

Innovation Projects PLAYBOOK



Introduction

Being innovative is something most companies aspire to be. Our world is increasingly dynamic and the need to meet the ever-changing demands ask for a different mindset. How employees can be motivated and facilitated to be innovative is often seen as difficult. As they grow, most companies find it difficult to break through certain procedures, patterns or behaviors that limit innovation. In other companies, there are a lot of ideas but time is simply limited to implement those ideas.

At Info Support we recognize these difficulties. But through our experience and efforts we've also found a way of creating a context which enables employees to generate innovative ideas and bring these ideas to fruition within a short period of time. We call this concept "InnovationProjects".

In this guide, we will share our insights and best practices regarding the different phases of an Innovation Project and we present an overview of the milestones you'll reach along the way of hosting an Innovation Project.

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Innovation Projects

Innovating in IT does not require much more than what is required for a small start-up company: people with good ideas, a laptop, time and a healthy dose of confidence.

With Innovation Projects, we create this within the context of a larger organization. A group of employees get the opportunity to use their imagination and creativity without the day-to-day constraints of a large project or working in a larger organization. A small company within a company, sometimes called intrapreneurship.

And it is intrapreneurship that characterizes Innovation Projects perhaps even more than the technologies being used. Innovation Projects are aimed at new opportunities, solutions and business models that add value to the customers proposition on mid to long term. It is about getting away from the regular context in a short timebox, with a Dream Team of eager people who are enabled to inspire, explore, and of course: deliver innovation. It can be seen as a structured experiment, characterized by lots of learning and little predictability; often it is a project with risks involved and uncertainty about the results.

In recent years, we successfully organized multiple Innovation Projects, such as the prediction of disruptions for the Dutch Railways and the Digital Lab Assistant for Radbouw University Medical Hospital. The results (learnings or products) of both projects are now used within real projects. The Digital Lab Assistant for example, is now used at the laboratory of the hospital to improve their efficiency. Our experience is that when a Dream Team is challenged within a short amount of time they achieve more innovative results at a faster pace. Added to that, it is a very exciting opportunity for an employee to be a part of a Dream Team.

Here are just a few of the reasons to start an Innovation Project:

- To try an innovative technology in a short span of time with a limited investment
- Stimulating innovation within an organization
- Create a Minimal Viable Product within only two weeks
- Fostering innovation, fun and excitement with employees of the company
- Stimulating entrepreneurship and experimental thinking
- Kick start of your project
- Try a new business concept on a smaller scale



How to host

To kick start an Innovation Project and determine its structure, it must first be clear what goal you are trying to achieve. Whatever your goal, preferences, opportunities or impediments are though, there are always a few phases an Innovation Project goes through: determine the Goal, generating Ideas, forming a Dream Team and determining a time box, Preparation,

the Innovation House, and the Follow-up. However linear these phases may seem, it rarely is as straightforward. Depending on your context, your approach will need to differ. Flexibility is key, so be sure to have a task force that can cope with this and assists during every phase.





