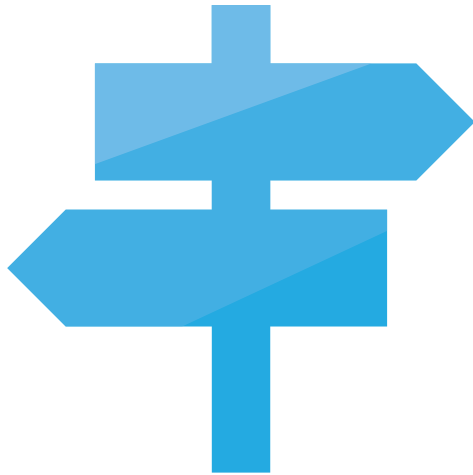


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How to Get the Most from Your Innovation Software: Key Process Considerations

The role of software & process in collaborative innovation

As organizations use software applications to help identify and develop new ideas, find a broader range of views, insights and knowledge for their innovation programs, common questions arise:

- How will software help?
- What actions are needed to ensure the software is used correctly and delivers value?

One way to answer these questions is to consider the experiences of others. We can consider where software has helped an organization and where effort beyond the software has been required to ensure a successful program. The following observations are most commonly observed our clients:

How has software been helpful?

1. **...it increased the visibility of the innovation process** – employees can now see where their ideas are in the innovation pipeline, what people think of them and the next steps. This fosters greater belief in the process and therefore encourages further participation.
2. **...it increased the reach of the innovation program** – employees and third parties can now participate wherever they are in the world and no matter the time zone in which they work. No longer does innovation entirely depend on putting people in the same room.
3. **...the program is now inclusive of those *without* new ideas** – employees whose natural skills are to help improve or critique the ideas of others can now be included in the discussion. This helps improve the quality of good ideas earlier in the process and rule out those that are too weak more quickly.

4. **...it increased the control of the innovation discussion** –The organization can now track who has participated in the innovation process and when. This can help with those ideas related to IP and third parties, while also helping to discover individuals with useful and perhaps hidden knowledge and creative input.
5. **...it offered the ability to manage scale** – Practitioners can now manage many more insights and ideas using automated tools. This brings the additional benefit of being able to identify related ideas and people with common skills or interests thus increasing the levels of connectivity between employees that would never normally work together. The software tool also provides a new repository of ideas that can be executed when conditions allow.

These observations offer a great insight into how software can help, but clearly it isn't the complete picture; the following helps demonstrate other critical aspects of successful programs.

What actions are needed to ensure the software is used correctly and delivers value?

1. **Create awareness** – unless the organization understands the purpose and value of being involved and sharing their ideas and views, employees will focus on their normal day-to-day business activities. It's critical that everyone understands what the company is trying to achieve, why and how they should participate.
2. **Match ambition to cultural readiness** – every organization is different, its combination of cultures and skill sets make it unique. Some employees will be excited to get involved in corporate innovation; others may be skeptical. It's necessary to match the ambition of the program to the current culture – if you push too hard or too fast, the risk is no-one will participate. Programs that show lack of ambition in the program may be equally discouraging for those with real innovations to share.

3. **Align to existing initiatives** – Any corporate program needs to show alignment to other things, for example, its relationship to R&D or in other circumstances – continuous improvement, where employees may also be asked to share ideas. It's key to ensure that employees understand where enterprise innovation fits to the business.
4. **Ensure sponsorship is in place** – Each innovation activity needs a sponsor with a mandate to take action on the best ideas. Creating ideas without someone pre-assigned to take action tends to lead to slower processing, lower participation (as employees are unsure what will happen next) and ideas without a home.
5. **Build a communications plan** – Lack of communication is the quickest way to kill an established program. Employees don't like waiting for years to hear about progress and which ideas will be adopted, so regular communication is crucial. It's also important to keep those that are yet to participate 'in the loop' so they build belief in the program and join in when the time is right.
6. **Share success stories** – Success in one area of your business will breed confidence and enthusiasm in other areas of the business. In large or complex companies, its best to find areas where you can be successful and then share those with the rest of the company. Greater numbers of sponsors will come forward, participation will go up and innovation will increase.

Summary

Software clearly brings many key benefits to any program and enables mass collaboration that's impossible to achieve in any other way, however it only goes so far. Software does not ensure employees will participate and produce greater levels of innovation. There are some key process considerations that should be adopted in line with any new innovation tools that will help encourage participation, breed greater levels of management support and deliver increasing value over time. When establishing a new collaborative innovation program, ensure you invest time into HYPE's top 5 process actions.



