

# THE ENTERPRISE --- GROWTH INNOVATION --- READINESS SCORECARD

 **sopheon**  
A Wellspring company

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A toolkit for assessing  
your organization's  
readiness for growth

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In any scenario, it's good to evaluate where you're at so you can move forward successfully. Like tackling a home improvement project on a Saturday, you've got to plan in order to achieve your desired outcome. Do I have the right tools? Have I drawn out a plan? What materials do I need?

Innovation is no different.

While it's much more complex than building a bookshelf or a deck over a weekend, the basic evaluation processes are still present. You've got to know where you are in order to get to where you want to be. This scorecard is meant to be an evaluation tool to measure your current state of innovation and identify possible gaps to improve efficiencies and processes so that you're set up for future growth. I already know that DeWalt drill I've had my eye on is in my future...Let's discover what fancy new tools may be in your future to foster growth innovation.

In early 2024, we commissioned a **Forrester study** to investigate the operations of enterprise innovation organizations who have realized significant improvements in their time to market, new product revenue, time to market, and pipeline throughput. The study found that these companies have realized disproportionate success by applying a radical approach to innovation management: an approach we now call growth innovation.

**Growth innovation** is a philosophy of innovation management that sets growth as the single most important innovation outcome and manages every step of the innovation process accordingly.

Growth innovation relies on thoroughly and comprehensively applying a trifecta of principles to manage innovation operations in the enterprise:

**Growth**

Every single innovation activity is explicitly tied to growth objectives. level business case.

**Visibility**

Every single piece of innovation data is logged and visible to whomever needs it.

**Orchestration**

Every single decision is made in the context of a unified portfolio-level business case.

When these three principles are applied in concert, enterprises transform innovation’s impact on the business. Our study found that growth innovation improves pipeline health and efficiency to such a degree that an enterprise can launch one additional net-new core product within five years of implementation, improve new product profit margin by one percentage point, and reduce project management costs by ten percent.

If done right, growth innovation can turn your innovation organization into a well-oiled machine that generates predictable, demonstrable ROI. But that kind of transformation doesn’t happen overnight.

## The Study's Results

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**Net New Core Product  
Launches - within first  
5-years**

1%

**Increase in Profit  
Margin**

10%

**Project Management  
Cost Reduction**

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## Growth innovation requires a culture shift

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The principles of growth innovation are intuitive on the surface. Everyone agrees that innovation should be a fundamental growth driver for the business—otherwise, why do it? Everyone agrees that it's better to have access to vital information. And no self-respecting leader would willingly choose to make decisions in a vacuum.

However, truly applying the growth innovation trifecta requires buy-in at all levels of the organization—and that's the hurdle that most enterprises struggle to clear. Leaders need to translate the overall company strategy into short-, mid-, and long-term growth objectives that can drive measurable targets and KPIs at every level of their innovation programs—and then they must document and socialize those growth objectives and targets with the rest of the organization. Every team needs to log their data (project management, product performance, market research, technical data, portfolio value, etc.) and document their processes in one central system. Managers need to set governance policies in place that ensure innovation activities are consistently aligned with growth objectives and all decisions are being made in context of the portfolio as a whole.

Growth innovation yields immense rewards, but the road to those rewards isn't an easy one. That's why it's important for change managers to take inventory of how ready their organization is for the shift to growth innovation.

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## How to use this resource

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We've created this guide and scorecard to be a resource for innovation leaders exploring how to implement growth innovation within their organizations. You can use this as a way to assess how ready your enterprise is for the shift to growth innovation today and identify which areas will require the most concerted change management effort.

This is a two-part resource: the first is a guide for assessing how aligned with growth innovation best practices your enterprise already is. Both pieces apply the three principles of growth innovation to the four main domains of enterprise innovation: Strategy & Planning, Portfolio Management, Research & Incubation, and Development & Launch. The guide describes how growth innovation principles are applied to each of the four domains along with tips for assessing your organization's readiness to implement growth innovation in each of the four. The scorecard, on the other hand, lists a series of growth innovation statements per domain. You can then grade your organization's growth innovation readiness based on how accurately these statements describe the way your organization operates today.

We recommend reading through the guide first and then using the scorecard. The scorecard can be used as an individual exercise, but it is also designed to be used to facilitate change management conversations among innovation teams within your organization. This can be a helpful first step in getting more innovation stakeholders' buy-in—which can be helpful to your efforts to bring about meaningful change.

Once you've completed your scorecard, please click the button below and we'll schedule a time to show you how to read your results.



