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7 MUST-HAVES FOR BIG RETURNS ON YOUR INNOVATION INVESTMENT

There are dozens of front-end software tools that help facilitate idea-collection, but that's where most of them stop. After the initial front-end flurry of ideas and excitement subside, management of ideas can veer off track, become opaque, and regress to an ad hoc evaluation process managed in email and spreadsheets. This is a common occurrence for companies that have tried to build homegrown "innovation portals" with general-purpose tools like SharePoint. Without a structured and flexible end-to-end evaluation process, these tools inevitably fail to move the innovation needle.

Using innovation management software that harnesses crowd insights and tools to prioritize ideas that have been collected, you can quickly transform ideas into something meaningful and actionable. With this approach, ideas are first captured, sorted, and logged. Then collaboration on ideas continues with individuals, subject matter experts (SMEs), and groups across geographical and organizational boundaries. The result is a unique space for idea development and management that leads to shortlisting, selection, and implementation.

A helpful way to look at the process of gathering ideas and moving them into execution is to think about it into two distinct phases: planning and execution. Across those two phases, adopting the following nine best practices will help you develop and run a successful innovation program.

> **"Generating good ideas, whether from inside or outside of the organization, is only the first step in an innovation pipeline that extends from ideation, through evaluation and prototyping, to commercialization."**
> **—Chip Gliedman**
> VP and Principal Analyst, Forrester Research

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Secure Buy-In and Financial Commitment from Your Stakeholders

Aligning with your key stakeholders and getting their buy-in is critical to growing a successful innovation program. Two proven methods for securing stakeholder buy-in are:

1. "Sell" an initiative at the department or division level and build momentum up to the CEO level, or

2. Secure C-level support from the onset.

Initial momentum is key to ensuring sustained participation. Start early with a robust marketing plan that identifies the target audience, uses all channels of communication, and drives an early user base that will participate and continue to grow.

Identify influencers across business functions to help advocate for your program throughout the company. Producing a launch event can also help spread the word and build excitement.

"Brightidea was the best choice for CLP. They are the top in their field of innovation management."
—Joe Locandro
    CIO, China Light and Power

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# Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: China Light and Power

China Light and Power (CLP) is a leading power provider in the Asia-Pacific region. CLP operates in extremely competitive, diverse markets and sought to improve the company's efficiency, utilize the latest technologies, and harness the collective knowledge of its employees.

Sponsorship of the Innov8 program started from the top as Joe Locandro, CIO at CLP, drove the development and implementation of a vibrant innovation program. The first campaign solicited employee suggestions on improving the desktop computing experience and included senior management support for this initiative to help drive adoption. Locandro personally announced the NGW idea campaign to all the IT employees. The platform then rolled out to the entire organization with more than 60% of employees participating in different campaigns.

Innovation Program Management Success at CLP:

- *$700,000 in ROI from innovation program*

- *Gradual rollout from IT to entire company*

- *First 10 campaigns:*
    - *750+ ideas*
    - *3,600+ votes*

- *Active participation of 2,000+ employees*

- *Public recognition as an innovation leader*
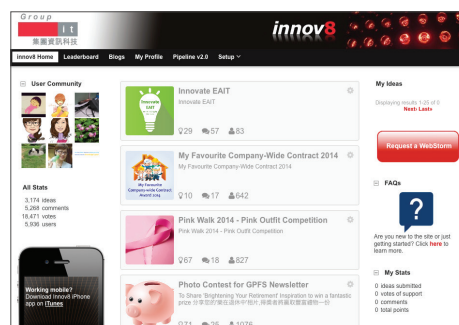
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## Support Your Processes with Innovation Program Management Software

Make innovation program management software work for you. Align your business processes with software to ensure innovation is managed end to end—from ideation to review, then to score carding and stack ranking, and into proposal and through to execution.

Depending on your use case—new products, cost savings, process improvements, customer insights, or general ideation—integrating the flow of ideas with the business process can streamline and automate the ideation process, allowing more focus on finding and developing the best ideas.

