

# IDEA DROP

A guide to the

## Implementation

of idea management software

# Introduction

You have done your research, chosen the software and now you are ready to implement an exciting new idea management platform into your organisation. Making the decision to boost your innovation output with such a software is only the beginning of your ideation journey. The next big challenge is to integrate it seamlessly into the very foundations of your business. Rather than a shiny new toy that fizzles out after a few months, an idea management platform needs to become part of the glue that binds your organisation together. An implementation strategy that leaves your employees thinking how on earth they functioned before the software was in place is the ultimate goal.

Implementing a new idea management software is about disrupting the status quo, breaking down bureaucratic barriers and encouraging openness to positive change. Easier said than done, such an approach requires structured planning and commitment from multiple stakeholders across the organisation. Visionary leadership that is dedicated to the aims and objectives of a revamped innovation strategy is key to ensuring successful implementation. Innovation equals change and this inevitably means resistance. According to a recent survey by PwC, 75% of change initiatives fall short of expectations due to employee resistance and lack of clarity and leadership support.

The implementation process must be about onboarding employees across the entire organisation. Your approach needs to be about shifting attitudes and changing the workplace culture. This is no mean feat, therefore a clear process and timeline must be established to increase the chances of success. For your innovation strategy to work, you need a structured programme in place - an innovation platform provides this structure but it must be rolled out in a way that maximises effectiveness and efficiency. In this white paper, we provide the essential steps needed to successfully and seamlessly integrate a new idea management software into your organisation.

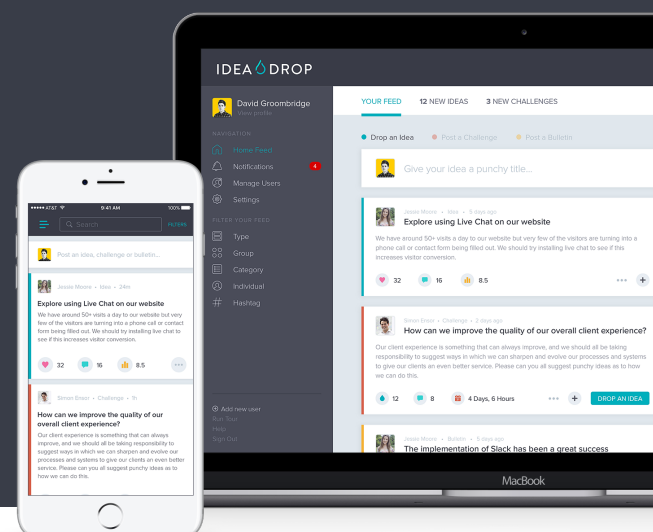
“ 75% of change initiatives fall short of expectations due to employee resistance and lack of clarity and leadership support. ”

