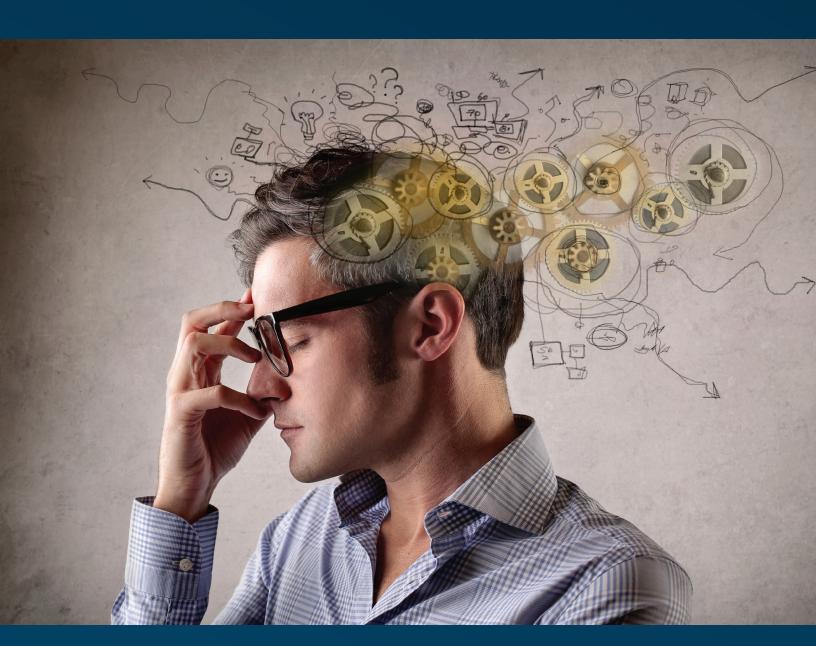
MOVING IDEAS TO REALITY: HOW TO DEFINE THE NEXT STEPS IN YOUR INNOVATION PROGRAM

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After you collect ideas, you need to transition them into actionable projects—make it happen by adopting these 9 best practices



Developing a successful innovation program depends on many factors. At the front end, it's important to have executive buy-in and marketing support to ensure you get the right people to participate. Sourcing ideas is an important first step. But frankly, that's the easy part. What comes after you've collected the ideas is what matters. Because without implementation, ideas remain just ideas.

INNOVATION = IDEAS x EXECUTION

Businesses operate within the margins of execution and use business proposal guidelines to gauge opportunity and manage potential. Proposals outline opportunity and risk, and the ones that make the cut

become funded projects with allocated budgets and resources. New ideas are executed by transitioning rough concepts into actionable projects.

For businesses looking to boost engagement with customers, increase employee collaboration, and improve product development, finding an efficient way to manage a high volume of ideas can be challenging. That challenge becomes increasingly difficult as you go beyond the identification process and work to transition promising ideas into actionable projects. Though this is often the hardest part of innovation management, it is also the most important.

"FOR EVERY \$1 **INVESTED BY BT IN OUR INNOVATION** PROGRAM, WE **HAVE RETURNED OVER \$75 TO THE BUSINESS.**"

-Steve Healey

Most companies get stuck in the post-idea collection phase, creating downstream roadblocks to further implementation of large-scale innovation campaigns. A comprehensive, predetermined process for evaluation along with innovation program management software can automate the process and remove those roadblocks. Once implemented, this approach can streamline the management of hundreds, if not thousands, of ideas so that the best ones turn into actionable projects that move to the execution phase.

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-toend 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.

"TWO RECENT IDEAS **DEVELOPED USING** THE BRIGHTIDEA **PLATFORM WILL GENERATE TENS** OF MILLIONS OF **DOLLARS FOR THE** COMPANY."

-John Jaddou

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.