> **"The Brightidea platform has powered better management and prioritization of ideas for Nielsen."**
> **—Stephanie Hegarty**
> Innovation Manager, Nielsen
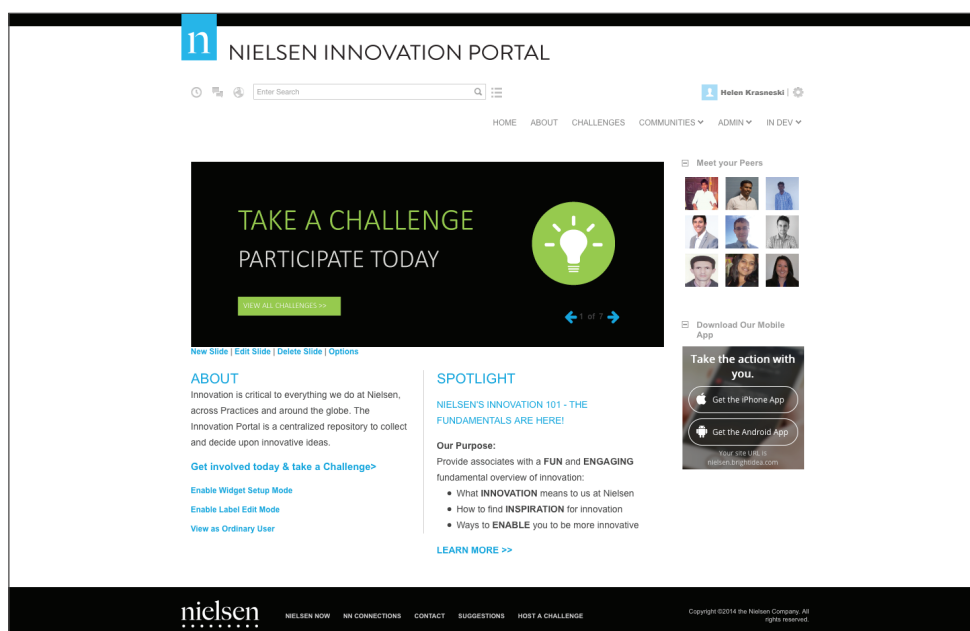
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Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: Nielsen

The Nielsen Company provides market intelligence worldwide in consumer information, television, media and mobile measurement, trade shows, and related properties. With a presence in 100 countries and 36,000 employees, Nielsen knows that innovation is key to success; however, they required a better process to effectively triage ideas, prioritize, and roadmap innovations.

Nielsen approached Brightidea to align its flexible and customizable platform with an innovation program process that included the support of a dedicated and centralized innovation team. The team of three innovation program managers provided business unit stakeholders the "highway" to drive innovation best practices, guidelines, tools, and direction on how to run an optimal program.

The company ran a series of 15-20 innovation "challenges" at any given time in specific categories across all business units. Using this model, the business unit stakeholder was able to easily create challenges through a systemized process; this allowed Nielsen to gather and manage ideas from employees, customers, and other resources all within the Brightidea platform.

The outcome for Nielsen was better management and prioritization of ideas. Program adoption grew tremendously over several years and produced more than 500 highly qualified idea submissions per quarter —ideas that are detailed and results-focused.

nielsen

Innovation Program Management Success at Nielsen:

- *Ran a series of 10-15 "challenges" at any given time in specific categories across all business units*

- *Sourced 500+ highly qualified idea submissions per quarter that are detailed and results-focused*

- *Millions of documented hours saved across the organization thanks to the "Cycle Time" innovation challenge*

3 Define Your Goals and Define Success

Select goals that are quantifiable and can be tracked objectively over time.

For example, if your company wants to see financial ROI for new products and services submitted through an innovation management program, the process and metrics used to track success are straightforward. A company should consider long- and short-term goals for the different stages in the innovation program process. Short-term goals could be reaching a certain number of active users or a number of ideas, but whatever metric is chosen, it should remain static. As your community matures, your focus will shift to include participation quality (e.g., number of ideas that turned into a proposal, number of ideas that were executed, etc.), new revenue sourced, or revenue generated from executed ideas.

