



Introducing

UPS Solve

Where Great Ideas Are Born and Nurtured

A Proposal for an Enterprise-Wide Online Collaboration Space

June, 2017

Nicholas C. Zedlar

Manage Change

Reason: Be Smart to Win

Of course, in commerce, it's all about the "survival of the fittest," zero-sum competition for scarce resources. As with any global business, this certainly applies to United Parcel Service.

This proposal posits a concerted focus on "survival of the smartest." It argues the case for the formation of a permanent **UPS UPS Solve**, an innovation factory that fosters the free flow of ideas, the goal of which is to ensure that, along with innumerable other benefits, the company can enjoy a competitive advantage and steady profitability far into the future.

Rationalize: Master Change

The objective here is to create an ideation nexus that transforms change management into a rational, proactive and, ultimately, profitable undertaking. This in turn creates favorable conditions for faster and superior solution implementation that surpasses market rivals as a regular occurrence, not an intermittent or rare phenomenon.

Collaborate: Crowd-Source Solutions

At UPS, this is not as much about culture *change* as it is about a logical, focused *expression* of it. If the company seeks to innovate, it must avail itself of collaboration technologies and invest appropriately in easy-to-use, efficient, central—and even fun—innovation systems. We'll see below that this means empowering UPS personnel across the enterprise to act in concert to craft new solutions. All of us share in the common goal of generating, nourishing and perfecting great ideas together. In essence, we're talking about tapping into the immense brain power and creativity of **crowd-sourcing**.

Identify Impediments

Release: Set Innovation Free

There are, however, some traditional roadblocks to overcome, because, intentionally or not, various policies and structures currently in place can throttle or hinder innovation. Obvious or hidden, these must be rooted out and removed—or circumvented completely—before any kind of formal ideation clearinghouse has any realistic chance of succeeding. We intuitively know how bureaucratic inertia or strictly hierarchical organization can impede progress by adhering to entrenched, outmoded thinking.

Remove: Eliminate Roadblocks

The real creative windfall comes from mobilizing the innate talent of all employees—on a strictly voluntary basis, of course—from CEO to rank and file across all divisions and functions. Our company may staff or provide venture capital for traditional, dedicated R&D facilities to the tune of millions of dollars, but it absolutely must not neglect significant investment beyond the confines of a relatively small cadre of engineers or elite think-tank eggheads. To do so is detrimentally short-sighted and foolish, and here's why...

The problem with strategic myopathy—or apathy—is four-fold:

1. **Apathy and Sluggishness** - The speed, frequency and scope of ingenuity infrastructure can't keep pace or scale effectively with contemporary socio-technological changes. In effect, this symptom indicates a lack of will, funding, confidence or sponsorship that results in painfully slow cultural evolution. This, in particular, cedes advancement to market rivals.
2. **Isolation and Fragmentation** - Weak, inefficient or absent formal mechanisms, forums and channels for communicating ideas isolate problem-solving efforts, making “cross pollination” and spontaneous brainstorming opportunities virtually impossible.
3. **Hubris and Elitism** - A management class and/or specialist faction that discourages grassroots innovation, even to the point of open hostility, can't reconcile the concept that ideas from “amateur,” “outsider” or “uneducated” colleagues are valid and can bear astoundingly good fruit.
4. **Risk Aversion and Complacency** - A bad case of **periculophobia**—the fear of taking risks—paralyzes the organization into a reassuringly stagnant and static cocoon. This often happens when the company adheres to certain solutions and policies that may have succeeded admirably in the past, but aren't as relevant or optimal today as they once were.
5. **Parsimony (Stinginess)** – The unwillingness to spend money or allocate personnel and resources on (untried) ideas, especially vis-à-vis incentive programs, resources, technologies, methods and/or platforms that encourage engagement. These kill innovation before nascent ideas even have a chance to germinate.

