

From the organizational perspective

Method

Prior to the tank meeting, members were given the opportunity to complete a survey where they could share their thoughts and experiences and some of these were chosen to speak during the meeting. The meeting included a workshop where participants could choose from a number of topics to discuss their own experience and their ideas on the subject. The participants also had the opportunity to try an idea management system where discussed ideas were submitted. This was followed by a discussion and presentation of IT-based idea management systems. Lastly scholars presented new findings in the area of idea management that provided the members with interesting new knowledge.

Take aways from this Innovation Pioneers

Many organizations recognize innovation as an important key to success, but are unsure of how this should be done. Some organizations seem to rely on a few champions to run the fuzzy concept of innovation, and maybe don't exploit their full potential within the firm. By the use of different idea management systems, employees can participate to a larger extent in the innovation process which imposes new opportunities for many organisations, but can also imply additional work.

Managing ideas can be difficult, even with an idea management system. These systems can increase the number of ideas which is necessary for innovation, but many ideas can become a burden to the organisation that is often faced with having to evaluate and give feedback to a large number of ideas, many of which are unusable. This can therefore seem as an insufficient approach in the search for great ideas. To increase the usefulness of the ideas, it was discussed that the idea collection should be directed through the use of campaigns, and primarily directed to engaged employees. However, according to the new study presented by Jennie Björk, employees play different roles in these systems and in some ways complement each other, which could suggest that a mixture of employees is needed.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is to realize these ideas into innovation. This requires resources, time and effort which may not always be available, or part of the current business strategy. The importance of a sponsor who is responsible for the ideas was discussed, to ensure that at least one person is capable of realizing the ideas. Nevertheless, the sponsor should not have to be expected to champion all by itself, but should be supported by management to encourage employees to participate.

How to motivate employees to participate was also up for discussion. Rewards can work as motivation, but can also limit the creativeness and willingness to collaborate when employees primarily focus is on winning. Recognition for great efforts was deemed more appropriate, but also to recognize failure as something positive in order to remove the fear of failing.

Despite increasing the number of ideas and thus the innovativeness of an organisation, an idea management system can also be interesting to improve other areas. Through an interactive system, employees can discuss and share knowledge more freely with each other

and thus increase their own knowledge as well as their network. This might in some cases lead to improved collaborations between departments of the organisation, and increase the innovative climate within the organisation.