Growing

CATALOGUE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL WINNING IDEAS

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In this catalogue, companies can find some **winning and inspirational entrepreneurial ideas** to create a **learning culture**, **entrepreneurial mindset** and **friendly workplace**!

The catalogue gathers 20 ideas identified by SMEs that contributed to the project and the GrowINg team, and each one of the ideas are related to one of the three topics of the GrowINg project: learning at the workplace, employees' career management and employees' entrepreneurial skills.

To better understand the context of implementation and creation of the ideas, in this document they are presented in three categories:

- **Entrepreneurial winning ideas (10)** – Ideas that come up from the launch of the entrepreneurial challenges in the SMEs from Portugal, Cyprus and Greece that implemented the GrowINg approach
- **Inspirational ideas for the self-assessment tool (5)** – Ideas on how companies can take the best use of the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool of the project
- **GrowINg good practices (5)** – Ideas that come up from the implementation of the GrowINg approach and resources in companies and that generated an interesting impact on them

Get inspired and dare to build a learning culture in your company!

Entrepreneurial winning ideas

As part of the implementation of the GrowINg tools by the companies, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises from Portugal, Cyprus and Greece launched **entrepreneurial challenges**.

These challenges consisted of internal contests in which employees were challenged to identify or find a solution to a problem or aspect to be improved in the company related to one of the three topics of the GrowINg project (Figure 1):

Figure 1 – Topics approached in the GrowINg project

In total, 12 SMEs in the three countries launched these entrepreneurial challenges in accordance with the following flow (Figure 2):

Figure 2 – Flow followed by the companies to prepare, launch, and close the entrepreneurial challenges.

Twelve entrepreneurial winning ideas resulted from these challenges and 10 of them are presented in this section.

(1) The juries should include at least 3 members, namely: a manager/director, a representative from the human resources or training department and a representative from the employees.
(2) Each team was composed of 3 to 5 employees, with one of them assuming leadership.
(3) The analysis of the solutions was made based on 4 criteria: clear relation between the solution and challenges, innovation of the solution (not being implemented in the company), the possibility of being implemented in the company and benefits to workers and the company.

Friday Fun Lunch

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How to improve skill-sharing, team building and knowledge exchange through personal relationships?

Solution: Organization of cuisine-themed lunch meetings (favourite dish, certain gastronomy) on Fridays in which employees can summarize their next week and offer/ask for help while getting to know each other. To achieve the successful implementation of the activity, follow the steps.

1. Reach an agreement with the team to have an altogether-themed lunch on Fridays. Every week a new theme will be suggested for that Friday's lunch (e.g., regional gastronomies of the world, vegetarian Friday, favourite meals, favourite childhood meals, etc.).
2. While at lunch, people should be encouraged to connect and discuss the week and the plans they have for the next week, allowing them to practise sharing tasks - especially when they.

Resources and conditions: The main restrictions for the activity are the availability of space and the possible resistance to investing time and money on the company's benefit while on lunch break, therefore it would be a good idea to allocate a small amount of money for the lunch meals. The time should be equal to or higher to lunch break, typically 1 hour.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Improved communication and collaboration among the department employees.
- Higher workers' morale and motivation.

Monthly Learning Library

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How can we ensure that the staff keeps up to date in all relevant matters through a lifelong learning approach?

Solution: Setting up a 'topic of the month' to plan several learning activities on it and create a digital library on the topic, which will enhance the knowledge.

1. Ask your employees what topics are relevant for them and find those which may be useful for a better teamwork environment and/or are aligned with the interests of the organization (e.g., handling stress, time management at work, project management etc).
2. Make a plan for the foreseen future, choosing one topic per each of the chosen months. Introduce the plan to the employees and ask for volunteer contributions (everyone is invited to add material to an online library, or offer to conduct a workshop/activity, share their experience, etc.).
3. Set the distribution of the activities within each month and explain the resources available for employees:
    - Collection of interesting articles, videos, bite-size learning activities, etc, to be added to the online employer library.
    - Organization of a small workshop, if possible.
    - Participation in free, short online courses, if possible.
    - Organizing a round table at the end of the month in which discuss how to implement the newly acquired knowledge in the working environment.
4. Prepare an evaluation plan to track the progress and impact. Take into consideration the evaluation results to design changes for the following months if the activities are not appreciated or considered useful.
5. Implement different activities each month.