"A single new technology idea that was posted to the i-Zone and went through our evaluation process is now about to go to market with multi-million-dollar revenue potential in the next 3 years."

—Matt Asman
Innovation Manager, Cisco

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Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: Cisco

Cisco Systems is a worldwide networking, electronics, voice, and communications technology provider.

Cisco has always focused on the latest technology innovations. Their fundamental challenge was how to create real business impact in Europe that was measurable and sustainable, as a way to sustain competitive advantage.

Matt Asman, Cisco's European Innovation Manager, sought to build a holistic program for the company that incorporated strategic goals backed by tools that facilitated opportunities for continuous innovation across multiple business functions.

Business goals included better productivity, increased competitive advantage, as well as increasing employee, customer, and partner satisfaction.

Cisco set up its Innovation Europe program as a formal mechanism to explore all the possible sources of innovation in all areas of the business and to harness the creativity of Cisco employees. At the heart of this internal program was the i-Zone, an idea management portal powered by Brightidea.

Innovation Program Management Success at Cisco:

- *400+ ideas*
- *More than 5,000 users*
- *5,000 + comments/votes*
- *10+ ideas under development*
- *1 idea with multi-million-dollar revenue potential*

During its first 15 months, i-Zone generated hundreds of ideas, comments, and community interactions. During one phase of the innovation program, the number of ideas generated through the internal innovation portal increased by nearly 50% and the community grew to nearly 5,000 users.

Cisco's executive leadership team approved 10 of the ideas submitted, which progressed through the system to receive support and investment from the business. Three ideas moved toward implementation, with several in prototype and two expected to create significant revenue potential for the company within 3-5 years.

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4 Maintain Momentum with Employee Engagement

The success of any innovation program is closely tied to the level of employee engagement. Citing a Towers Perrin study, management consultant Gary Hamel noted that only one-fifth of employees are truly engaged in their work and would "go the extra mile" for their employer. The rest ranged from disengaged (38%) to indifferent (41%).

Creating targeted innovation challenges set around solving specific business needs will not only get you the ideas you are looking for, but it will also motivate employees, drive collaboration, and make the evaluation process much easier.

Providing user recognition and feedback will show employees that the company is committed and listening, which will encourage greater participation in the future. Start with a mix of targeted and ongoing challenges. Targeted challenges will build momentum and introduce the innovation process, while ongoing campaigns integrate innovation in the broader employee culture.

More ways to sustain employee engagement:
- Maintain blogs, feeds, and newsletters
- Hold meetings to keep people informed
- Update statuses to show progress
- Highlight successes continually
- Communicate beyond idea submission

> "We are partnering across our enterprise to establish a culture of innovation and engage employees to identify implementable impactful ideas."
>
> —Sabrina Prouty
> Insights Integration Strategic Consultant, Humana

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Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: Humana

Humana Inc. is a leading healthcare company that offers a wide range of insurance products and health and wellness services that incorporate an integrated approach to lifelong well-being. While innovation has always been core to Humana, the advent of healthcare reform accelerated the need to drive more innovation faster.

Humana needed a best-in-class idea management platform to efficiently manage the end-to-end crowdsourcing cycle and reach decisions quickly.

After implementing Brightidea and a shared services model the team was able to act as expert crowdsourcing consultants. They worked across the enterprise to connect everyone to Humana's corporate priorities and strategies through crowdsourcing and collaboration.

Humana's 1DEA program was hugely successful. Using Brightidea Humana created a repeatable crowdsourcing process that scaled across its 35,000 employees. There are more than 20,000 registered users and 4,200 ideas created from 20 challenges since the program's inception.

Innovation Program Management Success at Humana:

- *More than 60% employee participation rate (20,000+ users)*
- *4,200 ideas*
- *20 idea Challenges*
- *Millions of dollars in cost savings identified*

5 Stress the Importance of Idea Evaluation

Idea evaluation is as important as idea collection because the evaluation phase is where most initiatives fail. Track what happens to ideas, train your team to evaluate ideas on an ongoing basis, and introduce the evaluation process early.

