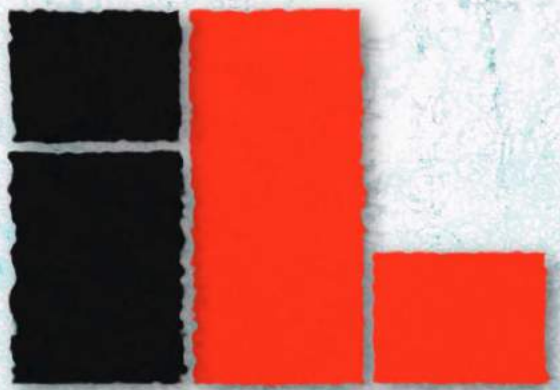




INNOVATION LEADER
RESEARCH — Q4 2019



Research

Quick Wins: **Data and Case Studies on** **Delivering Results Fast**

A Letter From Our Sponsor

Creativity is at the core of innovation, in the same way that quality ideas are at the core of quick wins. But how do you ensure you get the right kind of trade-off between quantity and quality?

It may sound counterintuitive, but cultivating company-wide creativity requires some form of structure. Case in point: “A Field Experiment on Motivating Employee Ideas,” a study conducted by the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. It revealed that rewarding employees not only boosted participation, but also substantially increased the quality of ideas submitted. Better yet, the participation rate persisted even after the reward was discontinued, suggesting habituation.

Indeed, whereas leadership (and structure) is top-down, creativity is bottom-up; that’s why it is crucial for company leaders to consider the psychological mechanisms of innovation as they integrate, develop, nurture, strengthen, and operationalize innovation management as a core competency. With proper guidance and a winning mindset, world-leading organizations have successfully leveraged our tried-and-true platform and program to cultivate a culture of innovation that skyrockets purpose-driven collaboration and quality ideation on an ongoing basis. After all, change is perpetual, risk is inevitable, and innovation is key. But organizations can only ever be as creative and innovative as the people who work for them—and their success is often a reflection of this culture.

That’s why we’re pleased to partner with *Innovation Leader* to bring you this research report, “Quick Wins.” We at Planbox observe first-hand the empowering nature of innovation wins, and even more so the value of capitalizing on the momentum they create by communicating said wins with those who make them possible. Sharing your organization’s innovation success stories with your workforce eventually becomes a reward in and of itself that habituates your employees to continuously innovate by submitting creative, quality ideas towards that next quick win—all it takes is your leadership to make the magic happen.

LUDWIG MELIK
CEO, PLANBOX
PLANBOX.COM



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

- What Role Do Quick Wins Play? 5
- Chart: What Types of Quick Wins Have You Worked On? 9
- Charts: Time/Energy/Focus Devoted to Quick Wins 10
- 21 Ways That Survey Respondents Communicate Quick Wins 14

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Ludwig Melik, Planbox — The Psychology of Innovation 16

CASE STUDIES & PERSPECTIVES

- Adtalem Global Education — Introducing a New Innovation Management Process 20
- AGCO — Supporting New Ideas with Seed Funding 22
- BNP Paribas — Creating a ‘Summer Camp’ for Corporate Innovators 23
- Boeing HorizonX — Connecting Startups in a Portfolio with Business Units 24
- Clorox — Capturing Open Innovation Metrics 25
- Duke Energy — Identifying Which Assets Need Repair 27
- Helen of Troy — Filling in the Gaps 29
- John I. Haas — Getting Scientists Thinking More Like Businesspeople 30
- KWS — Deploying AI for Language Translation 31
- Mitsubishi — Developing a New Startup Investing Strategy 33
- Premiera Blue Cross — Gathering Ideas from the Whole Organization 35
- Rockwell Automation — Designing a Bounty Program for Innovators 36
- Texas Windstorm Insurance Association — Leveraging Data to Avoid Lawsuits 38
- Trapeze Group — Starting an Ideation Bootcamp for New Innovators 40
- Carol Miller — Accelerating a Product Development Process 41
- Paul Campbell — Getting a New Consumer Product to Market 42

INTRODUCTION

What Role Do Quick Wins Play?

What role should quick wins play in your innovation or R&D portfolio?

That's the question we set out to answer with a survey and a set of qualitative interviews of innovation and R&D leaders in industries ranging from aerospace to utilities to financial services to consumer products. We defined "quick" as something that delivers a tangible outcome within a year — whether that was introducing a new tool, streamlining a process, finding clever ways to cut costs, launching a new offering, or building a new capability.

The quick answer: nearly all of the 132 survey respondents say that their portfolio involves delivering near-term results, and several respondents said they defined "quick" as an even shorter time period than we did — like, three or four months.

Just two percent of respondents said that they weren't devoting any time to quick wins. All of those respondents work in the technology sector, and one of them admitted that they actually do seek out quick wins, "so that leadership can see progress," even if there wasn't a specific amount of time they could identify as being devoted to working on those kinds of projects.

What kinds of quick wins are most common? More than half of the respondents said that they are working on, or have worked on, these types of projects:

- **Introducing new tools for colleagues to use.**
- **Developing new products or services for customers.**

- **Solving internal problems through open innovation or new external partnerships.**
- **Training colleagues to help them develop new capabilities.**

Projects that deliver near-term results are an "important part of a balanced portfolio of innovation projects," explains one survey respondent from the healthcare industry. Another healthcare industry respondent points out that quick wins "earn credibility and trust, as well as create momentum for bigger plays." In the best-case scenario, that credibility and momentum allow innovation groups to eventually make bigger, longer-term bets. But at some companies, "being responsible to Wall Street creates a culture of [using] quick wins to show progress or viability," according to another survey respondent in the tech industry. As a result, "We are very averse to long-term investments."

"In our world," explains a respondent from the energy and utilities sector, "if you aren't measurably demonstrating your own value in near-term parameters, you probably shouldn't get too comfortable in your seat."

Demonstrating and communicating value was another topic we asked about in the survey. A few respondents acknowledged that "we don't" or said that "this is a competency we are building." But generally, we found that companies use internal newsletters, email, meetings, lunch-and-learns, intranet sites, videos, awards programs, and press releases as a way to share their outcomes with colleagues and the outside world.

A financial services industry respondent said that he was communicating quick wins “as widely as possible, via direct-to-leadership presentations and company-wide communications.”

One respondent in the energy and utilities industry admitted that while he was employing a variety of channels — largely email — to communicate the outcomes of his group’s work, “Honestly, something I think about a lot is how I could be doing a better job of showcasing our work and wins to cross-functional internal audiences.”

In the survey results and our interviews, four key aspects of quick wins emerged.

1. Quick wins are important to innovation and R&D teams that want to show value, attract allies across the organization, and gain permission to place bigger bets.
2. In order to generate the maximum value, quick wins ideally are aligned with someone’s existing strategy — or tie in to something that business unit leaders or management cares about.
3. Quick wins need to be communicated broadly, using multiple channels.
4. The key risk to be aware of is that quick wins can have their own gravitational pull: once you start delivering them, business unit leaders and senior management want more, which can keep you busy doing near-term Horizon One efforts, without sufficient organizational support and resources to do medium- and long-term work.

There are other potential downsides to consider, says Moisés Noreña, Vice President of Innovation at Fortune Brands, the Illinois company that owns brands like Master Lock and Moen: How easily can you validate market acceptance of the idea? What is your ability to create sustainable advantage? And how tightly is the win connected to a corporate strategy? “What can look like a quick win may end up absorbing all your attention and resources,” Noreña cautions.

Quick wins can deliver short-term upsides, but they sometimes come with long-term downsides, says Amit Bhatia, head of the innovation labs at the insurer Manulife/John Hancock. “From a franchise point of view, [you’re] not working on the largest set of multi-year business problems — like larger customer problems, new markets, thinking 10X differently. And you’re not building foundations for the future.” As an example, he points out that “you can’t scale a blockchain initiative in one year, but if you don’t begin, next year you’ll have no foundation.”

Bhatia says that his team’s approach is to “take a portfolio approach of select areas close to the business that can be quick wins, but also focus on larger efforts.”

Despite the potential risks, quick wins should be — and are, according to our data — an important part of every innovator’s portfolio of work.

At Signify, a developer of LED lighting formerly known as Philips Lighting, Strategic Director Alexandru Darie says, “I think quick wins are an essential tool to create buy-in from stakeholders. You create goodwill, which then allows you to move to the next phase, and maybe do the things you initially wanted to do, but nobody gave you approval.” ●

What Role Do Quick Wins Play?

We asked survey respondents to describe the role that quick wins play in their organization, and explain why they are (or aren't important.) Below is a sampling of answers.

BENEFITS OF QUICK WINS

“Quick wins are rarely discussed outside of the initiative's launch. This seems to be the case because typical, long-winded projects are ‘how it's always been done.’”

“They act as more of a milestone toward long-term growth, versus an independent marker of success.”

Quick wins provide us with “early proof points that we are headed in the right direction, helping to keep the momentum of initiatives.”

“Quick wins are closely aligned with business goals and strategies. This shows a clear link to the benefits of innovation practices.”

“They're principally to ensure that we're always improving in a way that supports longer-term strategy.”

“They're very important, because the innovation group has been recently created.”

“Quick wins are big because it gets associates deeper in the organization to think of themselves as key to innovation. A lot of those ideas come from the front line.”

“They're important because we operate on internal stakeholder buy-in. We have to create heroes in order to cultivate champions for our next crusade.”

“Being in the inaugural year of the innovation team in our organization, quick wins are important. We are high-visibility, and our internal stakeholders are anticipating what kind of value we can deliver. This will help our team establish trust and earn social and political currency internally.”

“Quick wins help convince others that new techniques will deliver value. They help us to learn to fail fast and implement smaller-scale projects. Traditionally, everyone just sees the big goal. Quick wins also help with failing (and learning) fast.”

Quick wins are “revenue drivers in the short-term.”

“Quick wins provide three things: 1) validation of your product, idea, or business model 2) tangible results to justify competence, and 3) tangible results to show stakeholders.”

“They are important because our funding is dependent on annual results...”

“In a large organization it is important to shield yourself from non-generative scrutiny. Creating new products, and businesses takes time. Quick wins are a way to keep your runway clear.”

“They can be highly motivating.”

“Important part of a balanced portfolio of innovation projects. Engages and drives value for existing business leaders.”

“Our entire program is based on quick wins. Our change-resistant organization understands them (and they happen fast enough that the resistance is minimized).”

“I found ‘quick wins’ an unnatural phrase. We think of these activities as essential, agile, responsive behavior core to our culture, values, customer acquisition, and customer retention.”

“At least one-third of our work and effort should be to search, plan, execute, and evaluate work towards achieving quick wins or daily-weekly-monthly improvements.”

“One year to results is not seen as a quick win, as one year is a LONG time. [For our company,] waiting multiple years for results is a rare effort.”

“We are still (after 5 years) in the process of proving the value of our four-person innovation team.”

“It's important to focus on horizon 1-2-3 type projects and manage a portfolio. We consider quick wins in horizon 1. We need these to help continue to show the value of our innovation process and team.”

Quick wins help with “client satisfaction and provide visible deliverables to all of our customers.”

“Moving into 2020, I think this will be most of the work projects we take on as a team, so we can show business results quickly.”

“Quick wins allow us to continue learning about our current customers, while giving our teams opportunities to put these learnings into action and drive results.”

“The culture of our company mandates a quick-win mentality. Certainly everyone understands the value of innovation itself as a long term project, but in our world, if you aren’t measurably demonstrating your own value in near-term parameters, you probably shouldn’t get too comfortable in your seat....”

“Most quick wins are process improvements created by members of production. A few hardware-related (electrical and mechanical) R&D projects are quick wins, but not many. Many of our R&D software projects are quick wins to deliver new features to customers.”

“We mostly consider quick-wins the work we do to train and educate colleagues on innovation methodology and share insights from our research. This helps us develop relationships across the organization.”

Quick wins can help “leadership mentality to shift into a more nimble mindset (to embrace lighter risk/high reward.)”

“Senior management wants and needs PROOF. They get impatient quickly and lose their appetite for innovation quickly.”

“Every project that comes across my desk has a ‘quick win’ slide.”

“Quick wins have been an essential part of generating interest and buy-in for innovation initiatives I’ve been involved in. Quick wins not only demonstrate the value of your efforts over the short term but also provide the breathing room you need for those efforts to reach their fullest potential.”

“When we first started out, we were focused on quick wins to build credibility. Now that we have that credibility, we are looking at big adjacencies and breakthroughs that have bigger impact to the firm and hence longer runways. We now largely leave it to the business teams to handle quick wins or incremental innovation.”

“Since we only do short-term projects, they are our core work. The organization does not want any change to happen, so we use the projects as proof change can happen very fast and cheaply. We are slowly winning over the skeptics.”

“When we think about quick wins, it is usually in the form of trying to help other business units be more innovative within their own domain. We run programs, trainings, etc. to help those business units develop new services, solve for process inefficiencies, etc. because after running these programs they feel more empowered/skilled to make small changes happen.”