Resources and conditions: It would require the use of an online cloud to keep the 'knowledge library' up to date, as well as space for studying activities and workshops, making managerial support a key requirement. In matters of time, it would be needed to dedicate a minimum of 1 hour per week to studying and additional 2-3 hours per month in case of a workshop being organized.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Creativity
- Communication
- Lifelong learning
- Professional development at the workplace
- High-quality team activities
- Employee motivation

Learning with me

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts between team members with different workload levels?

Solution: Improving internal communication among the team, enhancing teamwork and skill-sharing.

1. Ask employees to share the rest information about their work (what do they do, main responsibilities, etc.) and to describe their skillset in a certain field of knowledge (e. g. sharing information on how to make a good presentation; how to create an impactful social media post to attract the followers, etc.).
2. Encourage creativity – ask them to choose the best way to share their knowledge and skills with their peers (e. g. presentation, video, audio recording, demonstration, etc.)
3. Highlight the positive impact that different profiles and skills have on business, allowing employees to learn from each other and create new connections.
4. Make a schedule for the sharing experiences: all the material(s) created should be accessible to all employees (uploaded online for employees to access).

Resources and conditions: It would require the use of an online cloud to keep the 'skillset profiles' and the skill-sharing materials accessible and up to date, as well as space for sharing activities, and managerial involvement. In matters of time, it would be needed to dedicate a minimum of 2-3 (a couple) hours per month.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Improved understanding of colleagues' works and responsibilities
- Enhanced knowledge of various topics
- Increased motivation to learn

Leading team to success

Topic: Employees' career management

Challenge: How to settle the leadership and team organization for a project or task?

Solution: Set consensual leadership in the teams, chosen by the own employees. This leader/ reference will organize and distribute the workloads according to their responsibilities and requirements.

1. Define the leader's role, which can include: the distribution of clients, the decision to the mobilisation of clients to another team, carrying out routines, staff distribution (who and at what time must work), and distribution of mealtimes and/or breaks.
2. Define a "leader"/"reference" professional profile (or eventually, an expert, if applicable) in each sector according to the inner requirements of the department.
3. Identify the work plan set by the referred professional.

Resources and conditions: Time, available staff and managerial support should be the main constraints in this matter: the leadership should be chosen in a meeting of fewer than 30 minutes, the management should be open to changes and, encourage people to volunteer for the leading position, this extra role should be remunerated somehow.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Improve the response of the professionals to a certain need or challenge
- Possibility to show leadership and teamwork
- Better team spirit

Be Digital

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How to ease and facilitate bureaucratic processes related to the submission, evaluation and approval of the managed projects?

Solution: Creation of an online platform with permissions accessible to all departments to facilitate the exchange and analysis of documents required for candidatures and validation of SME projects, facilitating the analysis of the eligibility for each project and notifying the validation result of the companies.

1. Define an action plan for the creation of the platform, identifying the tasks to be performed, moments and formats of co-working with the beneficiaries of the platform, timeline and outcomes
2. Meet with the leaders of the departments to introduce the plan and schedule meetings with the teams
3. Promote meetings with the teams involved (one meeting per department is advisable) to a) understand the responsibility of the teams in a proposal; b) know the flow of a proposal; c) identify the needs and constraints of the teams; d) be acquainted towards their expectations
4. Identify the characteristics to be incorporated into the platform and select the best server to support it
5. Develop a bet version of the platform
6. Meet with the leaders of the departments to introduce the platform and negotiate the internal-beta test
7. Promote the internal beta test and collect evaluation and feedback
8. Analyse the results and feedback from the beta test and incorporate the possible and necessary changes
9. Launch the official platform and introduce it to all company

Resources and conditions: Availability of the IT team to implement the platform, the rest of the staff to test it and give feedback

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Faster evaluation of the projects.
- Better decision-making process as information is always available to the users with enough privilege to consult it.

Welcoming newcomers

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills

Challenge: How to promote a quick and smooth integration from day 1 to any new member of staff?

Solution: This solution is to be implemented from the recruitment process:

1. Before new incorporation into the team[1], the employees create a pool of ideas of activities for the agenda of the first day of a new employee, boosting teamwork and integration.
2. Send a confirmation email to the new employee and inform the team of the arrival of a new colleague.
3. Create a session of brainstorming with the teams to fill the agenda of the newcomer.
4. Set a voting experience and let the team choose the best ideas.
5. Prepare all materials/resources needed for the desired agenda and the manual with all the necessary information for those who just entered.