Challenge the Status Quo

Rethink: Be Receptive to New Possibilities

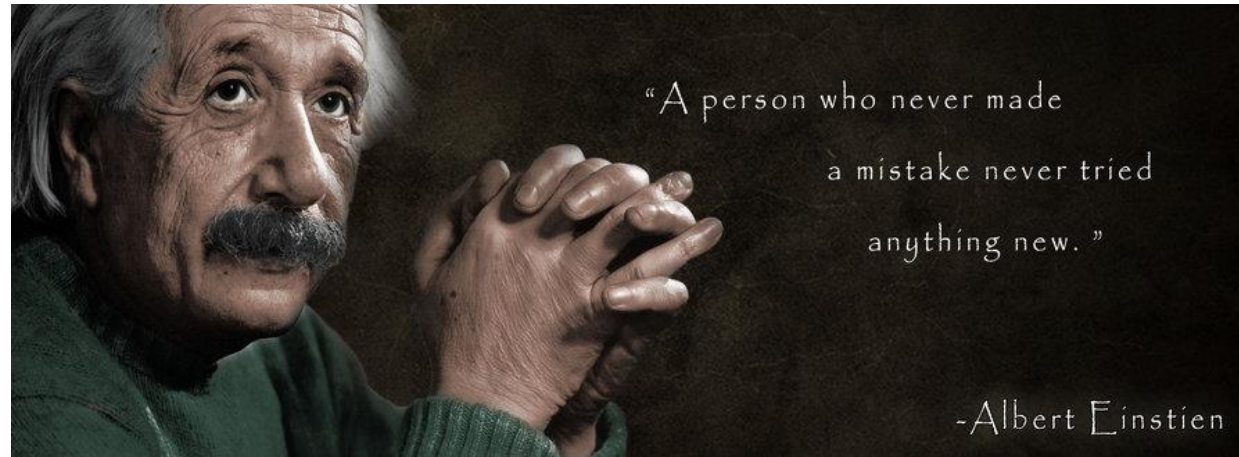
Rest assured, there's light at the end of the tunnel, but we'll have to shake up preconceptions and biases about the historical nature of invention to make it there. Surprisingly, the narrative of human advancement shows that great ideas aren't always the exclusive purview of PhDs in white lab coats or learned academics shuffling through hallowed Ivy League halls.

One example, almost certainly apocryphal, tells of a tractor trailer truck wedged firmly under an overpass. For hours, no one can figure out how to extricate it without damaging the vehicle or dismantling the bridge. That is, until a ten-year-old on a passing bicycle suggests simply letting the air out of the tires. *Eureka!*

Remember: Contemplate History

Indeed, innovation comes from seeing familiar problems in new, even unorthodox, ways. The tale of human invention is replete with examples of novel—sometimes profoundly revolutionary—solutions that arise from some of the most unlikely people, locales and situations. Many have been coincidental, incidental or accidental.

Michael Faraday, a London bookshop worker with no formal education, revolutionized how the world views electromagnetism. Musician **William Herschel** ground his own telescopic lenses to view the heavens and discovered the planet Uranus. Amateur gardener and monk **Gregor Mendel** laid the groundwork for the study of genetic inheritance. **Albert Einstein**, a rather poor student who worked as a patent clerk, changed physics and cosmology forever with his ingenious Theory of Relativity and other insights. The list goes on and on.



The fear of failure has stifled human advancement since the dawn of time. It's time to break the cycle.

Take Risks: Be Courageous and Unconventional

What these and all innovators share in common is the courage to challenge the status quo by rejecting the confines of conventional thinking. They agitate. They question assumptions and disrupt discourse. They're receptive to a wider realm of possibilities. They take risks and embrace change, because they refuse to be pigeonholed by old, arbitrary and irrelevant boundaries.

Create the UPS Solve

Survey the Landscape: Analyze Existing Offerings

Currently, the closest thing to a UPS Solve spaces is the [Global Product Innovation](#) site. Ostensibly, it is community of idea forums, but, sadly, it exhibits few signs of life. At the time of this writing, it lists only 155 registered users and 38 comments. It appears to have stagnated, with no updates within the last three months.

