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## Study advises businesses to foster innovation, risk taking

Philadelphia Business Journal - by Peter Van Allen Staff Writer

Businesses that foster creativity perform better.

At least that's the finding of a study to be released this month by Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia and conducted and paid for by global consulting firm Towers Perrin.



Karen Davis of the Arts & Business Council wants to unleash companies' creativity.  
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The study lends credibility to the Arts & Business Council's notion that business and the arts need to cross pollinate, said Karen Davis, president and CEO of the nonprofit, which places business volunteers in arts-and-cultural organizations to provide expertise.

"It sounds one-sided, but the business people learn from it as well," said Davis, who will disclose the findings on Oct. 28 at a breakfast session at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

"For us, the big 'ah-ha' was not, 'Who is the next Microsoft?' It was more about finding creativity, finding the innovators," said Tammy Mattson, managing principal at Towers Perrin's Philadelphia office. "We wanted to find out what gets built into everyday work and the effect when risk-taking is encouraged."

Towers Perrin interviewed 350 people, both through Web surveys and face-to-face interviews with C-level executives at Saul Ewing, Beneficial Bank, Campbell Soup Co., McNeil Consumer Health Care, IBM, Ametek and Harmelin Media, as well as the nonprofits WHYY Inc. and the University of Pennsylvania.

The findings, released in "The New Innovation Mindset: Small Revolutions, Big Rewards," are the first in what will be a three-year partnership between Towers Perrin and the Arts & Business Council.

The survey found that innovation in the workplace thrives when helped by four key factors:

- generations being able to work together;
- a spirit of collaboration;
- a company's reputation being built by "meaningful employee input and recognition;"
- and creating a supportive environment for risk taking.

At the Arts & Business Council's suggestion, McNeil, the pharmaceutical company in Fort Washington, brought in improvisational actors from Chicago's Second City comedy troupe to inspire marketing managers.

McNeil managers learned improv comedy's so-called golden rule: "All ideas or statements are accepted as is, without judgment, and built upon," the report said.

Other findings in the Towers Perrin report:

- 76 percent agree they "like to do things that are novel or unconventional;"
- 25 percent believe "management creates a barrier to creative work;"
- fewer than 50 percent of employees "believe their immediate manager understands what motivates them."