

# **Profile of an Innovator**

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If and when you decide to hire innovators into your department of government, how will you know who they are? What is the profile of an innovator? The characteristics of innovators in government can be described in four main areas.

An innovator has self-knowledge. Based on self-examination, an innovator knows what she is good and what she is not so good at doing. This knowledge helps her to understand where she needs help in developing an innovation.

An innovator is constantly learning. He asks silly questions, is curious, finds out what others have done and explores, like a child. He also learns from mistakes.

She takes risks, disagrees with the established wisdom of the government. Constantly asking irreverent questions, playful, she asks why, why not, how might we? She suggests ideas for improvement. Prepared to lead, she is confident about her ideas.

He is not guided by convention but by values, taking responsibility and setting targets. He trusts others and does not spread damaging rumors. Career progression is not his main objective. He is willing to disagree with people and feels free to invent new ways to do things.

The next time you hire somebody; why not assess her for these characteristics?

### **About the Author**

***Eleanor Glor*** Eleanor, an executive with Health Canada, organizes The Innovation Salon and is Editor of The Innovation Journal.