

Idea Receptiveness Survey



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Management Summary

This survey was carried out over the internet in 2006 and early 2007 to assess attitudes towards receptiveness to new ideas within organizations. There were 203 respondents of whom 82% were from private sector companies and 18% from the public sector.

The results indicate that most people consider themselves to be much more receptive to new ideas than their bosses are. So whereas 95% of people think that they would welcome or consider ideas from outside their department, only 77% thought that their manager would. If they had implemented a new policy and someone suggested there might be a better way to do the whole thing, then 52% of respondents would consider the suggestion carefully and be prepared to try it. However they thought that under similar circumstances only 18% of bosses would do the same.

Similarly when it comes to implementing other people's ideas, 94% of respondents said they would give the credit to the person who came up with the idea. But only 73% thought their boss would do so – 27% thought the boss would claim the credit.

When faced with a difficult problem for some time respondents believed that they were more likely to look outside their department for ideas (43%) than their managers were (24%). They thought that the managers were more likely to ask the department to make more suggestions or to try some more of their own ideas.

The most common things that were seen to be preventing new ideas from being adopted there were lack of time and money, poor communication and a variety of cultural issues including risk aversion and fear of failure. A picture of poor leadership in this area emerges.

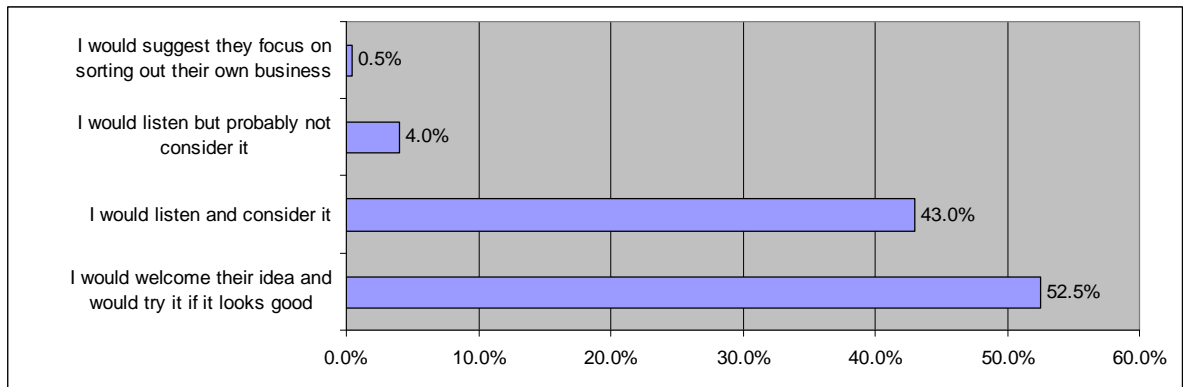
Overall people see their managers as being less open to new ideas than they are. This begs the question – do people become less receptive as they move up the management chain or is it a perception issue? Do we view ourselves as more receptive than we really are? Are we just as bad as our bosses but we don't see it?

