Innovation through a bottom-up approach:

A Working Concept for ISS A/S

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THESIS PERIOD:	February 2018 – July 2018

Preface

Before you lies the thesis 'Innovation through a bottom-up approach'. This has been written to fulfill the graduation requirements of the Facility Management Program at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS). I was engaged in researching and writing this dissertation from February to June 2018. The report is the final result of the research that was conducted for and at ISS Facility Services in De Meern. I look back on a very instructive and interesting period in which I have developed myself on both personal and professional areas.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank a number of people who have made this wonderful period possible for me.

First of all, I would like to thank all those involved at ISS who contributed to this research, in whatever form. I would particularly like to thank Vivian van Eijsden, Elisabeth Morais-Carvalho, Rogier van Os, Marcel van Haren, Maarten Baars, Jeffrey Kriele, Erik van de Graaf, Thijs Fennis and Sjoerd Bruinsma for participating in the interviews. Besides ISS Facility Services, other parties have also contributed to this research: ZHAW, Sentle and Hospitality Group. Because of the contributions of, respectively, researcher and lecturer Christian Coenen, Agile Coach Renze Klamer and Partner Sourcing & Management of Hospitality Group George Maas, this research has been given depth. I would also like to thank them for that.

Then I would like to thank Reinout Klamer, lecturer and coach of THUAS, for the excellent support. Thanks to your transparent, honest and clear communication and feedback, this research has become qualitatively stronger. Joris Tempelaar, the external evaluator, also contributed to a qualitatively stronger thesis, through his feedback.

In addition, I want to take the time to thank Daan de Geus and Karola Rutten for the support during this research. Because of your interests in my personal development I have grown as a person and as a professional. You have certainly contributed to making a fun, interesting and experiential research period possible.

My last word of thanks goes to Herman Knevel for the guidance from the internship organization and for making the internship possible. The feedback moments have ensured that I am satisfied with my research and that I was aware of my learnings at all times. I have been well supervised within a large and international organization such as ISS and I have continuously enjoyed it. Thanks for that!

I hope you enjoy your reading.

Solaiman Boubkari,

De Meern, May 29, 2018

Management summary

ISS Facility Services was founded in Denmark in 1901 and has grown into one of the largest facility providers in the world, offering a large number of services. ISS wants to be the best service organization in the world. In order to realize this, ISS must be able to add value to the customer every day. The best service organization today is not the best service organization of tomorrow. To compete with the changing needs of the customer, the environment and even the world, ISS will (at least) have to move with it. If ISS wants to be the best service organization, constantly surprise the (potential) customer and solve all problems of these customers or even avoid them, then ISS will not only have to move with the changes, but even take the lead.

ISS has a strong need to constantly innovate and to surprise the market with innovations. ISS tries to be innovative through the tactical/strategic level (such as the 'new' Innovation & Strategic Development department). But innovation comes (still) too little from the operational work field. The reasons behind this can be different. ISS is convinced that there are enough ideas 'in the minds' of the more than 6,800 employees in the Netherlands. Ideas that are groundbreaking, incremental, smart, simple, value-adding and/or efficient.

The overarching objective of the graduation project is therefore to help ISS further on their vision to become the best service organization in the world. Indirectly, this objective is achieved by another (sub) objective: to unlock and access ideas and best practices in the operational field at ISS' customers, so that these customers can enjoy the benefits that come from that innovation (user experience). The problem statement is:

> *"What are the possibilities for ISS to unlock and access the innovative ideas of ISS within the Key Accounts and Specialized Services?"*

To answer the problem statement and the sub questions, a theoretical framework and the results have been outlined. The theoretical framework focuses on innovation, services, the relationship between these two and best practices of companies that are using certain methods to unlock ideas and access these ideas. The current and desired situations are sketched through various notes and interviews with different internal and external stakeholders. Three main themes are used throughout this research: Leadership and culture, Accessibility of ideas and best practices at the operational level and Sharing ideas

Conclusions & advice

First of all, it is important that ISS takes a certain direction in the area of leadership. According to this research, it can be indicated that this is not the case in practice. ISS should therefore adapt the job descriptions of the site managers and the key account managers and give innovation a clear place in these job descriptions. In this way, managers are better assessed on innovation and they feel more like it is part of the job.

Furthermore, the SWAHT training, which ISS gives to the operational staff, needs to be added with an important piece of innovation. It makes clear to the operational staff why innovation is important in their work and what it can bring to them and ISS. In addition, it can be made clear during the training how employees can think innovatively.

In addition, the digital OPF can help ISS (and the leaders) to be more innovative. The digital OPF potentially has a lot of common ground with this research. It is recommended that the digital OPF will be used during the entire process of unlocking and accessing ideas from operational employees.

ISS must create an innovation session/meeting where employees can come together and where the leader tries to unlock and get access to the innovative minds of the operational employees. The accounts also need a physical board, where the employees can put their ideas (Team Board, Daily Huddle or WALITA). This is important, because during this session the employees get the possibility to come up with problems/bottlenecks and with (innovative) solutions. It is advised to integrate and to schedule this innovation sessions right after the daily huddles, team board meetings, or WALITA meetings. This way the innovation session is easier to implement and it is easier to guarantee larger participants of the meeting. Important to mention is that the research indicates that the foundation of an innovative mindset lies with leadership, culture, autonomy and empowerment. So the foundation has a higher priority than the innovation session with a board.

Experiment

It can be concluded that the experiment has shown that the operational recommendation, in order to hold an innovation session with operational staff, has been validated. This has been achieved by validating the four largest assumptions in the recommendation, in which hypotheses have also been formulated.

First of all, on the basis of the experiment (chapter 7) it can be concluded that there is support among higher management. After all, the managers have a clear positive attitude towards the session. This means that the researcher is allowed to carry out an innovation session for the accounts. The managers are even willing to perform the session within a week of answering to the mail. Also the employees are supporting it, because they are participating with the experiment. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the operational advice is validated and therefore 'works'. It is true that the ideas that are often incremental in nature.

Financial and organizational consequences

The costs of implementing the recommendation is about €250.272 for the first year. This calculation is realized by multiplying the labor costs with the effort (time) of the employees and resources. The following years, only the effort (time) of the employees are costing money.

It is difficult to express the benefits of this recommendations in financial figures, because the benefits are indirect. As mentioned in chapter 8.2, the advice result into the following benefits:
- Be distinctive in comparison to competitors
- Higher employee satisfaction, commitment and loyalty because they feel heard (higher eNPS)
- Different benefits that the different ideas can generate (e.g. productivity and / or efficiency). These benefits can be measured by using the innovation metrics.

Lastly, it is also relevant to mention the organizational consequences:

- Responsibility of the site manager and key account manager becomes broader
- Within the hierarchical structure, there will be no big changes
- The job profiles of the key account manager and the site manager has to be supplemented with innovation
- The leader have to respect the different behaviors of the operational employees. Some will like to be part of an innovative culture, some do not.

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Introduction

ISS Facility Services was founded in Denmark in 1901 and has grown into one of the largest facility providers in the world, offering a large number of services. ISS wants to be the best service organization in the world. In order to realize this, ISS must be able to add value to the customer every day. The best service organization today is not the best service organization of tomorrow. To compete with the changing needs of the customer, the environment and even the world, ISS will (at least) have to move with it. If ISS wants to be the best service organization, constantly surprise the (potential) customer and solve all problems of these customers or even avoid them, then ISS will not only have to move with the changes, but even take the lead.

ISS has a strong need to constantly innovate and to surprise the market with innovations. ISS tries to be innovative through the tactical/strategic level (such as the 'new' Innovation & Strategic Development department). But innovation comes (still) too little from the operational work field. ISS is convinced that there are enough ideas 'in the minds' of the more than 6,800 employees in the Netherlands. Ideas that are groundbreaking, incremental, simple, value-adding and/or efficient.

ISS would like to see innovation not only through its top-down structure, but also through the bottom-up approach. In concrete terms, this means that ISS wants the group of operational employees to think along and participate in innovative ideas. ISS needs a study, which shows which elements, processes and tool(s) are useful, to bring about innovative ideas among the operational staff.

The consequences of an innovative 'empowered' mind-set shift can turn out positively. The customer can, for example, benefit from efficiency benefits (fewer queues during catering, or faster cleaning, for example) through smart ideas that have been devised by the ISS operational staff. By constantly creating these benefits for the customers, ISS gets a positive appreciation from the customers. In addition, the innovative and creative ideas can lead to a competitive advantage. If ISS does not do this (fast enough), the competitors can get away with the new ideas. This means that ISS can never become the best service organization in the world. The competitive position and the connection with the vision and objectives of ISS makes it so that this research is urgent.

The overarching objective of the graduation project is therefore to help ISS further on their vision to become the best service organization of the world. Indirectly, this objective is achieved by another (sub) objective: to unlock and access ideas and best practices in the operational field at ISS' customers, so that these customers can enjoy the benefits that come from that innovation (user experience). The problem statement is:

> *"What are the possibilities for ISS to unlock and access the innovative ideas of ISS within the Key Accounts and Specialized Services?"*

Chapter 1 describes the organizational context of ISS. The internal and external context are elaborated and used to map the context out. Chapter 2 deals with which research methods and sources have been used to realize this research. Chapter 3 is the theoretical framework. In this chapter, by means of desk research, research was done into the various theories about unlocking innovative ideas from the operational field. In chapter 4 the research results of empirical research are mapped and analyzed. In chapter 5 the differences between the research results, the context and the theory are analyzed and a conclusion follows. In chapter 6, attention was paid to the recommendations. The operational advice is tested and experimented in the next chapter. Subsequently, attention will be paid to the implementation plan and business-related consequences. Finally, there is a discussion in which the validity, reliability, limitations and added value of the research are discussed.

1. Context of the research

In this chapter, ISS is described and the internal and external context of this research is illustrated. The external context will describe the trends and developments that are important for this research. Finally, the described context will be analyzed and translated into the problem indication.

1.1. Internal context

The internal context relates to the organization where the research is conducted.

1.1.1. Description of the organization

ISS Facility Services was founded in 1901 in Denmark and has grown into one of the largest facility providers in the world, offering a large number of services. The focus is on understanding the needs of the customers. After understanding their needs, ISS can provide a full range of facility services required to meet them. In order to deliver on this proposition, ISS has developed from primarily being a cleaning provider to becoming a company offering the full range of services, including integrated facility services (IFS). The increasing volume of non-cleaning services, which now makes up half of the business, illustrates this. The services ISS provides are: Facility Management, cleaning, catering, security, support and technical services. ISS has more than 530,000 employees worldwide and is active in more than 50 countries in Europe, Asia Pacific, North America and Latin America. ISS provides its services to thousands of customers in both the public and private sectors. Worldwide turnover in 2014 was 9.9 billion euros (ISS, n.d.).

With this research ISS wants to focus on both the Key Accounts and the Specialized Services. Key Accounts are the largest (inter)national customers, receiving the integral facility services of ISS. From the 'boardroom' these organizations are often seen as the most profitable customers. These customers usually get the most attention through very involved customer management and strategic win-win relationships. Examples of Key Accounts from ISS are PwC and Accenture.

Accounts that need only cleaning services, are divided within the Specialized Services (SS). A concrete example is THUAS, which receives only the cleaning service of ISS. ISS made a few exceptions during the 'classification'. For example, Schiphol is a Key Account (KA), while ISS only cleans at Schiphol. This is due to the large financial impact and the potential that this customer has to offer.

1.1.2. Structure of the organization

In order to understand the structure of the organization of ISS, within the operational field (the accounts), it is important to visualize the charts within the accounts. In appendix 1, these charts of the Key Accounts and the Specialized Services are visualized. After this, the structure and relevance of the Excellence Center (the department in which this research is being conducted), is being explained.

Accounts within KA and SS

The highest position in a Key Account, like Heineken, is the Key Account Manager (KAM). The Key Account Manager is responsible for the financial and operational results of the whole account. An account can have more sites. All these sites together, can be recognized as an account. Within the category Specialized Services, there is a similar function that looks like the KAM. This is called the Regional Manager. This manager is responsible for a couple of accounts within SS, which falls under the manager's region.

A site manager reports directly to the KAM. This site manager is responsible for the execution of all services within a site. For example: the site brewery of Heineken in Den Bosch. Within the category

Specialized Services, the accounts have a contract manager, or a cleaning/catering manager. This manager is also responsible for the execution of all service within an account.