RISKS OF QUICK WINS

“Quick wins for me feel like putting a Band-Aid on an open wound. I don’t think they’re always the best solution for the problem at hand, and more often than not, the problem needs a longer term fix. Stitches!”

“They baseload upper management’s expectations of results on a regular basis.”

“You need to be careful of not creating siloed, point solutions just because they deliver a quick win.”

WE DON’T DO QUICK WINS

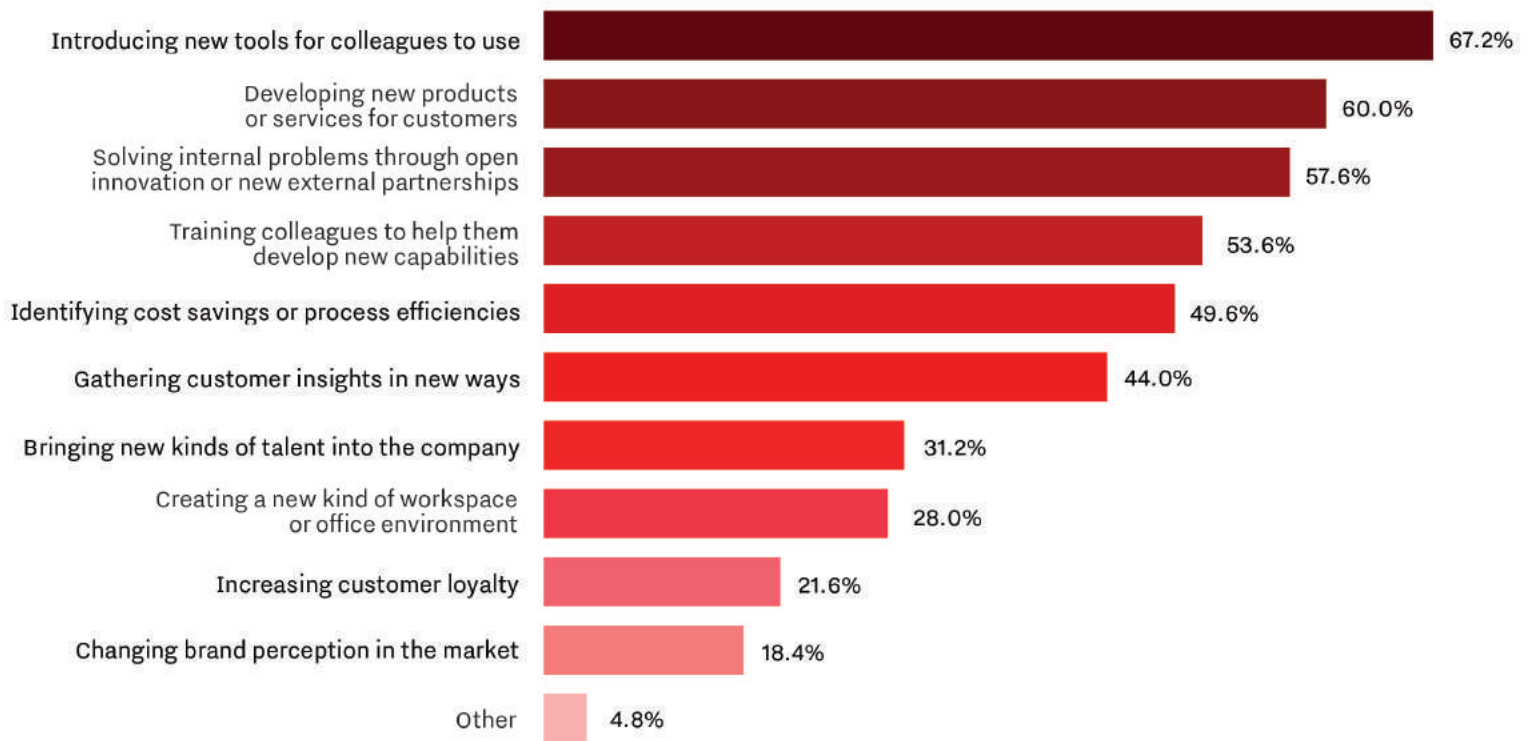
“As a manufacturing company it is very difficult to launch any new products within one year, and we are not focused on driving quick win process improvements.”

“As an enterprise, we’re not set up operationally or culturally to realize many quick wins. I would like to see us more rapidly conduct research, experiments, and go-to-market strategy.”

“Most of our innovation work is not ‘quick.’”

“When we started our team, we did do more work in the quick win area. Our goal was primarily to establish some momentum and credibility. Now we do mostly longer-term investments.”

What Types of Quick Wins Have You Worked On?



OTHER RESPONSES

- Investigating ways to get around current IP
- Social Programs / Environmental Projects
- Proofs-of-concept
- Low-hanging fruit: replacing legacy infrastructure technology with emerging and innovation solutions.
- Brand thinking / Helping marketing with messaging

TOP FOCUS FOR PEOPLE SPENDING 75% OR MORE OF THEIR TIME ON QUICK WINS:

- Developing new products or services for customers

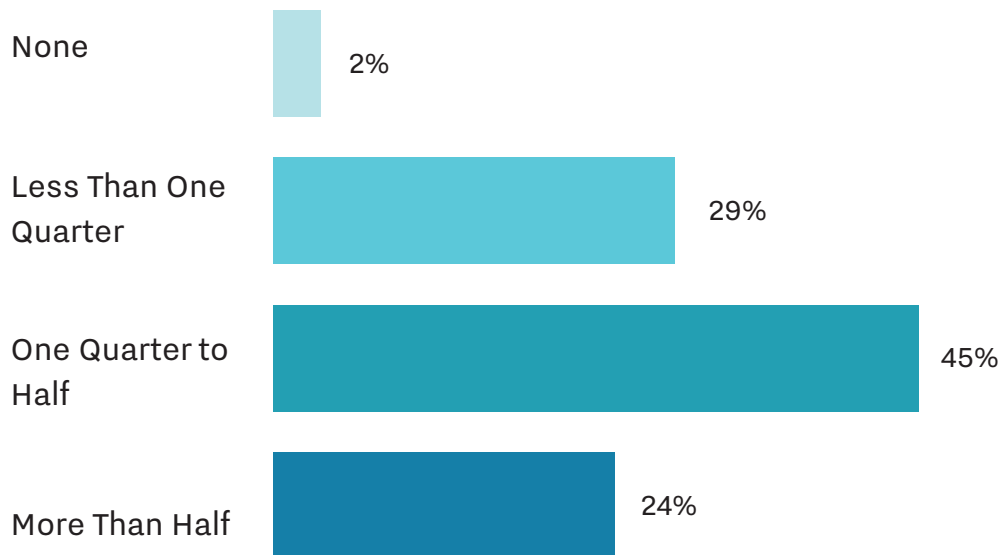
TOP FOCUS FOR PEOPLE SPENDING 25% OR LESS OF THEIR TIME ON QUICK WINS:

- Introducing new tools for colleagues to use

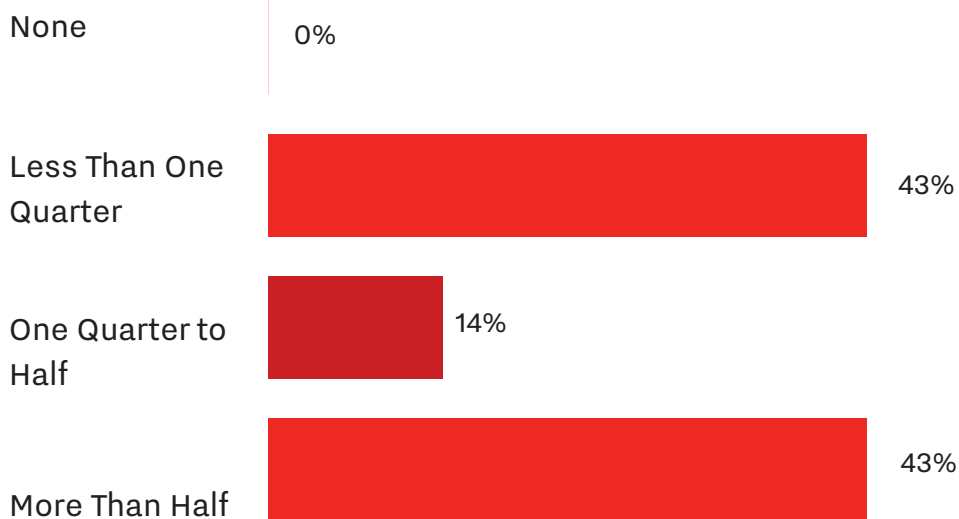
How Much Time/Energy/Focus Have You Devoted to Quick Wins?

How much of your time/energy/focus is devoted to "quick wins," which we define as things that deliver some kind of impact within a year?

