

Enhancing shopfloor employees'
innovation activity
- Innovation catcher in public utility

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The tool: Innovation catcher

- Aims to enhance the hidden innovation potential of the shopfloor level of an organisation
- Focus is on the fuzzy front end of innovation process
- Action research
- 11 cases during 2007-2008 in Lahti region

Idea channels

Different ways of expressing ideas

Collision places

Motivation

Feedback and rewarding

Ability to give and receive feedback

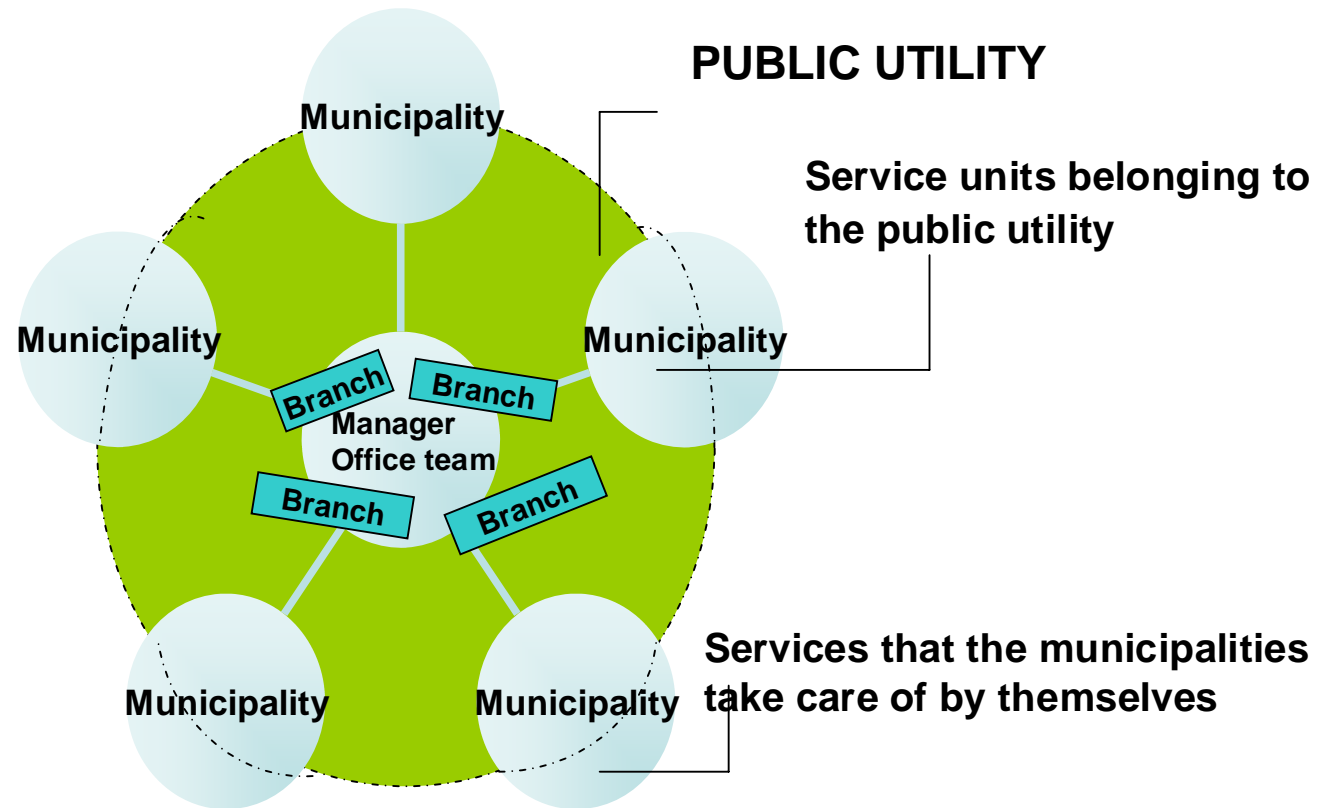
External knowledge

Absorptive capacity

Case organisation

- Public utility in the field of municipal engineering services
- 190 employees
- Dispersed working locations
- 10 participants from different units
- No Idea management in the organisation

