

The Corporate Maturity Matrix:

Complete Answer Keys

Persona: Corporate / Innovation Manager / Intrapreneur

Scope: Levels 0–8 (Dimensions & Risks) | Perspective: First Person ("I am...", "We are...")

Level 0: Conception (The Spark)

Focus: Resilience | **Core Question:** Are we structurally ready to innovate?

L0 Dimensions (Innovation Readiness)

Dimension	Grade 1 (The Fortress)	Grade 2 (The Tourist)	Grade 3 (The Partner)	Grade 4 (The Builder)	Grade 5 (The Platform)
D1: Problem Sourcing <i>Do you have list of unsolved problems for a founder to tackle?</i>	I have no awareness of problems; status quo dominates.	I have generic problems listed; they are vague.	I have identified clear business problems.	I have strategic problems with solutions ready.	I define transformative sector-wide problems.
D2: Articulation <i>Can you articulate these problems clearly?</i>	My problem definitions remain vague; unclear thinking.	I have superficial understanding; incomplete.	I have clear articulation with strategic insights.	I demonstrate deep understanding and systems thinking.	I articulate problems with transformative clarity.
D3: Openness <i>Are you</i>	I am closed; I prefer "Not Invented"	I acknowledge external ideas but	I am genuinely open; some barriers	I actively seek external solutions;	I drive transformation through external

<i>genuinely open to external solutions?</i>	Here" (DIY).	remain skeptical.	exist.	resources allocated.	solutions.
D4: Founder Engagement <i>Have you engaged with early-stage founders?</i>	I have no engagement; I don't understand them.	I have token engagement; it is superficial.	I have real engagement; I learn from them.	I have deep engagement; it is mutually beneficial.	I am a legendary partner; founders seek me out.
D5: Innovation Budget <i>Can you allocate resources to innovation?</i>	I allocate no resources; token gestures only.	I allocate minimal resources; half-hearted.	I provide clear allocation with real commitment.	I provide significant resources structurally.	I allocate transformative resources; innovation-first.
D6: Industry Insight <i>Do you have unique industry insights?</i>	I have generic insights based on public info.	I have some insights, but they are incomplete.	I share deep, proprietary industry insights.	I offer transformative insider perspectives.	I am an industry legend; I define the future.
D7: Experimentation <i>Can you celebrate</i>	I punish experiments; I am risk-averse.	I tolerate experiments but don't encourage them.	I celebrate learning and encourage trials.	I celebrate failure and structure learning.	I am legendary for enabling an experimentation

<i>experiment s?</i>					culture.
D8: Process Speed <i>Can you move at startup speed?</i>	I am paralyzed by bureaucracy; months to decide.	I am slow; weeks to make simple decisions.	I have a fast-track process for innovation.	I match startup velocity in decision making.	I move lightning-fast; I remove all friction.
D9: Incentive Structure <i>Are incentives aligned with risk?</i>	I punish risk-taking; strictly KPI driven.	I offer no upside for innovation risk.	I have specific incentives for intrapreneurs.	I offer significant upside/equity-like rewards.	I have a founder-grade incentive structure.

LO Risks (The Immune System)

Risk Factor	Grade 1 (High Risk)	Grade 2 (Risk)	Grade 3 (Managed)	Grade 4 (Secure)	Grade 5 (Antifragile)
EiR1: Innovation Theater <i>Is this real or just PR?</i>	I am doing this purely for PR/optics.	I am mostly focused on optics.	I have some substance behind the PR.	I am results-driven, not PR-driven.	I am purely impact-driven; substance first.
EiR2: NIH Syndrome <i>"Not Invented Here" bias?</i>	I reject anything we didn't build.	I prefer internal builds strongly.	I am neutral; best solution wins.	I prefer buying/partnering for speed.	I am radically open ecosystem-wide.

