



COOP-IN

# Social Innovation Training for Virtual Work Based Learning

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## Why are Corporations Excited About Social Innovation?

We all know that there are benefits for society and organisations when BIG corporations invest in social innovation. In this article we look at a selection of BIG businesses that have committed to social innovation in different ways.

### Social Innovation as Growth

When corporations decide to invest in its people or processes in order to be more socially or environmentally minded, such shifts represent huge investments which need to have a pay-off and increase the business's sustainability in terms of finance and community. Here are two examples of BIG business using social innovation resulting in growth.

**Example 1:** Unilever initiated its 'Sustainable Living' plan - a 10-year commitment to double the size of the business while reducing its absolute environmental impact. In 2016, it announced that its 'Sustainable Living' brands - Dove, Lifebuoy, Ben & Jerry's and Comfort – having engaged its workforce in this strategy, these brands are now growing more than 50% faster than the rest of the business – in 2016 they accounted for more than 60% of Unilever's growth in 2016.

**Example 2:** Puma was one of the first companies to establish an 'Environment P&L' in 2011 engaging its whole workforce along the way. This new framework has enabled them to identify and manage the cost to nature of doing business, while simultaneously sharpening focus in pursuit of new and sustainable business opportunities.

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**Website:**

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## Social Innovation in the Work Place

The term social innovation can be traced back to the early 19th century, which is long before technological-economic connotations determined the today's understanding of innovation. Why is it relevant to every business today?

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### Supporting Innovation in the Workplace

Innovation in all its forms including social innovation is the key to improved performance and productivity. Here are 10 ways to support and to facilitate innovation in the workplace:

#### **Top Tip #1: Involve People:**

If people do not feel connected to your company, then there is little incentive for you to be innovative. As a manager, you need to ensure everyone is aware and understands your company's plans, strategies and challenges and that you invite them to share their thoughts and ideas on how to improve performance. People who are involved early on in processes and plans are more likely to be motivated to see them through to completion. Their active participation and engagement will fuel more ideas and you will be on your way to creating an innovation culture.

#### **Top Tip #2: Make innovation important:**

Ensure everyone understands that you want to hear their ideas. Unless they understand how innovating your business processes can keep your company competitive, your efforts at encouraging creative thinking risk falling flat

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### What Is Next?

- **Game release summer 2019**—be among the first to register to play our new educational learning game
- **Social Innovation Toolkit to be published in May 2019**
- Take the **Social Innovation Self assessment** in May 2019
- **Social Innovation National Round Table events** in June 2019
- **UK project conference** in September 2019
- **Final partner meeting:** September 2019 (UK)

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