

## *Case Study*



# *Syngenta*

*Elaborating ideas through a clearly structured innovation process*



# Elaborating ideas through a clearly structured innovation process



## The company:

- World-leading plant science company committed to promoting sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology
- 24,000 employees spread over 90 countries

## The challenge:

- Seeds division has a new approach to innovation – engaging the final consumers of their products
- Desire to involve more employees in developing concepts
- Seeds is 40% of the revenue of Syngenta and therefore crucial for the long term success of the company

## The outcome:

- HYPE platform implemented to manage ideas from open innovation workshops
- Ideas are combined, built upon and stepped through Syngenta's innovation process
- Over 800 new ideas have been generated leading to 13 project proposals
- Engaged over 400 new employees within Seeds unit in the innovation process

## Business Challenge:

Innovation has always been important to Syngenta; they invest in face-to-face workshops to bring their consumers together with Syngenta employees to help develop new ideas for market. Recently, Syngenta Vegetable Seeds took the decision to extend this process beyond their prime customers – the retailers – and include the final consumers of their seed products. Syngenta Vegetable Seeds have always recorded ideas manually and managed them through their innovation process in the same way. This extension of their open innovation program and a desire to involve many more employees in the process led to a need for a new way to manage seed innovation.

## Scenario:

In order to ensure creativity wasn't lost and that the best expertise in the company could be included in the innovation process, Syngenta took the decision to implement an idea management system in 2007. A consistent and more efficient process was needed to manage ideas, increase the visibility of the process for all and try out online ideation campaigns. They wanted to improve the ideas created from the retailer and consumer workshops, combine ideas online, take the content from those workshops and then manage the ideas through its structured series of concept stages, while allowing different stakeholders to participate at the right time.



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## The Solution:

Syngenta implemented the HYPE platform as a small pilot, engaging just 50 people to explore the principles of online idea management. Any ideas created during the physical brain storming sessions are stored online to ensure nothing was lost and content could be shared. In 2008, a full implementation began after a successful pilot and now the program has grown within the Seeds division to over 400 users, each employee able to build and collaborate on ideas captured from the workshops. During the full rollout, Syngenta began to experiment with internal, fully online idea campaigns to complement its face-to-face innovation



workshops, yet wherever an idea was generated it would follow the Syngenta innovation lifecycle. Implemented in HYPE, Syngenta steps all content through a number of stages: Idea, Mini-Concept, Concept and Project Proposal to ensure only the highest quality ideas and concepts are implemented.

### ***The relationship between HYPE and Client:***

HYPE was selected in 2007 to be Syngenta's Seed Innovation technology provider. The organisation was looking for a software partner that could adapt to its innovation process, one that shared its view of innovation, and provide a system that could be adapted, changed and expanded during its operation. It was important to have only one partner, so the organisation to be selected needed to provide the whole service from the support of front-end ideation to full concept management.

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***“HYPE allows us to engage wider groups of employees up on focussed business challenges irrespective of where someone is based or their area of expertise. Creativity can now be harnessed and everyone can see what’s happening to their ideas and what we’re working on.”***

Elena Ozeritskaya  
*Market Intelligence & Innovation Manager*

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### ***Detail of the Program:***

The Syngenta program has two main areas of focus:

- Supporting face to face workshops and
- Campaign-based idea generation

In support of the customer workshops, ideas are created on paper, inserted into the HYPE system and then developed into 'mini-concepts' where pictures are added and employees can comment on the idea. Mini-concepts are then developed online into 'concepts' where a benefits evaluation is completed and top scoring ideas will lead to project proposals for review by the innovation committee. Nowadays, more and more online brainstorming is carried out. So far, 40 campaigns have been run which include a range of challenges set by the local and global management teams. The focus varies widely between new customer features for a product, process innovations, supply chain, marketing or seed quality. Some challenges are open to the whole audience, some are subject specific. At any one time, a number of campaigns will be live, so employees can engage with the subjects of most interest.



Elena Ozeritskaya has been delighted by the visibility and effectiveness improvements the solution supports

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### **Benefits**

Having confidence in the new and robust process to develop ideas has helped to ensure that engaging with final consumers would not result in wasted ideas. This in turn has led to better relationships with Syngenta's customer base.



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So far the program has captured over 800 ideas from the combination of employees and face-to-face workshops, importantly those ideas have been developed into 48 mini concepts, leading to 13 high-quality project proposals which will be reviewed, and if they meet final standards, implemented. Clearly, the best measure of success is the development of new ideas; in addition, the HYPE software has increased the efficiency of the process dramatically: mini-concepts are now developed on-line, and the increased visibility of the process has engaged more people, which in turn lead to higher quality concepts. Simply having everything in one place makes the whole process much easier to manage, but in addition, the evaluation of all content is now more structured and leads to better decisions and better developed proposals.

It's not just the company that's benefiting, employees contributing to good ideas are rewarded with innovative experiences or prizes such as iPods.



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