

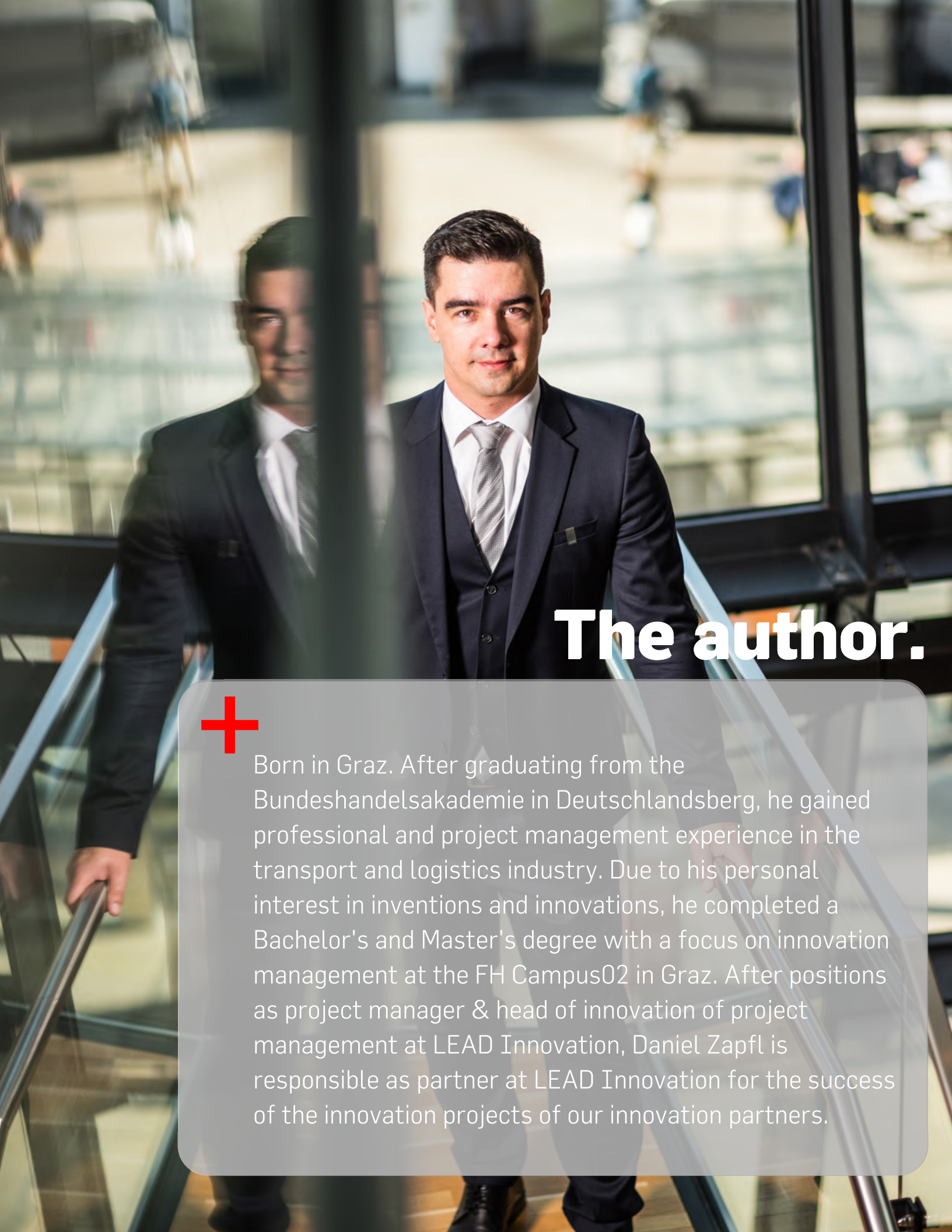
LEAD

Innovation Paper

FROM VISION TO MARKET SUCCESS.

Innovation process

5 tips on how to make
your innovation process
fit for the future



The author.



