

Learning from German Idea and Innovation Management Best Practices

In my years of consulting and visiting companies I realized that many companies have differences in understanding and implementing an Idea and Innovation Management. So here is a short description of the Idea and Innovation Management in Germany, as well as some “insider tips” of how to make the best of your Idea & Innovation Management:

1. The difference between Idea Management and Innovation Management in Germany:

The **Idea Management** is divided into traditional “BVW” (betriebliches Vorschlagswesen) and “KVP” (kontinuierlicher Verbesserungsprozess – similar or equal to KAIZEN):

- The “BVW” is the traditional way of the Idea Management in Germany. It started over 140 years ago and from then slowly began to take its place in the companies. It developed from a letterbox (which some companies still use today) to a modern and intuitive Idea Management Software. Some of the main features are that the employees cannot see the ideas of the others (so open discussion is not possible), it has a specific workflow (which includes a review committee) and the implementation of the suggestion is combined to a monetary incentive to the submitter.
- The “KVP” is a separate or additional part of the Idea Management in Germany. In difference to the “BVW” the main focus lies here more on workshops with the employees. In these workshops the employees can form a “team” to analyze, discuss and develop ideas and then create an implementation plan for improvement suggestions and solutions.

The **Innovation Management** and what happens after the ideas are generated and collected?

- The Innovation Management has the task to pick up the ideas that are “ready” for implementation and follow a workflow until they are implemented. Usually this workflow is based on a specific “Stage-Gate” Innovation Management process within the company.

Broadly speaking, with an Idea and Innovation Management you can collect ideas of employees (and or clients but then we are talking about “Open Innovation”), manage them, pick the “right ones” up and manage/handle the implementation.

2. The NEW Idea & Innovation Management:

- An interesting approach is that many companies go new ways in the Idea & Innovation Management by implementing a community where employees and or clients can see the ideas of others and are also allowed to like, comment or even work together on them. The benefit of a specific Idea and Innovation Management Community Software is also that people from different time zones and places or even with different competences can

work on the same ideas or challenges. As a result the value of the idea could grow much faster than if only one submitter is working on it.

3. Why should you use business or strategy consultants in the project?

A good and intuitive Idea and Innovation Management Software is important – but what will cause employees to use the software and to make improvement suggestions?

This is a very significant part and that's where business and strategy consultants should assist you.



The IDEA & INNOVATION CONSULTING - principles

In times of digitalization, new technologies, fast moving markets etc. the business and strategy consultants assist you with specific consulting services and principles in the conception, realization and implementation of an efficient and effective Idea and Innovation Management for your company.

5 Insider Tips:

1. **Make a clear Idea and Innovation Management Process for your company:** how do you want to collect the ideas, manage them and do the implementation?
2. **Define the usage of the software:** in which part of the Idea and Innovation Management should the Software support you?
3. **Work with business and strategy consultants:** find main factors to get benefits from your Idea and Innovation Management. How does your corporate culture influence the project? How can you increase the acceptance of your employees and raise improvement suggestions?
4. **Set monetary and non-monetary rewards:** what do employees (and/or clients) get, if they participate in the Idea and Innovation Management?
5. **Control and Follow-up in "long-term":** an Idea and Innovation Management project is not a short-term activity. Sometimes you will gain benefits only after a longer period so be patient and have a continuous improvement in mind. And in the whole process please do not forget to **inform your users regularly** about if an idea is submitted, when it goes to the next "step" and whether it is implemented or even rejected etc.

In summary, it can be said that the more time a company spends developing its Idea and Innovation Management - the more it can gain benefits, find improvement potentials and implement them.

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