

Innovation Management in State-Owned-Enterprises in the Digital Transformation: An Empirical Case Study of Swiss Post

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Abstract : Innovation is widely recognized as the key for private enterprises to win the market competition. The state-owned-enterprises need to be innovative to compete in the market after the privatization as well. However, it is a lack of research to study how state-owned-enterprises manage innovation to create new products and services. Swiss Post, a Swiss state-owned-enterprises, has established a department to transform the corporate culture and foster innovation to achieve digital transformation. This paper describes the innovation management process at the Swiss Post and analyzes the impacts of the instruments, the organizational structure, and explores the barriers of innovation. This study used qualitative methods based on a review of the literature on innovation management and semi-structured interviews. Being established for over five years, the Swiss Post's innovation management department has established a software-assisted modularized platform with systematic instruments to help the internal employees with the different innovation processes. It guides the innovators from idea creation to piloting in markets and supports with a separate financing source, with knowledge inputs and coaching, as well as with connections to external partners through the open innovation and venturing team. The platform also adapts to different business units within the corporate with a customized tailor for the various operational business units. The separate financing instruments enabled the creation and further development of new ideas; the coaching services contribute greatly to the transformation of teams' innovation culture by providing new knowledge, thinking methods, and use cases for inspiration. It also facilitates organizational learning to help the whole corporate with the digital transformation. However, it is also confronted with a big challenge in twofold. Internally, the disruptive projects often hardly overcome the obstacles of long-established operational processes in the traditional business units; externally, the expectations of the public and restrictions from the federal government have become high hurdles for the company to stay and compete in the innovation track.

Keywords : empirical case study, innovation management, state-owned-enterprise, Swiss Post

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