



ideas

Unlock the innovation capacity

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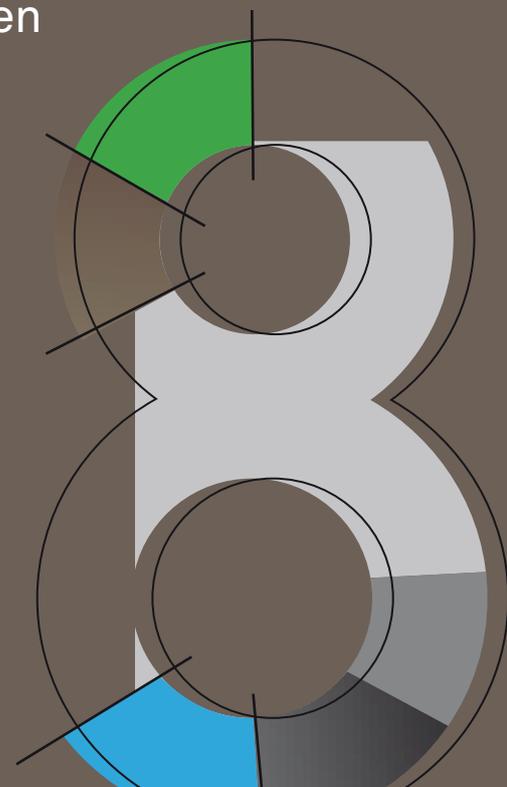
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Introduction

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This paper describes how to unlock the innovation capacity in organizations by combining innovation management good practice with an easy to use virtual collaboration tool for broad participation.

A challenge-driven innovation platform can be a powerful way of driving innovation by involving the organization in a systematic process to solve your innovation challenges. Key is combining an efficient online and offline co-creation process involving managers, team members and even customers and users.



Key-point

- Challenge-driven innovation can be an efficient and powerful method to engage people in a limited period of time, create action oriented solutions for specific, well defined problems. The platform consists of two elements: A transparent innovation management process and an easy to access online idea management tool that facilitates and accelerates collaborative innovation.
- The platform can assist the innovation manager (IM) in motivating people to participate in innovation, as well as help the IM to ensure outcomes of innovation investments, portfolio management etc.
- It's vital that the process is transparent and the tool is user-friendly and simple to access in order to ensure involvement of team-members and users in the process.
- It's also important that innovation management procedures are in line with the decision-making hierarchy in the organization to ensure buy-in from all management levels.
- Done that, the platform can out-perform traditional ways of organizing innovation by ensuring involvement of team members and users at a broader scale, in a more efficient way; it gives more and better ideas for solutions within a shorter time and it allows for proper management of investments in innovation.
- Finally, the platform enables creation of new relations and networks among people otherwise not connected - a cornerstone in building a long-term innovation culture across organizational and geographical boundaries.

Key-points

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The need for innovation tools that appeals to users

- Most managers have realized that innovation is necessary to secure long-term growth ; and many studies document a correlation between ability to innovate and long-term success .

Innovation is more than new products and technology. It is also innovation in services and larger changes in the way we run our businesses - both in private and public organizations.

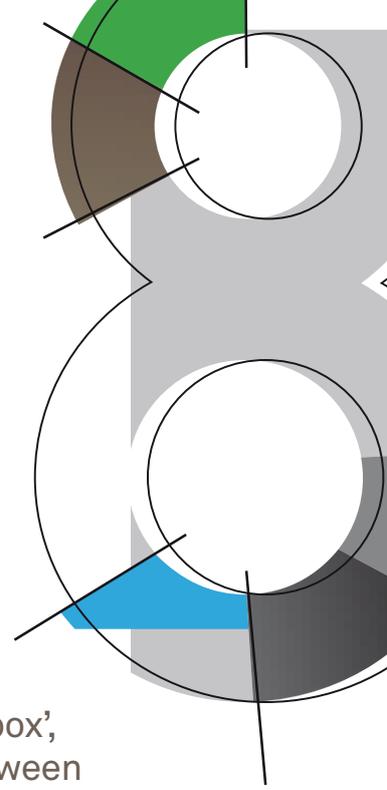
Even though the level of satisfaction with investments in innovation is growing, there are still considerable numbers of businesses that are not satisfied with the return of their investments in innovation .

The Boston Consulting Group's study points out three situations that hinder innovation:

- Intolerance towards risk
- Long development periods
- Insufficient measuring methods.

