

target Idea Management

The Challenges

Corporations and public institutions are both facing the same drive to innovate today. Businesses must rise above costs of production to win against global competition. Getting the edge on the competition – with new solutions or more effective production methods - depends on getting ideas to practical applications in the market at a fair price.

Therefore, what we need today is a culture of innovation-friendly companies and business leaders. Innovation, however, simply cannot be left to chance but must be planned and monitored. Above all, ideas, inventions, and improvements must be recognized, and be rewarded appropriately with immaterial and financial incentives.

A survey from the Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) showed that three quarters of the most innovative companies in Germany use idea management systems to support their innovation activities.

Furthermore, the 2007 annual report from the German Institute for Business Economics (dib) published the following averages from 290 companies:

- Idea rate (number of ideas submitted per 100 employees) = 71,9
- Realization rate (percentage of ideas realized that were closed) = 65,2 %
- Savings from realized value during first year of use per employee = 684 Euro
- Participation rate (number of employees submitting at least one idea) = 23,4 %

The importance and recognition of idea management are obvious, and result in the following challenges for managers responsible for this process in the enterprise:

- In the drive for innovation, idea managers must set a good example and be on the cutting edge, for example, by implementing state-of-the-art technology.
- Process flows in idea management must contribute to an innovation-friendly corporate culture. No generic prescription exists for this, in fact, it is better for each enterprise to determine the processes appropriate for their company. To do so, companies need a correspondingly flexible system.
- Good ideas and innovative employees must be recognized, internal competition incentivized, and participation made appealing. An idea management portal with role-based self-services creates transparency, streamlines the process flow, and offers an attractive work environment for all involved.
- Cost pressure compels processes be as automated as possible, supported by software and electronic workflows.
- In terms of total cost of ownership (TCO), idea management is not a silo application, but embedded and part of a total environment of enterprise business solutions. Is your company strategy already aligned with SAP?

The Solution

Since 1997, target software solution has provided idea management software that maps all idea management processes for SAP R/3. Since 2004, the solution is also available for SAP ERP. The software has been certified by SAP and target is an official SAP Software Partner.

Optimal support for business processes is realized through freely configurable workflows and role-based Web scenarios that can be embedded in an enterprise portal, if desired. A number of well-known companies of all sizes and from all industries are using the idea management software, including SAP itself. With every type of currency and date formats and translations in several languages available in one system, the software is especially well suited for enterprises implementing global idea management.

As a target customer, you profit from our experience and expertise in all areas of idea management, our SAP development competence, and the technological leadership of SAP. Now, with the open application and integration platform SAP NetWeaver, SAP is delivering the most modern platform currently available for enterprise resource planning solution that includes next-generation ERP components such as SAP Enterprise Portal and SAP Business Intelligence. In fact, since November 2004, our software has been powered by SAP NetWeaver.

Integration with SAP

„target Idea Management“ is tailor-made and integrated in both proven SAP R/3 and SAP ERP 6.0 solutions, the latter the newest generation of enterprise resource planning software.

Integration takes place on both an application and technological level and in such depth that is only possible with a business application that is realized as a component in the SAP system. The benefits from this type integration cannot be achieved using simple data interfaces:

Application integration: All operational data available in the SAP standard system is used by idea management without interfaces and redundancies, including information about employees as well as the organizational plan and payroll accounting.

Proof point:

Up-to-date employee data is available at any time. Managers can be quickly determined for workflows. Statistics and key figures are easily represented in the organizational hierarchy. Submitter premiums are automatically sent to payroll without requiring a special interface.

Technological integration: The idea management solution was created using the development tools from SAP and in a protected name space /tar/ SAP made available to target exclusively as an add-on development. As a result, the application does not differentiate from SAP's own standard developments.

Proof point:

The installation of the software takes place using the Workbench and Customizing requests within the SAP Transport and Change Management System. The target idea management solution is delivered preconfigured for fast implementation and is ready for use within two hours after working through a sample Customizing checklist.

There are no requirements for using the idea management solution beyond those required by SAP. The idea management software is immediately accessible after technical installation from any work station running SAP software or from an Internet browser. All SAP system services (user administration, database services, data security, network infrastructure, and so on) can be used as well.