**- PwC, Human Change Management: Herding Cats**

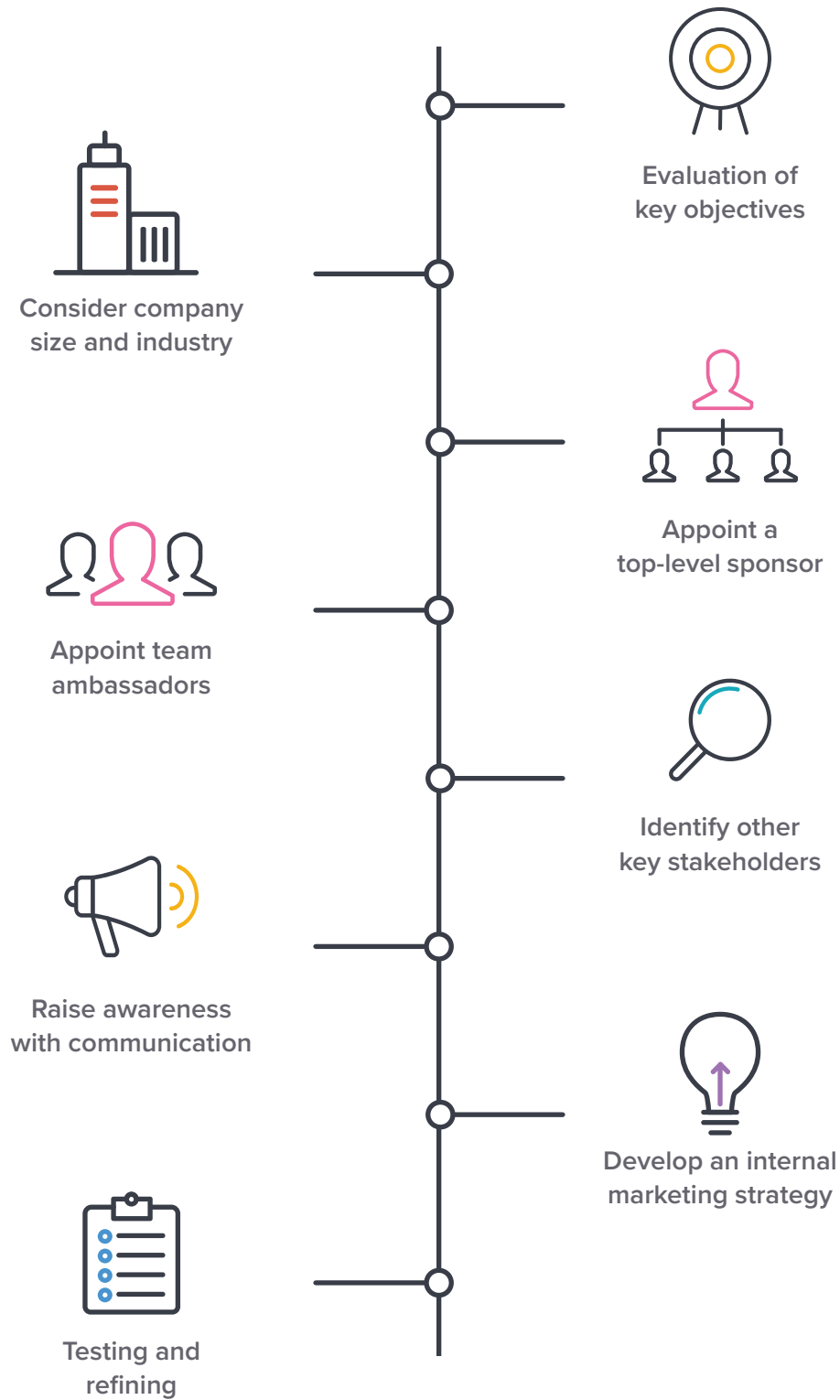
“ Companies that have successful innovation programs with a formal approach perform better and grow significantly faster than companies without a formal structured system in place - growing 3-fold difference in 5 years.

**- Bain & Company, Innovation Performance Survey**

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## Our cheat sheet guide to implementation



# Evaluation of key objectives

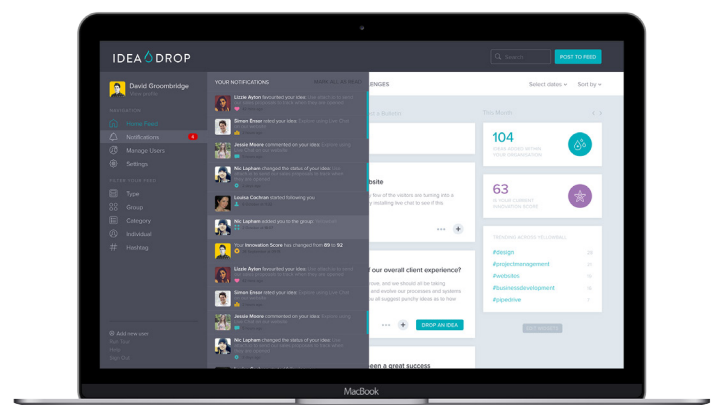
Every business is unique and there is no 'one size fits all' process for implementing a new software successfully. Nevertheless, the steps outlined in this white paper provide the basic foundations for a comprehensive process and can be easily adapted to your own requirements. In order to devise a bespoke plan, it is necessary to establish absolute clarity of your key business objectives, both in terms of the top-level goals and more innovation-specific aims. Begin by asking the following questions:

- ? What are your key short-term and long-term business objectives?
- ? What are the primary challenges that your organisation faces?
- ? How does your organisation currently innovate and implement new ideas to achieve goals?
- ? How does your organisation engage with employees and identify talent?
- ? What are the rewards and recognition processes in your organisation?
- ? What are the aims and objectives of implementing an idea management software?

