

A Manager's Ambiversion as a Prerequisite for Innovation*

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The findings from studies of the links between extraversion and innovation are contradictory. The aim of the current surveys was to ascertain whether the prerequisite for innovation could be the manager's ambiversion, which is comprised of characteristics of both introversion and extraversion. Ambiversion is a trait, which consists of infrequent (introversive) but intensive (extraversive) social interaction. The first hypothesis was that ambiversion is linked to innovation, i.e. the introduction of a new product or process leads to increased customer satisfaction, enterprise sales and profits. The second hypothesis was that ambiversion is linked to an ambiversive style of product development, in other words to the habitual tendency to interact in ascertaining the needs of customers and to become engrossed in thought when developing a new product or process. The third hypothesis was that an ambiversive style of product or process development is linked to innovation. In order to test these hypotheses, one survey was conducted amongst 75 product developers in 40 Estonian enterprises and another amongst 89 top managers in 25 Estonian enterprises. All the hypotheses were confirmed in both studies. These findings point to the need for further study of more specific personality traits and their interaction in order to gain a better understanding of the factors behind innovation at the individual and organizational level. These results underline the importance of taking into account the top managers' ambiversive personality and their innovation style in selection and training. Also, it is important to create an organizational climate that lets managers interact infrequently and intensively during particular stages in the innovation process.

Keywords: innovation management, extraversion, ambiversion, decision-making.

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