



**POINTERS**

# The Corporate Innovation Toolkit



**EXPERT GUIDANCE ON  
INNOVATION STRATEGY**

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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This issue of our Pointers series is filled with tools that will help take your innovation program to the next level.

We asked our strategic partners to share their best resources. What we received in return is an exciting mix of interactive spreadsheets, articles, worksheets, and more. Whether you're just starting out and want to gauge your innovation team's progress, or are a seasoned pro looking to continue improving, this collection can help make the road ahead just a little bit smoother.

We're grateful to our strategic partners for participating and supporting Innovation Leader's editorial mission—at our online and in-person events, in our website's Thought Leadership section, and in this series of PDF e-books. You can find prior editions of the Pointers series—covering topics like “Upgrading an Established Innovation Initiative,” “Getting an Innovation Program Started,” and “Creating an Innovative Culture”—on our website, at [innovationleader.com/pointers](https://innovationleader.com/pointers).

We encourage you to share this document with others who might find it useful. And if you have topics you'd like to see us cover in future editions of Pointers, I'd love to hear from you at the e-mail address below...



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PHOTO CREDIT: SASHA PEDRO

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# Tools to Shape Your Innovation Strategy

CONTRIBUTED BY BOARD OF INNOVATION

“Innovation teams need to prove impact, now more than ever!”

One of the roles of an innovation team is to understand the new economy and anticipate the growth opportunities it brings. This typically involves evaluating and pivoting your portfolio of activities to increase the impact and investing in growth areas.

Therefore, evaluating and defining the best approach in line with your growth strategy is essential. At Board of Innovation, we developed a decision-making tool called The Innovation Matrix.

The tool helps you to make the right decisions by defining your strategy and priorities, evaluating the impact of different growth initiatives, and turning strategies into action by choosing the right governance model.

## I.) Define Your Strategy

As a first step, you want to identify your ambitions and approach to achieve growth. There are

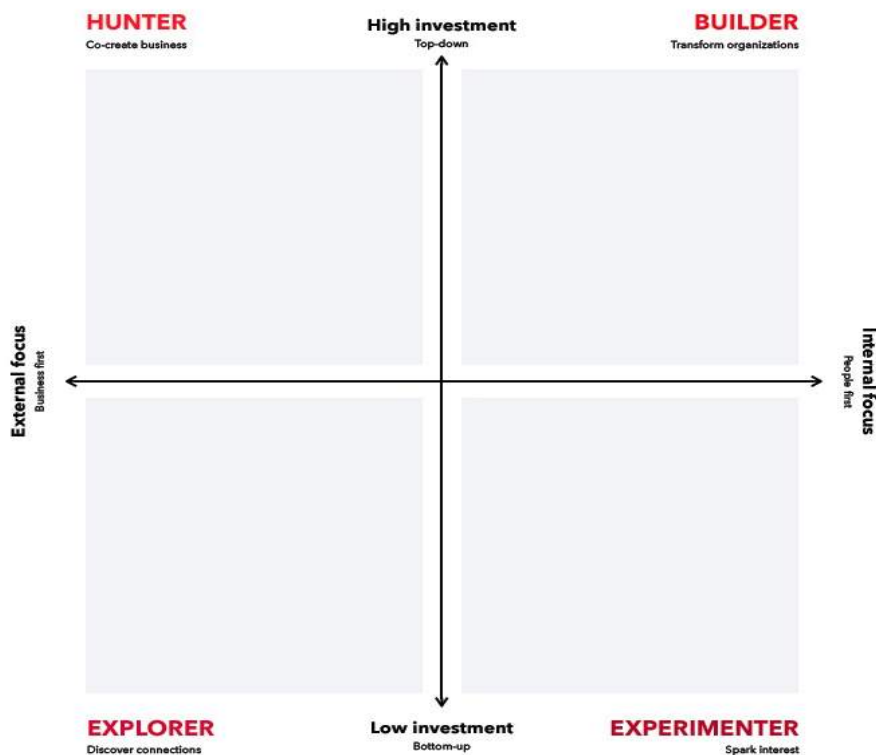
four different types of growth strategies—hunter, builder, explorer, and experimenter—depending on the focus and investment level of an organization.

### HUNTER

The hunter is the archetype located in the top left corner of The Innovation Matrix. Hunters represent a high commitment to innovation with a focus on external sources. Often, these types of organizations place heavy emphasis on cooperation with startups, acquisitions, and corporate venturing. By acquiring external expertise and products, hunters put their high commitment to innovation into practice.

### BUILDER

Builders sit at the top right corner of the quadrant. They have a high commitment to innovation, but innovate mainly internally. This means they invest significant resources in transforming their organization and building highly innovative departments and internal spin-offs.



**EXPLORER**

The explorer is the low-commitment variant of the hunter, located at the bottom left corner of the matrix. Like the hunter, the explorer also looks beyond the organization for new ideas. But they are still at the level of experimentation and don't orient their entire organization towards growth and new business. An explorer might be a large corporation that is moving into innovation by scouting for collaborations with startups or exploring new technologies.

**EXPERIMENTER**

The last archetype is the experimenter, which is located in the bottom right corner of the matrix. Experimenters are discovering and testing new ways of working by enabling internal people to work and act differently. These organizations focus their attention on internal actions.

**II.) Evaluate the Impact of Different Growth Initiatives**

The matrix comprises 16 main innovation formats that large organizations can run in order to reach growth through innovation.

**Corporate venture fund**—invests in external opportunities that could create growth outside of the core of the organization.