Accounts (KA and SS) also have operational team leaders, for example a service desk leader, a cleaning team leader etc. These team leaders are reporting directly to the site manager. They are responsible for the daily operational business.

Lastly, the operational employees are the employees that are carrying out the services. They are the 'experts' in their fields. The innovative ideas of these employees are the ones that ISS want to get access to.

Excellence Center
The Innovation and Development department falls under the Excellence Center. The Excellence Center is a new centrally positioned staff department and offers expertise and advice on services to both clients and the internal organization. The responsibilities of the Excellence Center include Quality Health Safety Environment (QHSE), Innovation, Data Management, Process Management & Lean, Transition & Projects and various Service Excellence functions. The Head of Excellence Center, Seth Halkes, reports directly to the director of ISS Netherlands. The purpose of the Excellence Center is: *"We will be the best support organization for ISS Operations and Sales, so that ISS can be the best service organization of the world"* (ISS, n.d.)*.* The various subjects that the Excellence Center deals with, are innovation, transition, health, safety and quality, etc.

The Innovation and Development department plays an important role within ISS' primary processes. After all, innovation is an important issue. For example, the department is involved in various tenders and contracts to give advice on innovative possibilities. This research is conducted within this department. This research gives the operations of ISS a possibility to get access to the innovative minds of the operational employees. To get it visual on how the Excellence Center is organized, appendix 1 provides a chart of this department. There is no direct hierarchical link between the accounts and the Excellence Center, because the Excellence Center is a support/staff department that has a place in the Board of ISS Netherlands.

1.1.3. Mission, vision and strategy
De mission of ISS is: "Service performance that facilitates our customers' purpose through people empowerment." ISS says in their statement, that this mission is a powerful message that gives the clarity and focus to ISS, which ISS needs in order to be the greatest service organization (ISS, n.d.).

The vision of ISS is as follows: "We are going to be the world's greatest service organization." The organization wants to be this by providing worldwide services and being present in all major regions and countries. ISS strives for a leading position in all markets and has the ambition to quickly achieve market leadership in new markets. ISS can realize this by offering the best single services and Integrated Facility Services (ISS, n.d.).

What underpins this vision is a strategy called The ISS Way. The ISS Way focuses on the following four segments (ISS, n.d.):
- Customer focus (customer comes first, need fulfillment, long-term collaborations)
- People management (employees are the core, courses and trainings care / follow)
- The IFS strategy (integral delivery of facility management solutions, from management to operation)
- Balance between autonomy and approach

The essence of ISS is to provide service excellence to empower the customer's business. ISS believes that great service is not simply a task or delivery. ISS is focused on how they can meet their customers' needs, the outcome of ISS' services and on how it helps the customer's organization achieve their business goals. ISS provides a well-defined set of services, as a part of an integrated offering, delivered by the people of ISS. According to ISS, this platform places them in a unique position, allowing ISS to offer integrated facilities services, both locally and internationally. This is 'The ISS Way' strategy.

The key point of differentiation is the ability to empower people, and spark the power of the human touch in the service performance. ISS wants to help their customers reach their goals as part of their offering and as an extension of their organization. This is ISS' way of providing essential strategy: more ease, higher effectiveness and better experiences to people and businesses, every day (ISS, n.d.). For more information about the ISS' values, please refer to appendix 2.1.

1.2. External context

As indicated earlier, ISS has various services (operations). These operations have a large number of competitors. According to Facto (2016), strong competitors are also present on the market at integral level (integrated facility services), such as Facilicom Facility Solutions, CBRE, and Sodexo etc. Hence, this research is contributing to staying one step ahead of the competition and helping ISS with this research to become the best service organization. By using the Five Forces Model of Porter (2008), the external context is mapped out (figure 1). The following information is obtained from external sources, but also internal sources, such as ISS' employees or intranet. The most important element of this model is industry rivalry. The other elements are carried out in appendix 2.2.
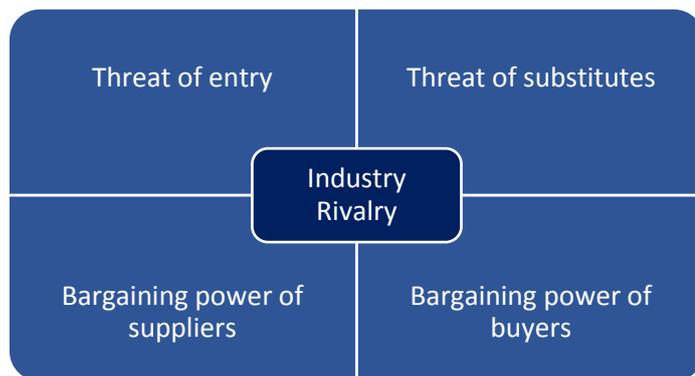
Figure 1 - External context model (Porter, 2008)

Industry Rivalry

According to the Providers Performance research 2017 (Maas, 2018), there are approximately 15 large players active in the field of IFM in the Netherlands. The research is about the performances of these providers in 2017. There is no actual research, which means that this research is reliable enough to use in this analysis. The integrators have different backgrounds and characteristics. The Provider performance survey shows again in 2017 that there are major differences in the performance of the various providers. In 2017, the difference between the lowest scoring and the highest scoring provider is 2.5 points on a 10-point scale. Engie scores with a 6.3 in 2017 as the lowest and KIEN with an 8.8 as the highest. On average, the providers are rated a 7.4 compared to a 6.9 in 2016. CBRE, HEYDAY and Sodexo show the largest increase in the overall score this year.

The large differences in performance scores underline the relevance of this research. The research provides objective and independent insight into the customer satisfaction of all Dutch providers. This information helps clients to select their provider(s) and helps providers when defining the topics on which they can improve or want to profile themselves.

ISS is currently 9th in the rankings, with a score of 6.9/10. ISS does show an increase compared to 2016. In 2016, ISS had a score of 6.6/10. In the area of innovation, ISS is currently not the highest scoring organization according to this study. In 2017 these were Kien, Facilicom Facility Solutions and Sodexo.

1.3. Consistency of context and research

ISS wants to be the best service organization in the world. In order to realize this, ISS must be able to add value to the customer every day. ISS delivers its products and services at a medium/good level, according to the FM Providers Research of Hospitality Group, but scores low on Innovation. The best service organization today is not the best service organization of tomorrow. To compete with the changing needs of the customer, the environment and even the world, ISS will (at least) have to move with it. ISS tries to stimulate innovation through the tactical/strategical level (such as the 'new' Innovation & Strategic Development department). But innovation comes (still) too little from the operational work area. The reasons behind this can be different. ISS is convinced that there are enough ideas 'in the minds' of the more than 6,800 employees in the Netherlands. Ideas that are groundbreaking, smart, simple, value-adding and/or efficient.

As described in the external context, it appears that the threat of entry and industry rivalry are the main causes for this research. The market continues to grow, even if there are enough competitive strong competitors. If ISS wants to be the best service organization, constantly surprise the (potential) customer and solve or even avoid the problems of these customers, then ISS will not only have to move with the changes, but even take the lead. ISS therefore has a strong need to constantly innovate and to surprise the market with innovations.

ISS would like to see these ideas and/or best practices found not only via the top-down structure, but also through the bottom-up approach. In concrete terms, this means that ISS wants the ideas and best practices, which are present in the 'heads' of the operational staff, to be accessible. ISS needs a study, which shows which tool(s), resources and/or processes are useful, to bring this innovative mind-set shift to the operational staff.

2. Research Methodology

This chapter describes the chosen ways of research in order to answer the sub-questions and the research question. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the way in which the research is carried out. A clear evaluation on the research methodology (for example the validity and reliability) is given in chapter 9 (Discussion).

2.1. Central question and sub questions

As outlined in the motive for this research and the goals, a need has arisen at ISS to stimulate innovation among the operational staff. On the basis of this information the following main question can be described:

> *"What are the possibilities for ISS to unlock and access the innovative ideas of ISS within the Key Accounts and Specialized Services?"*

In the central question, a number of terms have been used that require further explanation for the purpose of defining the research. For this explanation please refer to appendix 3.1.

The central question leads to the formulation of five sub-questions to carry out the research. These sub-questions are presented below, after which appendix 3.2 shows how the sub-questions will be examined by means of research questions. For each research question it is indicated which research method will be used. Please refer to appendix 3.2 for detailed explanation on these sub questions. These are the five sub questions:

* What are the requirements for unlocking ideas and building best practices?
* Which tools does ISS use to stimulate innovation at the operational level?
* What is the current situation at accounts of the Specialized Services (SS) and Key Accounts (KA) now?
* Which requirements need the tools to meet for unlocking the ideas and best practices?
* What is the best scenario to implement, based on the requirements?

2.2. Explanation chosen research methods

All described methods are formulated on the basis of Verhoeven's book (2014): What is research? This research uses two qualitative methods and one experiment method to validate the conclusions and recommendations.

In the first place it is important to indicate that ISS divides its customers under Key Accounts and Specialized Services. The difference between these are explained in chapter 1, context of the research. The Key Accounts Enexis, PwC and Heineken were selected for the study and Verkade, Deltion College and Health Care were chosen for the Specialized Services. The reason for this choice is because with the Key Accounts 2 of the 3 accounts has a method to unlock ideas (PwC uses Daily Huddle and Heineken uses Team Board). With the Specialized Services, this number is the same (Deltion College uses a whiteboard and Health Care uses WALITA).

2.2.1. Qualitative research

Literature review

The literature review is applied during different phases of the research. The first phase is mapping the context in which the research is located. The second phase is studying literature to eventually write the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework serves as a thread through the rest of the research. Document analysis has also been used to map ISS internal documents regarding the core themes, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Interviews

Within this framework, interviews will be conducted with various parties. These parties are divided into three levels in this study, namely:
* account level;
* staff level
* and external experts in the fields of empowerment, services and innovation.

In table 5, appendix 7.1, the respondents are divided in the levels. The respondents are chosen specifically. These respondents are all relevant for the research. The reasons are mentioned below.

At account level the site managers and operational employees are interviewed. The operational employees are the employees that have a lot of ideas in their minds. The site managers and leaders are their executives. When speaking about accessing the innovative minds of operational employees, the front liners and leaders are the most important respondents. This is also mentioned in the theoretical framework.

At staff level, Erik van de Graaf, Thijs Fennis and Sjoerd Bruinsma are interviewed. Erik van de Graaf is Organizational Development Manager and is, among other things, responsible for the design of all trainings. As described in the theoretical framework, training is one of the important elements to stimulate an innovative mind at the operational level. Thijs Fennis is Head of Business Process Management & LEAN and is responsible for also operational excellence. In order to realize this, Thijs Fennis has created and/or implemented tools, in order to realize operational excellence. These tools can help this study to create or redesign an innovative session, in order to get access to the innovative ideas of the operational employees. Sjoerd Bruinsma is Process Manager and is responsible for the design and the roll out of the digital OPF in the Netherlands. The digital OPF is playing a role on different touchpoints within this research. This is elaborated in chapter 4.3.1.

The interviewed external experts are Christian Coenen and Renze Klamer. Christian Coenen is a professor at ZHAW and gives courses in relationship management, service strategy and innovation in the Master's Courses. Christian Coenen coaches a lot of Master Graduates and Bachelor Graduates with their theses. Besides that he also does some consulting and some research. According to preliminary theoretical research, Christian Coenen's specialisms are relevant to this research. Renze Klamer has been hired as Agile Coach at ING. Agile is the body of thought, the whole concept, of everything that has to do with it. For example, LEAN, Kaizen and Scrum belong to Agile. Scrum is a working method. Renze Klamer aims to improve the teams through Scrum. Every two weeks Renze tries to organize a session with the team to go one step further. During these sessions the team looks back, but especially ahead of possible challenges. According to Renze Klamer, most innovations come to light at this moment. In order to understand this innovation method, Renze Klamer is interviewed.

Semi structured interviews
The semi structured interview is used in this study when there is a respondent with a managerial position or an advisory function. The questions have been formulated in more general terms, to eventually deviate from this and to ask further if necessary. By means of this method, in-depth questions can be asked and detailed information can be provided.

Unstructured interviews
For this type of interview, a set of relevant topics has been made. These topics were asked during the sessions, but each time in a different way. This brings forward an informal interview style. As can be seen in table 5 in appendix 7.1, it is clear that this interview style was used for the front-line employees. The reason for this is because during the interviews, the researcher has cooperated in the operation. In this way, the process was not disturbed and the employees were able to answer the questions in a familiar and 'safe' setting. A list of topics is more flexible in this situation than a set with dozens of predetermined questions.

