Developing Innovation in Staff and Getting Your Ideas Heard

Session Objectives

- Identify what types of issues or problems you are facing
- Provide a model for organizing your ideas/solutions
- Work with the model to gain familiarity
- How to vet and hone your idea
- How to sell it
- Q & A
Why are your ideas not adopted?

What makes an idea good?

• It solves a known problem or issue
• It saves time or resources
• It reduces or eliminates risk
• It improves efficiency or effectiveness
• Others?
Step 1: Develop the Problem Statement

• What is the issue?
• Remain objective: state facts, not opinions
• What is the impact of the problem/issue?
• Who are the stakeholders? What do they believe the problem is?
• Write a concise problem statement that details what needs to be solved

Step 2: Detail the Current State

• Provide a detailed account of how the matter is currently managed or handled (if applicable)
• Remember your audience?
  • Stake holders
  • Decision maker
• Enough detail to ensure audience understands the issue
Step 3: Detail your Recommendation/Solution

- Detail your recommendation or solution
  - Who is involved?
  - Who is impacted?
  - Systems or technology
  - Interconnections or interdependencies

Step 4: Vet your Solution

- Share your work with stakeholders
- Ask for feedback
  - Is something missing?
  - Does the solution create new issues?
- Gather Pros, Cons, Resource Needs & Risks
- Revise solution based on feedback or create new options and vet those too.
Building Support for Your Idea/Solution

• Know your stakeholders and decision maker(s)
• What is most important to them, and how does this issue relate?
• Who are your influencers? Who do the decision makers listen to?
  • Engage them in the issue and your solution
  • Listen, don’t be defensive, take notes
  • Who stands to benefit most from the solution?
• Engage in an information campaign
  • Take them to coffee, lunch, ask for a meeting or chat

How did it go?

• Thank those that helped to hone your idea or solution.
• Reflect to make sure you identify what worked best and what didn’t work as well as you had hoped.
• Don’t give up if your idea isn’t adopted or if it is shelved for now.
• Collect feedback on your approach.
• This is a skill and as with any skill, needs practice.
Let’s Practice!

- Break into groups of 2-3
- Pick your problem or issue
- Go through the steps

Wrap up and Report Out
Questions/Comments?

Marie Johnson
Director of Student Financial Services
University of Vermont
802-656-1194
Marie.Johnson@uvm.edu