

A photograph of two women in business suits standing in front of a whiteboard. The whiteboard contains handwritten notes and diagrams related to design specifications, including 'LOGO', 'NAME', 'CONTENT', and 'ELEMENT 2'. A large blue circle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text 'v//ma COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT FOR INNOVATION PROGRAMS'.

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**COMMUNICATION
TOOLKIT**

**FOR
INNOVATION
PROGRAMS**

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What is this Toolkit for?

If you're reading this, you probably already understand the importance of communication for the success of your innovation program. This toolkit is designed to **help you plan your communication for the launch of a new innovation program or initiative, as well as provide you with easy-to-use tools and templates to help with the process.**

In this PowerPoint Presentation, we'll provide you with actionable tools and templates, as well as some examples. Together, these can form the basis for your communication plan and related materials. You can find more useful information behind the **links** and in the **presentation slide notes**.

How to use it?

This presentation will walk you through the key parts, but for a more structured and detailed take on the topic, please read our article on [Communicating the Launch of an Innovation Program](#).

You can use the content any way you want, as long as you credit all materials and concepts to Viima. So, feel free to **share this Toolkit with your co-workers**, or anyone else you'd like to engage in the process.

PLEASE NOTE: This Toolkit is a starting point. Getting results will always take time and effort, so trust the process, be patient, put in the work, and the results will come.



Introduction



Why Communicate?

Communication is important for the success of every innovation program.

If you don't do it, or do a poor job at it:

- People will not participate actively
- ...even if they do, they do it all wrong