Thus, there is a need for tools that support a more systematic innovation process, shortening the time to market launch, and give better opportunities for the management to measure the results of the effort. The key is in a platform that combines collaboration among users and innovation management good practice.

Most admit that a systematic process for innovation is necessary and that the idea development phase is a central part of the innovation process. It is within the idea phase (also known as the Discovery Stage) the concept, product, or radical change is conceived and defined. A successful idea phase should result in a limited amount of ideas, which are matured sufficiently in order to make a decision for further development and implementation.



Give us a challenge!

Innovation is often initiated by a specific technical or commercial challenge, it is rarely driven by the big 'idea box', where people come with their ideas from everything 'between earth and sky'. Acknowledging this fact, the Challenge Driven Innovation (CDI) approach offers interesting insights about the innovation process.

The challenge is a well framed campaign with a limited time span, focused on solving a well-defined problem. The goal is to find the best suggestions for the solution by creating and keeping up motivation and intensity over a short period of time. The result has to be operational, so it is possible to take action, as soon as the campaign is over.

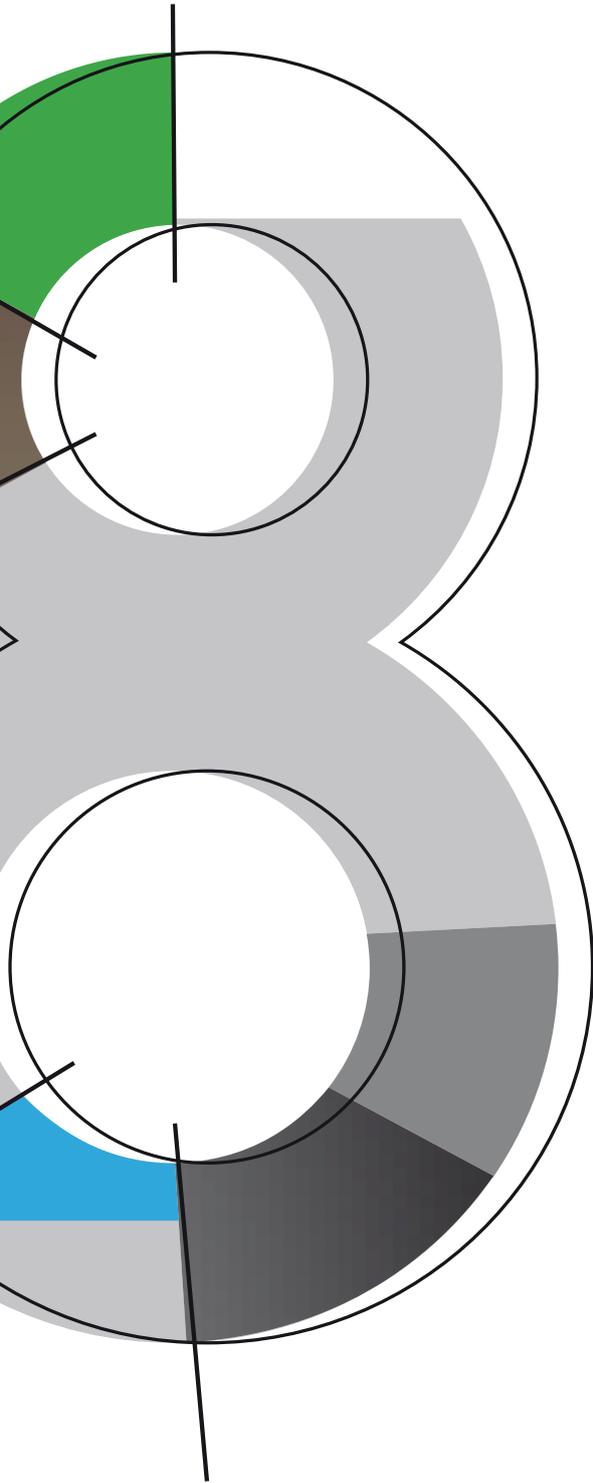
CDI gives the organization an opportunity to balance operation with innovation, and to avoid focusing only on operation, which is a typical obstacle to continuous innovation. With a well scoped challenge, and clear defined success criteria, managers and employees can handle the start and the end of the process in one go. This gives an opportunity for an extraordinary idea phase, where individuals and teams collaborate intensively in creating new, innovative solutions over a short period of time.