This indicates poor *quantity* in terms of participation and content. Likewise, the *quality* is questionable. It lacks an intuitive, rich interface design; offers no easy-to-read dashboard with statistics, and fails to provide a multifaceted toolbox of rich interactive and expressive features. It's clear from the dismal adoption rate that getting word out across the enterprise either didn't take place or simply didn't suffice in generating much interest.

Post-mortem assessment: I applaud the effort, but obviously scant funding and resources were allocated to build out a quality user experience. With respect to those who developed the site, it's ultimately difficult to use, has barebones functionality and, frankly, was virtually doomed to perish on the vine from its inception.

Let's go back to the drawing board. It's time to start from scratch to design and implement a world-class, enterprise innovation solution for UPS. What follows is a high-level roadmap, feature list and conceptual framework on how to accomplish this.

Allocate Resources: Support, Fund and Sponsor

Recognizing that great ideas can come from anywhere, anyone and at any time is key to seeing innovation as a perpetual, collective UPS activity. It must be a conscious, strategic decision to construct a secure creative space, specifically and exclusively designed for the internal generation and maturation of ideas.

The **UPS Solve** requires concomitant funding and resources, sponsorship from the highest levels of management, and special status as a fundamentally egalitarian, free speech forum. Of course, certain basic rules of decency and respect in interaction are necessary, but beyond that, the space should be left alone as much as possible.

Sponsorship is a double-edged sword. First of all, it gives senior management both oversight and visibility into the health of, and the innovation from, the UPS Solve. On the other hand, it needs management's maintenance of the "meddle-free zone" philosophy in action, and continued investment to keep and grow it over time.

Construct: Build a Vibrant Community

A formal **UPS Solve**—perhaps on UPSers.com—would be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With a proper campaign to raise awareness enterprise-wide, a warm welcome would encourage every single employee from top to bottom to submit ideas, which they can discuss, comment on, vote on and append with documents, images, links, multimedia and presentations as attachments.

Swap Files: Freely Share Documents

All popular Microsoft Office, Adobe, image, audio, video, text, code and archive formats should be supported.



Aim High: Aspire to Honorable Ideals

A flourishing **UPS Solve** takes on a life of its own. It self-perpetuates with discussion threads, artifacts, challenges and a clear path of maturation evident like the rings of an old tree. It features noble properties we value in other walks of life, such as transparency and democracy, convenience and openness, meritocratic egalitarianism, freedom of speech and debate, community, cooperation and teamwork, meaningfulness and optimism, and, perhaps most of all, creativity. It imparts a sense of intellectual satisfaction and professional pride. It increases loyalty and boosts morale.

Rouse: Encourage New Connections

When metaphorical and literal walls no longer impede the free exchange of ideas, serendipitous, though heretofore unlikely, interactions occur. People who never would have, or could have, collaborated before, now do, because the playing field is level and universal. The **UPS Solve** discards the boundaries of traditional corporate asymmetrical power in favor of a flat structure, where office politics and rank don't matter. Job title, business unit, function, geographical location or division don't matter either.

This creates an environment where the quantity and quality of creative output can flourish and manifest in new ways, like neurons reconfiguring to make novel, unimagined connections. Discourse then takes place on an unprecedented scale. No idea is too wild, no innovation is too far-fetched. What was imponderable before, is now an emerging concept on its way to being a fully-fledged idea with real-world application.

It's not hyperbole to say that the forum will sizzle with almost palpable electrical energy, that's when brainstorming reaches critical mass. As the crowd-sourced ingenuity pegs the mind-power meter, the company reaps many times its ROI.