GOALS OF COMMUNICATION FOR INNOVATION PROGRAMS

INFORM

The Why, How, &
What of Your
Innovation
Program

GUIDE

Participants to
Focus on the
Desired
Outcomes

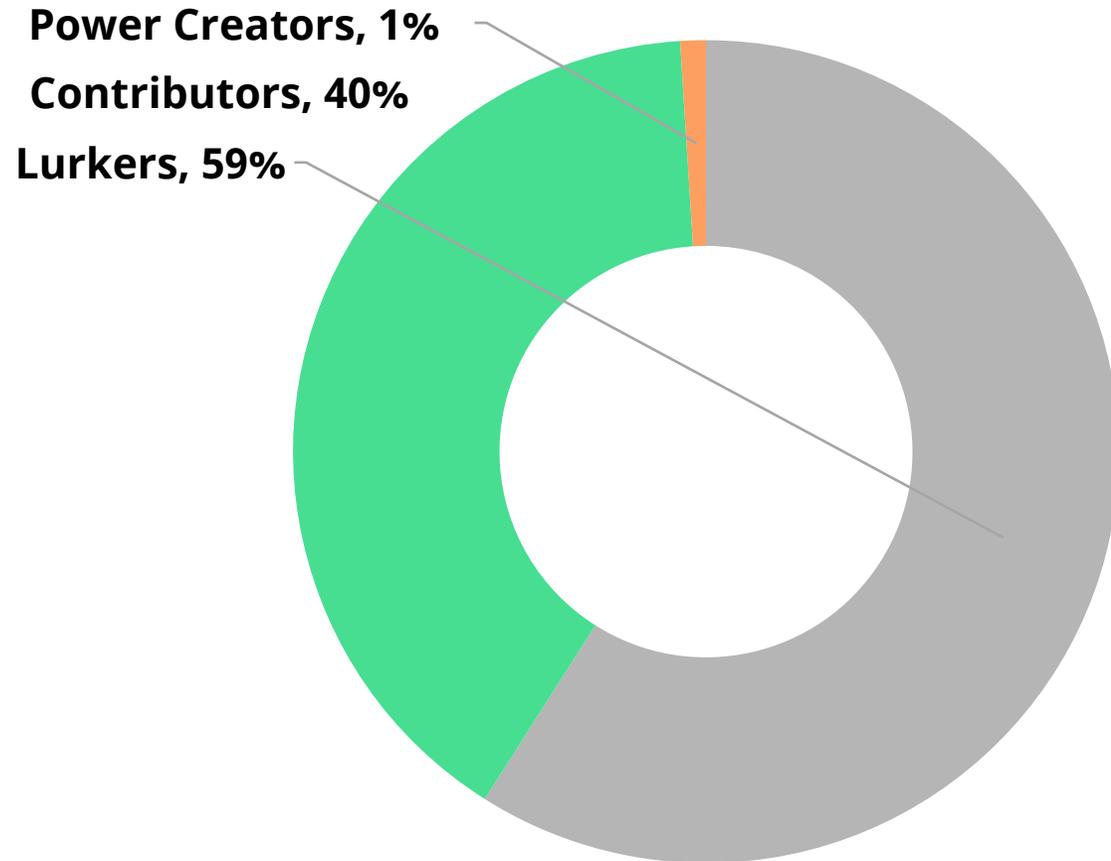
ACTIVATE

Achieve &
Sustain High
Levels of
Participation

IMPROVE

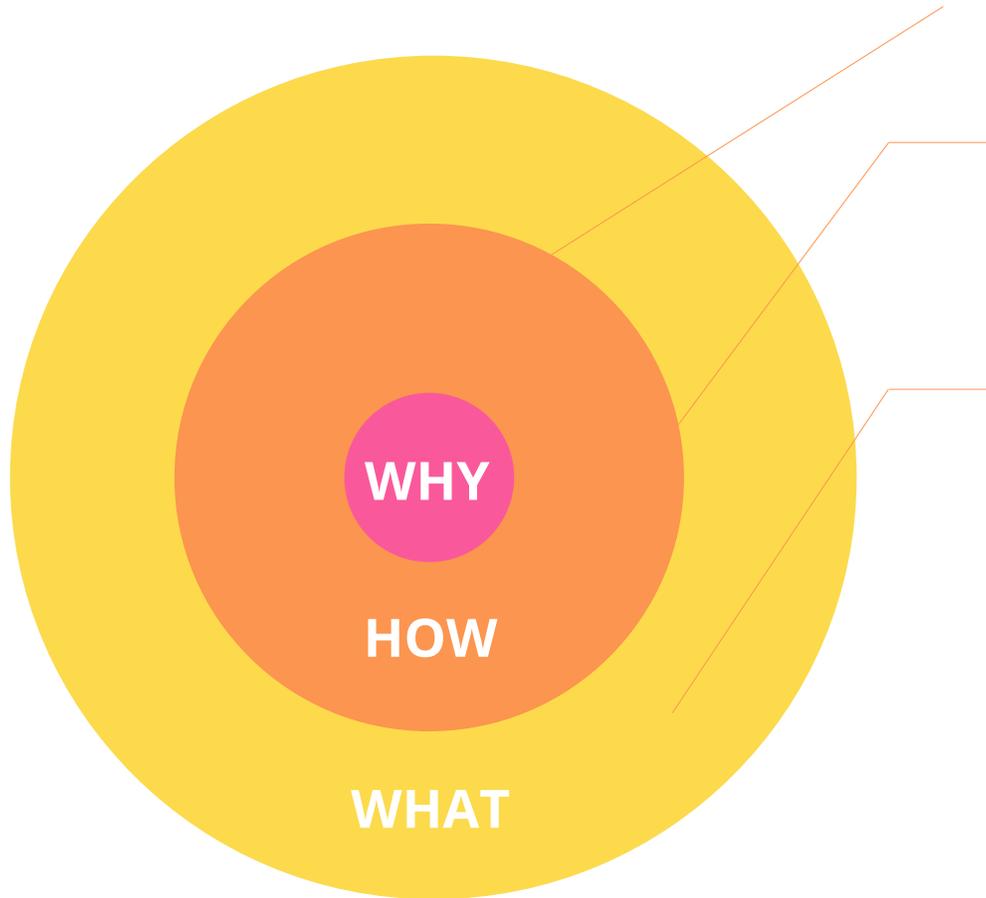
The Quality of
the Participation

What is a good participation rate?



BEST PRACTICES

Messaging



- **Start with WHY – don't just inform, inspire and motivate.**
If you just inform and tell the WHAT, and maybe the HOW, people just won't care. They're all busy and if you can't tell WHY they need to change their priorities, they won't.
- **Be concise and to the point.**
Say everything you need to say, but nothing more.
- **Show people their input is valued.**
Everyone says: "we want your feedback", but few truly mean that. Prove that your money is where your mouth is.
- **Test and iterate!**
Messaging is almost impossible to get perfect right away. Test it out on a smaller scale and then make changes based on the reception you get before proceeding to roll it out with a big launch.

Channels

Choose 2-3 primary communication channels and 1-3 additional channels, usually no more than 5 combined.

Keep the core message the same but alter the format to suit each channel.

