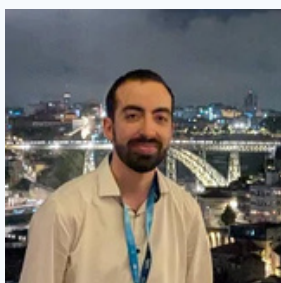


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**LOÏC VOISIN
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EXPLORATORY
ORGANIZATIONS:
GAINING SUPPORT
THROUGH
MULTI-PITCHING

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Pitching ideas is an essential part of innovators' jobs in large corporations. They must convince decisions-makers to provide support, resources and validation to their projects – and research on pitching suggests that they do so essentially by reducing perceived uncertainty. This strategy, however, is counterproductive when the project is highly exploratory. A different approach is needed. In this paper, we study exploratory organizations, i.e. organizational subunits that are granted some autonomy to explore ideas irrelative to mainstream R&D formal processes and goals. Based on 15 months of field observations in a major French automotive manufacturer, we look at how the leaders of exploration units handle the challenge of promoting innovation with other tools than uncertainty reduction. We find that they create unique forms of pitching visits, meant to generate curiosity and eventually take key stakeholders to embrace uncertainty. We document these practices using notes from months of in-situ observations, discussions with several actors, and internal documents. We identify a series of practices that, instead of trying to affect decision-makers' evaluations, focus more fundamentally on altering their evaluation criteria. This results in a switch from an economic mindset to an exploratory mindset. Those preliminary findings constitute a first step towards enlarging the theorizing of pitching beyond single ideas and extend it to the promotion of exploration activities at large.