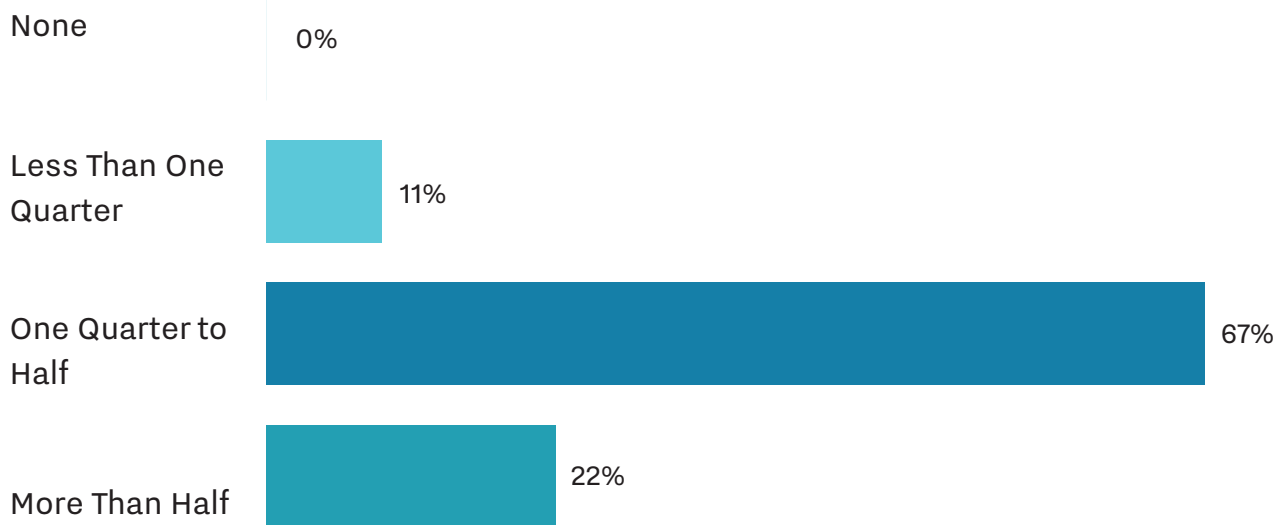
All Industries



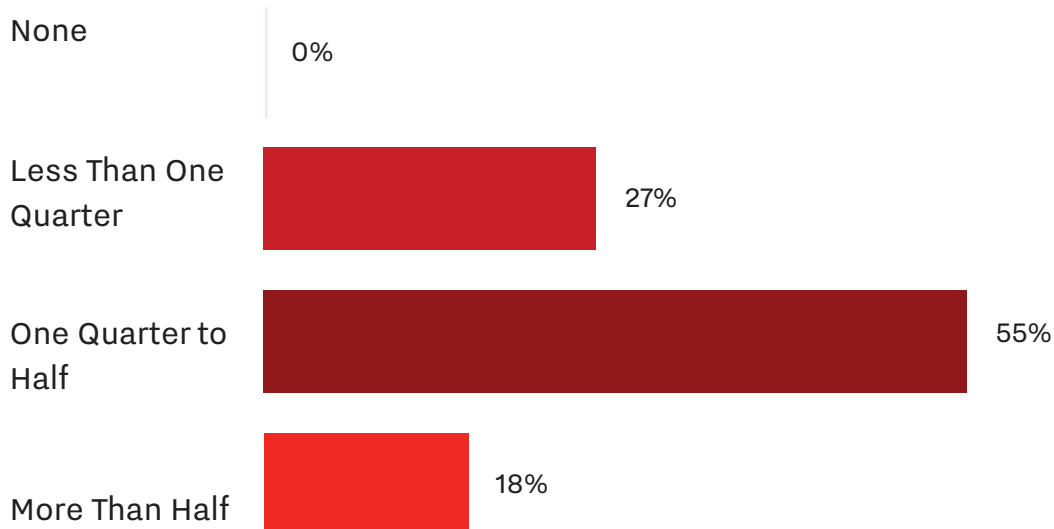
Aerospace



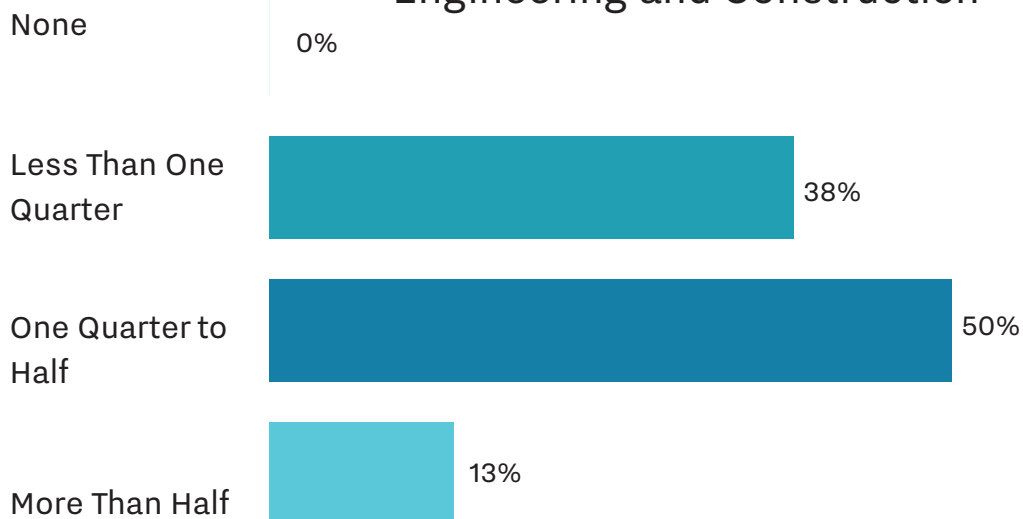
Automotive, Transport & Logistics



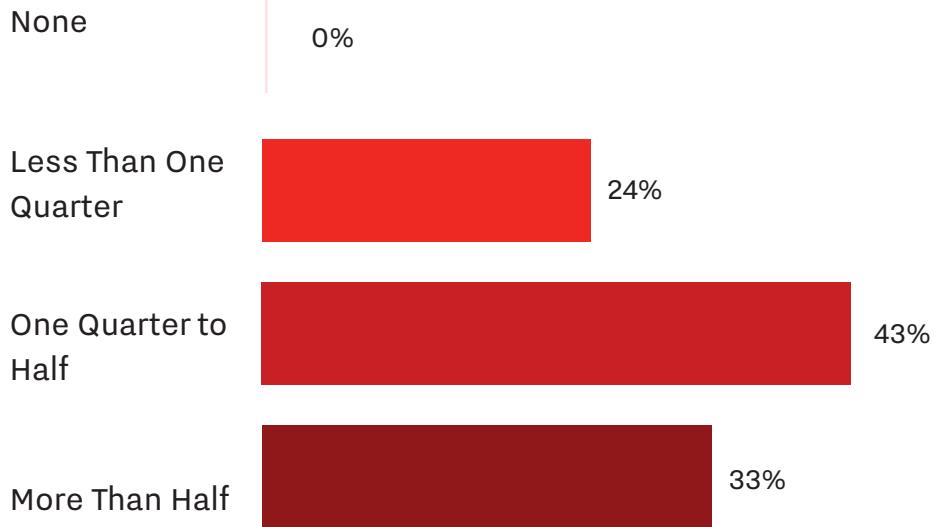
Consumer Goods & Products



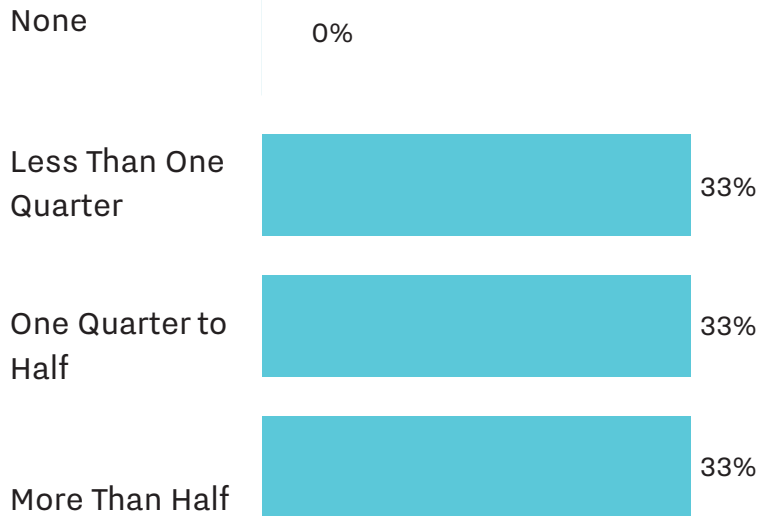
Engineering and Construction



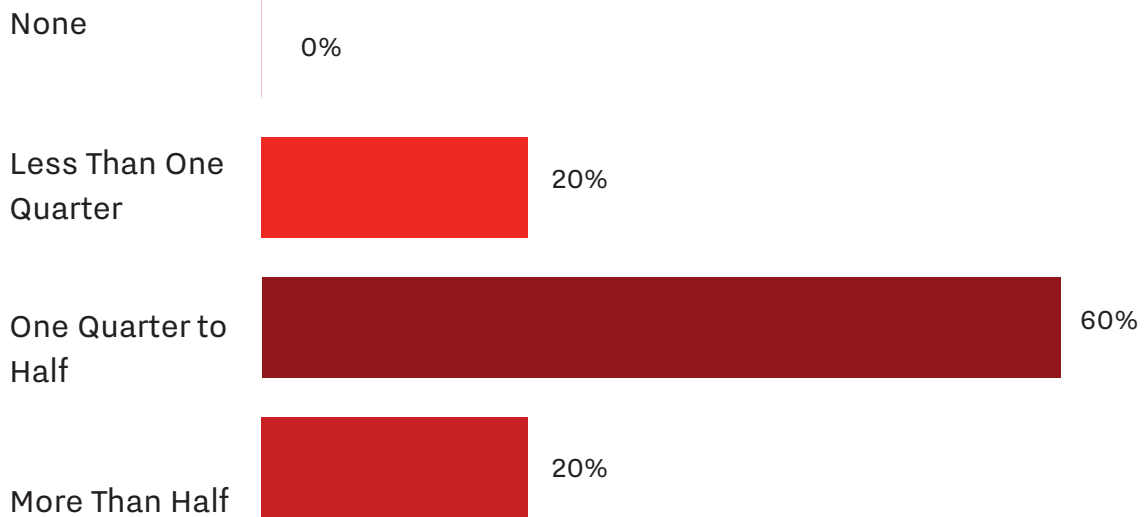
Financial Services



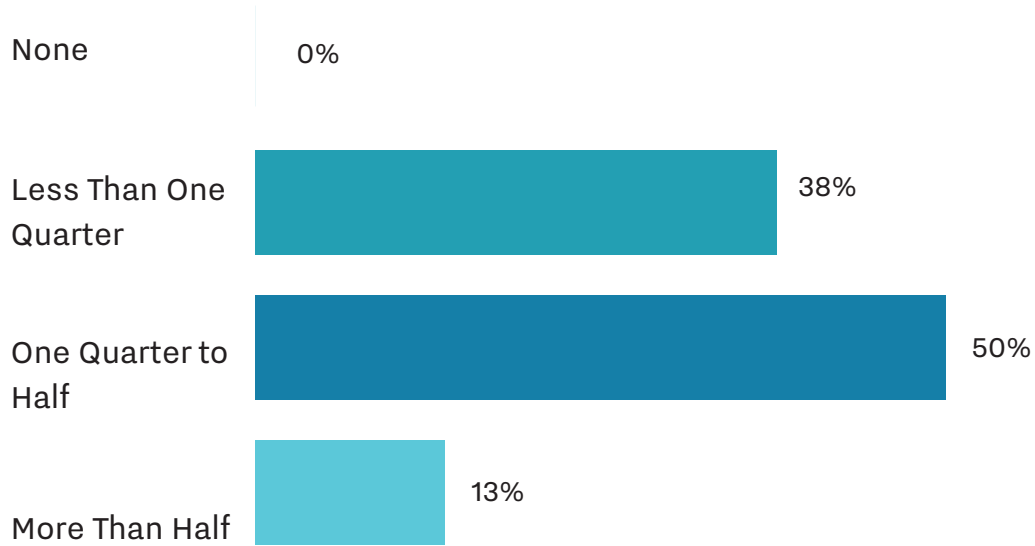
Government & Public Sector



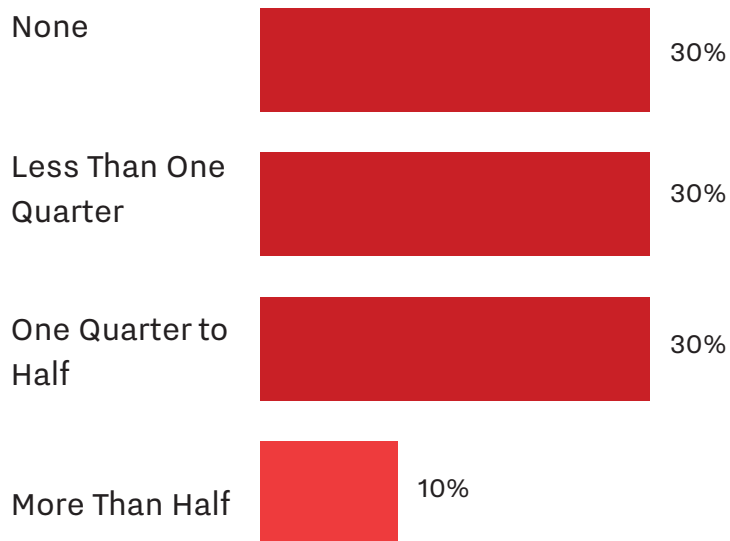
Healthcare



Industrial Manufacturing



Tech Industry



21 Ways That Survey Respondents Communicate Quick Wins

We asked survey respondents to explain how they communicate their quick wins, both internally and externally. Below are 21 of the most representative answers we received.

1. "We use our internal innovation social channel on Slack to share updates."
2. "Most communication is internal, and done via group meetings with business leaders."
3. "We leverage a take on the ROI2 metrics (return on innovation investment) and try to show how new tools, new insights, and small tweaks to existing products all lead to bigger innovation wins."
4. "Awards and recognition activities. One example: Our employees are able to nominate each other to win a CELEBR8 award, which automatically gives that person or team a small prize, or the INNOV8R award, which is chosen once per quarter to highlight wins among the business units and wins a larger prize. All of these are shared through our company's biweekly newsletter as well."
5. "Monthly newsletters to executive team, and an ROI dashboard on the intranet."
6. "We publish monthly reports, host lunch-and-learns, and do product demos."
7. Video.
8. "We are quick to issue press releases for external activities like startup collaborations, for the purpose of signaling the market that we are active."
9. "The change agents present their improvement projects to executives."
10. "Externally: our website, conferences, public channels."
11. "We created a wall of experiments."
12. Internal knowledge management system.
13. "We publish monthly innovation team dashboard and project summaries. We also complete one-page case studies on our final deliverables to post on our intranet team site. We also manage an innovation council meeting every two months and update execs there. You can never over-communicate!"
14. "Roadshows with the leadership team and internal communication via digital signs."
15. "Sometimes, it's just a quick note to senior execs. Always, it's making sure the insight or advance is well-understood and useful to at least some of the people who will be practicing it regularly. Attribution isn't as important to me as adoption."
16. Posts on our Microsoft Sharepoint site... SAP Jam...Yammer... internal "Facebook"-like system.
17. "Regular (monthly) updates to leadership to galvanize their support and receive in-the-moment feedback...usually with minimum viable products there, so they can touch and feel the work and have confidence we are operating in the 'real world' of commercialization."
18. Posts on LinkedIn and other social media platforms.
19. "The change agents who deliver the projects share their stories: Both the project results and their learning journey. A few projects from each cohort get broad exposure up the chain and across departments."
20. "Honestly, something I think about a LOT is how I could be doing a better job of showcasing our work and wins to cross-functional internal audiences."
21. "Any way that works — always with a focus on both users and sponsors."

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

The Psychology of Innovation

**GUIDANCE FROM OUR SPONSOR, PLANBOX
BY LUDWIG MELIK, CEO, PLANBOX**

Planbox is the pioneering provider of cloud-based AI-Powered Agile Innovation Management solutions. The company's family of products include Collaborative Innovation Management, Team Decision Making, and Work Management applications.

Innovation management (IM) systems started out as a departmental solution, used by a few to generate ideas, develop new concepts, or run “Shark tank”-style business competitions. They were generally viewed as a strategic tool used to improve the business. With the recently published ISO 56000 as a globally-recognized standard for innovation management, IM tools are rapidly gaining momentum as a must-have system of record for innovation, widely adopted by organizations looking to formalize and systematize their innovation management practices and processes.

When an organization rolls out a run-the-business type solution like Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), or financial applications, the emphasis is on achieving cost savings, compliance, and efficiency. In general, the owners and managers of these enterprise systems don't think twice about user adoption, since everyone is just expected to use these applications on a daily basis to get work done and run the business. IM solutions are different. Innovation is all about sparking creativity, thinking differently, and discovering new opportunities for improvement or transformation; therefore, how people feel about your innovation processes and program truly matters. The most well-funded IM program and best IM system in the world will fail to deliver results if your employees, customers, partners, and anyone else involved in the innovation activity do not embrace your vision, adopt the right set of behaviors, or take the necessary actions you seek to deliver continuous innovation.