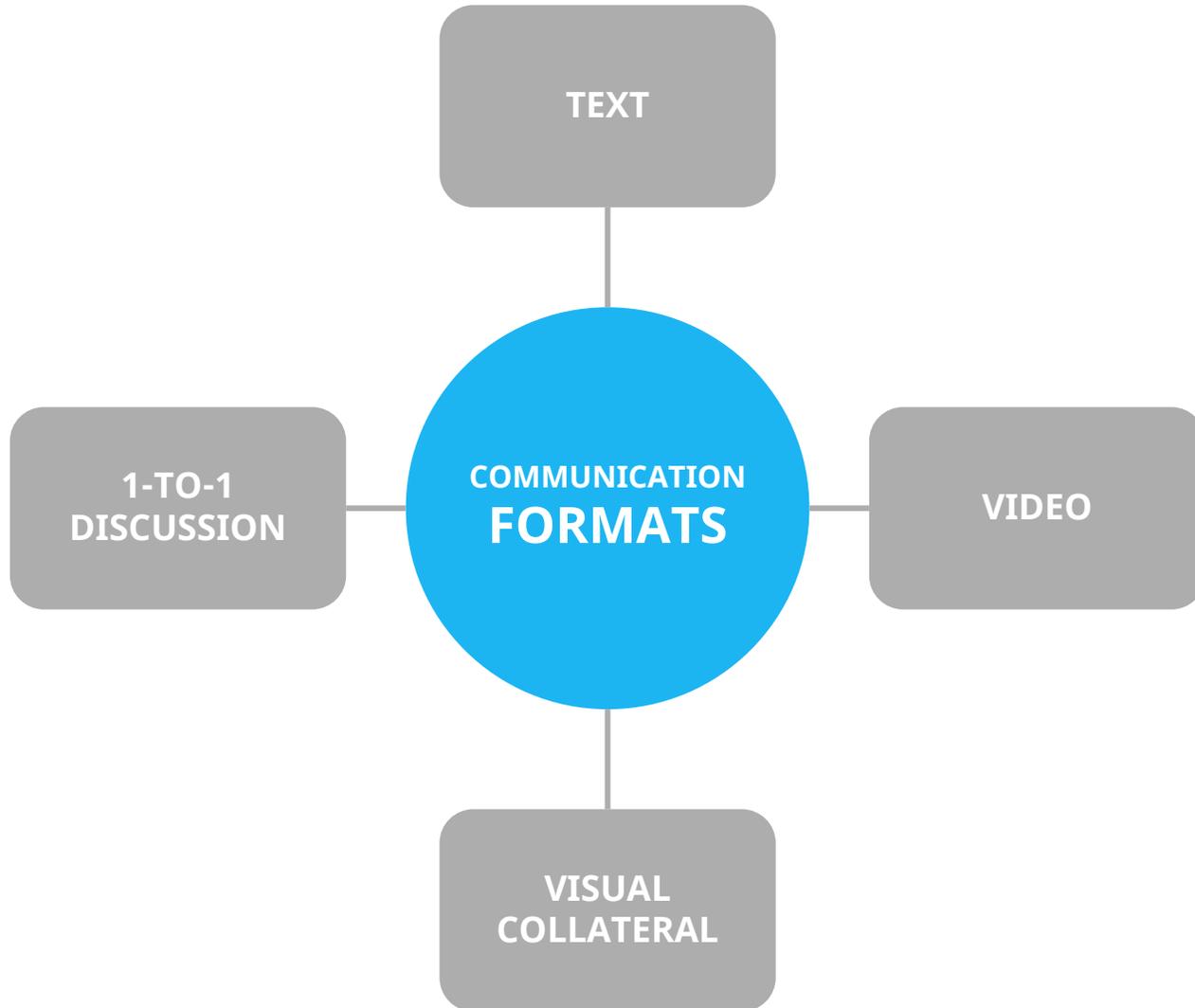
Primary channels

- **Managers across the organization!**
- **Idea Management** platform, such as Viima
- **Internal Chat** tools like MS Teams and Slack
- **Email**

Additional channels

- **Intranets** and internal social networking tools like Yammer
- **1-on-1 channels** such as SMS and IMs
- Flyers, posters, rollups etc. **physical collateral**

Formats



Text & 1-to-1 should always be there, video and visuals work to complement them. Each format has their own strengths.

Use a mix that is appropriate for your audience and your channels.

Frequency

You will, on average, need to repeat your message 3-20 times before people start to remember and internalize it, let alone take action.

Regardless of campaign length, similar amounts of communication is required. Thus, shorter ones are much more intense and usually require dedicated resources.

