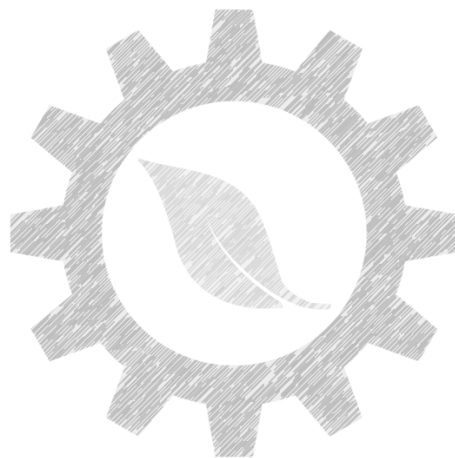


Guidelines for involving young talents to open innovation projects in co-operation with intrapreneurs



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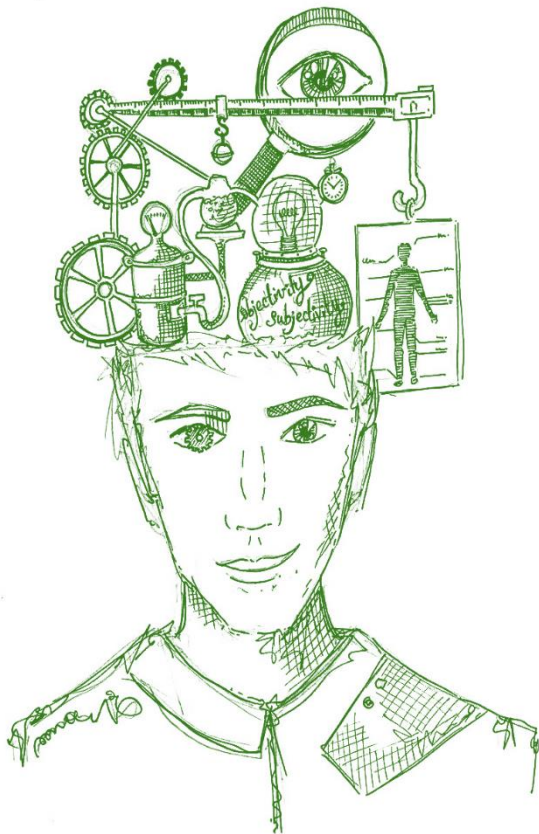
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Preface

This document provides an overview on topic of open innovation and involving young talent, which is aimed to be helpful supporting intrapreneurial projects in organizations. It provides guidelines that will help organizations and intrapreneurs to identify and understand the most efficient and resultative ways of collecting ideas and input from various sources, in particular young talents from within and outside the organization to enhance intrapreneurial activities focused on sustainability in environmental, social and economic terms.



“The use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation, and expand the markets for external use of innovation, respectively”

Introduction

In business world we have seen many revolutions. While business world has been flourishing taking advantage of these revolutions, some people might argue that we might do better in keeping the balance between business world and the environmental and sustainability aspects of the world we live in. This unbalance has given rise to the concept of sustainable development, where businesses look at development approaches that are different, competitive and at the same time balance out the factors of environmental, social and economic limitations that we face as a society, without compromising the future of the younger and coming generation.

Businesses need ideas and innovations that are not only new but also balance the requirements of the present and consider the needs of the future generations in order to achieve sustainable development. For this, businesses require talent and intellectual resources. Businesses can advance to a certain extent with the talent and intrapreneurs they have within the organization, but a business doesn't always have access to all the talent and intellectual resources in the industry or wider field, therefore businesses need to look outside the organization to acquire these. This is where open innovation and involving intrapreneurs and young talent comes in.

In the sections that will follow we will have a look at: why intrapreneurs and young talent is important to involve? what open innovation is? Methods for open innovation that can be used and Guidelines that can be used to execute open innovation projects, concluding with useful final notes.