PLANNING

ESTABLISH A TIMELINE

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Whether a campaign is ongoing or defined by a set start and end date will affect how you plan the evaluation of idea submissions. If the campaign is ongoing, set periodic evaluation dates monthly, weekly, or quarterly depending on volume. If it's a fixed period, then establish the evaluation timeframe to set expectations for your team and the overall community.

ENGAGE YOUR TEAM

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Know which individuals should be involved in the evaluation process before you start. Without knowing that you risk losing the input of stakeholders that can turn those ideas into actionable business projects. How many evaluators will you need? What will you need them to do and for how long? Why do you need them to do it? Be sure to set and effectively communicate those expectations with your core team at the start.

DETERMINE YOUR CRITERIA

Every business has unique criteria to evaluate and measure business potential. Creating scorecards with specific questions aimed to gauge feasibility and likelihood of implementation is a crucial step in the evaluation process. Sometimes it's necessary to go beyond a single scorecard and create multiple scorecards with focused questions specific to the evaluator's role, for example, different scorecards for marketing, legal, and finance.

GAUGE YOUR CAPACITY

Don't overwhelm evaluators with scorecards that are unnecessary or redundant. Experience has shown it takes evaluators on average 5-8 minutes to complete a scorecard. In addition, don't pass every idea along to your evaluation team. The community will help to identify ideas with the most potential, so don't inundate your experts, regardless of how much time you allow for them to review.

SET EXPECTATIONS WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

The wisdom of crowds can be an insightful prioritization method, but it's rarely the sole way to sort ideas that deserve further review. Explain to your community from the outset how ideas will be chosen and, if it is not solely based on top votes, what other considerations or individuals will be involved in the review process, and how long that will take.

These five planning steps will help you think through the detailed process of idea evaluation beforehand so that you can maximize the efficiency and the overall effectiveness of idea evaluation that drives implementation.

EXECUTION

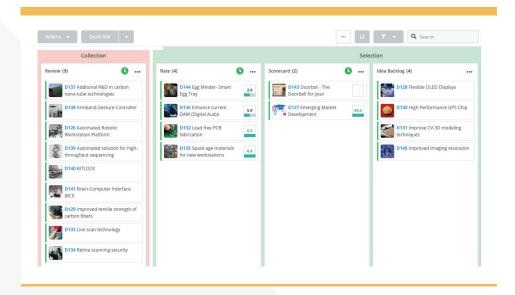


FILTER AND PRIORITIZE YOUR SUBMISSIONS

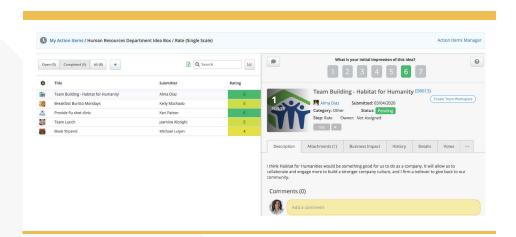
Filtering is key to grouping, prioritizing, and developing ideas. Filtering by votes, comments, categories, status, or more can help break down a large number of ideas.

Because companies have different evaluation processes, any innovation program management software needs to have two things:

 A flexible, user-definable workflow that allows you to tailor your end-to-end evaluation process without needing technical assistance.



- A broad choice of methods that enable you to shortlist and select the best opportunities. Examples of prioritization tools include simple stack ranking, pairwise comparison, a single scale ranking of 1 to n, and score carding. Here's how each prioritization method works:
- Stack ranking is a common method for evaluating ideas relative to one another—you determine the order of a list of ideas from best to worst.
- Pairwise comparison is typically an alternative to stack ranking. The evaluator is presented with two promising ideas at a time, and simply selects the one they like best. They are then presented with the next pair of ideas, and so on. Through this process, an algorithm ranks the ideas.
- Single scale is particularly useful when you are working with SMEs to help evaluate ideas. With the recognition that an SME's time is valuable and limited, single scale allows you to engage them early in the process to facilitate efficient, scalable ideascreening.