At Planbox's 2019 user conference, innovation managers shared some of the challenges they faced with the type and level of activity by participants:

- “We started out running a few challenges and giving points to people to submit an idea. We got many low-value entries and

had to spend a lot of time going through them. We decided to stop giving points for just submitting an idea.”

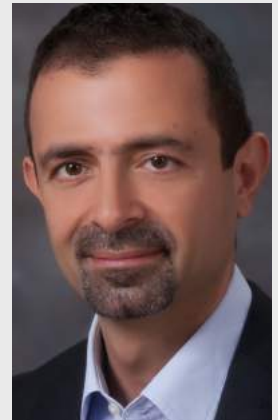
- “We were giving points for people to comment and vote on ideas. What ended up happening was some people started voting and commenting on each other's ideas just to collect points.”
- “I want people to really think it through and submit just one well-developed idea. Did you really think it through before submitting this entry for review? So we now require more information and ask more questions in our idea submission and evaluation processes. It is hard to strike the right balance between making it easy to share and explore, yet ensuring that the collaboration leads to real improvement or innovation.”

So, this begs the question: how do you encourage people to be creative, to submit high-value ideas, sponsor and support the best ideas, and collaborate as a team on developing concepts that have the highest potential for success?

It's important to consider the psychological mechanisms that lead to innovation. The key is for leaders to understand what they must do to create the right corporate culture and mindset that encourage purpose-driven collaboration, abstract thinking, risk-taking without the fear of failure, persistence, open-mindedness, and rebelling against the status-quo.

With 20 years of experience delivering hundreds of innovation management projects for Global 2000 organizations, we recommend to innovation management practitioners to account for and incorporate the following psychological success factors into their innovation program in actionable ways:

1. **Share success stories:** Sharing success stories increases engagement, sparks creativity, and results in higher visibility of your innovation activities and



accomplishments. Success stories should be shared on your innovation portal, internal newsletters, corporate reports, and in some cases even in public relations campaigns.

2. **Organize motivational ‘town halls’:** Plan regular all hands meetings—some casual and some speaker led—where people can share their challenges, wins, losses, and passions in an open and highly-interactive setting.
3. Hold classes and workshops to encourage positive thinking and open-mindedness.
4. Incorporate interviews with employees and innovators so they can share their passions, inspirations, and stories.
5. **Gamify innovation:** Gamification is valuable to measure innovation activity by an individual or team as one aspect of a comprehensive innovation performance evaluation model. Combine the participant’s innovation activity with actual measurable results that have been achieved, such as:
 - Number of directly-attributable success stories: How many ideas owned by the participant actually got implemented, including any measured tangible benefits of those ideas.
 - Number of team success stories: Even if a participant does not have any directly-attributable success stories, account for ideas and concepts he or she contributed to in any way that eventually led to successful business outcomes.
6. **Integrate innovation in your HR process:** Integrate Innovation into your employee evaluation process based on the IM tool’s Employee Innovation Report Card, so that employees’ innovation activity is factored into regular performance reviews.
7. **Innovation management is a top-down and bottom-up process:** Ask everyone

who is involved what kind of environment will empower them to be more creative, passionate, and inspired; then create a collaborative space based on their feedback.

8. **Involve participants from diverse backgrounds and expertise:** You will achieve the best results when you choose problems where sufficient domain knowledge is available to formulate the challenge comprehensively enough so that participants can understand the (technical or business) issue. However, the problem domain should not be so familiar to all participants that they risk being overly strict in defining solution requirements and evaluation criteria which can potentially limit alternative solutions solvers may want to explore.
9. **Every organization and individual is different:** Building a successful innovation system involves many individual and business-specific factors. Don’t attempt to replicate someone else’s success formula. You have to find out, through trial and error, what works best for you and your organization.

The official publication of the new ISO 56000 standard for innovation management, demonstrates the need for IM as a must-have business system. Your CRM, ERP, and accounting system require constant investment in learning, training, planning, management, and improved systems—and a successful IM program is no different. What is very different is the impact people’s feelings and mindset have on your organization’s innovation success. Ignore the psychology of innovation at your own risk. ●

REFERENCES

The Third RWTH Open Innovation Accelerator Survey, 2019

“The Psychology of Innovation Reveals We Can All Be Inspired Geniuses With a Little Practice,” by Nicola Brown

Planbox Agile Innovation Solution

Built to scale from individual teams to large global businesses and organizations, Planbox's award-winning functionality powers end-to-end agile innovation management, business competitions, and corporate venturing across your organization's ecosystem of employees, customers, strategic partners, universities, virtual networks of R&D problem solvers, entrepreneurs and startups.

Planbox believes that both a platform AND a program are necessary to successfully build an innovation management capability in a sustainable, scalable and cost-effective way. Our unique approach ensures community engagement, informed decision-making, smart execution, on-going learning, collaborative co-creation and most importantly, tangible business outcomes.

Our clients have realized billions of dollars in top-line growth and efficiency gains using our Agile Innovation Management Platform and outcomes-based programs.



INTEGRATE agile innovation in your organization in a scalable, sustainable and effective way



IDENTIFY & EXPLOIT the highest-impact opportunities



EMPOWER your employees, customers, strategic partners and external solvers to collaborate on insight discovery and solution-finding activities



DRIVE innovation activity and concept development based on your rules and requirements

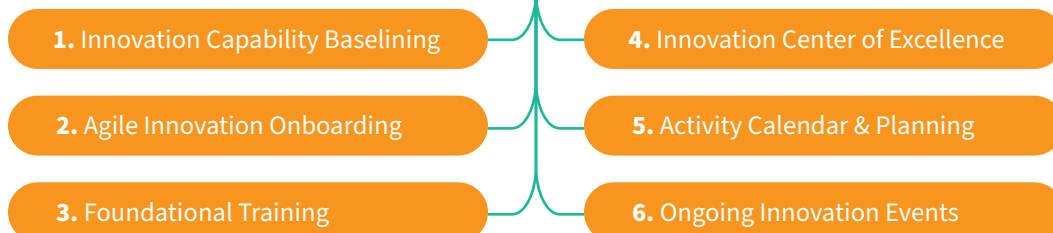
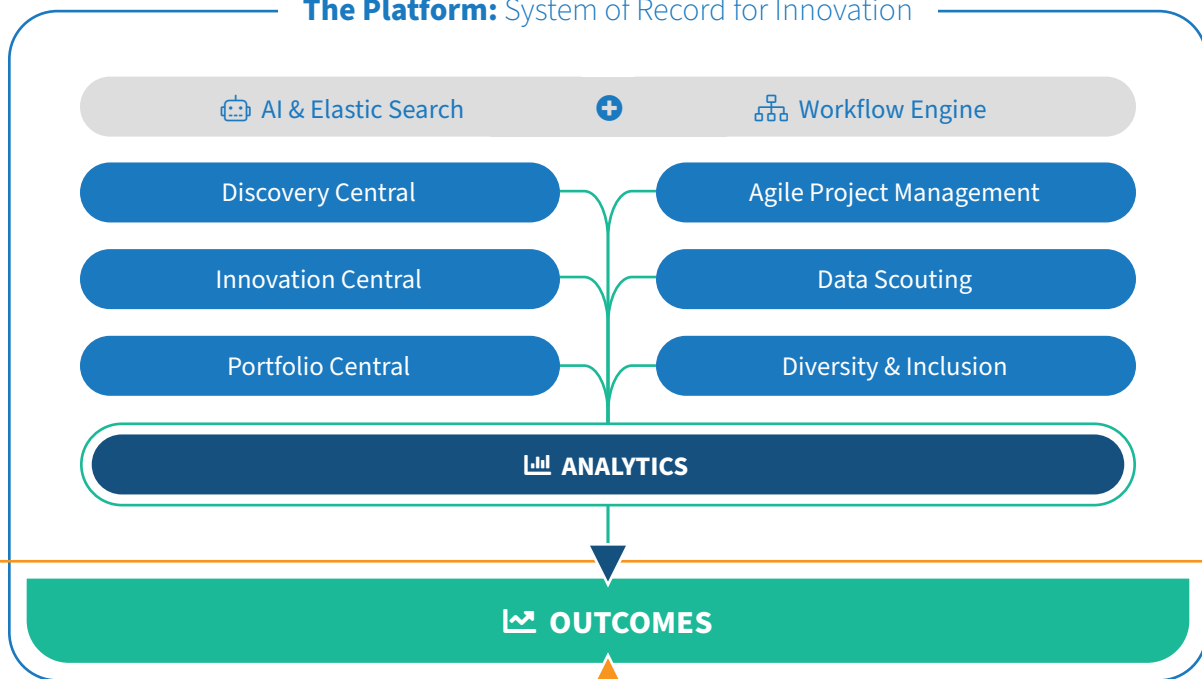


MANAGE innovation portfolios across the organization

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The Platform: System of Record for Innovation



The Program: Essential for Success

CASE STUDIES & PERSPECTIVES

Introducing a New Innovation Management Process

AYUSH SINGH, INNOVATION STRATEGIST, ADTALEM GLOBAL EDUCATION

Based in Illinois, Adtalem is a \$1.2 billion company that operates for-profit higher education institutions around the world, focused on healthcare professions, accounting, marketing, and other fields. It was previously known as DeVry Education Group.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

We didn't have an innovation management process. So we created one. This was a whole new white sheet of paper process for us, and we put it in place in six months. Using this process, from a problem identified at any one of our business units, we can go to a working prototype in a few months, tops.

We have trademarked it – iCampaign. It lives within our Innovation Center of Excellence. We're part of the overall enterprise innovation team.

We identify the problem or opportunity at the business unit using an intake form. These are actual pain points. The right people from the innovation team are notified. We reach out to the person who submitted it. We formulate what the campaign needs to be. As part of that, we have a whole workflow — a whole crowdsourced ideation process. We're going to go through a design sprint, and then prototype the winning ideas. This includes user validation, and it's followed by a pilot of a working prototype. Then, the goal is to productionalize the pilot project, if we want to go to scale.

The key for anyone starting out to create their own innovation management process would be to research, go through the literature, leverage Innovation Leader's reports, and move quickly. There's a lot of navel-gazing that could happen. The key is to have small experiments. Double down on stuff that is working, and scrap the stuff that is not.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

For the initial development of the whole process, it was the core innovation team, which is three people. We do partner initially with external firms for design sprints and digital prototyping — but we will bring that in-house at some point.

You don't need to have a large team, but you do need to be nimble about it. People will end up wearing multiple hats.

We did need executive leadership to sign off on the process, which included the strategy and innovation team, our chief operating officer, and the VP of strategy and innovation.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

It was purely the Innovation Center of Excellence.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

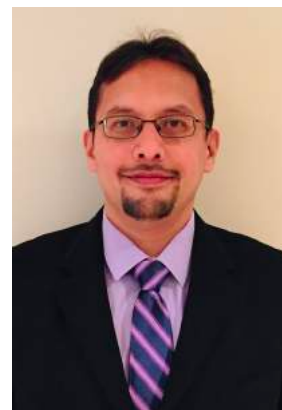
May to October, 2019. We started in May, tested the pieces, came up with a game plan by September, and then launched in October. Now we are doing design sprints and prototyping. We have two winning ideas, but ironically, both of the winners said that the two ideas merged together would be more powerful and have a stronger user base. So we're merging the two.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

Our KPIs are number of ideas generated. We understand that volume wasn't paramount; it's the quality that matters. At the end, we wanted to have 50 quality ideas to look through and filter. And we wanted to have the whole campaign take less than four weeks, and the whole process from campaign launch to a pilot of a working prototype to take two months, tops. We didn't have revenue numbers [as metrics] — just two months from launch to pilot. At Adtalem, we have multiple verticals. Our goal was to have three to four iCampaigns per year. Starting out, we didn't have any ROI numbers, but we are going to be quantifying that and integrating it in.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

We produce a report which lists how many users participated, and what percentage of users participated by department. We also track how many users submitted and voted on ideas. We wanted to know what the business unit participation level was.



That report is shared with the project sponsor leadership. One campaign was for our medical and healthcare vertical. The project sponsor was the leader of the vertical. So she gets the report. They had their own communication plan, and we had one with our enterprise-wide communications team. The challenge is always that there are a lot of things competing for attention. The communication plan was mostly email-based. But we did communicate progress in the campaign, and various deadlines, pretty regularly. Email communication is king, even in the age of social media.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

iCampaign was critical for us to bring about an organizational change in the sharing of ideas. For a big entity like Adtalem, people don't realize that everyone has ideas, and getting [employees'] voices heard through the iCampaigns was critical. It was not just about the ideas, but bringing them to life, and having a slightly more experimental approach to innovation. In a nutshell, we wanted to have an organized approach, not a scattered approach, where you are throwing things against the wall and seeing what sticks. ●

Supporting New Ideas with Seed Funding

RAVI GODBOLÉ, GLOBAL MANAGER OF INNOVATION PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS, RESEARCH & ADVANCED ENGINEERING, AGCO CORP.

