

The only way competitive workplaces can work is by encouraging staff self-improvement

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Companies that emphasise both competition between employees as well as personal accomplishments and development see more creative ideas being fulfilled, according to new research from BI Norwegian Business School (<https://www.bi.edu/>).

Not all creative ideas are implemented— generating too many creative ideas may actually lead to fewer ideas being carried out. This can leave a company worse off than if they had simply not spent any resources on generating ideas in the first place.

Miha Škervalaj, Professor from the Department of Leadership and Organisational Behaviour, studied the effect of two work environment climates, mastery and performance, on the relationship between idea generation and implementation. They used a sample of around 400 employees and supervisors, measuring idea generation and implementation and how they perceive the work environment.

A mastery work environment is associated with increased well-being, higher work performance, and rewards effort, self-improvement, and cooperation, while a performance work environment emphasises competition and comparing your achievements to colleagues. Performance work environments are related to high employee turnover, burnout, and effort withdrawal.

Prof. Škervalaj says:

“We found that a combination of the two work climates improves the relationship between idea generation and idea implementation: ideas were most frequently implemented in companies with high-mastery and high-performance climates. This suggests that introducing a mastery work environment is useful for stimulating idea implementation and for negating disadvantages of a performance work environment.”

These findings show that competitive work environments only promote creativity and idea implementation when employees adopt self-improvement goals. Therefore, companies that want to increase the implementation of creative ideas would benefit most from combining a mastery climate with a performance-focused one.

This research was published in the European Management Review.

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For more information, a copy of the research paper, or to speak with Prof. Miha Škervalaj, please contact Kyle Grizzell of BlueSky PR on 01582 790709 or at kyle@bluesky-pr.com