

## Innovation Pioneers – Tank Meeting 33: Idea Management (Society Perspective)

On Wednesday March 23rd 2016 the 33<sup>rd</sup> Tank Meeting by Innovation Pioneers was held at Innventia, in Stockholm. The theme of the day was “Idea Management”, which includes the practices and processes employed by organizations to gather, store, manage and select ideas produced internally or externally. As innovation is becoming an ever increasingly important aspect of business as industries and markets continue to evolve, idea management has become a highly relevant topic. At the Tank Meeting, participants had a chance to share and discuss their personal experiences in working with idea management in their respective companies.

Often referred to as “the front-end of innovation”, the stage before moving an idea into product development is where idea management is of critical importance. With improved idea management, organizations may strengthen innovation performance. Certainly, these assumptions may be applicable outside the industrial sphere as well, as countries and governments have also realized the importance of actively working with innovation.

In the different discussion groups during the tank meeting discussions ranged from how to measure engagement, how to make ideation interesting for generation x, y and z, to the positive effects of structured idea management. For instance, on the topic of the generations x, y and z, the differences in awareness was brought up. Compared to older generations, these younger ones have greater social awareness and collective spirit. This is something to take into consideration when a company wants to attract their interest for the ideation process. Facilitating communication across generational borders will also be important in order for different generations to work together with this in the future. Furthermore, in order to manage ideation successfully, participants discussed the importance of breaking the practices down in different stages, and adapting the management to each individual stage. The collection of ideas should be managed differently than the selection of ideas, and the *hand-over* between each stage is critical. Otherwise valuable ideas may be lost before they reach a mature enough stage to be evaluated sufficiently.

Having individuals from different organizations come together and discuss these topics may not only be mutually beneficial for the participants, but also create synergistic effects that reach further. Strengthened innovation capabilities will have spill-over effects which could benefit society as a whole. The tank meeting is a place where ideas and experiences can be shared in a non-competitive environment, the insights gained by each participant can be brought back to their respective organization to improve their innovation capabilities. More innovative organizations will in turn lead to improved growth which will benefit the society where they operate.