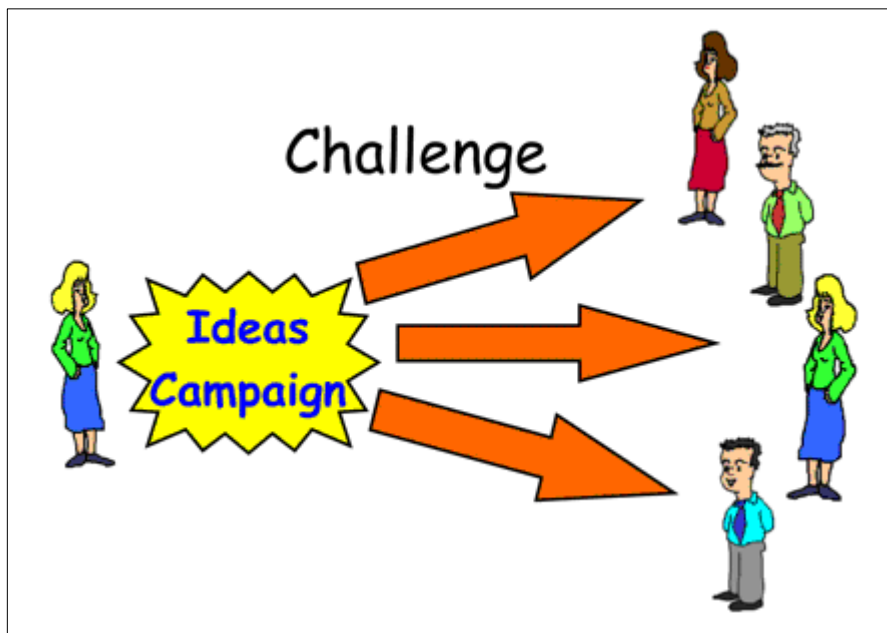

How ideas campaigns work

Idea management is a systematic approach to capturing ideas from your workforce, reviewing those ideas to determine which are most likely to meet your implementation criteria and then implementing the most promising ideas. There are two approaches to idea management. The suggestion scheme and ideas campaigns. As we shall see, in terms of sustainability and focusing innovation on your business needs, the ideas campaign approach is far superior.

Ideas campaigns are nothing new. The concept is based on well established creative problem solving methodology, the approach used by researchers, scientists and other innovative professionals.

Let's see how an ideas campaign works, step-by-step.

Step 1: the challenge

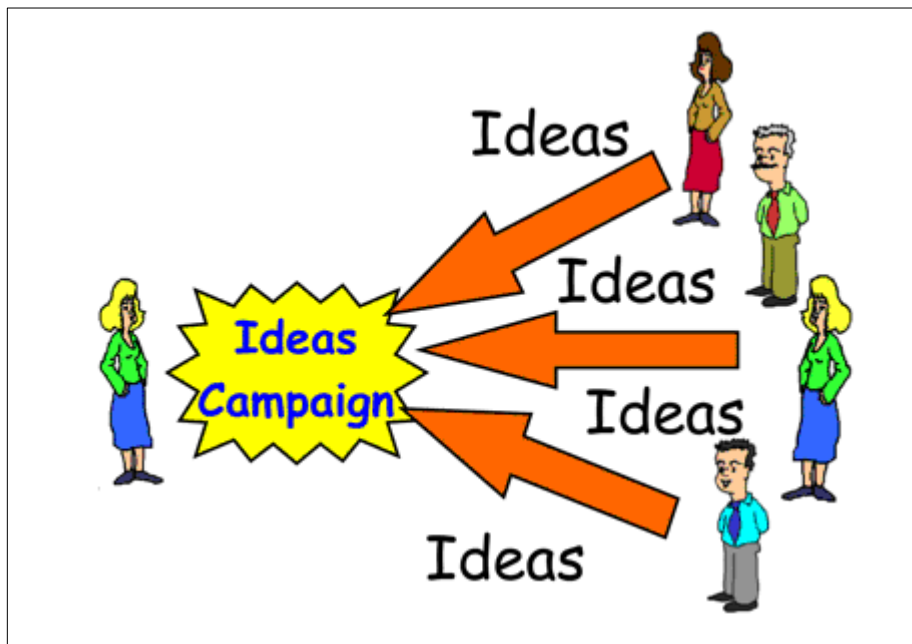


The first step in an ideas campaign is to formulate a challenge based on a specific business problem or need. Challenges usually start with words like "In what ways might we..." or "How could we..."; for example: "In what ways might we improve our product's usability?" or "In what ways might we reduce costs in our logistics process?"

This challenge is set up and promoted to the participants of your ideas campaign. Ideally participants will be everyone in your organisation. At the very least, participants should include a variety of different people from different backgrounds and divisions. This is because a wider variety of people generate a wider variety of ideas. And that translates into a higher level of creativity which results in more innovative ideas.