After idea collection, innovation program management software uses score carding and stack ranking for initial prioritization. Through the software, information is captured, sorted, and logged for future reference. Meanwhile, collaboration on ideas continues with individuals, subject matter experts, and groups across geographical and organizational boundaries, creating a unique space for idea development and management that can drive implementation of ideas.

"We have significantly increased client satisfaction and added millions of dollars to the bottom line by leveraging the scalability of online support."
—Kim Kelley
Program Manager, CSM, Mentor Graphics

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Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: Mentor Graphics

Every year, Mentor Graphics receives thousands of product improvement requests through its online help desk, "SupportNet First." They realized that these ideas could be extremely valuable, but they had no way to act on them.

Mentor Graphics turned to Brightidea for an innovation program management solution that would collect the flow of incoming improvement requests, and then streamline them for evaluation and implementation. One of the main reasons Mentor Graphics chose Brightidea was functionality that allowed for grouping similar ideas, which showed the company the most popular improvements.

The new system made the evaluation process much easier and more efficient, allowing the Mentor Graphics team to quickly view popular ideas and evaluate them through stack ranking and score carding. Mentor Graphics achieved clear results from its Brightidea deployment: a 45% reduction in call center stats and 78% of customers reporting their problems were solved. The implementation led to higher customer satisfaction, better idea visibility and prioritization, and faster enhancement implementation. enhancement implementation.

Innovation Program Management Success at Mentor Graphics:

- *3,500 ideas, 37,000 votes from 4,500+ users*
- *Increased client satisfaction and retention*
- *45% reduction in call center stats*
- *Better idea visibility & prioritization, faster implementation*
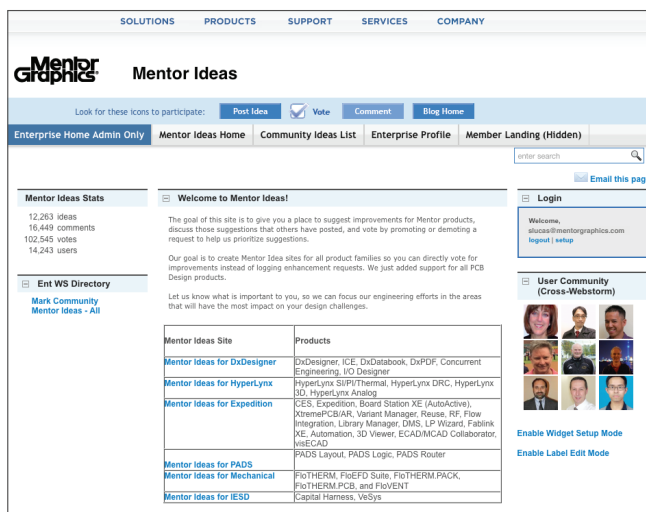
6 Focus on Implementation

Your collaborative innovation program should be designed to take qualified ideas and build them into something actionable within the organization. The complete innovation management lifecycle can be broken down into 4 phases: ideation, evaluation, proposal, and project. However, it is the final stage—the point at which an idea becomes reality—that determines the ROI and overall value of your innovation pipeline. So having the tools to vet, prioritize, and execute on the most promising ideas is critical.

> **"The opportunity to work with smaller companies around the world is big for us; we can now take ideas and plug them into places where they move forward."**
> **—Jeff Immelt**
> CEO, GE

Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: GE

The GE Ecomagination Challenge has been a model of success for open innovation because it demonstrates how essential follow-through and implementation are to achieving success.

Everything about the Ecomagination Challenge was developed to identify breakthrough ideas that could turn into next-generation technologies. Built on Brightidea's innovation management software, the Ecomagination Challenge website offered visitors a dynamic, user-friendly experience with dozens of ways
to participate and stay informed.

The first phase involved looking for ideas to improve the energy grid. The result was the largest open-innovation challenge of all time: 5,000+ ideas, 81,000+ comments, and 120,000+ votes from 70,000 participants around the globe. The 22 winning projects received total funding of $55 million (with $20 million dedicated to a single idea) from GE and its venture capital partners.