These questions will help you to prioritise what is important to the business, as well as identify key touch points and challenge areas. Once your goals have been established, they can be aligned to the implementation process, helping to guide it in the most appropriate direction. Ensure these goals have constant visibility and that processes are kept on track; according to PwC, 75% of change initiatives fail to fulfill their stated goals and objectives. Persistent referral back to the overarching aims will help to frame the implementation process and provide both transparency and motivation throughout the process.

## Examples of key objectives:

- ✓ Increase net profit margin by 15%
- ✓ Improve staff retention rates
- ✓ Drive higher turnover in specified divisions by 20%
- ✓ Increase market share by 5% by 2019
- ✓ Improve the effectiveness of marketing campaigns



## Key Takeaways:

Establish the key objectives of your organisation and align the implementation process with these goals

Framing the process in terms of key objectives will help push the initiative in the right direction

Clear goals allow for transparency and can provide motivation to keep the process on track

## Considering company size and industry

As well as establishing goals, it is also important to consider the industry and size of your organisation, as this will have a direct bearing on the implementation process. Often it is easier for startups and smaller companies to embrace change and new platforms, as these businesses are constantly on the cusp of growth and development. Change is therefore already hardwired into their culture and is more natural to them.

However, larger organisations tend to have numerous processes and structures that have been in place for many years. As a result, it is considerably harder to onboard the entire organisation in disrupting these systems. Such an endeavour requires knowledge, skills and a carefully considered plan. Despite these issues, larger organisations tend to have the advantage of available funding at their fingertips. Conversely, startups may not have all the resources they need to support both the process of implementation and the facilitation of new ideas.

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**Successful change requires development of a context-sensitive approach. Only under those conditions can employees' behaviours be adapted and changed.**

*- Deloitte,  
'Demystifying Change Management'*

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## Lear Corporation case study:

With 140,000 staff across 240 locations, Lear Corporation required a large scale roll out of the Idea Drop software. Customisation of the platform specific to the needs and requirements of a company as large as Lear Corporation was key in aiding successful integration of the software.

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As soon as we realised that we were able to customise Idea Drop to exactly the way that we work here within Lear Corporation we realised that it was the appropriate platform for us.

*- Kevin Farley, Design Review  
& Engineering Process*

”



*Darren Legh and Kevin Farley from Lear Corporation*

### Key Takeaways:

The key steps and approach to the implementation process will depend on the industry and company size

Larger companies can find it harder to embrace change due to rigid structures and a fondness of the status quo

Startups are hardwired to welcome change but can struggle with resources and funding for new softwares and systems

# Appointing a top-level sponsor

The implementation of any change initiative within an organisation requires clearly identifiable sponsors who have a vested interest in the process. Identifying the key decision makers and acquiring their full backing will help to elevate the new software integration to a top-level priority. Backing from senior members of the organisation is absolutely necessary to facilitate a smooth execution process. According to a respondent of a Bain & Company survey:

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Innovation cannot be successful if it does not come from the top to the bottom. In other words, the CEO must be completely convinced that innovation is the best strategy to achieve success. Innovation has to be part of the company's culture to be part of the company's achievements.

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- Bain & Company,  
*'Taking the measure of your innovation performance'*

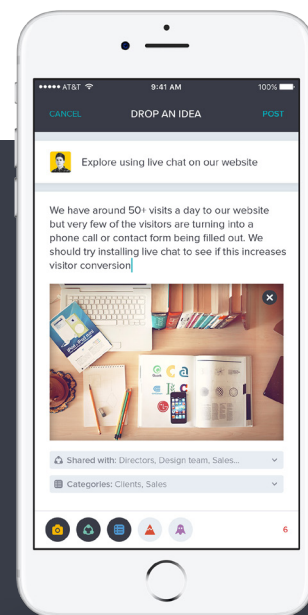
Appoint a relevant top-level sponsor who can champion the implementation process and act as a role model and representative of the new platform. The chosen person should be senior enough to ensure that all appropriate resources and funding are in place, as well as be in a position to resolve any issues should they arise. As an executive sponsor, their primary role is to provide direction for the implementation process, keeping it on track and executed as planned. Although this person may not be involved with the day-to-day running of activities associated with the new idea management platform, their influence is nevertheless crucial.

