Cisco Europe

i-Zone

- Collect Ideas from Employees and Identify Opportunities for the European Market
- Collaborate Across the Entire Business with Executive Support
- Execute Actionable Ideas that have a Real Business Impact

The Solution

Cisco set up its Innovation Europe programme in 2008 as a formal mechanism to capture and share innovation across the company’s European markets. Its objectives were to explore all the possible sources of innovation in all areas of the business and to harness the creativity of Cisco employees, in support of future business development throughout the European region. At the heart of this internal programme was the i-Zone, an idea management portal powered by Brightidea that supports focused ideation, feedback and voting in an online community.

Equally important to the process and tools was tackling the perception of what innovation means at Cisco. Asman states, “there was this perception in the company that innovation was all about Research and Development or New Product Development, and I really believed we as a company needed to expand our thinking beyond Innovation being all about R&D.”

The European arm of i-Zone focused on a number of key strategic priorities to improve and sustain Cisco’s thought-leadership; create a next generation innovation workforce, build an effective end-to-end Industry Technology Services

Challenges

- Improve productivity and innovation across all areas of the business
- Engage and educate employees about the importance of innovation

Solution

- Dedicated Innovation Program supported by Brightidea software and tied to specific business units and executive-level support.

Results

- 400+ Ideas
- Over 5,000 users
- 5,000 + comments/votes
- 10+ Ideas under development
- 1 idea with multi-million dollar revenue potential

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MATT ASMAN
Innovation Manager at Cisco
end innovation process, deploy the right technology and platform to facilitate the process and generate the quantity and quality of ideas to make innovation successful.

The creation of a steering committee and leadership teams helped build the right organizational structure to support the program. The enterprise i-Zone platform was expanded and branded for specific campaigns connected to various business units within Cisco. Employees were able to submit ideas in six categories: Partners, Operational Excellence, Technology, Markets, People and Services. Ideas went through three stages of review by category ‘owners’, by an Evaluation Committee and by an Executive Leadership Team, before the strongest ideas received commitment from the business.

Results

During its first 15 months, i-Zone attracted more than 3,500 registered users and generated hundred’s of ideas, comments and community interactions. During the most recent phase of the innovation program Cisco has successfully increased the number of ideas generated through the internal innovation portal by nearly 50% and grown the community to nearly 5,000 users.

Cisco’s Executive Leadership Team have approved 10 of the ideas submitted, which have progressed through the system to receive support and investment from the business. Three of the ideas are now close to being implemented, with several in prototype and two expected to create significant revenue potential for the company within 3-5 years.

Cisco is always looking for ways to improve participation levels in i-Zone and to stimulate and maintain employees’ interest in the innovation process. One of the most recent enhancements is innovation challenges, where people are asked to focus on an industry-wide or customer-specific issue. Each innovation challenge, which involves virtual innovation brainstorming, lasts for three months after which the ideas that are generated go through Cisco’s established evaluation process. This approach has successfully generated hundred’s of additional ideas for the company to pursue.

The next phase of Cisco’s European Innovation Program will see i-Zone rolled out to selected partners within their worldwide channel partner program, a move likely to create greater levels of partner engagement and new opportunities to maintain the company’s technology leadership.

“A single new technology idea that was posted to the i-Zone and went through our evaluation process is now about to go to market with multi-million dollar revenue potential in the next 3 years.”

MATT ASMAN
Innovation Manager at Cisco

For an online demo and more information contact Brightidea today at 415-814-1387
http://www.brightidea.com