

Daring Success Factors for Radical Innovation

INNOVATION IN ACTION 2015

This briefing paper includes key takeaways from the Innovation in Action 2015 workshop, facilitated by Johan Maresch from Volvo Cars and Johan Hallendorff from Husqvarna. The workshop included presentations of success stories from industry followed by discussions on what factors are important and less important to drive a success project. The purpose of the workshop was to share experiences and learn for each other in order to find common patterns and make conclusions.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the workshop was to identify some success factors from real stories on radical innovation. The workshop aimed to achieve a better understanding of what factors are compulsory, important and irrelevant to succeed in an innovation project. Certain factors can furthermore function more as obstacles than something facilitating the projects.

METHOD

Prior to the workshop at IIA 2015, the participants answered several questions as a preliminary work. Furthermore, the actual workshop included both presentations on how 3 success stories have been carried out in industry as well as discussions on what are the most important success factors, obstacles and irrelevant factors to successfully implement a project. To make conclusions, the participants made individual prioritization on a set of common factors in a project.

DESCRIPTION

Presentations on how Volvo Cars, Husqvarna, Googol, SCA and Alfa Laval have completed innovation projects that was considered radical. The presentations illustrated how a process from idea to concept development or implementation had been realized. The presentations followed by deeper discussions where the participants were divided into smaller groups. Each group received a template with common factors in an innovation project. Each group, and later each individual, had to prioritize and categorize based on the most important success factor, obstacle and irrelevant factors.

8 ways to action

- ◆ Find motivation for intrapreneurs- usually not money
- ◆ Better use of KPIs and metrics that supports innovation
- ◆ Use strategic “buckets” for securing budgets
- ◆ Gain market validation early
- ◆ Get support from internal organization by lobbying using early customer validation
- ◆ Get customer insights, don't ask for customer needs
- ◆ The purpose of the steering group is to support innovations and not align into old processes
- ◆ Create a sense of urgency- to trigger radical innovations

LEARNINGS AND RESULTS

A common understanding by the participants was that radical innovations are often lead by a single person in organizations. The importance of momentum and push from intrapreneurs was furthermore voted as the single most important factor in radical innovations. It was discussed that these intrapreneurs are not motivated by money or fame, and it is difficult to reach them with traditional incentives. Rewards and recognition is something many participants felt needed improvement within their organizations.

Furthermore, the use of KPIs and metrics are said to be important but often lacking a parallel structure, and they should be re-designed for the purpose of innovation. This is linked to the use of strategy and corporate vision to be interchanged at times for a wider scope of which projects are in line with the organization.

Lobbying within the firm, through the use of early customer validation, was said to be the most effective way to communicate the potential of ideas and projects. The importance of simple and early prototyping was mentioned, as well as gaining financial support internal and external sources. Company members should also be better at pitching their ideas, and consider training or setting up informal Dragon's Den like challenges.

The participants identified the culture of an organization to be correlated to radical innovations. A more creative and risk-taking culture was more likely to generate successful projects.

Lastly, the participants found that the use of a steering group was not a given factor for successful radical innovations. It was discussed that a steering group should be chosen with care, especially to ensure expertise, guidance, contacts and quorum.

Furthermore, the workshop leaders have summarised some additional takeaways from the workshop. The material is can be downloaded at <http://goo.gl/PU8pEd> or in the Innovation Pioneers app.