Management has the opportunity of scoping a specific strategic, technical or commercial challenge; for example new products, product improvements, processes, new working methods, new initiatives in sales and marketing, cost reductions etc. using the innovative power of the organization across disciplines.

Conditions for a successful challenge-driven innovation:

- The challenge is well defined and supported with relevant documentation (analysis or similar)
- The challenge motivates and inspires for new inputs, and is communicated effectively to managers, employees and other stakeholders involved in the process
- Users have trust and credibility to the process, including the process of selecting ideas
- Continuous communication of the process to the participants involved
- The results are communicated widely in the organization. Contributors and winning ideas/teams are broadly honoured, and eventually compensated
- The process is short and intense
- People are motivated to collaborate across departments and silos

Using a web-platform for challenge-driven innovation most organizations will easily be able to set-up a CDI-process and get started in finding new solutions to challenges using the benefits of CDI. However, to be accepted and used it's decisive that the tool supports existing organizational networks and management practices related to innovation. Otherwise, the tool will be met with resistance in middle management and scepticism from users. Also Karlsson's five designrules illustrated in the box should be applied.



Five design-rules to put a collaborative idea management system in place (Karlsson, 2011)

1. Invite everyone to engage the entire organization
2. Use the principle of selforganization to handle complexity
3. Embrace collaboration to leverage expertise and a diversity perspective
4. Secure feedback and recognition for a sustainable initiative
5. Integrate idea management into your overall collaboration effort.

The power of collaboration

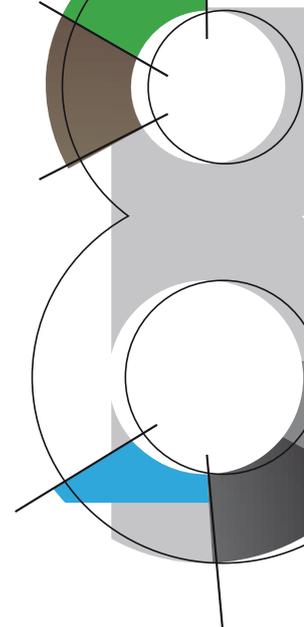
The power of collaboration

It starts with applying a platform with broad access for people and competencies across disciplines when innovative ideas should be created. Diversity in terms of multi-discipline competencies improves the odds of finding game-changing ideas. This applies internally in the organization and in relation to users, customers and other stakeholders in the value chain. Furthermore, it has the potential of creating a wide stakeholder ownership to the ideas that are selected very early in the process – ownership that is often necessary for subsequent development and implementation.

Analysis shows that organizations that are successful with innovation are able to involve users, customers and employees in the earlier phases of innovation. They do it to get market insights, uncover user needs, scoping challenges and to co-create and mature ideas to the level where they become feasible. This process might be accelerated by using a platform like 8ideas with effective sharing of insights and value-adding ideas in a collaborative process.

There are different views on brainstorming as a method – ie. a process, where a number of persons are physically present and generate new ideas in a collaborative process.

On the one hand, it is our experience, that traditional brainstorming is a good way for idea generation if the problem is well defined, process is well prepared, participants are chosen and briefed beforehand; and the process is facilitated by a skilled facilitator, that is able to use the right tools and methods. In this case it is possible to create a learning space, where participants enrich each other's ideas and reach new insights, which is not possible, when participants develop their ideas individually.



On the other hand, analysis shows that brainstorming as a method for common idea generation is less productive if the same persons would produce the ideas separately. They identify that the cause lies in three factors:

- Dominating people hinder the wealth of ideas flowing from others.
- Fear to come up with an idea that is perceived as foolish.
- That everyone can come with new ideas, which does not lead to a productive maturing of the best ideas.

The same analysis compares the traditional brainstorming method with electronic brainstorming, and the conclusion is clear – electronic brainstorming solves the shortcomings of traditional brainstorming and increases the productivity dramatically.

Many web-based ideation software solutions have inherent the benefits of electronic brainstorming and facilitate both individual and collaborative, virtual brainstorming. Our experience shows that in some cases it is advantageous to support virtual brainstorming with offline methods, such as Innovation Labs, workshops, physical pit-stop meetings etc. run by skilled process facilitators.

Innovation management good practice is to establish an innovation platform that integrates a virtual collaborative solution and a set of correlated physical process tools and methods. IM's and project managers should be trained to master the integrated platform and methodology and be able to operate across the virtual and physical domain, depending on the requirements of the specific challenge and project.

