

Active Twist Guide to the INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model™

Your Introductory Step-by-Step Guide to Understanding and
Advancing Innovation Maturity in Your Organization



Version Information

INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model — Version 25.11m

Table of Contents

Topic	Page
<u>Introduction Section</u>	
How to Use This Guide	3
About the INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model	4
Using Your Quiz Results	6
<u>The INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model Levels</u>	
Level 1 — Inactive	7
Level 2 — Narrow	7
Level 3 — Starting	7
Level 4 — Practical	7
Level 5 — Integrated	8
Level 6 — Robust	8
Level 7 — Exceptional	8
<u>Going Further with Active Twist</u>	
Consulting & Partnership	9
Our Extended Ecosystem	10
Next Steps & Contact	12

How to Use This Guide

The **INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model** provides a clear, structured way to understand how innovation actually functions inside your organization. This guide provides a high-level, complete overview of the model to help you orient yourself, interpret your quiz results, and understand which levers matter most as you move toward maturity.

This guide offers three things:

1. **A concise explanation of the model** — what it measures, how it works, and why it helps leaders build repeatable, reliable innovation capability.
2. **A succinct summary of each maturity level** — enough detail for you to understand the patterns, strengths, and limitations of where you are today.
3. **Guidance on what to explore next** — how INSPIRE fits into the broader
4. Active Twist ecosystem of models, and consulting support.



Use this guide as your starting point. If you completed the [10-question INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model Quiz](#), your results map directly onto the seven levels described later in [The Levels of the Model](#). Your score indicates your most likely level today, but the real value comes from understanding the adjacent levels above and below you, because progression rarely moves cleanly in straight lines. Innovation expands in pockets, regresses under pressure, and accelerates when the right structures are in place.

About the INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model

The **INSPIRE Model** helps you assess how well your organization turns ideas into meaningful, repeatable outcomes. It identifies the patterns that support or block innovation at scale and gives leaders a structured way to understand where they are today, and what progression requires.

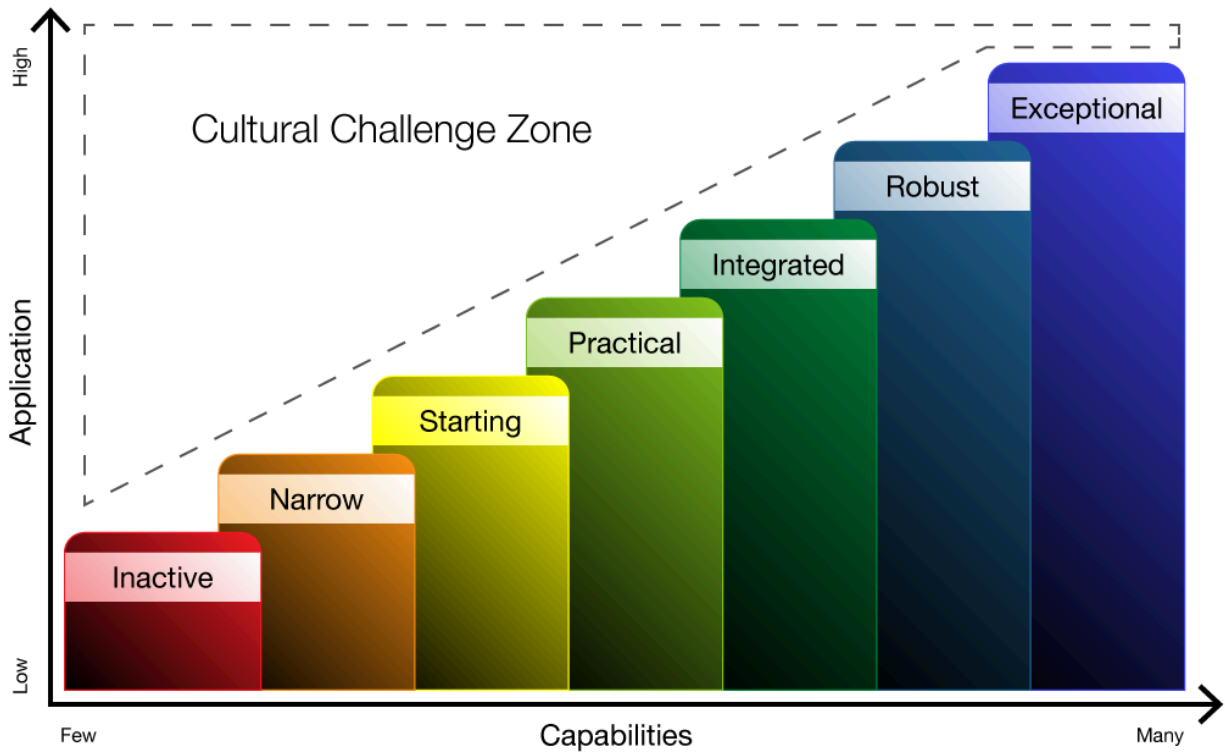
At its core, INSPIRE evaluates two things:

