

Outsourcing the Front End of Innovation

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Abstract : The paper presents a new method for efficient innovation process management. Even though the innovation management methods, tools and knowledge are well established and documented in literature, most of the companies still do not manage it efficiently. Especially in SMEs the front end of innovation - problem identification, idea creation and selection - is often not optimally performed. Our eMIPS methodology represents a sort of "umbrella methodology"- a well-defined set of procedures, which can be dynamically adapted to the concrete case in a company. In daily practice, various methods (e.g. for problem identification and idea creation) can be applied, depending on the company's needs. It is based on the proactive involvement of the company's employees supported by the appropriate methodology and external experts. The presented phases are performed via a mixture of face-to-face activities (workshops) and online (eLearning) activities taking place in eLearning Moodle environment and using other e-communication channels. One part of the outcomes is an identified set of opportunities and concrete solutions ready for implementation. The other also very important result is connected to innovation competences for the participating employees related with concrete tools and methods for idea management. In addition, the employees get a strong experience for dynamic, efficient and solution oriented managing of the invention process. The eMIPS also represents a way of establishing or improving the innovation culture in the organization. The first results in a pilot company showed excellent results regarding the motivation of participants and also as to the results achieved.

Keywords : creativity, distance learning, front end, innovation, problem

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