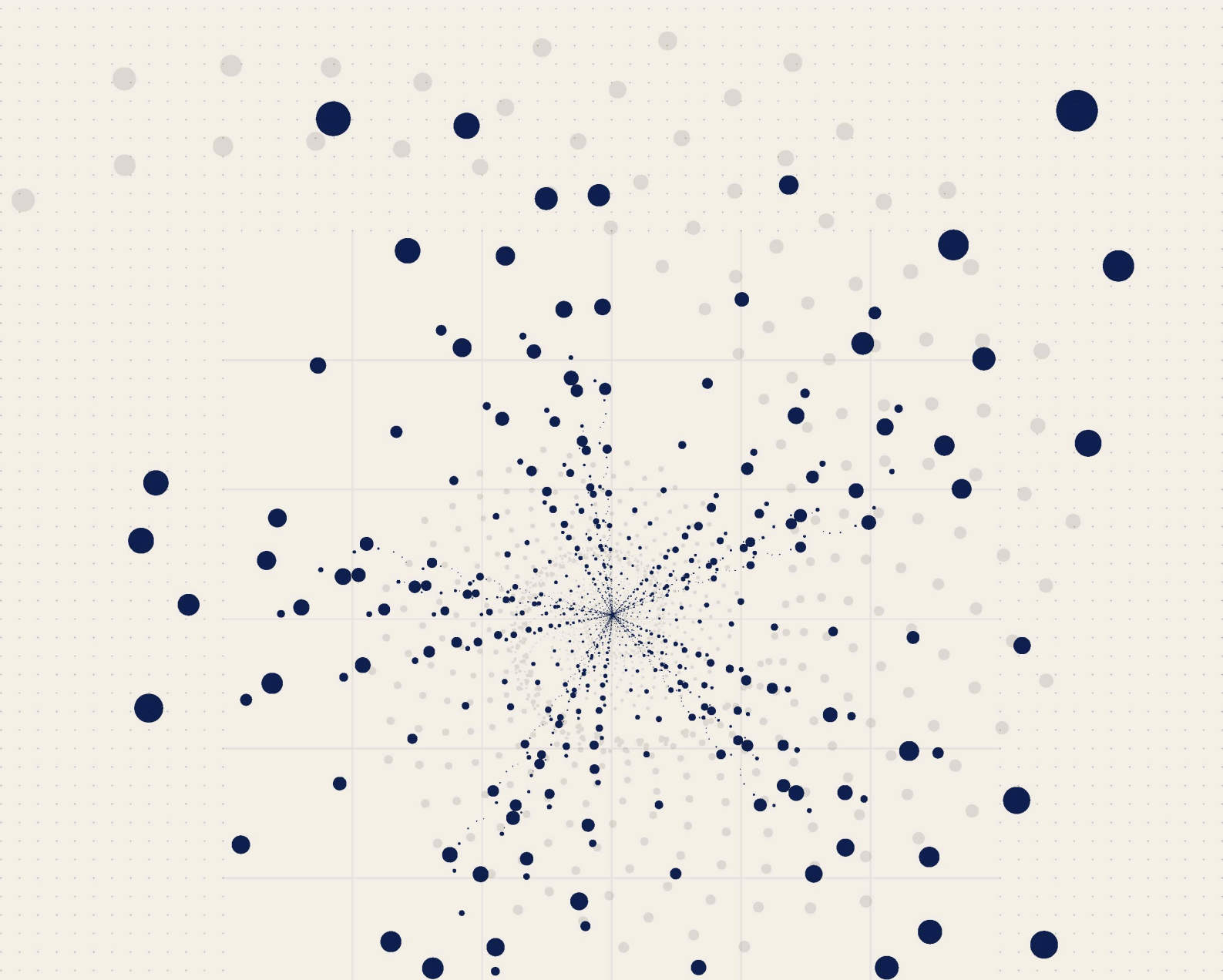


Acknowledgements

To the executives who generously dedicated their time, experience, and insights to the development of this work, and who join us on this educational journey to advance innovation knowledge, our sincere thanks.

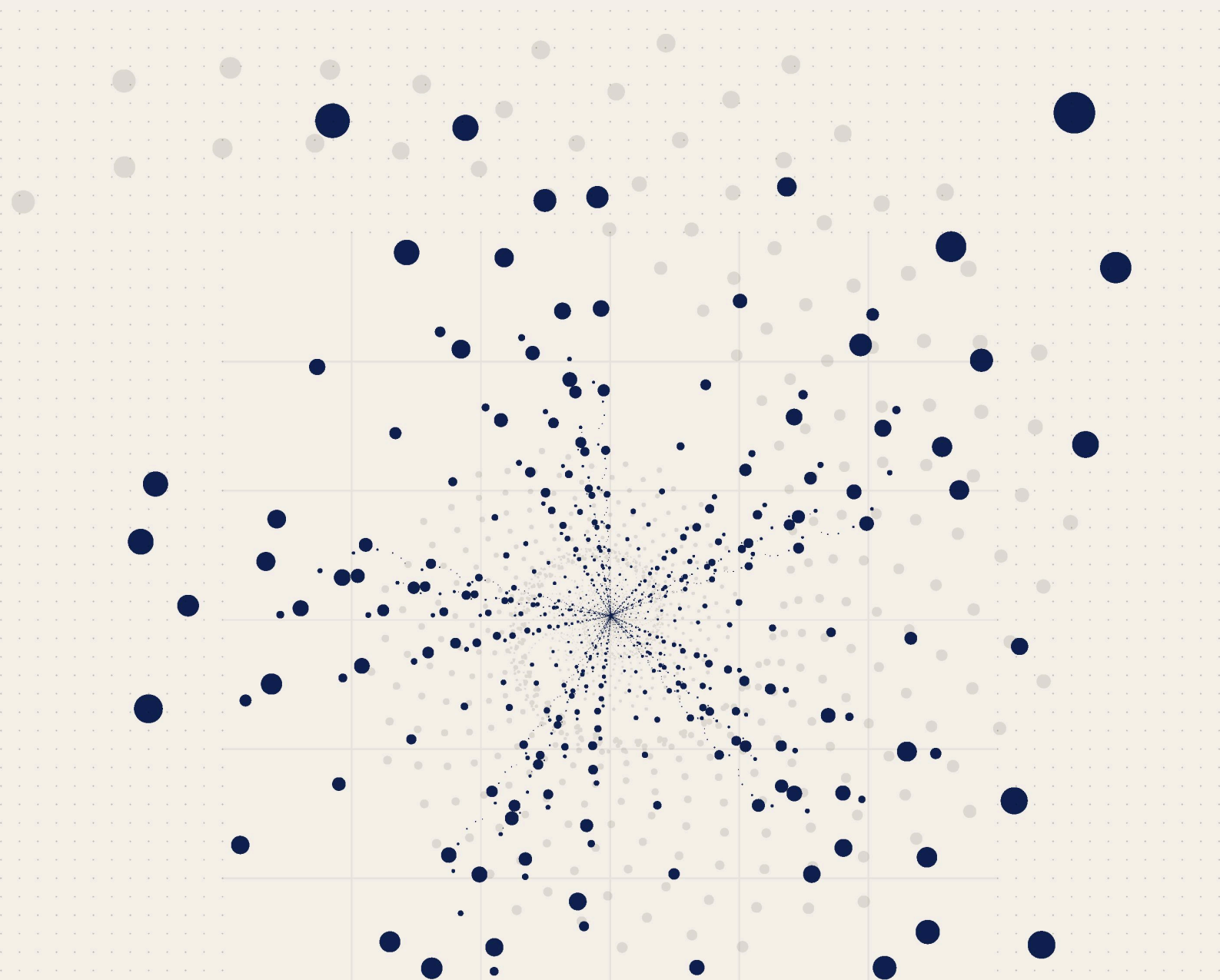
To Prof. Martin J. Eppler, for his continuous contributions alongside Brazilian leaders and organizations, strengthening discussions on innovation and advancing its practical application.