	❖ This works	❖ This also works	❖ Let others know	❖ Tips & Tricks
GOAL (WHY)	<p>Customer has a clear goal In many occasions the customer already has a SMART goal defined. ❖ For examples: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5)</p>	<p>Co-creation Sometimes the goal is not yet identified or not SMART specified. Based on our experience we help our customers to define and specify the goal together.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define target group for all the communication • Announcement and explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics, metrics, metrics. Make sure your goal is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound). • The Business Model Canvas can help you to define a new product.
IDEA (HOW)	<p>Customer has an idea or concept Great! We'll help concretise your idea. ❖ For the elements of a great idea: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5)</p>	<p>Need an idea? We're there for you Hosting a Voice of Innovation, followed by a Dragon's Den, we'll challenge employees to submit and to pitch their innovative ideas. You'll end up with the best idea to realize your goal in a short amount of time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements • Article of the events • Videos of Innovation Events afterwards • Social media content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gamification helps employees to generate ideas. Whatever method you choose though, make sure it's easy for employees to submit ideas. ❖ For more ideas: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5)
DREAMTEAM (WHAT)	<p>Mixed Teams Shaping a dreamteam to work on the Innovation Project is key. Info Support can deliver consultants to work together with the IT engineers of the customer during the Innovation Project.</p>	<p>Info Support Team Info Support could also supply the entire team to do the Innovation Project for the customer. We'll make sure this is a high performance team which is prepared to deliver value in a short timebox.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your employees if they want to participate in the dreamteam and select participants from all volunteers • Announce the dreamteam 	<p>Whatever team you select, always keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a blended team: multiple disciplines, experience and skill levels • Select talented professionals
PREPARATION (WHAT)	<p>Checklist Make a checklist that contains at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of location • Invitation to all the attendees of the Innovation House 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to all the attendees of the Innovation House ❖ For the entire list: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5) 	<p>Structure and exposure is what your preparation should be all about. ❖ For more information: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5)</p>
INNOVATION HOUSE	<p>Info Support Location Info Support has the facilities to host the Innovation House in which the dreamteam will work on the Innovation Project.</p>	<p>Customer Location Got your own suitable location for an Innovation House? All the right facilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening and closing of the Innovation House (invite the whole organization) • Blogs / Vlogs • Communicate using social media 	<p>Got the Innovation House all set up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the following: • Have a short timebox. • Specify the team's goal ❖ For more: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5)
FOLLOW UP	<p>Checklist Make a checklist that contains at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing up the location • Communication afterwards ❖ For the entire list: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the results in a blog or article • Give a presentation about the results of the Innovation Project • Aftermovie of the Innovation Project and/or House 	<p>Follow-up starts early!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape the follow-up and plan necessary marketing activities before the Innovation House starts. ❖ For more: check Playbook Innovation Projects (p. 5) 



Case Innovation Project

“Data driven Mobility Portal”

Goal

ROI Fleet is a company that solves mobility issues for all their customers for more than 20 years. At the moment they want to reach these objectives:

- Make a transition to Data Centered Company (Big Data)
- A transition from a lease car to mobility (Mobility as a Service)
- They need a flexible architecture for all their IT Services so that they can meet the needs of their customers easily
- Being competitive and successful in their market

Idea

During this phase we defined the scope of the Innovation Project together with ROI. The scope was to have the Dream Team create a Minimal Viable Product of the mobility portal and the first release in the data maturity journey.

Dream Team

The Business Unit Manager of Info Supports selects a Dream Team which consists out of several disciplines. Due to the prominent positioning of Big Data in the solution two data experts were part of the team. Also three .NET specialists are in the same team.

Dream Team

During the preparation phase a project manager worked together with the Dream Team to prepare the Innovation House.

Amongst others, the following activities were arranged:

- Determining of the architecture
- Defining the first version of the Minimal Viable Product
- Scheduling the Agile Project Kick-off given by the experienced facilitators
- Fun activities during Innovation House

Innovation House

With the pressure of a short timebox, the Dream Team realized a Minimal Viable Product of the mobility portal. The team members implemented the solution with innovative cloud services based on Microsoft Azure. The delivered mobility portal provides customers of ROI insights in the use of mobility and the costs of it. The Innovation House was located at the headquarter of ROI in Naarden. This resulted in effective and efficient communication with the customer.

Follow-up

After the Innovation House the following activities were planned:

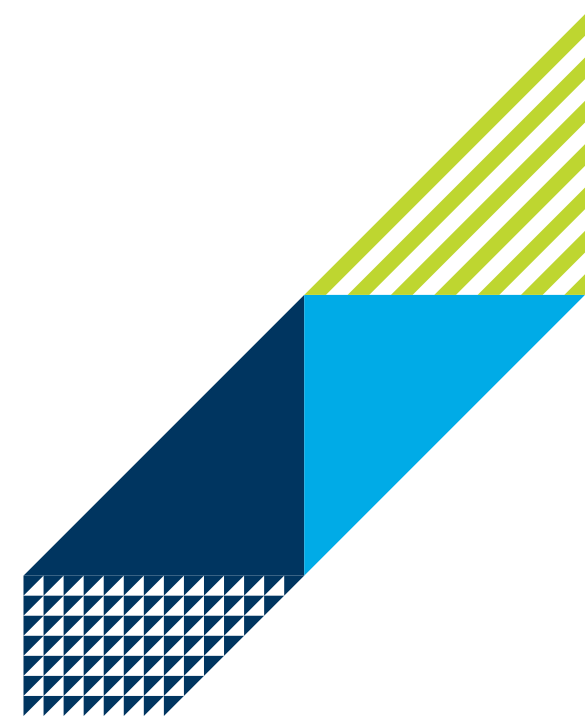
- Publish an after movie
- Defining next steps

Goal

In this phase, you determine the goal of the Innovation Project. Doing an Innovation Project is rarely a goal by itself. It is important to have a clear goal to pursue, because it will shape the ideas and structure of the Innovation Project as well as the scope in which the Dream Team will operate. You can identify different kinds of objectives for Innovation Projects. For example everyday business issues, trends, and developments in the market or environment to innovate new product market combination, stimulate innovation, or anything in between.