Paul Sloane

March 2007

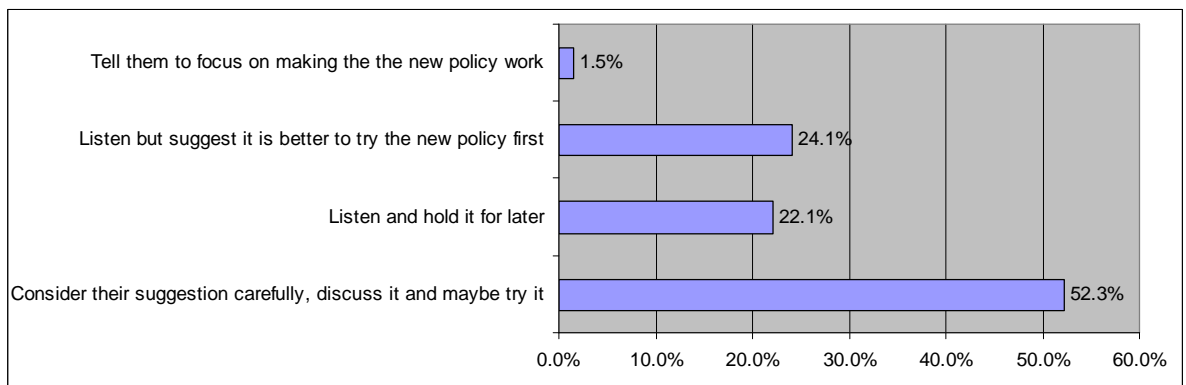
Detailed results

1. Someone from outside your department gives you an idea for how you could do things differently. How would you react?



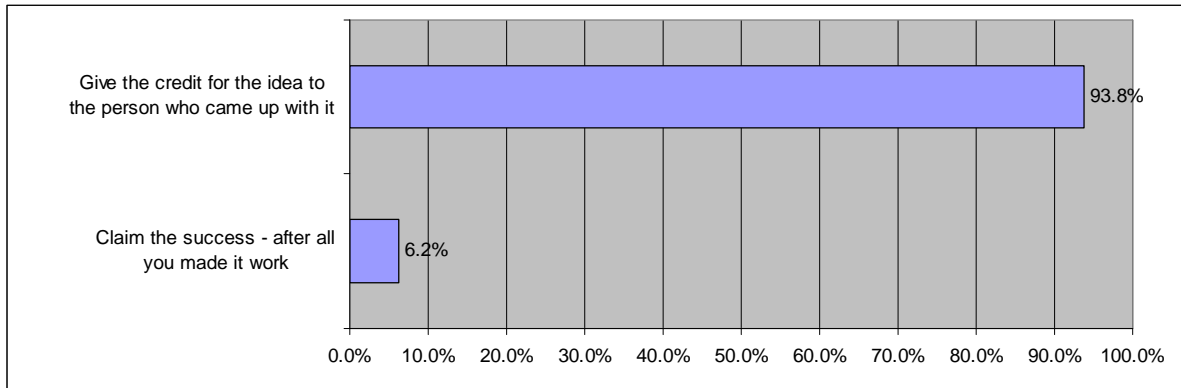
An impressive 95.5% of people stated they would respond very positively to an idea from outside their department.

2. You have just implemented a new policy for your department when one of your staff suggests that it would be better to do the whole thing differently. How do you react?



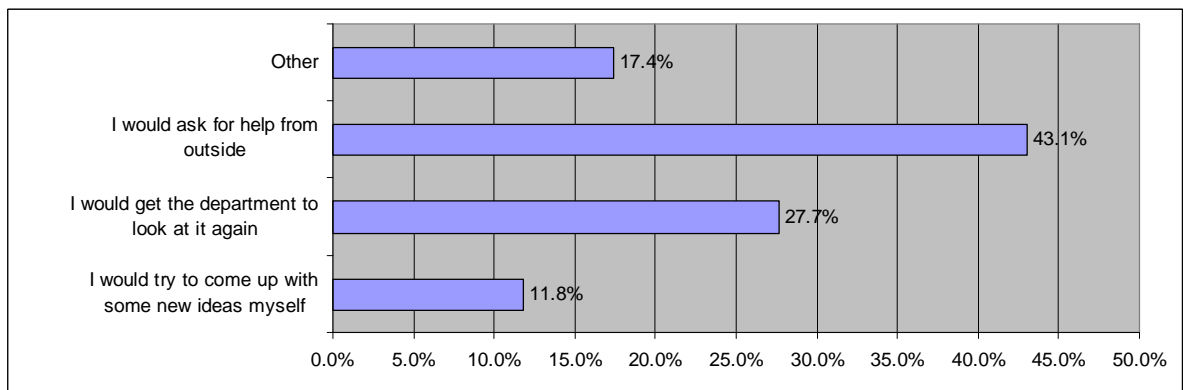
Fully 52% of respondents would be very open to trying a new idea even though it challenged a policy that has just been implemented. Some 46% would listen to the idea but be unlikely to try it immediately.

3. Someone makes a suggestion which you implement and make a success. Do you...



Nearly 94% of respondents claimed they would give the credit for the idea to its originator while 6% admitted that they would claim the credit.

4. You have faced a difficult problem for some time. Where do you look next for a possible solution?

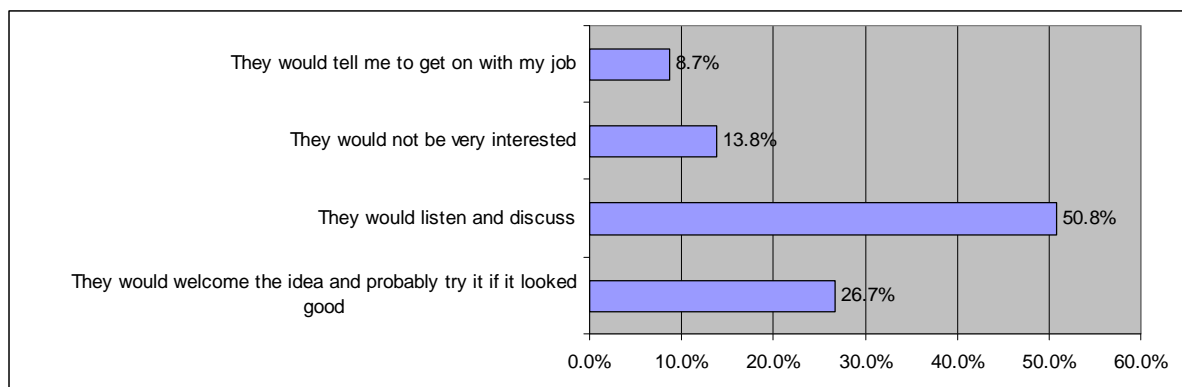


The most popular choice is to look outside for new ideas (43%) when facing a difficult problem. Only 12% stated that they would continue to try to come up with ideas themselves.