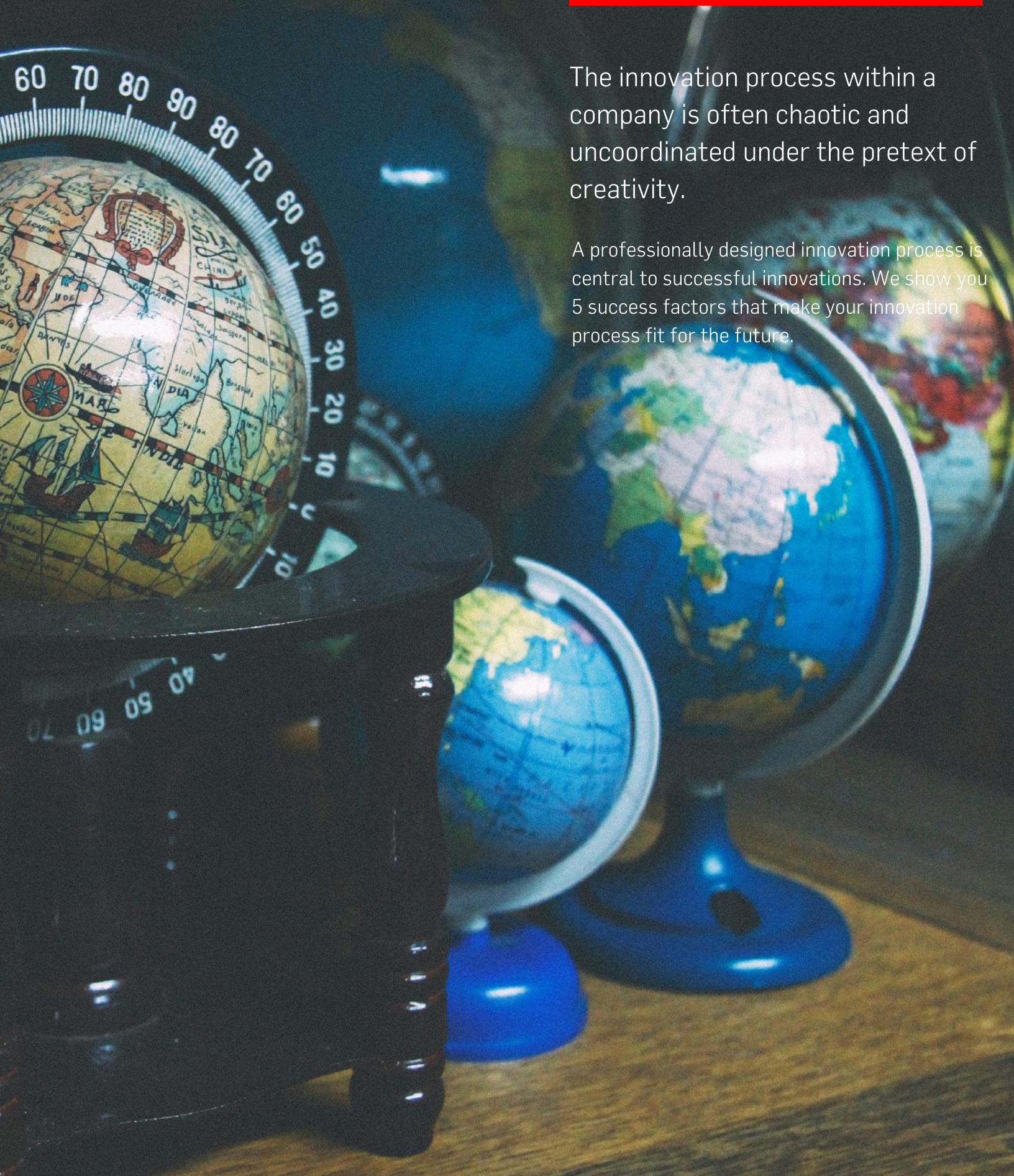
Born in Graz. After graduating from the Bundeshandelsakademie in Deutschlandsberg, he gained professional and project management experience in the transport and logistics industry. Due to his personal interest in inventions and innovations, he completed a Bachelor's and Master's degree with a focus on innovation management at the FH Campus02 in Graz. After positions as project manager & head of innovation of project management at LEAD Innovation, Daniel Zapfl is responsible as partner at LEAD Innovation for the success of the innovation projects of our innovation partners.

