

# Preface

It can be said that corporate innovation and innovation culture are constantly in the focus of the business world and that many articles and books are published every year on this topic. I started this book a long time ago and then I put it aside for some time, because of the huge number of editions coming out. At that time I simply could not see the uniqueness that I could bring. Then I thought of writing about exactly what I do: corporate innovation in IT companies and the result is in front of you.

Every new initiative in my organisation was a bucket of new knowledge, every new idea was different and every innovator has its approach, so this journey of managing innovation is full of challenges, but it also needed to be prepared on constantly learning. In almost 15 years of dealing with this topic, I started new programmes, innovation processes and challenges, different rewards systems, but I was also faced with different environments in the three companies where I worked. Two companies were huge (>100,000 employees) and the third was medium-sized; but, like the first two, it was a multinational IT company. Times of growth and times of slow-down, acquisitions and sell-outs, all affect innovation; it is better to say that innovation is one of the first aspects that is affected. Leaders, as an important part of the ecosystem, played a big part during the time; some were eager to make changes, but some had the feeling that innovation is for someone else's company or business unit. Managing innovation is a fight in long stages where you must be prepared to start from the bottom at any time. It was similar to writing this book: only after I got some encouragement about the topic did I continue with research and writing.

There are few books on the topic of IT and innovation. IT is assumed to be innovative by default and is thought to be much more engaged in the topic than other industries. Hence, it is strange that there are a really small number of books that cover this topic.

This book should encourage managers in big companies to ignite innovation, startup owners to formalise it, and entrepreneurs to start their idea and build upon it. On the other side, developers should be inspired to change the status quo in their environment and students should be encouraged to do that in the future.

If I ignite a spark in readers or put thoughts in the minds of some people, my task is complete. I hope that some of you enter "the zone" as I did while writing this book, mostly in my backyard, on nice summer afternoons with my Jack Russell terrier by my chair.

I hope you will enjoy reading as much as I enjoyed researching and writing this book. In the end, I hope that the book will be useful and inspiring.

## How to read this book

Each topic could be read by itself; if there are connections with other topics, I noted that in the text.

In the first part of the book, I'm writing about the initiation of the innovation process:

- IT and innovation – the state of innovation among software development companies and how product managers perceive it. What is the effect of having different shapes of people in innovation initiatives?
- Igniting the innovation process – an example of creating an innovation process from scratch by raising innovation culture, tailored to an IT company with a view to the innovation strategy of the organisation.

The next part is about the current state of the industry and looks at innovation inside IT companies:

- The fourth industrial revolution will change companies from the inside – very soon, we will feel the effect of processing big data, using AI, machine learning, virtual reality, IoT, biotechnology, 3D printing, automation, autonomous transport or the widespread use of robots. Technology changes future occupations and many of the current ones will be obsolete. In parallel, it also changes the relations inside companies, ways of recruiting, but also ways of managing and evaluating employees.
- Innovators inside companies – in the world of continuous changes and new trends, it is important to have on your team, department or organisation, people who think differently and who approach to problems differently. Often, it is difficult to recognise innovative persons, as they are shy and tend to hide their ideas for fear of being copied.
- Life in the agile world – agile is so widespread and used in most IT companies, how innovation can coexist with this methodology? Are agile and innovation contrary to one another? Customer focus and product innovation should be part of agile team thinking, but they are often neglected in fulfilling everyday tasks and finishing sprints.

Then I focus on the innovation process and its methods:

- Development cycle, agile process, innovation process – a fast and short development cycle need ideas that produce quick results. This is not easy, and sometimes not achievable, but could be adapted to reflect the needs of the future. Methods of design thinking, lean startup, design sprint and startup corporation and how these methods reflect the IT environment and agile.
- Reward programme and effects of rewarding – example of a reward programme and its effects on the number and quality of ideas and different approach

towards improvements and innovations with findings from my research using different reward programmes inside the same company.

- Brainstorming as an ideation tool? Could brainstorming lead to new ideas and how? It certainly has to be adapted.
- Life after brainstorming – brainstorming is certainly not dead as a method. How can it still be used for adapted innovation challenges in a special environment where the traditional brainstorming approach is simply not working?
- From ideation to realisation – there are a dozen challenges facing the innovation process implementation in a software development environment that must be pointed out, ranging from “space to experimenting” to “funding”.

Next is the more psychological part – about the inner state of innovators and external effects that inspire or complicate ideation:

- Introverts as the majority? Introverts are the majority in IT companies; that means no brainstorming (only adapted method), no design thinking (they hate post-its) but a careful and adapted approach can bring results.
- Inspire developers – developers are creative every day, but how to inspire them to look beyond code and think more broadly about product perspectives for the future of the market/company and reach their full creative potential?
- Environmental effects – regional environment and innovation. How to put your company in a bubble (own ecosystem) and not let external events affect you and your climate? A look at the effects that work environment and open offices have on innovation and organisational culture.

Methods to achieve results and their examples:

- Innovation challenges – quick and simple idea generation inside organisations with the guide and example of how to set it up.
- Improvements in the development environment – improvements are part of the development process, but often they are forgotten and not recognised. However, they can trigger bigger ideas and ignite innovation culture, so they must be approached as a valuable part of innovation activities, especially in IT companies.

Thoughts on the future and advice for success:

- Life after agile – what is the next step in the evolution of companies? Will agile will be enough in the future transformation of work scenarios?
- Every engineer needs a businessman – the world as we know it may be run by businesspeople, but it is definitely shaped by engineers. In corporations engineers become managers, but what happens in startups, where there is no time or budget for such education? Startups are driven by their first success – their first product – but can they survive the fall of it and create new successes?

- Startups – led by the vision of the founders, but later, with growth they often have to reinvent themselves.
- Be original – how to achieve uniqueness. Insights into the effect of copycats and the case of the stolen idea.
- Mechanisms of success – other activities that should support innovation other than top-down or bottom-up challenges like corporate incubators, acquisitions, joint ventures, skunk works or open innovation.

Another step in the method that brings results, with reflection on “dark times” in companies. At the end, a look at closely linked discipline to innovation management – technology management:

- 7 innovation method – My method for setting up innovation activities in the organisation, from igniting an innovation programme to the tasks after initial successes, with special attention to the role of innovation manager.
- Do nothing in dark times – Is it okay to stop innovation activities in times when the company is going down? Should it be part of the company’s redefinition?
- Technology management – What role should technology management have inside the company and how it can add value to innovation? The role of experts inside the organisation and the need for trend hunting.
- The effect – The effect that innovation activities should have on the software company.

Further resources and analysis can be found on the website [www.7innovation.net](http://www.7innovation.net) where you can find further explanation of 7innovation method described in this book.

There are many quotations and references; there are maybe places where I missed adding some references. Please be aware that this is not done on purpose, as some of my notes date many years back. So if someone finds their own words somewhere, please take it as praise, not that I wanted to steal something.