The 'other' answers included the following with the first two mentioned several times:

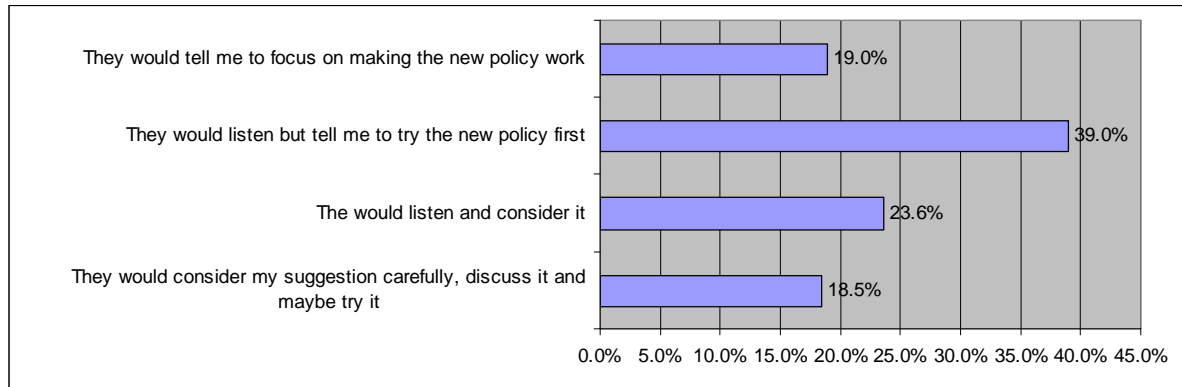
- A combination of the above
- Brainstorming.
- Post the problem on online forums
- Use stimuli
- Independent consultant
- Ask lots of people
- Pull cross functional teams together
- Look to see what others had tried elsewhere
- Sleep on it
- Research the internet
- Ask anyone with potential expertise in the specific area

5. Thinking of your current or most recent boss, if you made a suggestion for a way of running things differently how would they react?



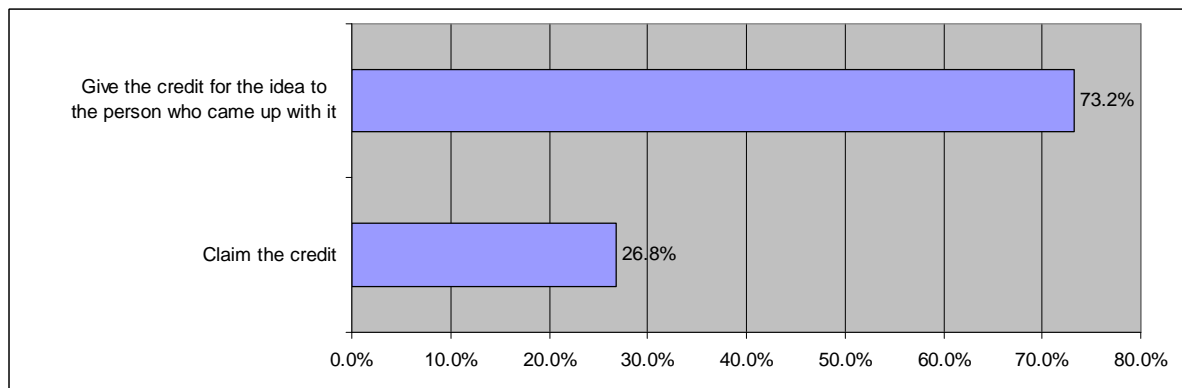
Half of respondents think that their boss would be prepared to listen and discuss new ideas. 27% are more positive and think that the boss would be prepared to try a new idea. 22.5% think that they would get a negative reaction from their boss.

6. Your boss has just implemented a new policy for your department when you suggest that it would be better to do the whole thing differently. How would they react?