Processing research data
The data from the interviews was analyzed by using key concepts. These key concepts are a recurring theme in the report and come back several times in the report. These core concepts have been drawn up through the interviews and preliminary research. To be able to extract this structure from the interviews, the interviews were first transcribed. These are written on the basis of an audio recording of the interview.

Experiment

To strengthen the research results and make it more reliable, it is important to carry out a practical experiment. The (operational) recommendation is actually implemented. The design of the experiment is further mapped in appendix 3.3. This experiment is a unique method in a thesis. Please refer to that methodology, in order to understand it and improve the ease of reading.

Core theme	Sub theme
Leadership and culture	∗ Training, autonomy and empowerment ∗ Role of leaders in stimulating innovative ideas and best practices
Accessibility of ideas and best practices at the operational level	∗ Innovative ideas and best practices at the operational level ∗ Existing tools ∗ Requirements for these tools
Sharing ideas	∗ Existing processes ∗ Requirements for these processes

Table 1 - Core themes of the research

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical context of the research is examined in this chapter. Firstly, the definition of innovation has been explained and the relationship between innovation and the operational staff. Subsequently, the relationship between innovation and the service industry (ISS' industry) is mapped to give the context extra depth. Finally, concrete tools are discussed that show how external companies make innovative ideas of employees accessible.

3.1. Innovation in a nutshell

For many people, innovation seems to be a 'simple' term, but defining innovation can be a challenge (Barsch, Marla, Capozzi, & Davidson, 2008). After all, innovation can mean a number of different things in practice, and the term includes approaches that vary from entirely new ideas, adapting the practice to other organizations, being creative and / or a successfully implemented idea. Innovation is one of those words that is plagued by an excess of meanings. For this reason, the theoretical framework will be kicked off with a meaning from Hamel (2006), which will be used throughout this report.

> *"Innovation is the process whereby value is created and offered to a user community in the form of a new solution. A new process, new service or new product are all examples of this. In all cases, the most important elements of the definition are novelty and value transfer. Customer contact and interaction can be important for coming up with an innovation."* (Hamel, 2006)

Examples of innovation within the services sector can be groundbreaking and revolutionary, such as new technologies (3D printing, or cleaning robots). Innovation can also involve simply introducing something that has been used or enjoyed on a particular market for a long time, such as a food or face cream, and introducing it on a market that has never seen it before. Argan oil is a good example. This product has been used for centuries by the Berbers in North Africa. The last 5 to 10 years it has become a popular ingredient in the American hair and cosmetics market.

Innovation is not an isolated process. After all, innovation and improvement must go hand in hand. This does not happen often in practice. This topic is explained in this theoretical framework, because it is one of the biggest challenges that companies are struggling with, according to Osterwalder (2018):

"…to create two parallel cultures of world-class execution and world class innovation that collaborate harmoniously (Osterwalder, Why Execution and Innovation Are Fundamentally Different, 2018)*.*

Osterwalder (2018) indicates that organizations with a large amount of staff are good at the execution process and improvement process. It is becoming more difficult for this type of organizations to also set up a good innovation process.

Within this research, the emphasis is on generating ideas and best practices. Table 3 in appendix 4.2 clearly shows the difference between improvements (execution) and renew (innovation). The two concepts differ from each other on four crucial topics (Osterwalder, Why Execution and Innovation Are Fundamentally Different, 2018).

To define the right and appropriate innovation strategy (for an organization), innovation can be divided into two dimensions: technology and market (Satell, 2017). In making an innovation strategy, companies have the choice to focus on technological innovation and the degree of 'business model innovation'. Figure 2, which studies how a potential innovation fits into the existing business model and the technical possibilities of a company, can help with that decision. From figure 2 the following four innovation strategies can be identified (Satell, 2017).
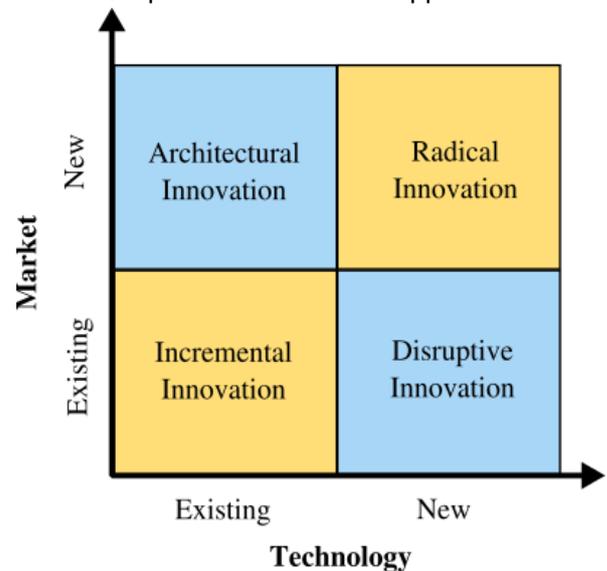

Figure 2 - Four innovation strategies (Satell, 2017)

  1. Incremental innovation
  2. Disruptive innovation
  3. Architectural innovation
  4. Radical innovation

In appendix 4.1 these different innovation strategies are described.

3.2. Leadership and culture

An innovative organization involves everyone throughout the organization in developing and implementing new ways to achieve the goals of the organization. From the chief executive to front-line workers. Getting the chief executive to be innovative should not be too difficult. After all, the chief executive has not been repeatedly promoted to more and more advanced responsibilities without having invented a few innovative ideas (Behn, 1995).

Regardless of how difficult it is to make the chief executive innovative, it will certainly be more difficult to make managers from middle management innovative, even more difficult to make frontline supervisors innovative and perhaps even more difficult to convince frontline employees of innovative being an important element of their job. This raises an important question: Is it possible to convince every individual in the organization that an important part of his or her responsibility is the development and implementation of new ways to achieve the goals of the organization? The answer to this question is: no. Everyone has a certain motivation to get to work. One comes because of the money. The other person comes to work because the work is his or her passion. One wants to lead the way, while the other wants to stay in the background. And there is always a middle group. These are 'a bit in between'. When developing an innovation strategy (especially at the beginning) it is important to put the time and effort into the right target group. In this way, the fastest progress can

be made. There is also a good chance that the middle group will follow the example of the front runners (Behn, 1995).

Innovative organizations are created by leaders (managers) who create the necessary conditions that are needed to unlock the ideas from the operation. The important question here is: How can these leaders (managers) create these conditions, so that operational employees will be more innovative? This requires leaders who meet two important conditions (Behn, 1995):

1. Leaders must convince front-line employees that the management supports the line.

The supervisors therefore give the example in the first instance. Employees are quick to take over the behavior of the managers (Stevens, 2018). If the managers make mistakes, learn from these mistakes, are exploratory and are innovative, chances are that the operational staff pick them up and 'imitate' them. Furthermore, it is important that the leaders are facilitators. Everything that an operational employee needs (and cannot arrange himself) for the innovative, self-invented idea, should facilitate the manager (HBR, 2017). Things such as money, time, space, services, products and/or even feedback and coaching can be examples.

2. Leaders must ensure that front-line employees understand the bigger picture

It is important that employees understand 'the bigger picture', the 'Why?'. Why innovation? Why now? Why me? Why is all this so important? All these questions can easily be answered, but the answer to these questions is often not clear for the operational staff. At the moment that the core is clear for the operation, they sooner understand the need to innovate (Sinek, 2011).

Training is also an important tool to stimulate innovation on the front line (Barsch, Marla, Capozzi, & Davidson, 2008). Although companies recognize the need to train their staff, they often invest too little in training. Employers know that employees can easily go to other companies and thus take their valuable new skills with them. Yet this circulation of talent and expertise is an important mechanism of 'knowledge exchange' and sharing ideas. In addition, a too low investment in training weakens the innovative capacity of individual companies (Gemmel, Looy, & Dierdonck, 2013).

As soon as everyone thinks of ideas - and imagines that the self-invented innovative ideas could actually change the company - the entire company is effectively involved in innovation. And in the internet age, where the pace of innovation is getting ever faster, understanding the science of innovation can make the difference in the ability to compete and thus (like ISS want) be the best service organization (Minor, Brook, & Bernoff, 2017). In appendix 4.3 four different variables are described that have an influence on the ability to unlock ideas (Hamel, 2006).

An organization must ensure that the most creative people out there do not feel restricted. This has been shown by the investigation of The National Audit Office (2009). In addition, a bureaucratic structure does not fit and this is usually the biggest obstacle to building new things. The goal, of course, is to make the entire organization more flexible, innovative and better able to serve its customers. When hundreds or perhaps thousands of individuals on the frontline share a common identity as leaders and a common understanding of their role, companies can leverage their creativity by pushing more of their data and analytical tools towards them. Because frontline leaders have the most direct contact with employees and with customers, contractors and vendors and the most intimate knowledge of their company's services, this makes faster and more confident decision-making possible and new ideas and innovations are propagated faster throughout the world. Companies that

exercise bottom-up leadership do more with less, become more competitive and attract and retain the people who help them to stay that way (NAO, 2009).

3.3. The relationship between innovation and the services industry

In order to understand the relationship with ISS and innovation, it is relevant to conduct research to the relationship between innovation and the whole service industry.

3.3.1. Classification of services

Just like the concept of innovation, it appears that finding the same meaning for the word 'service' is also difficult. Several scientists have tried to give meanings to the word. Quinn and Gagnon (1986) state the following: *"Services are actually all those economic activities in which the primary output is neither a product nor a construction."*

A more positive meaning of the word was formulated by Grönroos (1990) in the book by Gemmel, Looy & Dierdonck (2013):

> *"A service is an activity or series of activities of a more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessary, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or good and/or systems of the service provider which are provided as solutions to customer problems."* (Gemmel, Looy, & Dierdonck, 2013)

There are different methods for classifying services. The most relevant for this research is the classification of Maister (1997). In this framework Maister combines the degree of customer contact with the degree of customization. The framework is mapped in table 2.

	Standardized process (execution)	Customized process (diagnosis)
High degree of client contact Value is rendered in the 'front room', i.e. during interaction with client	**Nurse** **Key skill:** making client experience comfortable and user-friendly in going through pre-set process	**Psychotherapist** **Key skill:** real time diagnosis of complex ill-specified problems
Low degree of client contact Value is rendered in the professional's 'back room'. Client's focus is on results only.	**Pharmacist** **Key skill:** supervision of low-cost delivery team	**Brain surgeon** **Key skill:** creative, innovative solutions to one-of-a-kind problems

Table 2 - Classification of services (Maister, 1997)

The services such as cleaning, catering, security or reception can be divided into different classes. There are various elements for the classification of a service. The customer and supplier play a major role here. If the customer opts for low costs and cleaners after working hours, this automatically means that the 'cleaning' service will not be placed high in the area of customer contact. Conversely, it can of course be the case that the customer and supplier consider it important that cleaners are present between 9 and 5, so that the degree of customer contact is automatically increased. The trend is that many contracts in the service industry are focused on quality, instead of price. More and more organizations realize that focusing on costs, reducing quality and focusing on quality reduces costs (Rietveld, 2009).

It is true that this type of facility services have standardized processes. This means operational excellence, the right execution and efficiency. A customized process is therefore not applicable here.

3.3.2. The role of empowerment in service organizations

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is important that employees do not feel limited. Empowerment, autonomy and involvement are important elements to stimulate innovation (Gemmel, Looy, & Dierdonck, 2013).

A model that maps the importance of employee involvement and the right leadership is the service-profit chain. The service-profit chain maps the relationships between profitability, customer loyalty and employee satisfaction, loyalty and productivity. The links in the chain (which must be regarded as propositions) are (Heskett, 2008):

1. Profit and growth are mainly stimulated by customer loyalty.
2. Loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction.
3. Satisfaction is largely influenced by the value of services to customers.
4. Value is created by satisfied, loyal and productive employees.
5. Employee satisfaction in its turn mainly results from high-quality support services and a policy that enables employees to deliver results to customers.