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## About Accolade

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**Accolade** is an innovation management software solution from **Sopheon**, a **Wellspring** company. For more than 20 years, innovation professionals have used Accolade's data visualization, analytics, roadmapping, and collaboration capabilities to reduce time to market, optimize portfolio value, improve efficiencies, and increase new product success rates.

In summer 2024, Wellspring commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study to examine the potential ROI enterprises can realize by using Accolade in a growth innovation context. In addition to finding a three-year ROI of 321%, the study found that the typical enterprise customer can introduce **one successful net new core product in the first five years of using Accolade.**

To see how Accolade can help your organization increase new product revenue and facilitate growth innovation, [schedule a demo today.](#)

# Assessing Your Enterprise's Growth Innovation Readiness

In order to realize the full business potential of your innovation operations, the three principles of growth innovation need to be adopted by stakeholders in all four of the main innovation management domains:

- **Strategy & Planning:** the creation and ongoing curation of innovation portfolio plans that are tied to corporate strategy and corresponding business outcomes.
- **Portfolio Management:** the coordination of investment, resourcing, and prioritization decisions in support of each innovation portfolio's business objectives.
- **Research & Incubation:** the management of early-stage (exploratory) innovation activities, culminating in a business case for entering the Development & Launch pipeline.
- **Development & Launch:** the execution of a dedicated innovation pipeline, from business case to launch, in support of each portfolio's business objectives.

This guide describes how the trifecta of growth innovation principles (growth, visibility, and orchestration) manifest in each domain, and provides direction for assessing how ready each domain in your enterprise is to begin applying those principles today.

To learn more about the principles of growth innovation, check out our free guide, *The Growth Innovation Trifecta: A new philosophy of innovation management*.

# Assessing growth innovation readiness in strategy & planning

Strategy and planning is where effective innovation begins, and so it's a smart place to start when assessing your organization's readiness to implement growth innovation management practices. The key things to look for here are how clearly your innovation initiatives are linked to overall business strategy, how well-socialized those connections are, and how leaders keep innovation activities aligned with strategy.

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## Innovation strategy and overall objectives

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In a mature growth innovation enterprise, every single innovation initiative is explicitly tied to the company's overall strategy. Any given innovation project has a documented, objective-backed rationale for being in the works.

When assessing your organization, begin with the following questions pertaining to your innovation strategy:

- Is the strategy formally documented?
- Is the documented strategy available for reference to all innovation stakeholders?
- Is all strategy documentation accurate and up to date?

This lays the groundwork for assessing growth innovation readiness in this domain. If the answers to all the questions above are “yes,” then your organization has a decent foundation of documentation to build growth innovation practices upon. But if you answered “no” to any of



these questions, then the first step on the road to growth innovation should involve changing this. In order to tie your innovation strategy to organizational objectives, you first need to document your innovation strategy!

If your organization has a well documented innovation strategy, then you can move on to examine how that strategy connects to the company's overall objectives. Look at the initiatives listed in the innovation strategy and ask the following questions:

- Does every initiative make sense in context of the company's formal objectives?
- Is there documentation that explicitly connects each initiative to at least one of those objectives?
- Is that documentation available for reference to every innovation stakeholder involved in that initiative?

If the answers to these questions are “yes,” your organization is already implementing some growth innovation best practices. If that's not the case, expect to spend some time drawing up specific rationale for each initiative as you shift toward a growth innovation culture.

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## **Innovation strategy and target setting**

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Growth innovation management is the process of keeping the enterprise's innovation activities focused on driving the company's short-, mid-, and long-term growth. A vital component of this is setting specific growth targets for innovation initiatives. These targets give innovation stakeholders clear expectations for progress, performance, and reporting; they also give managers metrics to measure progress against.

To assess your organization's readiness in this area, ask:

- Are overall goals broken down into subgoals at the business unit and/or category levels?
- Does each innovation initiative have specific, measurable targets

attached to it?

- Has leadership articulated reporting KPIs for each initiative?
- Do each initiative's KPIs clearly translate to the company's overall strategy?
- Are these targets and KPIs documented and available for reference to all relevant innovation stakeholders?

If the answer to these questions isn't "yes," leadership will need to change this by setting clear targets and reporting expectations. Once this is done, those expectations will need to be socialized with relevant innovation stakeholders, and reporting practices will need to adjust accordingly.

It's important to keep in mind that although measurable targets must be connected to the growth strategy, in most cases it will not be directly connected to revenue, or even ROI. Rather, the targets are a way of holding every project accountable for its contribution to the strategic goal. As such, an effort to develop next-gen materials for a new aircraft design might have KPIs around shear strength or durability, because those performance levels are critical for the overall design concept to succeed (and therefore generate growth once it has launched in the market).

