Creating Employee Networks that can Deliver Open Innovation

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Successful OI Companies

- Many other companies failing at open innovation
- Why – failing to ensure that the right ideas reach the right people in the employee social network
- An example
Survey non-complete
Gatekeeper
Internal Star
R&D Group Member
External Star
Tackling the NIH syndrome

- “Not invented here”
- A major problem for open innovation
- The idea connector plays a central role in breaking down these internal barriers
Tackling NIH at Siemens

- Background – trying to implement open innovation but stymied by NIH
- Many business units in Siemens – failing to integrate
- One success story; the ‘Mobile Applications Unit’ and the ‘Transportation Unit’
How it happened

- Peter - the idea scout
- Hans – the idea connector
Insights for Innovation Leaders

1. Need to cultivate innovation brokers – but what do they look like?
# Idea Scouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Common Characteristics</th>
<th>How to Facilitate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to identify useful ideas from outside the firm</td>
<td>• Broad network outside the firm</td>
<td>• Need to be allocated the time to scan the outside world</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Deep and narrow knowledge base of a particular technology space</td>
<td>• Low to medium organization tenure</td>
<td>• Given priority to external networking events</td>
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<td>• Strong analytical skills</td>
<td>• Attained higher level degree in specialized technology field</td>
<td>• Training in the effective use of social media technologies</td>
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<td>• High information technology literacy</td>
<td>• Genuine interest in keeping abreast of emerging trends in their specialty</td>
<td>• Use ONA to assess and optimize external network</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Include in talent management program and provide recognition for their scouting successes</td>
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# Idea Connectors

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wide ranging knowledge base</td>
<td>• Broad network inside the firm</td>
<td>• Encourage their networking activities through involvement in cross functional projects and job rotations (particularly for emerging connectors)</td>
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<td>• Ability to translate external information into a form understandable and relevant to internal colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exert influence - can convince other network members to take a needed action</td>
<td>• High tenure within the organization</td>
<td>• Bootstrap to idea scout to ensure new the ideas they provide get disseminated to right parts of the firm</td>
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<td>• Get enjoyment from helping others</td>
<td>• Use ONA to determine if their internal network contains biases or disconnects</td>
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<td>• Have a reputation for technical competence among their colleagues</td>
<td>• Provide recognition for their broker role e.g. make social graphs publicly available</td>
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Insights for Innovation Leaders

1. Need to cultivate innovation brokers – but what do they look like?
2. Need to consider the whole open innovation process
External ideas

Internal ideas

Scout

Connector

IDEATION

SELECTION

DIFFUSION

EXPLOITATION
Ideation

- Only a small portion of employees interested in keeping up-to-date with latest technological developments
- Allocated them resources
  - Time
  - Web access
  - Conference, seminars etc
- Need to train future scouts on effective use of social media
- ONA techniques - example
Idea Selection

- Separate the wheat from the chaff
- Google’s Marissa Mayer
- Need a formalised way in which idea scouts can reach out to key influencers
Idea Diffusion

- Idea scout recognises potential of new idea – need to find those with the skills to exploit that idea
- Google Desktop – Mayer reached out to Steve Lawerence (vast experience in information retrieval)
In sum

- Organisation interested in open innovation need to invest in the idea scout and idea connector roles