Things you always need to do:

- Communicate the launch of the program/campaign
- Communicate the end of a campaign
- Communicate when the program changes or the campaign moves to the next stage
- Active communication & facilitation during idea development to help refine ideas and challenge participant's thinking
- Active communication regarding decisions being made and the rationale behind them

Things that are usually good to do:

- Heads-up communication a couple of days before launch
- Reminders a couple of days before the end of a campaign or each deadline within it
- Periodic reminders for participants (e.g. weekly). This is especially important for continuous processes and longer campaigns.

TOOLS & TEMPLATES

The Innovation Program Canvas

- The first step in planning the communication about your innovation program is to get clarity on the big picture of the program.
- To help with this, we've created The Innovation Program Canvas. A PDF version can be found from this toolkit.
- Fill in the canvas and make sure your team is aligned on these matters before you move forward in creating the communication plan.
- Misalignment here are likely to lead to challenges down the road.

The Innovation Program Canvas

WHY

Explain what the strategic purpose of your innovation program is for the organization and what the tangible goals you are looking to achieve are. Also explain why it is in the participants' best interest to take part and be active.

Strategic purpose:

Tangible goals:

Motivation for participants:

HOW

Explain the big picture of how you're planning to achieve the aforementioned goals. What initiatives will you be doing, what does the roadmap ahead look like and how is that organized in terms of responsibilities?

Big picture plan for achieving the goals:

Roadmap ahead:

Responsibilities:

WHAT

Explain the next steps clearly. What initiatives will you start with? What does that look like in practice? Mention timelines, goals, and the key steps in getting there, as well as your expectations for participants.

Next initiative(s):

Practicalities (timelines, goals, key steps):

Expectations for participants:

The Communication Plan Canvas

- Next, fill in this template for your communication plan
- You can use our best practices as a foundation, but make sure to tailor it to your specific needs
- **Keep the target audience of your communications in mind for each of the sections!**
- You don't have to fill in all the details, but be detailed enough to make the plan actionable
- **Make sure to test the plan, especially the messaging, with a smaller audience before launch!**

The Communication Plan Canvas

Version:

MESSAGING

List the key points of your messaging here according to our best practices.

WHY:

HOW:

WHAT:

FORMATS

Describe the planned formats and required artifacts (such as video, email...)

Planned formats (per channel):

Artifacts to create:

CHANNELS

Choose 2-4 primary and 0-3 secondary channels. Explain required variations for each.

Primary channels:

Secondary channels:

Key variations to messaging per channel:

FREQUENCY

List each stage of the program and/or regular interval where comms are planned.

Stages of the program:

Regular intervals:

Enough repetition and variance?

STAKEHOLDERS, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

List all key stakeholders and their respective roles & responsibilities in executing the plan.

Key stakeholders:

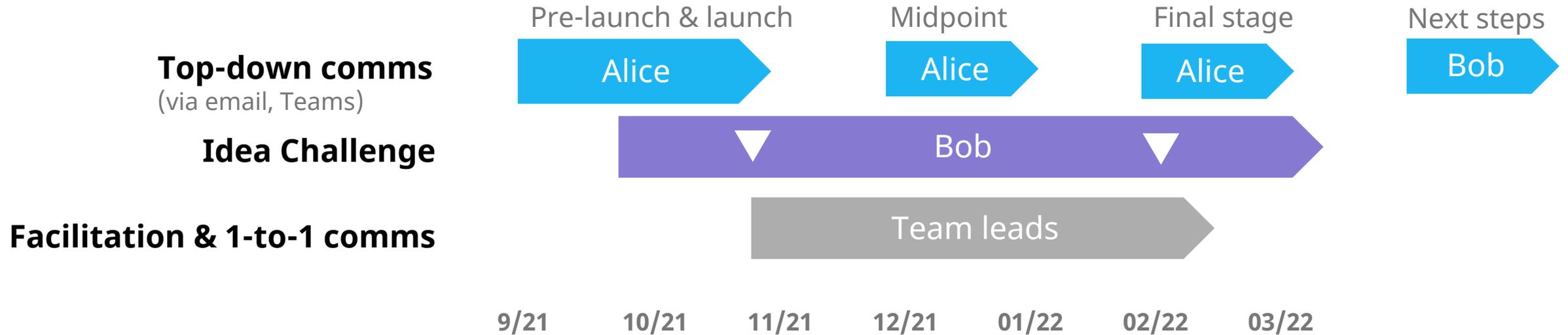
Roles & Responsibilities:

Designed by Viima.
For more information,
visit www.viima.com.

viima

Communication Plan Timeline

Simplified example of an idea challenge for illustrative purposes



EMAIL TEMPLATES

Using these email templates

1. The following slides contain email templates that can be used as the basis for some of your communication.
2. Each template has some [bolded placeholders] and notes on the margins. Use these to modify the content to match the messaging from your communication plan.
3. Remember, these templates are simple examples for getting you started. In reality, you will likely need to modify them quite a bit and will also need much more communication than just these few messages.
4. We recommend you spend some time testing and tweaking these templates to better match your specific situation, and then use those insights to finalize your comms plan.

