



Create Spaces for Innovation: A DIY Worksheet

The DIY worksheet is designed to help enterprises consider how physical and cultural SPACES within their organisation can spark and sustain creative thinking.

Why “SPACES” Matter

Research shows that the **physical environment** can significantly influence creativity and collaboration (Dul & Ceylan, 2014). By strategically designing workspaces, organisations can foster **psychological safety** (Edmondson, 1999) and encourage **intrinsic motivation** (Amabile, 1996), both of which are crucial for ongoing innovation.

Instructions (Set aside 20–30 minutes)

1. **Reflect:** Think about your current workspace arrangements—both physical (e.g., layout, décor) and cultural (e.g., norms, attitudes).
2. **Review:** Consider the dimensions in the table below. Each dimension highlights a factor that can significantly influence creativity.
3. **Ideate:** Write down your plans or immediate steps for each dimension, focusing on how you’ll enhance collaboration, positivity, and innovative thinking.
4. **Act:** Select one or two ideas to implement quickly (within the next 30 days).

The SPACES Matrix

<i>DIMENSION</i>	<i>WHY IT MATTERS</i>	<i>EXAMPLES & INSPIRATION</i>	<i>YOUR ACTION STEPS</i>
1. Physical Layout	- Open vs. closed spaces can impact how people share ideas and collaborate (Oldham & Cummings, 1996).	Google’s “open-plan + pods”: Offers quiet nooks alongside open areas to cater to different work styles. Tip: Use movable furniture so teams can reconfigure the space for brainstorming or focused work.	- How can you rearrange desks, chairs, or even entire rooms to encourage spontaneous collaboration? - Could you introduce multi-purpose “break-out” zones?

2. Visual & Sensory Elements	- Colours, lighting, and décor affect mood, productivity, and motivation (Dul & Ceylan, 2014).	Biophilic Design: Introduce plants and natural light to boost creativity and reduce stress. Vibrant Colours: Use energising colours (e.g. green, yellow) to spark creativity.	- Which colour palette might energise your space? - How can you incorporate nature (plants, natural light) for a calmer, more inspiring atmosphere?
3. Collaboration Hotspots	- Dedicated areas for group work can improve knowledge sharing (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).	Team Corners: A round table or comfy sofa where small teams can have quick stand-up or huddle sessions. Whiteboard Walls: Keep markers handy for sketching or mind-mapping ideas instantly.	- Where can you establish a “collaboration corner” or “lounge”? - Will you add writable surfaces to walls or provide virtual whiteboards for hybrid teams?
4. Culture of Experimentation	- A culture that encourages trial and error leads to innovative breakthroughs (Amabile & Khaire, 2008).	Fail Fast, Learn Fast: Hold short feedback loops or “demo days” to share prototypes and lessons learned. Hackathons: Fun sprints that encourage rapid idea generation.	- How can you celebrate small wins and “smart failures”? - Are you providing psychological safety for people to take risks, share half-baked ideas, and learn?
5. Positive Energy & Wellbeing	- Emotional states can affect creative performance (Isen, 1999).	Wellness Initiatives: Provide healthy snacks, relaxation areas, or midday stretch breaks. Social Rituals: Weekly socials or coffee breaks to build rapport and community.	- How can you integrate wellbeing practices into the workspace routine? - Are there any fun, regular rituals (e.g., monthly team lunches) to reinforce positivity?
6. Technology & Tools	- Access to the right digital and physical tools speeds up ideation (Edmondson, 1999).	Brainstorming Apps: Use virtual whiteboards (Miro, Mural) for remote collaboration. Rapid Prototyping: Basic 3D printing tools or simple craft materials to mock up ideas quickly.	- Which tools are missing from your workspace that could enable quicker prototyping or brainstorming? - Could you budget for software or equipment upgrades?

Reflection Questions

1. **What immediate changes** can you make to your workspace—physical or cultural—that would spark **more creativity**?

2. **Which resources** (e.g., budget, team buy-in, external expertise) do you need to introduce these changes?
 3. **How will you track success?** (e.g., measuring idea generation, employee satisfaction, or project completion rates)
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Final Tips

- **Involve Your Team:** Co-create solutions by asking staff for input on workspace improvements (Edmondson, 1999).
 - **Prototype & Adapt:** Start small—test one corner of your office as a “creativity zone,” then expand what works well.
 - **Stay Inspired:** Look for success stories from other SMEs or big tech innovators. Adapt their ideas in ways that fit your culture and budget.
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References & Further Reading

1. Amabile, T. M. (1996). *Creativity in Context*. Westview Press.
 2. Amabile, T. & Khaire, M. (2008). *Creativity and the Role of the Leader*. Harvard Business Review. [Link](#)
 3. Dul, J. & Ceylan, C. (2014). *The impact of a creativity-supporting work environment on a firm's product innovation*. *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Part B: Journal of Engineering Manufacture*, 228(2), 223-236. [The Impact of a Creativity-supporting Work Environment on a Firm's Product Innovation Performance - Dul - 2014 - Journal of Product Innovation Management - Wiley Online Library](#)
 4. Edmondson, A. (1999). *Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
 5. Oldham, G. R. & Cummings, A. (1996). *Employee creativity: Personal and contextual factors at work*. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(3), 607-634. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/256657>
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Go forth and create SPACES that nurture fresh ideas, strengthen collaboration, and fuel your innovative edge! Feel free to customise this worksheet to your unique business context and **celebrate each step** you take toward a more creativity-friendly environment.