Just Do It: Design, Develop and Publish

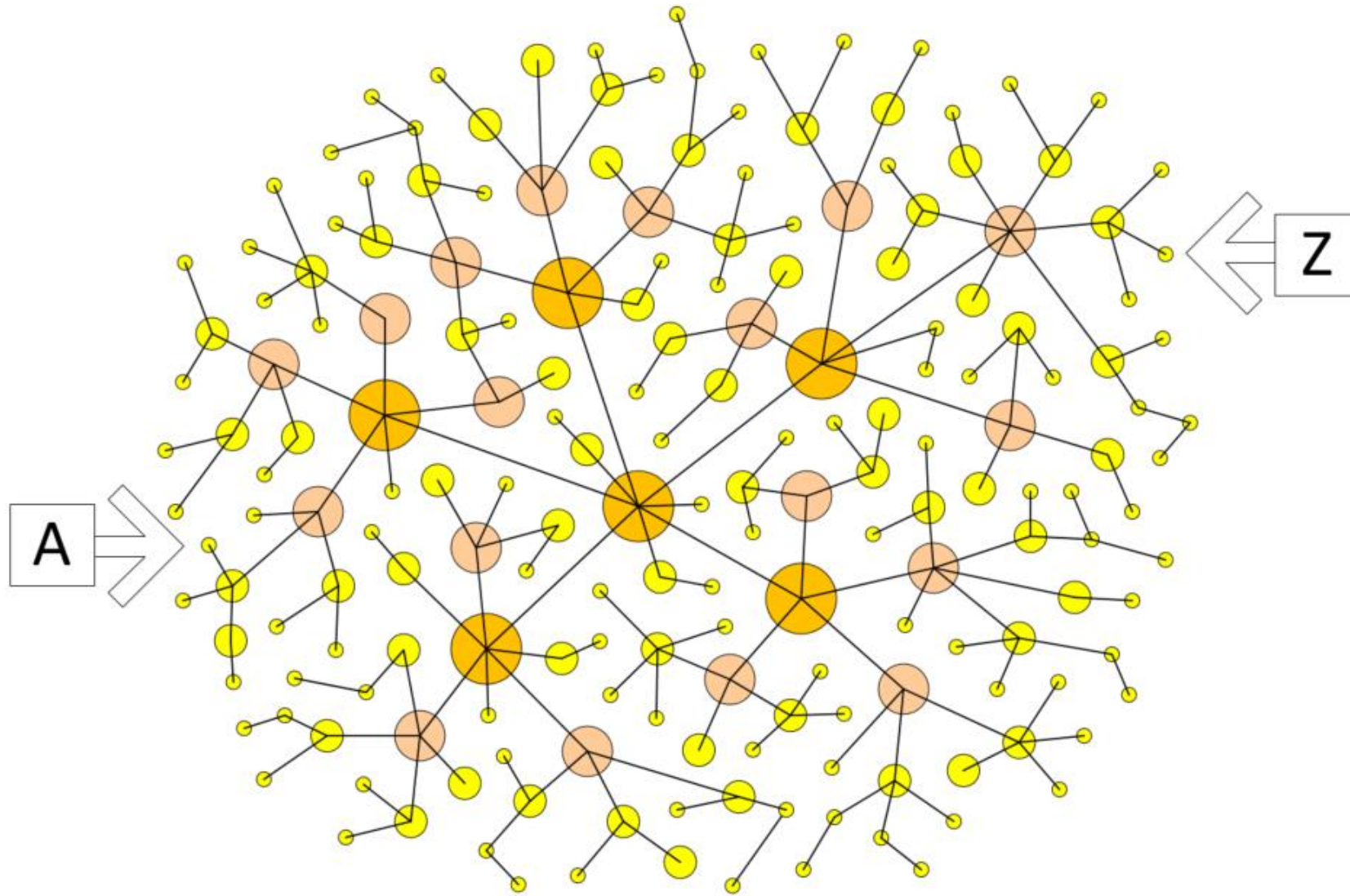
Despite the need for some custom development, ramp-up can be incredibly fast. A basic site could be up and running in perhaps two weeks, following a brief period of requirements-gathering, sizing, user experience design, custom development and quality assurance testing. It doesn't have to be fancy, and in its first live test run, it can solicit ideas on how it can be better!