Example Email to Innovation Champions Prior to Launch

Dear Innovation Champions,

We're really looking forward to our upcoming innovation program focused on **[our environmental sustainability]** and couldn't be more excited to have all of you as part of the core team!

As a quick recap, this is a huge strategic priority for the whole organization in the upcoming years and for all of you, this is a great opportunity to get your teams behind the initiative and to be **[highlighted as top performers]**.

As you remember, the goal of this first challenge is to find ways to **[reduce our environmental footprint by 20%]**, and for us to achieve that, we need your input, and the active participation from everyone in your teams.

In practice, the challenge will be divided into **[3 phases]**:

1. Ideation (1 week)
2. Idea development (2 weeks)
3. Final evaluation and decision-making (1 week)

Our core team will take care of high-level communications and send some reminders, as well as manage the process related to the final decision-making, and solve any potential technical challenges.

However, that alone isn't enough to really ensure active, and high quality, participation. So, what we need from you is to: **[a) remind your team members to participate by saying how important this is, and b) facilitate their ideation work and help them refine their ideas.]** In practice, here's what we'd need from you in each of the phases.

In phase 1:

- Encouraging participation by highlighting the importance for the organization and the personal benefits of participation for employees
- Sending reminders

In phase 2:

- Ask questions to challenge your team members thinking
- Remind them about what's needed from each idea ([best practices document here](#))
- Doing follow up checks on the progress of ideas
- Communicate next steps
- Engage with inactive participants

In phase 3:

- Remind your team members to evaluate their favorite and least favorite ideas
- Repeat the instructions for what makes a good evaluation ([instructions here](#))

We'll continue to send you reminders and practical instructions throughout the challenge to further help with all of the above steps. Regardless, if you have questions or don't know what you should do, please contact us!

Thanks again for your efforts, we really appreciate it and can't do this without your help!

On behalf of the organizing team,
[Challenge manager]

Example Email for Launching an Innovation Challenge

Hello everyone,

As you may know, at [organization name] we're [under a lot of pressure from customers and shareholders to make our offering more environmentally sustainable]. It's a big priority for us not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because [we've seen it unlock many new business opportunities and lay the foundation of our success for decades to come].

And to achieve that, we need your help. We've already heard many of you share great ideas on this area, so we wanted to double down and ask for your input. Now's a great chance to really [have an impact on the way we do business], but it's also a great opportunity to [get recognized for your contributions and find new career opportunities as some of you will get the opportunity to take ownership for turning your ideas into reality].

So, in the coming months, we will be launching several initiatives, some of which will permanently change the way we work, to drive this transformation. The first of these is an [innovation challenge for finding 100 practical ideas we can implement already this year to cut our environmental footprint by 20% and kickstart the transformation]. This is a big ask, so we'd love to see all of our employees participate.

This first challenge starts [today] and we ask all of you to come up with any kind of environmental sustainability related ideas, as long as they:

- a) [help reduce our carbon and/or water footprints]
- b) [could be implemented already this year]

Later this year, we'll then be looking for bigger, more transformative ideas we can do on this front in the coming years, but first we need to focus on these low-hanging fruits to really show that we as an organization are serious about actually doing this, not just talking about it.

WHAT

We're now launching a new innovation platform [called Viima] where this and most of the upcoming initiatives will be taking place.

In practice, how this will work is that you'll be receiving invites to the platform from [challenge manager] later today with more specific instructions on how to participate.

You will then have [1 week] to submit your ideas. Once the two weeks is up, you will then refine those ideas into more practical solutions based on feedback from others for [2 weeks]. After that, we'll have one final week for voting on and evaluating the ideas, after which [our sustainability board will choose 100 of the most promising ones, all of which we will implement].

I can't stress enough how big of a deal this really is for us as an organization. We know that you're all busy, but we'd still love to see all of you take half an hour for this during each of the upcoming phases.

Let's make the world a better place together!

[Name]
[Title of C-level sponsor]

Example Email on the Practicalities

Hey everyone,

As you saw in the email from **[C-level sponsor]** earlier today, we're now launching an innovation challenge to come up with **[ideas for reducing our environmental footprint by 20%]**.