Resources and conditions: Integration of the co-jointed efforts of HR, Administrative & IT departments. 1 hour for the brainstorming/voting session. Preparation of the agreed materials.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Boost of team spirit
- Breaking out the routines
- Healthy competitiveness for the ideas to be chosen
- Higher feeling of community
- Ease of integration for new team members

1 This activity complements the traditional integration of newcomers, i.e. preparing contractual and other documents, welcome kits (computer, notebook, pen, reusable water bottle, schoolbag…), etc.

Skill-build your team

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How to identify the skills requirements that are not present in our staff to be able to provide training in the most demanded areas?

Solution:

1. Ask staff about the main 'pain points' they deal with on daily basis and take note of the most common areas.
2. Have an open discussion with the staff about their expectations on training or areas that might add a surplus/extra value to the organization.
3. Search for training opportunities (online courses, workshops, etc).
4. Organize and provide in-house training.

Resources and conditions: 3 hours availability of the team for the discussion session. It might be required to hire trainers, buy licenses for online courses, etc.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Upgrade the knowledge of the staff
- Identification of possible market trends
- Keep updated with the market needs and demands

Friendly workplace

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How to maintain a friendly employee & customer environment?

Solution: After having managed to create and establish a friendly employee & customer environment over the years, the company growth represents a challenge in this sense, as there are more people to be involved and integrated every time.

1. Introduce the activity to the team and explain that the objective is to boost morale and improve team spirit.
2. Suggest a first activity to be a quiz (company culture, curious facts about the countries of origin of the team members/customers, etc) by teams (through Slido/Kahoot, etc).
3. Open a mailbox for free suggestions for the next experiences.

Resources and conditions: 2-3 hours per teambuilding experience. It is needed to gain the will and engagement of the team about their participation, so it is highly recommended to ensure managerial support for the initiatives.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Increase team building
- Getting to personally know your coworkers

Who (really) are you?

Topic: Learning at the workplace.

Challenge: How to ensure a newcomer meets all the members of the organisation potentiating his/her social integration?

Solution:

1. Whenever someone new joins the team, introduce the game "two truths, one lie" activity to the staff
2. To play, everyone gathers in a circle (standing or sitting down).
3. One by one, each person in the circle says three statements about him/herself. Two of these statements must be true, the other must be a believable lie. The rest of the group must guess which one is the lie.

Resources and conditions: 1 hour. Material resources will be post-its, pens or markers and a space where to carry on the game. This initiative relies highly on the interest and motivation of the staff, so it would be good to ask each member of staff to suggest a different icebreaker every time.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- People will start knowing each other better
- Teamwork and team bonding will be increased in the company

Taking a break together

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills

Challenge: How to foster communication among the team and contribute to the establishment of a relationship based on the values of trust, truth and empathy?

Solution:

1. Announce to the team that every last Friday of the month, the team will leave work 2 hours before the normal hour and gather in a common space (e. g. coffee shop) to spend qualitative time together and boost the bonding of the team.

Resources and conditions: 2 hours per month. Attendance of every team member and will to participate (it could be suggested that every month a different person chooses the place).

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Team bonding
- Relaxed times for the employees
- Less stressful work

Inspirational ideas for the self-assessment tool

Small and medium enterprises from Portugal, Cyprus and Greece accepted the challenge of knowing the GrowINg approach and started implementing some of the tools developed in real context with employees.

From this experience, companies created and identified some ideas on how organisations can incorporate the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool in their activities and services. A total of 5 ideas are identified at this level and emerged from different experiences (Figure 3):

Figure 3 – Contexts from which the ideas on how to benefit from the self-assessment tool come up.

Skilled solution

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills.

Challenge: How to assess the employees' skills and identify/prepare activities and training to reinforce those skills?

Solution:

1. Implement the online entrepreneurial self-assessment tool of the GrowINg project for a short period.
2. Review and compare results.
3. Open discussion among the team.
4. Provision of training, and webinars to help with the advancement of the gaps identified.

Resources and conditions: The activity should not take more than 2-3 hours, and the main requirements are technical, such as access to the internet and encouraging registration in the platform.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Understand the personality of the employees to adapt the work processes to their traits.
- Acquire knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of the employees.

Matching jobs and skills

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills.

Challenge: How to allocate each member of staff in their most adequate job placement?