- **Capabilities** — the foundational innovation skills and structures your teams rely on (how people frame problems, test assumptions, collaborate across functions, and use evidence to make decisions).
- **Application** — how widely those capabilities are used in work (how reliably teams apply methods, how leaders reinforce the behaviors, and how often innovation succeeds outside isolated pockets).

These two axes form the backbone of the model. Strong capabilities without broad application lead to isolated successes that fail to spread. Strong application without real capability leads to performative “innovation theater.” Mature innovation requires both the existence of skills and the systematic use of those skills across the organization.

The model organizes innovation maturity into seven levels, each describing a distinct combination of capabilities and application ranging from early, fragmented efforts to fully integrated and reliable organizational practice. [The Levels of the Model](#) section provides a concise interpretation of each level.

The **full model graphic**, shown below, visualizes these levels along the two axes. It helps you see at a glance how maturity progresses and why organizations often plateau without adjusting both capability and application.



This graphic also highlights the **Cultural Challenge Zone**, where applying new capabilities demands the most cultural effort. This zone is widest at the early levels because organizations with less maturity struggle more with shared language and cross-group coordination. As capabilities grow, weak intergroup communication and silo boundaries put additional stress on progress, making this zone a common place for slowdowns or stalls. Understanding this helps leaders see why early movement is harder, and why consistent cultural reinforcement matters as maturity increases.

Use this model as a reference point. Whether you're interpreting your quiz score or aligning teams around a shared understanding of where you stand, the INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model provides a common language for how innovation grows, stalls, or accelerates in practice.

Using Your Quiz Results to Orient Yourself

If you completed the [10-question Quiz](#), your score maps directly onto the seven levels of the INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model. The quiz is designed to give you a fast, reliable sense of where your organization sits today and which maturity patterns are shaping your current outcomes.

Your score does three things:

1. **Identifies your most likely maturity level.** Each range of scores corresponds to one of the seven levels in the model. This gives you a starting point, not a final diagnosis.
2. **Highlights your adjacent levels.** Innovation maturity rarely behaves like a staircase. Organizations often show strengths from the next level up and weaknesses from the level below. Reviewing your adjacent levels in Section 4 will help you understand the patterns around your score.
3. **Orients you on your innovation maturity path.** The model isn't about labeling; it's about direction. Your level shows what your teams can do today and helps you understand the patterns shaping your current outcomes.



The Levels of the Model

The **INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model** outlines seven levels that represent how innovation develops, stabilizes, and becomes a strategic capability. Each level reflects clear patterns in **capability development, application consistency,** framed within the organization's leadership posture, and cultural readiness. The summaries below give you a quick way to interpret your current state and the patterns around it.

Level 1 — Inactive

Innovation is essentially absent. There are no meaningful capabilities, processes, or appetite for innovation. The culture is risk-averse, psychological safety is low, and experimentation is rare. Any results that appear are accidental and unsustainable.

Level 2 — Narrow

Innovation appears only in isolated pockets. One or two teams show early interest while others remain cautious or disengaged. Support is uneven and processes are inconsistent, leaving efforts neither repeatable nor scalable.

Level 3 — Starting

Innovation becomes consistent. Early routines, templates, or practices take shape, and leadership begins to support experimentation. Progress has become visible but remains fragile.

Level 4 — Practical

Innovation produces reliable results. A basic playbook exists and is used consistently, teams collaborate, and cross-functional support becomes common. Appetite grows, though cultural reinforcement is still developing.

Level 5 — Integrated

Innovation becomes a strategic priority. Processes, data, and cross-functional collaboration embed into daily work. Risk is managed intelligently, and methods and language are shared across the organization.

Level 6 — Robust

Innovation becomes a strategic advantage. Decisions are guided by data and analytics grounded in demonstrated outcomes. Learning loops, feedback systems, and psychological safety are institutionalized, enabling the organization to adapt quickly to changing conditions.