**Structural partnership**—a formal collaboration between two companies with the aim to launch multiple joint ventures.

**External incubator**—a physical environment to support the growth and evaluate the value of external startups.

**Scouting**—aims to regularly scan a specific opportunity area for interesting startups.

**Innovation lab**—a separate entity that hosts internal ventures with high potential before they are profitable.

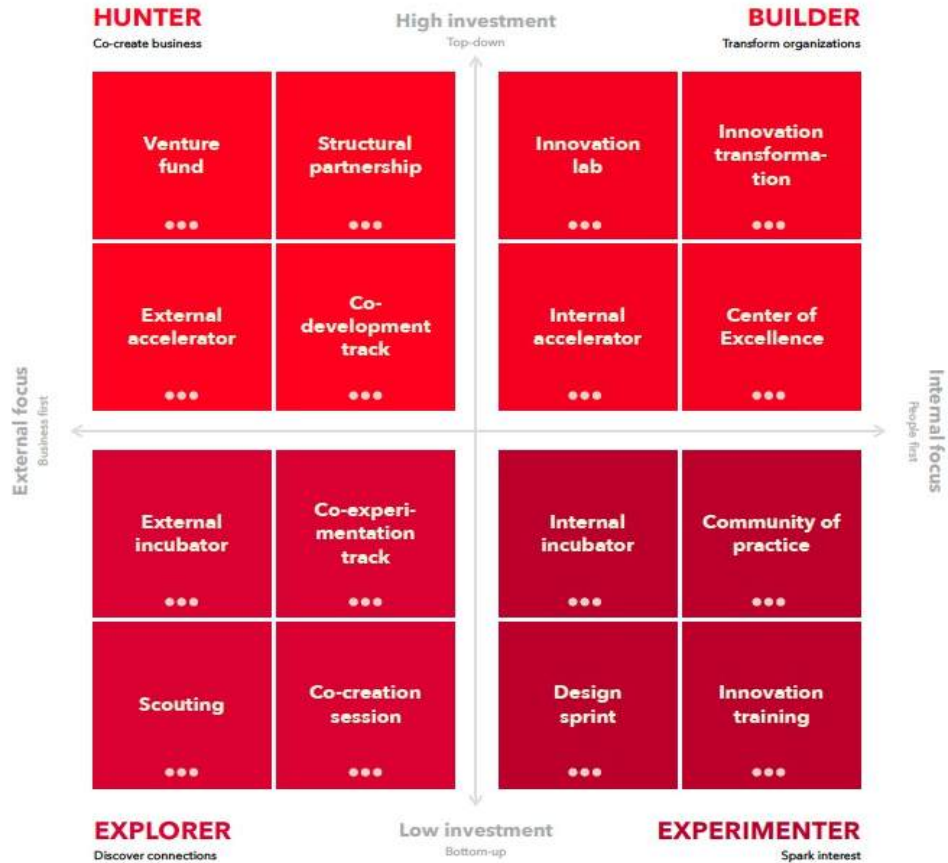
**Internal incubator**—a virtual or physical space to grow internal startups outside of the core organization and validate the market fit.

**Innovation training**—a short learning track to grow the knowledge and interest of employees.

**Co-creation session**—a short ideation session with customers or partners to turn mutual problems into ideas.

**Center of excellence**—a formal group of experts that coordinates innovation initiatives to embed innovation within the organization.

**External accelerator**—a program to support the validation of external startups.



**Co-experimentation track**—a joint test between two or more organizations to validate the solution fit of an idea.

**Scouting**—a methodological process to identify relevant startups in your field, validate their potential, and engage with their founding members.

**Internal accelerator**—separates intrapreneurs outside of the organization to validate the solution fit of ideas.

**Community of practice**—a cross-functional group of innovation ambassadors.

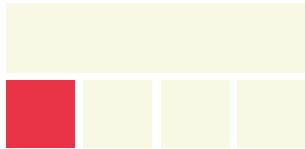
**Design sprint**—a short track to answer business questions through designing, prototyping, and testing with customers.

**Innovation transformation**—a central group of innovation leaders responsible for knowledge development.

### III.) Choosing the Right Governance Model

The right governance model allows you to accelerate the execution of growth initiatives. We've summarized four structures you can use.

#### INTERNAL



Experimentation with new innovation formats is most effective when done within one part of the organization. This allows you to do decentralized learning before scaling it inside the full organization. *Lead: Internal Innovation Manager.*

#### INTEGRATED



Building capabilities is often an integrated effort that impacts the full organization. Sharing a common practice is most effective when done in the central organization. *Lead: Transformation Officer.*

#### SEPARATED



Exploring connections with the outside world needs to happen outside of the core organization. When working together, new resources, processes, and profit models need to be explored. *Lead: Open Innovation Manager.*

#### DISCONNECTED



Hunting for new business is most effective when done in a way that's disconnected from the core organization. Only key people from the organization should act as an investment committee. *Lead: Strategy Officer.*

# What is an Innovation Maturity Assessment and Why Should you Complete One?

CONTRIBUTED BY EDISON365

Innovation is a key driver for many organizations. It enables them to develop new products, services, and processes, and remain competitive within their industry. Like any other process that impacts the progression of the organization, innovation must be reviewed. Not only to determine its success, but to also ensure that value is being generated in the most effective and efficient way.

That's why edison365 developed an Innovation Maturity Assessment that enables your organization to accurately identify your innovation maturity and provide a holistic overview of your end-to-end innovation process.

Taking the time to complete an Innovation Maturity Assessment places the existing approach to

innovation under the scrutiny of industry standards, giving the organization an opportunity to review their established way of acting. Furthermore, the results from an innovation maturity assessment can provide definable and systematic suggestions to embed a culture of innovation within every part of the organization, making it easier and faster to drive change across the organization.

Aligned to the ISO 56002—a guidance standard that details the specific factors that contribute to the establishment, implementation and continual improvement of an innovation management process—this assessment contains a set of comprehensive questions representative of each area within their framework.