Especially the latest proposition has a relationship with innovation. The moment the employees get the feeling that they can add value to the customer, in the form of innovative ideas, employee satisfaction thus arises.
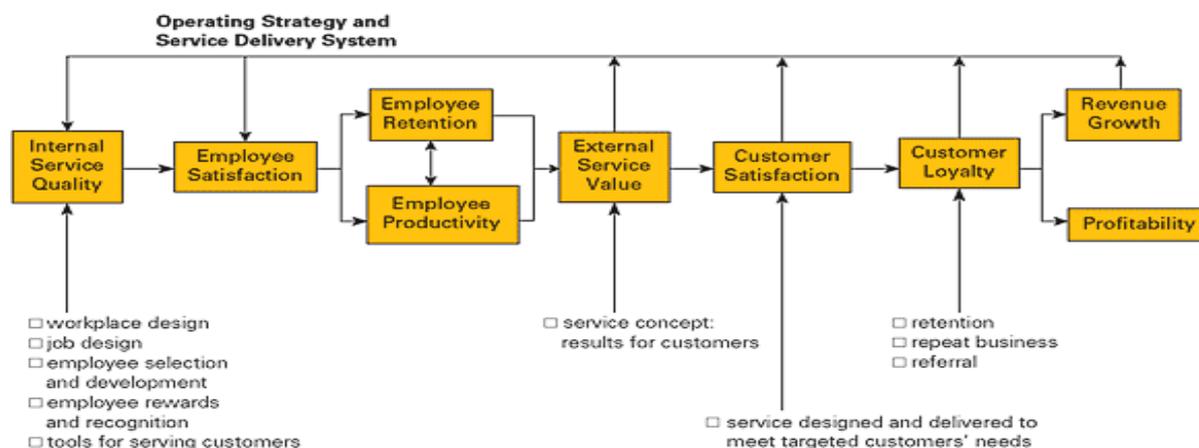
*Figure 3 - Service profit chain (Gemmel, Looy & Dierdonck, 2013)*

There are various sources that influence employee satisfaction. The most important elements are (Gemmel, Looy, & Dierdonck, 2013):

1. Freedom (autonomy) to surprise the customer and meet the expectations of the customer
2. Authority to serve the customer
3. Knowledge and competences to serve the customer
4. Reward for providing good service

Empowerment ultimately ensures that the employees come up with ideas and implement these ideas independently (and in teams). The relationship between empowerment in the service industry and innovation is therefore important. The right leadership is part of this. This is described in chapter 3.2. The relationship between the Service-Profit Chain and ISS is that ISS wants to be the best service organization. By following this SPC and positively influencing all elements, ISS can become the best service organization.

3.4. Which existing tools and possibilities exist?

Supposed that an organization has properly set up both the execution process and the innovation process and the right leaders are in the right place and the employees almost all have an innovative mind set. Many things are then arranged, but how, in practical terms, does this unlock the innovative ideas in a low-threshold way for the operational staff, without losing too much time for the primary process? Organizations such as Adobe are dealing with these kinds of issues and have certain tools that serve as a solution to this issue. The tools of these different organizations are now being used by thousands of professionals (business customers, SMEs and universities).

3.4.1. Adobe Kickbox

Kickbox was developed at Adobe by building on 30 years of experience with successful innovation. Adobe wanted to give individual employees the opportunity to follow their instinct about new opportunities, so Adobe created an 'innovation-in-a-box' package. Each red box contains everything Adobe thinks an innovator needs from an enterprise (Adobe, n.d.). Please refer to appendix 4.6 for a detailed explanation and examples of this tool.

3.4.2. Board of Innovation

Innovation does not just happen in the office of the CEO. Innovation is the result of a collective transformation that is promoted by a large number of employees who believe in positive change. That is why the Board of Innovation (BoI) has shared their innovation tools on their website: to make as many innovative ideas available to employees as possible. These tools are described in detail in appendix 4.6. The tools that are mapped belong together. One is useful for unlocking the ideas, while the other can be used to first identify bottlenecks. Please refer to appendix 4.6 for a detailed explanation and examples of this tool.

3.5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that innovation is a broad concept and therefore needs to be well defined. In addition, it is important for a (large) organization to set up the two parallel processes of improvement and renewal. Within this research, the focus is therefore on exploration and not exploiting the aspect. All in all, the four different types of 'innovations' can describe how organizations deal with innovation. The literature shows that there are more than four types, but in this theoretical framework it is delineated into these important types. The most important factor is that organizations find their own innovation   type   that   suits   them.

Furthermore, the service industry has a lot to do with innovation. The classification of a certain service, but also the degree of interaction of services, have a major influence on the development of innovation. The higher the interaction and the contact with the customer, the more innovative solutions can be devised from the employees.

Finally, the most important main topics discussed in the research methodology are from the literature. The theory thus clearly showed that leadership and culture, unlock innovative ideas and the sharing

of ideas within a company are important main topics. These main topics are discussed in the following chapters (research results and analysis) and form the key themes of this research.

4. Results and analysis

In this chapter the research results of the interviews are explained. This concerns the most common results. The full results are included in the appendices. In this chapter, each key concept (and also sub-concept) is explained in each case what the most important results are. These are then analyzed using the theory from chapter three and internal documents. This section focusses on the most important outcomes of the interviews. In total, 15 semi-structured interviews and 8 unstructured interviews were conducted. The transcripts of the interviews are included in appendix 7.3 to 7.14. In this chapter not only the results, but also the analysis of this has been mapped out in this chapter.

4.1. Leadership and culture

According to the theoretical framework in chapter 3, leadership is an important factor for stimulating innovation. In this section, per sub-concept of the core concept of leadership and culture, the most striking and / or most common results from the various interviews will be explained.

4.1.1. Training, autonomy and empowerment

When speaking about leadership and culture, training of the front-line employees is an important part. A training, in which innovative thinking and autonomous and empowered working are central, is an important part to stimulate an innovative mind set at the front-line employees (Barsch, Marla, Capozzi, & Davidson, 2008).

Several site managers of the accounts (described in the research methodology) answer the question of which training courses the operational staff have had and what the goal behind these training courses is. The statements below are the literal quotes from the site managers.

> *"The intention of the training Service with a Human Touch (SWAHT) is to change behavior, that people understand what is expected of them. Furthermore, they have all kinds of professional training courses, like a special cleaning course. This SWAHT training does not have to do with innovation but with how you carry out your work." (*De Geus, 2018).

> *"We did not have any behavioral training. So no SWAHT training. Only a cleaning training and safety training."* (Baars, 2018).

> *"They have followed the SWAHT training, including the Heineken employees who are managed by ISS. I noticed that the employees were all thinking in boxes at the beginning. Cleaning is cleaning, reception is reception, etc. I have spent a lot of time to change this. What I did at the start of the transition was speaking to all employees individually and I have asked them: what would you like to do yourself? Which service? An employee said landscaping, the other cleaning, the other postal service. In that we have changed the behavior and I am continuously working on that. We are also called the one-FM team." (van Os, 2018)*

According to the results of the interviews it is clear that the training Service with a Human Touch (SWAHT) is the training that ISS uses for operational employees to stimulate a certain behavior. That there is a difference between the accounts, in terms of training, is also clearly visible. After all, not all employees at the various accounts have had the training. It is noticed that the operational staff of the

Key Accounts have had the training, while not all employees of the Specialized Services have heard of the training.

In addition, it is also important to have a training that stimulates the right behavior. Does the training stimulate an innovative mindset and an autonomous, empowered behavior? The site managers again give answer to this question.

"In terms of innovation, there is no training. " (De Geus, 2018)

"This training is intended for employees to experience how to deal with the customer and how to display the right service behavior." (Morais-Carvalho, 2018)

"You can now see that employees are always taking on other things. They show good exemplary behavior. If they love to do something, they can do it." (van Os, 2018)

"The message that we are trying to deliver to them is that the most important things of a great service for a guest is hospitality and attention." (Van Haren, 2018)

According to the interview results it can be noticed that the purpose of the SWAHT training is to teach employees the right service behavior. Innovation is therefore not sufficiently highlighted. But it is important to highlight that Heineken's site manager Rogier van Os, thinks that partly through the SWAHT training, autonomous and empowered behavior is fueled. Erik van de Graaf, Organizational Development Manager (responsible for this training), does not entirely agree. According to Erik van de Graaf, a large part of innovative thinking falls under the 'Support Me' pillar of the SWAHT training. In principle, responding to needs and making it easy for the customer is a good start to stimulate innovation (Meijer, 2010) among operational employees. Nevertheless, the managers have not indicated that the operational employees seem to think more innovative because of the training. The training was also followed by the author of this report, to validate the

Figure 4 - SWAHT training element

results. During the participation in the training the author has found that the results, from the interviews with the managers, are indeed correct. Compared with the rest of the pillars, less attention is paid to the 'Do Improvement Proposals' aspect than to the rest of the aspects of the training. Furthermore, the word innovation is not mentioned once during the session.

4.1.2. Role of leaders in stimulating innovative ideas and best practices

It is the vision of People & Culture (HR-department) that states that all leaders at every level of the organization live and breathe according to the ISS Leadership Principles - promoting teamwork and collaborating across borders and businesses - ensuring that each and every one of ISS' more than 530,000 employees work towards the shared vision of being the world's greatest service organization. The Leadership Principles describe the way leadership should be performed in ISS. These Leadership Principles serve as a guideline and a benchmark for the leaders of ISS and helps to bring out the full potential (People and Culture ISS, 2018).

The ISS Leadership Principles translates the values into actions, describing behavior that characterizes

a successful leader within ISS. In other words these principles are a framework for the way ISS' leaders do business. These are the 9 Leadership Principles (People and Culture ISS, 2018):

* In ISS we put the customer first
* In ISS we have a passion for performance
* In ISS we encourage innovation
* In ISS we treat people with respect
* In ISS we lead by example
* In ISS we lead by empowerment
* In ISS we develop ourselves and others
* In ISS teamwork is at the heart of our performance
* In ISS we are one company with shared values, one brand and one strategy

The following answers were given to the question of how operational staff are currently being encouraged to come up with innovative ideas. Answers are given by site managers of the accounts again. Maarten Baars (from Deltion College), Jeffrey Kriele (Health Care) and Rogier van Os (Heineken) give their opinion about this topic.

> *"I wish they would come with it. I have also said all ideas are welcome. But there is not something that stimulates the operational staff to come up with ideas, whether these are ideas for improvement or innovative ideas. I am convinced that every idea that comes must have a real chance to be tested and implemented, or not."* (Baars, 2018)

> *"Firstly through the week start. Secondly, through culture, that I let them decide for themselves what they want to do and what they like. These people are now really intrinsically motivated. I also give them freedom to work on the ideas. Then we put time and energy into it. If I say from the beginning that we will not do it, then the next time they will no longer come up with an idea. In this way I stimulate them a bit. If their own idea is worked out and you notice that such an idea has not been successful, you will see that they really respect it. They have to work it out themselves, I always offer my help."* (van Os, 2018)

> *"There is no structure within the entire organization in which it becomes clear what the structure looks like to come up with improvement ideas and innovations. It is very important to properly translate the alignment with the vision and mission. The best service organization, what does this mean for the operational employee? We should we focus on that much more with each other?"* (Kriele, 2018)

The leaders are actually those, according to ISS, who have to encourage innovation, both for themselves and for their employees (People and Culture ISS, 2018). It is striking again that the results are different per account. The Key Account (Heineken), which have been used as an example above, indicate that the employees are indeed being stimulated. This is not the case with Specialized Services (Deltion College and Cure & Care).

Now that the vision of leadership has been brought to light, from the perspective of the interviews, it is important to map the internal documentation in the area of leadership. If ISS stands for motivating leadership, the leaders (and even the employees) must also be reviewed on this (De Steven, n.d.). The interesting thing about the job descriptions is that in the job description of the operational employee and the site manager, there is no mention of innovation or innovative thinking or even improvement proposals. At the key account manager there is something about innovation, but this is also relatively little. There is no concrete activity or result dedicated to innovation. Because there is too much focus

on the operation, innovation becomes a side issue. The job descriptions cannot be put in the appendix, due to confidentiality.

Vivian van Eijsden (Key Account Manager Accenture) agrees with this and also says that too much focus on operation, can cause less focus on innovation.

> *"There needs to be much more focus on innovation. We are led by the issues of the day, and innovation is not. So we need to focus on innovation in addition to our focus on operations. In innovation, we have to stop for a moment and put on another pair of glasses. A lot of nice things happen, a lot of challenging things in the operation, so we have not been able to realize that access during the operation."* (van Eijsden, 2018)

4.2. Accessibility of ideas and best practices at the operational level

In this section, the current and desired situation of unlocking ideas is mapped in the first part. Furthermore, existing tools within ISS are also mapped, which stimulate a certain behavior (usually from continuous improvement). The reason why this is mapped is because the reason to improve or innovate is often the same (Osterwalder, 2018). After all, a need arises from the customer or the employee (or a complaint). Hence, through the existing tools, ISS tries to map out all those needs and to make improvements accessible. Lastly, requirements for designing a tool, which will facilitate access to the innovative minds of the frontline employees, will be illustrated.