**Using Communications
to Drive Innovation -
How to Develop
an Engaging and
Sustainable Program**

Promotion and engagement

Enterprise innovation has one main goal – developing business value. There are many different elements that support that goal, but one of the most crucial is communications. As mentioned in the previous article, software has a key role to play, but it doesn't guarantee employee participation or value to the business, we need to think more widely to address these needs.

Communications initiatives have many elements, the two most critical phases these elements need to support are as follows:

- **Promoting the innovation program** – key for new programs and those with new participants.
- **Keeping and growing levels of engagement** – vital to building belief and confidence in your innovation activities.

Key activities for new programs

1. **Create a buzz** – You need to entice and excite your potential audience. Advertising comes in many flavors and you need to make sure the enterprise innovation program stands out. Consider viral videos, flyers on desk, novelty giveaways as-well as more traditional posters, intranet marketing and emails.
2. **Inform & educate** – Many invitees will want to understand more about what innovation means, what's being asked of them and how to participate online. Consider webinars, town hall meetings, brochures, or videos that show how to join in and help.
3. **Demonstrate the corporate mandate** – Invitees need to be aware that senior management encourage and want them to participate. Many won't be prepared to take time out of the day-job without explicit permission from a credible senior sponsor.

4. **Advertise progress** – Many invitees may wait and watch to see how people participate and what's achieved. Issue information at the end of every innovation activity (such as an idea campaign) what the next steps will be and who owns major actions. Remember to include everyone that was invited whether they participated or not.
5. **Recognize everyone that helps** – It's not just submitters of insights and ideas that should be recognized, consider those that build and improve the ideas of others, those that identify issues and those that provide a practical perspective. Each helps build an idea into a workable concept and should be recognized as having helped develop something new.

Not everyone will participate on day one, but these five recommendations will help develop the momentum from which you can build.

Building belief and confidence

6. **Issue regular success stories** – On a quarterly basis issue a program update to the entire enterprise, highlight progress and implemented ideas. Not only does this help keep those that have participated enthusiastic, but also shows demonstrates the program delivers value to those who are yet to join-in.
7. **Keep marketing your program** – Every organization will have a natural attrition rate, people will leave and new joiners will arrive. In addition, you may acquire other companies or be subject to a merger. This increases the potential for innovation, as greater numbers of diverse opinions arrive and they'll want to understand how to take part. Consider how to raise their awareness and demonstrate how to get involved.
8. **Monitor and share details from older projects** – Innovation doesn't happen overnight, so maintain contact with those running innovation projects to which the program has contributed. Include any major developments in

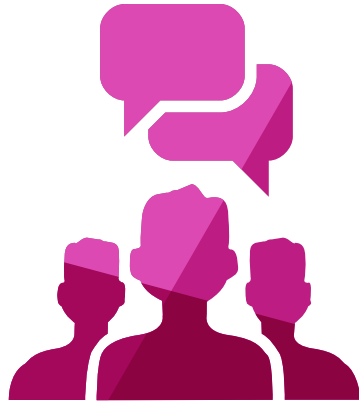
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9. **Seek out the non-engaged** – Consider who is participating and who is not; there will always be pockets of the organization that take longer to get engaged. Consider surveying the non-engaged and ask whether they've heard of the program and whether they'd like to get involved.
10. **Rigorous feedback and review** – Ensure every innovation initiative provides feedback to invitees at the end of the campaign or idea theme phase. Nothing slows momentum more than lack of feedback. Of course, to offer good feedback, ideas and concepts must be evaluated and judgments made. Ensure review teams and time is allocated in advance of any innovation initiative.

Summary

The highest performing programs rigorously focus on communications, marketing the program, showing value, keeping people engaged and growing the audience over time. Don't be frightened to reshape your plans depending on what you learn from feedback and participation.

Remember that the innovation themes and sponsors also help motivate the invitees to participate, but effective communications can ensure everyone hears about the program and believes in it.



**How to Encourage
Collaboration across
the Enterprise -
Diverse Opinion is the
Key to Innovation**

The importance of collaboration

The value of inter-employee collaboration can be best observed when looking at a new product, service, or perhaps process and then tracing back how it found a path to implementation. In-fact, consider anything that's new and look carefully at the journey it took. Now compare the final product with the initial idea that inspired it; was there a business case or an implementation plan? Was it a fully rounded concept and tested at that stage? Of course that would be very unusual, indeed it's been through a series of steps to get there.

What you discover is that this initial idea has been: developed, criticized, improved, tested, and refined. Consider how each of those steps occurred and you'll understand that it took a series of interventions from either the idea originator or others to get the product where it is today. Collaboration has happened and we didn't even think about it. At each step, someone with a different perspective intervened and helped move the idea forward, and in some cases, backwards before it could go forward again.