EiR3: Quarter-it s <i>Short-term vs Long-term?</i>	I kill anything without quarterly ROI.	I struggle to fund long-term bets.	I protect innovation from quarterly cuts.	I have a ring-fenced long-term budget.	I have generational patience.
EiR4: Career Risk <i>Is innovation a career killer?</i>	Failure here gets you fired.	Failure stalls your career.	Failure is accepted if learned from.	Failure is a badge of honor.	Innovation is the fast-track to C-suite.
EiR5: Legal Blockers <i>Does Legal kill deals?</i>	Legal kills everything early.	Legal is a major bottleneck.	Legal is trained in startup norms.	Legal is a partner in speed.	Legal finds ways to say "Yes."
EiR6: Procurement <i>Can you pay startups fast?</i>	Payment terms are Net-90+; kills startups.	Procurement is slow and rigid.	I have a simplified startup procurement path.	I pay startups instantly/Net-15.	Procurement is a competitive advantage.
EiR7: Executive Sponsorshi p <i>Do you have air cover?</i>	I have no executive sponsor.	I have a weak/distraughted sponsor.	I have a committed executive sponsor.	I have C-suite active participation.	The CEO is the chief innovation officer.
EiR8: Talent	My best innovators	I struggle to retain	I retain talent by	I attract entrepreneurs	I am a magnet for

Drain <i>Are innovators leaving?</i>	are quitting.	entrepreneurs.	giving them autonomy.	urial talent.	the world's best builders.
EiR9: Strategy Alignment <i>Is this strategic?</i>	Innovation is a side hobby.	Innovation is loosely coupled.	Innovation supports business units.	Innovation drives business unit strategy.	Innovation is the corporate strategy.

Level 1: Initiation (The Hunt)

Focus: Validation | **Core Question:** Are we solving problems or just buying toys?

L1 Dimensions (Scouting & Discovery)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)
D1: Scouting Quality <i>Can you find relevant startups?</i>	I wait for startups to email me.	I look at general databases.	I scout based on specific problem theses.	I have a deep, active scouting network.	I find startups before they are known.
D2: Problem Validation <i>Do BUs validate problems?</i>	Business Units (BUs) ignore me.	BUs give vague problem statements.	BUs validate problems before I scout.	BUs actively partner in discovery.	BUs demand innovation; pull-based.
D3: Pilot	BUs refuse	BUs are	BUs have	BUs	BUs run

Readiness <i>Are BUs ready to pilot?</i>	to pilot external tech.	hesitant to pilot.	budget set aside for pilots.	compete to run pilots.	pilots at lightning speed.
D4: Startup Empathy <i>Do you understand startup limits?</i>	I treat startups like big vendors.	I demand excessive documentation.	I respect startup resource constraints.	I minimize friction for startups.	I protect startups from my own complexity.
D5: Trend Spotting <i>Can you spot market shifts?</i>	I am blind to disruption.	I see trends after they are mainstream .	I identify trends early.	I predict market shifts accurately.	I shape market trends.
D6: Deal Speed <i>How fast is your NDA/LOI?</i>	NDAs take months.	NDAs take weeks.	NDAs take days.	Standardized, instant docs.	Zero-friction contracting .
D7: Value Proposition <i>Why should startups work with you?</i>	I offer nothing but a logo.	I offer slow potential revenue.	I offer data, customers, and expertise.	I offer unfair market access.	I make startups market leaders.
D8: Feedback Loops <i>Do you give</i>	I ghost startups.	I give vague rejections.	I give actionable feedback.	I connect them to other opportunities	I am a trusted advisor even when

<i>feedback to startups?</i>				es.	saying no.
D9: Integration Vision <i>Do you know how they fit?</i>	I have no plan for integration.	I figure it out later.	I have a hypothesis for scale.	I have a clear path to production.	I view every pilot as a potential M&A.

L1 Risks (Validation Blindness)

Risk Factor	Grade 1 (High Risk)	Grade 2 (Risk)	Grade 3 (Managed)	Grade 4 (Secure)	Grade 5 (Antifragile)
EiR1: Solutionism <i>Looking for problems for solutions?</i>	I buy tech looking for a problem.	I am excited by "cool" tech.	I start with the business problem.	I am rigorously problem-led.	I validate the problem before seeing tech.
EiR2: Pilot Purgatory <i>Do pilots go nowhere?</i>	Pilots define success; no scale plan.	Most pilots die after the POC.	I have a defined path out of pilot.	I have a high conversion to production.	I only pilot if I intend to scale.
EiR3: BU Resistance <i>Do BUs fight you?</i>	BUs actively sabotage innovation.	BUs are indifferent.	BUs are cooperative.	BUs are champions.	BUs drive the innovation agenda.
EiR4: Brand Risk	Fear paralyzes all action.	Excessive compliance checks.	Balanced risk assessment	Smart containment of risk.	We embrace reputational