[Click here to complete edison365's Innovation Maturity Assessment.](#)

**Innovation Maturity Assessment**

The Innovation Maturity Assessment has been designed to give you a holistic understanding of your current end-to-end innovation capability. Aligned to ISO 56002, the following assessment will take you through a comprehensive series of questions. On completion, you will receive a PDF report, highlighting how you currently score against innovation management best practise.

\* Required

1. Strategy \*

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Somewhat disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Somewhat agree   Agree   Strongly agree

My organization has an overall business strategy clearly explained and visible, so that innovation activities can be aligned to it.

# On Climbing Mount Innovation

CONTRIBUTED BY GERHARD PAWELKA, CEO, COOPER PERKINS

In 1958, after 47 days spread over a period of 18 months, Warren Harding became the first human to climb the 2,900 foot tall, mostly vertical granite face of El Capitan in California's Yosemite Valley. He had tools to help pull himself and his equipment up El Cap, and he had tools to protect himself from a fall. In 1994, Lynn Hill became the first person to free climb El Cap in under 24 hours. She had no tools to help her climb, but she did have tools to arrest a fall. In 2017, Alex Honnold free soloed El Cap in under four hours. He had nothing with him at all.

It's tempting to conclude from these stories that leaving the tools behind leads to faster climbs. However, there's more going on here. Hill and Honnold practiced their routes with tools before their historic climbs. Honnold spent years visualizing his climb—and months hanging on ropes studying and adjusting his route, practicing, and memorizing over 3,000 moves he'd need to make when free soloing. He meticulously documented each move up the wall in his personal journal. Documentary clips even capture Honnold cleaning pencil-thin edges of granite with a toothbrush to help him assess exactly how to choreograph his intended moves on that one spot.

Honnold's free solo climb of El Capitan was a remarkable human achievement by any standard. But he does not attribute this achievement to luck. He planned his route. He prepared his body. He practiced the moves. In his own words, "it felt like mastery." It should be noted that Honnold would not have had that free solo experience if he did not take the time or have the tools to prepare for it.

I am in the comparatively safer business of engineering. Working with exceptionally talented colleagues and clients, I convert inventive ideas into innovative products. While what we do is a lot closer to the safety and ease of flipping a pancake than it is to free solo climbing, engineering does have its complications and its thrills. We work in a wide range of industries with an even wider range of technologies. Every path we take is different, but the process is always the same: Find the route, study the route, practice the moves, gulp, then climb swiftly and deftly to the top. It should feel like mastery.

I know what it feels like to work on projects that strived to reach that innovation summit, but did not make it. It wasn't because the team was not fit or because there was a precipitous fall. Mostly, it was because we got lost somewhere on the wall. Of the projects that did summit, all of them had diligently conceived and well-executed plans. Those lessons

taught me that having the right tools to plan innovation is far more important than having tools to help or save me when my trip is already underway.

So, what should we do to prepare ourselves before a climb? The specifics are very circumstantial, but we generally refer to a set of tenets that are my company's first principles for planning and executing our work.

Here are three of my favorites around planning:

## Find a Way

This is less about muscling through adversity and more about lifting the fog, identifying the obstacles, and clearing a path to the destination. We are perpetually solving business problems with engineering, which involves the balancing of three factors: economic viability, technical feasibility, and customer utility.

When we see a sufficiently large overlap between these factors, the planning is easy. When we do not see an overlap, we have to figure out which side of these factors we need to push on to get that overlap. That planning is harder. The fog is heavier, the obstacles are bigger, the terrain does not as easily give up a path to the destination. Nonetheless, if there is a way, the most intrepid of us will find it.

## Listen, Think, then Build

This seems like the obvious order of operations, but it is surprising how easily it can be forgotten. My team is almost always put in a position that is, to some degree, unfamiliar. So, we expect to learn. With that expectation, we have to listen—listen in the broadest sense of the word. What we allow ourselves to hear shapes the reality of the steps that follow. Anything misheard or unheard will contribute to the shape of our thinking as much as what was heard. As for thinking, take the time to constantly modulate between a state of unbridled creativity and a state of rigorous critical analysis. Take the time. Don't rush to build.

## Think like a Beginner

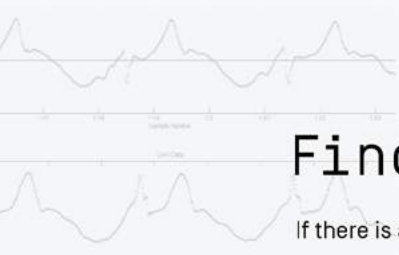
Experience is a powerful thing. It gives you the ability to predict the future. With it, you can avoid common pitfalls and other treacherous obstacles. The problem with experience is the confirmation bias that comes with it. We tend to index what we are observing today with the closest thing we experienced in the past. That bias can betray us. Beginners are not so encumbered. As Zen Buddhist monk



Shunryu Suzuki succinctly states: “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s there are few.” Suspend disbelief long enough to fully explore what you are facing.

The connective tissue between invention and innovation is insight—having a deep understanding of a thing. The more certain I am of my insights into the terrain shaped by the economics, the technolo-

gy, and the user, the more certain I am of my path-finding. And the more certain I am of my path, the more certain I am about making little adjustments along the way. We follow the path we laid out before us, we test and confirm every move, and before long we are standing on the summit. What a view!