Solution:

1. Review the CVs of the staff
2. Implement different personality tests
3. Fill out the online entrepreneurial self-assessment tool[2] of the GrowINg project
4. Acquire feedback on the strong skills and characteristics of each member
5. Review the available job descriptions and allocate the personnel accordingly

Resources and conditions: The project would have an estimated lifespan of 1 week. The only requirements are willingness to participate from all parties involved, internet connection and registration in the platform.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- A more efficient workplace since each member of staff will work in their area of expertise.

2 Link to the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool: http://growing-project.eu/self-assessment-tool/

Are you learning properly?

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills.

Challenge: How to assess employees' learning while attending an entrepreneurial training course?

Solution:

1. Create a group on the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool correspondent to the training group
2. Define a date, time and place to proceed with the initial evaluation and invite all employees that will attend the training. This evaluation should be done before the training course start.
3. Collect and analyse the results without showing them to employees.
4. At the end of the training, define a date, time and place to proceed with the final evaluation and invite all employees that attended the training, You can decide the time between the last sessions and this final evaluation, it can be up to 6 months.
5. Gather the results from the two moments of evaluation, comparing the results from the initial evaluation with the final evaluation.
6. Schedule an individual meeting with employees to present and discuss the results of both evaluations. You can also debate the impact of the training on employees.

Resources and conditions: All employees must answer the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool at the same time in the two moments. They will need computers and the internet to answer the questionnaire. The time between the last training session and the final evaluation should be discussed and agreed upon to assure a proper evaluation.

Did you know!?

- By this way is impossible to measure the impact of the training on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills of employees
- By answering the questionnaire, employees may improve their skills of self-reflection and awareness
- By involving employees in the evaluation, you are promoting their engagement and commitment towards their learning

Interns as lifelong learners

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills.

Challenge: How to facilitate the integration of interns through self-reflection and discussion?

Solution:

1. Define a date, time and place to proceed with the evaluation and invite all interns of the company to the activity
2. When in the group:
   a. Do an ice-breaking activity to know the interns involved
   b. Briefly introduce the tool and the objectives of the session, clarifying that the goal is to discuss the results after answering the questionnaire
   c. After interns answer and see their results, ask them to analyse them and take some notes about them: What did you feel while answering the questionnaire? What is your impression towards the results (real/not real, novelty/or not)? What did you learn from the experience and results? Are you able to reflect on your path in the company? Do you need support to draft your plan?
   d. After individual reflection, promote discussion in a large group, giving the word to everyone.
   e. In the end, try to define and agree on initiatives that the company can promote to overcome some possible gaps identified.

Resources and conditions: To answer the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool interns need computers and an internet connection. Is important to guarantee the balanced participation of interns. Interns can answer the questionnaire individually and only they will have access to the results.

Did you know!?

- By promoting moments and opportunities for self-reflection on skills you are contribution to promote a lifelong learning spirit on interns
- By promoting these and other activities in regular basis, with interns and even other employees, you are contributing to their engagement, ownership, responsibility and excellence
- The self-assessment tool can be used to promote self-reflection and awareness

Find your team's entrepreneurial potential!

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills.

Challenge: How to know the entrepreneurial potential of a team?

Solution:

1. Define a date, time and place to proceed with the evaluation and invite all the members of the team to the activity
2. When in the group:
   a. Identify one of the members responsible for answering the questionnaire The idea is all together to answer one questionnaire as a team.
   b. Whenever a new question comes up, the team needs to discuss and agree on an answer.
   c. After completing the questionnaire and getting the results, each member will have time to analyse the results and draft some conclusions and recommendations.
   d. A joint debate, in a large group, should be done after the individual analysis of the results.
   e. After the debate, the team can suggest ideas to reduce/overcome the gaps identified.
3. The team leader should reflect on a strategy for the implementation of the ideas that come up from the discussion

Resources and conditions: To answer the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool is necessary to access a computer and internet connection. Is important to guarantee that all members take part in the activities and actively contribute at all moments.

Did you know!?

- Moments in team contribute to increase the trust, commitment and connection between the members of the team
- By engaging your team in process of self-assessment you are involving them in the definition of their learning path
- By promoting moments and opportunities for self-reflection on skills you are contribution to promote a lifelong learning spirit on employees

GrowINg good practices

Apart from the ideas that emerged from the entrepreneurial challenges and the implementation/testing of the entrepreneurial self-assessment tool, other ideas came up from the implementation of the GrowINg tools in SMEs that, due to its impact in improving the link and sense of belonging of employees to the company are identified in this document as GrowINg good practices.