4.2.1. Innovative ideas and best practices of front liners

When asked whether the site managers can list an example of one innovative idea, conceived by an operational employee, only one idea emerged. This idea has not been worked out due to the budget. The quote comes from the site manager of PwC, Elisabeth Morais-Carvalho.

> *"An innovative idea came from an employee of ISS at PwC. She suddenly asked the question, because of the many empty pizza boxes in the evenings, why ISS cannot do something with a kind of meals app. So that employees of PwC can work overtime and order food via ISS. In the end it did not get off the ground, because it was very difficult to convince people in terms of personnel and costs. It has been worked out reasonably well, but unfortunately it cannot be realized."* (Morais-Carvalho, 2018)

It is remarkable that site managers can mention examples of improvement proposals, but not radical or disruptive innovative concepts (see transcripts from Appendix 7.3 to 7.14). According to Christian Coenen and Renze Klamer, innovation from the operational level (due to the competencies and knowledge level of the employees) does not have to be radical or disruptive at all.

> *"When looking at ISS, I was in Denmark and I saw a lot of sensors and face recognition apps etc. No doubt, I would call these things innovation. Really data-driven and radical/disruptive innovation. On an operational level it can be a very simple exchange. A very incremental innovation that also can be seen as an innovation. To put it in other words, at operational level, innovations don't have to be radical or futuristic, science-fiction robot-like."* (Coenen, 2018)

> *"Someone who has a lot of knowledge can connect things more easily. The difference between the highly educated and the low educated is not bad at all. That is important. Because I believe that you get innovation on a different level. While highly educated people come up with a new disruptive innovative television system, the low-skilled people come up with good methods on how to hang the tv up or clean them. The highly educated people have never thought about this, simply because they did not interfere."* (Kamer, 2018)

Also Jeffrey Kriele (site manager Health Care) agrees with this statement.

> *"But if you ask the question how can you solve it and think for a moment, then it is often very simple things in the process. But it is often only improvement ideas. It may well be that innovations can come out, but I've never experienced it before."* (Kriele, 2018)

In addition to focusing on innovative ideas, it is also important to review the best practices. When asked if the site managers were able to disclose best practices among employees, the following answers were given:

> *"I think it's the responsibility of the site manager. Sure the employees will say yes, this is so handy, try this somewhere else. They are also in close contact with other colleagues from PwC Utrecht, Rotterdam etc. But in the end, I think site managers should have this insight to identify these types of ideas and then use the network and contacts to share the ideas and best practices."* (Morais-Carvalho, 2018)

> *"I also do not think this is intended for the operational employee. They have to come up with ideas as experts and we as managers must immediately share these ideas with a kind of platform."* (Van Haren, 2018)

> *"I actually do not think they should have that. Best Practices therefore fits more for the layers above the operation and the ideas come up for the operation."* (van Os, 2018)

4.2.2. Existing tools

At the moment the foundation (leadership, culture, empowerment etc.) is good, a tool can be a good method to unlock innovative ideas. There are already some tools within ISS that site managers use to unlock ideas for improvement among the operational staff. In addition, the opinions of the external respondents will also be included in this chapter. For more tools, the theoretical framework in chapter 3.4 can be consulted.

Team Board

The purpose of the Team Board is to create an interactive visual board for all on-site staff members to use in order to enhance communication, collaboration, and service performance quality and team culture. The ISS Team Board creates a friendly, interactive and easily accessible way for on-site staff to communicate. It provides the opportunity to discuss and plan the service requirements of the day and get the teams to support and help one another when necessary. For example, if the executive chef has limited resources to support a lunchtime or special event. Daily short briefings are held with on-site staff to discuss service performance, Health Security and Environment, employee engagement and customer purpose. The ISS Team Board consists of 3 boards, with each board linked to a specific purpose of the ISS mission, thereby delivering vital and relevant information to individual team members and/or on-site groups. Please refer to appendix 5.1 for more information about the Team Board. Heineken uses this Team Board in order to stimulate ideas. *"The Team Board is a great tool to get access to the ideas of employees."* (van Os, 2018)

These are the benefits of the Team Board.

* Improves communication between all on-site staff
* Promotes team culture with focus on the "I" of IFS
* Empowerment of ISS employees
* Progresses daily operations through the display of daily performance and discussions about learnings, improvements, etc.

∗   Expands off-site staffs' understanding of the customer and what is important for the customer
∗   Is essential to deliver a consistent service performance– *"one company, one brand, one culture"*

Daily Huddle

The daily huddle is a way to let our teams go through the tasks of the day, look back on feedback and look ahead to important events, guests, etc. The daily huddle is driven by different themes. Some themes are treated every day, while the other themes are treated once a week. The daily huddle is performed at both PwC and Accenture.

The team lead will assign the responsible person to the huddle per day. He/she takes the lead and follows the points of the day. The day-old is always someone who started the earliest. After all, this person is aware of everything that has already happened that day.

The huddle is held under the team. If necessary, someone shifts from a different team, this depends on the topics being treated. E.g. when important visitors or large groups are expected, or when help is needed from that team. Always make sure that the operation continues. If the situation allows, a closed meeting can be held with the team. It is striking that during the huddle, hardly any attention is paid to innovation or improvement ideas.

Benefits of the daily huddle are:

♦   Guarantee a daily fixed time with the team,
♦   Increase efficiency,
♦   Increase empowerment,
♦   Optimize hospitality,
♦   Divide the tasks,
♦   Better communication,
♦   Better collaboration, because we are aware of current issues,
♦   Pay attention to the team and talk to each other,
♦   Offer more structure during the day and
♦   Inform every one of matters that are important for their work.

Elisabeth Morais-Carvalho gives an opinion and explanation about the Daily Huddle. This method is used on PwC, where Elisabeth Morais-Carvalho is site manager.

> *""I indicate with every huddle that we are and are one team one goal. That means that we are all responsible for everything. So if you see something lying down, you are not going to call the cleaning, but then you clean up yourself if you can do that. I also have a very autonomous team. Take your own decisions and then we will talk about whether that was the right one, or not and why not."* (Morais-Carvalho, 2018)

Agile/Scrum
Agile/Scrum is a tool that has been nominated by an external respondent, Agile Coach Renze Klamer. Renze Klamer explains in the interview how Agile/Scrum can be shaped so that it can be used for this research.

> *"You ask a group to address a problem that they have identified and resolve it. Bring this group together and ask what they are most up against (or the customer). Then you let them filter the problems to simple, very annoying, etc. Then you let them choose one problem or fun topic,*

which they would like to have solved. Then you leave them in groups to work on this problem. You let those groups form themselves. A kind of sprint session. At the end of the afternoon/session, the employees present the solutions to the ideas. And that's how you get some fantastic solutions that you've never thought of before." (Klamer, 2018)

4.2.3. Requirements for these tools

One of the interview questions, which came back in each interview, was whether the respondents could draw up a number of requirements that a tool must meet in order to unlock innovative ideas from operational ISS staff. Because there are a large number of respondents (including a lot of quotes), these requirements have been made transparent in table 3. In table 3, in addition to the requirements, the weighting factors per requirement have been mapped. The weighting factors are determined on the basis of the number of times a requirement is mentioned by the respondents. A higher weighing factor shows that it is seen as more important by the respondents. The questions with the answers are included in the transcripts (Appendix 7.3 to 7.14). Also, the explanation per requirement can be found in appendix 5.2.

Requirement	Amount of mentions
Easily approachable	9
Interaction with frontline employees	4
Update on ongoing innovations	4
Concise and very understandable language	8
Focused only on innovation, and not operation	5
No big change	6
A set day in a week ('innovation Friday')	3

Table 3 - Requirements for tools

4.3.   Sharing ideas

Sharing best practices is important within an extensive international organization such as ISS. This means that the wheel does not have to be reinvented every time and different ISS customers can enjoy innovations that have been devised within other accounts. This makes the innovative character stronger. But with which processes or platforms does ISS have to share ideas that have been devised by the operational field?

4.3.1.   Existing platform

Within ISS there is no standard process in which it becomes clear how ideas from operational staff can be shared with other accounts. There are platforms such as Yemmer and IDEAS@ISS app. But these platforms are not used throughout the entire organization, so that is why these platforms are not included in this concept.

ISS does have a framework to make all processes within the operation transparent and standardized. This framework contains descriptions of all ISS standard work procedures and tools that are needed at a specific account. This framework is called the Operations Process Framework (OPF). The difference between Yemmer, IDEAS@ISS app and the OPF is that the OPF is an accepted standard for processes and it focuses on providing a standard, consisting of services for ISS' customers and end-users around the world. Encouraging the operation to work via the OPF is therefore easier. The OPF facilitates and helps the executive employees and site (and account) management to carry out their work in an effective manner. The OPF is originally an inappropriate framework for making changes, but due to the arrival of the **digital** OPF, this is changing.

Thijs Fennis, Head of BPM and LEAN, explains what effect the digital OPF has, in relation to the paper OPF.

> *"The OPF is now a book of a few inches thick. There is almost scientifically described how we should work. But this is too cumbrous and almost no one likes to read it all. That is why we are now also working on a Digital OPF, in which processes are explained by means of fun videos and presentations (low-threshold) and visuals. A much nicer and more flexible way to do this."* (Fennis, 2018)

Another advantage of the digital OPF is that the paper OPF is written in general (from Denmark), while the digital OPF is made for and by ISS Netherlands, taking into account the internal and external environments (laws and regulations, etc.).

Further general benefits of the digital OPF:

♦ A collection point: The OPF will become the place where all available information regarding ISS work processes is described and can be found. No more endless search. In the OPF things like forms, instructional videos and templates can be found.

♦ Structurally high quality: In the OPF, standard processes are continuously updated with best practices. Copy, improve and rule is the motto.

♦ Owner and expert in every (sub) area insightful and visible: OPF creates a link between excellence centers worldwide, different accounts and managers. This ensures transparency and insight into where what can be found.

♦ Improvement of training, knowledge and onboarding process: Onboarding of employees will become easier. Managers can use OPF as an (extra) training tool and to broaden their (own) knowledge.

The digital OPF exists of 21 core processes. Every core process has a process owner, which is responsible for the underlying sub processes. Herman Knevel, head of Innovation and Strategic Development, is the process owner for the main process innovation management (and the associated sub processes).

The first concept of the digital OPF will go live at the end of May. At the moment all countries that are working with the digital OPF are filling up the platform with their information. Now everyone can see what for example ISS Spain, has written down in its digital OPF. The OPF is also intended to share best practices with other countries. This is the reason that process manager Sjoerd Bruinsma (responsible for the implementation of the OPF Netherlands) is now consciously open to everyone, because it may help the process owners. Sjoerd Bruinsma explains this further in the interview.

> *"Suppose that as a process owner you read the piece of Spain, and you think that is useful for the Netherlands, then you can still take that as a process owner. At the moment that I am going to publish at the end of May, I will only disclose the Dutch data. Then I make sure that the users in the Netherlands can only consult the Dutch OPF and that it looks much more structured, instead of a large unstructured collection of information."* (Bruinsma, 2018)

4.3.2. Requirements for this platform in order to share innovative ideas

Innovation is one of the main processes and therefore has a clear place in one of the chapters within the digital OPF. During the interview with digital OPF experts Thijs Fennis and Sjoerd Bruinsma, questions were asked to map the relationship between the digital OPF and this research. Furthermore, questions were asked to map the requirements, which the digital OPF must meet, so that the opening

up of innovative ideas to the operational staff can be standardized. Thijs Fennis, Head of LEAN and BPM, indicates the relationship between the digital OPF and innovation:

> *"The relationship between innovation and the OPF is that the processes that exist in the digital OPF must innovate and improve in order to keep customer satisfaction and expectations high. I strongly believe that it can only be successful if an accepted standard has been set up. And this is what the OPF is. This is an accepted standard for processes. If innovative ideas in the process are processed in the OPF, this is easier to accept throughout the organization and therefore automatically becomes more successful." (Fennis, 2018)*

So if an Accenture operational employee has an innovative idea that generates fundamental change in the processes, the OPF is there to organize this, so that the operation in the Netherlands (or even outside the Netherlands) can take advantage. The accounts and process owners (Innovation department) must therefore assess whether this innovation is good enough to enter as a standard.