To the sponsors of A Diretoria, Fleury e Orizonti, for their support in making this project possible and for contributing to the advancement of innovation discussions.



Summary

Introduction	04
Chapter 1: Innovation Blindspots	06
Chapter 2: How Do Managers Kill Innovation (According to Themselves)?	11
Chapter 3: Innovation Culture	17
Chapter 4: How Leaders Enable an Innovation Culture	25
Chapter 5: Innovate Yourself	32



Introduction

Execpedia is a project that brings together and structures the practical knowledge of Brazilian executives on management and innovation, based on experiences drawn from the real context of their organizations. Developed within A Diretoria, a podcast hosted by Techni Methods, a company based in Minas Gerais that integrates management, education, and consulting into a single ecosystem, the project aims to consolidate these experiences into an organized, accessible, and continuously updatable format.

The initiative is conducted in partnership with Prof. Martin J. Eppler, Full Professor of Communications Management at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, Director of the Institute for Media and Communications Management, and recognized among the top 2% of scientists worldwide according to Stanford University.

With research featured in publications such as Harvard Business Review, Inc. Magazine, MIT Technology Review, BusinessWeek, and TED.com, and as the author of 26 books, Martin J. Eppler contributes to Execpedia as the facilitator of the chapter discussions with Brazilian leaders - co-authors of this work - and as the person responsible for translating these discussions into visual representations, leveraging his expertise in knowledge visualization in a logic similar to his work Visipedia.

This book brings together real lessons from selected guests who have participated in the podcast and who experience innovation in practice within their organizations. It is periodically updated with new themes and chapters.

CHAPTER 1



CHAPTER 1.

INNOVATION BLINDSPOTS

Hidden areas with high returns?

Innovation is often associated with breakthrough products, new technologies, or disruptive business models. Yet in many organizations, **the most promising opportunities lie elsewhere**. They hide in everyday processes, overlooked functions, and routine decisions that rarely receive strategic attention. In times of accelerating technological change and increasing complexity, executives can no longer afford to ignore these areas.

The following blindspots emerged from executive discussions about where organizations systematically **underestimate innovation potential**. These domains are often considered operational, bureaucratic, or “non-strategic.” Yet precisely because they receive less attention, they can generate disproportionate returns when reconsidered thoughtfully.

In collaboration with the co-authors of this chapter, we identified nine innovation blindspots based on their lived experiences. **Any examples provided are purely illustrative, intended to demonstrate how these patterns may manifest in practice.**

1. Thinking through First Principles: Question inherited assumptions and rebuild solutions from fundamental truths rather than improving existing practices incrementally.

- *At a manufacturing company, portfolio complexity was eroding margins and slowing innovation despite efficiency efforts. The board commissioned a review of customization logic, separating true customer value from legacy constraints. Many product rules reflected historical decisions, not market needs. Rebuilding the offer architecture reduced structural complexity and accelerated testing of new value propositions. Innovation improved once core assumptions were reset.*

- 2. Training through AI Tutoring:** Reimagine learning by using AI tutors that personalize training, accelerate skill acquisition, and reduce the cost of knowledge transfer.
- 3. Manual Labor through Robotics or Eliminated Steps:** Improve operational productivity by automating repetitive work or redesigning processes to remove unnecessary steps entirely.
- 4. People Engagement through Meaningful Transitions:** Strengthen motivation and commitment by redesigning key moments in the employee journey -onboarding, role changes, and career transitions.
- 5. Management by Relocating Time Spent:** Transform management effectiveness by reallocating time away from administrative routines toward coaching, problem solving, and strategic dialogue.
- 6. Legal through Partnering:** Treat legal structures and contracts as innovation tools by developing partnerships that unlock new collaboration and value creation models.

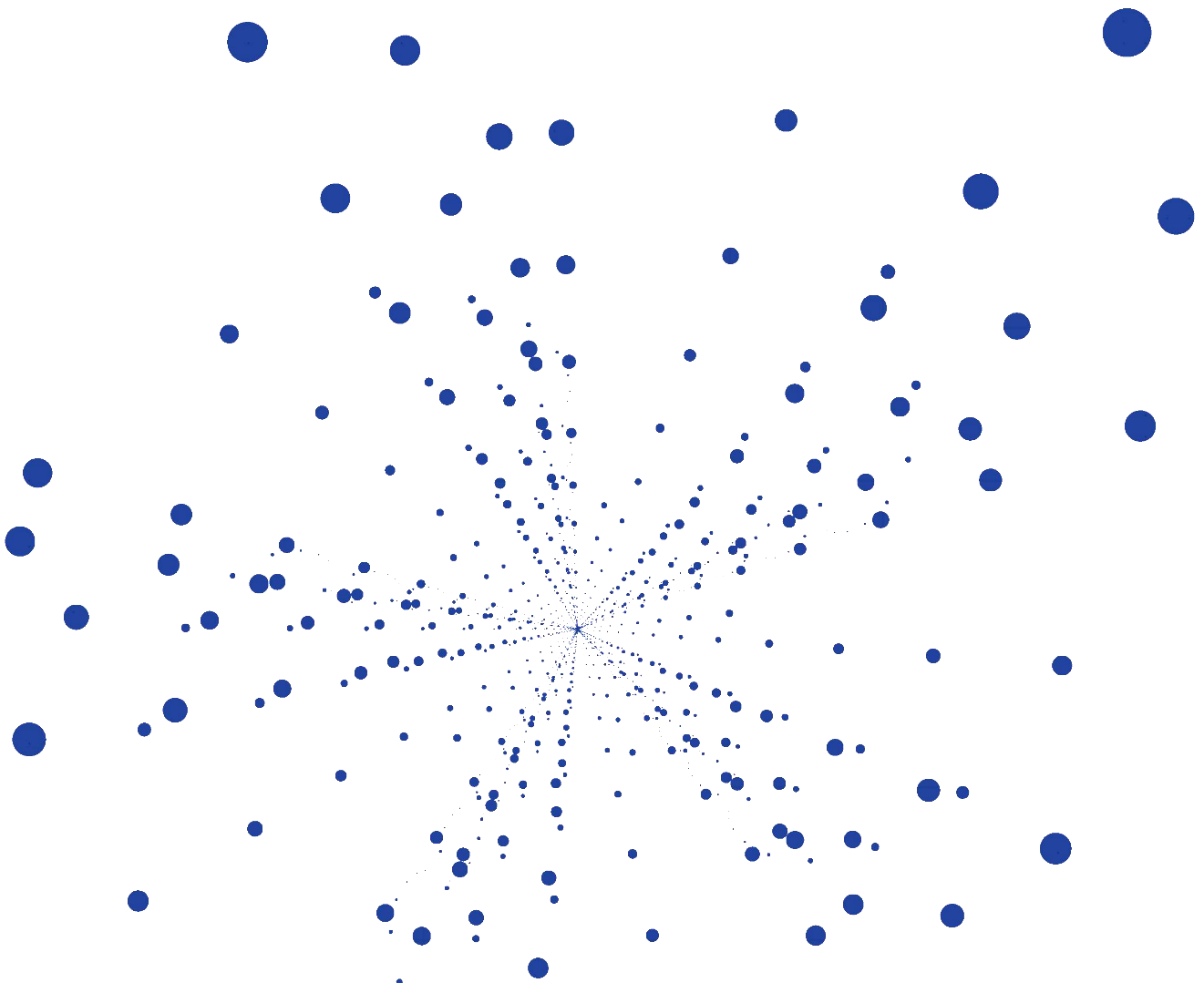
- At a services company, partnerships stalled late in the legal process. Legal was involved upfront to define standard collaboration and risk boundaries. Deal cycles shortened and pilots increased. Innovation moved faster without increasing exposure.*

- 7. Facility Management through Automation:** Increase efficiency and reliability by integrating automation and smart systems into infrastructure and operational environments.