In detail, these ideas resulted from the:

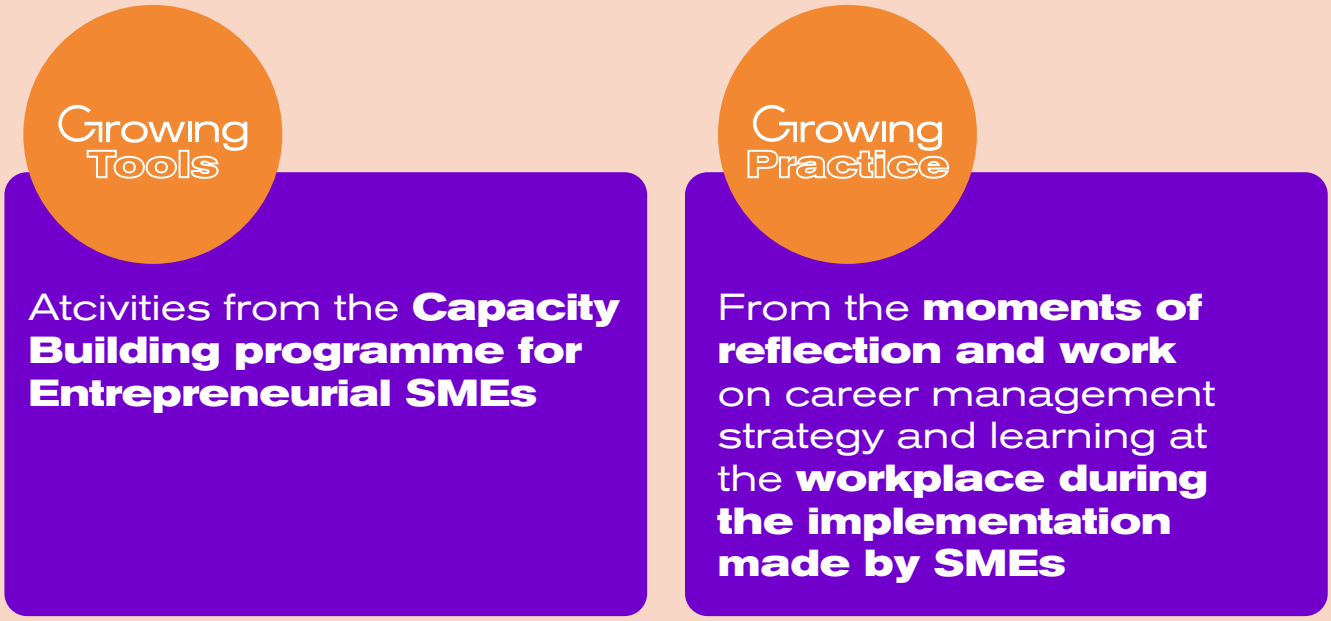

Figure 4 – Contexts in which other entrepreneurial inspirational ideas were identified and used by companies

As such, five ideas are identified in this section, one is the most popular activity included in the handbook for entrepreneurial skilled employees and four ideas were identified by the teams involved in the implementation, as a solution to overcome challenges related to the employees' career guidance and promotion of learning at the workplace. Part of these four ideas were implemented during the testing of the GrowINg tools in SMEs, and the other part will be implemented after the end of the project.

Buddy system

Topic: Employees' career management

Challenge: How to support the inclusion of a new employee in the company?

Solution:
Implementation of the buddy system in the company, consisting of identifying an employee that can become a "buddy" for the "newcomer" during the first period of integration in the job and workplace. Follow these steps:

Before the entering of a newcomer

1. Set the goal, period and resources to allocate for the implementation of the buddy system in your company
2. Identify the "buddy" and determine her/his role. While identifying the buddy is important to: a) consider the policies and practices existent in a company that need to be transmitted to the "newcomer"; 2) analyse the responsibility, character and interest of the "buddy", once not all employees are able or can act as trainers or mentors; 3) prepare the "buddy" presenting the method for a smooth inclusion of a new employee.