Some tips and tricks can you help to define a brilliant goal:

- Metrics, metrics, metrics:
Make sure your goal is measurable!
- Make sure that project success can be defined along the way based on this goal.
- If you define a new business proposition: using a Business Model Canvas can be a great way to set your goal.
- Involve business experts when you create the goal
- Validate the goal by running it by your colleagues
- Define objectives using the SMART criteria



Ideas

Having set a SMART goal, it is time to generate ideas. In this phase, it is necessary to widen knowledge about markets, technologies, developments, customers, or anything that may have a relation to the goal. Often the idea also contains an hypothesis which can be validated or invalidated during the Innovation Project.

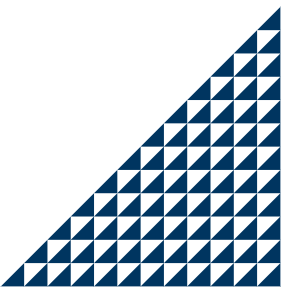
Sometimes, defining and sharing a goal immediately triggers (new) ideas on how to achieve the goal. Another great way is to involve employees. From our experience, the creativity, craftsmanship, and knowledge of employees is a great source of innovative ideas. Especially if employees are challenged explicitly.

Gamification helps out here. To trigger employees, we've hosted a Voice of Innovation various times, followed by a Dragon's Den. Prior to the Voice of Innovation, all the employees will be able to send in ideas. A board selects the best 10 ideas. The candidates of the selected best 10 ideas are invited to pitch their idea at the Voice of Innovation within 3 minutes

to a jury of 4 coaches. Every coach selects an idea. In this way, at the end of the Voice of Innovation only 4 ideas are left. During the next 8 weeks, the candidate and the coach elaborate the idea and prepare a presentation for the Dragon's Den. During the Dragon's Den, the candidates compete with their ideas and a jury selects the winning idea. The winning employee attains a key role in the Innovation Project. This concept worked as well for generating exposure for the Innovation Projects as for generating the ideas.

Some tips and tricks can help you to find the best idea:

- Make use of gamification
- Reward employees with the best idea with an innovative price (a cool gadget for example)
- Engage many stakeholders to generate ideas
- Engage an external party in evaluating the ideas
- Do not limit employees during the creative process of generating and collecting ideas
- Do you need to decompose an idea into actionable tasks? Check out Story Mapping.





**Voice of
Innovation**



Immuun Fenotypering (CHI)
Afdeling Laboratoriumgeneeskunde, Laboratorium Hematologie

Immuun Fenotypering (CHI) is een techniek die wordt gebruikt om de functie van verschillende soorten witte bloedcellen te onderzoeken. Het wordt vaak gebruikt bij de diagnose van hematologische aandoeningen.

De afbeelding toont een presentatie over immunofenotypering (CHI) met diverse grafieken, diagrammen en foto's van laboratoriumapparatuur. Het document is afkomstig van Radboud umc.

Dragons
Den

Dreamteam/Timebox

In this phase, a Dream Team is formed to execute the (winning) idea. There are various ways to form a Dream Team, but having a blended team works really well. A blend of different skill levels, experience, and technological disciplines stimulates creativity and open-minded thinking in the team. It can also be beneficial in multiple ways to involve one or more high potentials in the team.

“A blend of different skill levels stimulates creativity and open-minded thinking in the team.”

Having formed your Dream Team, it is wise to quickly determine the timebox in which the Innovation Project will take place. In this way, it is possible to block the agendas of the Dream Team.