- At a digital services firm, infrastructure instability limited experimentation. Automated monitoring and predictive maintenance improved reliability. Teams gained confidence to run continuous tests. Innovation followed operational stability.*

- 8. Collaboration through Visualization:** Make complex work visible through visual tools that help teams align faster, understand problems collectively, and make better decisions.
- 9. Planning through Benchlearning:** Improve strategic planning by learning systematically from comparable organizations and adapting their successful practices

Taken together, these blindspots offer a diagnostic lens for leaders. Rather than asking where innovation should happen next, **managers can use the model to identify neglected areas** where small conceptual shifts may unlock significant impact.



Which of these blindspots might hide the next breakthrough in your organization?

Innovation Blindspots Hidden Areas with High Returns



Innovate Thinking through
First Principles



Innovate Training through
AI Tutoring



Innovate Manual Labor
through Robotics or
Eliminated Steps



Innovate People
Engagement
through Meaningful
Transitions



Innovate Management by
relocating Time Spent



Innovate Legal through
Partnering



Innovate Facility
Management
through Automation



Innovate Collaboration
through Visualization



Innovate Planning through
Benchlearning

CHAPTER 2



CHAPTER 2.

HOW DO MANAGERS KILL INNOVATION (ACCORDING TO THEMSELVES)?

Innovation rarely dies because of market forces alone. More often, it is quietly suffocated inside the organization. In times of technological acceleration, AI-driven disruption, and strategic uncertainty, leaders are expected to transform experience into structured, repeatable innovation capability. Yet many well-intentioned managerial behaviors systematically undermine exactly that goal. This model captures the self-inflicted patterns executives themselves identified — turning daily decisions into innovation blockers.

The following patterns illustrate how innovation is unintentionally constrained within organizations. Any examples provided are purely illustrative.

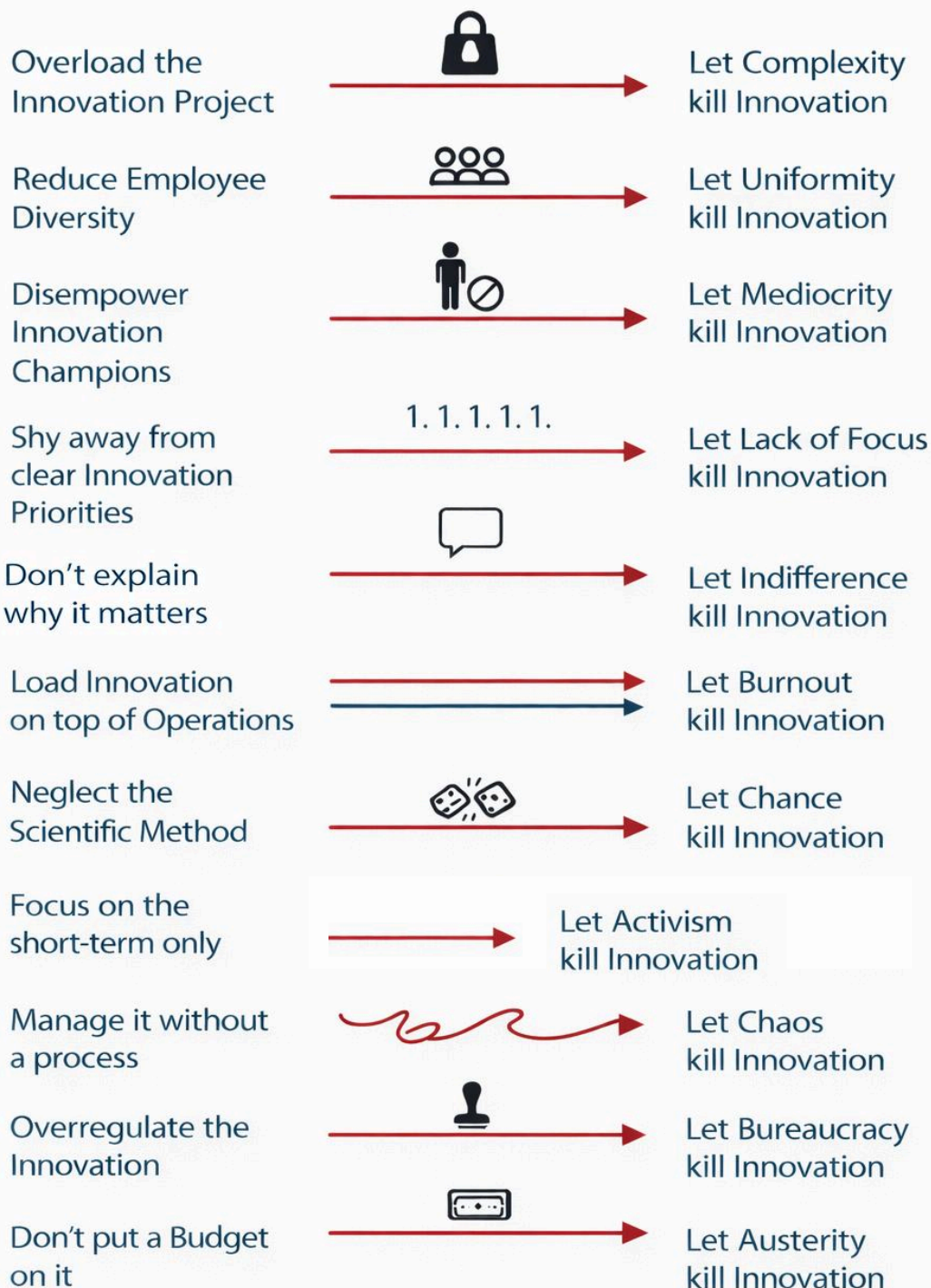
- 1. Overload the Innovation Project:** When initiatives become too large or complex, complexity replaces clarity and momentum stalls.
- 2. Reduce Employee Diversity:** Homogeneous teams produce predictable thinking; uniformity eliminates creative friction.
 - *At a technology firm, innovation teams were composed mainly of engineers with similar backgrounds. Ideas became technically sound but commercially limited. By introducing professionals from operations, marketing, and customer-facing roles, discussions became more diverse and solutions more applicable. Innovation improved as different perspectives reintroduced productive tension.*
- 3. Disempower Innovation Champions:** Without authority and protection, internal change agents lose energy and credibility.
 - *At a healthcare organization, a manager was assigned to lead innovation but had no formal authority or dedicated resources. Initiatives depended on informal support and quickly lost traction. Once the role was formalized with decision rights and executive backing, projects gained momentum. Innovation progressed when internal champions were empowered, not symbolic.*

- 4. Shy Away from Clear Innovation Priorities:** If everything is important, nothing is; lack of focus fragments effort.
- 5. Don't Explain Why It Matters:** When purpose is unclear, indifference quietly replaces engagement.
- 6. Load Innovation on Top of Operations:** Adding innovation to already full agendas leads to burnout instead of breakthroughs.
- 7. Neglect the Scientific Method:** Without hypotheses, experiments, and validation, innovation becomes guesswork.
- 8. Focus on the Short-Term Only:** Short-term activism crowds out long-term strategic innovation.
- 9. Manage It Without a Process:** Absence of structure turns experimentation into chaos rather than learning.
- 10. Overregulate the Innovation:** Excessive controls transform creativity into bureaucracy.
- 11. Don't Put a Budget on It:** Without dedicated resources, innovation remains symbolic rather than real.

Leaders can use this model as a diagnostic mirror. It surfaces hidden organizational behaviors that silently sabotage innovation. It also serves as a strategy conversation starter — helping executive teams distinguish between structural barriers and cultural habits that must be redesigned.

If we intentionally stopped killing innovation tomorrow, what structural change would we make first?