<i>Fear of reputation damage?</i>			.		I risk for growth.
EiR5: False Signals <i>Confusing interest with commitment?</i>	I promise deals I can't deliver.	I overhype internal interest.	I am transparent about decision power.	I only promise what I control.	My word is gold; startups trust me.
EiR6: Mentorship Quality <i>Is your advice good?</i>	I give corporate advice to startups.	I give generic advice.	I give relevant industry context.	I provide game-changing mentorship.	I am a legendary mentor.
EiR7: Data Access <i>Can startups use your data?</i>	Data is locked; impossible to access.	Data access takes months.	Sandboxed data available.	API-first data access.	Seamless, secure data integration.
EiR8: Fatigue <i>Are you wasting startup time?</i>	I meet just to "learn".	I ask for endless free consulting.	I respect their time/burn.	I add value in every meeting.	I accelerate their business regardless of deal.
EiR9: Sourcing Bias <i>Do you only see the</i>	I only see big-name startups.	I see what VCs send me.	I scout diverse/global sources.	I find hidden/stealth gems.	I have a proprietary deal flow engine.

<i>usual suspects?</i>					
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Level 2: Formulation (The Build)

Focus: Feasibility | **Core Question:** *Can we build/integrate without crushing them?*

L2 Dimensions (Venture Building)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)
D1: Internal Build <i>Can you build startups internally?</i>	We build corporate projects, not startups.	We build slow, expensive MVPs.	We build lean, validated ventures.	We run a professional venture studio.	We build category-defining unicorns.
D2: Tech Stack <i>Is your tech modern?</i>	Legacy systems block everything.	We have some APIs, mostly legacy.	We have a modern integration layer.	We are cloud-native and API-first.	Our tech stack is a competitive moat.
D3: CVC Strategy <i>Do you invest?</i>	No investment capability.	Ad-hoc, strategic investments.	Dedicated CVC fund with thesis.	Top-tier CVC with financial returns.	Legendary CVC; smart money.
D4: Spin-out Cap <i>Can you spin out IP?</i>	IP is locked forever.	Spin-outs are legally painful.	We have a process for spin-outs.	We actively spin out non-core IP.	We create ecosystems of spin-outs.

D5: Co-Creation <i>Can you co-create with startups?</i>	We treat them as vendors.	We try to collaborate; friction high.	We have co-creation frameworks .	We build joint IP effectively.	We seamlessly fuse teams.
D6: Governance <i>How are projects governed?</i>	Managed like IT projects (Waterfall).	Stage-gate with heavy docs.	VC-style metered funding.	Milestone-based growth boards.	Founder-friendly governance .
D7: Talent Flow <i>Can staff move to ventures?</i>	Staff cannot leave core roles.	HR makes transfers difficult.	Staff can second to ventures.	Seamless flow between core/venture.	Best talent fights to join ventures.
D8: unfair Advantage <i>Do you leverage corporate assets?</i>	We hide our assets.	Hard to access assets.	We leverage brand/distribution.	We weaponize our scale for startups.	We provide unfair market dominance.
D9: Speed to Pilot <i>Time from hello to live pilot?</i>	> 12 months.	6-12 months.	3-6 months.	1-3 months.	< 4 weeks.

Level 3: Market Entry (The Launch)

Focus: Traction | **Core Question:** Can we scale this beyond a press release?

L3 Dimensions (Commercialization)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)
D1: Scaling Path <i>Path from pilot to contract?</i>	No path; pilot ends relationship.	Path is unclear/negotiated.	Standardized conversion path.	Automated triggers for scaling.	Guaranteed scale for winners.
D2: Distribution <i>Do you put them in front of customers?</i>	We never expose to customers.	Limited exposure to friendlies.	Active sales channel integration.	Incentivized sales force sells it.	Seamless bundle with core product.
D3: Marketing <i>Do you co-market?</i>	No marketing support.	We allow use of our logo.	Joint press releases.	Full co-marketing campaigns.	We make them a household name.
D4: Procurement Scale <i>Can you buy at volume?</i>	Procurement blocks scaling.	Volume discounts hard to negotiate.	Scaled master agreements.	Global framework agreements.	Vendor-of-choice status globally.
D5: Impact Tracking <i>Do you measure</i>	No metrics; anecdotal.	Vanity metrics (number of pilots).	ROI metrics (cost savings/rev).	Strategic impact metrics.	Transformative P&L impact.

