

Tools and Brokers: Implementing the Innovation Ecosystem at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

Adrián Esquinas

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Broad, cross-divisional action that tackles several areas of the organisation are required to foster collaboration and allow employees to network with an innovation purpose.

The thesis developed three interventions that can help KLM in implementing an effective innovation ecosystem.

Introduction

KLM is the flag carrier of the Netherlands. The contribution to climate change of the airline industry requires urgent changes in innovation to be sustainable. At the organisation, the central innovation management team proposed the assignment of a digital product that can interactively represent people involved in the innovation ecosystems within the company.

Research phase

It is imperative for organisations to innovate as an 'ecosystem' given the competitiveness and complexity of the current business environment (Tidd & Bessant, 2010). Nevertheless, employees at the organisation are partially focused on execution and barriers among departments have raised. The culture at the organisation shows formality and structure, valuing efficiency and with productivity residing in the individual and in the respective department.

Problem definition

If the innovation ecosystem concept is to remain alive, efforts should address the inefficiency of lateral collaboration. Moreover, the different areas of the organisation have to be influenced, such as values, systems or staff. This thesis developed three interventions that aim to foster collaboration while facilitating the implementation of the innovation ecosystem.

Development phase

After an iterative design process, a tool that allows the people within an ecosystem to see others' involvement was built using Power BI. The second intervention required a reorganisation of the knowledge-management system used for innovation. Knowledge is now easily retrieved. Finally, the last intervention identified the cultural brokers who can connect groups of employees with an innovation purpose. Studies on social networks and innovation show the brokers own a competitive advantage within the networks: they are more creative and can help groups of employees to foster collaboration (Burt, 1992, 2004).

Recommendations

Finally, after developing the interventions, the organisation is recommended to define the governance of the ecosystems in place. Once governance is defined, the organisation is provided with guidance on how to continue with implementation tasks, by starting a pilot project and including a manual of the designed tool to assist users during their learning.

References

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Committee

Prof.dr Gerd Kortuem (chair)

Prof.dr ir. J.M.L. van Engelen (mentor)

Arlette van der Veer (company mentor)

Company

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