Intrapreneur and Young Talent

An intrapreneur is developing an innovative concept or assignment inside an organization. The intrapreneur might not face the significant dangers or acquire the rewards of an entrepreneur. However, the intrapreneur has access to the resources and competencies of an established business enterprise. (Estevez, 2021) While intrapreneur and entrepreneur may sound similar, they are different and have different objectives. An entrepreneur envisions a company from its launch, while an intrapreneur builds on the vision of an established company within the organization to expand it.

Intrapreneurs help advance the business with their deep understanding of the business at all levels and rise to the top. They work with other company employees to solve and foster growth of the company by integrating new ideas and utilizing talent.

Intrapreneurs tend to be highly motivated individuals with specific skill sets as well as innovative vision and leadership. They are willing to take risks and interpret industry and market trends for the company to remain competitive.

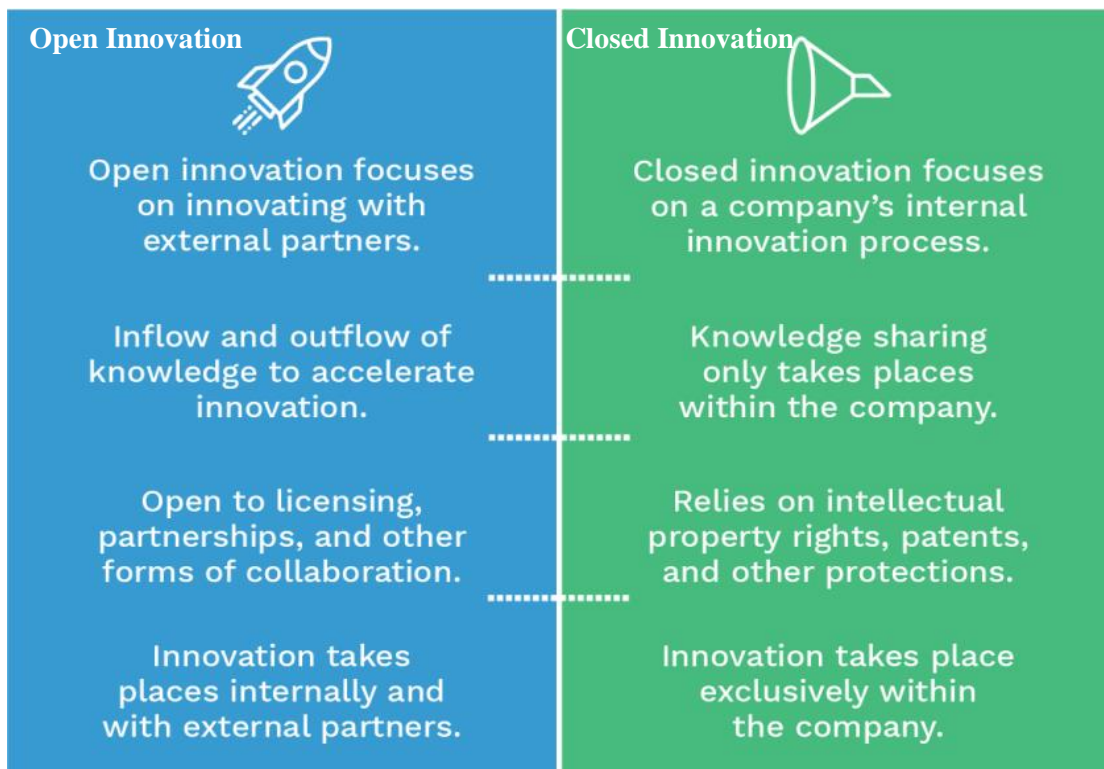
Where intrapreneurs look at problems from the experience they have acquired, young talented individuals have a fresh view and look at things from a different perspective. Young talent tends to be more energetic and envision different ideas that tend to be outside traditional views.

Bringing together the intrapreneurs and young talent through open innovation projects will help create synergy of ideas and innovation that will businesses with better innovations and products. At same time, young talent will gain guidance and exposure to the real problem solving and experience. But the important thing is balancing of group and avoiding dominance and therefore businesses require proper methods and guidelines.