How Managers kill Innovation (according to themselves)



Co-authors

Chapters 1 e 2 bring together contributions from Brazilian executives who actively engage with innovation in practice. The individuals below participated as co-authors, sharing insights and learnings drawn from their professional experiences within their organizations. The chapter was developed in collaboration with Prof. Martin J. Eppler, who contributed as a co-author by facilitating and structuring the discussions, and as part of the Execpedia initiative led by Techni Methods.

- **Flávio Ribeiro** — NetLex
- **J.R. Ferraz** — Pátria, Elfa
- **Márcio Moura** — Invés | Fleury
- **Matheus Pedrosa** — Fralía Cacau Brasil
- **Ricardo Garcia** — Board Member, Mentor and Angel Investor
- **Sérgio Guerra** — Orguel
- **Werner Dalla** — Abertta Saúde

Disclaimer

The views and perspectives presented in this chapter reflect the individual experiences of the co-authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Discover the co-authors of Chapters 1 and 2 through their episodes:

A DIRETORIA EP #25

ERROS que Você NÃO Pode Cometer em Rodadas de Investimento
with **Flávio Ribeiro — NetLex**

A DIRETORIA EP #22

O Futuro da Saúde Está Fora dos Hospitais? | J.R. Ferraz
with **J.R. Ferraz — Pátria, Elfa**

A DIRETORIA EP #14

Por que buscar uma assessoria financeira no modelo fee fixo?
with **Márcio Moura — Invés | Fleury**

A DIRETORIA EP #49

Como inovar em um setor que não muda há 100 anos?
with **Matheus Pedrosa — Fralía Cacau Brasil**

A DIRETORIA EP #27

A Mente de um CEO: Como eles pensam e agem?
with **Ricardo Garcia — Board Member, Mentor and Angel Investor**

A DIRETORIA EP #20

Reinventando o Seu Negócio: Estratégias Para Empresários Modernos
with **Sérgio Guerra — Orguel**

A DIRETORIA EP #67

Como a Tecnologia Está Redesenhando a Saúde no Brasil
with **Werner Dalla — Abertta Saúde**

CHAPTER 3



CHAPTER 3

Innovation Culture

How to recognize an innovation culture: language, metaphors, and environment

Innovation culture is one of the most talked-about and least understood topics in management. Before any innovation policy or transformation program exists, culture is already present in the way people communicate, the spaces they inhabit, and the metaphors they use to describe collective work.

3.1 How people talk in a stagnation culture versus an innovation culture

Language is one of the most immediate and most overlooked signals of organizational culture. You just have to listen to how people respond to a problem or a new proposal.

In stagnation cultures, responses tend to shut conversations down. These are phrases that close possibilities, transfer responsibility, and signal resistance to the new: "That is your problem", "We can't because...", "I think", "This is absurd", "We need to move on".

In innovation cultures, the same situations provoke responses that open pathways. The difference lies not just in tone, but in the mental structure that guides the response: "How can we fix our challenge together?", "We could if we...", "Let's find out", "This is interesting", "Tell me more".

This contrast also works as a self-diagnostic tool: how do you and your team respond today?

How People Talk in a

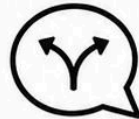
**Stagnation
Culture****Innovation
Culture**

That is your problem.



How can we fix our challenge?

We can't because...



We could if we..

I think



Let's find out

This is absurd



This is interesting

We need to move on



Tell me more

3.2 An innovation culture is like...

Analogies reveal understandings that formal definitions cannot reach. In collaboration with the co-authors of this chapter, four metaphors emerged to capture distinct aspects of what makes a culture truly innovative.

1. A jazz band. Each musician improvises freely, but the point is not loose improvisation. It is the coexistence of a minimal score with continuous iterative listening: each musician adjusting their own sound to the sound of others in real time, based on clear roles, trust, and empathy. Organizational innovation works this way: enough structure to avoid chaos, enough openness for the outcome to be emergent.

2. A beehive. Each individual fulfills their function with a focus on the common good, but remains highly attentive to what others are discovering. The flow of information and tacit collaboration are as important as individual execution.

3. A garden. Fertile ground allows different flowers to bloom, but some need to be pruned. Cultivating innovation requires both openness and discernment. The space for a thousand ideas to flourish is the starting point, not the destination.

- *At a century-old direct selling company, creating space for a thousand ideas to bloom was the starting point for transforming leadership's mindset and enabling a shift to a multi-channel model. The garden metaphor created collective permission to envision what did not yet exist.*

4. A coral reef. An invisible and interdependent ecosystem, with elements at different stages of their life cycle, that depends on healthy conditions to remain vibrant. Innovation culture cannot be transplanted: it dies when one tries to copy it without rebuilding the ecosystem that sustains it.

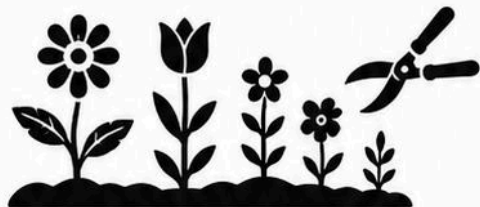
An Innovation Culture is like....



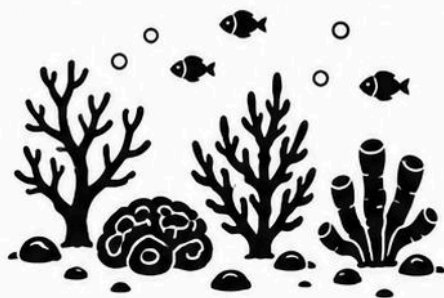
a jazz combo- building freely on each other based on clear roles, trust, and empathy.



a hive where everybody is busy doing their part for the common good while highly attentive to what others found out.



a garden where fertile ground lets different flowers bloom but some need to be cut.



a coral reef, where an invisible ecosystem flourishes that has elements in different life cycle stages (but needs healthy conditions to continue to be colorful).

3.3 The innovation office

Culture can also be read in space. The physical environment communicates, before any word is spoken, which behaviors are expected and valued. When visiting a truly innovative organization, five elements of the physical space stand out.

1. Plants, colors, and open views.. Natural elements and environments with natural light signal that the space was designed to stimulate creativity, not just operational productivity.

2. Open Doors. The absence of physical barriers between leadership spaces and workspaces conveys a concrete cultural posture: accessibility and hierarchical permeability in daily life. Corner offices reserved for hierarchy communicate the opposite.