Managing

Managing innovation by motivation

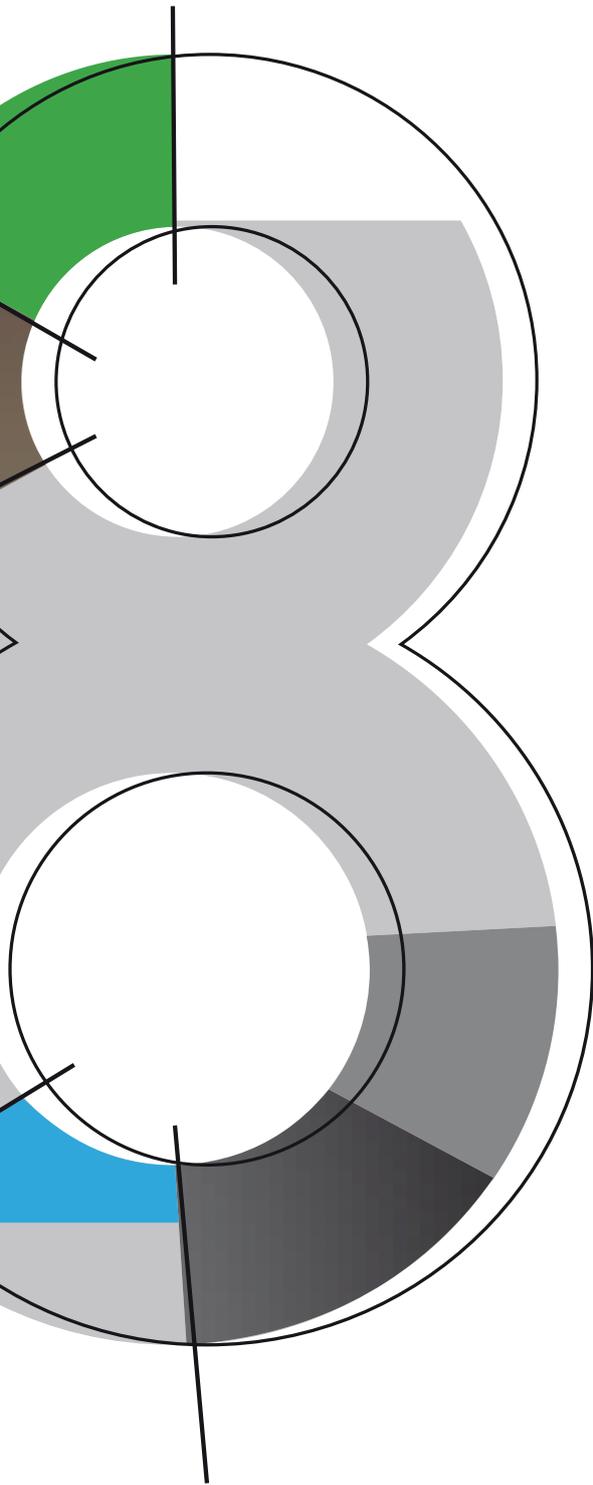
Managing innovation is the process of managing the business process of innovation. Innovation management is done at a general level in conjunction with other business areas as well as at the specific level, ensuring progress of innovations from start (discovery) to finish (implementation).

Gradually, innovation management has become an accepted business activity like finance and marketing, though it's still often the junior member among activities. At the strategic level, innovation is recognized as essential to every thriving organization, public or private. In larger organizations, the innovation manager can play a valuable part in directing and organizing the innovation process.

In recent years, innovation management has put far more emphasis on managing, or leading, people than managing the innovation process itself – and to involve people across departments and disciplines. By the end of the day, its people that are innovative and bring new ideas, develop and implement them.

The focus of the innovation manager has, thus, shifted to be able to involve and engage people at all levels to participate in the innovation process. This is not a trivial task. Most people have their daily operations not directly related to innovation. Hence, it's a key competence for an innovation manager to empower and communicate at many levels to motivate the right people to participate in innovation from idea to solution.