**A PAPER FROM DANIEL
ZAPFL.**

Innovation process

The innovation process within a company is often chaotic and uncoordinated under the pretext of creativity.

A professionally designed innovation process is central to successful innovations. We show you 5 success factors that make your innovation process fit for the future.





5 tips on how to make your innovation process fit for the future

1. Align innovation goals and process

In practice, it has proven its worth to see innovation goals as a superordinate component of the innovation process. Thus, the innovation process does not only start with the trend and needs analysis, but already with a clear definition of the innovation goals:

- What types of innovation are we striving for?
- How high should the degree of innovation be?
- How many innovations are targeted in which areas?

After all, a business model innovation will require different process steps than, for example, a product innovation.

Conclusion: The decision for certain innovation goals defines the process steps derived from them. Thus, the process should be adjusted to the changed innovation goals and adapted accordingly.

Once the innovation goals have been defined, the innovation process will be coordinated accordingly.

It is therefore necessary to check whether the new objectives are adequately covered and reflected in the innovation process.

2. Align innovation structure and process

The innovation structure anchors the innovation process by defining responsibilities in the internal organizational structure, i. e. the structure determines which employees are involved in the innovation process and at which position, i. e. "Who does what?". The structure therefore influences the innovation process and success to a large extent:

- Are the right employees represented in the innovation team?
- Does the team only consist of R&D staff or is marketing, sales and business development represented to a sufficient extent?
- Do the right people sit at the right gates?

Therefore, you should examine personnel responsibilities, team composition and critical management tasks on the basis of the following questions:

- Who is looking for ideas?
- Who decides on the follow-up? Who develops ideas further?
- Which ideas are pursued within the established R&D structures and which ideas need a different development team, based on the type of innovation or the degree of innovation?

- Which hierarchical levels must be included in the different stages of development?

Conclusion: The innovation structure is an essential component of a successful innovation process. The structure and process should therefore be coordinated. In many cases, it is not necessary to create a completely new structure. Modified team compositions can be sufficient.

3. Provide methods and toolset

In addition to coordinating goals, structure and process, the provision of suitable methods for the individual process stages is an important element for the successful implementation of the innovation project.

This starts with creativity techniques for generating ideas up to the testing of prototypes. It is important to find out which methods are best suited for the company and its requirements. Employees must also have the appropriate skills to use these methods. Workshops and trainings can often do both: education and content.

Conclusion: An important basis for the success of innovation activities is the provision of suitable methods. Training courses and seminars on the innovation process and innovation methods ensure that employees are able to use the provided toolbox professionally in the innovation process.

4. Ensure agility and iteration ability

Linear or systematic innovation processes work very well for degrees of innovation and types of innovation that are controllable. The best-known form of a systematic innovation process is the Stage-Gate process according to Cooper and Kleinschmidt.

The model serves as the basis for imposing a certain discipline and systematics on the innovation process, which is often lacking in many companies. However, innovations with a very high degree of innovation require adaptation, since the rigid structure of the Stage Gate model, for example, has a counterproductive effect on a complex innovation project. This requires agile methods that proceed step-by-step and iterative (Scrum, Lean Start Up method). Optimally used, Scrum in combination with the Stage Gate process is ideally suited for complex innovation projects.

Conclusion: Innovations with a high degree of innovation are difficult to manage with a linear process. In order for a process to work in this case, flexible methods should be used to ensure agility and iterative ability - in line with the motto "Fail often and early and fail forward".

5. Communication and common understanding

The expectations and objectives with regard to the desired innovation must be clearly communicated to each employee. For this reason, the innovation strategy must be clearly communicated across all functions and hierarchy levels in order to ensure a common understanding. On the other hand, each employee is to be informed by the responsible manager (communication manager, innovation manager) about what innovation means for their area, what role they play in the innovation process and what they can contribute to the success of innovation.

Conclusion: Internal communication and a common understanding are essential criteria for the success of innovation as part of the innovation culture. All employees involved in innovation projects should therefore be familiar with the innovation strategy and know how and what to do.

Do you have any questions? Talk to our expert:

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