The context



Research objective

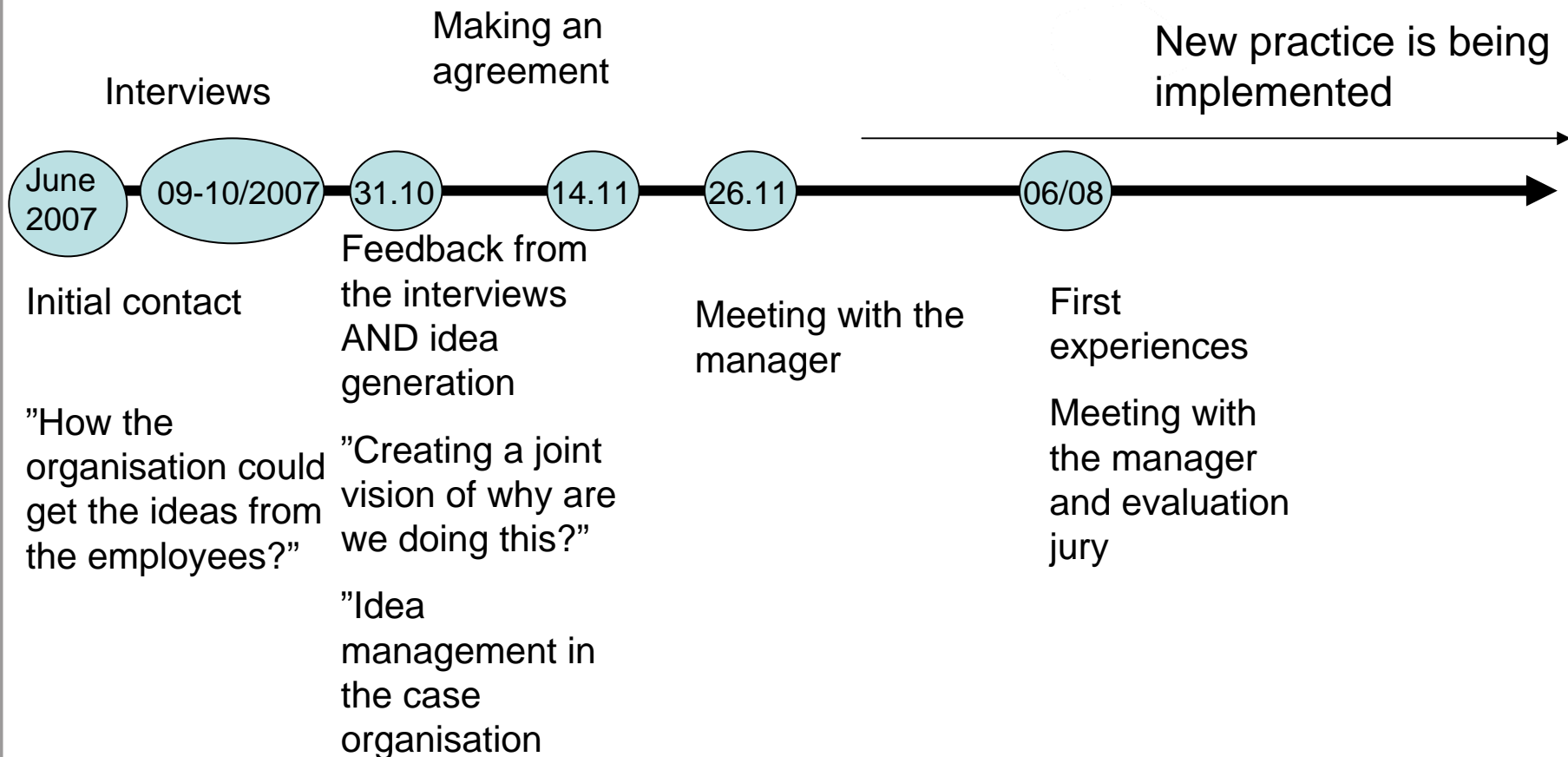
- What kind of new practices could be generated to cultivate the innovativeness among the employees?
- How could these changes be facilitated in a public sector where the bottom-up approach is not common?
 - Focus on the supporting the idea generation phase of the innovation process, i.e. idea channels, feedback system, and overall climate

Methodology

- Why action research?
 - Organisation needed help to facilitate and activate innovative ideas on shopfloor level → involvement of researchers
 - Bottom-up, iterative, open-ended, participative approach
- Action research process according to Coughlan and Coghlan 2002
 1. Pre-step
 2. Data gathering, data feedback, data analysis, action planning, implementation, evaluation
 3. Meta-step

Phases of development

2007 -> 2008



REWARDING



Suggesting candidates to be rewarded

IDEA EVALUATION

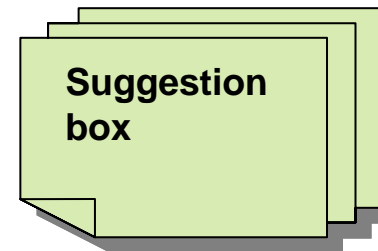
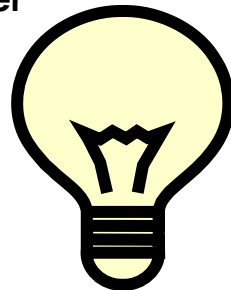
EVALUATION JURY/ 8 people
-Analysing every idea, giving feedback, updating idea bowl



Personal feedback

Worker and his/her idea

IDEA GENERATION



Suggestion box

Discussion

- Practices need to change to sustain competitiveness
- The use of action research in this case
- Bottom-up approach challenging to public utility
- A promising start for enhancing the innovation activity