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## **Innovation strategy calibration and alignment**

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Finally, growth innovation calls for regular review and recalibration of innovation activities—this keeps the entire innovation organization aligned with the innovation strategy and keeps the innovation strategy aligned with overall business objectives.

In assessing this, ask:

- Are there practices in place for regularly reviewing innovation activities for alignment with strategy?
- Are there practices in place for regularly gathering insights from historical and current innovation activities?
- Are there practices in place for regularly reviewing and realigning the innovation strategy with overall business objectives?

- Are these practices followed consistently, and are they documented and accessible to relevant innovation stakeholders?

As in the previous parts of this section, answers in the affirmative indicate that your organization is already on track toward a culture of growth innovation. If these practices aren't in place, or (as in most cases) if they are being followed sometimes but not across-the-board, then leadership will need to audit their approach to innovation governance so that innovation operations are kept well calibrated and in line with company strategy.



# Assessing growth innovation readiness in portfolio management

In a growth innovation organization, portfolio management is the discipline of translating growth innovation strategy into specific investments, priorities, and resourcing decisions for groups of interrelated projects. At its core, growth innovation seeks to treat every decision as a component of the aggregate, portfolio-level business case. Therefore, assessing readiness in this area requires you to take inventory of how your organization approaches these decisions.

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## Portfolio management and prioritization

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While growth innovation strategy links each initiative to the company's overall objectives, growth innovation portfolio management prioritizes those initiatives based on how they're expected to contribute to organizational goals.

By prioritizing initiatives, innovation stakeholders at every level can make decisions confidently, because they know which activities should receive more resources, which projects should be expedited, and how projects should be triaged at bottlenecks. As you assess your innovation strategy, ask the following questions:

- Are all innovation initiatives prioritized in a meaningful way within each portfolio (i.e., is it clear which projects are centrally important, which are experimental, which are dependent on the outcomes of others, etc.)?
- Is the rationale for the prioritization process clearly linked to the overall business strategy?

- Are priority levels documented in a way that all relevant innovation stakeholders can reference them?
- Are resources allocated in a way that reflects those priorities?
- Is the prioritization process responsive to changes along the way (e.g., lessons learned during development, shifting project timelines, market shifts, external technology evolution, etc.)?

Answering “yes” to these questions indicates that your organization is already implementing some growth innovation best practices on this front. If the answer to any of these questions is “no” or “sometimes but not always,” you will need to change this in order to realize the full benefits of growth innovation.

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## **Portfolio management and data visibility**

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Growth innovation calls for decisions to be made in context of the entire portfolio—this is only truly possible if managers can see the ripple effects that every decision will have throughout the rest of the innovation projects at play. This allows managers to see how actual activities align with the priorities they’ve set.

When it comes to assessing readiness in this area, ask:

- Is each portfolio’s roadmap (all its projects and initiatives, and how they relate to each other) managed in a centralized system?
- Is each portfolio’s progress toward growth targets being tracked in a centralized system?
- Are project interdependencies clearly mapped in a centralized system?
- Is all of the data (roadmaps, progress, and interdependencies) accessible to relevant stakeholders on demand?

If you can answer these questions in the affirmative, your organization is already ahead of the curve! Logging this data and making it accessible to stakeholders isn’t an easy task, but doing so gives the entire organization the clarity they need to make portfolio-level decisions on the regular. If you answered “no” or “sometimes, but not always” to any of these questions,

prepare for the shift to growth innovation to involve a concerted effort in gathering, documenting, and centralizing all of this information in an innovation management system.

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## Portfolio management and calibration

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Growth innovation portfolio management requires regular check-ins to keep priorities, budgets, staffing, and other moving pieces in alignment with the innovation strategy. These meetings should involve groups of cross-functional executive stakeholders—this makes sure any adjustment decisions are fully informed.

To assess readiness on this front, ask:

- For each innovation portfolio, are there regular cross-functional executive meetings to review priorities, resource allocation, and staffing?
- For each innovation portfolio, are there policies in place for enacting adjustments necessary to achieve strategic growth goals?

If the answer to either of these questions is “no,” or “sometimes, but not always,” expect the shift to growth innovation to involve setting up procedures for keeping portfolio management activities aligned around growth.



# Assessing growth innovation readiness in front-end innovation

Front-end innovation (FEI) is the process of identifying and greenlighting opportunities for the launch pipeline. Growth innovation principles ensure that this process stays focused on researching and incubating ideas that contribute to the growth targets set by business leaders in the innovation strategy. Furthermore, growth innovation enterprises keep their idea portfolio aligned with the priorities assigned by portfolio managers.

