

CULTURE BEATS STRATEGY

INNOVATION PIONEERS TANKMEETING 4, 2015

This briefing paper includes key takeaways from the fourth tank meeting 2015 hosted by Husqvarna in Huskvarna. Johan Hallendorff and Maria Strahl from Husqvarna lead the tank meeting, which was a spin off from the popular tank meeting at Volvo Cars earlier this year. The day included a visit to the Husqvarna museum to witness the evolution of successful innovation projects, created through a robust culture. The tour was followed by a workshop with the aim to understand the importance of culture and identify what some key factors are to build a successful innovative culture.

PURPOSE

The tank meeting was a spinoff from the popular meeting at Volvo Cars earlier this year. The previous workshop explored what makes innovation projects successful. It was then agreed that having a strong culture in the company was one of the key factors for successful innovations. Therefore, the purpose of this workshop at Husqvarna was to further explore 6 different themes about initiatives that directly or indirectly create a good innovation culture. The aim was to provide the participants with a toolbox or guide for creating a more innovative culture in organizations.

METHOD

Before the meeting, the participants were asked to answer a questionnaire to share initiatives, success stories or initiatives that turned out with less success, that they have experience from. Based on these insights, the participants of the tank meeting were divided into smaller groups that each would address one of the different themes. To share knowledge, each group presented their findings to the rest of the participants, with the help of big papers or power points. Each groups also created a 1-minute video with their key findings.

DESCRIPTION

All participants got to choose which workshop they wanted to attend out of the 6 themes. It could be that they had a lot to contribute to the group or struggled with the theme in the organization and wanted to receive insights. The groups received a handout with a template of important aspects to guide the discussion and structure the documentation. At the end of the workshop, the groups presented their discussion and findings. The 1-minute videos, produced by each group, is uploaded on the Innovation Pioneers website.

8 ways to action found in the learnings and results below

- ◆ Curiosity is a key in innovation
- ◆ Profiling Intrapreneurs
- ◆ Documenting the innovation process
- ◆ Innovation Events is an effective tool and can be customized to companies and needs
- ◆ In a large company with strong culture, a strategy is crucial
- ◆ Culture is more important than strategy
- ◆ Reward is an important component and does not need to be monetary, instead, the receiver can decide
- ◆ Breaking patterns and habits creates an innovative climate. Shake hand with people using the left hand

LEARNINGS AND RESULTS

Theme 1: How do you grow intrapreneurs?

An intrapreneur can be defined as an inside entrepreneur, or an entrepreneur within a large firm, who possess and uses entrepreneurial skills in their work. As an initial step, it is important that the HR department knows the profile of intrapreneurs in order to recruit them to the organization. Thereafter, the intrapreneurs need a defined process with an assigned budget and time for development and support at the early stages. The intrapreneurs furthermore need the right leadership with a clear framework for ideas outside current business, but still within the explorative scope. They want to feel empowered in their work and perceive openness for new initiatives in the organization. Providing the intrapreneurs, managers and other employees with training and education was another key. The managers and employees can often learn a lot from intrapreneurs, and vice versa.

Theme 2: How do you execute an innovation event?

Creating innovation events has become fairly common and there exists several structures for such events. The group presented examples of innovation events that they have had experience from within their own organization. Google Design Sprint, FedEx Day, ID Days, Innovation Expo, Innovation Camp and Innovation Journey were the cases presented. The timeframe for the event varied between 24 hours to 5 days, depending on the purpose of the event. To idea generate, the event does not need to be very long while creating a finished product with a clear business plan demands more. The number of participants in the events varied and some had invited external participants for new insights.

Theme 3: How to create belief in the future?

One group discussed how companies could create a sense of the future to adopt to change. Technology, human behavior, social-, legal- and political frameworks are uncertain in the future but companies need to allocate resources to explore them, start thinking ahead and create future solutions in order to be sustainable. It was also important that the company shared knowledge within an organization to create a common vision and objectives for the future. Several companies also recommended and shared their experience of future roadmapping and also expressed it as very useful.

Theme 4: How do you create an innovative working environment?

Having the right environment is a key for stimulating innovative work. Allocating time to be innovative is important, which could be both office hours and outside. When creating the right innovative working environment, the space is another factor. Creating a room without distractions, comfortable interior and the possibility to write on the walls, was a few of the suggestions that was presented. Sometimes, just a black room can be the best surrounding. That puts a focus on talking and eliminates distractions as body language. Another important key in the discussion was having diversity among the employees, creating an organization that operates cross-functional and breaking patterns of old routines.

Theme 5: How do you get a collaborating culture?

The group presented different methods for creating a more collaborative culture that they had experienced within their companies. One way was to create a platform to share experiences, allocate resources and create openness. Another proposal was to have 1 hour voluntary meeting each week where employees could discuss and share ideas, problems or projects with each other. One could also collaborate with customers to create an understanding of the future need.

Theme 6: How can you work with rewards and recognition?

There are several different rewards and recognitions that can be applied in organizations. Team reward, bonus, career ladder, lunch with CEO and compensation in vacation days were a few of the suggestions. It was also discussed that companies does not need to decide the reward. A more appreciative and effective method would be to let the employee choose the reward between certain alternatives. The group also discussed what projects that should be rewarded. It was agreed that companies should not put a focus on whether the project was successful or not, instead focus on the learning and effort.