## Find a way.

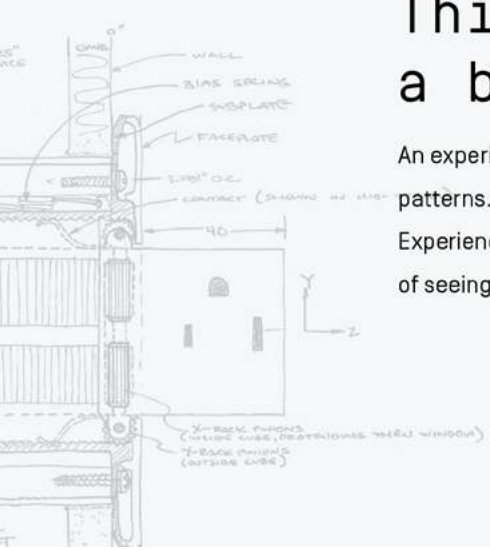
If there is a way, find it. If there really is not a way, make sure there is no doubt

## Listen, think, then build.

Yes, in that order. No exceptions.

## Think like a beginner.

An experienced mind strives to recognize familiar patterns. A young mind is not so encumbered. Experience matters but not at the expense of seeing something in a completely new way.



# Creating a High-Involvement Innovation Culture

CONTRIBUTED BY HYPE

## A Maturity Model for High-Involvement Innovation

It's a simple message—innovation matters. In today's environment, organizations need to change (and keep on changing) what they offer the world and how they create and deliver it. Staying ahead means innovating daily. And not just the big projects—you need a steady stream of incremental improvements, a regular pulse of innovation in our products, processes, and services.

That's not going to happen by merely waving our arms and making bold statements about the importance of innovation. To enable everyday innovation, you need people who will get behind this concept and make it a reality. Most organizations have specialists—teams and individuals working in areas like R&D, product, and service development—whose formal role is to contribute to the innovation agenda. But there's a much bigger resource which can be engaged: everyday innovation from everyday people. High-involvement innovation taps into the creativity and energy of employees, harnessing their shared efforts towards strategic goals.

High-involvement innovation of this kind is all about building a culture of innovation. A place where “the way we do things around here” includes behaviors around questioning, exploring, challenging, and suggesting new approaches. And other behaviors around picking ideas up and running with them, cooperating and working together to overcome obstacles and find a way to create real value from the original good idea.

Although we might all aspire to such a culture, the reality is that it doesn't happen by accident. We must build it from the bottom up and based on learning and experimenting with new ways of working. Figure 1 shows the step-by-step development towards a high-involvement culture, and it describes a “maturity model”—a roadmap for how high-involvement innovation might develop in an organization.

Where should you begin when building a high-involvement innovation culture? An excellent place to start on this journey is with a clear idea of where you are now—where is your organization on the maturity model? High-involvement innovation isn't just about doing one or two things to change your culture—there are several dimensions involved. Your organization's profile will likely have some areas where things are highly developed, and others that need improvement. A critical reflection on this will highlight strengths to build on and other areas worth investing in development efforts.

## High-Involvement Innovation Cultural Self-Assessment

To help you take a structured approach towards understanding your organization's level of innovation maturity, think about your organization as it is and the kinds of things people might say or do around the innovation theme. Use the High-Involvement Innovation Culture Assessment tool to build a picture of how you might describe “the way we do things around here.” The interactive spreadsheet asks you to rate where your organization stands regarding the ten core values of innovation management. Use the results to analyze your company's innovation profile and decide on the next steps to take to evolve.

Validate your results by sending the self-assessment to your colleagues to see how they perceive the situation at your company.

The High-Involvement Innovation Culture Assessment is an interactive spreadsheet designed to help you take a structured approach towards understanding where your organization is in terms of its core values. Use the statements of the questionnaire to build a picture of how you might describe “the way we do things around here.” After you fill out the spreadsheet, a useful next step is to ask relevant colleagues to do the same in order to get a sense of where they feel the organization is on the journey.

**Click here to access HYPE's interactive High-Involvement Innovation Culture Assessment spreadsheet, and make sure to use the High-Involvement Innovation interactive e-book to interpret your results.**

High Involvement Innovation Culture Assessment		
© Prof. John Bessant, University of Exeter		
Aggregated company value		#NUM!
Core Value	At our company...	For each statement in each of the core values, enter a value from 1-5: 1=fully disagree - 5=fully agree Formulas automatically calculate the median for each core value and for your overall company value.
1	<b>Ideas matter from everyone</b>	2
	People are expected and encouraged to contribute and share their ideas – it's part of the job	5
	People constructively comment and add to other's ideas	2
	People can see what happens to their ideas – they don't just disappear off into space	3
	People's ideas can turn into action – they feel they can make a difference	1
	Most people are regularly involved in suggesting and contributing comments, etc.	1
2	<b>Innovation needs an enabling process; it's not just magic</b>	#NUM!
	People know how to take ideas forward, there's a clear roadmap and process for innovation	
	People use a formal process to help them innovate – from ideas to implemented value	
	There are several routes to taking ideas forward, such as contributing to various campaigns on the platform, working in teams to develop big ideas for pitching to senior management etc.	
	The organization uses and understands the process as a way of creating value from ideas and manages KPIs – volume of ideas in system, status of those ideas, etc. – in process measures	
	The process is balanced – it isn't just about collecting ideas but also about evaluating, shaping, developing them	
3	<b>People need to learn to be innovative</b>	#NUM!
	People are given regular training in how to innovate	
	People understand what's involved in innovation and the skills associated with the journey	
	People are trained to use different innovation tools and understand how to use them – for example, how to pitch ideas, prototyping and pilots, etc.	
	Someone is responsible for facilitating and coaching the idea suggestion process	
	There are clearly identifiable training resources – trainers and coaches, courses, a library of tools, etc.	

# You Could and Should Be Assessing Innovation Opportunities

CONTRIBUTED BY THE INOVO GROUP

Experienced innovation practitioners know that some of the most valuable tools are ones that help decide which opportunities to spend more resources on. That's why Inovo has created the Should/Could Assessment, a tool made for innovation portfolio management.