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## FEI and growth objectives

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FEI identifies, researches, and incubates potential new innovation projects. When growth innovation principles are infused with this domain, every new opportunity is expressly connected to growth targets and portfolio priorities. To assess how ready your organization is to do this, ask:

- Does the current FEI portfolio reflect innovation priorities?
- Are all our upstream and early-stage innovation activities explicitly connected to at least one of our short-term, mid-term, or long-term innovation goals?
- Is this documented rationale accessible to all relevant innovation stakeholders?
- Are there policies in place to move on-strategy projects forward and avoid spending resources on off-strategy projects?
- Are these policies documented and accessible to all relevant innovation stakeholders?

Answers in the affirmative indicate greater readiness to run FEI according

to growth innovation principles in your organization. If you answered “no” to any of these questions, expect to address them as you build a growth innovation culture of FEI.

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## **FEI and data visibility**

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Data visibility is key to building a growth innovation culture within your FEI teams: it allows all stakeholders to review growth-strategy rationale, glean insights from historical data and research findings, and see which opportunities are approaching the launch pipeline. To assess data visibility readiness, ask:

- Is all the key information from upstream and early-stage innovation activities managed in a centralized system?
- Is all this FEI information visible by default to relevant stakeholders?

If the answers to these questions are not “yes,” plan to spend time pulling together FEI data into a centralized system that allows the rest of your innovation organization to view and share it.

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## **FEI and decision-making**

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The shift to growth innovation may involve restructuring the decision-making processes your organization uses in FEI activities. To assess this, examine your organization’s current approach to making FEI decisions by asking:

- Do our FEI decisions consistently consider their potential effects on the portfolio’s overall ability to achieve strategic growth objectives?
- Do our FEI decisions consistently employ metrics and benchmarks appropriate for early-stage exploratory innovation efforts?

As a company matures in its growth innovation journey, the answers to these questions will become “yes.”



# Assessing growth innovation readiness in the launch pipeline

The launch pipeline is where new offerings come to life: it carries initiatives from the FEI stage through production and into the market. Within most enterprises, the launch pipeline usually has the most sophisticated and codified approaches to operations, decision-making, and governance.

The shift to growth innovation shouldn't destroy effective policies and procedures in the launch pipeline; rather, it should free pipeline stakeholders to make faster decisions, increase throughput, reduce time to market, and trim project management expenses.

Like FEI, the launch pipeline takes direction from leaders in the strategy and portfolio management domains. Therefore, assessing growth innovation readiness in the launch pipeline is similar to assessing it in FEI. If growth innovation principles have been thoroughly applied in leadership domains, the effects will likely have trickled down into the launch pipeline.

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## Launch pipeline and growth objectives

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When growth innovation principles are applied within this domain, every project is explicitly connected to growth targets and portfolio priorities. To assess how ready your organization is to do this, ask:

- Are all activities in our dedicated launch pipeline explicitly connected to at least one of our short-term, mid-term, or long-term innovation goals?
- Is this documented rationale accessible to all relevant innovation stakeholders?

- Are there policies in place to ensure high-priority projects keep moving forward?
- Are these policies documented and accessible to all relevant innovation stakeholders?

If the answers to all these questions are “yes,” your organization’s pipeline is primed for the growth innovation shift! If this isn’t the case, expect to make these changes after implementing growth innovation principles in the domains of strategy and portfolio management.

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## **Launch pipeline and data visibility**

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Data visibility allows leaders and pipeline stakeholders alike to get a real-time view of development and production activities. To assess data visibility readiness, ask:

- Is all the key information from our dedicated launch pipeline (including the growth-strategy rationale, as well as documents, stage changes, decisions, etc.) managed in a centralized system?
- Is all this pipeline information visible by default to relevant stakeholders?

If the answers to the questions above are not “yes,” the shift to growth innovation will involve choosing an innovation management system, centralizing pipeline data within the system, and making that data visible to innovation stakeholders.

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## **Launch pipeline and decision-making**

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While the shift to growth innovation shouldn’t necessarily break existing pipeline procedures, you may find the need to tweak decision-making processes. To assess how much your pipeline decision policies will need to change, consider the following questions:

- Do our decisions on downstream innovation activities consistently consider their potential effects on the portfolio’s overall ability to achieve strategic growth objectives?

- Do our decisions consistently employ metrics and benchmarks appropriate for downstream innovation efforts?

As with all the questions we've recommended asking in this guide, in a growth innovation enterprise, the answer is always "yes." If this isn't the case for the current state of your pipeline, plan to spend time adjusting decision-making processes accordingly.