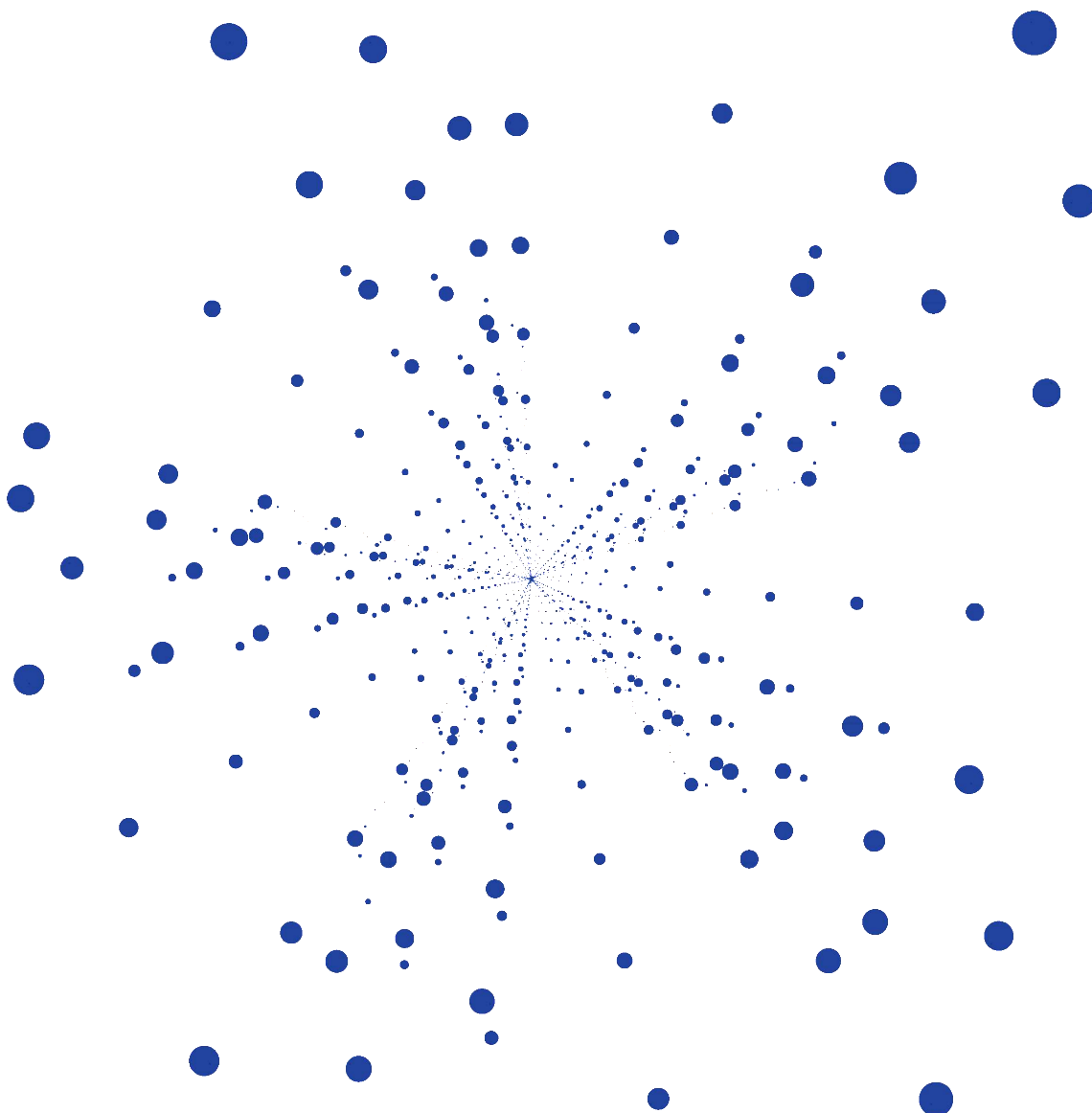
3. Informal spaces, games, and hangout areas.. Innovation frequently emerges from unplanned conversations. Spaces that favor casual encounters between people from different areas create the conditions for this to happen.

4. Whiteboards, indicator boards, and jamboards. The visible presence of collective work tools signals that shared thinking is a practice, not an exception. OKRs and innovation KPIs displayed for everyone communicate that the progress of initiatives is the responsibility of the entire organization.

- *At an innovation-driven organization, the strategy map and OKR dashboard were made visible and interactive for the entire company. The organization also created a repository of closed initiatives: a concrete place to deposit what did not work and learn from it. Innovation advanced when progress stopped being leadership's information and became the entire organization's asset.*

5. Success celebrations and frequent peer trainings. Rituals of collective recognition and peer learning reinforce that innovation is an everyday practice. Celebrating learning carries the same weight as celebrating results.

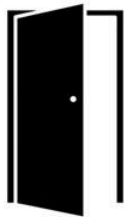
An innovative environment is not necessarily the most sophisticated one. It is the one where the physical space reinforces, rather than contradicts, the culture one wants to build.



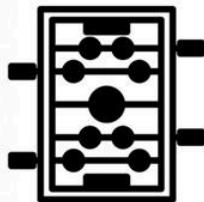
The Office - Innovation Edition



Plants, Colors, Open Views



Open Doors



Informal Meeting Spaces,
Games, Hang-out Areas



Whiteboards, Indicator-
boards, Jamboards

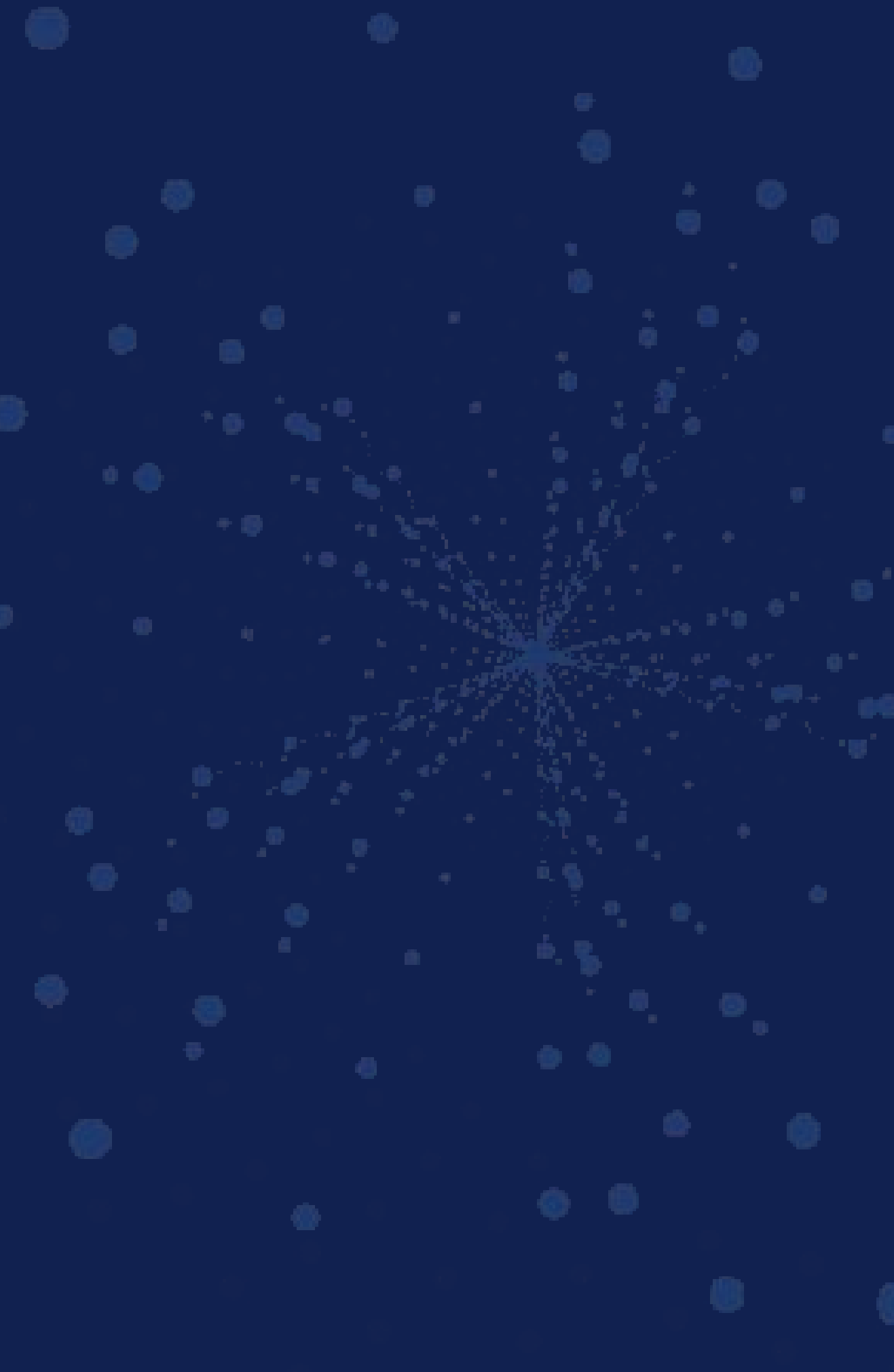


Success Celebrations,
Frequent Peer Trainings

■ ————— EXECEDIA ————— ■

If an external visitor spent a day at your organization tomorrow, which signs of innovation culture would they find and which would they be searching for in vain?