<i>results?</i>					
D6: M&A Readiness <i>Can you acquire them?</i>	M&A is disconnected from innovation.	M&A is slow and destroys value.	M&A watches innovation pipeline.	Innovation feeds M&A targets.	Seamless acquire-and-integrate.
D7: Global Rollout <i>Can you take them global?</i>	Local pilots only.	Hard to cross borders.	Regional rollout capability.	Global rollout infrastructure.	Instant global scale.
D8: Revenue Share <i>Are deal terms fair?</i>	We take all the value.	We squeeze their margins.	Fair, standard terms.	Generous terms to fuel growth.	Ecosystem-first value sharing.
D9: Adoption Culture <i>Do employees use it?</i>	Employees resist new tech.	Forced adoption; low usage.	Champions drive adoption.	Widespread enthusiastic use.	It becomes essential to daily work.

Level 4: Scaling (Grow)

Focus: Growth | **Core Question:** *Can innovation drive material revenue?*

L4 Dimensions (Growth Engine)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)

D1: P&L Impact	Innovation is a cost center.	Innovation breaks even.	Innovation contributes to EBITDA.	Innovation drives material revenue.	Innovation saves/makes the company.
D2: Portfolio Mgt	No portfolio view.	Ad-hoc collection of projects.	Balanced portfolio (Core/Adj/New).	Rigorous portfolio optimization.	Self-sustaining innovation fund.
D3: New Biz Units	We never launch new units.	New units die inside core.	New units survive with protection.	New units thrive independently.	New units become the new core.
D4: Market Share	We are losing share.	We are defending share.	We are growing share via innovation.	We are taking share from disruptors.	We are expanding the TAM.
D5: Talent Density	Innovators leave for startups.	We hire some ex-founders.	We retain intrapreneurs.	We attract top startup talent.	We are the top destination for builders.
D6: Brand Perception	We are seen as a dinosaur.	We try to look cool.	We are respected as modern.	We are seen as an innovator.	We are a category king.
D7: Ecosystem Gravity	Startups avoid us.	Startups tolerate us.	Startups like working with us.	Startups prefer us to VCs.	We define the ecosystem.
D8: Investment Returns	We lose money on innovation.	Returns are unclear.	Returns meet cost of capital.	Returns beat market benchmarks.	Innovation funds the future.
D9: Strategic	We cannot	We pivot	We pivot strategically	We anticipate	We shape the market

Agility	pivot.	too slowly.	y.	and adapt.	direction.
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Level 5: Efficiency (Profit)

Focus: Profit | **Core Question:** *Is innovation efficient and accretive?*

L5 Dimensions (ROI & Optimization)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)
D1: Innovation ROI	Unknown ROI.	Negative ROI.	Positive ROI tracked.	High ROI consistently .	Exceptional , compounded ROI.
D2: Kill Rate	We never kill zombie projects.	We kill projects too late.	We kill projects rigorously.	We kill fast and redeploy.	We celebrate killing projects.
D3: Resource Fluidity	Resources are siloed.	Resources move slowly.	Resources follow opportunity .	Liquid resource allocation.	Frictionless capital/talent flow.
D4: Process Auto	Manual innovation tracking.	Spreadsheets and meetings.	Digital innovation management.	Automated dashboards /metrics.	AI-driven portfolio management.
D5: Cost of Innovation	Extremely expensive.	High cost per success.	Benchmark ed cost.	Efficient capital use.	Negative cost (self-funding).
D6: Synergy	Synergies are	Synergies are hard to	Synergies	Synergies are	The whole is 10x the

Capture	theoretical.	realize.	are tracked.	systematically captured.	parts.
D7: Operational Bridge	Gap between Innovation & Ops.	Handoffs are painful.	Structured handover process.	Integrated ops/innovation teams.	Seamless continuum.
D8: Data Usage	Data is siloed/useless.	Data is descriptive.	Data informs decisions.	Data predicts success.	Data drives autonomous innovation.
D9: Profit Centers	Innovation is overhead.	Innovation is subsidized.	Innovation is a profit center.	Innovation funds other units.	Innovation is the growth engine.

