BrainStore
Empowering Innovation

NIKKEI

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The Idea Factory: Teenagers as Brains

Ideas for the business are being produced on the assembly line of a factory. We found such a factory in Biel, a small city in the northern west valleys of Switzerland.

If you enter the office under a sign-board of a human brain, you meet a bathtub and piles of wood chips which all are tools to help create ideas.

Markus Mettler (33), the president of BrainStore, said, "the demands for ideas soar as the speed of the economy increases. We need a system to produce them effectively".

For instance, they worked with Novartis, the biggest pharmaceutical maker in Switzerland, on product development. In the summer two years ago they asked for a new food product, in the field of functional foods for health and beauty which would be well received by the younger generation.

Mettler has a prepared methodology to produce any idea in four steps. The first step is to acquire ideas. They asked by e-mail 1500 "brains" who are mainly in their teens and are scattered all over the world to contribute their ideas, and simultaneously did research on consumer consciousness. Then they convened a two-day meeting.

Over 1000 ideas were produced by 15 participants who varied from an ordinary high school student to a rock-fiend with colorfully died upright hair to a businessman. The ideas were compressed at the second step to three concepts: refreshes the head, makes you happier and makes you more beautiful.

At the third step, the maker tested the ides by making a prototype, and the Brainstore prepared documentation for the promotion to complete the process. All these steps took 8 weeks. Novartis introduced a new healthy drink to the market in January this year that embodies the three concepts in the combination of caffeine, chocolate and beta-carotene. BrainStore earned its reward of SF100,000.

In the age of the global economy, intelligence is the main player. But accumulation of vague ideas and knowledge is not worth much. Companies need to select better ideas from the mass, polish them and implement them in a process just like an assembly line of a factory.

Idea production: charged by the hour

The BrainStore method originated from a challenge: how to commercialize invisible intelligence or ideas as a product to earn reward.

At the BrainStore, the price for the produced idea is calculated by the hour based on the principle that the whole process produces a value. Whether the client earns or loses after the idea is handed over is not directly relevant. This can be said to be sale-by-the-piece. Payment for the participants in the idea creation sessions is evaluated by their hours of participation.

The BrainStore, in other words, adopts the wage system of the industrial society and calculates the value or cost of knowledge by the process time, but not by the result.

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第4部 21世紀への進化 ❶

アイデアの工場

2000年地球人は ▽39

知の対価決めフル稼働

生産時間で算出

貢献度測り報酬