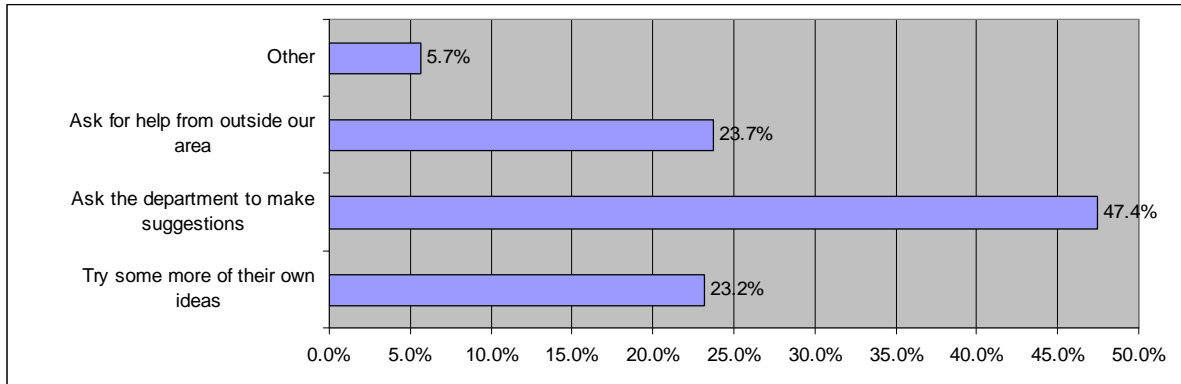
Only 42% of respondents thought that their boss would be receptive to a new idea which challenged a recently implemented policy. Some 39% thought their boss would listen but not be likely to accept the idea and 19% said that their boss would be quite negative towards the idea.

7. Someone makes a suggestion which your boss implements. Would your boss....



Most bosses would give the credit where it is due but some 27% of people thought their boss would claim the credit for themselves.

8. Your boss is struggling with a difficult ongoing problem. What would they do?

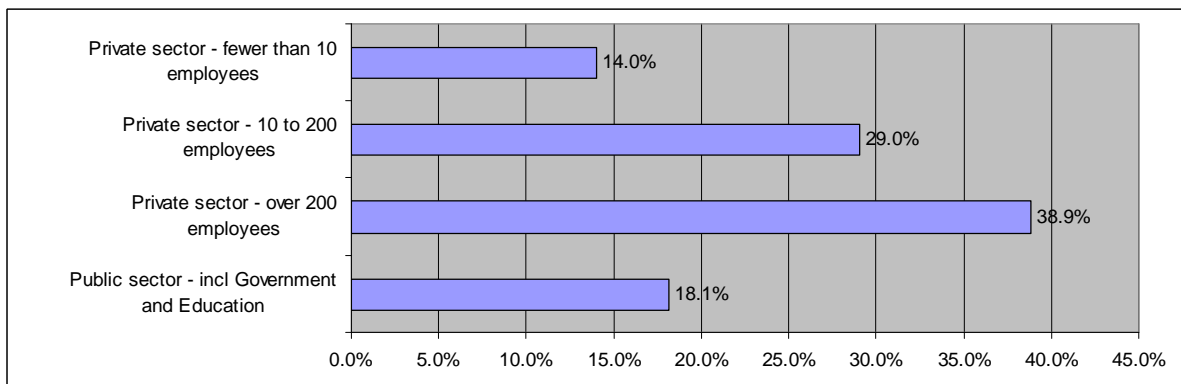


According to our respondents the boss is much less likely to look outside for new ideas than they are (24% versus 43%). Most people think the boss would ask the department for ideas (47%) or try their own ideas (23%).

Other answers included:

- Discuss with close colleagues
- Keep on keeping on
- Bring in external consultants
- Address the problem to the entire company and take suggestions from as many people as possible
- ignore for as long as possible
- Delegate the blame!

9. Is the organization you work in?



10. What things are preventing new ideas being adopted in your organisation?

The most common comments were:

- Time
- Resistance to change
- Resources/Budget/Money
- Fear of Failure
- No incentives
- The boss
- Inertia
- Culture
- Leadership
- Lack of communication
- Feeling that no-one would listen
- Risk aversion

Other comments included:

- Too much ego in play when ideas are discussed
- Not asking creative thinkers
- Hierarchies
- Focus on making the existing business work
- Public sector stagnation
- Legal
- Fear of rejection
- Established thought patterns
- Career consciousness
- Lethargy
- Lack of ideas
- Too many ideas
- Lack of strategy
- No clear focus
- Self interest
- Organization Structure
- No experience
- Complacency
- Low morale
- Poor accountability
- Preconceptions
- External constraints
- Prefer status quo
- Technology
- Staff too old
- Management attitude
- Middle Management
- Change Overload
- Mud-bound client base
- Silos
- We are too successful
- Sarcasm
- No permission
- No chain for ideas
- 'Not invented here'
- Staff preserving existing hierarchies