This message contains a link you can use to log in to the innovation platform where the challenge will take place, as well as more specific instructions on how to participate.

This is the biggest development priority for the whole organization this year, and we really need all of you to participate, so please take the time from your day-to-day to share your ideas on how we could achieve these goals. As a reminder, people coming up with the ideas will receive **[special recognition]** in front of the company and will have the opportunity **[to work on implementing their ideas]**.

We'd like to highlight that we're now looking for **any kind of ideas or opportunities for reducing our environmental impact**, so it isn't just about ground-breaking new inventions. In fact, you **don't even have to have a solution for addressing problems or inefficiencies in our current products or processes**. Simply spotting these problems is equally valuable. In the upcoming phases, up to **[300 of the most promising ideas]** will then receive help from our team to turn those problems into solutions that could be implemented.

Once you log in to the innovation platform, you will be greeted with a quick video explaining how the platform works, but in essence, all you have to do is click on the "add new idea" button and then fill in the form. However, if you want to get some inspiration, you can look at other people's ideas before submitting yours.

WHAT

As a recap, here's what we'd love to see from you:

1. Click on the link below to sign in and access the platform
2. Submit your ideas for reducing our environmental footprint by clicking the "Add new" button and filling in the form.
3. Go and like ideas from other people

Remember, we're now looking for ideas that:

- Point out an area where we're currently not so great for the environment, or propose a solution that helps us reduce our environmental footprint
- AND could be implemented already this year

So, focus on those more practical ideas, even if they might seem like minor inefficiencies. There might not be a silver bullet that solves all of this, but that's fine. Hundreds of those smaller improvements do also really add up and make a big difference.

If you have any questions, concerns or technical difficulties, you can reach the organizing team on **[this Teams channel]**. We'll be there to help you get going.

Good luck and thank you for your participation! On behalf of the organizing team,

[Challenge manager]

[BIG LINK FOR SIGNING IN TO THE PLATFORM]



Example Email on The Next Phase of a Challenge

Hey everyone,

Our environmental impact innovation challenge is off to a great start, we got an incredible **[842 new ideas from you in just a week]**! Thank you for your super active contributions so far.

WHY

We're now moving on to the next phase of the campaign where we'll be focusing on refining the ideas into concepts that could actually be implemented. By definition, most ideas will be a bit rough around the edges at this point, so don't worry if your idea isn't there yet!

By now, **[the 300 most promising ideas based on your likes]** should all have received suggestions and feedback from our team that will help you refine the idea further.

HOW

These instruction will be slightly different for different ideas, but the common nominator for most is to focus on looking at the problem domain and identifying the root cause before coming up with your final proposition.

If any of that feels a bit overwhelming, please ask our team for more details **[either directly in Viima, or via our Teams channel]**, or drop a mention or message to a colleague you think could help you further develop the idea. In addition, if you have any suggestions or feedback to your colleagues' ideas, now's a great time to help them out as well.

So, for each of you, **the next steps are** to:

WHAT

1. Refine your idea into a more **refined concept** with instructions from our team (link below)
2. Help your colleagues refine their ideas by sharing your comments and feedback towards their ideas

Keep up the great work! On behalf of the **[organizing team]**,

[Challenge manager]

[LINK TO PLATFORM HERE]

Example Email Just Before the End of a Challenge

Hey everyone,

We're now closing in on the final week of our innovation challenge. So far, we've gone down from **[842 great ideas down to 300 refined concepts]** in just a couple of weeks. That is an incredible accomplishment, so again I'd like to extend a big thank you to all of you for your work so far.

During this final phase, we're going to be evaluating and reviewing these **[300 concepts so that we can pick the final 100]** to be implemented. For that, we've designed a simple set of metrics consisting of both more subjective and objective criteria.

We have a panel of experts doing some of that work, but we'd still love to engage all of you to provide your subjective evaluations on some of these. All input is highly welcome and all feedback you may still provide will be taken into consideration by our steering group when they make the final decision on which ideas to implement.

So, for this final part, we're **asking you** to:

1. Log in to the platform via the link below
2. Evaluate **[5 or more]** of your favorite and least favorite ideas from other people using the criteria and instructions available on the platform.

Our jury will then be looking at the ideas and their evaluations holistically next week. As a reminder, try to be as objective with your evaluations as possible: the jury won't automatically just pick the ideas with the highest ratings.

Thank you for the final push!