CHAPTER 4



CHAPTER 4

How leaders enable an innovation culture

What are the levers that build an organization that innovates?

Innovation culture does not emerge spontaneously. It is built or destroyed by the concrete choices of those who lead. More than declaring values or launching programs, leaders enable or inhibit innovative culture through daily decisions: what they prioritize, what they fund, what they celebrate, what they tolerate, and what they ignore.

In collaboration with the co-authors of this chapter, we identified eleven high-impact enablers for fostering an innovation culture. The examples presented are illustrative and are intended to demonstrate how these patterns manifest in practice.

1. Define an innovation agenda and track it. Innovation without direction disperses. A leader who sets priorities, objectives, and metrics transforms intention into organizational priority. Tracking is as important as defining: without follow-up, the agenda becomes mere discourse.

2. Be a shining example of learning from mistakes. Cultures that punish mistakes create cultures of silence. When leaders openly share what they learned from their own failures, they create permission for others to do the same.

- *At a healthcare company, leadership introduced the practice of starting innovation meetings with a learning of the week: a real case of something that did not work and what was extracted from that experience. What began with resistance became an anticipated ritual. Innovation advanced when failure took the stage and stopped lurking backstage.*

3. Foster hypotheses testing. Innovation is a learning process through experimentation. Leaders who encourage their teams to formulate and test hypotheses before seeking the definitive solution build organizations that learn faster and fail more intelligently.

4. Connect employees to collaborate. Much of the knowledge relevant to innovation is distributed among people who rarely interact. Leaders who intentionally promote connections across areas and functions create conditions for insights to combine and evolve.

5. Set an innovation budget. Innovation without resources is rhetoric. A specific budget, however modest, signals real commitment and creates the material foundation for initiatives to advance beyond ideation.

6. Give people time to experiment. Without space in the agenda, innovation competes with operational urgency and loses. Protecting time dedicated to exploration is one of the scarcest and most valuable conditions a leader can create.

7. Make your employees confront different realities. Innovation feeds on diverse perspectives. Leaders who encourage their teams to visit other organizations, explore different sectors, and confront varied contexts expand the collective repertoire from which the best ideas emerge.

8. Don't dominate discussions. A leader who talks more than they listen suppresses the team's collective intelligence. Creating space for other voices to emerge is, in itself, an act of leadership for innovation.

9. Foster participation in external events. Conferences, technical visits, and encounters with other ecosystems bring into the organization stimuli that rarely arise from the internal day-to-day. Companies that close themselves off lose touch with the boundaries of what is possible.

10. Prioritize innovation dialogues. Meeting agendas reveal what really matters. When innovation is a formal agenda topic, it stops being an exception and becomes part of the routine decision-making process.

11. Measure and share progress. What is measured is managed. What is shared becomes part of the culture. Making the progress of initiatives visible to the entire organization, including what did not work, creates collective learning and genuine engagement.

- *At a healthcare company, leadership incorporated a recurring check into its strategic review cycles: were the innovation initiatives underway connected to the organization's future direction? Projects that generated results in isolation but were disconnected from strategy were redirected. Innovation advanced when it began to be evaluated not only by what it created, but by what it contributed to the company's future.*

These eleven enablers are organizational design choices. Individually, each one has impact. Combined, they create the conditions for innovation to stop being a one-off project and become a permanent capability of the organization.

How Leaders Can Enable an Innovation Culture

Define an innovation agenda and track it.



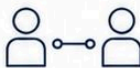
Be a shining example of learning from mistakes.



Foster hypotheses testing.



Connect employees to collaborate.



Set an innovation budget.



Give people time to experiment.



Make your employees confront different realities.



Don't dominate discussions.



Foster participation in external events.



Prioritize innovation dialogues.



Measure and share progress.



EXECPEDIA



If we intentionally stopped inhibiting innovation tomorrow, which of these levers would we move first and what is stopping us from starting today?

Co-authors

Chapters 3 e 4 bring together contributions from Brazilian executives who work directly with innovation in practice. The professionals below participated as co-authors, sharing insights and learnings derived from their professional experiences within their organizations.

- **André Ghion — Ghion.AI**
- **Werner Dalla — Abertta Saúde**
- **Eduardo Ribeiro — Jequití Comésticos**
- **Ricardo Pelegrini — Quantum4**
- **Flávio Ribeiro — NetLex**
- **Gustavo Maia — Priner S.A**

Disclaimer

The opinions and perspectives presented in this chapter reflect the individual experiences of the co-authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the organizations to which they are affiliated.

Discover the co-authors of Chapters 3 and 4 through their episodes:

A DIRETORIA EP #25

ERROS que Você NÃO Pode Cometer em Rodadas de Investimento
with **Flávio Ribeiro — NetLex**

A DIRETORIA EP #51

Ele Criou um Clone de IA e Disponibilizou GRATUITAMENTE
with **André Ghion — Ghion.ai**

A DIRETORIA EP #35

Como Esse CEO Salvou Empresas da Falência e Fez Elas Prosperarem
with **Eduardo Ribeiro - Jequiti Cosméticos**

A DIRETORIA EP #34

Por que o Brasil não inova (e decola)?
with **Ricardo Pelegrini - Quantum4**

A DIRETORIA EP #76

Como Crescer Ainda Mais Depois de Vender Sua Empresa
with **Gustavo Maia — Priner S.A**

A DIRETORIA EP #67

Como a Tecnologia Está Redesenhando a Saúde no Brasil
with **Werner Dalla — Abertta Saúde**

CHAPTER 5



CHAPTER 5

Innovate Yourself

Why does change in an organization start with change in the person who leads it?

An executive can master the vocabulary of digital transformation, speak fluently about experimentation and continuous learning, and still hold beliefs, follow routines, and live in environments that have never been questioned with the same rigor they demand from their own company. In this territory, credibility doesn't come from talk — it comes from concrete examples, and the most concrete example of all is the one a leader is able to recognize in themselves.

This chapter looks at three layers of that practice: the beliefs that support, or sabotage, the way you make decisions; the routines nobody questions; and the environment — physical, social, and technological — that expands or limits the reach of your ideas and, ultimately, the value they can generate.

5.1. The beliefs that support, or sabotage, your leadership

Every leadership decision rests on a set of assumptions that are rarely questioned, precisely because they worked in the past. The real risk isn't holding onto those assumptions — it's failing to ask whether they still make sense in the world the company operates in today, with shorter cycles, cheaper technology, and competition coming from unexpected places.

The group gathered in this session identified nine management beliefs that needed a second look: on one side, what seemed like unquestionable truth; on the other, what real experience ended up showing.

1. Technical depth helps, but connecting different areas helps just as much. Specialists deliver technical depth, but that same depth can become a blind spot when no one from outside the subject is in the room to spot connections that specialization was trained to ignore.

- *A young Nobel Prize winner in Physics, asked how he had managed to invent an entirely new type of microscope, answered that specialists tend to be the most biased people in the room, precisely because of their own expertise, while generalists, with less depth in any one specific area, sometimes see connections that specialization was trained to ignore. The same pattern showed up in a discussion about healthcare in the same group: bringing in people from departments with no direct link to the problem produced the breakthrough that the specialists, on their own, hadn't found.*

2. Good communication always takes preparation, but it can also be spontaneous. A well-rehearsed talk conveys confidence, but the quicker, less scripted conversations tend to be the ones that bring the freshest thinking to the table.

3. Real change seems to require big leaps, but it also happens little by little. The most visible advances grab attention, but much of a company's real capacity for transformation is built through small, continuous adjustments that are almost invisible when looked at one by one.

4. The more specific the problem, the better — but a little vagueness helps too. A problem defined with exact precision already carries within it the assumptions of whoever framed it about what the solution should be, and that narrows the space a team is able to imagine.

