

Think you know what innovation is? Here are some common myths about innovation (and the straight goods on each one).



1. The Better Mousetrap Myth

We often think of innovation as creating a tangible product, but innovation also makes technologies, processes, services and systems better.



2. The Eureka Myth

Innovation isn't just about big inventions – something that didn't exist yesterday but changes the world today. It's also about moving forward incrementally -- asking the right questions, finding new approaches, and making improvements. In other words, it's not just inventing the first cell phone, but also making phones better with each iteration.



3. The Instinct Myth

When you think about famous innovators, you might feel that you're not up to the task. But everyone can develop an innovative mindset, honing the competencies and characteristics that lead to great ideas and important solutions. It comes down to practice, support and mentorship.



4. The Got-it-in-One Try Myth

Great innovations don't usually drop out of the sky fully formed. There are often many failures on the road to success. Innovators are determined and resilient, willing to keep going even when their idea doesn't work the first, or the fortieth, time!



5. The Lab Coat Myth

Some innovations happen in the lab, led by brilliant researchers and engineers. But innovation is not just about cutting-edge science and technology – it's also about designing new practices, services and processes that meet community needs in better ways.



6. The Startup Myth

Some innovations lead to the creation of new companies – or non-profit organizations like Let's Talk Science! But many innovations happen inside existing organizations, often through the work of dedicated teams. You don't have to be an entrepreneur to be an innovator. "Intrapreneur" is the term for someone who innovates inside an organization.

So what is innovation? Here's the Let's Talk Science approach.

Innovation is a way of discovering, understanding and solving problems that matter in a creative, responsible and sustainable way. It includes competencies and a mindset that can be developed and practiced. Everyone can be an innovator!