Open Innovation

In 2003, Henry Chesbrough coined the term “Open Innovation” defining it as “the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation, and expand the markets for external use of innovation, respectively.” (Chesbrough, 2006) But in practice open innovation has been a good practice long before then. Since the origin of the open innovation concept, it has developed into many forms. Open innovation allows businesses to have permeable boundaries allowing it to combine business resources with external co-operations to expand.

Open innovation in a sense can be considered as a mindset of being open to sharing and receiving information and the best way to understand it is knowing the difference between closed and open innovation.



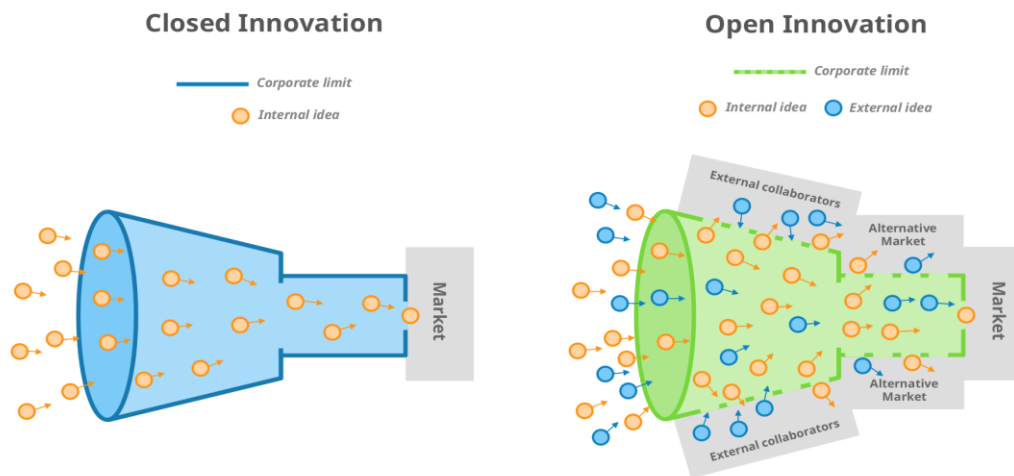


Figure 1: (Isomäki, 2018)

Further understanding of the topic can be acquired by clicking on the link [Open Innovation](#).

Open Innovation can be classified based on level of inclusion and purpose of use as shown in the matrix.

		Level of inclusion			
		Intra-company	Inter-company	For experts	Publicly open
Purpose of use	Marketing			E.g. Conveying information about niche products	E.g. Sharing information about a new product
	Gathering insight	E.g. Gathering tacit knowledge from employees	E.g. Gathering useful tips from partners	E.g. Getting relevant input from the pros in the field	E.g. Getting customer feedback to build relevant products
	Finding talent	E.g. Finding unrecognized talent inside the company	E.g. Finding hidden expertise in partnering firms	E.g. Recruiting experts from various fields	E.g. Finding the best match for the open job position
	R&D	E.g. Uniting business units for product development	E.g. Utilizing collective knowledge between firms	E.g. Developing products that require specific expertise	E.g. Developing products with the largest possible audience

Figure 1: (Isomäki, 2018)

Benefits of Open Innovation include:

- Engaging larger audience
- Engaging relevant audience
- Improving cost-efficiency
- Involving customers in R&D
- Improving PR & Brand Value
- Gaining customer goodwill
- Chances of lucrative partnerships
- Scouting new talent

But every coin has a flip side and open innovation is no different, therefore when planning open innovations things need to be considered carefully, especially the following:

- Goals
- Type of audience
- Building an effective process
- Developing and implementation of ideas
- Finding the right tools
- Intellectual property rights
- Terms and conditions
- Negative attitudes and worries
- Lack of participation and commitment
- Rewarding participants

Carefully executed open innovation, taking into consideration the participants are likely to give great outputs.