The innovations that have been conceived and implemented (as standard) can be guaranteed by the digital OPF. The ambition (i.e. requirement) is that the process owners periodically carry out a gap analysis, to see if the operation meets the requirements set by the OPF for the processes. Sjoerd Bruinsma explains this further, by using an example.

> *"So if a cleaning robot is used, and Enexis uses something else, then they have to justify themselves in such a gap analysis that the process owners are responsible for. If they deviate from that standard, there has to be analyzed why they deviate."* (Bruinsma, 2018)

A traditional pitfall in innovation is that there is no room to work 'differently'. This has also been discussed in the theoretical framework (chapter 3). It is therefore not the case that if the digital OPF prescribes something, everyone is obliged to work in this way. The customer's request must connect. So by means of that gap analysis the accounts can justify why they choose not to implement it.
"It will not work if the operation and (especially) the customer does not have this need or demand. Even if you reach it on a gold tray" (Fennis, 2018).

According to Sjoerd Bruinsma, the tool that is ultimately recommended in this research can also be implemented in the digital OPF, so that it functions as standard for accounts and all accounts can benefit from the possibility to make innovative ideas of the operational staff accessible. According to Sjoerd Bruinsma, the innovation chapter (which the Group has provided) is still too general and not yet complete. Process manager Sjoerd Bruinsma also really insists that the innovation chapter must be filled well and the process of unlocking ideas must be properly described.
"And such a tool that you are working on is a very good and strong addition to stimulate innovation from the operational field and therefore fits well within the digital OPF" (Bruinsma, 2018).

One point, where both Thijs Fennis and Sjoerd Bruinsma agree, is that 'small' incremental innovations, or 'small' improvements, do not belong in the digital OPF. The reason for this is that the OPF is still not flexible enough to constantly add small improvements. Sjoerd Bruinsma and Thijs Fennis both indicate that the following can be done:

> *"Include a piece in the OPF with: In addition to the big disruptive innovations being updated regularly, we also have small improvements that can be implemented directly in your account. And then you place a link to a blog or whatever, which contains all the improvements that have been thought up by accounts, from big to small"* (Bruinsma, 2018).

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, a conclusion is written for each sub-question, which leads in chapter 6 to the answer of the main question of this research. In chapter 9, the discussion, the relationship of this research with the Real Estate and Facility Management market is being illustrated. It is recommended to read this in order to understand the 'bigger' picture of the research.

What are the requirements for unlocking ideas and building best practices?
The theoretical framework and the research results have shown that there are actually a number of important elements that can stimulate innovative thinking among employees within the service industry.

One of these important points, according to the theoretical framework, is to keep in mind (as leaders) that not all employees can be 'converted' into innovative thinking machines. When asked if it is possible to convince every individual in the organization that an important part of his or her responsibility is to develop and implement new ways to achieve the goals of the organization, the answer is no. Everyone has a certain motivation to get to work. It is therefore important to respect the individual and to keep the focus on the people who do want it. The internal and external respondents of the interviews also agree with this, as shown in chapter 4.2.1.

Training is also an important tool to stimulate innovation on operational level (Barsch, Marla, Capozzi, & Davidson, 2008). Although companies recognize the need to train their staff, they often invest too little in training. In addition, too little investment in training weakens the innovative capacity of individual companies. ISS is able to provide qualitative training on how to provide service. Unfortunately there is no training within ISS that 'improves' innovative thinking. But there are tools which stimulate this (team board, daily huddle and WALITA). The SWAHT training is popular to several employees and also site managers, but no innovation element is dealt within this training.

Finally, the service industry a link with innovation. The classification of a certain service, but also the degree of interaction of services, have a major influence on the development of innovation. The higher the interaction and the contact with the end user and the customer, the more innovative solutions can be devised from the employees. This is perhaps the most important reason for differences between the Key Accounts and Specialized Services. At the Specialized Services customers (like Verkade), ISS employees work more often on weekends and the employees do not see the customer/end-user. In addition, it is also more common for employees of SS customers to see cleaning at ISS as their side job. ISS provides services on maintenance-interactive and task-interactive level. However, there is a shift going on, which ensures that ISS delivers services on a personal-interactive level. In chapter 9, the discussion, the relevance between this research and FM is elaborated.
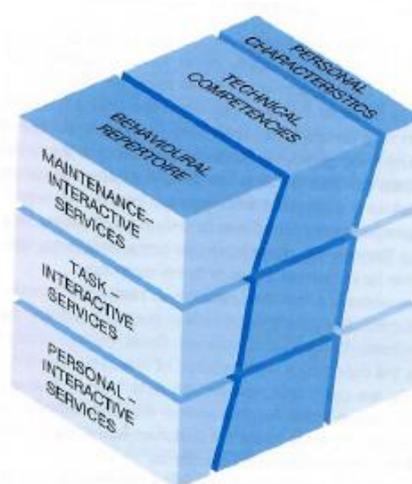
Figure 5 - Classification of services and competencies (Gemmel, Looy & Dierdonck., 2013)

Which tools does ISS use to stimulate innovation at the operational level?

ISS currently does not use tools and / or resources to unlock innovative ideas at the operational level. However, ISS does use three tools, with which improvement ideas can be disclosed or information shared. These tools are the Daily Huddle, the Team Board and the Walita Board. These have all been discussed extensively in Chapter 4.2.2. Furthermore, the theoretical framework has dealt with a tool from Adobe (Kickbox), and four from Board of Innovation. External discussions were held with an Agile Coach, who believes that Scrum is a good method for ISS to unlock innovative ideas in the operational field.

What is the current situation at accounts of the Specialized Services (SS) and Key Accounts (KA) now?

To answer this sub-question, the 3 main themes will be discussed.

- ♦ Leadership and culture

According to the results of the interviews it is clear that the training Service with a Human Touch (SWAHT) the training is which ISS uses to stimulate a certain behavior with operational staff. It is striking that the operational staff of the Key Accounts have had the training, while not all employees of the Specialized Services have heard of the training. From the results it can also be concluded that innovation is not well enough highlighted during the training. The autonomous and empowered behavior, which is necessary to stimulate innovation (Gemmel, Looy, & Dierdonck, 2013), is well framed by means of the SWAHT training. During the SWAHT training the employees get the feeling that they matter and that they can solve the problems of the customer themselves. The managers of the accounts who have been interviewed also agree with this, as shown in chapter 4. But thinking 'out of the box', and making innovative or improvement proposals, is not stimulated very well in this training.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that ISS states that innovation must be encouraged by and among the leaders, in the ISS Leadership Principles. If this is 'tested' on the basis of the results from the interviews, it can be noted that this is not always the case. This is concluded by the 'hard' figures on the one hand. How many innovative ideas actually come up? These are very few. And on the other hand, the job descriptions of the leaders and the employees. No mention is made of innovation or innovative thinking in the job descriptions of the operational employee and the site manager, or even about improvement proposals. At the Key Account Manager there is something about innovation, but no concrete activity or assessment devoted to innovation. Because there is too much focus on the operation, innovation becomes a side issue.

- ♦ Accessibility of ideas and best practices at the operational level

As already mentioned, at the moment, hardly any innovative ideas are disclosed to the operational staff. Causes of this are the elements that have been named for this. Furthermore, a very important finding was found during the investigation. The term innovation is usually understood as incremental innovation at the operational level. This may be due to the level of education (see chapter 3). In a number of cases, disruptive innovation may be unlocked, but the vast majority of ideas will be incremental. **From now on in this report, the term innovation needs to be understood as incremental innovation, unless it is stated otherwise.**

Furthermore, it is confirmed several times that there is indeed a difference between the Specialized Services segment and the Key Accounts segment. According to the different reactions during the interviews and the site visits, this has been noticed by the researcher. There is obviously a greater

need for innovation at the Key Accounts than at the Specialized Services. External parties and the theoretical framework state that it depends on the degree of customer interaction and more focus on quality, relationship and value creation as shown in chapter 3.

Furthermore, it is also remarkable that opinions about best practices are the same for almost all respondents. They believe that recognizing best practices and sharing them with colleagues at other accounts or sites should be a responsibility of the site manager and not of an operational employee. In fact, the sharing of every (innovative) idea must be done directly through a kind of platform, so that the wheel does not have to be invented again and again within ISS (more about this in 4.3.2.).

♦ Sharing ideas

In terms of processes, ISS has a potentially good framework, called the digital OPF, which ISS can use for the entire process of unlocking ideas. Chapter 4.3 explains how and when the OPF can be used for this study.

General benefits of the digital OPF:

♦ A collection point: The OPF will become the place where all available information regarding ISS work processes is described and can be found. No more endless search. In the OPF things like forms, instructional videos and templates can be found.
♦ Structurally high quality: In the OPF, standard processes are continuously updated with best practices. Copy, improve and rule is the motto.
♦ Owner and expert in every (sub) area insightful and visible: OPF creates a link between excellence centers worldwide, different accounts and managers. This ensures transparency and insight into where what can be found.
♦ Improvement of training, knowledge and onboarding process: Onboarding of employees will become easier. Managers can use OPF as an (extra) training tool and to broaden their (own) knowledge.

Which requirements need the tools to meet for unlocking the ideas and best practices?
In the following table 4, it is clear which requirements are linked to the tool that should generate the unlocking of ideas. The requirements were raised by various respondents. In addition, on the basis of the amount of mentions, a weighting factor is linked to the requirement. The more mentions, the higher the weighting factor. The weighting factors are based on a 5-point scale.

Requirement	Amount of mentions	Weighting factor
Easily approachable	9	5
Interaction with frontline employees	4	1
Update on ongoing innovations	8	4
Concise and very understandable language	8	4
Focused only on innovation, and not operation	5	2
No big change and ease of implementation	6	3
A set day in a week ('innovation Friday')	3	1

Table 4 - Requirements with weighting factor

What is the best scenario to implement, based on the requirements?
In order to determine which scenario is best to implement (the desired tool), an assessment matrix was used. This matrix contrasts the tools (horizontal side) and the requirements (vertical side), so that scores can be assigned per tool for each requirement. The tool with the highest score scores the best.

The scores that have been given are multiplied by the weighting factor. If the Team Board scores a 5 on Easily Approachable, then that is multiplied by the weighting factor 5. The score on the first element for the Team Board is 25 points.

	Team Board	Daily Huddle	Walita	Adobe Kickbox	Board of Innovation	Scrum
Easily approachable	5	4	5	2	5	1
Interaction with frontline employees	5	3	4	2	5	3
Update on ongoing innovations	5	2	3	4	4	4
Concise and understandable language	2	4	4	2	1	2
Focused only on innovation, and not operation	1	1	1	5	5	4
No big change and ease of implementation	3	4	2	1	1	1
A set day in a week ('innovation Friday')	5	5	2	4	5	3
Total	**74**	**66**	**66**	**63**	**68**	**54**

Table 5 - Comparison: tools and requirements

According to table 5 it can be concluded that the Team Board, with a score of 74, is the best tool to unlock innovation at the operational level. If the matrix is analyzed, it can be concluded that the Team Board, Daily Huddle, Walita and Board of Innovation score well (in the vicinity of each other), while Adobe Kickbox and Scrum fall outside the boat. The most important similarity between the four well-scoring tools is that there is a joint session. There is a meeting with a manager and a select number of operational employees, where there is interactive discussion about the order of the day and about the improvement ideas.

6. Advice

Based on the conclusion in chapter 5, a number of recommendations can be given with regard to practical implementation. The recommendations are elaborated in this chapter. The advice is subdivided into strategic, tactical and operational advice. The strategic recommendation is about the strategic relevance of this research and the industry of Real Estate and Facility Management. The tactical and operational recommendations are about the concluded elements, which have to improve in order to realize accessible innovative minds of operational employees. Together, the recommendations provide an answer to the main question:

> *"What are the possibilities for ISS to unlock and access the innovative ideas of ISS within the Key Accounts and Specialized Services?"*

6.1. Strategical advice

First of all, it is important that ISS takes a certain direction in the area of leadership. Innovativeness is an important aspect to focus on determining which leaders ISS wants in the organization. It is true that ISS in their Leadership Principles (discussed earlier in chapter 4.1.1) indicates that being innovative is an important characteristic for the leaders within ISS. But the conclusion already clearly indicates that the hard figures indicate that this is not the case in practice. ISS should therefore connect the practice to the theory (read further at chapter 6.2.).