## Take the next step toward growth innovation

You've seen how to assess growth innovation readiness in your organization—you're ready to start! Begin with the scorecard in the second part of this resource: it's an exercise that you can do yourself or with a group to see how your current state of innovation lines up with growth innovation best practices.

If you're interested in speaking with an expert about how to begin implementing growth innovation at your enterprise on the Accolade platform, we'd love to show you how we've helped other companies in this area. [Schedule an Accolade demo with one of our consultants today!](#)

# Growth Innovation Readiness Scorecard

## How to use the scorecard

The following scorecard includes twelve statements describing an enterprise that has fully applied the three principles of growth innovation to the four main domains of innovation management: strategy, portfolio management, front-end innovation (FEI), and the development pipeline.

For each statement, score your own organization on a scale of one to five based on how accurately the statement applies to how you do things today. Once you've scored your organization against all twelve statements, tally the scores in each domain and then add them together to get your final score out of sixty.

This exercise will show the extent to which each principle is currently being applied in each of the four domains. When complete, you (and anyone else who works through this scorecard with you) will have an idea of where change will be most felt within the organization—which is a good place to begin when planning for a shift in innovation management philosophy.

**NOTE:** You don't have to work through this scorecard alone! Pull together a small group of innovation stakeholders and score your organization together—the diversity in perspective will help you more accurately assess your organization's readiness, and a group discussion will yield more ideas for implementing change than simply working through this on your own.

This resource also includes a blank [Excel version of this scorecard](#) which you can use to facilitate such a meeting. We've designed this scorecard in a way that should allow a group of six people to work through it in an hour.

# Growth Innovation Readiness Scorecard

	Growth	Visibility	Orchestration	Score
<b>Strategy &amp; Planning</b>	We have explicit innovation strategies for the purpose of driving growth over time. These strategies are organized into innovation portfolios and they are weighted across short-, mid-, and long-term time horizons.	Each of our innovation strategies are documented and socialized such that all innovation personnel understand the growth outcomes behind their work, and so that they can apply that strategic rationale in navigating their everyday activities and decisions.	The senior executives responsible for our growth strategies regularly review insights and lessons learned from across our innovation activities as a core set of inputs for adapting, fine-tuning, or even reworking those growth strategies as warranted.	<b>Area Readiness score</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>Portfolio mgmt.</b>	Within each portfolio, we regularly review the specific projects and initiatives at a cross-functional executive level to optimize that portfolio's contribution to the growth strategy.	The Roadmap for each portfolio (all of its projects and initiatives) is managed in a centralized innovation system where we can see the progress of each piece and map the interdependencies clearly.	For each of our innovation portfolios, cross-functional executive stakeholders meet regularly to make decisions (prioritization, resource allocation, staffing, etc.) and clear roadblocks as necessary to achieve the strategic growth goals.	<b>Area Readiness score</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>Research &amp; Incubation</b>	All of our upstream / early-stage innovation activities are explicitly connected to one or more of our short-, mid-, or long-term innovation strategies and therefore connected to the company's growth strategy.	All of the key information from our upstream innovation activities (including the growth-strategy rationale, as well as documents, insights and intelligence, lessons learned, etc.) is managed in a centralized innovation system and visible to all by default.	When we make decisions on front-end innovation activities (go/kill, business case, resourcing, etc.), we consistently a) consider how it will affect the portfolio's overall ability to achieve its strategic growth goals; b) employ metrics and benchmarks appropriate for early-stage exploratory innovation efforts.	<b>Area Readiness score</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>Launch Pipeline</b>	All of the innovation activities in our dedicated launch pipeline are explicitly connected to one or more of our short-, mid-, or long-term innovation strategies and therefore connected to the company's growth strategy.	All of the key information from our dedicated launch pipeline (including the growth-strategy rationale, as well as documents, stage changes, decisions, etc.) is managed in a centralized innovation system and visible to all by default.	When we make decisions on downstream innovation activities (go/kill, business case, resourcing, etc.), we consistently a) consider how it will affect the portfolio's overall ability to achieve its strategic growth goals; b) employ metrics and benchmarks appropriate for activities in a dedicated innovation launch pipeline.	<b>Area Readiness score</b> <input type="text"/>



## Total Growth Innovation Readiness Score

Sum total of individual area scores

## **A growth innovation mindset starts with the right resources. Ensure you've got the right tools in your toolkit!**

Would you like assistance filling out your scorecard? Request a workshop with one of our experts and they can help walk you and/or your team through the evaluation.