Open Innovation Methods and Guidelines

Carrying out open innovation cannot be considered as an easy task. Additionally, involving young talent in co-operation with intrapreneurs through open innovation projects needs adequate planning and strategies. In this sense open innovation can be executed by organizations using various methods depending on the purpose, if its only for collecting ideas or more. Listed below are some open innovation methods and how they can be executed followed by steps to choose the right method (Isomäki, 2018).

Open Innovation (or idea) Challenge

It is a competition in which participants collaborate to develop ideas centred on a specific theme, generalized problem, or area for improvement. They can be structured as limited time and size ventures

that include either only the solution phase (when the problem is clear) or both the solution and problem phases (When the problem must also be defined).

One method for carrying out an open innovation challenge is to use an idea management tool as the platform for facilitating the ideation and development process, while email is used to engage the target audience. Remember to give potential participants plenty of time to respond (multiple communication rounds to build excitement) and to be very clear about the nature of the challenge.

When to use it and why?

An open innovation challenge is ideal for businesses looking for solutions to specific problems that warrants for the input of experts in the field, intrapreneurs, and young talent. If finding a solution or making an improvement is time sensitive, limited time challenges can be completed in effective cycles, increasing the number of ideas and the pressure to develop something worthy of implementation in a shorter time.

Open innovation challenges are scalable, surgical, and quick, making them an effective tool for companies working on a time crunch or in a highly specific field.

Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing shifts a significant portion of the responsibility for engagement and oversight of the innovation process outside of the company. In general, this means that a company develops a theme, question, or challenge and then hires or stimulates people from outside the company to come up with ideas or solutions. In this way, a large number of young talents from outside the company can participate.

To facilitate crowdsourcing, you must create a highly intuitive environment in which external collaborators can collaborate to create and develop ideas. The environment should be easy to use and engaging in order for the innovation process to not require constant management. This can be accomplished using either a dedicated idea management tool or a company's own solution.

When to use it and why?

Crowdsourcing works well for clear themes that don't require constant managerial input from the company of origin and fields where relevant insight isn't limited to only a handful of individuals with knowledge of the company. In addition, the information released in crowdsourcing should not be sensitive or harmful to the company in the wrong hands.

Crowdsourcing can be cost-effective in the sense that the facilitating company typically only pays for results, fast since it offers a possibility to engage large and relevant audiences without bias towards the company, and flexible due to the wide range of engagement possibilities. All in all, crowdsourcing is a great way to get a diversity of quality ideas.

Open Idea Ecosystem

An open idea ecosystem is basically a fixed environment for innovating together with customers, partners or other experts of the field. This method is not as surgical as an open innovation challenge, but also requires less oversight, thus being less expensive in the long haul.

Many companies, like Lego with their Idea's site, have their own internal solution, like a web page with an internal process for filtering and developing ideas. Alternatively, a dedicated idea management software can facilitate a platform where ideas can be added and developed with administrative oversight from the company.

When to use it and why?

An open idea ecosystem is perfect for companies that don't necessarily have the need to come up with solutions to anything specific (like in an innovation challenge), but regardless want to include a large audience in regular R&D or just gather customer insight.

Additionally, these types of ecosystems are a cost-effective way to engage consumers in the early development phases of a product or service.

Open Innovation Lab

This is typically an internally facilitated and separately funded workspace for innovation void the day-to-day routines and processes of the company. The people that take part in the open innovation lab are typically a team that consists of employees and new hires with the help of some external collaborators. The team's mission can vary anywhere from coming up with targeted solutions to specific problems to imagining new ways to improve existing systems.

Hosting an open innovation lab basically entails providing an unhindered place where the chosen participants collaboratively work together to create and develop products or services, securing funding for the project, and informing the participants that they've been accepted to be a part of it.

When to use it and why?

A common problem with these labs is that they're executed too hastily and without clear goals for what they're meant to achieve. This results in very poor used expense per idea and overall implementation of an idea ratios. The ideal situation for hosting an open innovation lab - keeping in mind the importance of careful planning and clear goals - is when you either wish to come up with solutions to very specific and challenging problems that require heavy expertise or create new exciting business ventures.