Based in Duluth, Georgia, \$9.4 billion AGCO is a leading manufacturer of agricultural equipment and farm optimization services. Its brands include Massey Ferguson, Valtra, and Challenger.

We had been doing seed funding for the last five or six years. We have a 30-person global Research & Advanced Engineering team. They knew that I had some budget, and they would contact me when they had an “out of box” idea. But what about the rest of the organization, since we are only a small fraction of the R&D organization? The question was, “How can we involve more people in the R&D?” So last year, I proposed to bring some transparency and a process to it. And we launched the Seed Funds program.

The seed fund is for wild ideas that are outside of our five focus areas, such as electrification and autonomy. To get funding, all someone has to do is propose their idea in one slide; what’s the scope, tell us what’s in it for the customer, and what’s in it for AGCO. Maybe a few sketches or pictures. Their direct manager agrees to let them use a few hours of their time (say less than 100 hours per year). All we expect is a crude proof-of-concept within six to nine months.

We make sure that their direct manager is OK with them spending 50 or 100 hours a year on it; we don’t want to take them out of their main job. The maximum we will fund is

\$50,000, and the person’s hours get funded out of their own manager’s budget. But the money we provide can pay for materials, a consultant, an external supplier.

Some of the projects we’ve funded were soil sensors, crop sensors, and even new materials. One proposal is a new material for a vehicle component that opens up new design possibilities and also leads to major weight savings. Some of the sensor proof-of-concepts are being considered for new product development.

We have been able to engage 10 to 20 percent of our main R&D organization through this. That was really the goal, since we want to harvest more of their ideas and convert a few of these into new product features. We want to raise the conversion rate from 10 percent today to 25 percent in a few years. Leveraging our R&D organization and conversion are going to be the measures going forward — how many new ideas we receive and how many we convert from proof-of-concept to new product development. ●



Creating a ‘Summer Camp’ for Corporate Innovators

DANIELLE WINANDY, HEAD OF RISK INNOVATION OFFICE, BNP PARIBAS

Headquartered in Paris, BNP Paribas traces its roots in banking back to 1848. It has more than 200,000 employees and a presence in 77 countries. It is the largest bank in the Euro-zone; 2018 revenues were \$47 billion.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

Two years ago, we created some e-learning on innovation. The e-learning are a mix of videos and slides. We had worked with a consultant in creating the modules. But we were struggling to have enough people [taking advantage of] them. They had to go to our management development tool, look for them, and subscribe.

So over the summer of 2019, we created “Innovation Summer Camp.” We put six different e-learning on innovation there — from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours in length — and we spread it to our 5,500 employees in 42 different businesses all around the world. It was about six hours of programming in total. We said, “Let’s just do it and see what happens.” Some of the e-learning were Innovation 101 (what is innovation and what is the process internally). Then Innovation 201 was about methodologies for innovation, like design thinking, lean startup, business model canvas, and jobs to be done. You had to take quizzes to go to the next level.

At the beginning, there was no incentive to complete the Summer Camp, but [later], we rewarded people who finished it with one year [of access to a Harvard Business School online program, ManageMentor.] We said the summer is a good time to improve your skills, take your career to the next level. ... After we had some people who followed it, we asked them to give a testimonial. We put it on our intranet. Out of 5,500 people, more than 2,000 started the e-learning, and 1,250 did all six hours of training during the summer. This was amazing, because we were not expecting such success.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

It was in partnership with human resources – they played a great role. The tools to create the path, and take metrics from the system, are managed by HR. They sent the message to employees.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

It was me, because I didn’t know how to capitalize

on all those e-learning. There was a summer camp organized on AI that I could join for one week in London, from a consultancy. I said, that would be great inside the bank. I was inspired by that idea from outside.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

We had the idea mid-May 2019, but we started to work with HR at the end of May. We launched it at the end of June. And we finished it September 15.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

I thought I would be happy with 250 people doing everything in the Summer Camp program. If we had 500, it will be amazing. We got almost three times more. And we are under a lot of budgetary constraints, but this helped us to tell top management that cutting the innovation efforts is not a great idea. People are ready to do it. Now we are getting budgets back...

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

We have one-hour with the executive committee every month. We reported it there. And we have 49 RISK innovation champions all around the organization – we reported it to them. We reported it to all the people on our intranet, and in a mass mailing. And we sent personalized emails to the winners of the Harvard management site access. (We also sent an email to everyone who didn’t get the site access.) Also, we have screens in our offices, so we put it on the screens also.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

I really believe that innovation is a consequence of how well you support people, and how you give them the opportunity to be at their best. ...For us, it was a way to show that everything we’ve been investing in for the past two-and-a-half years – on people, events, workshops – is changing the company, transforming it, and we should not stop doing it now. You don’t want to sacrifice long-term opportunities because of a short-term mindset. ●



Connecting Startups in a Portfolio with Business Units

AYAL SOMECH, DIRECTOR OF PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT, BOEING HORIZONX VENTURES

Aerospace giant Boeing created the HorizonX Ventures team in 2017 to “unlock the next generation of game-changing ideas, products, and markets.” It has made investments in 3D printing, urban drones, satellite communications, and hypersonic propulsion technology.

WHAT IS THE QUICK WIN?

The Boeing HorizonX Ventures Portfolio Development team is responsible for the traction and success of our portfolio companies, while working to introduce their various technologies and capabilities inside of Boeing and across our supply chain. Here we demonstrate the additional value-add for our startups besides investment dollars, which includes identifying and scoping out meaningful projects on which both parties can collaborate. At times, the best ideas come from the most unexpected directions.

In an attempt to increase visibility and diversify thoughts and suggestions, the Portfolio Development team collaborated with members of an emerging leaders development group within Boeing to familiarize participants with the Boeing HorizonX Ventures Portfolio, and brainstorm potential collaborations between the portfolio companies and different teams from the core business. The group received overviews of the portfolio companies and then brainstormed projects in a “roundtable” setting. Out of 300-plus ideas sourced, 10 were selected for further refinement, where the Boeing HorizonX Portfolio Development team worked alongside teams of participants to craft project memos for their ideas. This was a great way to expose participants to working with a startup and how Boeing can leverage this talent pool to create value for both parties.

Building off that engagement, the Boeing HorizonX Portfolio Development team launched an enterprise-wide initiative to inspire Boeing employees to brainstorm potential collaborations with the portfolio companies as part of an enterprise-level project – “Boeing’s Innovation Week.” Employees are encouraged to share their ideas and submit a well-thought out plan and business model for solving challenges across the enterprise and for our customers. Harnessing this existing platform, Boeing HorizonX launched a competition which called for ideas and problem-solving suggestions [that would leverage] the Boeing HorizonX portfolio companies.

This process has generated 50 unique submissions so far and refined ideas that call for a collaboration between the Boeing HorizonX portfolio companies and Boeing business units. The hope is to take and fund at least one of the ideas to an end solution in the next twelve months.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

We worked with the coordinators of Boeing’s emerging leadership development program, the Innovation Week planning team, and Boeing Communications to get the word out about the Innovation Week portfolio development campaign and solicit ideas.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

The previous Boeing HorizonX Ventures Portfolio Development director, Saiesh Reddy.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

Boeing’s Innovation Week ran from October 21-25 2019, with submissions accepted until Nov 4.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

The objective was to engage 200-plus leaders at Boeing, and familiarize them with the Boeing HorizonX Ventures portfolio companies. We had also hoped to identify three to five ideas to explore further after the initial workshop.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

Outcomes were communicated via email to workshop participants, and through intranet articles about the workshop.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

This fit into our strategy of getting more people at Boeing exposed to the Boeing HorizonX portfolio, and helping them brainstorm ways Boeing could partner with startups for innovative solutions. ●



CAPTURING OPEN INNOVATION METRICS

NAVIN KUNDE, DEPARTMENT MANAGER, OPEN INNOVATION AT THE CLOROX COMPANY

Consumer products maker The Clorox Company has 8,700 employees, \$6.2 billion in revenue, and a history that dates back to 1913 and the creation of Clorox bleach. Today, it owns brands like Brita water filters, Burt's Bees, Glad trash bags, and Kingsford charcoal.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

I decided that we needed to find a way to do metrics for our open innovation team that covers all the different businesses at Clorox. We needed to know how we were doing against each of those businesses — where we are having success, where we are not, and what can we learn from each other. There was a lot of cross-pollination that was part of the goal here.

I ran it by my team, and they had lots on their plates already, but they understood the intention here — that it's important to put the right metrics in place in order to learn from each other and know that we are on track.

But it was also intimidating that nobody had done this before. I talked to a lot of folks in the industry, and nobody had a lot of success with open innovation metrics. That was a challenge. I even talked to Henry Chesbrough, who coined the term “open innovation” back in 2004 and wrote a book by that name. And he basically confirmed that, to his knowledge, nobody had really put metrics in place for open innovation that were actionable and tangible.

The first few months were just understanding the state of the metrics in the industry and understanding whether there was anybody out there that we could learn from. The answer by July/August 2019 was no, figure it out yourself.

[A few examples of the metrics we're measuring include]:

- How many times during the last quarter have we enabled a business team to look externally in their category/industry?
- How many “new tool” pilots are we planning to run next quarter?

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Mainly the open innovation team.

Even as we were debating this idea about metrics, [we were] asking, “What are we measuring and why are we measuring it?” It led us to do a lot of introspection about where we add value, versus where it is just activity that is for activity's sake.

We're focused on impact and not activity. So we were asking our internal stakeholders, “Where do you find the most impact? Where do you not?” And then we realized that we had to focus on those impactful events, and then work backwards to figure out what led to that impact. Then we would need to start measuring those things. Not everything that can be measured matters, and not everything that matters can be measured. We were trying to get to what matters, instead of just measuring what we can measure.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

I was at the Innovation Leader [Field Study in] San Francisco [in February 2019]. ... I met Shashi Jain from Intel, and I listened to one of his presentations about metrics. It was very interesting, and I started thinking about metrics. I talked to Shashi...about how hard it is to actually put metrics in place. But it's also important because it helps motivate the team, as well as allowing you to know whether you are on track or not.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

I would have loved to have [the metrics in place] like a week after I talked to Shashi. ... I was impatiently waiting for this. We mocked it up and we just started doing it. It was really rough and tumble in the beginning. We had elements of what we were trying to do. We started doing things in stages. So we broke it down into multiple things. ... It was [around] eight months.

I have a “dare to suck” mantra around here — we have to dare to suck. Go out there and do stuff, even if it's not perfect. It's okay to do a soft launch and it'll suck and it's okay, because that's how you learn. So that's why we've gotten this far this quickly, because we dared to suck.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

We started doing one-pagers for the projects that truly had impact. People were measuring activity: how much of X did we do, how much of



Y did we do, how many meetings [did we have]? ... But at the same time, since we were doing interviews and understanding where the impact was, we started doing simple one-pagers,... boiling it all down into single-page PowerPoints. ... We did a mockup in [April to June 2019], a little pilot within our group. And then in [July to September 2019], we rolled out all of those one-pagers to the VPs. So every VP that we were serving, whether it was Cleaning or Specialty [Products] or the Burt's Bees business...they got to see all of the one-pagers that the team had. And then we got feedback: "This is awesome," or "This is kind of eh — what's so great about that?" So by September, we got a really good handle on what was impactful and what was not. And we were quickly able to dive deep into the things that were impactful, thinking about what did we do that made that impactful?

We realized there were three or four things that we needed, and there was this team that started to emerge. ... I created a house of metrics, [which has]...allowed us to zero in on where each business unit needs help. And they can learn from each other. So that cross-pollination vision that I had six months ago is actually coming true, where I can say..."Health and Wellness is nailing it, and Cleaning is not doing so well. So can you learn from each other?"

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

The one-pagers have really helped us tell stories, because we've gone from a 20-page deck to a one-pager [that spells out the] situation, action, and result. And I'm ramping it up even further with one person on my team who is really good at 30-second [elevator pitches about the one-pagers]. ... We're learning from her about how to quickly and concisely tell your story. We're also going external to learn from storytellers at other companies, we are hiring people and bringing

them in. So I have a very focused way of directing my training budget. We've gone from one-pagers to the 30-second, elevator pitch. ...

Our next aspiration is to grind that one-pager down into a one-liner. Can you imagine a one-liner sent to all the VPs with a link in it? And that link takes you to the one-pager, and you can click a link there and read a 20-page deck if you're interested. ...