Level 6: Leadership (Lead)

Focus: Innovation | **Core Question:** *Is innovation part of our DNA?*

L6 Dimensions (Culture & Strategy)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)
D1: CEO Mandate	CEO ignores innovation.	CEO pays lip service.	CEO reviews innovation quarterly.	CEO actively champions it.	CEO's legacy is innovation.
D2: Board Engagement	Board asks about risk only.	Board asks about ROI only.	Board reviews strategy.	Board demands innovation.	Board includes founders/V Cs.

D3: Culture	Culture of fear/compliance.	Culture of execution.	Culture of improvement.	Culture of experimentation.	Culture of ownership/invention.
D4: Org Structure	Innovation is a department.	Innovation is a side-desk.	Innovation is a function.	Innovation is embedded everywhere.	The organization is a network of startups.
D5: Incentive Alignment	Incentives favor status quo.	Mixed signals.	Innovation KPIs exist.	Long-term incentives (LTI) aligned.	Everyone owns the future upside.
D6: Psychological Safety	Fear of failure dominates.	Blame culture.	Safe to fail within limits.	Failure is analyzed, not punished.	Fearless radical candor.
D7: Vision	Quarter-to-quarter.	1-year plan.	3-year strategy.	5-10 year moonshots.	Generational vision.
D8: Change Mgt	We resist change.	We manage change poorly.	We adapt to change.	We lead change.	We are the agents of change.
D9: Ambidexterity	We only exploit (core).	We struggle to explore.	We balance exploit/explore.	We excel at both.	Seamless integration of both.

Level 7: Unicorn (Icon)

Focus: Legacy | **Core Question:** *Have we reinvented the industry?*

L7 Dimensions (Industry Transformation)

Dimension	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5

	(Novice)	(Amateur)	er)	nal)	(Legend)
D1: New Ventures	No new ventures.	Small, irrelevant ventures.	Successful niche ventures.	Category-leading ventures.	Multi-billion dollar new lines.
D2: Market Cap	Stagnant/Declining.	Tracking index.	Outperforming peers.	High growth multiple.	Tech-like valuation multiples.
D3: Disruption	We are being disrupted.	We are following trends.	We are fast followers.	We are disrupting others.	We disrupted ourselves.
D4: Ecosystem Power	We are isolated.	We participate.	We are a key player.	We orchestrate the ecosystem.	We are the ecosystem.
D5: Talent Magnet	We hire mercenaries.	We hire managers.	We hire builders.	We hire visionaries.	The best people work here.
D6: Legacy	We will be forgotten.	We are a case study in decline.	We are a stable incumbent.	We are a renewed giant.	We are an industrial icon.
D7: Standards	We follow standards.	We complain about standards.	We adopt standards early.	We influence standards.	We write the industry standards.
D8: Global Impact	No impact.	Local impact.	Regional impact.	Global impact.	Civilization-level impact.
D9: Reinvention	We define ourselves by the past.	We are trying to change.	We have modernized.	We have reinvented.	We are eternally young.

Level 8: Steward (Sustain)

Focus: Stewardship | **Core Question:** Are we good ancestors?

L8 Dimensions (Sustainability & Ethics)

Dimension	Grade 1 (Novice)	Grade 2 (Amateur)	Grade 3 (Practitioner)	Grade 4 (Professional)	Grade 5 (Legend)
D1: Purpose	Profit at all costs.	CSR as PR.	Purpose alongside profit.	Purpose-driven profit.	We exist to solve humanity's problems.
D2: Sustainability	Extractive.	Compliance-based.	Sustainable practices.	Net-zero/Regenerative.	Healing the planet.
D3: Ethics	Compliance only.	Avoid scandals.	Ethical guidelines.	Ethics by design.	Moral leadership.
D4: Community	We take from community.	Transactional charity.	Good corporate citizen.	Deep community integration.	Pillar of society.
D5: Inclusivity	Exclusive/Homogeneous.	Diversity targets.	Inclusive culture.	Belonging and equity.	Radical inclusion.
D6: Long-termism	Next quarter.	Next year.	Next cycle.	Next decade.	Next century.
D7: Stakeholders	Shareholders only.	Shareholders first.	Balanced stakeholders.	Stakeholder capitalism.	We serve the world.

D8: Governanc e	Opaque/De fensive.	Compliant.	Transparent .	Accountabl e.	Radical transparen cy.
D9: Wisdom	Smart but foolish.	Knowledge able.	Experienc ed.	Wise.	Institutional Wisdom.