Some tips and tricks can you help you to select the best Dream Team:

- Create a team with 5 to 7 people
- Make the customer (end-user) part of the team
- Make sure all members of the Dream Team can spend all their time on the Innovation Project during the scheduled two weeks of the Innovation House
- Select a blended (skills level, experience, technological disciplines, etc.) team

Preparation

The goal is set, an idea is selected, and a Dream Team is formed. Great. Now, preparation really starts.

During the preparation phase, tasks and meeting frequencies intensify for the task force. Preparation means taking care of all details, like reserving a space for the Innovation House. The Innovation House is the room where the Innovation Project is executed during the two weeks. There are many options here, but perhaps the most basic choice is to run the Innovation House at your own location or somewhere else.

If you decide to run it in-company, check if your location is suitable, offers enough flexibility to build a 'house', and is different enough from the regular working context. Need help or an Innovation House? Info Support can help out if needed, for example at our Innovation Lab at Start-up Village.

Other preparations involve getting hardware ready, arranging catering, decorating the Innovation House, and planning the involvement of a customer.

One of the decisive factors of a successful Innovation House is exposure. Be sure to spend enough attention to exposure while preparing: make a communication plan, update your organization regularly and with increasing intensity running up to the Innovation House, and plan all marketing activities during the Innovation House. Our experience learns that it helps to have all these activities planned and aligned with the communication plan to bother the Dream Team as little as possible during their work in the Innovation House.

It helps to have a checklist of all things to-do and to involve the Dream Team during the preparation phase. Use their input and preferences to make sure the Innovation House will run as smooth as possible.

TIP!

Food! Supply the Dream Team with special foods and drinks, like a red bull fridge, pizzas or ice-creams if the weather happens to be great.

Some tips and tricks can you help you to prepare the Innovation House:

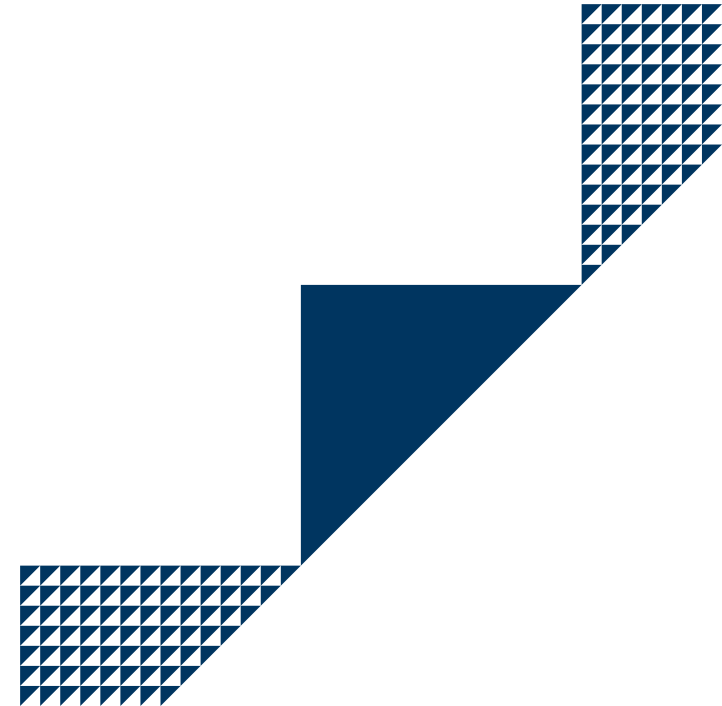
- Involve the Dream Team during preparation
- Use the standardized script for the Innovation House and tailor this script for your Innovation House
- Create a High Energy Atmosphere during the Innovation Project. Create full dedication of the team, schedule a public kick-off and load the Innovation House with fun things, like a game console, darts or relaxing chairs.
- Food! Supply the Dream Team with special foods and drinks, like a red bull fridge, pizzas or ice-creams if the weather happens to be great. Don't forget to involve the rest of the organization in this as well: ice-creams for take-away can be a great way to create some more exposure.
- Organize a meeting with the task force for preparation every two weeks.
- Appoint a project manager that is responsible during the preparation phase and ideally the other phases as well.

Innovation House

This is where the magic happens. After all preparations, the Dream Team is now working on an innovative concept and working towards delivery. The Innovation Houses we've run lasted for two weeks; enough time to build something worthwhile, whilst still having time pressure. To help the Dream Team, arrange a Project Kick-off with a facilitator to help them get to know each other better and have a dream start of the project.