This is a process we're used to. People have different strengths and help in different ways. In an online world, we need to find ways to encourage those same behaviors at the front end of the process.

Why don't organizations collaborate better online?

1. **Focus is on the most creative types** – Those perceived as innovators often win the prize, they're the ones held up as role models and winners. Often our programs are badged 'innovation' and therefore attract those that consider themselves most creative above all others.
2. **Collaboration is not recognized as a helpful behavior** –We unwittingly reinforce the message that those with new ideas are the people we care about most by publically recognizing or rewarding the person with the initial idea.

3. **Little empathy for those that 'help'** – If you've helped to make an idea better but then didn't receive any recognition, you're unlikely to feel the program really values your efforts. Indeed this may mean that you won't help again or perhaps with a little less gusto than you may have previously.
4. **We don't show people what 'good' collaboration looks like** – Where are the examples of what a good 'helper' could do, how can they add to the process? Many online programs are full of individual ideas and comments that say 'great idea!', this simply reinforces the perception that 'adding value' will come later, there's no need to get involved unless you have a great idea of your own.
5. **Too much content** – Broad or vague campaign questions to engaged audiences often lead to a lot of diverse content, it's hard to wade through, it all looking for where you can improve ideas that are most engaging to you. In fact, it takes far more time than submitting an idea of your own to read through others, so a busy employee group will quickly get drawn into other things.

Key activities to boost collaboration between employees:

1. **Request the behaviors you want to see** – When launching a program, issuing a campaign or inviting people to share ideas, put equal weight on the request for people to help each other and look to make existing content better.
2. **Show people what to do** – Never invite people to submit content unless you have example ideas and comments included already, this shows early visitors what a 'good' comment looks like and helps encourage more and higher quality commenting in general. For example, a good comment could improve an idea, constructively questioning a weak point, or inviting those with expert knowledge to comment on specific aspect of the idea.
3. **Engineer the right behaviors by live intervention** – Foster the support of 'community volunteers', a close network of innovation advocates that look at submitted content every day and ask questions, connect people and demonstrate all the behaviors you wish to see from the wider audience.

4. **Organize your content** – A large mass of uncategorized ideas makes it very difficult for others to find content that's of interesting to them. Encourage idea tagging and for invitees to subscribe to content they like the best and link similar ideas so invitees can browse more easily.
5. **Recognize those that add value** – When taking an idea forward, ensure you recognize and thank all of those that have helped get it to its current position. Make that recognition public where appropriate so that other invitees see it's a team game.
6. **Encourage peer-to-peer idea referral** - Encourage idea submitters to actively engage their peers for commenting by demanding a minimum number of comments before an idea moves forward to the next stage.

Summary

We know the value of collaboration in traditional innovation activities, but systemizing the process helps to increase the diversity of opinion available early on in the process. If harnessed correctly, this will improve the quality of the funnel and save time later on as those with issues or concerns may have them addressed during the ideation phase.

Value those that comment and recognize the team of people that contribute to an idea. Show them how they can add value to other ideas, and reinforce in your communications that collaboration has value whilst the company changes the way it collaborates.



How to Increase Engagement in Enterprise Innovation and Develop a Sustainable Program

How can engagement be measured?

At HYPE we're regularly asked what to expect in terms of participation, numbers of ideas shared and what benchmarks to set when engaging large groups online on innovation initiatives. Every organization is different, has a different culture, structure and set of objectives. These nuances will affect expectations even before you've addressed the focus of the innovation program.

What's more helpful is to judge key indicators over time and monitor how five categories of employee engagement change. The five categories are:

Innovation enthusiasts

Engage in almost every innovation campaign, happy to play a part in moving the company forward.

The engaged

Those that are aware, support and participate in the innovation program when required or when appropriate to their role and skill set.

The watchers

Those aware of the program, but yet to participate. They may be cautious about taking part until they've seen real value and outcomes from the program.

The unaware

Those that are yet to understand the innovation program and their role within it. They may require further marketing effort or briefings to understand how and why to get involved.

Innovation skeptics

Those that are aware, yet won't engage in the program due to lack of belief in the program, a history of innovation failures causing disillusionment.

Each organization will measure the number of employees in each category differently depending on the pace of the program, the level of marketing and communications that's been undertaken and the historical factors. Considering standard participation metrics in addition to the levels in each group help you to monitor engagement levels and adjust your approach accordingly. For example, if a large portion of employees are 'unaware' of the enterprise program, one of your main tasks will be to market the approach and raise awareness.