The Should/Could tool is an interactive spreadsheet used to compare a set of opportunities by both their inherent potential and the company's capabilities to deliver on that potential. It allows a team to independently assess a set of opportunities along two dimensions to create a graph that ranks

opportunities based on value and feasibility. The tool is intended to foster discussion and promote innovation during times of uncertainty.

After downloading the spreadsheet, an administrator should fill out the first tab with the names of up to 10 team members and opportunities. Then, each team member will independently rank their assigned opportunity based on the criteria listed on their tab in the spreadsheet. Finally, once the results have been returned to the administrator, the administrator will update the summary tab to create a Should/Could canvas that ranks the opportunities.

**Click here to download The Inovo Group's Should/Could Assessment tool.**

**Welcome to the Should/Could Assessment Tool**  
by The Inovo Group

If you are one of the people who is assessing these opportunities, please click on the tab below with your name on it and follow the instructions.

If you are the administrator of this assessment, please do the following steps:

- 1- Fill in the opportunities you want to assess - names and brief description
- 2- To assign each voting sheet to a person, select the "Person 1" tab below and type a team member's name into the "Name" box. This will change the tab name to the person's name. Repeat for tabs Person 2 - Person 10 until each team member is assigned a tab
- 3- Send out a copy of this spreadsheet to all of the people you listed with a request for them to fill out their tab and send it back to you by a specific date
- 4- When you have received everyone's response, copy their voting information from their tab back into the appropriate tab in this workbook
- 5- Go to the "Summary - All" tab to see the results. Move the bubble labels so they can all be seen. Review and discuss with the assessment team

Opportunity Name	Opportunity Description
1. Taco Tuesday	A spectacular mexican lunch - tacos galore
2. Opportunity 2	Describe opportunity 2
3. Opportunity 3	Describe opportunity 3
4. Opportunity 4	Describe opportunity 4
5. Opportunity 5	Describe opportunity 5
6. Opportunity 6	Describe opportunity 6
7. Opportunity 7	Describe opportunity 7
8. Opportunity 8	Describe opportunity 8
9. Opportunity 9	Describe opportunity 9
10. Opportunity 10	Describe opportunity 10

**Should Attribute Definitions**

- 1. Technology / Design Readiness**  
The extent to which the technology being used is at an optimal point of maturity and the designs that result work well and are differentiated. The technology and design of the opportunity are right for the time. Will the technology and design deliver what the OoI promises in form, function and uniqueness?
- 2. Market Creation**  
The extent to which the opportunity changes, redefines or creates a new market segment or an entirely new market that didn't exist before and a unique competitive position is established. The extent to which opportunity is entering an unpopulated and/or new competitive position or space with few, weak, and/or new direct competitors. Is the market or segment new or otherwise free from strong competition?
- 3. Opportunity / Market Fit**  
The extent to which the opportunity addresses something people want and the strength or intensity of unmet needs and desires the opportunity satisfies that has the potential for value creation with both current and potential customers (consumers, end users and/or commercial B2B customers). The potential for high margins and new adopters. Is the opportunity satisfying a strong unmet need or desire and the value clear?
- 4. Growth Drivers**

**Could Attribute Definitions**

- 1. Technical / Design Experience**  
The extent to which technical and design competencies, physical assets, partnerships and intellectual property (IP) exist to realize this opportunity. This includes physical and knowledge assets and developed competencies – the know-what and the know-how. The extent to which technical and design competencies this opportunity requires can be learned or acquired. How capable are we to enhance our current technical and design capabilities support the opportunity?
- 2. Market & Commercial Capability**  
The extent to which the company has the capabilities to market, sell and support the opportunity with the markets and customers being targeted. Includes all aspects of brand, distribution channels, customer relationships etc. The extent to which the company has the capabilities to market, sell and support the opportunity. How willing and able are we to change our current marketing and sales structure and activities support the opportunity?
- 3. Ecosystem Effectiveness**  
The extent to which the company is part of and can influence the ecosystem the OoI fits into. Knowledge of the PESTEL factors that affect the opportunity. How will can the company adapt to new ecosystem forces and constraints that this opportunity is going to face?
- 4. Operational Proficiency**



# How a Curious Mindset Carries Innovators Through Tough Times

CONTRIBUTED BY NEWRY

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In the midst of great instability, it is tempting to retreat from the unknown, shoring up our dependable strengths and jettisoning any potential liabilities. To hedge against risk, we must demonstrate restraint in our ventures; when nothing is guaranteed, we must exercise discipline over how we invest.

However, restraint is only one part of the equation for survival. Furthermore, what passes for “discipline” is all too often a form of poorly concealed mental and behavioral rigidity: a calcification of attitudes and activities that may ultimately prove to be even more toxic than an “undisciplined” excess of spend or exposure to risk.

What we’ve learned in our more than 30 years of working with early-stage innovation organizations is that when uncertainty is high (which it virtually always is in early-stage innovation), the important thing is not to be regimented; it is to be curious. More often than not, programmatic box-checking gets you nowhere. Flexible, hypothesis-driven learning, on the other hand, offers a consistent and less costly path to success (or early termination, if the opportunity is a dud).

This orientation towards learning and adaptable decision-making is core to innovation philosophies, approaches, and frameworks such as discovery-driven planning, design thinking, Lean and Agile, etc.—most of which should be familiar to innovation leadership at this point. However, when a major upheaval shakes the foundations of the market and/or conventional wisdom, mature businesses get a taste of the early-stage innovator’s life.

Nothing can be taken for granted; everything must be questioned. Learning must become a priority on the same order as execution; rapid pivots must be accepted and embraced as a matter of course.

