



SiPi
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How To Improve Innovation At The Workplace?

In the current market, escalating competition and the rising importance of brand establishment has necessitated the need for almost every organisation to drive innovation at their workplace, to build unique brand visibility, and gain a greater share of the market.

Today, businesses depend on innovative marketing strategies to edge out fellow competitors in the market. It is no longer sufficient just to develop a good product. Unique product features and innovative marketing strategies are crucial factors to creating brand identity.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

How to Improve Innovation At the Workplace2

What Is Innovation?.....2

8 Tips To Initiate & Inspire Innovation.....3

Innovation-Decision Process.....3

Special points of interest

- What Is Innovation?
- Innovation-Decision Process

What is Innovation?

Innovation is the development of new values through solutions that meet new needs, inarticulate needs, or old customer and market needs in value adding new ways.

This is accomplished through more effective products, processes, services, technologies, or ideas that are readily available to markets, governments, and society.

Innovation differs from invention in that innovation refers to the use of a better and, as a result, novel idea or method, whereas invention refers more directly to the creation of the idea or method itself.

Innovation differs from improvement in that innovation refers to the notion of doing something different rather than doing the same thing better.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innovation>



Here are 3 key tips to assist you in encouraging innovation at work

1. SET UP A SPECIAL TASKFORCE

The first thing that every organisation, small or large, must accept is that not everyone is equally creative. Different employees working in different departments will generate different innovative ideas depending on a few factors, such as personal exposure, working environment, education and family background. Furthermore, it is always a big challenge getting employees to contribute their ideas, as it is not usually company culture for employees to speak up.

Therefore, one of the best methods is to set up a special “taskforce” to champion the company’s “innovation drive”. The team will be tasked with collating ideas from various departments, setting deadlines and conducting activities to boost innovation. They can conduct various surveys, organise brainstorming sessions and activities.

2. REWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

A good way to motivate employees to contribute ideas is to have in place a rewards and recognition system. Upon selection of an idea, an employee will stand to be rewarded. Rewards can be tangible such as monetary incentives or intangible like recognition from the company. This will not only signal to employees that their contributions are valued by the company, but also act as incentive for other employees to contribute.

3. FOSTERING A RELAXED WORK ENVIRONMENT

It is a widely known fact that Google has the best offices around the world. In the 2011, Google London spent a tidy sum of money to deck a single floor of their office space, to include a music-jamming room, a gaming room as well as an in-door park. When asked on the reason behind the renovation works, Mr. Nelson Mattos, Vice President for Product and Engineering said, “We hire the brightest and best engineers in the UK and put them together in a highly creative, relaxed and exciting environment.” “We don’t see these perks as distractions. They are a fundamental part of the innovation process here,” he added.

Psychological studies have also shown that a positive mood spurs creativity. “Generally, positive mood has been found to enhance creative problem-solving and flexible yet careful thinking,” said Ruby Nadler, a graduate student at the University of Western Ontario. Needless to say, it is important for organisations to provide employees with some form of relaxation and enjoyment, to nurture creativity.

On the other hand, organisations can also consider adopting Google’s method of introducing time at work for special side projects, aptly coined “Google’s 20 per cent time programme”. By setting aside a fixed amount of time for employees to channel energies and creativity into projects unrelated to their workload, Google believes that employees will be more inspired to come up with innovative ideas and projects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE TO INNOVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

Work-life programmes such as workplace redesign and wellness training, and the implementation of work-life balance policies can effectively contribute to a company's sustainable pursuit in innovation and productivity. According to Worklife Solutions - a leading HR consultancy firm in Singapore, overseas studies have shown that there is a symbiotic relationship between work and person/ family life. Benefits from work-life balance strategies include improved staff morale and engagement, and improved recruitment, retention and reduced turnover. These benefits are crucial to fostering and sustaining cooperative and collaborative culture in the workplace where employee engagement and empowerment is key to building an innovation culture within a company.



In short, work-life strategies can help individuals at work perform more productively, and enhance organisational performance. Companies such as UBS AG, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Cargill Asia Pacific Holdings, and Cherie Hearts Group of Childcare Centres are also known to offer a platter of policies to improve workplace performance and provide room for innovation and productivity.

8 TIPS TO INITIATE & INSPIRE INNOVATION

Innovation Tip #1: Develop a clearly defined and focused vision for innovation within your business.

Innovation Tip #2: Develop a set of measurable goals that will clearly define what you want and need to get out of innovation.

Innovation Tip #3: Develop a system for tracking and managing innovation.

Innovation Tip #4: Develop and implement a forum for sharing. Promote the open exchange of ideas and collaboration among your co-workers and team members. The forum could be face-to-face meetings or done so online with message boards or blogs.

Innovation Tip #5: Engage the powerful technique of brainstorming. The power of brainstorming enables you to address a business challenge, issue or opportunity and is effective because it sets no boundaries and allows people to say whatever they want.

Innovation Tip #6: Consider establishing an Innovation Team whose priority is ensuring that innovation is a priority and that there is a clearly defined and focused effort to achieve innovation in your business.

Innovation Tip #7: Research what others, outside your organization, do to initiate & inspire innovation. Set a goal to identify 3 or 4 organizations that are very innovative and then request visits to those companies to gain new perspectives on innovation.?

Innovation Tip #8: Find a business coach or mentor and learn something from them.

Source:

<http://www.evancarmichael.com/Business-Coach/223/20-Tips-To-Initiate--Inspire->



Innovation-Decision Process

Tarde (1903) defined the innovation-decision process as a series of steps that includes:

1. First knowledge
2. Forming an attitude
3. A decision to adopt or reject
4. Implementation and use
5. Confirmation of the decision

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innovation>

For more information on
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