Level 7 — Exceptional

Innovation defines the organization's identity. The company sets standards, publishes insights, and influences the broader industry. Renewal systems keep capabilities sharp and forward-looking, making innovation self-sustaining, generative, and future-focused.



Consulting & Partnership

Some organizations need deeper support interpreting their results, aligning leaders, or coordinating change across teams. When the work involves multiple perspectives or complex decisions, external guidance makes a meaningful difference in outcomes.

Partnering With Active Twist

A consulting engagement typically includes:

- Deeper organizational diagnostics
- A detailed analysis of cohort results
- A facilitated interpretation session
- Recommendations tailored to your context
- Workshop delivery anchored in model-based methods
- Support for building an organization-wide maturity roadmap

If you'd like to discuss whether consulting is the right fit, or if you want guidance on interpreting your current results, we invite you to start the conversation with us at:

<https://activetwist.com/contact>



Our Extended Ecosystem

The **INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model**, the **Intergroup Leadership Maturity Model**, and the **CLIMB AI Readiness Model** form a connected ecosystem intentionally designed to give leaders a holistic view of organizational maturity. Each model addresses a different dimension of performance, and together they reflect how real organizations evolve, collaborate, and adapt under pressure.

While each model stands alone, they were built to interlock. Leaders often adopt them sequentially or in combination, depending on their goals, constraints, and strategic horizon.

A Holistic View of Organizational Maturity and Readiness

Organizations rarely stagnate for a single reason. Innovation struggles when leadership communication breaks down. Leadership efforts stall when groups isolate themselves. AI transformation fails when strategy and capability are misaligned. The three Active Twist models help leaders understand these relationships without forcing them into a one-size-fits-all framework.

Together, they offer three distinct but complementary views:

- The **INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model** Shows how well your teams turn ideas into durable, repeatable outcomes.
- **Intergroup Leadership Maturity Model** Shows how leaders communicate across groups, reduce friction, and enable collaboration.
 - <https://activetwist.com/our-process/intergroup-leadership/>
- **CLIMB AI Readiness Model** Shows how prepared your organization is to adopt AI with clarity, discipline, and aligned expectations.
 - <https://activetwist.com/our-process/ai-readiness/>

How the Models Reinforce One Another

When used together, the models help you see patterns that are hidden when looking at one maturity dimension alone:

- Strong innovation efforts (**INSPIRE**) often depend on leaders who frame communication clearly across groups (**Intergroup Leadership**).
- AI initiatives (**CLIMB**) become more effective when innovation structures are already in place (**INSPIRE**).
- Cross-group collaboration (**Intergroup Leadership**) spreads innovation practices more evenly, preventing pockets of progress from stalling.
- AI readiness amplifies innovation capability when teams understand how to apply new tools responsibly (**CLIMB + INSPIRE**).

This integrated view helps leaders avoid blind spots and enables purposeful, coherent maturity planning.

Three Models, Many Entry Points

Organizations can begin with any model in the suite. Common entry points include:

- **Innovation-focused teams** starting with INSPIRE
- **Leadership teams** working across functions and developing common language starting with Intergroup Leadership
- **Technology-forward teams** preparing for AI enablement and transformation starting with CLIMB

When the Full Ecosystem Becomes Most Valuable

The complete ecosystem is especially powerful when:

- Several teams are navigating change simultaneously
- Innovation depends on cross-group alignment
- AI adoption requires cultural and capability adjustments
- Leadership wants a cohesive maturity roadmap across the organization

Active Twist's consulting support can help integrate the models into a single, unified maturity view tailored to your organization's structure, goals, and constraints.

Next Steps & Contact

You now have a clear understanding of the **INSPIRE Innovation Maturity Model** and how it can help you assess and develop your organization's innovation capability. This free guide gives you a complete overview of the model, a succinct interpretation of each maturity level, and a sense of how innovation maturity connects to leadership effectiveness and AI readiness.

If you want to continue your work, you can explore the options that best match your goals.

Review the Other Active Twist Models

If you want a broader organizational view, the other two guides are available here:

- [Intergroup Leadership Maturity Model](#)
- [CLIMB AI Readiness Model](#)

Each model includes its own assessment, free overview, and consulting options.

Share This Guide

You are welcome to forward this guide to colleagues or teams who would benefit from a shared understanding of innovation maturity. A common vocabulary is often the first step toward aligned progress.

Start the Conversation

If you'd like help interpreting your maturity level, planning a roadmap, or evaluating how another model fits your goals, you can reach out anytime. We're here to support leaders who want to build capability with clarity and discipline.

Start the conversation at: <https://activetwist.com/contact>