

Summary

Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity are at the heart of modern societies. Transformations are accelerating and represent an inescapable challenge for all organizations, public and private. The solution is often sought through tools, processes and organization charts, whereas it is first and foremost a collective effort by men and women.

Thus, a better understanding of innovation and transformation in organizations requires, on the one hand, an understanding of the individual, collective and environmental characteristics of the actors who contribute to it and, on the other hand, an understanding of the specific skills of innovators. Many of these skills are not technical or professional, but socio-behavioral in nature. The objective of the study¹ is to understand which of these transversal competencies, or *soft skills*, are mobilized by these men and women in order to innovate and lead the transformation of their organizations. Training men and women, organization's talents, to recognize and develop their soft skills, and engaging and preparing teams to drive transformation and innovation are major challenges, as they are vectors of growth, competitiveness and employment. It is a question of moving France further ahead in the knowledge-based economy.

To this end, after six years of research and the analysis of 364 manager profiles, the work presented combines the points of view of personality psychology, management sciences and sociology. This work identifies and evaluates the skills and work contexts that promote or hinder innovation and transformation, both at the individual and collective levels. It is based on original empirical material collected in France between 2015 and 2020 from companies and innovators.

The qualitative part of the study is based on semi-structured interviews with people considered as "innovators": 93 intrapreneurs and 33 startups. The information obtained from the respondents allows us to characterize their backgrounds, their aspirations, and their representations of innovation. On this basis, and also based on academic literature and proven psychometric measurement scales, an original tool for evaluating innovation soft skills and work environments was developed.

¹This working paper synthesizes the research work done by Briec du Roscoät, Romaric Servajean-Hilst, Sébastien Bauvet and Rémi Lallement (2022), [Les soft skills liées à l'innovation et à la transformation des organisations. How to act in uncertainty?](#), Institut pour la transformation et l'innovation, March. The purpose of their distribution is to stimulate debate and provide food for thought. The opinions and recommendations they contain are the sole responsibility of their authors.

The 25-skills reading grid thus obtained constitutes the basis for the quantitative part of the study, which involved an online survey of 269 individuals in total. Three categories of people were interviewed: intrapreneurs (from the private and public sectors), startupper and "classic" managers (excluding positions focused on innovation). By showing how these 25 soft skills interact, the study establishes a typology of innovators according to their soft skill profiles, as well as a classification of work environments that are more or less favorable to innovation and organizational transformation activities.

The document makes seven recommendations aimed at developing the soft skills of the people and teams in charge of these activities, on the triple level of the individual, the workgroup and the organization. Essentially, these recommendations involve three sets of levers that concern respectively the training and coaching of individuals, the integration of a diversity of profiles in work teams, and finally the development of enabling environments, allowing cross-functional skills to be fully realized.

Keywords: transversal competencies, innovation, soft skills, transformation, work, change, innovator, intrapreneur, startupper