

White Paper

INCLUDE TO INNOVATE

How Inclusion and Technology Fuel Innovation



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Why do the loudest – not the best – ideas often win?

Game-changing ideas are often missed because traditional ideation processes are unintentionally designed to favor extroverts and those with power.

To foster innovation, growth-minded leaders cultivate environments and processes that ensure **all** stakeholder voices are considered, not just a select few.

At Melissa Majors Consulting we facilitate strategy planning using the **in'klōoded**[®] method. This inclusive process draws out game-changing ideas that would otherwise be unintentionally ignored.



Our secret? Ensuring all voices are heard and considered.

We combine many perspectives into a few great ones then systematically and collaboratively prioritize ideas that deserve action. That is the secret to in'klōoded[®] and to discovering the most disruptive ideas.

To listen, analyze, discuss, and prioritize ideas, we use technology to facilitate the in'klōoded[®] process. Doing so enables us to ensure all ideas are considered and all stakeholders have an equitable say in the outcome.



Unfortunately, the loudest ideas, not the best ideas, often win.

Oftentimes dominants, those who hold the power, control the ideation process and unintentionally drown out the voices of non-dominants, those with less power. Growth-minded leaders, leverage inclusive, systematic, and data-driven strategic planning processes to foster innovation.

This whitepaper outlines the in'klōoded[®] method and we hope it sparks ideas on how you can use inclusion and technology to fuel disruptive innovation.

How to Inclusively Innovate



The first step is to empathize with and uncover the needs of those you serve.

It's tempting to assume we can empathize with the needs of our customers based on our perspectives and that of our social circle. There are a variety of methods to conduct research – customer listening, surveys, interviews, etc. Step number one is to capture the voice of your customer.



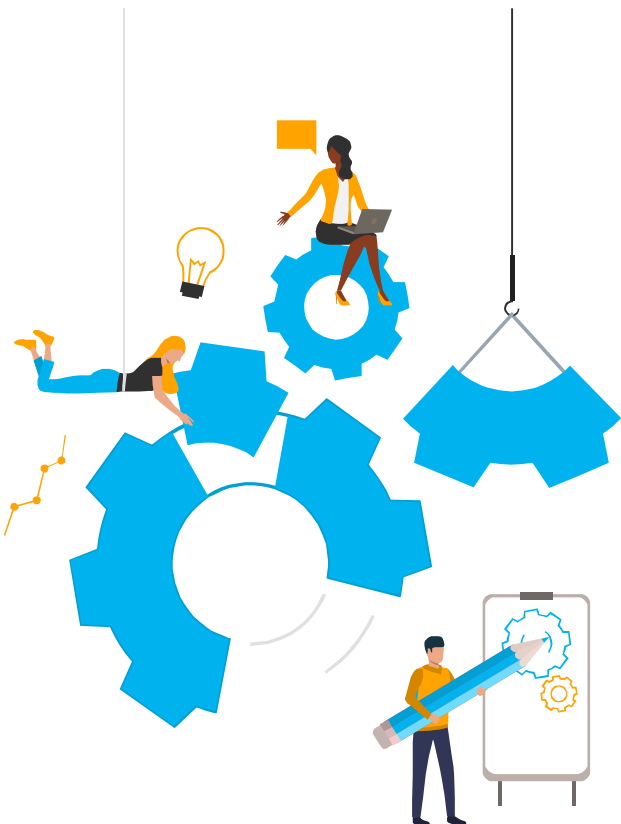
Next, analyze the data for trends.

What problems are the majority of your constituents trying to solve? Stay laser-focused on the needs of the majority versus a few influential situations. To help with the analysis, we recommend using data scientists to synthesize and help visualize the data.



Share data in a consumable way with those involved in the ideation process.

We find the use of stories, quotes, and infographics to significantly improve understanding of data. If your stakeholders don't understand the data, the risk of misalignment between customer need and the solution is highly likely.



DEFEAT GROUP THINK DURING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Group think is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome. Group think has been identified as the catalyst for many business failures such as Enron, Lehman Brothers, WorldCom, the subprime mortgage bubble leading up to the global financial crisis, etc.

In other words, the social need to belong trumps business logic and often causes stakeholders to support ideas or decisions to maintain social capital versus being the rational contrarian.

To defeat it, we use tools such as Evenium's ConnexMe to equitably solicit ideas from meeting attendees, categorize them, and as a group vote on solutions that have the highest propensity of achieving desired outcomes. Using technology to facilitate this process enables the following results.



Equitable Idea Contribution

Everyone is invited to post their ideas, insights, and challenges. Input can be anonymized. This allows people who feel they would not be heard to share their thoughts without fear of any repercussion. Input can be explored with upvotes, replies, and moderator selected highlights. This creates an environment that removes any social pressure and facilitates the ability for all to contribute.



Prioritization Based on Desired Outcomes Versus Contributor's Social Status

After collecting ideas and challenges for each topic of discussion, attendees vote on the top ones using a ranking system. Although all of the votes are anonymous the overall voting results are visible to everyone.



Electronic Capture of Ideas and Priorities

All of the meeting content (including comments, ideas, notes, votes, slides) is captured and saved. It is then easily exportable for later use unlike traditional facilitation tools such as flip charts and manual notetaking which often result in inaccurate record capture.



During their pitch, they must frame their idea using "because of" and fill in the blanks with specific references. This ensures alignment to data and opinion.

"Because of x (data point), we're recommending y (solution). This will result in a % change to b metric."



We have found that using this simple framework results in ideas that are anchored in data vs. opinion.

Immediately after the pitch, using ConnexMe, we build a ranking survey based on the presented ideas and allow the larger group to vote on the top 4-5 solutions that the organization will commit to implementing.

This democratic method allows for prioritization based on the inclusive and collective opinion of the group, versus a select few.

Aligned Ideation

To ensure solutions are aligned with customer needs and the metrics that matter most, we use the "Because of" framework.

During the ideation phase, we typically break the teams into small groups. Using ConnexMe, they can mine the ideas and insights that have been contributed by other attendees on each topic using filters and hashtags.

Next, they prioritize the top 2-3 ideas against the highest propensity to address a customer need and achieve desired business outcomes. The spokesperson then pitches the small group's prioritized ideas to the larger group.



“Because Of...”



Don Welsh
President and CEO of
Destinations International

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Normally, I do not look forward to two-day meetings. However, this was by far the best planning meeting I've ever attended!”

”



Design the meeting engagement based on your audience's position, experience level, and size. The needs for a meeting with a small group of C-Suite executives will differ a business meeting with a larger, more diverse audience.



With smaller groups of executives, you'll want to make sure that everyone understands how to prioritize and align their ideas with factors that matter most to the organization – financials, purpose, etc. With larger, more diverse groups, you will want to quickly gather their opinion and identify themes in their collective perception. This data will illuminate what matters most to the majority versus a select few influencers. Pragmatic and innovative strategies thrive when the collective voice of all stakeholders influence decisions.



Regardless of the type of strategy you're designing, we can help you maximize innovation using the in'klōoded® process. You'll have a clear path to follow that will produce game-changing insights, innovative ideas, and inclusive collaboration. Contact us to learn how your team can get your team in'klōoded®!



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“ The in'klōoded® process has resulted in a 100% Net Promoter Score and led to the creation of innovative solutions that wouldn't have been considered otherwise.

The Evenium team and tools significantly contribute to these amazing results. ”

We can help get your team in'klōoded®!

Email us at hello@melissamajors.com.