There is no need to appoint only one top-level sponsor; often it is effective to form a coalition of sponsors. The resulting team will establish a more powerful authority behind the new software, therefore providing stronger advocacy. With a comprehensive coalition of influential backers, implementation of an idea management platform will be significantly easier and more likely to be a roaring success.

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**26%**

of CEOs believe that strong visionary business leadership is the most important ingredient for successful innovation in a company

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- PWC - *'Unleashing the power of innovation'*



## Key Takeaways:

Appoint a top-level sponsor to champion the implementation process

An executive sponsor should be senior enough to push forward the change initiative and influence stakeholders

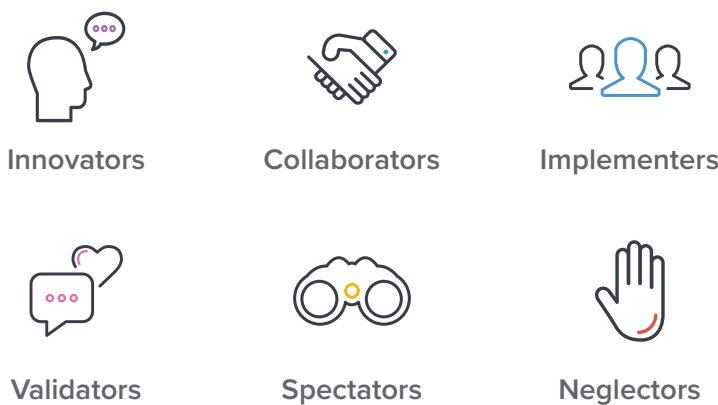
Consider appointing a coalition of sponsors to add further authority and influence behind the process



# Appointing team ambassadors

As well as the executive sponsors, it is also important to appoint ambassadors in each team or department. These champions should be influential individuals who have direct contact with the staff on the ground. Acting as moderators, they will help to facilitate the process and provide regular feedback on its progress. The primary aim of these stakeholders is to engage the staff and incentivise participation on an ongoing basis.

There are different types of innovator within any organisation, from those too shy to participate to those overflowing with confident ideas. The job of a team ambassador is to motivate all staff to play an active part in the innovation process. Ultimately, everyone has ideas and therefore everyone is an innovator; sometimes people just need some encouragement and a push in the right direction.

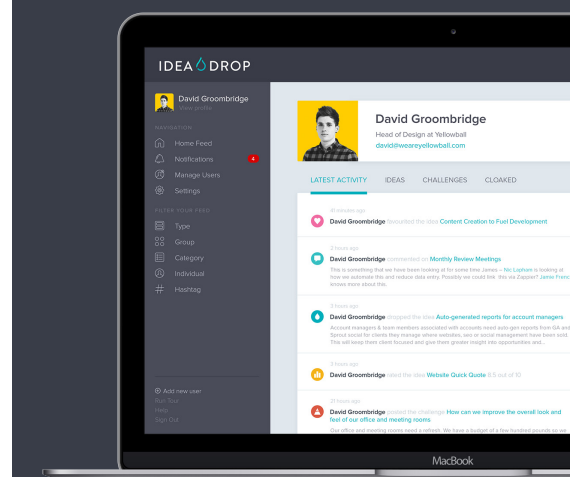


Selecting the right people for the task of team moderator is key. One of the greatest barriers in appointing ambassadors is a perception that they are too busy to carry such a responsibility. However, crucially these ambassadors should see the process as a way of achieving their goals and furthering their own agenda, not as an additional burden to their workload. Furthermore, there should be an emphasis on providing long-term value as an innovation ambassador. This is not a temporary role for the implementation period; they must focus on sustaining participation and engagement with the new software for the foreseeable future of the company.

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**48%**  
of respondents say  
their companies don't  
have the necessary  
capabilities to ensure  
that change  
is sustained.

- PwC, Strategy  
and Cultures  
Role in Enabling  
Organizational  
Change

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## Key Takeaways:

Appoint team  
ambassadors to act as  
moderators for staff  
across all departments

Ambassadors should  
act as influencers and  
incentivise engagement  
with the new platform

The role should be framed  
as a way of helping staff  
achieve goals, not as an  
additional workload burden

## Identifying other key stakeholders

Aside from the team ambassadors, you will need to consider what other stakeholders need to be involved in the implementation process. From IT and legal to HR and marketing, ensure that all the necessary people are onboarded and have transparency over the process and timeline. Every stakeholder requires absolute clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities so that all departments can work together in a productive manner to maximise the breadth of knowledge from across the organisation. The table on the right is an example of the various stakeholders who could potentially be involved in the process and their corresponding responsibilities.