To support this evolution of mindset and conduct both within and beyond your innovation organization, we’ve provided a “Learning Plan” template on the following page. We use Learning Plans as part of our Assumptions Workshop process, which is designed to identify, prioritize, and test the fundamental beliefs underpinning an innovation program. While the template itself is not a silver bullet or a Magic 8-Ball, it can go a long way toward mitigating major risks.

For best results, you should articulate your assumptions as positive statements—hypotheses that you can test instead of open-ended questions. It’s worth going through the mental exercise of breaking down your main assumption into sub-assumptions. This process will reveal additional underlying beliefs that must also be confirmed. Finally, get specific about assigning responsibility, setting deadlines, and defining measurable outcomes to ensure accountability.

Learning Plans should be revisited and revised regularly—at least once every 90 days. These reviews should not be conducted as standard progress updates, but rather as dynamic decision points where the team can choose to accelerate, pivot, or refocus their efforts. Remember, the template is not a terminus; it’s a launch pad to the next stage of learning.

**Find Newry’s Learning Plan worksheet on the next page.**



## IRON IN THE FIRE: A 30/60/90-DAY LEARNING PLAN



### KEY ASSUMPTION

*In order to succeed, the following must be true:*

#### SUB-ASSUMPTION

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Uncertainties and Obstacles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“HOT” Tests:

In the next 30 days, we will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“SLOW BURN” Tests:

In the next 60-90 days, we will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### SUB-ASSUMPTION

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Uncertainties and Obstacles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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In the next 30 days, we will:

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#### SUB-ASSUMPTION

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Uncertainties and Obstacles:

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In the next 30 days, we will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“SLOW BURN” Tests:

In the next 60-90 days, we will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How will we track our progress?

What do we need to watch out for?

# The Anatomy of a Good Idea

CONTRIBUTED BY **PLANBOX**

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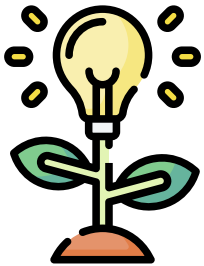
Aren't there technically no bad ideas when you're brainstorming? Shouldn't an organization encourage failure and feedback to create a positive innovation culture?

Yes, all ideas are valuable—but that doesn't mean they are all effortless. Even great ideas require elements of research, description, and discussion to make it to the finish line.

Planbox takes the guesswork out of the idea-generating and submitting process with its innovation tool, The Good Idea Blueprint. This chart breaks down the anatomy of a successful idea, detailing best practices to ensure that an opportunity is explored thoroughly and reaches the desks of the right people.

**Take a look at The Good Idea Blueprint by Planbox before you tackle your next innovation challenge.**

## The Good Idea Blueprint



**Summarize** Share your idea, issue, risk, opportunity or question

**Describe** Explain the idea as **precisely** and **clearly** as you can  
**Propose** Offer a potential solution that is **feasible** and **actionable**  
**Target** **Relate** the idea to your **audience's interests, passions and knowledge**  
**Discuss** Invite other to **discuss**, comment and vote on your idea/issue/opportunity

### Categorize



**Attach Document:** Attach any videos, documents and web links that support your idea or help build the case for your idea's timeliness, feasibility, or its potential solu-

### Images are worth 1,000 words!

Pick the most representative, inspiring image possible to convey the value/importance/urgency of your idea or issue.

### Get the right people involved!

Select the categories (e.g. employee engagement, R&D, operations, etc.) your idea belongs to so that the right actions are triggered and the most relevant people review the ideas you share.

SUBMIT IDEA



## How To Create A Good Idea

### ELEMENTS OF A GREAT IDEA



- Offers actionable solutions
- Is relevant to the community in which it is posted
- Is aligned with stated objectives of the organization or an active innovation challenge
- Has a positive tone and encourages feedback and participation of others in the community

### ELEMENTS OF AN IDEA THAT NEEDS WORK



- General complaints without offering a solution
- Unrelated to the audience's interests and passion
- Not aligned with the organization's objectives or any active innovation challenges
- Is framed negatively and discourages participants from wanting to contribute

## Idea Submission Process Best Practices

Underlined text above indicates the minimum required information that should be captured in the idea submission process. Idea submission shouldn't take more than **3 minutes** — anything longer and people are less likely to share their input. Participants and subject matter experts can add information and build on the initial idea in subsequent stages.



# Why Crowdsourcing Challenges Succeed: 7 Best Practices Every Company Should Know

CONTRIBUTED BY PLANVIEW

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Great ideas can come from anywhere. For proof, let's go back to 1714, the year that many believe sparked the first successful crowdsourcing challenge.

After a series of embarrassing naval disasters, the British government solicited ideas from the public for a reliable method of calculating the longitude of a vessel while at sea. The winner was John Harrison, whose idea to create a device known as the marine chronometer would change transoceanic travel forever.

Interestingly, John wasn't a Royal navigation

expert—he was a self-educated carpenter and clockmaker. If the government hadn't opened the problem-solving process to the public, the problem may have persisted, putting the Navy at risk for more unnecessary shipwrecks.

Polling a diverse crowd is just one important aspect of running a successful crowdsourcing challenge. In this interactive guide, you'll learn six other important best practices that will help you drive high employee engagement and create business value.

**Read on for tips, inspiration, and a workspace to jot down your own ideas, enabling you to quickly put these best practices to work for your innovation program.**

## 1 Pick the right topic

Find the right balance between what the business cares about deeply and what is also compelling to the crowd. Without the former, you'll have a bunch of ideas no one wants. Without the latter, you'll struggle to get the crowd to participate.

Think about what matters to your company, from strategic goals to corporate values. Also consider what's important to employees. Could a process be improved? Or a method be reimaged? Write your topics here.