The innovation platform should enable innovation managers to do their best in executing innovation management by involving people in the organization and motivate them to participate in innovation. What motivates people to participate can be a complicated mix of psychological and organizational drivers. We have narrowed them down to six important factors that influence most people's motivation to participate in innovation – being online ideation, offline workshops etc.:



1. **Involvement:** I would like to be involved, have influence and be asked about my opinion and ideas
2. **Importance:** I recognize the project as important
3. **Transparency and trust:** I believe in the process and the people behind
4. **Community and recognition:** I will be a part of a community that is important for me, careerwise and/or socially
5. **Problem-solving:** I like to be challenged and solve problems
6. **Communication:** It's important to keep me informed as I have many other things to do.

In this case, innovation management good practice is related to manage innovation by motivation along the six factors, as illustrated in the table below.

Motivation factor

Motivation factor	Innovation management good practice
Involvement	<p>Be careful when scoping a challenge – do you ask the right questions, can you involve people in scoping the challenge and in asking the right questions?</p> <p>Involve lead-users early, already when planning (lead-users being key contributors that are often ambassadors for other participants)</p>
Importance	<p>Assess whether the challenge is considered important among participants</p> <p>Select the participants that have ‘something at stake’</p>
Transparency and trust	<p>Always ensure a transparent process</p> <p>Be open about when decisions are taken and selection criteria’s up-front</p> <p>Do not make changes in decision-making procedures during a project</p> <p>Ensure challenge owner and lead-users active participation</p>
Community and recognition	<p>Use the platform – offline and online – to boost collaboration in existing communities and networks in the organization, it’s often a precondition for innovation</p> <p>Use the platform to build new innovation communities over time</p> <p>Make contributors visible and embrace them</p>
Problem-solving	<p>Make a challenge exciting and appealing</p> <p>Establish problem-solving teams physically/virtually already in discovery and ideation</p> <p>Work inspired by ‘Agile Project Management’</p>
Communication	<p>Do not underestimate the resources needed for communication</p> <p>Use cross-channel communication – web, smartphone/tablet, workshops</p> <p>Make a design template for offline and online communication</p>

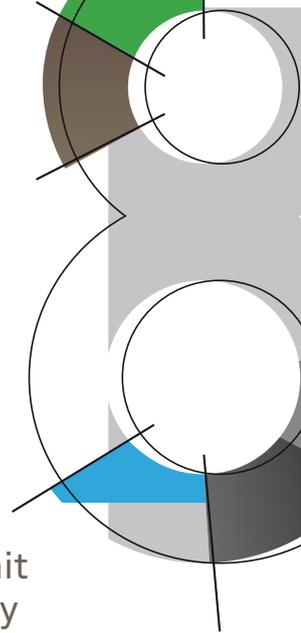
An innovation process that is implemented with an online version - and is widely known in the organization - has the advantage of being a clear and transparent process for people. If you have a great idea, it's obvious where you submit it (for example one click with the smartphone). You have easy access to communicate with others, get and give feedback ie. being a part of a community and developing the innovation project you recognize as important for the organization.

