

The Secret Innovation Accelerator

Clear communications help companies accelerate innovation by helping people to understand the rules of the game and to fully participate. Use the following communication tips to improve innovation at your company.

DO

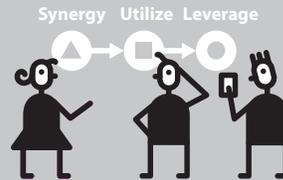
DON'T

1 Before you start

Of course, you need an innovation process and people to support it. You also need rules about what kind of innovation you're looking for. Setting and communicating boundaries can actually spur thinking and avoid wasting time on ideas that are going nowhere. But, having these written in a binder isn't enough. Share the plan visually with everyone who will listen (and even those who won't).



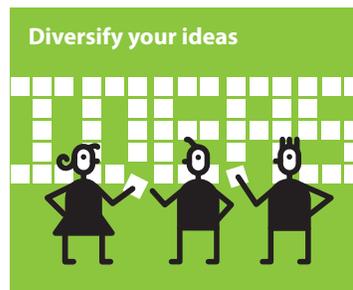
Under communicate



Don't worry about over communicating; people need to hear about new processes often to really get it. But, make sure that frequent communication is actually useful. Don't waste time with confusing jargon and abstraction. Instead, give your audience rich visual explanations that clearly showcase each step of the process. Help people see themselves and their departments in the process.

2 During ideation

The magic of innovation is rarely a single idea from one mind. The best ideas are usually the product of weeks, months, or even years of collaboration with diverse minds. So, in your discovery sessions, don't just spend time filling walls with sticky notes. Encourage participants to explain their ideas, combine them, and then discuss them again.



Spend too much time on any one idea



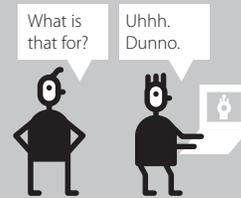
As you discuss ideas, it is tempting to fully define them before sharing them with others. You might want to create beautiful prototypes, write out complex business plans, and commission detailed research studies. But, these activities can make an idea become too precious too soon. So, keep it flexible: draw on napkins, wave your hands, and guess for a little while.

3 Making it real

Once team members have an innovative idea to stand-up, they'll often wall themselves off and keep working until they "have something to show." But this can be dangerous: solutions start to be formed in a vacuum. Instead, they should keep their half-finished baby front and center, communicate their progress, and share their failures.



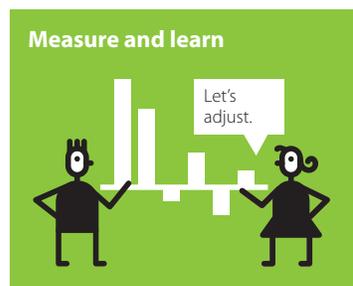
Lose sight of the goal



In long term implementation projects, it can be easy to lose sight of the original goal and the strategy driving it. So, you need to keep communicating within the development team and to the rest of the organization about your audience, the problem you're solving, and how you're attacking it.

4 Sharing results

Don't forget: the launch is not the end of the project. You have to see how products and services progress. Measure and track your solutions, and aggregate and share that data with everyone. Perhaps a big new trend or a process improvement is hidden in that data, but you'll never know if you don't look.



Hide participants



It can be hard to keep track of everyone who impacted an idea during its inception and incubation. But, you need people to keep participating—and recognition is a huge motivator. So, take the extra step to find everyone who was involved and recognize them in a public way.

If you want to learn more about how communication can accelerate innovation for your company, get in touch at www.thoughtform.com or 412.488.8600.