On behalf of the **[organizing team]**,

[Challenge manager]

[LINK TO PLATFORM HERE]

Example Email After the End of a Challenge

Hello everyone,

Our environmental impact innovation challenge ended last week and our steering group has now made the final decision on which of the many great ideas we're going to implement.

WHY

Overall, the challenge was a huge success, and we have all of you to thank you for it! After a closer review of the most promising ideas, we will be funding the development of **[93 ideas]**. That is just shy of the goal of **[100]** we set out in the beginning, but the good news is that if our estimates are correct, we should still be able to comfortably surpass our initial goal of **[reducing our impact by 20%]**! You can find the full list of ideas that were chose from the innovation platform via the link below.

I'd just like to highlight that for an organization of our size, that is an incredible achievement. We can all be proud of what we've achieved in such a short time, you can all give each other a pat on the back for that.

HOW

However, we still have a lot of work to do to realize these benefits. The next step is to form the project teams for implementing all of these great ideas.

Most of them can be implemented in existing business units with only minor additional resources, but there are also many that still need passionate people to make them happen. If you'd like to be a part of that, you can volunteer for any of these ideas on the platform via the link below.

WHAT

We will be providing you with additional updates as the projects move forward, and early next year, we'll be rewarding the team that has made the biggest difference so far.

Thank you again for your super active participation in the challenge, keep up the great work!

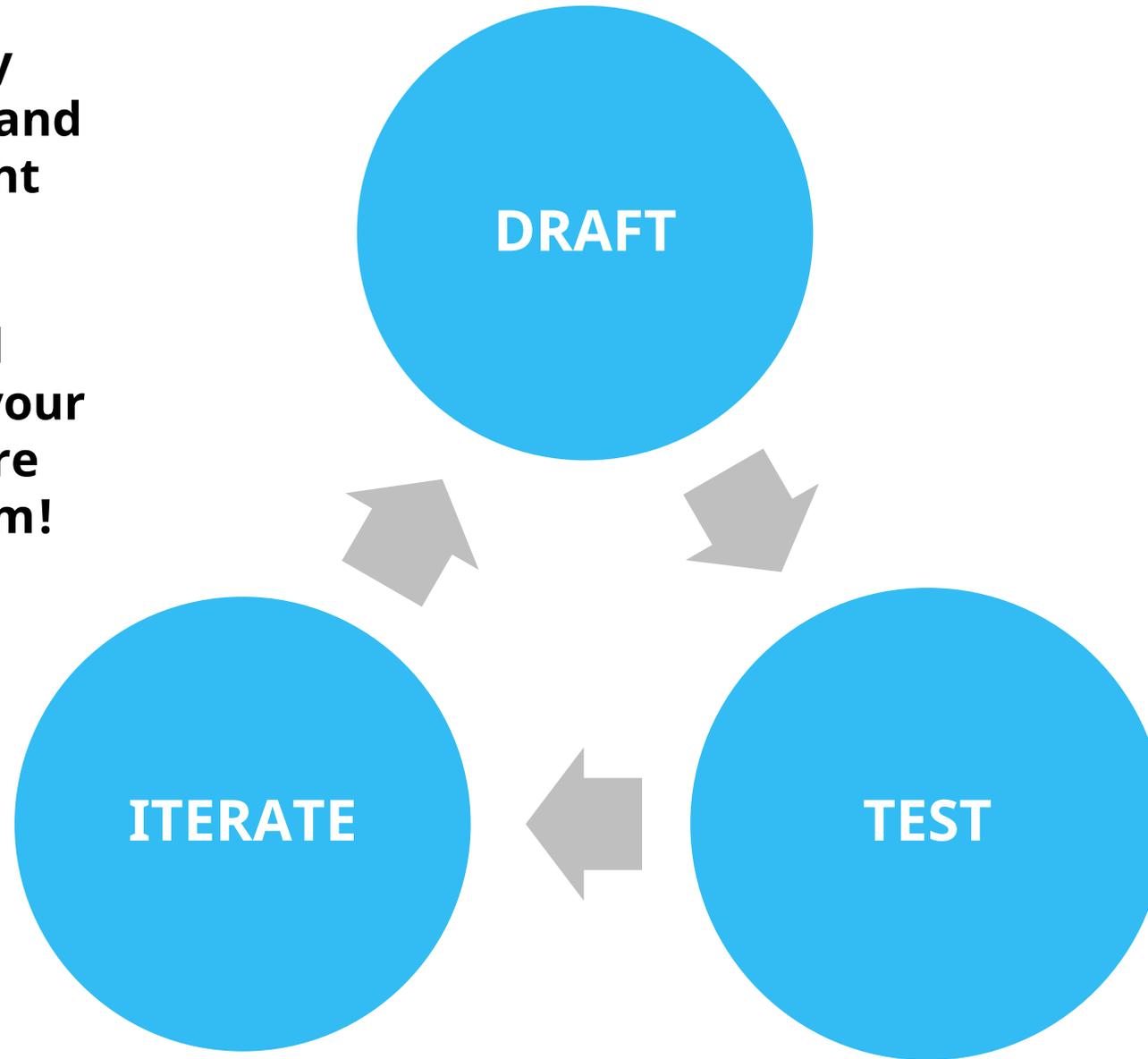
[C-level sponsor]

