

Challenges in knowledge-intensive creative work

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Theoretical background

- **Climate factors** are critical in all change and innovation efforts, but where does the greatest leverage lie?
- **Motivation, initiative and trust** are of particular scientific importance in creative work – do experienced critical factors coincide with these?
- **Goals and autonomy** are important antecedents for motivation and initiative – could these provide the best starting point for improvement efforts?

Study

- Critical factors for project success was explored in the context of **product development**, requiring systematically creating new solutions in teams
- Data was collected from critical-incident based interviews of **11 experts** of product development
- The identified **336 critical factors** were categorized

Results

Critical factors affecting product development project success

1. Collaboration	20%
▪ holding on to one's own previous solution, unwillingness to adopt others' solutions (9% of the category), conflicting priorities and/or goals (7%)	
2. Autonomy	12%
▪ enough freedom in framing the problem (32%), problems with bureaucracy (17%)	
3. Goals	12%
▪ clarity of goals (21%), maintaining a coherent whole (18%)	
4. Time	11%
▪ lack of time (32% of the category), difficulties in estimating time and schedules (32%), time problems caused by changes added too late in the project (16%)	
5. Attitude	11%
▪ proactivity (22%), problems with illusions of knowing all relevant information and insufficient questioning (22%)	
6. Trust	10%
7. Motivation	10%
▪ genuine enthusiasm and interest (35%)	
8. Product-development skills and knowledge	6%
9. Communication	5%
10. Other	5%

Implications

Scientific significance:

- The type and clarity of **goals** and the amount of **control**, via their effects on motivation, trust and attitudes, are key constructs in creating a beneficial climate for creative team work

Significance for managers:

- Goal clarity and amount of control are important tools for managers in fostering **trust, motivation** and a **proactive attitude**
- **Lack of time** was the largest single challenge in product development, and is especially significant due to its adverse effect on experimentation
- **Scheduling and prioritizing** were also prominent needs, but as **autonomy** was highly valued, project management should not necessarily directly address these challenges
- Product development **specific knowledge and skills** accounted for less than 6% of the critical factors, but most training is nowadays targeted at these

Thank you!

Any further questions can be directed to
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