With the entering of a newcomer

3. Draft and share Internal tools and guidelines, which can be didactical and provide an explanation of the basic procedures and practices of the company.
4. Give the newcomers a good understanding of the mission and the strategy of the company. Explain who the key stakeholders are, who the clients/customers are, and which the main services or products.
5. Explain what the main goal of the company and the plans are.
6. Allow them to understand their role in the strategy of the company.
7. Prepare a "pool of activities and work-based tasks" for the first four weeks. Prioritize these tasks/ activities from the most important to less important and give them some time to process and learn their main duties
8. Pick a "buddy" or a "mentor" for a particular period. It serves as a development opportunity for both employees; the old and the new. Define the period and explain the roles of both involved persons (a) the buddy and (b) the new employee. Explain what is expected from both and what the procedure of this approach is.
9. Let them participate in meetings or informal conversations even if their role is irrelevant.
10. After the determined period of the "on-the-job learning" (i. e. 4 weeks) schedule a meeting with the new employee and the buddies to review the progress, the achievements and the lessons learnt.

Resources and conditions: Willing of the team workers, involvement and understanding from management.

Did you know!?

With the "buddy system"…

- … the "buddy" employees feel that they have a voice in the process of career management of their colleagues and feel part of that process
- … the newcomer feel empowered and able to develop a sense of belonging

Shadowing for empathy

Topic: Employees' career management

Challenge: Employees don't know exactly what their peers do or deal with, which ends in lower efficiency and occasional conflicts by misjudgement of the challenges for other colleagues.

Solution:

1. Ask each team member to prepare a "1 day in my shoes" experience, including usual tasks and challenges associated with their position.
2. Once a month each member of the team can "host" a shadowing of a colleague during the morning to have a better understanding of that position, the workflows and how each department can help the others.
3. Every 3 months explore with the team the experience: What are they learning? What do they feel about the activity?

Resources and conditions: Willing of the team workers, involvement and understanding from management.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Empathy and good relationships between co-workers.
- A more efficient workplace since each member of staff will understand how their job is integrated in the cycle of the organization and can improve their own work to make things easier for the rest.

Performance recognition

Topic: Employees' career management

Challenge: How to increase the odds of retaining employees for a longer period?

Solution:

1. Establish a table of salaries according to professional categories within the company and disclose it to all employees (i.e. Cat1 X€-Y€; Cat 2 X1€-Y1€, etc.).
2. Make a quarterly presentation of the department results and allow employees to express what they have achieved during that quarter.
3. Let the team vote on three candidates for the best performer of the quarter. Whoever wins, receives an economic bonus.
4. If a team member wins three bonuses in two years or five in less than three years, should be automatically promoted to the next category.

Resources and conditions: Management commitment. Approximately 2-3 hours per quarter.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Work ethics.
- Motivation.
- More fluid relationship between team and management.
- Creation of a proper environment to provide feedback and recognition.
- Higher chances to retain talented workers.

Task pool force

Topic: Employees' entrepreneurial skills

Challenge: How to ensure that each member of the team accomplishes their responsibilities in due time?

Solution:

1. Ask employees to make the most complete job description of their current position, including all relevant tasks they need to do daily.
2. Create a form in which employees can report the tasks that they often take care of but are not coherent with their job description (or with the rest of it if they have included it as a residual part of it).
3. Create a task pool including all these tasks and either associate each of them with the person with the most similar profile or create periods of 30 mins during the day in which each team member must take care of one of the pending tasks.

Resources and conditions: Willing of the team workers, involvement and understanding from management.

Did you know!?

This activity promotes the development of:

- Work efficiency.
- Motivation.

Mind-mapping needs

Topic: Learning at the workplace

Challenge: How to engage teams in the active and cooperative identification of training needs?

Solution:

Promoting meetings to mind-mapping training needs

1. Prepare a list of the main activities to be performed by the elements of the team, without being too narrow or too specific
2. Promote a joint session will members of the team to promote an active and cooperative process for the identification of the team training needs
3. Organize the team in groups of 3 to 5 elements (depending on the dimension of the team)
4. Distribute a sheet with the activities identified, ensuring that in the center of the sheet is identified 1 activity (you should distribute 1 sheet per activity)
5. Each group should discuss the activities and identify the training needs of the team for each one of the activities. Each team will have 15 minutes to discuss one activity. Each group can discuss all activities or, in the case they are too many, just some of the activities.
6. Each group will introduce the main results from the activity and together the team will identify priorities and plans to overcome the needs and gaps.

Resources and conditions: Place to promote the meeting, materials to identify the needs, flipchart or whiteboard to register the main decisions

Did you know!?

- By engaging the team in the identification of the training needs you are potentiating their motivation to the training
- By reflecting and discussion on the training needs employees will accept more easily their gaps and needs

Growing

LinkedIn

Website