Storytelling is important, because it allows you to influence. That is so hard, especially when you are an innovator and you're often having to tell a story or make leaders do something they don't want to do, or that is not in their short-term interest. You have to be very compelling at telling that story from that data. You can't just be waving your hands and pontificating. You have to really understand what their pain points are, and be a painkiller not a vitamin.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

So many innovation teams are working in places that they're super-passionate about, but they're disconnected from the business. And I think that was the magic bullet that I got out of this: Make sure you are relevant. Make sure you're working on things people care about. ... In January 2020, I'm going to our leadership team to recommend that we double-down on those impactful things, and stop focusing on those less impactful things, which is going to be a major strategic shift for us and is going to be not very popular, because people are very used to us working on those less impactful things.

Now we know which bets are going to pay off and which ones are not paying off. And this data is enabling us to do that. It also gives people the reassurance that we are not going to go off track too much. The metrics will tell us if we are going off track, because we are measuring where the impact is. ... ●

Identifying Which Assets Need Repair (and Which Don't)

CHAD BRADY, DIRECTOR, DUKE ENERGY

Based in Charlotte, N.C., \$24.5 billion Duke Energy distributes electric power and natural gas to roughly nine million customers from Ohio to Florida. It manages 280,000 miles of electric distribution lines, and also operates 3,000 megawatts of solar and wind power facilities.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

We ideated, prototyped, built, tested, and deployed an analytical model aimed at identifying broken capacitors on the grid. The previous process used a time-based approach, while the analytical model uses a condition and value-based approach. ...

We had a time-based approach where we would go out and review assets on the grid — this particular asset is a capacitor. What a capacitor does is it monitors voltage and kWh that go down the line. If one area starts to degrade... a capacitor's function is to jump in and say, "We need to boost that voltage." And so if a capacitor is broken and not doing its job, then it...puts more stress on other assets. Crews would say, "It's been three years since we've gone and looked at those capacitors. We've got a little bit of budget for maintenance, let's go out and review where those are."

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

We had a data scientist on our team, and I had called him in to look at another product that we were ramping up. We were still working on some of the scoping and just needed some additional ramp-up time on the other product. ... In a previous life, this data scientist was an electrical engineer. And he came to me and said, "Hey, in getting all of the data requests for this other product, I noticed that I've got a lot of data around capacitors. Have you guys ever done anything with it?" No, we haven't done anything with it. He said, "Well, let me see what I can do. I think I can come up with a quick win for us."

In a matter of days, he had built a quick little database, and said, "Chad, it looks to me like we have in...the Carolinas region... about 4,500 capacitors that are out on the grid. If I were going to call this model done, and we were going to try to make an improvement, I would roll trucks on 1200 of these capacitors today. And I could say with about 90 percent confidence that they

would be broken and we'd be able to get repairs on them."

And so from there, we started looking at the value and the benefit realizations that go along with that. So the previous process, we would roll a truck and a crew would go out and inspect it and say, "Is it broken? Yes. No." And then that would make its way back to a repair crew who would go out and say, "We know those are broken. Let's go do this." And so we ran a pair-wise comparison where we wanted to see what the difference is [between the traditional approach this new approach].

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

[It took] 90 days...from his idea, to us having a prototype and working that model with...the business. He had a database up and running in a matter of days. And from there, it takes a couple weeks to curate things. He ran out into the field, and he checked a couple things himself and went back to some of his old counterparts in the electrical engineering side of the business and wanted to vet some of this.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

The previous process yielded a 10 percent hit rate. So they were going out and they were finding one in 10 capacitors that were broken, and then we still have to do the two different truck rolls. What we found in ours was it was a 100 percent hit rate. ... And so from there we really just worked with the business and said, "Is this valuable? Would you be interested in changing the process, the way things work, and eliminating an initial truck roll?"

[We're also looking at a methodology for recouped revenue. For example,] you and I go to a bar this afternoon and we sit down and order two beers. Let's say that they pour my beer and they pour it absolutely perfect. It doesn't have any foam at the top or anything like that — I'm going to get 16 ounces of a full beer. When they



pour your beer, it's beer on the bottom and half of the glass is full of foam on the top, we're both going to pay the exact same price for that. But you're not going to get as much of what you ordered. Energy is the exact same way, and what the capacitor is supposed to do is it's supposed to ensure that you get delivered the amount of energy that is supposed to come to you. And when it doesn't come to you, the way it manifests itself is in increased outages. ... So you're just not going to be satisfied. ...

There's [also] an avoided generation cost that we would be able to save and so in addition to the avoided generation costs, the increase in revenue with making sure that we're delivering 100 percent power without any "foam" attached to it. We would also be able to look at decreasing truck rolls where they were doing the inspection first. So there's an efficiency gain, there's some cost savings, there's some fuel savings.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

We're a product-based organization and we like to innovate on how we create our pipeline. ...

We have four products that are actively being worked on, and that's kind of our bread and butter. But where innovation comes into

it is, let's say that we take a concept like load disaggregation. Load disaggregation is where we can reach in and say, "We know that you come home around this particular time, you start running a dishwasher, your heat comes on..." And so it's picking apart all of the [electrical] load that is coming into your house. And then we can make recommendations on ways that you can be more efficient from that.

So several of those products that are the active bread and butter, they utilize information around load disaggregation. What we're really starting to figure out is if we can carve out time or resources and dedicate people to those parallel functions, that's where the quick wins happen. In this case, it was downtime. And he was discovering that he needed this particular data set for the products that we were waiting on. And he was able to say, "Capacitors are just one asset class. Why don't I just hone in on this asset class and figure out what I can do that would be beneficial in this area?" So it was a one-off that was a quick win. But I think what we learned from that is because we've got so many parallel functions across these products, when we dedicate people, time, and resources to them, that's where true quick wins and innovation occur. It's not really in the products themselves. ●

Filling in the Gaps

KELLY WHITE, DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION, HELEN OF TROY

Helen of Troy, headquartered in Hamilton, Bermuda, manufactures and sells housewares, beauty, and health brands like Oxo, Braun, Honeywell, and Revlon — some under license agreements with other companies. The company's 2018 revenues were \$1.5 billion.

In terms of quick wins, we've looked at so many different opportunities. And what it comes down to is, you have to take a core competency and something you're already good at...and find different ways to sell it — different channels or a different consumer target.

From a product development standpoint, some of our products take at least 18 months to two years to launch. So for us, a quick win still takes about two years. In some cases, that's really mandated by regulatory requirements. We have health care products, like thermometers, that need FDA approval. So there's some time built into the schedule for that.

There are building blocks that we need from a long-term perspective. Those are the [projects] that are three- to five-year product development projects. There are people that are working on those, but then there are gaps we need to fill. A lot of our business is seasonally-based. We have such a wide portfolio of different categories that if we have one bad season — for example,

with our Honeywell heaters, if it happens to not be a cold winter, we don't sell a lot of heaters. ... But it's offset by having such a wide portfolio. Because we face those challenges every year, there are always gaps to be filled...to meet our goals and what we've promised to our shareholders. And so quick wins can help fill in some of those gaps.

Focus...is really important for any kind of quick win. It's easy to get distracted. When you're trying to make everything perfect and do all the deep dives into the analysis, sometimes it's easy to get caught up in making everything perfect, but for a quick win, you have to count on your gut and the core competencies of your organization. ●



Getting Scientists Thinking More Like Businesspeople

ALEX BYELASHOV, VP OF INNOVATIONS & BREWING SOLUTIONS, JOHN I. HAAS

John I. Haas is North America's top supplier of hops to brewers. The company is headquartered in Washington, DC, with an innovation center in Yakima, Wash. It is part of the family-owned Barth-Haas Group, the world's largest supplier of hops.

Too often, the R&D staff of an organization takes a rather narrow approach on product development — that of only dealing with the “technical” aspects of an endeavor. They shouldn't necessarily be faulted in this, for it is certainly their primary purpose. However, I wanted my technical staff at Haas to broaden their scope to consider the business fundamentals, such as determining costs, and perhaps even the pricing, of a potential new product. This approach surprised many in the group because it represented such a paradigm shift from conventional thinking. Some asked, ‘Why do I need to do this? It's a commercial task.’

Including a business mindset in the thinking of the technical team will actually keep development work focused on the value proposition for the ultimate user, the customer. It also helps in communicating with other departments in the organization, particularly with the group that will take the innovation from the technical realm into commercial reality.

Our first opportunity to advance this approach was with the development, and ultimate commercialization, of a product called Incognito. Incognito was designed to deliver a unique hop aroma and flavor to brewers, but as a substantial benefit, it also helps brewers save on their brewing process yields dramatically. Furthermore, Incognito is a cost saver: it's a concentrated liquid product, resulting in lower

shipping costs than the hop pellets it's designed to replace.

So I asked the technical team some key points to consider: Why would brewers want to use this product? What would it cost to make, and what would we do with the by-products generated in the process? Finally, how would we price it? This last point was particularly crucial, because we needed pricing that benefited customers as well as our own bottom line; if the price was wrong, the entire project may need to be re-done, and it was better to realize that from the start.

It took some time to gather and crunch the data, but my team took the lead to build costing models that compared Incognito to existing product alternatives as well as measured the economic benefits Incognito delivered to brewers. With this basic information regarding costs and benefits, we presented our models to Haas' collective management to be considered, challenged, and fine-tuned.

With the technical team's non-traditional input, not only did we provide an impetus for continuing of the project, but we also helped introduce Incognito to its initial users (the early adopters), explain how it brings value to the customer, and show the distinctive features that set it apart from other products.

Sales orders of the product have been impressive, even before Incognito's official commercial launch in May 2018. I believe Incognito demonstrates the effectiveness of our new paradigm in innovation. ●



Deploying AI for Language Translation

LAURA LEE, SENIOR MANAGER OF DIGITAL INNOVATION, KWS GROUP

With more than 5,000 employees in 70 countries, the KWS Group is one of the world's biggest suppliers of seeds to the agriculture industry. The digital innovation accelerator at KWS was created in 2018 to facilitate new collaborations with the technology sector.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

Our team's goal is to test emerging digital technologies that will change the future of farming. Our model is set up to bring these technologies to a company site for testing. We quickly discovered that language barriers were an issue — our company is active in 70 countries across the globe. We knew we'd need some kind of translation tool to first establish effective multilingual communication, before introducing any crazy new changes to company sites.

We found an initial use case we considered a “quick win,” wherein we could test an AI natural language processing tool for both the spoken and written word. Our company's headquarters is in a rural area of Germany, and the receptionists there often are the first point of contact for trucks dropping off shipments from Ukraine, Italy, France, Russia, Belarus, etc. Since implementation, the [translation] technology has helped massively cut down confusion, reducing misdirected shipments, providing more immediate directions, and overall, bridging communication gaps.

KWS is a pretty big Microsoft company. So we found an existing tool called Microsoft Translator that existed within our Microsoft Office Suite. Not a lot of people knew about [this tool] in the company. ... It wasn't advertised that this was something that we could all utilize. So we really dug into that. We went through trainings for the tool, and we got it up and running on a tablet at the reception station at the front desk. And [we trained] the receptionists on how to use it, and did some tests in real time, where drivers would come in, and they could interact with the front desk receptionist and get a real time translation.

WHO WAS INVOLVED

It was really just our team and then the users. As I mentioned, the tool we use is a Microsoft tool. So in this case, we didn't really need to

bring in any technology developers — it was something that we already had access to. And it was relatively easy to go through the training and use. The individual on our team who led the project was one of our project managers. ... And then it was the end users, the front desk receptionists, that we used for the pilot.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME

September 2018 to February 2019. [But] it's still ongoing. ... We're looking at the other use cases. ... It's helpful, because we have this success story with this initial language translation tool. So now they can bring that to other people in the company and say, “Hey, look, we tried this here, this is what happened, this is what worked in these ways.” As you can imagine, as a company that's active in 70 countries and has 5000 employees, there are a lot of uses for language tools. ... So now we're exploring where we might take this next.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES

There are some potential ROI numbers we can put on it things like the reduced time that an interaction took. The front desk receptionist wouldn't have to go hunting around the company trying to find someone who potentially spoke the native tongue of a truck driver. [It also may reduce] the confusion, and the chance that the truck driver interpreted [the receptionist's] directions wrong and then brought the shipment to the wrong location.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

A lot of it was person-to-person communication, letting them know how it went, and what they could expect. We also did a bit of internal promotion, since this is truly an HR thing. It has helped our internal processes. It's not like we were creating a new service or product or finding new customers — it was just improving



an internal process in the company. A lot of the promotion we did afterwards focused on internal promotions; we have a company blog and we posted on that.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

There's a difference between being a global company and being a company that has business in multiple countries. KWS, as a strategy, is transitioning from a company that does business in many countries around the globe, to being

a truly global company. That has been reflected in a couple different things that the company has done recently. ... We just acquired a [seed] company called Pop Vriend, and that's based in the Netherlands. Additionally, our company just opened up a second office in Berlin, which is a pretty big step. ... We're calling it our global transaction center, and it's consolidating a lot of the functions around HR and procurement. This whole idea of going global [requires that we] ensure that we're effectively communicating with people all over the world. So this project aligns with that part of the company's strategy. ●

Developing a New Startup Investing Strategy

EITA KITANI, VP, MITSUBISHI CORPORATION

Japan's Mitsubishi Corporation is a collection of 10 business groups that operate in industries spanning urban development, mining and minerals, automotive, and consumer products. In 2019, revenues were \$145 billion.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

About three years ago, Mitsubishi set up what we call the M-Lab in Silicon Valley. The idea was to put a team on the West Coast that could understand the real problems that the business groups at Mitsubishi had, and monitor what was happening in the startup world that might relate. I now run our Boston branch, but was at the M-Lab for three years.