Both start-up and operating costs would be modest, since the site would most likely piggyback on existing extranet/intranet infrastructure and doesn't need to be terribly sophisticated for initial release.

Reward: Recognize Great Ideas

The organization must reward innovation. That is an absolute requirement. The key takeaway here is that innovation deserves tangible reward, not just a token plaque or a pat on the back. Serious rewards show the company is willing to put its money where its mouth is. Anything less is lip service and will ring hollow.

Be realistic. People will work hard for a raise, choice assignment, individual bonus payment or, say, a big-screen TV. If the company reaps potentially millions of dollars from a good idea, the person or persons who came up with the idea deserve to be compensated well, and I mean above and beyond their salary, customary bonus or other extant compensation. Think about it. If a consultant came in to generate ideas, UPS would pay them well for their insight. We should do the same for our own fellow UPSers.



The typical organizational structure lacks a central collaboration space. In this case, it complicates **Person A's** search for a solution, which she has no way of knowing that **Person Z** has.

The winner(s) can receive predetermined rewards—or, perhaps, choose themselves—among the following:

- discretionary (PTO) days
- vacation days
- cash or gift cards
- stock
- electronics, such as computers and tablets
- UPS merchandise
- health spending account (HSA) contributions
- promotions
- choice of duty assignment

Remember, unconventional thinking enables unconventionally positive outcomes and creative possibilities!

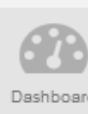
Features

- Dashboard of personal metrics and community statistics with gamification and badging
- Moderation, administrative and oversight functions, plus support for executive sponsorship
- Search capability by metatag and/or keyword, including archives and “retired” ideas or contests that can be “resurrected”
- Sorting/filtering by date, author(s), commenter(s), status, winner(s), etc.
- Site on is up 24/7/365 on the extranet, so can be reached without VPN tokens, being onsite / inside the firewall, or jumping through a lot of hoops
- Anyone may issue an informal “challenge” or ask for suggestions with customizable parameters, such expiration and participants; Official contests can issue formal challenges with potentially big rewards
- Anyone can vote for and/or follow their favorite contests, authors, contributors, comments and ideas
- A store gallery of prizes and reward options
- Team and cross-team head-to-head contests, either open or closed to others
- Short, simple “flash” challenges or longer, more polished problem-solving collaborations
- Clocks can countdown contest start and end dates/times
- Peer review: anyone can comment and follow threads
- Featured top ideas and winners, including “Hall of Fame” for top performers in various categories
- Anyone can post or comment anonymously, if they wish
- RSS feed, alerts, sharing and forwarding
- Attachment uploads (documents, multimedia, images, etc.)
- Maybe an even more secure area, accessed by invitation only, that functions as a secretive “Skunkworks,” where highly sensitive projects are underway

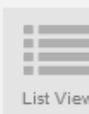


MY IDEAS

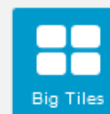




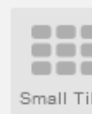
Dashboard



List View



Big Tiles



Small Tiles

All Ideas (12)

Open (6)

Review (1)

Closed (1)

Archived (4)

Drafts (0)

Change presentation between dashboard, list, large card and small card views. Select a title, challenge or sponsor to see more details. Sort by ascending or descending by column headers.



Nuterium angeris

RE: Microcosmus nova
ARCHIVED

Mauris pellentesque sed urna et egestas. Morbi magna dolor, rutrum vitae sollicitudin eu, ultricies a risus. Phasellus eget tempor magna, sed volutpat sem. In blandit egestas porta. Nulla vel t. nisl. lacus pretium felis ac laoreet. Nulla vel t. nisl, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula...

