# Making Innovation Work for Your Organization

## 📚 MIT Sloan Executive Education Webinar Summary – April 30, 2025

The session featured Dr. Phil Budden, Professor Dame Fiona Murray, and Dr. Kate Isaacs, exploring how leaders can define, enable, and scale innovation authentically within their organizations.

## 📌 Key Takeaways:

### 🔍 What Is Innovation?

- MIT defines innovation as *the process of taking ideas from inception to impact*.
- Impact is defined by the organization- it can mean *profitability, societal change, efficiency, or mor*e.
- Innovation is not just about technology; it's about **leadership**, **implementation**, and **ecosystem collaboration**.
- Ideas are defined as *matches between problems and solutions, not just moments of invention*.

### 💁 Leadership for Innovation

- Innovation leadership requires distinct roles: Architecting Leaders (senior), Enabling Leaders (middle), and Entrepreneurial Leaders (frontline).
- Architecting Leaders create strategic clarity and design systems that reduce organizational friction.
- **Culture is strategy, not separate from it**. Innovation needs *trust*, *clarity*, and *cultural reinforcement*.
- Strategic clarity should be bi-directional: both top-down and bottom-up.

## 🏢 Overcoming Organizational Barriers

- *Inertia*, *bureaucracy*, and *risk-aversion* are the enemies of innovation.
- Organizations must actively **kill unproductive projects and redirect resources to scalable ideas**.
- Middle managers are often wrongly blamed. Innovation needs cross-level ownership.
- **Culture is not static. It can be shaped by leadership behaviors, structure, and clear values.**


## 🌎 Ecosystems and External Innovation

- Tapping into innovation ecosystems (like Kendall Square or Silicon Valley) accelerates impact.
- Corporations, universities, governments, and entrepreneurs all play crucial roles in regional innovation.
- Large organizations gain competitive advantage by partnering with external stakeholders and startups.


## 🧠 Building Innovation Culture and Capabilities

- **Trust** and **purpose** are key to engaging teams in innovation.
- Clear frameworks and simple rules help guide bottom-up innovation.
- **Radical innovation must be protected from inertia; incremental innovation must be strategically prioritized.**
- Leaders must assess innovation health by tracking project flow, stakeholder engagement, and employee empowerment.