One of the first investments we made could be considered a quick win. It was a Vancouver startup called MineSense, which offers an IOT sensor and analytics for mining.

In copper mines in North and South America, the easy resources are already gone. It is getting more difficult to get good quality copper, because it's in more difficult areas. They take samples of rocks and try to figure out how much copper is contained in them.

The traditional way we'd been doing it had been to dig some samples, send them to the lab in town, and then a week later, the result comes out. Even with that approach, often, many of the decisions made from the samples are not to go forward.

With the system that MineSense developed, when you dig into certain rocks or parts of the mountain, the sensor immediately captures how much copper is there, and the quality level. You don't need to send the sample down the mountain; you can immediately know where to dig. It could save millions in cost if this is deployed in a more scalable way. Already, it is starting to show some results [in our operations.]

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

We have had a new business development person locally in Vancouver, who has been working in [the mining] field for almost 15 years. But the challenge she had was, as a local person in Vancouver, she had lacked opportunities to talk with the headquarters people who really know what they want, or may not know what they want but are looking for something. So she had been sending

ideas to Tokyo, and often getting no response.

Then came the M-Lab concept three years ago. The person in Vancouver started to talk with our M-Lab people, and with that Silicon Valley hub structure in place, they made the decision to invest in MineSense.

WHAT WAS TIMEFRAME?

In 2016, we started M-Lab. We had a minerals group person assigned to Silicon Valley by the end of December, and I think the MineSense investment happened in 2017.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

At that time, it was more about the low-hanging fruit, which was easy to understand. It was about efficiency improvement. [The company] already had the budget to invest in startups in Tokyo, but where and what to invest in was not too clear. The keyword people used was "digital mining," but the definition was broad and vague. That "digital mining" concept became a little more clear, by trying out something [and making a first investment.]

So the objective was better [mining] efficiency, but also as a catalyst to better define the "digital mining" strategy.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

MineSense was purely about the mining group. But it became a leading example that we did share throughout corporate. Twice a year, my boss and I [and others] travel to Japan and do this conference – a gathering of 200-300 people from within headquarters. We explain what is happening in Silicon Valley and North America. We brought [the MineSense] example up. Then other groups like chemicals, or mobility, or retail noticed how the Silicon Valley office works, and what kind of opportunities there are in the North



America region. So we did disseminate that case throughout corporate, so that other business groups were able to refer to it and learn from it.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

Realistically, we [have] about 10 different corporate strategies, depending on the group. All decisions and investments come from 10 different verticals. There is no central corporate VC group. But with carbon management, for

example, the mining industry emits a lot of greenhouse gases. The power group does, as do the petro and chemical groups. It's a common issue for multiple groups. What we're seeing with the Silicon Valley M-Lab is that these related groups are coming together and looking at certain opportunities. If that moves forward, there could be a concept that we could or should have an overall corporate level of corporate venture capital. But already, for certain topics, we are starting to see some cross-group or cross-vertical collaboration. ●

Gathering Ideas from the Whole Organization

PATTI BROOKE, DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION, PREMIERA BLUE CROSS

Premiera is a non-profit Blue Cross Blue Shield licensed health insurer based in Washington State, serving more than two million customers in Washington and Alaska. The company has more than 3,200 employees in those states.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

We launched a company-wide crowdsourcing campaign around how we can surprise and delight our customers. We generated close to 500 ideas. We had almost 80 percent participation across the company, which included people who submitted ideas or were engaged with the voting process. After the executive team applied their criteria, we wound up with four top ideas. Two have been pretty straightforward to implement, and are in motion now. One involves delivering care boxes to newly-diagnosed cancer patients, with some comfort items and an acknowledgment that the company is aware of what they're going through. The other involves delivering baby boxes to rural mothers. The other two involve accessing your immunization records. ... It's pretty complicated. And another one...involves how to manage surprise billing, and billing communications.

We sent the top four winners to Disney World to participate in the Disney Institute's week-long customer experience program.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Our former Vice President of Innovation & Strategic Investments, Torben Nielsen, had used crowdsourcing at [a prior employer.] He brought [the crowdsourcing tool] Spigit in here. When I joined about a year-and-a-half ago, he had run a mini-pilot with key stakeholders, just to show people how it worked. That pilot went pretty well. Then we said, "Let's do this company-wide." I got handed that project, and worked with a cross-functional team in marketing, operations, HR, communications, and customer experience to set success metrics.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

Torben did. He was a big believer that crowdsourcing is one tool in the toolbox for an innovation team — a mechanism to have people visualize that their ideas can contribute value to the company, and for executives to embrace bottoms-up thinking.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

I came in in April 2018. We worked through the summer to do all the socializing, and launched the day after Labor Day. There was signage everywhere; you couldn't avoid it. By beginning of November, we announced the winners. ...

Ideas that are eventually going to touch the customer take time to execute. Our IT division also did a crowdsourcing campaign, and it was more internally focused, on ideas to improve efficiency and job satisfaction. Five ideas were selected, and those are fast to implement. They involve things like making wait times at our internal tech hub [help desk] more visible to employees, putting desktop whiteboards in place, and offering people more learning and development opportunities.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

We were tracking engagement. We wanted high participation. We wanted 50-100 ideas. We had almost 500. We were blown away by the employees who engaged and the raw numbers of ideas.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

We have time at the monthly officers and directors meeting to report out progress, engagement, and implementation, and to determine if we should scale [particular ideas.] For employees, we have some articles on the intranet site. ... We had a box-building party, so employees could participate in creating those boxes for patients. We got a high level of involvement in building the boxes, and people loved seeing notes come back from patients, with names removed. We put together about 500 boxes.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

It helped people find opportunities to be more efficient, and think of ways to do their job differently. It's all about building those muscles, which can be applied to all of the core strategic initiatives of the company. This was a way to start training those muscles. ●



Designing a Bounty Program for Innovators

GWENN PETERS, INNOVATION LEADER, ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisc., Rockwell Automation sells hardware and software related to industrial automation, safety, and digital transformation. The company has 23,000 employees and \$6.7 billion in annual revenues.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

[We] launched a reverse-pitch “bounty” program, an empowering, Wild-West themed vehicle for on-going, internal innovation. ... It got started to complement other programs we had in place. We had been doing Shark Tanks for a few years and had a lot of success around that. There was a Global Innovation Challenge being done across the company. But those were very event-based and very competitive. ...

Some people would rather do anything but stand in an auditorium and talk in front of a bunch of people and give a pitch. So [the bounty] program is a complement to that. It's not competitive. It's not event-based. It's evergreen, it's continually going, and it's a lower amount of effort with respect to something like a Shark Tank, where you're curating an idea from scratch and developing a brand new business case. ... And so bounty is about 20 to 40 hours a person with a team of around two to four people. It's kind of a quick win program. Once a team has signed up, they get three months [to work on the bounty] with no competition. ...

The ideas for the bounties can come from a variety of sources. They can come from problems identified in our annual employee engagement survey. Very often it comes from one-on-one conversations with employees about what their pain points are in their day job. And it can also come from leadership when they identify a roadblock in the way that we're working. ...

A deadline is immediately set once that team is formed. It hasn't happened yet, but should a team fail to meet their deadline or fail to make significant progress by the deadline, we could open up the bounty for another team to work on it. It is completely voluntary, and the teams form based on whether it's a topic they want to learn more about, topics they have expertise on, or just people they want to work with or get exposure to [so they can] grow their network.

And all of the rewards, we have a program

called Bravo, [which is] a point-based rewards program where you can have a bank account of Bravo points that then you can turn in for travel or shopping in the marketplace. So each bounty has a reward attached, and then the team splits that reward evenly.

The other big difference between this and something like a Shark Tank is that Shark Tanks tend to be very product-focused, and bounty for the most part is about process innovation. It doesn't mean it's entirely internal, because sometimes our processes are still customer-facing, and our customers can benefit from that. But about 80 percent of our bounties have been around process innovation.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

My boss, me, and two of my peers.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

We first conceived of it in November 2017. We launched it in February 2018.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

When we launched the program, we had 21 bounties. ... We kind of just crossed our fingers, because we didn't know how it would be perceived. And it was a raging success. In two days we had 11 teams sign up. The same organization that was complaining when they had to do a Shark Tank was very excited for this different format. ...

[We're measuring] participation levels and completed bounties. We also measure how many of our global regions have participated... the number of businesses or functions participating across the company. We had one particular bounty that was set to save 13,000 engineering hours a year. So we actually did go through and measure the potential savings from that one. But most of these, we didn't want to burden the team with measuring financial impact. We wanted to



kind of keep it fun. And because it is a quick win thing, and doesn't really need a lot of resources to maintain, we haven't been asked to justify the program. It has this cult following and everybody recognizes it provides benefits.

We haven't really gone too far into impact metrics. Certainly, on our annual employee engagement survey, we're looking whether the organizations participating in bounty are increasing their engagement score.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

I think the way we've communicated it was part of its success. When we launched it, we had a virtual board that we managed on Microsoft Teams. ... But we also have physical boards in the main office areas, imagine a bulletin board with a bunch of wanted posters on it.

[We announce new sets of bounties during quarterly meetings]. So in every quarterly meeting when we're launching a new set of bounties, we show up in Wild West sheriff costumes. ... And it's actually something that we've found translates pretty well globally. ...

We do keep a quarterly cadence of releasing a new batch of bounties every quarter. We recognize in that same quarterly meeting any bounties that have been completed within the last quarter, and we give [participants] a [fake] bounty hunter's license. ...

We also try to keep all the red tape very simple. When the team forms, they have an

email of a "sheriff" that they can reach out to for coaching if they need it. But it's very hands-off. The teams work independently for those three months. They can reach out if they have questions, but there's not a lot of hand-holding. At the end, it's just a short 20-minute presentation to the business leaders on their accomplishments. And then if needed, if they're creating new processes, we ask them to train the organization on the new process and document it. But we try to keep it pretty simple, because there's a lot of people that aren't into big presentations and being in front of groups.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

Innovation is one of our core values. ... One of the topics that comes up a lot in our annual employee engagement survey is that our company has so many barriers to execution ... In one sentence, Bounty is a program we've created to tackle barriers to execution. ...

The next stage is that we are launching company-wide bounties, so bounties that aren't specific to any given group, but that anyone across the entire company globally can work on. ... We have an online platform that's going to help crowdsource with respect to the business needs. And we look at it as kind of like the Uber model or the TaskRabbit model for internal process innovation participation. ... So direct matching of the business needs to the motivated talent. ●

Leveraging Data to Avoid Lawsuits

DAVID WILLIAMS, VP CLAIMS, TEXAS WINDSTORM INSURANCE ASSOCIATION

The Texas Windstorm Insurance Association was created by the Texas Legislature in 1971. Based in Austin, it provides windstorm and hail insurance to the Texas seacoast. It is the second-largest property insurance plan in the US.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

Back in 2008 when Hurricane Ike struck, Texas Windstorm Insurance Association had around 92,000 claims from that event. And one of the problems...was there was a large storm surge in the Galveston coastline area, which resulted in about 2,500 slab claims — where the property is totally destroyed. ... And the question came up as it always does: Which came first, the surge or the wind to destroy the property, and if both acted at the same time, which caused what percentage of the damage?

We had 2500 of these claims, and we couldn't get them resolved in the policyholder's favor. So there was a class action lawsuit. And we ended up paying out almost \$200 million to settle that class action lawsuit. And as a result of that... the insurance commissioner was instructed to appoint a panel of experts to develop a methodology to determine the extent of loss caused by wind wave surges, and a methodology for calculating the claim costs that we should pay, versus what the flood insurance companies should pay.

In 2011 the law was enacted, and in 2013 we actually had a panel put in place of engineers and experts. In 2017, we finally got the guidelines from the Department of Insurance and that expert panel. We were given a directive in October 2017 to implement the methodology by June 1, 2018. ...

Working with Accenture, RMS, EagleView, the Texas Tech Wind Institute, and our own people, we started on the project. We call it Science to Settlements, and there's five modules we had to build and put into place:

Property Characteristics Database: We collected the 24 different data points for each property that could be in a flood zone where the [property] could be destroyed by surge. [We looked at] length, width, height, type of construction, type of roof, age of the structure...

Hazard Module: [We gathered] weather

data and flooding surge data from a variety of sources including NOAA and the US Geological Survey. What we're looking at with the hazard model is where were the winds, what was the wind speed, what was the direction? And for the surge, where was the flooding, what was the height of the floodwaters, and what was the timing of the wind and the surge?