An Implementation Guide (IMG) is available to configure the system. Standard SAP user master data is utilized; defining authorizations takes place using the profile assignment in the user master record as in the SAP standard system. The software is designed specifically to use efficient SAP tools for idea management

purposes, for example, in the areas of word processing, queries, e-mail, electronic attachments, and key figure reporting. The “look and feel” of the application is similar to SAP. In other words, end users work with the same type of forms regardless of whether or not they are creating a leave request or submitting an idea.

System Prerequisites

The following release prerequisites must be met by the SAP system:

- SAP R/3, Release 4.6C or
- SAP R/3, Release 4.70 or
- SAP ERP 5.0 or
- SAP ERP 6.0

The following application data is mandatory: Basic data for employees, including organizational assignment, address data, and communications data (SAP mini-master record).

The following application data are recommended, but not mandatory: Organizational plan.

There are no additional prerequisites for system operation. In other words, the software can be used for all databases, operating systems, Internet browsers, and so on, that are permitted for the operation of a SAP system.

Service and Software Maintenance

Our service comprises the implementation and the environment of idea management in the following areas: strategic consulting for process definition, implementation support, training and coaching, as well as continuous enhancements and improvements.

We guarantee software maintenance and support for the SAP software based on SAP’s release and maintenance strategy (“Mainstream Maintenance” und “Extended Maintenance” policies). In other words, the maintenance intervals are 1:1 identical to those of SAP and thereby ensure the requisite security for planning purposes.

Functions

Idea Management comprises the following basic concepts:

- **Idea group:** An idea group defines the scope of the company policy for idea management. Any number of idea groups can be configured in one system. In this way, various plants or companies with different regulations for idea management exist in one system at the same time.
- **Centralized or decentralized organization:** In a centralized organization, a few idea managers are responsible for carrying out the idea management process. The idea managers are responsible for involving reviewers in the process; making decisions on submitted ideas is carried out with employees' managers and committees. In decentralized organizations, the managers with personnel responsibility for the employees are responsible for the entire process – from accepting the idea to valuating and putting it to practice. In reality, the pure employee manager model is very often replaced by one of idea teams.
- **Idea team:** An idea team comprises members having various functions (for example, decision makers, idea coaches, idea administrators, works council members). Idea teams can also be defined according to the organizational plan. They can also be responsible for subject matter areas related to the ideas submitted. In decentralized idea management, an idea can be assigned to the idea team that is either organizationally assigned to the submitter or concerns itself with topics related to the idea in question.

General Functions:

- **Transparent workflow:** Workflows are customer-defined. The process flow can be fully mapped electronically without mixing media. Workflows are triggered by activities that are stored in the system and cannot be modified; these activities provide idea managers with all the information they need concerning the existing completed and planned steps for the idea in question. A communication activity can either be carried out via e-mail or in printed correspondence. Mixed formats are also permitted: an activity can be sent as an e-mail but also as a letter if the recipient does not have any e-mail access. The system contains due- date monitoring with graduated levels of reminders as well as internal and external follow-up function.
- **Role-based Web application:** The role-based application of the software enables users to access exactly the information and processing functions that correspond to the employee's role. The system supports the profiles with specially developed Web services based on the roles in question, as follows:
 - Employee: Submits ideas, views processing status, performs general searches in idea pool
 - Manager:: Analyzes and makes decisions on employee ideas
 - Responsible for Realization: implements idea
 - Idea Team Member (same as Manager): Analyzes and makes decisions on employee ideas, derives authorization from team function
 - Reviewer: Creates reviews
 - Interested Parties: Uses ideas
 - Committee Member: Prepares committee sessions, makes decisions on ideas
 - any number of client –specific additional roles
- **Idea management portal:** The idea management portal is the single point of access to role-based Web applications. After logging on, employees get a view of idea management customized to their particular role in the company.
- **Easy to use:** No training is required to use the role-based Web services. Any employee with access to a keyboard and a mouse can start working with the system immediately.