In either case, a well-executed open innovation lab is a great way to pool together a focused group of highly talented individuals around a common goal.

Colleague Crowd

A colleague crowd is much as it sounds, an employee collaboration initiative that consists of online and/or offline innovation activities with the intent of realizing new business or improve existing ones.

When planning the execution of the online activities in a colleague crowd ultimately the goal is to get implementation-worthy ideas. This means that you need to have an environment where you can gather ideas from employees, sort, and develop them. One of the best ways to facilitate this entire process is with a dedicated idea management tool.

When to use it and why

This method is great for companies that want to boost internal R&D and engage employees in the larger picture of the company. It offers the possibility of getting relevant insight and tacit knowledge from employees without the risk of exposing sensitive information to the outside. In addition, a colleague crowd is a very effortless way to increase innovation activities in a company without having to build extensive additional support structures (like in an innovation lab). However, as it is limited to the confines of the company, it's not always the most effective way to utilize the vast creative and intellectual potential that, for example, an open idea ecosystem can offer.

Choosing the Right Method

Even if you read plenty on the topic, it's not always easy to assess which methods might work in a given instance. Therefore, here is an easy process to choose a method.

Process of choosing a method:

- Charting your goals
- Listing Pros & Cons
- Choosing a method (& piloting)
- Executing (& repeating)

Charting Your Goals

In any case, a good place to start is by outlining your objectives. At this point, it's important not to get too caught up in innovating one way or the other, but rather to simply figure out what you want to achieve.

Make a list of the primary goals, strategic focus areas, or problems that need to be solved. Form them into guiding questions to get a better idea of the type of ideas you're looking for.

Listing Pros & Cons

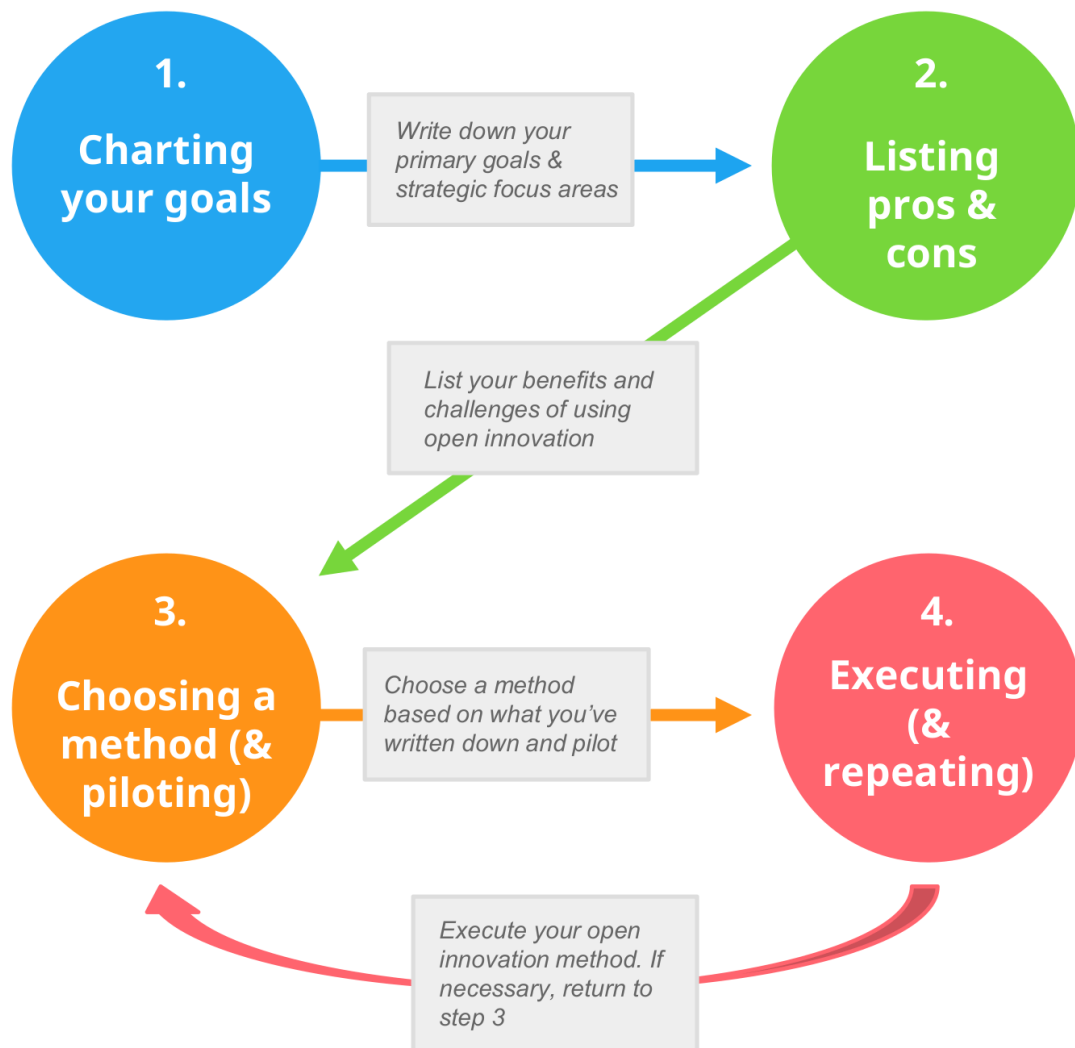
Before deciding on a method, it is critical to assess the applicability of open innovation to the situation. This can be accomplished by compiling a list of advantages and disadvantages. Refer back to the advantages and disadvantages of open innovation. How could open innovation benefit you, and how are these benefits manifested? What potential obstacles could jeopardize success?