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Jerry Lewis
Ended: 11:30am UTC on 03AUG2015



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RE: Nortena facebookum
OPEN

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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Dick Cheney
Ended: 9:00pm UTC on 11JUL2016



Notelatus tragica

RE: Nederlands bundestag
OPEN

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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Arnold Schwarzenegger
Ended: 9:00pm UTC on 15FEB2016



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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Arnold Schwarzenegger
Ended: 9:00pm UTC on 15FEB2016



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RE: Dakota musta as
CLOSED

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Monthly Top Ten Idea
August, 2016

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Alan Rickman
Ended: 5:00pm UTC on 08SEP2016



Suora tandem insta

RE: Digni neverlandis
OPEN

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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Billy the Kid
Ended: 9:00pm UTC on 22OCT2016



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RE: Uno sparkalus glovi
UNDER REVIEW

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Innovation Top Ten
2016

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Johnny Carson
Ended: 10:00am UTC on 08JAN2016



Nuterium angeris

RE: Microcosmus nova
ARCHIVED

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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Jerry Lewis
Ended: 11:30am UTC on 03AUG2015



Notelatus tragica

RE: Nederlands bundestag
OPEN

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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Arnold Schwarzenegger
Ended: 9:00pm UTC on 15FEB2016



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[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Jerry Lewis
Ended: 11:30am UTC on 03AUG2015



Notelatus tragica

RE: Nederlands bundestag
OPEN

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[View Discussion](#)

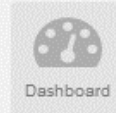
Sponsor: Arnold Schwarzenegger
Ended: 9:00pm UTC on 15FEB2016

[+ New Idea](#)

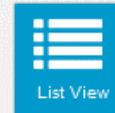


MY IDEAS

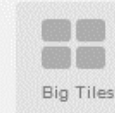




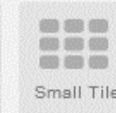
Dashboard



List View



Big Tiles



Small Tiles

All Ideas (7)

Open (2)

Review (1)

Closed (2)

Archived (1)

Drafts (1)

Change presentation between dashboard, list, large card and small card views. Select a title, challenge or sponsor to see more details. Sort by ascending or descending by column headers.

TITLE CHALLENGE/TOPIC	SHORT DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR SPONSOR	START DATE END DATE	SCORE	AWARDS	VOTES
I <u>Instagloria et passia</u> Favoritius insolem aveci	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Proin vestibulum sem a commodo fringilla.	<u>Mary Lamb</u> Jim Johnson	11MAY2017 11MAY2017	151	5	4,311
I <u>Monsteria antecedent</u> Lorem ipsum sit dador amet gala	Fusce eu mattis augue, at aliquet elit. Donec orci elit, molestie non cursus auctor.	<u>Mary Lamb</u> Bob Barker	06MAY2017 06MAY2017	97	5	3,658
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I <u>Passismit candelabra</u> Ipsum sit dador	Donec efficitur consectetur porttitor. Sed elementum sed nibh sit amet mattis.	<u>Mary Lamb</u> Jim Johnson	16APR2016 16APR2016	88	4	3,249
B <u>Instagloria et passia mit sandalim</u> Gorgonzola imperium	Donec in ornare elit. Fusce feugiat elit nec orci elementum aliquam.	<u>Mary Lamb</u> Kermit Frog	01MAR2016 01MAR2016	82	4	3,106
B <u>Donderheimi banana septis</u> Masterata dolfino	Phasellus purus metus, scelerisque sed diam non, luctus porttitor ligula. Proin fermentum tempor.	<u>Mary Lamb</u> Angie Daddy	25FEB2015 25FEB2015	71	4	3,051
B <u>Publa distributium paki</u> Dador caliberi massivi	Sed ut tristique eros, sed dictum risus. Ut vel urna quis lacus dictum dignissim eu eget magna.	<u>Mary Lamb</u> Jim Johnson	04JAN2015 04JAN2015	64	4	2,952