Innovation Program Management Success at GE:

- *Launched the largest ever open innovation challenge*

- *Collected 5,000+ ideas from 70,000+ people worldwide through Brightidea's innovation management software*

- *22 funded projects, plus additional grants and $100k awards for future projects*

7 Measure Results

Throughout the lifecycle of an innovation program, continuous reporting and measurement are critical to optimizing performance.

Your first step is to identify the metrics you care most about. Review engagement metrics like active participation, total ideas submitted, or the number of qualified ideas. Distinguishing the number of visitors from participation (comments, votes, etc.) will show you how engaged your users are and where you may need to improve or stimulate participation. Ultimately, you need to be able to track outcomes because, without implemented projects, there is no innovation.

> **"For every $1 invested by BT on our innovation program, we have returned over $75 to the business."**
> —**Steve Healey**
> Head of New Ideas, BT

Metrics may focus on program performance and include the total number of:

- Campaigns run
- Participants
- Ideas collected
- Comments posted
- Votes cast
- Outcomes generated
- Winning ideas
- Rewards distributed

Metrics may be linked to the organization's bottom line and ROI include:

- Outcomes implemented
- Cooperation agreements
- Patents filed
- Field trials run
- New products introduced
- Productivity cost savings
- New markets created
- New revenue generated

Brightidea Customer Success Snapshot: BT

BT Group, one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions, sought to create a corporate culture of innovation. They defined success as the specific financial value of ideas generated and executed over time.

BT established a system that would allow the company to fully harness the collective knowledge of its employees, gather customer insights and efficiently turn the most promising ideas into concrete projects with measurable returns. To do this, BT engaged the Rewards Shop, an incentive structure system. As a top reward, submitters of implemented ideas receive 10% of the idea's bottom-line benefits from the first-year performance up to a maximum of $50,000.

The program outcomes have been nothing short of astonishing. More than 10,000 ideas were submitted and 200 were implemented. Cost savings and new revenue generated exceeded $250 million, and an engaged and involved employee base fulfilled the goal of creating a culture of innovation.

Innovation Program Management Success at BT:

- *Executed more than 60 campaigns.*
- *More than 200 ideas were implemented.*
- *Generated more than $250 million between new revenue and cost savings from ideas sourced.*
- *Returned $75 for every $1 invested in the innovation program*

From securing stakeholder buy-in and establishing goals to aligning your process with management software and measuring outcomes, each component is critical to managing innovations from concept to cash and driving tangible returns on your innovation investment.

Implementing a companywide collaborative innovation management program can effectively capture the collective wisdom of employees, partners, and customers. It can also efficiently manage the identification and implementation of next-generation products and services that lead to a competitive advantage.

But you can't succeed with ad-hoc tools and ill-defined processes. Successful execution requires a defined, proven process and innovation program management software that can function as a system of record for tracking ideas through to implementation while also measuring all aspects of your innovation initiatives. Because without measurement, you can't even begin to calculate a return on your innovation investment.

Choosing the right tools and having the proper expertise to effectively innovate will be a defining factor in a company's ability to survive in today's increasingly complex, competitive business landscape.

> **"By putting formal systems in place to manage innovation, companies can position themselves to seize control of change and become its master rather than its victim."**
> —Accenture

Brightidea is purpose-built innovation management software designed to help you capture, evaluate, select, and implement the best ideas to solve business problems and uncover new opportunities. What's more, Brightidea offers the power and flexibility to tailor that process to your specific needs. Why? Because no two innovation programs are the same. And because your innovation needs today will be different tomorrow. Brightidea is the right partner for your innovation journey.

Our software is the #1 customer-rated platform for managing employee Ideas. It's designed for any size idea or innovation management initiative, has more than 2.5 million users worldwide, and has delivered more than $15 billion in net benefits to date. Engage your employees at scale, collaborate on novel solutions, and foster a culture of innovation within your company. Wherever you are in your innovation journey, our platform and people will help you get to the next level.

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