[LINK TO PLATFORM HERE]

NEXT STEPS

Communications is rarely perfect out of the gates, and the best way to get it right is to just start doing it.

Take the time to test and iterate your drafts with your audience, and you'll figure out what works with them!



About Viima

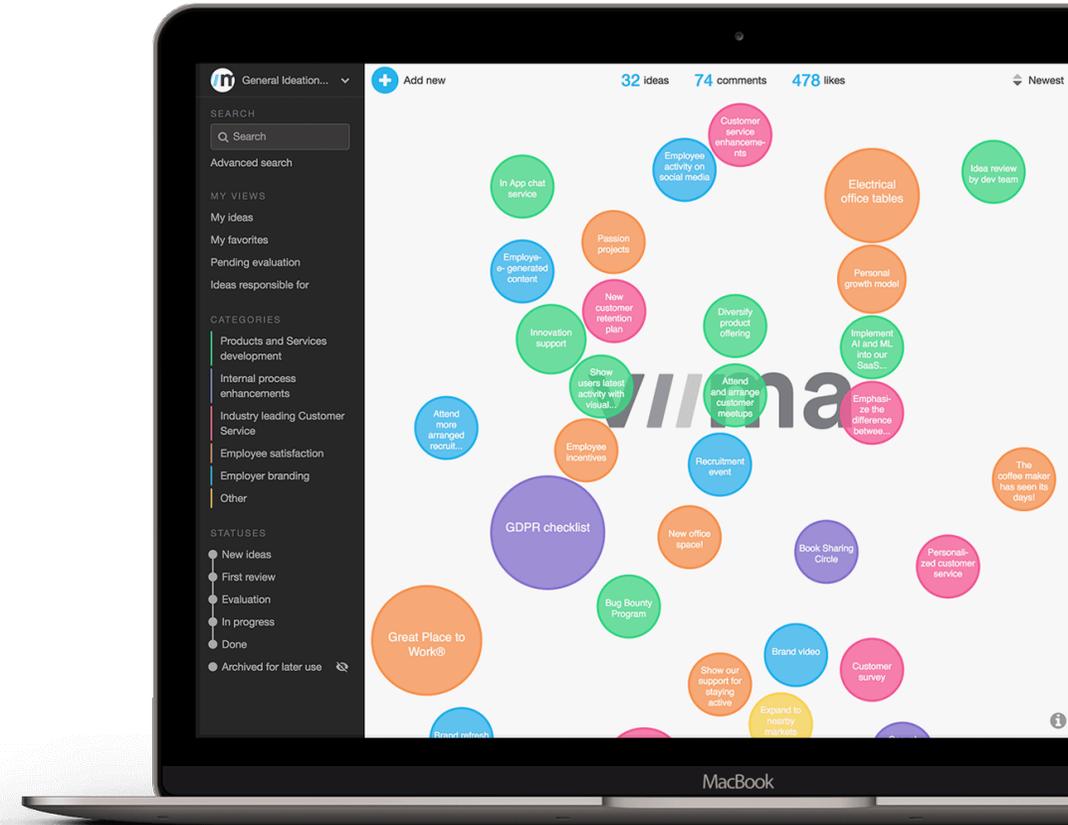
We're on a mission to help organizations make more innovation happen.

Viima is the all-in-one innovation platform that helps you go from ideas to innovations, every step of the way.

Getting started is fast and easy and the best part is that Viima is completely free for an unlimited number of users!

So, If you're looking for a tool that can help you **run and manage your innovation program with ease**, you can get started in as little as 5 minutes at viima.com.

START FOR FREE



viima

Who Are We?

#1

in global
market share*

#1

in customer
ratings**

121%

avg. annual growth in
paying customers

Wake up.
Kick ass.
Repeat.

* Number of active deployments, source: Gartner, 2019

** Avg. of all reviews, source: Software World; 2018, 2019, 2020

v//ma