## 2 Secure sponsor commitment

The sponsor of the challenge must have the ability to implement ideas related to the challenge topic. That means the topic must be within her sphere of influence, and she must have access to the human and financial resources needed to implement the ideas.

Write the names of a few potential sponsors who are passionate about the challenge topics you brainstormed above (you may have a different sponsor for each topic).

## 3 Ask the right question

As you draft your challenge question, carefully consider the outcomes you're looking for. A broad question may drive high engagement but may result in lots of out-of-scope ideas. A narrowly scoped question will likely result in lower engagement but produce more targeted and actionable ideas.

Pick one topic from the list you brainstormed. Jot down a draft question that aligns with the topic. The goal here isn't to write the perfect question; this step is more about capturing a starting point for you to refine later with your sponsor.

## 4 Invite a diverse crowd

As you draft your challenge question, carefully consider the outcomes you're looking for. A broad question may drive high engagement but may result in lots of out-of-scope ideas. A narrowly scoped question will likely result in lower engagement but produce more targeted and actionable ideas.

Think of a reason why you wouldn't want to invite your entire organization to participate in this challenge. Identify the groups that you wouldn't want to involve.



**Aristocrat** has created an innovation process that is transparent, collaborative, and continual, where every employee has the opportunity to come up with the next great idea at any time. Some of the challenges are technology-focused, while others are solving cultural challenges, like how to become more sustainable, diverse, and inclusive.

**READ THE CASE STUDY**



**Premiera Blue Cross** wanted to improve health care for their subscribers. But instead of asking the broad question, "How do we make healthcare better?", they asked, "As we make healthcare work better, how might we provide positive surprises to our customers and delight them?" to zero in on the emotion they wanted to elicit from their subscribers.

**READ THE CASE STUDY**



## 5 Tell the crowd how ideas will be evaluated

Set the rules of the game in advance and inform the crowd what a good idea looks like. Ensure that the evaluation criteria you choose promotes creativity by focusing on the "what" versus the "how."

How will you evaluate what a good idea looks like for this challenge? What specific criteria could you use to determine the feasibility, desirability, and viability of the idea? Write them all here.

## 6 Motivate the crowd to participate

Think through the behaviors you are trying to influence, and the people whose behaviors you are trying to influence. Then create your rewards and recognition program. Strongly consider using recognition-based rewards instead of cash or prizes.

Think outside the box when it comes to recognizing participation. What do you think would truly motivate people to take part in a challenge?

## 7 Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Keep the crowd informed of the various calls to action and deadlines. Use diverse digital channels in addition to email. Leverage the influence of your sponsor! Be sure to close the loop with the crowd once the challenge ends, so they know that their time and effort had a meaningful outcome.

What could you do in addition to your company's standard corporate communication channels? Capture your ideas here.



Sometimes the crowd of your company, **Siemens** sought input from the public to solve five specific problems faced by the traffic industry. The winner – a student at UMass Dartmouth – proposed using quadcopters to find open parking spots and help guide drivers to the designated space via a mobile app.

### READ THE CASE STUDY



In addition to their own internal challenges, **Ryan Companies** runs challenges with their employees that help solve problems on behalf of their clients. Top idea contributors work on teams and compete against each other – Shark Tank-style – in front of the clients.

### READ THE CASE STUDY



# How Corporates Pitch to Startups

CONTRIBUTED BY SWITCHPITCH

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Every corporation has a version of six or 12 month planning, outlining goals to be accomplished and an associated budget. The goals often require contracting with outside partners, including startups, especially for innovative corporations that want to maintain or build a competitive advantage by looking for the “next new thing.” To be successful, the key question is “How and where do corporations look for startups?”

## How It Works

Goals often highlight the need to fill a capability gap. Subject matter experts (SMEs) inside the corporation are very articulate about what exists today and what’s missing. However, they don’t always know what the best solution might be. Instead of spending time online or going to conferences to search with a vague idea of a solution, it’s more efficient for the SME to create a business use case and a reverse pitch.

The business use case is a description of the problem, the current state, the desired future state, and possible solutions that have either been considered or already tried. The business use case creates structure for the challenge and provides the necessary background for the startups who are seeking to understand how they can help the business. The business use case can be further analyzed to estimate the business value, KPIs, budget, and potentially RoI.

## Getting It Done

The reverse pitch is structured to recruit startups to work on the business use case. The reverse

pitch is a short summary of the business challenge which can be circulated to startups through a sourcing channel such as SwitchPitch. The reverse pitch strategy works well across the corporation and with a diversity of topics. Corporations can have just one or dozens of reverse pitch searches playing out at any one time, maximizing returns with minimal effort.

Startups registered with SwitchPitch or other sourcing channels will receive the reverse pitch with the business use case background. Startups will self-select if they can help the corporation. Startups apply to the reverse pitch. Because the reverse pitch is connected to a current need, the business is aligned and willing to discuss potential solutions, moving quickly to implement a proof of concept or even larger scale test. The corporation and startup matchmaking friction is minimized.

## Results

The reverse pitch is tested and it works. Recently a SwitchPitch and N3 Innovation client posted a reverse pitch for a cutting edge sensor technology. Within the two week deadline, four viable startups responded and were available to discuss their offer in more detail. The startups saved business development cycles and the corporation saved time in research and sifting through hundreds of startups to find the few that are the best match for the business use case.



# Strategic Assessment: Defining General Innovation Readiness

CONTRIBUTED BY TECHSTARS

Is your organization on the fence about its innovation strategy? Are your innovation leaders concerned about being disrupted, and interested in ramping up startup engagement efforts? Why not turn to the experts?

Techstars has included guidelines to help teams at large organizations identify innovation readiness. Does your company celebrate failure and new ideas and promote an innovative culture? Then you might consider yourselves in the emerging phase. Gauge your own progress, and use this assessment to determine whether or not your company needs to shine a greater light on its innovation strategy.