Incidentally, Jenni idea management allows any authorised manager to set up and run her own ideas campaign as well as to promote it via Jenni's e-mail blast tool. This puts each manager in charge of her own innovation. It also gives your head of innovation more time to focus on overall innovation.

Step 2: Open, collaborative idea generation



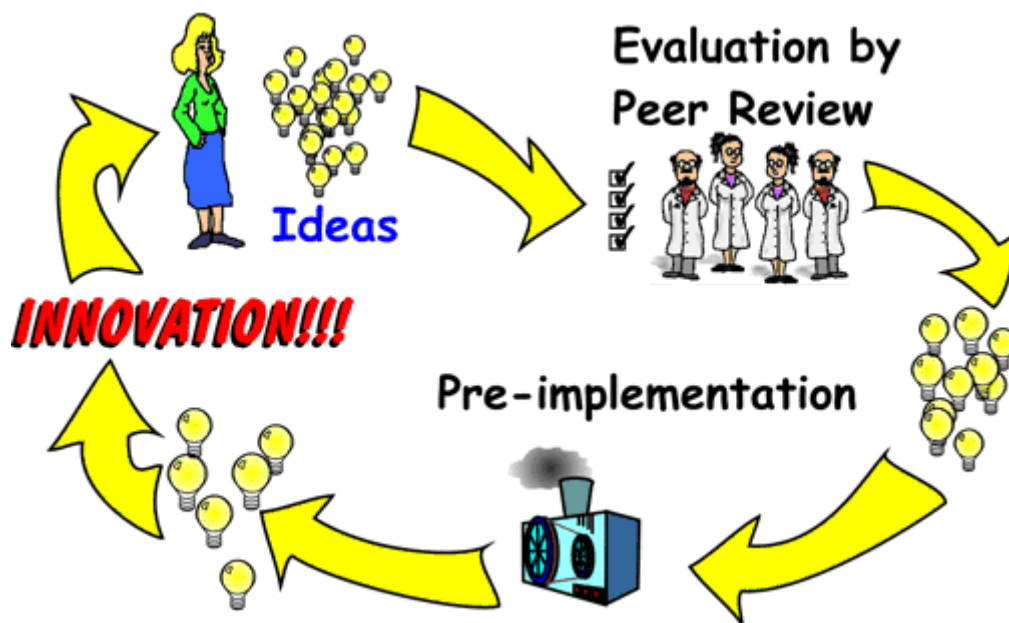
Once the ideas campaign has been set up and promoted, employees are invited to submit their ideas. For the best results, an open, transparent and collaborative idea space should be provided where employees may not only submit their own ideas, but also browse other employees' ideas and even build on other ideas. Such an environment allows your employees to collaborate together - even if they do not know each other - to build small ideas into big ideas; and build big ideas into great ideas.

The benefits to the collaborative ideas campaign approach are clear...

- ideas are focused on the challenge, in other words your specific business needs.
- the challenge focuses your employees' minds and enhances creativity (creative people thrive on creative challenges and shy people see challenges as an invitation to open up).
- few or no duplicate ideas. One of the biggest problems of non-collaborative idea management systems is that many people submit similar and identical ideas; all of which need to be processed. A collaborative system allows people to collaborate rather than repeat.
- Ideas campaigns are of limited duration. This encourages employees to think about your problem immediately and provide ideas now.

Once the campaign is closed to new ideas, it is time to review the ideas your employees have submitted in order to determine which are most likely to achieve your objectives.

Step 3: Evaluating ideas



There are a number of approaches to reviewing ideas. However, the most effective approach, initially, is peer review using an evaluation matrix. We like the 5x5 criteria based evaluation matrix for its simplicity and accuracy. Establish five criteria for evaluating ideas. In the case of product related ideas, for example, these criteria might include "How profitable is this idea likely to be?", "How easy will it be to implement this idea in our production system?", "How well does this idea integrate with our existing product line" and so on.

Send the idea together with evaluation criteria to experts who can review the idea and determine how well the idea meets each criterion on a scale of 0-5 points. Also invite the evaluators to provide comments to clarify their scores and any issues not covered by the criteria.

As evaluations are completed, compile them and calculate the overall score to fit in a fixed range (such as 0-100 points). Once this is done, it is easy to quickly compare ideas to see which will best meet your your business requirements.

For ideas related to new products and services, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis can be an effective follow-up to the evaluation matrix. Have more than one expert performing the SWOT analysis brings more accurate results.

The next step in the review process is what we call "pre-implementations". Pre-implementations typically include preparing a detailed business case, developing a prototype and running a trial. Pre-implementations vary from business to business. Most likely, your firm already has a series of pre-implementation processes in place for certain kinds of new ideas.