Choosing a method (& Piloting)

Now it's time to pick a method and put it through its paces with trial runs. It's impossible to say what the ideal method is, or even if one exists. However, it should be clear at this point which methods appear to be the most likely to get you to your target. It is critical to begin testing it right away and learn from early successes and failures.

Executing (& Repeating)

When the method has been established, it is time to move on to the actual execution. Based on your experiments, you should have a good idea of how it would work on a larger scale. Make it happen by applying what you've learned. If things don't work out, go back to the first step and try again. Finding the right method (and thus the right tool for executing it) is frequently an iterative process, so don't be alarmed if it doesn't go your way right away. Continue your efforts.



(Isomäki, 2018)

When engaging with powerful minds (inside and outside) the organization, strong support roles within the organization are required. However, there is no single champion of Open Innovation. Innovation processes are complex, involving numerous people, departments, and disciplines. In addition, when considering open innovations to include intrapreneurs and young talent the process may seem to be further complex. Therefore, to overcome inertia in complex innovation projects, different roles are required. Roles that can assist an organization in overcoming internal forces that may hamper open innovation. The roles need to involve a person with the hierarchical power to drive a project, provide necessary resources, and assist in overcoming obstacles such as will and bureaucracy that may arise during the course of a project. The second role, a person who has the unique technical understanding for the innovation problem at hand and overcomes limitations of ability. These obstacles are frequently the end result from an information within the discipline of a selected area. Thirdly, a person who derives affect from organizational know-how and intra- organizational social networks. This individual establishes and maintains the relationship among the other roles, as well as different project contributors who are willing and able to make a contribution to an Open Innovation project know-how who do not have the permission to do so because of existing internal regulations or restricted capacity and resources.

Final Notes

Trying to achieve goals by executing an open innovation method in areas it's not required and without understanding why you're doing it can be a biggest mistake made.

Finally, open innovation can occasionally be a cost-effective and surgical tool for outsourcing ideas even during rough times, but others an embarrassing void of sunk investment. Understanding everything that came before, and then some is the difference between the two.

Other Good Reads

https://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/3213b335-1cbc-11e6-ba9a-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_2

https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/publications/creativity-innovation_en.pdf

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