**To learn more about where your organization stands, read the Defining General Innovation Readiness Strategic Assessment below.**

## Developing

There are a group of people passionate about startup engagement in the corporation who are beginning to organize and put energy and effort into its development. There are the beginnings of startup engagement events or groups formed and attended by potential startups or internal intrapreneurs (internal employees with innovative ideas). There have been a few startups conversations or a few attempted POCs (typically 0-5). Some of the executives are involved at a light touch level or at least aware of these engagements. There may be the beginning of a venture group yet no accelerator activity. Common startup space(s) are available to founders.

## Emerging

There are active high-growth oriented leaders in the corporate <> startup engagement process

internally who take an active role in engaging in POCs and actively identifying innovation internal ideas that can be driven forward by internal employees on a short timeline. There have been at least 10 completed POCs with startups. There are regular, multiple events per month in which a wide group of corporate stakeholders with interest attends to engage in the startup community.

This is a corporate <> startup engagement ecosystem that has consciously and deliberately begun to put in place the necessary building blocks. The corporation recognizes the need for entrepreneurs to be involved widely across the entire corporation with a long term view. Feeder organizations such as law firms, universities, angel investors, venture capitalists, and government officials are regularly supporting the efforts of these leaders. Best practice mentorship is active, and high growth partnerships with startups are being formed. Failure is accepted and celebrated across the entire corporation as a normal part of the journey.

## Leading

This corporate <> startup engagement ecosystem is regularly producing meaningful high-growth partnerships and POCs. Mentorship and capital are widely available to qualified startup partnerships as well as internal employees with innovative ideas. Numerous and regular substantive events draw the corporate <> startup ecosystem together, which is linked to other communities in meaningful ways. This corporate <> startup engagement ecosystem is fully formed and is regularly producing partnerships that produce enterprise-wide pilots. There is a pervasive and sustained culture of mentorship and a give first attitude across the corporation.

# How to Prioritize Your Needs When Choosing Solution Providers

CONTRIBUTED BY YET2

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When conducting a technology landscape, our clients often struggle with deciding whom to move forward with out of all the companies identified.

The solution is a Prioritization Scheme adapted to your organization's criteria, created and recommended by yet2 to help you grade each potential solution provider.

While yet2's spreadsheet is a useful tool for all,

it can be customized even further to meet the needs of your organization. For example, certain criteria may be more important to your organization, and thus a greater weight or a higher score can be added for that criteria in the chart. The total score will indicate the leading partners in this topic, and can be used to craft a recommendation to move forward with the top two or three players.

**[View yet2's Prioritization Scheme spreadsheet and examples of how to use it on the following pages.](#)**

# yet2 Prioritization Scheme

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E	Company F
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Criteria</b> 3 = x 2 = x 1 = x						
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Criteria</b> 3 = x 2 = x 1 = x						
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Criteria</b> 3 = x 2 = x 1 = x						
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Criteria</b> 3 = x 2 = x 1 = x						
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>						

Chart, graphic, list – Client determines the filtering criteria. Format is an example.

## Example Prioritization Scheme: Medical Device or Life Sciences

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E	Company F
<b>Clinical Trial / Quality of data</b> 3 = Trials with set of robust studies 2 = Initial clinical studies 1 = No clinical trial yet (lab tests only)	3	3	3	2	1	1
<b>Level of Maturity</b> 3 = Significant development progress (sometimes already available in some regions) 2 = Some development progress (prototype still being developed) 1 = Very early stage prototype	3	3	3	2		1
<b>Regulatory Status</b> 3 = Both FDA approval and CE Mark 2 = Either CE Mark or FDA approval 1 = No indication of approval yet	3	2	2	1	1	1
<b>IP</b> 3 = Strong US and International filings 2 = Pending US and International applications 1 = None yet (or unknown)	3	2	2	2	2	1
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

Chart, graphic, list – Client determines the filtering criteria. Format is an example.





## Example of Prioritization Chart

Criteria	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E	Company F
Alteration to the package 9 = No alteration 3 = Minor alteration/weight increase 1 = Major alteration	3 (lightweight film)	9 (non-contact method)	3 (thin fabric)	3 (19.8g or less)	9 (non-contact method)	1 (“bulky smart watch”)
Cost (approx. to set up trial in 1 year) 9 = £100 – 10,000 3 = £10,000 – 100,000 1 = £100,000+	9 (\$500 per roll, small software license fee)	TBD (company unwilling to share information)	TBD – likely 3 (custom development)	9 (\$65 per unit, depending on development)	1 (\$20k/month dev kit plus annual fee for cloud access)	3 (~\$30,000)
Number of data types collected (pressure, movement, etc) 9 = 3+ 3 = 2 1 = 1	3 (pressure distribution & amount)	9 (pressure, seal integrity, stress, surface finish)	9 (pressure distribution & amount, size, bend, twist, stretch)	9 (temp, light, pressure, humidity, motion)	3 (collisions, scuffing)	1 (location)
Development Stage 9 = Commercially available 3 = Custom development required 1 = Pre-development	9 (commercially available)	3 (requires installation)	3 (custom development required)	3 / 9 (custom tracker with modified PCB)	3 (custom development required)	3 (technology is ready, needs setup)
Application flexibility Scale of 9 (applied to most substrates) to 3 (limited application)	9 (film can be applied on most substrates and already been used for various use cases)	9 (lack of contact and number of data types opens this up to other applications)	9 (number of data types and flexibility of design)	3 (would require modifications for other applications)	9 (hardware agnostic, core technology applies to machinery health and diagnostics)	3 (transponder use limits use cases)
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24-33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>

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## **ABOUT POINTERS**

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