The reason this is relevant, is because leadership within an innovative organization is important. Leaders must convince front-line employees that the management supports the line. The supervisors therefore give the example in the first instance. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, employees are quick to take over the behavior of the managers (Stevens, 2018). If the managers make mistakes, learn from these mistakes, are exploratory and are innovative, chances are that the operational staff pick them up and 'imitate' them. Furthermore, it is important that the leaders are facilitators. Everything that an operational employee needs (and cannot arrange himself) for the innovative, self-invented idea, should facilitate the manager (HBR, 2017). Things such as money, time, space, services, products and/or even feedback and coaching can be examples.

Leaders also must ensure that front-line employees understand the bigger picture. It is important that employees understand 'the bigger picture', the 'Why?'. Why innovation? Why now? Why me? Why is all this so important? All these questions can easily be answered, but the answer to these questions is often not clear for the operational staff. At the moment that the core is clear for the operation, they sooner understand the need to innovate (Sinek, 2011).

Making leaders more innovative means not only having to come up with innovative ideas consistently. It also means that these leaders must have a high priority in 'making' the employees more autonomous and involved and also empower them. These are important characteristics for operational employees to think and be innovative. A model that maps the importance of employee empowerment, autonomy and involvement is the service-profit chain (described in the theoretical framework). These elements ultimately ensure that the employees come up with ideas and implement these ideas independently (and in teams). The relationship between the Service-Profit Chain and ISS is that ISS wants to be the best service organization. Through this SPC and positively influencing all elements, ISS can become the best service organization.

6.2. Tactical advice

The realization of more innovative leaders can be done by adapting the job descriptions of the site managers and the key account managers and giving innovation a clear place in these job descriptions. In this way, managers are better assessed on innovation and they feel more like it is part of the job.

Furthermore, the SWAHT training, which ISS gives to the operational staff, needs to be added with an important piece of innovation. It makes clear to the operational staff why innovation is important in their work and what it can bring to them and ISS. In addition, it can be made clear during the training how employees can think innovatively. It must become clear that employees must think in problems and then in solutions, instead of just raising problems. The training will be a kind of wake-up call for the employees and during the training a few times will be given the opportunity to 'practice' through cases that can be used. Cases are already being used during the SWAHT training for other purposes, like practicing for a more hospitality experience. All this makes it easier for the leader to ultimately encourage employees to come up with innovative ideas during their daily work, because the employees are then already aware of the importance of innovation.

Furthermore, the digital OPF can help ISS (and the leaders) to be more innovative. The digital OPF potentially has a lot of common ground with this research (i.e. unlocking innovative ideas to the operational staff). It is recommended that the digital OPF will be used for the entire process of unlocking ideas among operational employees. During the following 'touch points' the digital OPF interfaces with this research:

- ◆ Step 1 (Plan): If an innovation session is held on an account, to make innovative ideas accessible to the operational staff, the digital OPF can be consulted to see the process. The digital OPF will explain the tool and how a session can be held. Both site managers and operational employees can see this.
- ∗ Step 2 (Do): When an operational employee has come up with an idea, it is important to know whether this idea already exists within ISS. The digital OPF can also help with this. By means of a list in the digital OPF, all innovative ideas (with contact details of accounts) can be mapped. In this way, the employees do not always have to reinvent the wheel.
- ∗ Step 3 (Check): If the idea already exists, it can be taken over from the digital OPF. If one has difficulty with working out the existing idea, the accounts that have already implemented the idea can be consulted by the account that wants to have the idea implemented (for help). If the idea does not yet exist, the account must elaborate on the idea and measure the effect of the innovation.
- ∗ Step 4 (Act): Finally, the innovative idea and its effects must be shared via the digital OPF (best practices). This can be done via a digital form that needs to be completed and then sent to the process owner. The process owner determines, together with the process team, whether the idea is good enough to scale. If so, then there will be an update to all accounts, that an innovative idea has been added.

Within the digital OPF, there is no room for small improvements that have little demand (see chapter 4.3.2). However, these improvements can still be taken into account by means of an external link within the digital OPF, so that accounts with interests in those small improvements can still use them. The link can be directed to Inside@ISS (the intranet of ISS), where Karola Rutten (Innovation Growth Manager) is engaged in mapping all innovations.

6.3. Operational advice

According to table 5 it can be concluded that the Team Board, with a score of 74, is the best tool to unlock innovation at the operational level. During the research, it was decided not to choose one specific tool. After all, if the choice is to continue with the team board, the research actually excludes the other tools. The research indicates that the foundation of an innovative mindset lies with leadership, culture, autonomy and empowerment. So it is not that a specific tool can be used for innovation and the rest is 'worse', especially because the tools are similar. The most important agreement between the four well-scoring tools is that there is a session. There is a meeting with a manager and a select number of operational employees, where there is interactive discussion about the order of the day and about the improvement ideas.

ISS must create an innovation session/meeting where employees can come together and where the leader tries to unlock and get access to the innovative minds of the operational employees. The accounts also need a physical board, where the employees can put their ideas (Team Board, Daily Huddle or WALITA). This is important, because during this session the employees get the possibility to come up with problems/bottlenecks and with (innovative) solutions. It is advised to schedule this innovation sessions right after the daily huddles, team board meetings, or WALITA meetings. This way the innovation session is easier to implement and it is easier to guarantee larger participants of the meeting. In the next chapter, this operational advice is being validated by means of an experiment.

7. Experiment

The purpose of this chapter is to validate the operational advice. This is done on the basis of an experiment that was done at two different accounts. In appendix 3.3 the methodology is described of

this research. Please refer to this appendix, before reading further. It is important to understand the methodology first.

7.1.   Results per hypothesis

In this section, the results are analyzed per hypothesis. The hypotheses are prioritized on the basis of importance. So it is most important to first check whether there is a demand for an innovation session. If this is not there, the following hypotheses cannot be done. Then it is important to see if there are actually ideas from the session. If this is not the case, hypotheses 3 and 4 cannot be worked out.

> **H1: There is demand at Key Account Management/Regional Management level, to implement a tool that can help ISS Operations to get access to the innovative minds of the operational employees.**

The aim of this hypothesis is that more than 80% of the selected managers respond to the mail sent, with a positive reply. The result of the test is positive. 90% of managers responded. All reactions were positive. A positive reply means that the managers allow the researcher to carry out an innovation session on their account. The managers are even willing to carry out the session within the week of responding.

An assumption in this hypothesis was that there was more demand for innovation at KA level than at SS level. To be able to test this, we looked at the differences between the amounts of reactions. To validate my sub hypothesis (test card 1c), at least 70% of the responses had to come from KAM's. This is not the case. After all, 60% of the responses are from KAMs and 40% from ROMs. This means that there is indeed sufficient demand for innovation from the management of the SS segment.

> **H2: The tool is an adequate way to help ISS Operations to get access to the innovative ideas in the minds of the operational employees.**

The aim of this hypothesis was to obtain at least one innovative idea from the operational staff, per account, during the session. The result is positive. At PwC there were four innovative ideas and at THUAS two (see hypothesis 4 for details).

> **H3: The tool provides the site manager and researcher a way to stimulate autonomy and empowerment.**

The aim of this hypothesis was that the employees are able, through the session and tool, to solve at least 80% of the bottlenecks/problems themselves (innovatively). The result is positive and the hypothesis has been validated. The employees were sufficiently stimulated during the session to find solutions to the problems. This is mainly because during the first day (16th of May) of the innovation session it was told that it is important to address bottlenecks and at the same time think about the solutions themselves.

> **H4: The operational employees are, due to lack of knowledge or training, not able to come up with disruptive innovative ideas. Most of the time the innovations will be incremental innovations or improvements.**

The aim of this hypothesis was to identify that employees do not come with disruptive innovations, but with incremental innovations or improvements. This can be measured by analyzing the given ideas and dividing those into the Satell's matrix (see theoretical framework). The hypothesis has been validated, as all the ideas given fell under the term incremental innovation and/or improvement. Some examples of the ideas given during the innovation sessions are:

- A thermometer on water taps, so that employees of PwC do not suddenly wash hands with hot water. This way one can get hurt.
- Coffee machines with a special sieve, so that coffee residues do not leak and thus the machines can be cleaned more efficiently.
- To improve the communication between the operational team, the PwC operational staff want to set up an online communication tool for the team.

7.2. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the experiment has shown that the operational recommendation, in order to hold an innovation session with operational staff, has been validated. This has been achieved by validating the four largest assumptions in the recommendation, in which hypotheses have also been formulated.

First of all, on the basis of this experiment it can be concluded that there is support among higher management. After all, the managers have a clear positive attitude towards the session. This means that the researcher is allowed to carry out an innovation session for the accounts. The managers are even willing to perform the session within a week of answering to the mail. Also the employees are supporting it, because they are participating with the experiment. It is important, in the further implementation (chapter 8.3), to learn and build further. Because due to time limit and scope, only 10 managers were asked to give answer. In the further implementation, this has been taken into account. This will assure the ongoing level of interest (OLI), because more managers will be asked if they are interested, during the implementation.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the operational advice is validated and therefore 'works'. It is true that the ideas that are often incremental in nature. This means, according to Satell's matrix, that the ideas are often not groundbreaking of disruptive.

8. Consequences and implementation

In order to implement the advice, consequences must be taken into account. This chapter shows the most important organizational, staff-related and financial consequences. Finally, these consequences are made clear and time-bound in a table 6 under the header 'implementation'. ISS must take into account that these consequences are an estimation and are based on assumptions. The 'real' consequences can differ. But this chapter is justified by (scientific) sources, so that the difference between the theory and practice will be as small as possible.

8.1. Organizational and staff-related consequences

In this section the organizational and staff-related consequences are mentioned. These have to do with organizational culture.

Responsibility

For the innovation sessions that are being implemented, it is important to know first who is responsible for this. Since the daily huddles and team board meetings are already being held by the site manager, it is logical that the site manager also bears responsibility for the innovation session, which will be integrated with the meetings. The key account manager has the final responsibility for this. That is why it is important that the job profile of a site manager and a key account manager contains elements of innovation.

The site manager is also responsible for sharing best practices via the digital OPF. This can be done via a digital form that needs to be completed and then sent to the process owner. The process owner, together with the process team, evaluates whether the idea is good enough to scale. If so, then there will be an update to all accounts, that an innovative idea has been added. The process owner is Herman Knevel (Head of Innovation) and the process team is his innovation team. Scaling the ideas that can have a significant impact on accounts becomes the responsibility of the Innovation Growth Manager (Karola Rutten).

Structure
There are no big changes for the hierarchical structure of ISS. The process owner of innovation management is mandated to make a decision about the best practices that are shared by the site managers. Furthermore, clearly visible hierarchy can kill innovation. It is therefore important that the site manager is a facilitator and a true leader for the operational employee and not a traditional boss. Being open and having a culture where it is allowed to make mistakes is important.

Furthermore, it is recommended to have a physical board during the innovation session (according to the conclusion and advice). On the basis of table 5 it can be stated that the Team Board, Daily Huddle Board and WALITA board are good physical signs for such a session. This means that the accounts must get one of these boards. There are some accounts that already have such a tool, for example PwC, Accenture and Heineken.

Job profile
It is important that the job profile of the leaders within ISS Operations (site manager and key account manager) contain points about innovation. As stated earlier, making leaders more innovative means not only having to come up with innovative ideas consistently. It also means that these leaders must have a high priority in 'making' the employees more autonomous and involved and also empower them. In addition, it is also important for the operational staff to have elements of innovation in the job profile. That, together with the training and the 'innovative leaders', ensure that the operational employees are and remain stimulated, and see as part of the job. The key account manager has to assess the site managers on whether they are being innovative or not.

Attitude of operational staff
It is important that the operational employees are triggered about innovation. It is possible that a part of the operational staff is not interested in innovation. The operational employees that are not interested in coming up with ideas, are not 'bad people'. The site manager must then focus on the interested people and the people that would like to participate with the innovation sessions. Jeffrey Kriele (site manager Health Care) explains this clearly in the interview that is held with him:

> *"There are three groups: ambassadors, the middle group and the negative group. What matters to me is that you at least enable the ambassadors to come up with ideas and that you give the middle group a platform to think along with. In the end, you try to make the middle group more ambassadors, if that works."* (Kriele, 2018)

8.2. Financial consequences
In this section, the costs and benefits of implementing the advice are worked out.

8.2.1. Costs

On the basis of the advice and the consequences, there are two important cost elements: time and resources. It is important to know that there are approximately 40 key accounts and 30 specialized services accounts. This means that there are working approximately 100 site managers at ISS Netherlands.

