

CROWDSOURCED PROBLEM SOLVING // CHALLENGE SPONSORS GUIDE



The Challenge Sponsor is the customer of your Crowdsourced Problem Solving Service. Your job is to create a Solve Challenge that delivers solutions to a problem that he/she faces. Your sponsor is **responsible for providing the resources and budget for implementing the solution.**

This guide will help you identify potential sponsors in your company, connect with those target individuals, and initiate outreach meetings. Ultimately, you want to build a rich pipeline of potential sponsors for your service.

CHALLENGE SPONSOR KEY TRAITS

As you build your list of potential sponsors, focus your attention on individuals with the following qualities:

- ✓ **Operating in Technical Departments like Manufacturing/Production and R&D/Development.**
Go to where the action is! Divisions responsible for tough, technical work tend to often face problems that Solve Challenges can help address.
- ✓ **Already Have a Known Problem they Need to Solve.**
Find an executive with a ‘burning problem’, who will benefit immediately from fresh thinking around potential solutions.
- ✓ **Has the Resources to Implement Solutions.**
The Sponsor must commit to implement the solution, once one is identified that meets his/her requirements.
- ✓ **Bigger is Better.**
Seek out sponsors with titles between Director and SVP that lead large teams; even if they do not currently face a problem, members of their teams may have specific problems that require help.
- ✓ **Expressed Interest in your Program and Tools.**
Executives who are already interested in your Innovation Team are the easiest to get engaged.
- ✓ **Already Engaged in Innovation-like Activities.**
Executives that participate on an innovation council or committee are strong candidates, as they have demonstrated interest in exploring novel ways of working.
- ✓ **Social Media or Technology Savvy.**
Does your target sponsor have a blog? Are they active on Twitter? Executives that embrace social media often have a ‘prepared mind’ for crowdsourcing innovation.

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TACTICS FOR FINDING NEW SOLVE CHALLENGE SPONSORS

Here are a few tactics for you to try as you start building your pipeline of potential sponsors:

- ✓ **Ask** for an introduction through a colleague. Does your supervisor have connections to a leader who meets our Challenge Sponsor Key Traits? How about the executive sponsor of your innovation program?
- ✓ **Check** your intranet or internal newsletters for any projects that could be potential sources of Solve Challenge topics. Find a way to meet with the leader of that project team to explore fit.
- ✓ **Search** your company directory for individuals with titles like Director/VP of Manufacturing, Director/VP of Production, or Director/VP of R&D. Use our email template below to reach out and introduce your crowdsourced problem solving service.
- ✓ **Broadcast** this new service via internal communication channels (newsletters, intranet, posters, team meeting visits). Encourage potential sponsors to reach out to you for more information.
- ✓ **Add** a footer to your email signature. “Now looking for new problems to solve! Do you face a technical roadblock in your production process or on a R&D/new product development project? Our new crowdsourced problem solving service harnesses untapped potential from employees throughout [company_name] to consistently solve problems faster than other methods. Contact me if we can help you.”
- ✓ **Get** on the right meeting agenda. If there is a strategy or innovation council, add yourself on their discussion topics, so they are aware that this service is now available.
- ✓ **Build** a physical innovation area that has heavy foot traffic (even if it's a single message board in the cafe!). Communicates that this service is now available, and invite conversations with potential sponsors.

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SPONSOR “PITCH” EMAIL TEMPLATES

Leverage the below email templates to reach out to potential sponsors for Solve Challenges.

Version for Manufacturing/Production

Subject: New tool for Manufacturing/Production leaders - crowdsourced problem solving from the Innovation Team

Dear [Potential_Sponsor],

I wanted to introduce our new **crowdsourced problem solving service** that we recently added to our innovation program, as I believe there will be opportunities for [company] leaders in Manufacturing and Production, like yourself, to get value from it.

Our goal with this service is to give you a tool to help you solve problems that your teams face, faster and more efficiently than your current means.

When we help you run a “Solve Challenge”, we leverage the untapped skills, abilities, and perspectives of people throughout our company - across offices, departments, and geographies - to come up with solutions to a sticky problem that you have been facing. The process should take about 6 weeks, meaning, in 6 weeks time, you should have solutions to try out and implement.

Solve Challenges can be used to address the following types of problems in Manufacturing and Production:

- Troubleshoot a problem area in your production line that’s hurting your monthly KPIs
- Brainstorm creative ways to revamp a hot spot in the assembly process
- Explore novel solutions to a blocker issue

Since the Solve Challenge is hosted on our global platform, it can be accessed by anyone at [company] – we will work with you to come up with a list of the best possible individuals around the company to invite, ranging from factory workers to plant managers at other [company] plants around the world.

We require zero budget to run the process, only a commitment from you to implement the solution, once we identify one that meets your requirements. The overall time commitment needed from you and 2-3 members of your team would be about 2 hours per week for 6 weeks, plus completion of a short feedback survey at the end of the Challenge.

If this sounds like something that your team might benefit from, I’d love to set up a 30-minute meeting for us to further explore the opportunity. Could I set up a meeting for next week?

Best,
[IPM]
[IPM email]

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Version for R&D/Development

Subject: New tool for R&D leaders - crowdsourced problem solving from the Innovation Team

Dear [Potential_Sponsor],

I wanted to introduce our new **crowdsourced problem solving service** that we recently added to our innovation program, as I believe there will be opportunities for [company] leaders in R&D/Development, like yourself, to get value from it.

Our goal with this service is to give you a tool to help you solve problems that your teams face, faster and more efficiently than your current means.

When we help you run a “Solve Challenge”, we leverage the untapped skills, abilities, and perspectives of people throughout our company - across offices, departments, and geographies - to come up with solutions to a sticky problem that you have been facing. The process should take about 6 weeks, meaning, in 6 weeks time, you should have solutions to try out and implement.

Solve Challenges can be used to address the following types of problems in R&D:

- Unblock a project that is stuck due to lack of technical know-how.
- Brainstorm creative approaches to meeting a challenging cost target or new design requirement.
- Revive a long-term problem previously shelved due to lack of progress (where a solution could give us a distinct competitive advantage!).

Since the Solve Challenge is hosted on our global platform, it can be accessed by anyone at [company] – we will work with you to come up with a list of the best possible individuals around the company to invite, such as research scientists and development engineers working on other products at [company].

We require zero budget to run the process, only a commitment from you to implement the solution, once we identify one that meets your requirements. The overall time commitment needed from you and 2-3 members of your team would be about 2 hours per week for 6 weeks, plus completion of a short feedback survey at the end of the Challenge.

If this sounds like something that your team might benefit from, I'd love to set up a 30-minute meeting for us to further explore the opportunity. Could I set up a meeting for next week?

Best,
[IPM]
[IPM email]

Need help building your Solve Challenge? More questions? Let us know at success@brightidea.com