Poland - Country Research Report

Partner name and country: Danmar - Poland

Data about respondents and their organisations:

Total number of respondents	32

Age of the youngest respondent	Age of the eldest respondent	Average age (from all respondents)
22	59	42

Number of SME managers	Number of SME owners
20 (62%)	12 (38%)

Shortest length of service	Longest length of service	Average length of service (from all respondents)
1	28	15

Number of employees	Less than 10	10 - 50	50 - 250	More than 250
	15 (47%)	14 (44%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)

Organisation's field of activity	
	• Agriculture • Constructions • Education • Financial services • Leisure activities • Insurance • Trade • Footwear manufacturer • Management consulting • Consulting and training • Hairdresser's • Production of candles • Textile industry • Cultural services • ICT

	• Logistics • Manufacturing • Services • Transport

Number of organisations located in urban areas	*Number of organisations located in rural areas*

Number of organisations concerned about innovation, in general	30 (94%)
Activities/actions that respondents currently implement (or they would be interested to implement) in order to support and promote innovation in their professional activity or work	• Involvement of employees in decision-making • Open discussions with employees • Funding of selected development ideas • Promoting cross-departmental cooperation • Sending employees to participate in trade fairs/conferences • Collaboration with universities • White papers
Number of respondents that promote innovation leadership	28 (82%)
Practices that encourage the employees the most to be proactive or contribute ideas	• Casual work atmosphere • Building a good and open atmosphere • Performance recognition • Financing / Co-financing of staff training • Ensuring that employees have all the resources to do their jobs • Providing an environment in which employees have a real impact on performance • Ensuring appropriate rest time • Providing an work life balance environment • An environment without undue stress and worry about position • Lack of a "rat race"

Beliefs of respondents regarding innovation leadership	• Individual approach to employees • Allowing employees a certain amount of freedom in decision-making • Openness to changes • A less formal approach • Innovation oriented • Passion invoking • Encouraging diversity • Delegation of tasks (confidence in employees' abilities
<u>Behaviours</u> that respondents can practice to encourage and support their employees' openness to contribute their ideas/proactivity/willingness to engage in innovation activities OR <u>Behaviours</u> that respondents find relevant for engagement and valuable contribution to (implement) innovation	• Support employees in finding innovative solutions • Providing employees with the resources and courses necessary for their development • Providing employees with a sense of meaning and mission in their work • Rewarding the team as the company grows • Motivating employees to make changes • Openness to change
<u>Areas</u> that respondents consider as the most important and that they believe WINN Toolkit and Training Programme should envisage	Critical Thinking - 14 Clarifying Ideas - 11 Mapping Arguments and Decisions - 5 Innovation mindset - 11 Emotional intelligence - 6 Leadership style - 13 Collaborative behaviors - 3 Empathy - 7 Overcoming biases in decision making process - 3 Heuristic Reasoning - 6 Comparative Reasoning - 2 Ideological Reasoning - 7 Empirical Reasoning - 8
<u>Innovative behaviours</u> most necessary for an employee to become an innovative individual	(a) ***Idea generation behaviours***: Exploring opportunities - 11 Identifying performance gaps - 15 Producing solutions for problems - 17 (b) ***Idea application or implementation behaviours***:

	Demonstrating application-oriented behaviour - 5 Investing effort in developing, testing and commercialising the idea - 11 Displaying strong personal commitment to the idea - 17 Persuading others of the value of that idea - 9 Enhancing creativity of your followers - 8 Proving creative self-efficacy - 3
In relation to "trying to introduce innovation into an organisation":	
Paths to innovation	• Casual working atmosphere • Employee training • Autonomy of employees • Ensuring work resources (time, tools) • Openness to change
Areas of required individual development	• Personal commitment • Sense of initiative • Critical thinking • Looking for solutions • Self-development
Main success factors	• Improving qualifications • Collaboration with universities • Active search for innovation • Environment open to change • Autonomy of work
Challenges	• Lack of sense of mission/purpose among employees • No openness to change • Lack of reaction to employee proactivity • No sense of community within the company • Lack of plan how to innovate and what to do with ideas

Interviews with representative of SME support organisations

Brief description of the supporting institution and / or interviewee	Interviewee –**Marek Duda** Institution - **District Development Agency (RARR)** – Poland, Rzeszów - established to provide comprehensive development opportunities in the region, concentrating and mobilizing the potential of local communities, providing consulting and service in the processes of restructuring, opening and supporting business ventures, promoting the region and acquiring foreign aid funds. The agency also supports SMEs, currently coordinating an initiative dedicated to this group of professional companies, recognizing their implementation of innovative solutions.
Main conclusions from the commentary on the research results	Marek Duda considered the subject matter of the project to be important. A high number concerned about,innovation and involved in innovation is really good. In principle, Marek Duda agreed with the answers. However, he thinks that a lot of theoretical activities were given without being covered by concrete actions. An example is one of the answers on *Activities/actions that respondents currently implement.* The answer is for example: Promoting inter-departmental cooperation. Marek Duda believes that although the answer is correct, it does not contribute anything if we do not have concrete actions here. That is, the group completing the questionnaire should give examples of activities supporting the promotion of inter-departmental cooperation, what can be done to promote it, how to maintain it. Overall, Marek Duda expressed his satisfaction with the awareness of the group

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	completing the questionnaire on the topic of innovation
Main conclusions from factors/behaviours/beliefs/aspects relevant for engagement and valuable contribution to innovation	Marek Duda agrees with the factors/behaviours/beliefs/aspects relevant for engagement and valuable contribution to innovation listed by the survey participants. Of those listed, two were more analysed, first: • Collaboration with universities Marek believes that it is rather a process of innovation implementation. It is not actually dependent on the motivation of employees or their critical thinking / innovation search skills but rather is the transfer of developed innovations by universities and putting them into practice. However, theoretical innovations can often transform after they have been introduced into the market, and here there may be some innovation involved in adapting theory to market expectations. Nevertheless, Marek Duda stresses that cooperation with universities, but also with incubators and public institutions can support innovation activities carried out in a company by providing knowledge on new methods / processes / tools or by obtaining funding (for example from public authorities). Another point that has come under wider review was: • -An environment open to change He agrees that an innovative environment especially for SMEs should be open to change and the search for innovation, but also stresses the importance of risk in this process. According to Mark Duda, the environment should be open to both change and risk.

	Risk can, of course, be reduced by applying certain management and analysis techniques but it is impossible to eliminate it completely. Among the challanges, therefore, should be an openness to risk and to all its consequences (for example: financial, reputational).
Main conclusions regarding the role of the listed areas	The highest score was achieved here by: - Critical thinking (14) - Leadership style (13) Marek Duda, while agreeing that both are very important, believes that a particularly useful feature is: - Collaborative behaviors, and - Overcoming biases in decision making process Both relate to the ability of employees to work together. He believes that this is fundamental when spreading the values of an open and friendly environment, and only such an environment can generate innovation. The creation of a working environment consisting of employees who can openly discuss and exchange ideas without being ostracised or criticised has a positive effect on both job satisfaction and a sense of mission, which can be directly responsible for innovation. Of course Leadership style and the rest of the qualities are also essential. Mare Duda believes that all the areas mentioned are very important and the choice given to the respondents was very hard.
Relevant quotes (if necessary)	Innovation management is also about managing risk, stress and all that goes with it.

	The biggest responsibility falls on the shoulders of the boss/manager, but it can be felt by everyone. An environment of collaboration, common mission and a sense of connection among employees plays a huge role here.