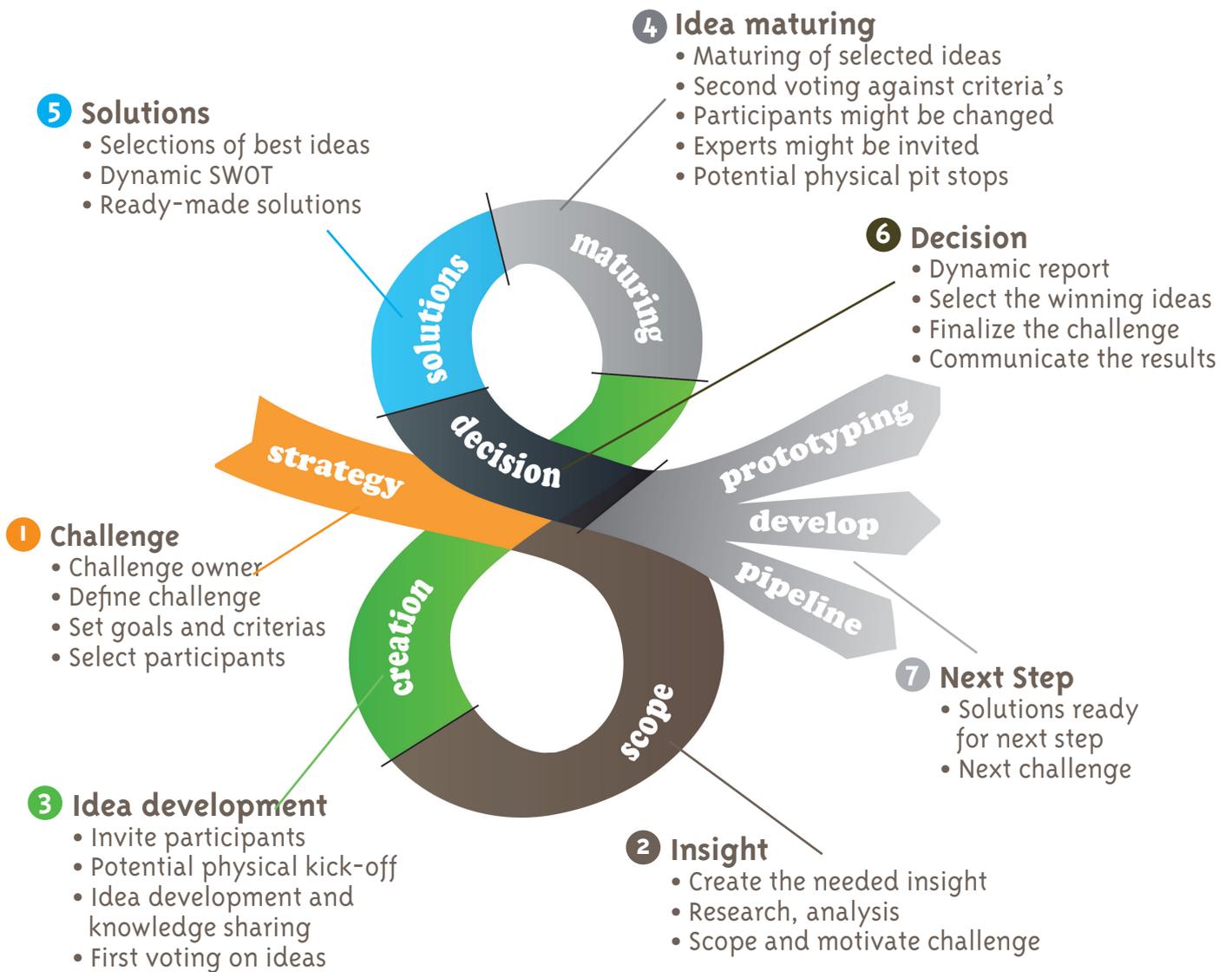
The good IM interact closely with challenge owners to scope the challenge and identify and engage people that see the project as important and wants to be a part of the community.

Another important job-to-be-done for the innovation manager is to ensure efficient use of resources put into innovation as well as document the outcomes for top-management. The platform can ease this job for the innovation manager by offering a tool that supports challenge overview and management reporting.

Summing up, a challenge-driven collaborative innovation tool can make the process clear, transparent and remove ambiguity. To unlock the full innovation capacity, one can benefit from good innovation management practice related to motivating people for participation. In the long run that can build and renew communities for innovation in your organization.

8ideas offers a web-based virtual collaborative tool based on innovation management good practice. You can combine it with a complementary Innovation-Kit and training of IM and project managers to boost innovation at meetings and workshops.





If you want to know more about 8ideas please contact us at
www.8ideas.dk.

- Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (2010) Innovation, <http://www.bcg.com/documents/file42620.pdf>.
- Seven circles of Innovation, http://www.cfl.dk/files/Publikationer/Andre/Seven_circles_of_innovation.pdf.
- Article by Tomas Vedsmann & Søren Kielgast on service innovation, see: <http://www.innovationmanagement.se/2011/09/26/how-to-successfully-implement-collaborative-idea-management-2/>. We have successfully worked with a systematic process in service innovation, where competencies within IT and HR, among others, were involved early in order to increase diversity in the idea phase of service innovation, see article on how to do user innovation in services
- BCG (2010) <http://www.innocentive.com/seekers/challenge-driven-innovation>.
- For example Frans Johanson (2004): "The Medici effect" is pointing on so called 'intersections' between different cultures and disciplines that are proofed to create innovation.
- <http://userinnovation.mit.edu/> MIT User Innovation Homepage, Professor Eric von Hippel and others.
- For a summary of what motivates people to participate in voluntary projects, see: <http://www.pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2009/09/Briefing-paper-4-Why-participate.pdf>.
- Article by Tomas Vedsmann (2013) on project management and ideation, see: <http://www.innovationmanagement.se/2013/02/04/making-ideation-a-part-of-the-innovation-project-machine/>.