- *Framing the same challenge in a slightly more open way, leaving room for interpretation, consistently produced a wider range of responses within the group. It even became a catchphrase among the participants: a broad scope avoids the directional bias built into a narrow one.*

5. Confronting ideas widens your options, but hierarchy can turn the game against it. Inviting disagreement only works when the person being invited to disagree doesn't feel it will cost them, and that sense of safety is rarely stated out loud — it's built long before the moment someone actually needs to disagree.

- *For years, one habit was a source of pride for one of the leaders present: actively making room for people to disagree with him in important meetings, in the belief that this brought more options to the table. It only became clear during the session itself what had gone unnoticed. The weight of his authority and the level of demand he carried turned the invitation into a power play. Instead of expanding, the space for decision-making shrank. People spent more energy protecting themselves than actually voicing disagreement — the exact opposite of what the practice was meant to produce.*

There's a thread connecting how someone reacts to a new idea to the simple habit of a leader who listens more than they speak. Belief generates the pattern, the way you react reveals it, and the leader's behavior either sustains it or undoes it — three layers that live together in the same person.

6. Harsh, direct feedback sounds like professional respect, but it can come at a cost without the right care. The same tone that feels like honesty to the person giving the feedback can sound like aggression to the person receiving it, and the effect usually shows up long after the meeting where it was given.

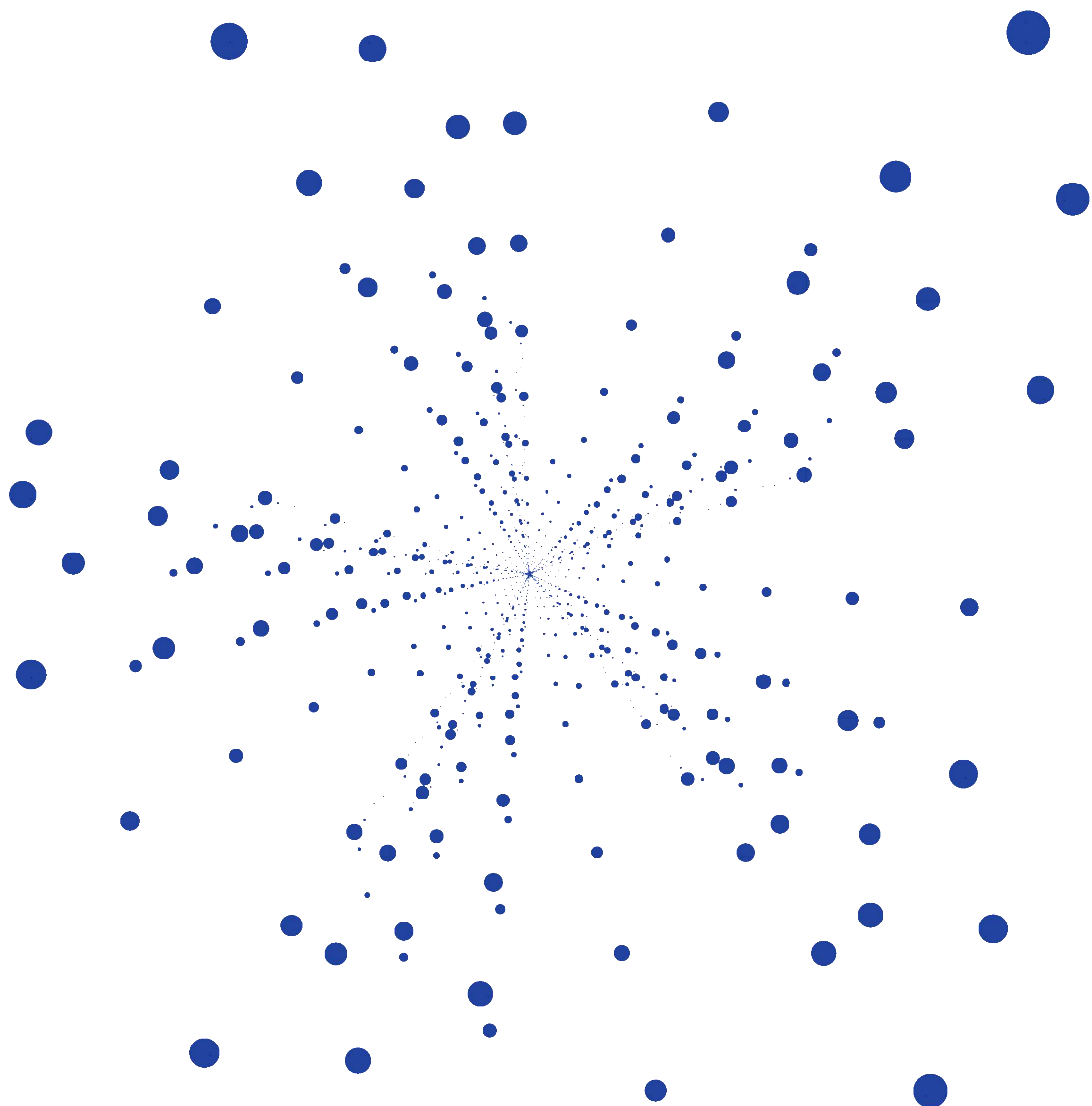
7. Control seems synonymous with tracking numbers, but it can also reveal qualitative insights. The same management systems used to measure results, when well designed, also capture signals that no spreadsheet can show on its own.

8. Artificial intelligence promises to improve operations, but it can also speed up misalignment. Without governance, the same speed that multiplies good decisions also multiplies bad ones — just too fast for any human process to catch in time.

9. Innovating seems like a matter of having good ideas, but in practice it's a matter of staying power. Ideas rarely die for lack of imagination. They die in the valley between the moment they're proposed and the moment they finally start working. Sustaining that valley is the invisible work: keeping the budget alive when there's no immediate result in sight; keeping the right people assigned when other projects seem more urgent; keeping up the review cadence against the natural impulse to give up. Whoever does this rarely shows up in the photos of innovation. They're the ones who make innovation actually arrive.

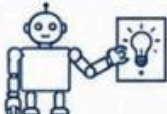
The framework below brings together these nine reframings, with each old belief placed next to the new one, without either erasing the record of the other. Keeping both visible at the same time is what makes the contrast really work, because change is easier to recognize, and easier to remember, when the before sits right next to the after.

This kind of framework is worth using at two moments: at the start of a succession or a role change, when an executive still has time to review their own assumptions before they become the rule for the whole team, and during quarterly leadership retreats. The practical value lies less in the specific list and more in the habit of putting on paper what used to be silently assumed.



Innovating Yourself #1

Examples of How Executives Refine their Beliefs (according to themselves)

I used to think that..	But now I believe that...
 in-depth knowledge enables innovation.	→ it also requires generalists who can connect domains.
 communication always requires detailed preparation.	→ it can be spontaneous and fast-paced.
 innovation is made in big moves.	→ it can be incremental and continuous.
 problem definitions must be as specific as possible.	→ a bit of vagueness enables a bigger solution space.
 confrontation improves innovation.	→ this can destroy openness when hierarchy is present.
 feedback must be tough & direct.	→ it should be constructive and developmental.
 controlling is just about numbers.	→ it can enable qualitative insights and ideas.
 AI can improve operations.	→ it can accelerate misalignment if not governed properly.
 innovation is mainly about breakthrough ideas.	→ it is all about grit, resilience and relentlessness.

5.2 The routines nobody questions

Beliefs are easier to question than habits, because habits rarely ask to be questioned. A routine survives not because someone actively defends it, but because, after proving it worked once, in a context that may not even exist anymore, it never got a second look.

- *A management style built around autonomy and openness revealed, once the results were measured, a gap between intention and reality: most people didn't thrive under total freedom, and asked for more direction, better-defined tasks, and clearer limits. Full autonomy sounds like the more advanced choice, but it comes with a level of responsibility that not everyone is prepared, or willing, to carry without some structure around it.*

Collaboration assumes some degree of structure, and autonomy without organizational design isn't freedom — it's the absence of a decision about how the work should happen.