Key blockers to engagement growth:

1. **Sponsorship without commitment** – Bad innovation sponsors can ‘spoil the well’ for the rest of the organization. Lack of feedback, action on next steps, or engagement in the process as a whole is sure to disengage some and create apathy in others.
2. **Lack of middle management support** – The day job often gets in the way of participation, this is normal, but perhaps some middle managers are so focused on the day job, their teams don’t feel supported in taking some time out to help others.
3. **Lack of trust in colleagues** – If invitees witness the ideas of some being treated less than respectfully, perhaps dismissed without any constructive comment, this can cause others to fear putting their idea forward.
4. **Lack of transparency and recognition** – Nothing slows participation down faster than a feeling your ideas have disappeared down a black hole; everyone likes to see how their ideas are progressing. Ensuring the whole process is transparent enables peer recognition; employees become witnesses to the success of innovation activities.
5. **Lack of variety in the innovation topics** – Some programs are focused clearly on one area of the business, often that’s product or service innovation. If all you ask for is one type of innovation, people can simply run out of ideas for the same set of questions and challenges.

It may be tempting to blame one area for stagnant or falling levels of engagement, but consider all five areas to ensure the program is as strong as possible in each.

Key activities to build engagement:

1. **Choose sponsors carefully** – Good sponsors take action once they have great ideas they can put into practice. They participate in idea campaigns and choose good review teams. They’re usually focused individuals, aware of exactly what they want and what they don’t want. Look for those that have a reputation for ‘getting things done’ and those in senior positions that command the respect of others.

2. **Check for pockets of non-participation** – Every company has groups that participate more than others, consider those that seem out of step with the rest and find out what local factors affect that group. Perhaps their VP doesn't believe in it, or perhaps they don't feel connected to the current range of innovation initiatives. Consider what types of innovation campaign could engage those groups and their local management; where possible align tactical needs of local middle management.
3. **Ensure participants are adhering to constructive behaviors**– Active moderation helps set expectations for all on what behaviors you'd like to see and which are detrimental to the process. Constructive feedback should always be welcomed, however dismissing an idea completely doesn't help the submitter or others to improve an idea that may not make an initial assessment.
4. **High-quality feedback** – All submitted ideas, insights and innovations deserve feedback. If you have too many ideas to offer individual feedback, consider a range of standard responses to fit common reasons to reject a contribution. For example: 'Your idea was good, but we only had budget to implement a few, so I'm going to save the rest and consider them again in 6 months.'
5. **Innovate everything** – Innovate every area of your business. Remember that many things have value to your company, including process improvement, cost reduction and sharing best practices in addition to more traditional product and service innovation. Campaigns on these topics will pull in a much wider group of potential innovators and keep things fresh and different.

Summary

Maintaining and building high-quality engagement over time should be the focus of all innovation managers as they strive to develop sustainable enterprise programs. Use the data and what you know about your organization to understand what level of engagement exists over time and how many employees you have in each of the engagement categories.

Consider how to mitigate all the reasons why employees may not engage on a regular basis; remember that you're competing for employees time, so it's crucial to show business value and success on a regular basis.



**Making the Right Idea
Investment Choices -
Idea Evaluation at Scale**

Idea evaluation

Your initial assessment of ideas generated from an idea campaign or on-going ideation process is the first and arguably the most important gate an idea will pass through. Despite best intentions, ideas dismissed at this stage are rarely considered again if they don't make the cut, so selecting the best few for further consideration and ultimately implementation is crucial.

Innovation programs take many forms, sometimes ideas are created on small tactical needs, sometimes in-line with the company vision, and from time to time, you may receive many more ideas than you were expecting. Perhaps it's because asked a question relevant to a large group of people, or the topic of the subject of the campaign really is in an exciting area. All ideas need to be processed effectively to ensure continued engagement of participants and sustainability of the program.

Key challenges:

1. **More ideas than expected** – It's always recommended to agree review team members in advance of the campaign and ensure time is allocated in their diaries, however this means making a judgment on how many ideas you'll receive. The more expected, the more reviewers will be required.
2. **Availability of good evaluators** – Sponsors nominate suitable evaluators in advance, ideally those that understand the scope of the challenge most closely and have time available to consider ideas. Often it can be difficult to get time allocated, especially for the review team to meet and talk through submitted content.
3. **It's not just about the idea** – Review team members need to consider all comments against an idea, not just the idea itself. Often the initial idea is far from the final implemented concept and it could be comments that help take it in a new direction or make an idea practical. This of course takes more time, so campaigns with a lot of collaboration require more evaluation time.
4. **Parallel ideation campaigns** –If you work for a complex multi-national organization, parallel campaigns may be asked in different languages, so you need to provide an evaluation team for each language and then build into knowledge transfer or translation into the program to share the best ideas from each community.

