

Success in innovation – enough theories, but what really needs to be done?

Innovation is an important success factor for companies, if not *the* success factor. Up and down the country, various explanations are given for processes, tools and the right variables – in other words, a certain systematic approach – that ought to make companies more successful.

Does a company become more innovative by listening carefully to customers? Which measures are right for me, sales of products not older than x years, or rather benchmarking myself against competitors in an industry? Which tools do I use, are customer interviews the right way to start off or should it be in the hands of the product marketing department?

What is certain is that successful companies not only manage to surprise their existing customers with innovative products and services, but also approach new customer groups and segments and conquer them successfully.

There are three key questions that you should always ask yourself:

- What do our customers really expect from us?
- How can we (not just) meet these expectations, but exceed them as far as possible? Or meet not only explicit but, wherever possible, implicit expectations too.
- How can we be sure that our assumptions are correct?

For one thing, customer expectations are very rarely clear. People are sometimes so used to an existing product that it doesn't even cross their mind to look for a new solution. After all, problems of use no longer attract attention after years of familiarity

However, it is only possible to get really enthusiastic about something that truly is new. And to achieve this, you need to step into the customer's shoes and take a look at the world from their perspective.



And then the next question comes up: What are the right tools in this case to “provoke” or produce this innovation?

- Lead user workshops, internal workshops
- Customer interviews, Discussions with agents and sales organizations
- Industry analysis or the large number of existing industry reports
- Industry segment workshop

The main direction could be towards innovating a core product or service (variants, changes in application, improvement in performance, cost reduction) or towards generating an innovation in the surrounding area or the business model (offering a customer-specific service, generating additional benefits or setting up a low cost solution across the entire value chain).

And this is precisely the point, when the customer once again comes into the picture. Innovation can only be successful, if we do so with the overall aim of making customers happy and by involving them early enough.

Have you checked your latest projects to see how they got on? Is innovation success something you are interested in? How do you gain access to good ideas in your company and pursue them up to the project start and then, if possible, to their successful market launch? It is never easy.

A chat with no obligation is always worthwhile! Benefit from expertise gained through 9 years of experience in consulting and 14 years of line experience. Advice based on experience and passion.