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Tubex introduces idea management system at their plant in Rangendingen

ESB students work on final-year theses and projects to support the development and rollout of the company's idea management system



Wanting to build on their previous success, Tubex, IABEP corporate partner, decided to introduce an idea management system at their plant in Rangendingen. The new system replaces the traditional suggestion scheme that was in place. In 2017, Tubex piloted a software-based innovation process at their factory in Brazil. The goal of this innovation system was to generate new ideas with respect to optimising processes, products and services. By involving the entire workforce, the company also sought to increase employee loyalty, foster a sense of team spirit and improve the corporate culture. The management team in Brazil received considerable guidance from Antonio Teixeira, former CEO of Brasilata. Teixeira led his own company to success with a similar scheme, approving over 1 million ideas in his 37-year career. Teixeira is also a professor at FGV, a partner university of the IMX programme at ESB Business School.

Tubex's CEO, Leopold Werdich, made the decision to connect Teixeira with Prof. Hazel Grünewald to consider how the idea management system could be adapted to the German environment and culture. Together with a defined task force from the company and with significant input from Teixeira, Prof. Grünewald went on to design and deliver training sessions for managers and employees to kick-start the process.

In order to derive as many lessons learned and good practices from the Brazilian experience, two empirical studies were also conducted by students of ESB Business School. The studies were carried out within the framework of final-semester theses under the supervision of Prof. Grünewald on the following topics:

- Determining motivational factors encouraging front-line employee participation in the idea suggestion system at TUBEX - Sebastian Haumann (BSc. International Business)
- Potential success factors and challenges with respect to introducing idea management at the Tubex factory in Rangendingen based on the Brazilian experience – Jevgenia Lang (MBA-PT)

To support the idea management system further, Grünewald guided two part-time MBA student projects focusing on the following areas:

- How to develop and implement a uniform team culture that fosters innovation in a 5-shift production company
- Development of a corporate culture and structure for TUBEX that support and demand innovation

The benefits of such projects strongly align with the goals of IABEP. Students get to apply the knowledge that they gain from business courses to real-life situations and companies profit from advice and recommendations based on theoretical and empirical research.