



## BEYOND THE *EUREKA* MOMENT: HOW A KNOWLEDGE SHARING CULTURE DRIVES INNOVATION

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**F**or insights professionals, the ideal outcome to any research project seems simple. After reviewing the data, your team has a eureka moment, and this new realization leads to valuable insights that become the foundation for a ground-breaking innovation that leads to new products and great success.

As much as we like to mythologize the eureka moment, innovation doesn't occur in a single flash of brilliance. And while creative, novel ideas may sometimes seem to appear out of the blue, they're actually the result of a new perspective or a combination of ideas that came before.

Innovation within your business doesn't come from a single study or report that your team compiles. It occurs when you make connections between different pieces of information and collaborate across functions. That can't happen unless you take a bottom-up approach to innovation.

#### What Is a Bottom-Up Approach to Innovation?

Taking a bottom-up approach to innovation means that you are democratizing information and insights across your company— and encouraging people at all levels of the organization to follow their curiosity and learn from their peers in different departments. This is still a challenge for insights teams across industries. Only 17% of respondents in the Business & Innovation GRIT Report said that they always promote research to the broadest appropriate audiences.

To foster an innovative environment, insights teams must distribute their research to stakeholders across the organization, not just to the line managers who commissioned the project. Ideas often come from unexpected places, and combining the expertise of employees from across the organization allows your teams to make the kinds of connections that lead to innovation.

There are two additional key components to bottom-up innovation: giving employees the opportunity to ask their peers questions and the space to fail safely.

Asking questions is important because it helps your teams identify sources of expertise, gaps in existing knowledge, and new areas for exploration. Inviting customer-facing teams to ask questions about your latest market research report, for example, can help you discover areas for future studies or to discover new applications for existing research that you might have missed otherwise.

Ideally, employees should have access to a platform that lets them search for questions that have already been asked and publish questions that haven't so that the Q&A process is as efficient as possible. After all, no subject matter expert wants to answer the same question over and over again.

Giving employees space to fail safely is a matter of leaders promoting a culture of experimentation. Leaders must show their team members that making a decision and failing (or getting an unexpected outcome) is more valuable than not making a decision at all. Leaders should also encourage their team members to document and share the outcome of their experiments so that others can build on what they've learned.

#### Innovation Starts With a Knowledge Sharing Culture

Innovation doesn't occur in a vacuum. Insights teams need to share their learnings with stakeholders across the organization, welcome input and questions from their co-workers across functions, and synthesize existing research. It's only when ideas from all these different sources come together that something new can emerge.