Damage Estimation Model: Using artificial intelligence, machine learning, and complicated algorithms, you combine the property characteristics data with the hazard data, and it gives us a report that shows the percentages of damage to major structural components. So the roof, the walls, the foundation, windows and doors, things like that. And then you use that data to come up with an economic loss model.

Economic Loss Model: This is not an estimate of the cost to repair or replace the structure. It's the economic loss to the structure that was caused by wind — we only cover wind, we don't cover flood. So you take your damage estimation model and your hazard model which tells you the timing and intensity and it gives you percentages of damage caused by wind, percentages of damage caused by flood, and then the timing. So anything before the flood destroys the property, if it's wind-related would be covered.

Report Generation: Then, we provide fancy reports to our policyholders so they understand what we base our claims on.

This is all pretty much automated. It happens within 48 hours of a storm, when we get our first reports on the properties that were most likely slabbed. And then we can use estimating software to develop a reconstruction report to come up with the cost of the economic loss. ...

Why does it matter? The legislature wanted to stop the run to the courthouse, class action lawsuits, and bleeding of money from a not-for-profit residual market insurer. So if we run this model and follow it back to the letter of the law, the only way somebody can file a lawsuit



against us as if they can come in with clear and convincing evidence to support their position. ... Somebody would have to come in with better science and better capabilities than what we have.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Accenture was our project management entity. They provided resources to keep track of all the moving pieces and make sure we completed each component on time. They also provided the AI, machine learning, and scientists to do the mathematical programming. And they also helped us build the application — they provide the platform and the application designers and builders as well.

Risk Management Solutions (RMS) provided the geospatial intelligence information. What are the locations...that are most likely to be slabbed if a hurricane occurs. And then they coordinated with EagleView to get the property characteristic data. RMS formatted the data, cleaned it up for us, and put it in a package that went through to Accenture to put into their programs.

EagleView is a geospatial intelligence company. They provide us with aerial images before and after the storm as well as property characteristic data that they call from their systems. They can provide diagrams, measurements, and some other third-party data, like age of home and age of roof.

And then Texas Tech has the National Wind Institute. They have the portable wind-monitoring devices that they deploy. So they provide the real-time wind hazard information. ...

[At TWIA,] we don't have meteorologists. We don't have the capability to collect public record information and capture aerial images. We certainly don't have data scientists and programmers at the level required for this project.

We put an RFP out, and most of the companies that responded couldn't do everything. ... You always want to have as few partners involved as possible. And this is the minimum we could get it done with.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

[This innovation] was required by law. Our regulators, the Texas Department of Insurance, is the entity that created the rules and handed it down to us to deliver. As far as support, there

probably were more people, more external stakeholders, who didn't want to see this happen at all. As a not-for-profit, every dollar we spend on this project gets taken away from our ability to pay policyholder claims down the road. Some of our board members didn't think it was a good idea. Legislators and public entities felt that maybe the money could be spent on better things. But at the end of the day, if we ever have another storm like Ike, it definitely is something that will speed up the claim process tremendously. We can identify properties that have been potentially destroyed and look at aerial images within 48 to 72 hours, and start putting together claim offers of settlement within seven to 10 days. Even though that would be the initial starting point of the claim — the policyholder can still come back and rebut what we do — it's better than waiting weeks and months like what happened after Hurricane Ike. ...

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

The project was started in October 2017, and we finished in May 2018. The deadline for the project was June 1, 2018.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

[Our solution] is staged and ready to go. I think the big thing is, if there were to be another event like Ike, we have a methodology that will protect us from significant litigation, but more importantly, it will provide the policyholders with a much faster resolution. Instead of months and years, it'll be days and weeks. A much faster turnaround time, and in many cases, it may not involve a physical inspection on the scene.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

What we're trying to figure out next is, can we leverage this technology for other types of claims. And we're also trying to figure out if there are other insurance companies out there that would love to leverage this technology. Because we're not-for-profit, we're not allowed to advertise or get that message out there. So it's kind of a weird dynamic, but certainly this is a solution that Florida insurers could be leveraging right now, if they're fighting with policyholders over these issues.

Starting an Ideation Bootcamp for New Innovators

TRAVIS KNEPPER, DIRECTOR, NEW PRODUCT INITIATIVES, TRAPEZE GROUP

Headquartered in Ontario, Canada, Trapeze Group sells technology to public transit agencies around the world that operate bus, rail, and paratransit systems. Founded in 1988, the company's first product was a scheduling software package.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

We have an internal incubator and accelerator program at Trapeze Group, which is intended for our team members to submit their insights and different ways they feel like we could be helping customers. While we did have some good insights coming through, we weren't seeing the volume of submissions that we expected. We were confident that there were trapped insights in the organization that were not being submitted. ...

We decided to offer an ideation bootcamp...to completely de-risk the fear of submitting an idea that might not be a grand slam. The program was advertised to all employees. I offer it once a quarter. I started out traveling to different office locations, but now I do it primarily remote.

What we found is that when participants come to the bootcamp, many have an idea in mind that they weren't comfortable pitching without some support. Instead, they were holding on to their ideas, not sure what to do with them. Other participants didn't necessarily have a specific idea in mind but wanted to learn more about the process. ...

As a result, the number of insights that were being submitted to the incubator, and ultimately accepted, [increased]. The people who had gone through the ideation bootcamp were much more likely to be accepted because they understood the principles of design thinking, lean, and all these other thought processes to make sure they were solving a problem and they were able to articulate the problem they were solving.

We saw numbers go up from a trickle of roughly two or three ideas that were submitted, to around 10 times the number of ideas that were coming in after we put the bootcamp in place.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

The General Manager of Trapeze created the incubator program and brought me in to run

it. I pitched the bootcamp idea to him and he gave full support by promoting the bootcamp in a town hall and other company-wide communications.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

When we announced [the bootcamp], the first one was held probably 45 later. Since then, we've held them once a quarter. ...

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

We take a look at it from both the quality and quantity lens. From the quantity lens, we went from not having many ideas coming in, maybe one or two a quarter. And we jumped up to a total of 23 ideas. And then the likelihood of the ideas actually being adopted and brought into the incubator, ideas that went through the bootcamp were 23 percent more likely to be accepted into the incubator. ...

We're looking at moving the fundamental skills that are taught in the bootcamp, over to an HR-hosted learning management platform, so that we can scale it more effectively to all of our employees. ... Employees will be empowered to learn through self-guided training activities and be acknowledged via a badge or certificate that will be maintained on their employee record.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

We're a software company, and we're very close to our customers. This program allows us to channel our customer insights more effectively as we drive increased benefit to our customers through continuous innovation. ●



Accelerating a Product Development Process

CAROL MILLER, FORMER VP OF CORPORATE INNOVATION, AMERICAN GREETINGS

Founded in 1906, \$1.8 billion American Greetings sells cards, party goods, gift wraps, and stationery products through more than 60,000 retail outlets.

For us, an important quick win was being able to show that the innovation team had the capability of not only coming up with new products, but also new processes through our creative problem-solving methodology. That methodology — understanding the challenge, generating ideas, and planning for action — was one we could leverage to address a problem we had.

Our timeline for getting new products to market was about 18 months, and that wasn't enabling us to use the data from a year before — the last Valentine's Day or Christmas — coupled with emerging design trends to influence the next year's product line. Instead of trying to change how the whole company went to market for every occasion, and every season, we focused on one season — Valentine's Day — and got the process down from 18 months to eight months.

The keys to success were that we, as the innovation team, realized we did not have the subject matter expertise to be able to do it ourselves. Instead, we acted as project managers. We brought in seasoned veterans to be part of this flash team that worked on the project. They knew how to operationalize any new ideas we generated.

We got approval from the subject matter experts' bosses for them to participate, because

it was going to be time-consuming. We met three times a week. We had food — your classic ways to rally and bring people in. We brought in speakers as a mental break.

There were too many checks and balances that didn't need to be in place [for developing new products.] Because we were a 100+ year old company, everyone and their brother needed to sign off. If we empowered certain people to be the final decision maker, it cut a substantial amount of time. Our supply chain wasn't as efficient as it needed to be, so we decided to improve it by learning from some other Cleveland-based companies. You need courageous people with a job to do — they'll open up the closet and find all the skeletons to improve the process and speed-to-market as a team.

We had less than 12 months to pull this off. The urgency was that the company had to preserve our space in the retail channel. When you're dealing with pressure from customers or a competitor, it creates urgency. We were stuck in a pot with boiling water. Companies tend to be complacent otherwise. ●



Getting a New Consumer Product to Market

PAUL CAMPBELL, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, W.L. GORE INNOVATION CENTER

W.L. Gore and Associates, based in Newark, Del., focuses on products derived from fluoro-polymers, and is best-known for the waterproof Gore-tex material. Gore opened an innovation center in Silicon Valley in 2017.

WHAT IS YOUR QUICK WIN?

Around 2011, I was just joining [a major Dutch consumer products and healthcare company] as their Chief Innovation Officer, doing the rounds, and reviewing the portfolio of projects. One project that looked pretty promising was a Class II medical product. [Class II devices include things that only pose a moderate safety risk to users, like a blood pressure cuff or a home pregnancy test.] This was an on-skin patch for back pain – an over-the-counter product. It was funky. It used blue LED light to trigger vasodilation, getting blood vessels to expand so more blood can flow through. That triggers the muscles to relax, which was relieving back pain.

I said, “This is great – how long before you get to market?” And they said, “It’s going to be three years,” and they’d already been working on it for four or five years, burning millions of dollars. It was a cool idea, but not a mainstream product. ...The idea of spending three years on this project only to find customers won’t spend the money was just wrong.

We ended up saying, “Let’s do an in-market pilot, to test the pricing, the channel, and our message.” Three months later, they were in market with a pilot. We were hand-making these things, and losing money on every one. But they flew off the shelf. We had to go through the pharmacy channel, which was supportive. We got letters back from customers: “Now I have a mobile pain relief product that lasts a long time, instead of a water bottle or a heating pad.”

We skipped the clinical trial; if you don’t claim anything, you can just sell it. So we changed our claims and said, “University research suggests that blue light can relieve back pain.” We went to five pharmacies across Germany, talked to pharmacists, and said, “We’d love your feedback.” We decided to contract with a pharmacy sales force that knows pharmacy, rather than training our own sales team. Those steps are typically sequential, and each one is about one year long.

The CEO felt that this was the way we should

do projects every time – get the feedback and validation, and then scale up. The device is still for sale in Europe.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

We had a contract manufacturing team that was hand-making these for us; a hired sales force; we used our own marketing person, but he was a new hire to the company who was an expert in the pharmacy channel. We used an internal regulatory person as an advisor, but also brought in our own clinical regulatory person [from a consumer products business.] He knew how to go fast.

Our biggest challenge was working with the sales team – usually there’s a long drawn out conversation about training, margins, collateral. We talked with them and said, “Here’s what we’re going to do.” They said, “We’re too busy doing our own stuff.” That was a good relief from purgatory – having permission from sales to go ahead with our own contract salespeople.

We also worked with finance. Because we were a central incubator, we didn’t have a P&L. We worked with finance to track revenue, and determine how we would measure our P&L.

WHO IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITY?

I was doing a review of all the projects, and this was a multi-year project within an R&D group. I challenged them to go faster, and they responded with great ideas. [The company] hadn’t adopted lean startup yet; they still had this methodical stage-gate process where everything takes two years or more. All they needed was permission to use lean startup, plus ongoing support, and knocking down internal barriers.

WHAT WAS THE TIMEFRAME?

Three months to get the product in market.

WHAT WERE THE METRICS OR OBJECTIVES?

Will the pharmacy channel agree to do this and



promote it? It was channel adoption. And it was customer adoption – this was a weird thing, with blue light. How many are we going to sell? Another big thing was data about the price point, and also return rate. Someone might buy it and try it, and then return it. But we got zero returns. We were guessing we would sell 1000 units per store, for the three-month pilot, and I think we sold out every store in the first month. We had to re-engage the manufacturers to start making more. We were in five cities in Germany, with one or two stores per city. We chose specialty mom-and pop pharmacies to do this, not the big ones.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE OUTCOMES?

We reported the metrics of everything I just mentioned to the Chief Strategy Officer, the CEO, the Chief Technology Officer, and the country team – just to let them know what the results were. The big thing was really the return rate: none of them came back.

Things began to get more complicated, because the pilot was so successful. We had

to change our plan, shortening the timeline, and coming up with this transition plan to keep production going. So we had to manage expectations with everybody through project reviews with a lot of people, and a lot of internal communication.

HOW DID THIS FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

What it demonstrated to the company was that they'd kind of become ossified in their development processes. So it was an example that we could use for other product development teams to encourage them to go faster, try new approaches, cut some corners in a good way. With that product specifically, it was so successful, we said, "Seems like a good business. What other pain relief products can we make?" We went from one product to a portfolio of products. We started teaching lean innovation to project teams, and tried to get that more broadly adopted. It made a difference for the consumer product teams there. It helped us accelerate innovation in a broader way. ●



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