5. **Evaluators are too slow** – Evaluations completed alone can often take far longer than when review team members meet in person, waiting for one or more to complete all the reviews allocated to them can be a slow and frustrating process for all.
6. **Avoiding group think** –Facilitating review team members to meet in person can help speed up the process, but the risk is the discussion is dominated by one opinion and propagate 'group-think'.

Tactics to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of your evaluation teams:

1. **Ask better questions** – The best way to avoid very large numbers of ideas is to ask a more specific question, perhaps sharing more detail on the evaluation criteria to reduce the number of ideas submitted that won't make the grade.
2. **Use the community view** – Set thresholds for ideas to be evaluated based upon interaction from the community. Ask the invitees to seek a number of comments that build and improve on the idea before it will be evaluated. Not only does this improve engagement and idea quality, it helps to ensure the evaluation team members spend their time on the most engaging ideas.
3. **Triage average and poor ideas out** – Ask each reviewer to vote for ideas they wish to consider in more detail, take the majority opinion on which ideas to keep for detailed evaluation. This should remove 50% - 80% of the content depending on the nature of the campaign.
4. **Pre-define some standard responses** – Remember that all ideas should receive feedback to ensure submitters aren't disillusioned with the process. Consider the likely reasons for non-selection and offer standardized feedback to ideas that sit in each category of non-selection. For example: 'Your idea is good, but we don't have enough resources available to implement it at this time...'

5. **Use the most time on the best ideas** –Once ideas have been triaged down, decide if every reviewer should look at each idea and associated comments or each idea could be considered by 3 different reviewers. It may depend on how much content you have to consider, look to maximize the efficiency of the team and its skills.
6. **Allow wildcards** – In order to mitigate any ‘group-think’ that may arise due to evaluation discussions between team members, allow each individual a small number of wild cards for ideas they feel passionately about.
7. **Decentralize the evaluation process** – For very large, or multi-national programs, consider having one team per department or country to look at both local and global impact of an idea, the best ones are promoted to a centralized team for wider implementation.

Summary

The best way to ensure an efficient and effective evaluation process is to think about it before running the campaign, ensure the question will steer people towards quality not quantity, select evaluation team members and allocate time in their schedules after the campaign is finished.

Use pre-selection filters such as the community view and a quick vote-based triage to remove ideas that simply won't make the grade; this will help ensure your team spends their time on only the best content.

Finally, review all the comments and make a quality based assessment, allowing evaluation team members to promote a small number of ideas which lack wider support to minimize group think and allow more radical content to filter through.

Capture ideas, engage with your community, evaluate and process top ideas, generate meaningful results, and drive sustainable, scalable innovation with HYPE

Our Professional Services Team

HYPE's professional service team has worked for over 13 years across the globe, implementing innovation software and advising on processes. Working closely with our clients, our consultants developed deep knowledge about the individual facets, but also about commonalities of the most diverse innovation initiatives. For us, it is a core value and a real differentiator to treat our clients as business partners, and to turn their challenges into our own.

Our Full-Lifecycle Innovation Management Platform

HYPE's approach to innovation management is simple: we provide built-in innovation software features which are flexible enough to map to your company's innovation strategy. Our customer-centric software is designed so innovation managers can easily and quickly create and manage campaigns. The innovation portal is engaging, easy for users, and design-friendly. And best of all, our platform is built to scale across your company and integrate with back-office applications and social enterprise software like IBM Connections, Microsoft SharePoint™, Yammer, and Jive. The result? A full-lifecycle innovation platform which powers all of your innovation program and reaches all of your communities.



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MISSION STATEMENT

Please join our Innovation Program!

Welcome to the Innovation Hub. This is our corporate home for online collaboration, focused around innovation topics. Throughout the year we will be running campaigns that help us deliver better results against our strategic goals. This company has a rich history in innovation and I firmly believe that the more employees we can engage in our innovation activities, the stronger we will be. Be inspired, and join the initiatives at the Innovation Hub.

Andy Hartzfeld, CEO

HYPE Enterprise – Innovation Management Software

HYPE and Your Company – How to get started?

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HYPE: Full-Lifecycle Innovation Software – From Idea to Market

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Visit our website at www.hypeinnovation.com to learn how HYPE enables companies to transform their best assets – employees, clients, partners, and suppliers – into dynamic and engaged innovation communities.



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