American Chemical Society

Fostering Innovation in a Publishing Production Environment

Theresa Schwope
Associate Technical Editor
American Chemical Society

WHO WE ARE

ACS Global Production Operations (GPO)

• >100 in-house production staff and IT support
• Production focused, metrics driven with respect to quantity and quality
• Efficiency is everyone’s responsibility
• Emerging and innovative global aspect
Challenges to promoting innovation in a production environment

- Full production is the focus during periods of high receipt
- Working to manage volume throughput and meet customer expectations may preclude "free-think"/creativity at work
- Work environment is by nature solitary
  - Office designed to promote concentration and minimize outside distractions
  - Majority of staff participate in remote work several days a week

Encouraging Innovation in the Workplace
Innovation Incubator Group

- Volunteer employee group that meets once a month over lunch to formulate and brainstorm new ideas
- Staff are invited to bring their ideas to gather support and offer advice and assistance to others
- Staff can choose when to move an idea to the next level by submitting the idea to the “Innovation Funnel”

Workshops and Events

- Encourages and motivates collaboration and energizes staff
- Events can be short or long, typically 2-3 hour held during the workday
- Past workshop/event
  - 2018 Science Fair Poster Session highlighting implemented innovative ideas
  - 2019 Invited Speaker, Mark Hensen, author of “Ordinary Superpowers”
Innovation Week
A week of themed activities to foster collaboration and encourage innovation and engagement in the department

2018

A week of activities promoting collaboration and creativity in GPO

2019

A week of activities promoting individual strengths and talents in GPO
Feb 25th through March 1st

Innovation Week

• Activities were designed to
  – Facilitate participation during the work day
  – Uncover and recognize diverse talents
  – Drive home the importance of collaboration to innovation

• Activities included lego build, group scrabble board, trivia contest, create a logo contest, photo opportunities, etc.
Promoting Participation

- Easy for staff to submit ideas at any time through the software they use daily.
- Department whiteboard to engage staff, brainstorm, encourage thinking outside the box.
- Prizes and gifts for participating in events. Snacks. Open invitations.
Submitting an Idea

• Online tool allows easy capture of ideas or kernels of thought
• Employee Innovation Group (EIG) Committee of staff catalogues and triages ideas
• Submitters choose their level of involvement

Ideas in the Innovation Funnel

• All ideas are catalogued online and open to all staff to see
• Consistent update, re-evaluation, and follow-up of each idea until implementation or archive
• Formal proposal before Innovation Steering Committee
Innovation Steering Committee

• “Ready” ideas are presented to the Innovation Steering Committee which consists of the department management team.
• The person who owns the idea presents his/her proposal to the committee.
• The Committee discusses the idea and decides if the idea can be further developed.
  – Has this idea already been tried?
  – Does the expected return value make sense for the resource expense?
  – Would it be of interdepartmental interest?

ACS Global Production Operations

Results
Participation

- Success of innovation events measured by participation numbers and feedback from staff

![Graph showing participation numbers](image)

Increase in ideas submission

- After each event there is an increase in the amount of ideas submitted. Example: Achievement through Collaboration Innovation Week

![Graph showing increase in ideas submission](image)
Meeting the Challenge

Implemented Ideas

• Efficiencies
  – Software changes
  – Shortcuts
  – Workflow

• Information/Collaboration Exchange Avenues
  – Knowledge Exchange (KX)
  – Brown-Bag Lunch series
  – Recap Notes

Thank You
Questions