Planning is another routine that's rarely put to the test. The discipline around daily, weekly, monthly, and annual cycles is a strength many executives take pride in, and rightly so. What's missing is the habit of thinking three, five, or ten years ahead on a fixed spot on the calendar. Some co-authors called this “future-back” planning — planning from the long horizon back toward the short one. Without that layer, planning becomes an occasional scenario exercise, and ambition quietly shrinks.

- *Rigorous planning in short-term cycles, built over an entire career, never had an equivalent routine for longer horizons. Without that layer, even flawless short-term planning quietly shrinks ambition, because every decision ends up optimized for the next quarter. Rebuilding the practice meant deliberately setting aside a fixed block of time on the calendar for a more uncomfortable question: where do I want this to be ten years from now, not just in the next report.*

A less obvious but equally present instinct is the urge to always connect every dot before acting. Thinking through long-term strategy and every trade-off involved before moving has real value, especially for capital decisions or ones that put reputation at risk — but not every decision calls for that lens, and some situations simply call for movement. Knowing how to tell the two apart, and being willing to act without the full picture when the moment calls for it, is a skill that almost never makes it onto senior leadership's agenda. Failing to test hypotheses is a real risk, but turning every decision into a formal experiment has a cost too, and that cost is speed.

One last routine deserves attention, and it almost always slips by unnoticed: the annual review of the business's rhythm — what gets done weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly. One of the co-authors insisted that setting aside time to review this rhythm, once a year, is possibly the single most important thing a leader can do. It's the chance to decide whether the company's pace still fits the moment it's in, or whether it's simply inherited from a context that has already changed. Almost no one does it.

5.2 The environment that expands, or limits, the reach of your ideas

Belief and routine live inside a person, while environment is everything around them: the tools they use, the people they turn to, the physical and virtual spaces where the work actually happens. It's the most concrete lever a leader has available, and also the easiest one to neglect, because it looks like decoration when it's actually infrastructure for thinking. The group identified five environment upgrades, each paired with the benefit that justifies it.

1.Reorganize workflows around new tools, like artificial intelligence agents. The gain doesn't come from adding a new tool to an old process — it comes from redesigning the workflow around it, which tends to bring more focus, more leverage, and better results.

- *One of the executives in the group recalled what happened when electricity reached factories at the end of the nineteenth century. The first plants simply swapped the central steam engine for one large electric motor, in the same spot. Productivity barely moved for decades. The real leap came when factories were redesigned around small motors distributed across individual workstations, with the layout rebuilt around the flow of work. The lesson, which economist Paul David described in 1990, applies directly to today's moment with AI. The gain doesn't come from swapping the engine. It comes from moving the outlets.*

2. Seek out an outside entrepreneur, not just the usual colleagues or consultants. Internal relationships carry hierarchy and shared history, which makes truly honest feedback harder to get. Someone from outside, with nothing to lose inside that company, tends to see things more impartially.

- *In the medical device industry, distributors traditionally own the entire customer relationship, from demand generation to logistics. That pattern was challenged, and the model was split: the manufacturer's own team took over demand generation across all accounts, since they understood the product better, while the distributors kept the logistics and order fulfillment they were already good at. The lesson goes beyond that particular industry: redesigning who does what based on expertise, rather than historical habit, applies to any area that's been treated, out of habit, as support rather than as a strategic partner — including, here, a leader's own personal network.*

3. Block off two hours with no devices at all — just paper and pen. Deep thinking requires an environment where interruption is impossible, not just resisted through sheer willpower.

- *Half a day a week blocked off with no technology at all, just paper and pen, kept up as a practice for a year. During that period, two patents were filed.*

Physical space communicates before any word is spoken: an environment that allows constant interruption is, in practice, saying that depth isn't a priority, even if no one ever says so out loud.

4. Work in pairs instead of large groups or alone. Two people already create enough accountability to decide quickly, without the coordination friction that shows up as soon as the group grows.

5. Use the physical environment more, and the virtual one less, for the work that really matters. A shared room still carries a kind of trust and creative friction that no video call, so far, has managed to fully replicate.

The framework below organizes these five upgrades in an upgrade-benefit format: each behavior change sits next to the consequence that justifies it, reinforcing that environment isn't about aesthetics — it's about cause and effect. This framework is worth revisiting at two moments: when planning a move to a new workspace, physical or digital, and when building the agenda for a new senior executive, as a checklist of what needs to come with the new responsibility. The problem this framework solves is simple: environment usually changes by accident, pushed along by budget or urgency, when it should change by decision.

The three layers in this chapter — belief, routine, and environment — aren't an isolated personal-development exercise. At the scale of a single person, they describe the same kind of mechanism that underlies any real change: blind spots hidden in everyday decisions, self-inflicted patterns that sabotage stated goals, signals that show up in behavior and environment before they ever show up in a report, and levers that only work once someone decides to pull them. Asking an entire organization to look in the mirror only makes sense once each leader has done the same, alone, first.

Innovating Yourself #2

How Executives are Upgrading their Work Environment (according to themselves)

UPGRADE		BENEFIT
	Reorganizing workflows to best profit from new tools (such as AI Agents).	→ Enables more focus, higher leverage and better outcomes.
	Asking a coach or entrepreneur for feedback instead of just colleagues or consultants.	→ Brings more honest, experienced and constructive perspectives.
	Banning digital gadgets for 2 hours and just work with pen & paper.	→ Deepens thinking, reduces distractions and sparks better ideas.
	Working in teams of two instead of working in bigger teams or alone.	→ Increases accountability, speeds decisions and strengthens results.
	Using physical environments more consciously and virtual ones less.	→ Boosts well-being, creativity and the quality of real collaboration.

Which of your own beliefs, routines, or tools haven't you questioned in years — and what would it take to finally put it to the test?

Co-authors

This chapter was developed in a live session facilitated by Prof. Martin J. Eppler, in collaboration with the Brazilian executives listed below, who shared the beliefs, routines, and environments they are personally rethinking, rebuilding, and updating.

- **André Ghion — Ghion.AI**
- **Werner Dalla — Abertta Saúde**
- **JR Ferraz - Grupo Elfa**
- **Felipe Borges - PMI**
- **Ailton Ricaldoni - Nanum Nanotecnologia**
- **Gustavo Maia — Priner S.A**
- **Matheus Pedrosa - Frália Cacau**
- **Marcelo Domingos - Board Member and Investor**

Disclaimer

The opinions and perspectives presented in this chapter reflect the individual experiences of the co-authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the organizations they are affiliated with.

Meet the co-authors of Chapter 5 through their episodes

A Diretoria EP #22

O Futuro da Saúde Está Fora dos Hospitais? | J.R. Ferraz
com **J.R. Ferraz — Pátria, Elfa**

A Diretoria EP #49

Como inovar em um setor que não muda há 100 anos?
com **Matheus Pedrosa — Fralía Cacau Brasil**

A Diretoria EP #81

A empresa brasileira que cresceu com tecnologia própria
com **Ailton Ricaldoni — Nanum Nanotecnologia**

A Diretoria EP #86

Como construir um negócio forte em um mercado imediatista
com **Marcelo Domingos — Conseheiro e Investidor**

A Diretoria EP #44

Como ESG vai transformar a Gestão de Projetos
com **Felipe Borges — PMI**

A DIRETORIA EP #51

Ele Criou um Clone de IA e Disponibilizou GRATUITAMENTE
com **André Ghion — Ghion.ai**

A DIRETORIA EP #76

Como Crescer Ainda Mais Depois de Vender Sua Empresa
com **Gustavo Maia — Priner S.A**

A DIRETORIA EP #67

Como a Tecnologia Está Redesenhando a Saúde no Brasil
com **Werner Dalla — Abertta Saúde**



TECHNI
METHODS