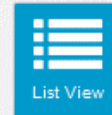


HALL OF FAME





Dashboard



List View



Big Tiles



Small Tiles

All Ideas (8)

Open (7)

Review (0)

Closed (0)

Archived (0)

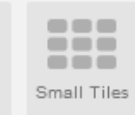
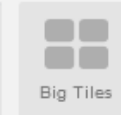
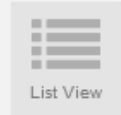
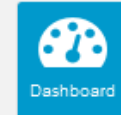
Drafts (0)

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COMMUNITY STATISTICS



All Ideas (331)

Open (88)

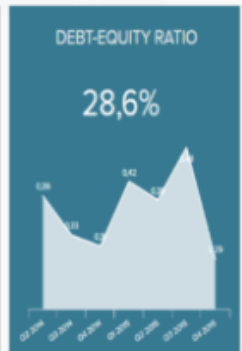
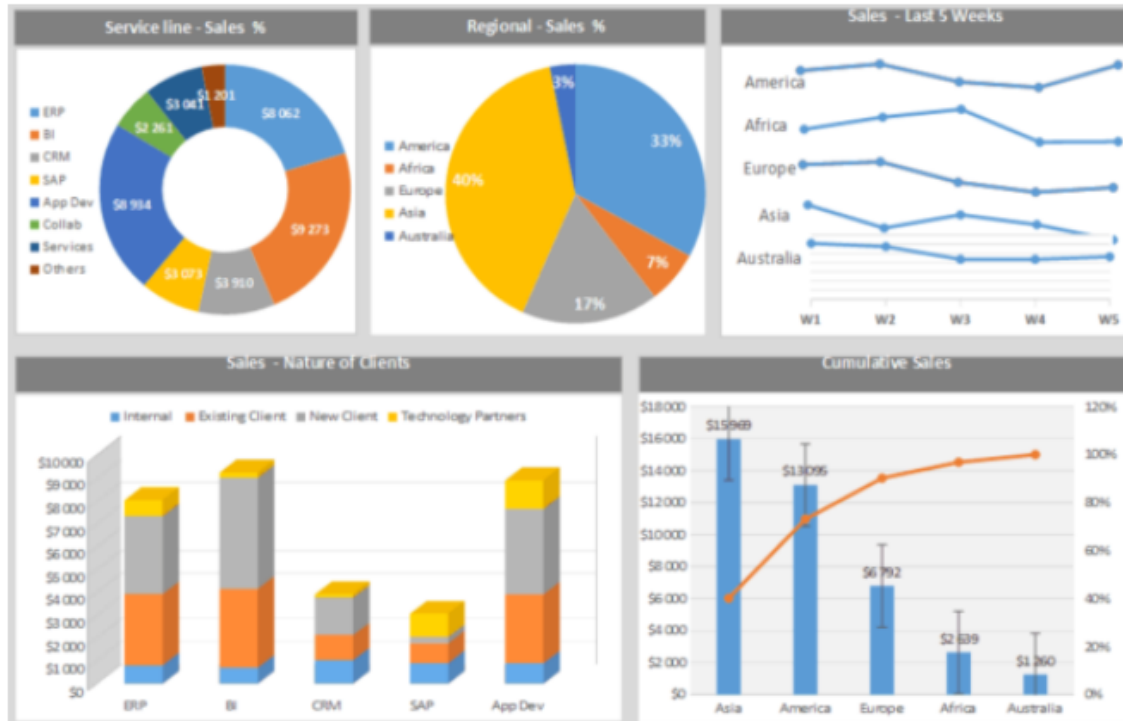
Review (39)

Closed (158)

Archived (36)

Drafts (10)

Change presentation between dashboard, list, large card and small card views. Select a title, challenge or sponsor to see more details. Sort by ascending or descending by column headers.





CREATE NEW IDEA



All Ideas (12)

Open (6)

Review (1)

Closed (1)

Archived (4)

Drafts (0)

Change presentation between dashboard, list, large card and small card views. Select a title, challenge or sponsor to see more details. Sort by ascending or descending by column headers.