Time of employees

At the moment that the innovation sessions are being implemented at ISS accounts, this will take some time for different stakeholders. The management, operational staff, but also the innovation department will have to invest time in this.

The management (site managers) are engaged in the innovation session 15 minutes of their working time. According to data from Indeed (2018), it appears that a site manager earns approximately €3.100 per month on the basis of a 40-hour working week. The wage costs for an employer are 27% compared to the gross wage (Berekenhet, 2018). This means that a site manager costs about €3.937 on average for an employer. For a quarter of an hour, a site manager costs €6 for ISS. If this advice is eventually implemented in every ISS account, it will mean that it will cost in total (€6*100=) €600 per week. Per year this will cost €31.200.

For the operational staff it is also a 15-minute session, in which they are engaged in the innovation session. According to Loonwijzer's (2018) data, an operational employee (cleaner) earns €2.000 per month, on the basis of a 40-hour working week. Assuming that this is the average salary for an operational employee at ISS, this means that the wage costs are (€ 2.000 * 127% =) € 2.540 based on a 40-hour working week. For a quarter of an hour, an operational employee for ISS therefore costs around €4. During the experiment, about 10 employees were present at a time. Assuming that there are 10 employees per session, this would mean that one session costs about €40 in wage costs for operational staff. If this advice is eventually implemented in every ISS account, that will mean that per week this will cost (€40*100=) €4.000. Per year this will result in €208.000.

The Innovation Growth Manager (Karola Rutten) also 'loses' time scaling these ideas by including the incremental ideas in the newsletter in Inside@ISS. This newsletter is made every end of the month. This list requires about two hours per month. According to Glassdoor (2018), an Innovation Manager costs about €3.810 per month in labor costs on the basis of a 40-hour working week. This means that it costs €48 for ISS to make such a list, per month. This therefore costs €572 per year.

Resources

By means of resources, the physical tool is meant. This tool is 'bought' by the accounts from a website of Group (ISS Global organization). For the convenience, the Team Board is used to address the financial consequence. A self-made and translated Team Board costs €150 for accounts. If all accounts purchase the Team Board, this will cost approximately €10.500.

In addition, it is important for the SWAHT trainings that the element 'do improvement and innovative proposals' is stressed out enough during the trainings. In order to realize this, the employees are engaged in the training for about 15 minutes longer. This costs nothing, since the employees have not been working all day. After all, the whole day is being held free by ISS for the training. So the investment in this training is already made.

8.2.2. Benefits

In addition to costs, the advice also brings benefits. It is complex to map the benefits of (incremental) innovation. Especially because an innovative idea from an operational employee has not yet been implemented. So no real effect has been measured yet. This section thus reflects the possible positive effects of the advice.

As mentioned earlier in various chapters, ISS wants to become the best service organization in the world and innovation helps ISS with this vision. ISS will gain benefits through a more innovative image. Being more innovative can even help win tenders, as Ernst & Young report (2016) shows that (potential) clients are increasingly focusing on innovation. If ISS can demonstrate during tenders that it 'even' stimulates the operational staff to be innovative, it will be a great opportunity to surprise the potential clients positively. Winning tenders can generate tons, or even millions of euros.

In addition, ISS also reaches the employees with this advice. The operational employees feel heard because the complaints/problems/bottlenecks are converted into self-invented (innovative) solutions. According to De Steven (n.d.) this results in employee satisfaction, loyalty and commitment. This would mean that the eNPS score will increase among the operational staff. This is one of the objectives of ISS Global (Group). For example, research by Gallup (2013) among a large number of organizations has shown that employee satisfaction not only leads to less staff turnover. In a selected group of organizations with above-average employees, a number of other measurement values were tested. Below is an indication of the impact of above-average employee satisfaction (Gallup, 2013):

♦ Loyalty of clients (+5,6 percent)
♦ Productivity (+5,0 percent)
♦ Profitability (+3,3 percent)
♦ Turnover (-5,0 percent)

In addition, it is important to recognize that the ideas that will be conceived and implemented also bring benefits. Incremental innovations that ensure that efficiency is achieved, or higher labor productivity can be achieved. These are just a few of the many benefits that operational staff can achieve with their ideas. The example of the sieve in the coffee machine (chapter 7) is a good example of efficiency. Because there will be no more leakage, the employees no longer have to clean up the leak. This results in more time for other activities. Other methods look at the benefits of innovative ideas are described in figure 6. This figure gives four KPI's and give metrics to assess the benefits.

		Activity Metrics	Impact metrics
Create	Reporting KPI's	♦ Number of ideas ♦ Number of experiments ♦ Number of users reached	♦ User experience + Customer experience (cNPS) ♦ Experiment results ♦ Cost-per-learning ♦ Time-cost-per-learning
Learn	Governance KPI's	♦ Percentage of pilots aligned to innovation	♦ Impact on Programs ♦ Contribution to Desired Outcomes
Scale	Organizational KPI's	♦ Number of start-up collaborations ♦ Number of social enterprises ♦ Number of business	♦ Number of decisions made ♦ Scaling of partnerships: start-ups, social enterprises, business
Build	Workplace KPI's	♦ Number/Percentage of employees trained ♦ Number/Percentage leadership committed	♦ Employee experience (eNPS)

Figure 6 - Activity and Impact metrics for innovation

8.3. Implementation

The consequences for the organization and staff and the costs and benefits of the advice have been mapped out. In this section the implementation of the advice is mapped out by means of table 6. In appendix 6 a structured bar planning is made for the implementation. In the bar planning a distinction between the strategic, tactical and operational level is made.

Activity (What?)	Who?	When?	How?
Description of process innovation session	Process owner innovation (Herman Knevel)	June 2018	With the help of this research (advice, experiment)
Informing management about outcomes of innovation session and testing the ongoing level of interest (OLI) (refer to chapter 7.2)	Solaiman Boubkari and Herman Knevel	June/July 2018	Via mail and referring to digital OPF
Adding (more) innovation elements to the job profiles of site manager and key account manager	People and Culture (HR)	August 2018	When added, it is also important to really assess the managers on these competencies
Adding (more) innovation elements to the SWAHT training	People and Culture	August 2018/continuously	During all of the upcoming SWAHT trainings
Pilot of innovation session starts at a couple of accounts	PwC, Enexis, THUAS and Deltion College	September 2018/July 2019	Please refer to the advice and experiment
Evaluate pilot	Innovation department and management of accounts	Regularly, starting from November 2019 and ends July 2019	Evaluating by assessing the amount of ideas unlocked and accessed and by assessing the effect of these ideas and the process (with the innovation metrics)
Unroll pilot to all accounts	Innovation department and management of accounts	September 2019 / continuously	Step by step, not all accounts at once

Table 6 - Implementation plan

Additional information

In table 6 a number of activities have been formulated that require some explanation. It is outlined that there should be a pilot of the innovation session at a number of accounts. The pilot is a kind of large-scale experiment, during which learnings from the pilot can be obtained at the end of the evaluation (the Build-Measure-Learn cycle). In this way, unnecessary errors can be prevented during the large-scale implementation.

In addition, it is also important that the pilot is rolled out in phases after the evaluation. This means that not all accounts will immediately 'produce' the innovation sessions, but step by step. The reasons are to create a better focus and to spread the investment over a longer period. By implementing step-by-step, the focus and the guidance per accounts can run more smoothly. In addition, this means that the investment does not have to be made in one go, but also in phases. This is favorable for liquidity.

9. Discussion

In this chapter the validity and reliability of the methodology adopted are analyzed, and then the limitations of the project are described. Finally, the added value of this research project is evaluated, by explaining the relevance of this research in the REFM (real estate and facility management) market.

9.1.   Validity and Reliability

This research relates to a specific organization. It is therefore not generalizable and the conclusions and advice will not apply to other organizations or the professional field in general. Perhaps there are elements that can add value for the similar facility services providers. The reliability and validity of this research are guaranteed in the following way.

Reliability

The results of this research are reliable due to the complete, accurate and correct documentation, coding and analysis of the qualitative data. The individual opinions are presented in this document in such a way that they are clearly and unilaterally interpretable to the reader. This approach makes it likely that, when the research is repeated, the same results will emerge, provided they are applied within the same organization.

Validity

With validity, a distinction can be made between internal and external validity. Both are guaranteed in a different way within this research:

* **Internal validity:** This concerns the extent to which systematic errors within the research are minimized. This is ensured through triangulation (combining different data sources, methods and theories) and assessment of participants of this research (allowing participants to assess their opinions on the credibility of their interpretations).

* **External validity:** This concerns the generalizability of the data found. Because this is a research for a specific organization, external validity for this research is not high. However, by means of a detailed description of the context of the research, a clear picture can be created of the frameworks within which the research question must be answered. In other words, the service industry can profit from this research as well.

9.2.   Limitations of the Project

First of all, the interpretation of the word "innovation" is an important issue. In this research the word innovation is often used. This term can imply a very broad number of different ideologies, terms and processes. In the last chapters of this research, innovation has been taken into account focusing only on incremental innovation, because of the lack of possibilities of the operational employees to think in terms of disruptive innovation.

It was also not possible, due to a limited time span, that the innovation session could have been tested at more accounts. This means that the amount of accounts (two) is not representative enough. But still, it is clear that there were a lot of ideas and the session worked. Also, the pilot (table 6, implementation) will give more insights in possible learnings for ISS, in order to create an even better innovation session.

The amount of key account managers is also not representative enough. Due to a limited time span, only 5 Key Account Managers and 5 Regional Managers were asked to give a response on the mail, in order to map the initial level of interest (hypothesis 1). But on the other hand, the reactions were clear. All responses of the managers were positive. So, despite the fact that the number of respondents was not representative, the result was clear enough to give a reliable conclusion.

9.3. Added value of the research

In a fast-moving global market, it is important that workplace/service delivery is flexible and can contribute with added value by adapting to the needs and demands of the customer and accounts. In order to support the client and to be in the forefront of the workplace development market, focus on innovation is crucial (Ernst & Young, 2016). Currently, there is a movement away from traditional transactional contracts (lowest price) to more partnership-oriented models (trust and win-win ideology), aiming for strategic value. Moreover, the focus within the Real Estate and Facility Management industry (REFM) is shifting towards more strategic and company-wide benefits such as proactivity, flexibility and innovation (Ernst & Young, 2016).

Potential customers are looking for a relationship oriented contract. Market development has put pressure on contracts that have been designed at a time when cost savings was identified as the most important consideration. It is difficult to achieve innovation on collaborations that are based on transactional relationships. That is why companies have become aware of the potential to create more value than savings in models that are more based on partnership (Ernst & Young, 2016). Although large players can provide standard services within the REFM domain at a very low price, value creation above and beyond is often difficult to achieve. With partnership-based models it is possible to reward suppliers directly if they deliver more value. In this way, the supplier wins when the company wins. This is why close collaboration can create solutions that are valuable to the buyer and the supplier. In the early days, the suppliers did not offer innovation and the buyers did not request innovation. It was purely a negotiation about the prices (Ernst & Young, 2016).

Hospitality Group (2018) also shows in the FM Providers Research (which was used in the theoretical framework and organizational context chapters) that customers expect that providers themselves will investigate opportunities for improvement and innovations and proactively communicate about this to their clients. Here is a chance for the providers. Clients of Integrated Facility Management providers are least satisfied with Innovation and continuous improvement compared with the clients of other sourcing forms (Maas, 2018).

Overall there is an upward trend in satisfaction with the theme Innovation and continuous improvement. Despite the fact that satisfaction with this theme is still the lowest of all themes, clients are also more satisfied with this in 2017, compared to 2016. Despite the increase Hospitality Group states that this theme has to be the main focus for the service industry. Especially satisfaction with the extent to which providers actively search for innovations and opportunities for improvement is lagging behind. Hospitality Group therefore sees a relationship here with lower satisfaction with the Proactivity competence (Maas, 2018).

In 2016, Hospitality Group concluded that innovation was the theme that clients were relatively dissatisfied with. This year too, the research shows that clients still believe that providers should show more innovative strength. Compared to last year, however, clients are considerably more satisfied with the performance of their provider on this point. Last year Innovation with 2 stars scored by far the worst. This year the average score is 3 stars and with a 1 star increase this is the biggest increase of all themes and competencies. In all it can be concluded that providers pay more attention to the theme Innovation (Maas, 2018).

With this research (making the innovative ideas accessible of the operational employees) the service industry can make a huge step towards a higher customer satisfaction on the Innovation theme. Also, this research fits within the shift from transactional contracts to relationship-based contracts in the service industry.

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