Continuous communication is important during the Innovation House. Invite members of your organization to the kick-off and make it a festive event. Plan meet and greets with the team if it fits for them and ask them to compose updates of their work and progress to communicate with the organization. Work towards a festive end to the Innovation House as well, with a presentation and demo to round it off.

Again: if there is a customer involved, make sure to invite them regularly for demos and feedback.



Some tips and tricks can help you to prepare the Innovation House:

- Plan several activities around the Innovation House. An example we've touched on before is supplying ice-creams around the Innovation House. Other examples are demos or mini competitions with the team
- Communicate regularly about the progress of the Dream Team.
- Make sure you get plenty of footage from the Innovation House for the communication afterwards.
- Provide lunch for the Dream Team.
- Use Social Media to post updates about the Innovation House.
- Find the sweet spot between activities and communication and not distracting the Dream Team too much.



Follow up

When the Innovation House has come to an end, it's time for the follow-up. This will mainly be communication, which is important to shape in advance. Let the Dream Team know beforehand what follow-up content they should deliver during or shortly after the Innovation House.

During the Innovation House, the focus of the Dream Team is to deliver a Minimal Viable Product. It is really important that all activities required to make this product available in production are taken during those two weeks. This way, you can limit the number of modifications needed after the Innovation House.

Good communication after the event delivers a lot of value for your organization. Communicate what has been achieved, make an aftermovie or continue to update the organization on further progress after the Innovation House. Whatever you do: make sure that the follow-up communication conforms to earlier communication and doesn't degrade the perception of earlier communication or the achieved results.

TIP!

Plan and shape your desired content beforehand

Some tips and tricks can you help you during the follow-up:

- Start the follow-up early
- Plan and shape your desired content beforehand
- Involve the Dream Team during follow-up
- Do not underestimate this phase
- Schedule a retrospective for the Innovation Project
- Share the lessons learned with your organization
- Plan a dinner with the Dream Team afterwards



Communication

We've touched on it multiple times: communication. During every phase, it is important to send the right messages to activate and involve the organization. Whether you want employees to generate ideas, to have them apply to the Dream Team, or to keep an eye on updates from the Innovation House, your Innovation Project needs to be a project to remember for the entire organization and/or your customers.

This is why it is useful to add a marketer to the task force. Every message that is to be send, needs to be aligned with the audience you are targeting and the goal of the Innovation Project. Our advice is to plan as much of the communication as possible beforehand. This will help to arrange the resources needed, to get content from stakeholders and to compose the right marketing materials around your Innovation Project.



Case Innovation Project

“Predict disruptions of trains”

Goal

Info Supports want to achieve multiple objectives with Innovation Projects:

- Develop entrepreneurship
- Stimulate innovation themes (Data Driven, Continuous Delivery, Cloud Architectures, Artificial Intelligence.)
- Organize cool projects for employees
- Engage customers with innovation

Idea

During this phase we walk through these steps:

- More than 30 employees provided innovative ideas
- During the Voice of Innovation, the coaches selected these ideas: “launch IoT” by Paul Borgeld, “Blockchain engine” by Mark van Cuijk, “Predict disruptions of trains” by Maarten van Duren, “Football table IoT” by Pim Hazebroek and Bart Caro.
- During the Dragon’s Den, the jury selected the idea “Predict disruptions of trains” as the winning idea.

Dream Team

Maarten (the winner of the Dragon’s Den) selected a Dream Team that existed out of several Info Support colleagues. All

the team members together had the required skill set (i.e. Data Specialists, Start-up Thinkers, and Cloud Engineers). There was also a good balance between senior and junior team members.

Preparation

During the preparation phase, a project manager prepared the Innovation House together with the Dream Team. Amongst others, the following activities were arranged:

- Participation of OV9292 and Ricardo Rail during the Innovation House
- Obtaining the required data
- Decorating the Innovation House
- Arranging fun activities during Innovation House (a massage chair for all team members and lunches every day)

Innovation House

The whole organization joined the kick-off of the Innovation House. During the two weeks, the team implemented a solution to schedule trips that take disruptions into account. They created a mobile app to track travel history. Based on your preferences (for example: do you prefer cheap train rides or do you want to travel from A to B as quickly as possible) the app gives you suggestions which trip fits your profile best. This solution was presented to the customer and Info Support in the final presentation.

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