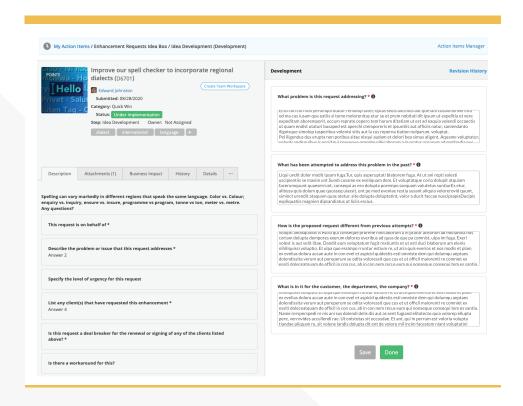


 Score carding is typically used for more detailed evaluation and prioritization of shortlisted ideas, where ideas are scored (often by SMEs) based on answers to a set of specific questions.



MERGE AND DEVELOP YOUR SUBMITTED IDEAS

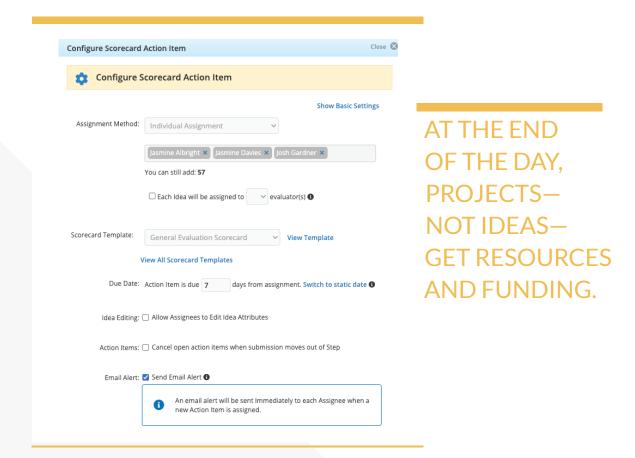
Inviting experts to develop ideas is easy when using idea management software designed for execution. Managers of a challenge event can send an action item to the idea submitter requesting additional information about the idea. Individuals and SMEs can form teams to collaborate and develop an idea, or groups of ideas, into business cases and opportunities that can be become fundable projects.





ASSIGN YOUR EVALUATORS

With careful planning, assigning the right individuals and creating teams for evaluation is simple. By creating a variety of topic-specific scorecards, or questionnaires, you can gain valuables insights through quantified responses with individual scores and aggregated inputs.



BUILD YOUR BUSINESS CASE INTO AN OPPORTUNITY

After ideas have been sent out for score carding and properly vetted, the result of that evaluation is a developed business case. From there, it can be selected as an opportunity and then funded and executed as a project. At the end of the day, projects—not ideas—get resources and funding.

Just as each step of your innovation campaign must be closely planned, marketed, and monitored, the evolution of ideas through a formalized evaluation process holds the key to true innovation success—it's the critical point where ideas become reality. Without this formalized end-to-end process that moves ideas to fundable projects, ideas become stranded and never see the light of day. When that happens, innovation projects stall, which risks funding being

pulled and sending you back to the drawing board. Many organizations have tried to build their own process using general-purpose tools like SharePoint and have failed. How do we know? Because we replace them on a regular basis.

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.

THE EVOLUTION OF **IDEAS THROUGH A FORMALIZED EVALUATION PROCESS HOLDS** THE KEY TO TRUE **INNOVATION** SUCCESS—IT'S THE CRITICAL POINT WHERE IDEAS **BFCOMF RFALITY.**

Brightidea 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.

TechValidate Surveyed Our Customers

- 95% of Global 500 companies saw improvements to their innovation program.
- 92% of users who focused on targeted innovation challenges with Brightidea achieved a positive ROI in less than 12 months.
- 95% of the respondents view Brightidea's targeted innovation challenges as an essential part of their innovation program toolkit.