- **Electronic attachments:** Attachments can be created and displayed by all persons involved in the idea process that have the proper authorization. Ideas are completely documented electronically in the system using idea fields, long text, comments, activities, and attachments.
- **Deputy concept:** Employees can assign someone to represent them (temporarily) as “deputies” in their role as manager or reviewer. Workflows are then redirected accordingly. The deputies are displayed in the idea management portal.
- **Multiple languages:** The idea management software is available in the languages English, German, French, Italian and Spanish. Additional languages are in development. All language-dependent elements are stored with language keys, and therefore are translatable. Correspondence (with submitters, for example) can be carried out in the language of the recipient, where desired.
- **Flexibly configured:** The system provides almost every type of configuration option, which are methodically structured and well documented in the Implementation Guide (IMG). If necessary, customer-specific enhancements can be carried out in their own function modules without modifications to the standard system software.
- **Ready to work:** The software is delivered with sample customizing so that the software can be used immediately.
- **Data migration from legacy systems:** The software contains general data migration tools as well as special utilities for transferring data from standard applications.

Special Functions

The functions covering the entire idea management process can be divided into the following areas:

- Generating and submitting ideas
- Analyzing and making decisions on ideas
- Using ideas
- Awarding premiums
- Idea controlling

The software provides comprehensive support for all of the aforementioned areas of idea management. These functions are briefly listed below.

Generating and Submitting Ideas

- Idea submission forms user-defined and configured
- Any number of submitters, percentage participation, additional information permitted
- Idea description user-defined and structured, for example, for areas of actual status, target status, and value
- Idea submitters can enter classifications
- Ideas saved in draft form
- Collaboration: Each submitter can process the draft of the idea; first submitter can send the draft as the idea
- Ideas or submitters defined as anonymous, when desired
- Campaigns can be assigned
- Support provided for submitter groups
- When ideas are submitted, the system uses various criteria to check whether similar ideas exist, and if so, displays them on the screen.
- Employees submit ideas on their own or others' behalf
- Special fast entry transactions available for mass entry
- Support provided for "Return to Submitter" function, if decision maker requires additional information

Analyzing and Making Decisions on Ideas

- Idea forum (discussion on idea among any number of employees) possible
- Employee's manager or member of idea team can pass the idea on to another person responsible
- Any number of comments and "Send Info To..." permitted
- Any number of experts and reviewers can be involved; support provided for selecting reviewers
- Reviews formatted and valued in any way
- A valuation proposal can be created from the reviews
- Valuation types available: "Not realized"; "not realized with recognition amount"; "realized"
- Any number of groupings for valuation types, for example, "calculated value" and "no calculated value"
- Ideas can be reopened and objections to decisions made on ideas are also possible

Using Ideas

- Any number of interested parties can be informed
- Assignment of person responsible for realization and date for realization
- Search for similar ideas using key words
- User-defined format for value confirmation of idea
- Any amount of distribution to cost centers using the idea possible
- Valuation can be derived from the value confirmation

Awarding Premiums

- Flexible premium calculation including participation and responsibility of submitter
- Partial payments possible
- Rule-based release by decision maker, idea management, or a committee
- Special transactions for mass release (CIP) and mass decisions by the committee available
- Automatic recalculation for retroactive calculations and determination of differences
- Optional transfer to SAP Payroll with cost assignment
- Several monetary and points accounts possible
- Integration with web-based Premium Shop (Couponing House)
- Account debiting for prizes, automated e-mail ordering
- Account debiting from special drawings
- Transaction for cash payments available
- Awards for external employees
- "Request Acceptance by Submitter" procedure

Controlling Ideas

- More than 20 preconfigured valuations are delivered in a report tree
- Customer valuations can be generated using SAP Query without programming knowledge
- SAP Query contains extensive options for further processing, including connection to Microsoft Word and Excel, and graphics
- Convenient standard selections according to all relevant criteria
- Connection to SAP Business Information Warehouse (SAP BW) including predefined Datasources, Infosources, InfoArea with 78 characteristics and 39 key figures, two infocubes for ideas and submitters, multiprovider containing both infocubes, and sample queries.