Creativity Recognition by Supervisors: The Role of Idea Enactment and Influence tactics

ABSTRACT

Employees’ creative ideas often do not get recognized by managers and therefore lose the opportunity to be implemented. Drawing on Dutton and Ashford’s (1993) issue-selling framework and related literatures on creativity and innovation, we developed and tested a dual-approach model predicting that employees who exhibit high levels of idea enactment behaviors (characterized by using demos, prototypes, or other physical objects when presenting ideas) and also employ upward influence tactics (such as rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, consultation, and collaboration) will be more likely to get their ideas recognized by their supervisors and therefore implemented. Using 2 studies (an online experiment with 199 participants and a field study using data from 192 employees and 54 supervisors across 16 divisions in a video game and animation company), we found that employees’ joint use of idea enactment behaviors and influence tactics was most effective in impacting supervisors’ subsequent recognition of their creativity. This recognition, in turn, aided the ultimate implementation of these employees’ ideas. A third study is being designed to understand the impact of idea novelty on these relationships.