The best pre-implementation action for any idea depends on the nature of the idea, the nature of the challenge and your firms' processes for evaluating new business ideas.

However, be aware that many companies over-process ideas by running them past too many review committees and too many pre-implementations in order to reduce all risk. Unfortunately, when you reduce risk, you tend to reduce innovativeness. The most innovative ideas are always risky by their very nature. They are about doing things differently than you have done in the past and that means taking a risk.

So, instead of reducing risk in innovative new ideas, provide a budget for implementation and establish a clear set of benchmarks. If the implementation of the idea does not achieve a specific benchmark, you can either make changes in the idea or discontinue the implementation all together.

Once an ideas campaign has been completed, ideas evaluated and the most promising ideas pre-implemented and implemented, you should archive your ideas campaign, with a report, for future reference.

Rewards

Rewarding the employees who share ideas with you is an important component of any ideas campaign. Rewards can be in the form of recognition, such as announcing in company publications the names of people who have contributed the best ideas, personal notes of thanks from the CEO or a points system. Rewards can be in the form of small gifts, such as a toffee or a coin for every idea; or slightly larger gifts such as digital cameras, restaurant coupons or similar for the best ideas. Rewards can be in the form of work related privileges, such as the right to attend international conferences, move up a class on business trips or get additional time off for top ideas. Whatever system you use, it is important that rewards not be overly large and to give out rewards consistently.

Rewards should be announced at the beginning of the ideas campaign in order to motivate people to participate.

Sustainability

Ideas campaigns are a sustainable method of innovation precisely because they are short lived. Once one ideas campaign is completed, you can start another one. You can even have several ideas campaigns running simultaneously. However, be careful not to have too many ideas campaigns going at the same time. Too many simultaneous ideas campaigns tend to dilute each other as employees are overwhelmed with challenges and decide not to participate in any campaign.

However, multinationals can effectively layer their ideas campaigns.

1. At the top layer is one or possibly two cross-enterprise ideas campaigns in which all employees are invited to participate.
2. Below the top layer, different country offices can run their own ideas campaigns in their own languages.
3. Below the country level, regional offices may also run ideas campaigns specific to their needs.

As a result, a company may have five or ten or more ideas campaigns running simultaneously. However, any one employee would only be aware of - and able to participate in - no more than two or three ideas campaigns at any one time.

Ideas campaigns can also lead to new ideas campaigns. A powerful idea generated in one ideas campaign may become the basis of a challenge for a second ideas campaign. For example, an ideas campaign for new product ideas might result in a radical new product idea. You may decide to develop the idea further with a follow up ideas campaign on "In what ways might we make this product even more appealing?" or "How might we integrate this product into our current line?" or "How might we launch this new product?"

Conclusion

If you are looking for a sustainable idea management process, the ideas campaign approach is your best choice. Ideas campaigns....

1. Provide a long-term, sustainable solution
2. Focus innovation on your business needs
3. Make it easy for your employees to innovate
4. Allow layering of ideas campaigns to maximise innovation across your company
5. Empower managers to take charge of their own innovation

Idea management by ideas campaigns works best with a dedicated software solution such as Jenni idea management software service. However, firms can experiment with ideas campaigns using e-mail, a large wall the employees can write their ideas upon or even a suggestion box with the ideas campaign challenge written on it.

It should be noted that ideas campaigns do not work in isolation. It is necessary to promote not only the ideas campaigns themselves, but also innovation across your firm. Moreover, ideas campaigns should be carefully thought out and, in particular, challenges framed with care. We have seen ideas campaigns bring in poor ideas owing to poorly thought out innovation challenges.

Lastly, you need a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation. If your firm is highly risk-averse or people are criticised for proposing what are perceived as bad ideas, your employees will not dare expose themselves by sharing ideas.

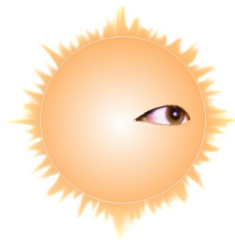
For more information on how to run successful ideas campaigns, please contact jpb.com.

Jenni Idea Management Software Service

Jenni is the only idea management software service to provide...

1. Ideas campaigns in an open, transparent and collaborative platform.
2. Flexible idea review allowing you to use evaluation by peer review together with collaborative pre-implementations according to your preferences.
3. Technical support, user support and innovation mentoring included in the base price.
4. Unlimited number of ideas campaigns.
5. International support.

For more information about Jenni, please visit www.jpbc.com/jenni/



jpbc.com

Diestbrugstraat 45, 3071 Erps-Kwerps, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 251 7725

E-mail: hello@jpbc.com

Web: www.jpbc.com