Providing clarification around these roles ensures transparency and provides the appropriate motivation for each individual to execute their responsibilities. Ultimately, these stakeholders hold the key to successful employment of a new idea management platform and must be given all necessary resources to allow them to go about their required involvement with the process. There is a difference between letting an initiative happen and making it happen. Stakeholders must be aligned with the latter and be incentivised to sustain their responsibilities on a long-term basis.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>CEO</b>	To provide visible support for integration of the new idea management software and provide endorsement by participating in the internal communications plan.
<b>Top-level sponsors</b>	To act as a team of powerful influencers and innovation champions to incentivise all departments to not only accept the change but also to participate with enthusiasm and genuine motivation.
<b>Team moderators</b>	To act as ambassadors for the new idea management platform and influence people on the ground to engage, feedback and participate on a continuous basis.
<b>Marketing and comms</b>	To execute a comprehensive internal marketing strategy for the rollout of the new software and ensure a receptive integration into the organisation.
<b>IT and technology</b>	To get all technical requirements in place to guarantee seamless integration with the current systems and to educate staff on any new IT specifications.
<b>Legal</b>	To ensure any legal requirements regarding implementation of the new software have been addressed and resolved.
<b>HR</b>	To establish the key stakeholders and plan any necessary training requirements within the organisation.

### Key Takeaways:

Identify all key stakeholders across the organisation and consider all departments, from IT to HR

Ensure that everyone is clear about the different stakeholders and their corresponding responsibilities

Stakeholders should be incentivised to carry out their responsibilities to ensure successful implementation





# Raising awareness with marketing and communications

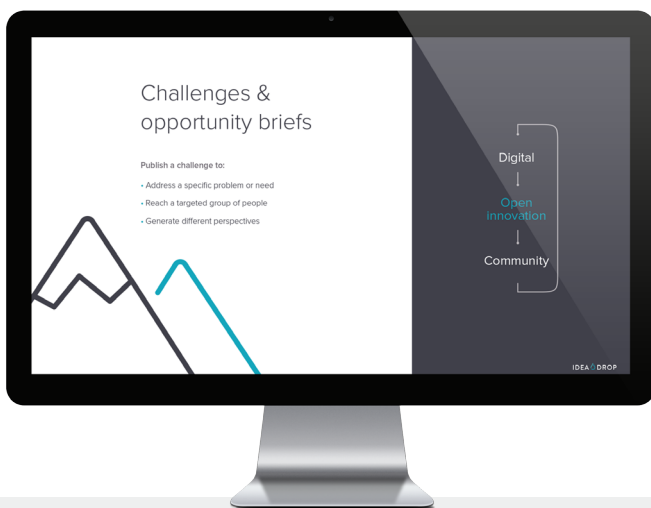
Raising awareness of a new product or software is key, but in a large organisation, how do you broadcast details of the initiative to everyone?

Adopting a marketing perspective is crucial to preparing your organisation for the implementation of a new platform. Underestimate the importance of this preparation and you are likely to face resistance from employees. Although the key stakeholders are likely to already be heavily invested in the initiative, the greatest challenge is onboarding the remainder of the organisation. Remember that the stakeholders are likely to have spent a lot of time researching the new software, nurturing it from concept to implementation. To them it is exciting and has the potential to be very successful but it is not always easy to convey this excitement across all departments and to every individual.

A marketing plan should not only inform and educate, it should also incentivise and generate buzz. For the implementation to be a success, you do not just need staff to go along with the process, you need them to be actively engaged and participating. When people are busy, this takes careful persuasion and it is important to emphasise the benefits that the new software will bring, not only to the organisation as a whole, but to each individual worker.

According to Full Potential Group, business leaders stated that a lack of understanding and communication on the reasons for change (40%) is the main factor that could hamper the success of change initiatives. Outline the goals and processes in a clear and accessible format to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. Emphasise that an idea management platform will make their lives easier and will create a new, exciting workplace culture that is more open, collaborative and innovative.

