

# Case Study



## VCW

*Open Innovation in the Chemical Industry with HYPE GO!*



# Open Innovation in the Chemical Industry with HYPE GO!



## Organisation

- VCW is an independent subdivision of the German Chemical Society
- Covers topics relevant for natural sciences and economics
- Members are coming from leading companies such as BASF, Evonik, Merck, Dow Corning, Bayer, Swarovski, Pyrolyx, and many more

## Challenge

- Define the term "Social Chemistry"
- Find ways to improve cooperation between companies and academia
- Make use of the benefits of social media also in chemical industry
- Bring representatives from chemistry and economics together for an exchange of thoughts and ideas

## Outcome

- Launch of an industry-wide open innovation platform
- Broad spectrum of participants from the chemical sector: academia, scientific institutions, industry, topic related consultancies, and freelance professionals
- High level of engagement
- Delivery of valuable insights and ideas for discussion at VCW conference
- Realistic scenario for collaborative online innovation with a social media platform

## Background

Founded in 1999, the Association for Chemistry and Economics (VCW) is an independent section of the German Chemical Society (GDCh) which counts more than 30.000 members. VCW fosters exchange between natural sciences, especially chemistry, and economics. One of the association's main objectives is the formation of an international chemical business network which allows closer collaboration between chemists, scientists, and engineers, as well as other chemistry related professionals. The VCW autumn conference 2013 was dedicated to social media use in the chemistry sector. VCW wanted to discuss with its members the opportunities and challenges of integrating and promoting online collaboration tools and crowdsourcing initiatives for internal as well as for cross-company cooperation.

In preparation of the conference, the VCW team decided to set up a social media platform focusing on two goals: Firstly, to allow members and associated enterprises to discuss thoughts and ideas on this topic online prior to the event and, secondly, to give them the opportunity to gather first-hand experiences with such a tool. The results were to be presented at the autumn conference.

## Solution

One of the main requirements for an appropriate platform was a quick deployment, low maintenance, and an attractive, self-explanatory user interface that doesn't scare off non-tech-savvy users. With that in mind, VCW came across HYPE GO! during their market research. HYPE GO! combines the benefits of social media elements with campaign-based idea management. During a one week trial period, the VCW team realized that the platform perfectly matched the defined requirements and was immediately convinced.

HYPE GO! is a software-as-a-service solution. Therefore, the platform could be set up by VCW instantly. Despite being new to the field of idea management and without any experience with running idea campaigns so far, the wizards, tools, and help texts, which offer assistance and guidance during setup and deployment of the campaign, proved to be very valuable.

## Details of the program

In accordance with the name and topic of the VCW conference in November 2013, the campaign was named "Social Chemistry - Social Media in the Chemical Industry". The important role of the campaign sponsor which is the official face behind the campaign was given to Prof. Dr. Thomas Beißwenger, VCW president and former in-house consultant at Evonik Industries. Members of the VCW organization as well as



academia, experts, and companies in the chemical sector were invited to share and discuss ideas.

The GO! platform allowed the campaign participants not only to submit and read other's ideas, but also to comment these, vote for them or directly share them with others via e-mail. Reports on the overall platform activity helped the moderators to keep track of the engagement level, and undertake actions to increase it e.g. by sending motivational notifications that spur creativity. Furthermore, to fuel the discussion and enrichment of the submitted ideas, moderators asked questions and requested the contributors to elaborate more on certain aspects. On the start page, every user could follow the latest ideas, comments, and messages from the moderators in the activity stream.

The official idea submission phase lasted for five weeks. After the submission phase had ended, the eleven jury members were supposed to evaluate their list of ideas against four criteria: originality, applicability, feasibility, and elaboration of the idea. The top three ideas were rewarded with tablet computers and book vouchers, sponsored by Evonik Industries, and presented by the idea contributors themselves to senior managers from the chemical industry at the VCW conference 2013.

## Outcome

The open innovation platform attracted around 140 people, mainly with corporate and academic backgrounds and expertise not only in chemistry but also in social media, web technologies and innovation. For five weeks, participants submitted, enriched, and discussed ideas on how social media could be used more effectively in the industry. Even several weeks after the official end of the campaign, some ideas were still eagerly discussed and developed further.

VCW is very satisfied with its experiment of launching an idea campaign prior to their conference. The expected number of participants was met, whereas the number of ideas exceeded expectations with a submission rate of over 20% and nearly three comments per idea in average.

Overall, the idea campaign fulfilled two goals: First, it delivered a lot of impulses and ideas on the use of social media tools in the industry. This was valuable input for the participating organizations to be picked up, refined, and implemented in a next step or to serve for entrepreneurs as a new business idea. Second, since the HYPE GO! platform is a special purpose social media tool itself, it allowed the members to try out such a tool directly. Therefore, it's not surprising that some, including one of the winning ideas, suggested to provide employees, customers, academia, and other chemistry experts with such an innovation platform for collecting chemistry-specific problems and developing appropriate solutions collaboratively.



*Prof. Dr. Thomas Beißwenger,  
sponsor of the idea campaign*

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***“Our idea campaign was a success: The HYPE GO! platform was really easy to set up and deploy and it was very well received by the community. We got a lot of valuable input and look forward to see the most promising ideas implemented in the industry.”***

*Prof. Dr. Thomas Beißwenger*

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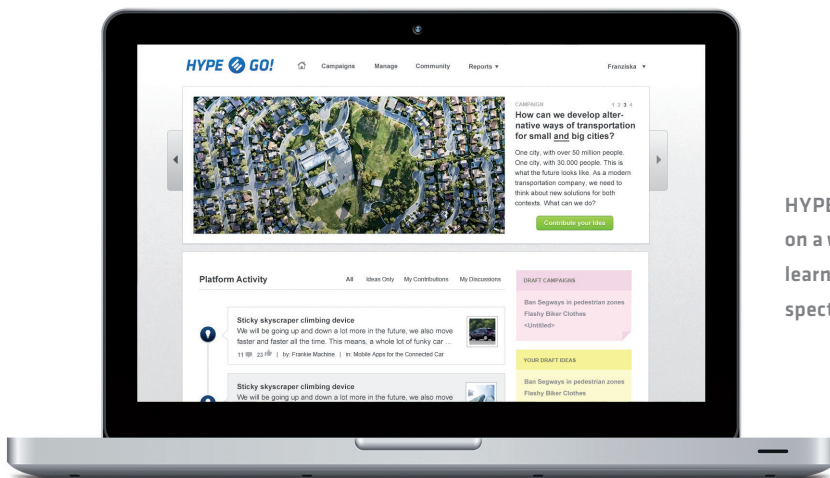
# Open Innovation in the Chemical Industry with HYPE GO!

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Visit our website at [www.hypeinnovation.com](http://www.hypeinnovation.com) to learn more.



HYPE GO! is an on-demand SaaS solution that focuses on a workflow of campaigns and ideas. If you want to learn about our other product's features for the whole spectrum of innovation, please get in touch with us.



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