Title**Challenge/Topic****Author**[Look Up](#)**Sponsor**[Look Up](#)**Start Date**[Look Up](#)**End Date**[Look Up](#)**Description**

Mauris dapibus elit ex, nec pulvinar dolor egestas blandit. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Morbi laoreet est nec quam viverra porta. Quisque vel mi sit amet. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada

Status**Open To****Tags**

pellentesque, habitant morbi, tristique, senectus et netus, malesuada fames, ac turpis egestas, morbi laoreet, est nec quam

Attachments

lorem_ipsum_sit_dolor.xls
critelius_santos.doc
democratia_decorum.zip



Attach

[+ New Idea](#)



Barbra
Streisand

72

Votes

9

Comments

9

Shares

2

Followers

Nuterium angeris

RE: Microcosmus nova

ARCHIVED

Mauris pellentesque sed urna et egestas. Morbi magna dolor, rutrum vitae sollicitudin eu, ultricies a risus. Phasellus eget tempor magna, sed volutpat sem. In blandit egestas porta. Nulla velit nisi. laculis pretium felis at laoreet. Nulla velit nisi, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula...

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Jerry Lewis

Ended: 11:30am UTC on 03AUG2015



Batman &
Robin

66

Votes

56

Comments

39

Shares

10

Followers

Notelatus tragica

RE: Nederlands bundestag

OPEN

Mauris pellentesque sed urna et egestas. Morbi magna dolor, rutrum vitae sollicitudin eu, ultricies a risus. Phasellus eget tempor magna, sed volutpat sem. In blandit egestas porta. Nulla velit nisi. laculis pretium felis at laoreet. Nulla velit nisi, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula...

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Arnold Schwarzenegger

Ends: 9:00pm UTC on 15FEB2016



O.J.
Simpson

2

Votes

8

Comments

2

Shares

6

Followers

Natavium sanctum

RE: Nortena facebookum

OPEN

Mauris pellentesque sed urna et egestas. Morbi magna dolor, rutrum vitae sollicitudin eu, ultricies a risus. Phasellus eget tempor magna, sed volutpat sem. In blandit egestas porta. Iaculis pretium felis at laoreet. Nulla velit nisi, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula. Praesent iaculis pretium...

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Dick Cheney

Ends: 9:00pm UTC on 11JUL2016



Michael
Jackson

124

Votes

26

Comments

5

Shares

26

Followers

Nationalecti feverum

RE: Uno sparkalus glovi

UNDER REVIEW

Iaculis pretium felis at laoreet. Nulla velit nisi, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula. Praesent iaculis pretium felis at laoreet. Orci ligula.



**Innovation Top Ten
2016**

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Johnny Carson

Ended: 10:00am UTC on 08JAN2016



Gaspar the
Dolphin

13

Votes

2

Comments

16

Shares

40

Followers

Intervalus facilis nuncto

RE: Dakota musta es

CLOSED

Phasellus eget tempor magna, sed volutpat sem. In blandit egestas porta. Nulla velit nisi, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula. Praesent iaculis pretium feliset.



Monthly Top Ten Idea
August, 2016

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Alan Rickman
Ended: 5:00pm UTC on 08SEP2016



Strawberry
Shortcake

267

Votes

16

Comments

32

Shares

13

Followers

Supra tandem insta

RE: Dirigi neverlandis

OPEN

Mauris pellentesque sed urna et egestas. Morbi magna dolor, rutrum vitae sollicitudin eu, ultricies a risus. Phasellus eget tempor magna, sed volutpat sem. In blandit egestas porta. Nulla velit nisi. Iaculis pretium felis at laoreet. Nulla velit nisi, suscipit a risus at, vestibulum molestie augue. Proin et orci ligula...

[View Discussion](#)

Sponsor: Billy the Kid
Ends: 9:00pm UTC on 22OCT2016