*Provide a guide to the new idea management platform with an overview of innovation in the workplace, or enlist the help of Idea Drop to run an innovation workshop.*



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**- The Full Potential Group,  
'The State of Leadership  
& Change report'**

## Key Takeaways:

Broadcasting details of the new idea management software is key to ensuring participation

Adopt a marketing perspective to onboard employees across the organisation

Emphasise how the new platform will make their lives easier and outline these benefits



## Developing an internal marketing strategy

Devise an internal communications plan as early as possible so you can ensure that everything is in place right from the start of the implementation process. This plan will essentially be an internal marketing strategy for the new idea management platform and should include a range of formats and channels:



Launch email



Launch video



Webinars



Workshops



CEO blog post



Social media



Intranet



Print

Pay close attention to any feedback received throughout this marketing process and adapt where appropriate. Leverage the positive feedback to further amplify your marketing efforts and address the negative feedback with a solution. There will inevitably be areas of the proposed implementation process that require improvement and attention, or where additional clarity is needed. This is why it is important to roll out the communications plan as early as possible; ironing out any issues early on will mean that the bulk of the process is smooth and non-disruptive.

The internal marketing strategy around the new idea management software is not just for the implementation process. Continue with the communications on an ongoing basis to the point where the new platform becomes ingrained into the very foundations of the organisation. Share news bulletins, reward notices, blog posts, videos of successful ideas and run follow-up workshops to inspire. Keep people engaged with the platform and it will be used both efficiently and continuously.

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**57%**

of CEOs believe that having the right culture to foster support and innovation is one of the top ingredients for successful innovation.

- PwC, *'Unleashing the power of innovation'*

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### Key Takeaways:

Develop a comprehensive internal marketing strategy to ensure full awareness across the organisation

Pay attention to feedback received and adapt accordingly

Communications surrounding the idea management software should be ongoing

# Testing & refining

With stakeholders in place and a comprehensive communications plan established, you will need to set out a timeline of all key stages, ensuring the project is kept on track. The initial implementation will be a process of measuring, testing and refining; in the majority of instances, there will always be ways in which the initiative can be iterated and improved. For this reason, it is essential to include a soft launch as one of the stages, in which you can test that all elements are working correctly. A soft launch enables early identification of any issues and leaves plenty of time for them to be resolved before wider company rollout.

For Idea Drop, we recommend testing the following:

- ✓ Idea and challenge posting
- ✓ Commenting
- ✓ Notifications
- ✓ Innovation score
- ✓ Ratings
- ✓ Admin access
- ✓ Customisations and integrations

The first few months are the most important of any change initiative, as this is when you have the attention of your stakeholders and employees. Have a selection of innovation challenges in place, ready to launch with. When posting a challenge, it is essential to provide as much information as possible to encourage relevant, valuable responses. Outline the current problem and how a resolution will help the business. Ask the key question that needs to be solved, set a deadline to add a sense of urgency and attach any supporting material.

## Recommended challenge format

### Detailed question:

Currently we are losing money through our sales process, as we are spending too much time chasing unqualified leads. Improving this will mean we can better expand our client base.

How can we refine our sales process?

### Deadline:

18th December

### Media:

Screenshot of all the leads that have failed to convert into a sale over the previous months.

Beyond this initial implementation point, it may be necessary to revitalise the internal communications strategy to maintain interest and participation. Provide regular bulletins to broadcast the key successes and updates, making it the ongoing responsibility of the appointed stakeholders and ambassadors to keep engagement high. This type of communication is crucial in captivating the attention of employees from the outset, enabling them to be fully involved and therefore enjoying greater user satisfaction.

An open line of communication between stakeholders and employees should be established, so that the initiative can be continually measured and adapted. Reporting back to management is a key part of this, as it will enable both improvements and potential expansions. For example, following a successful integration of the software, stakeholders may look to pursue a wider internal roll out or even explore an open innovation strategy. By paying close attention to the progress of a change initiative, the opportunities for success are endless; it just takes a little time and dedication to achieve great results.

## Key Takeaways:

Set out a timeline detailing the key stages of the implementation process

Include a soft launch to allow software to be tested and any issues ironed out before full roll out

Devise a selection of innovation challenges to launch with so employees are engaged from day one



# IDEA DROP

To discover more about how Idea Drop can help you  
crowdfund, curate and implement the best ideas  
from your people, schedule a demo with us today.

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