

**STREAMLINED INNOVATION  
PLAYBOOK: A HANDBOOK FOR  
EFFORTLESS BREAKTHROUGHS IN  
IDEA GENERATION, EVALUATION AND  
IMPLEMENTATION**



## A Strategic Necessity for Business Growth

Innovation is vital for a business – numerous studies have shown that innovative companies yield better profits and performance. Supporting this, over 80% of CEOs emphasized in a survey that innovation is critical for their company's growth. However, the unfortunate reality is that only a fraction of individuals contribute ideas. Compounding this challenge, Harvard Business School Professor Clayton Christensen notes that a mere 5% of these ideas succeed.

The dismal state of innovation in enterprises is evident despite the enormous buzz it generates. The solution to this challenge is clear: an immediate enhancement of the entire innovation ecosystem, from ideation to realizing tangible outcomes.

However, an organization must begin with creating a conducive environment for innovation to thrive. Leaders must acknowledge that sustaining the innovation agenda requires more than individual efforts. Steve Jobs once said, "Great things in business are never done by one person, they are done by a team of people." It, therefore, makes sense for leaders to rely on collective wisdom



and responsibility to generate tangible outcomes that make a difference to their business.

Infosys boasts a solid foundation in transforming innovative concepts into tangible outcomes. This hugely successful approach and mindset has given rise to a few best practices we share in this paper.

## Broadening Perspectives: The Strategy Around Idea Generation

The starting point of business success is an idea. For ideas to prosper, organizations must take a few critical steps to boost the quality of idea generation and ensure a steady pipeline.

1

**Understand your client** – A good grasp of the client's business and unique client context is closely linked to the superiority of ideas generated. Its value cannot be overemphasized. For instance, Nike's revolutionary Flyknit technology was born from a deep understanding of runners' and athletes' needs. Contrast this with the quality of ideas generated by those who adopt a narrow focus on the task at hand without gaining a broader perspective of the client context. To enable a wide and rich variety of ideas, there must be active participation from domain and customer-interacting resources who can provide valuable information on the client. Needless to say, this step is essential and often overlooked.

2

**Democratize idea generation** – Today's trends point towards sharing and openness of information. The same holds for ideas, too. Organizations must adopt a crowdsourcing route to solicit ideas from a broader population of employees and even users. LEGO's Ideas platform allows users to submit their ideas for new LEGO sets. The platform has been enormously successful, with over 1 million ideas submitted and over 30 sets released based on user submissions<sup>3</sup>.

3

**Reward the idea generator** – Rewards can vary from having the idea generator execute it to awarding monetary benefits. In the LEGO example, those who successfully submitted ideas converted to products received royalties from the company on their sales. In addition to rewards, companies must establish an atmosphere that allows the failure of ideas as long as genuine efforts are behind them. That's essential, as fear can cripple action.

<sup>1</sup> Growth Strategy & Innovation | Strategy & Corporate Finance | McKinsey & Company

<sup>2</sup> 9 Business Innovation Statistics 2023: The Facts & Trends (businessdit.com)

<sup>3</sup> What Is LEGO Ideas? (Including How To Submit An Idea!) - Brick Hobbyist

# The Art of Evaluation: Maximizing Success in the Innovation Pipeline

Honest and transparent evaluation models pave the way for an excellent culture of innovation. Additionally, the thoroughness of the evaluation will directly impact the success rate. What can organizations do on this front?

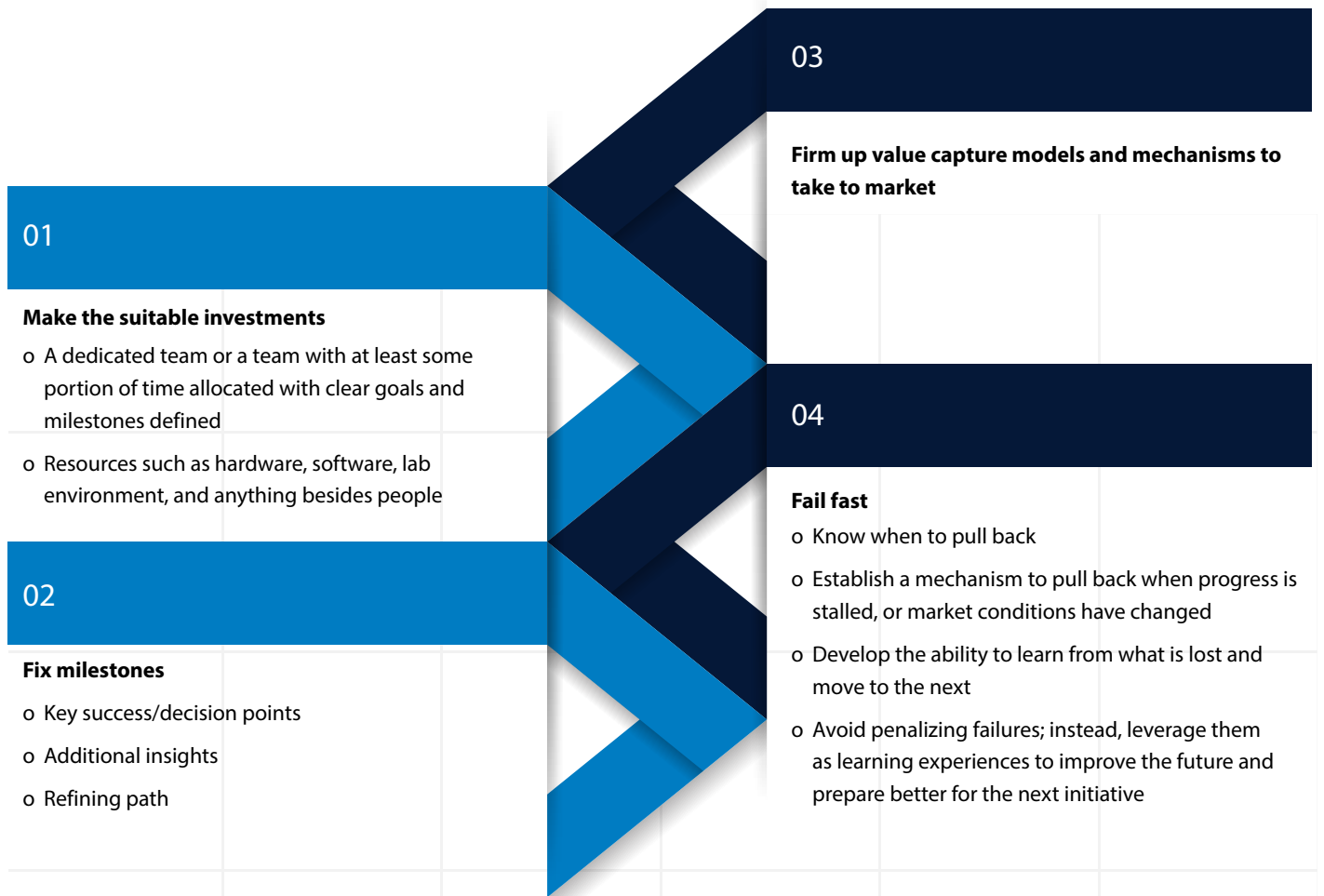
- **Mount guardrails** – Set boundaries to discourage the generation of irrelevant ideas.
- **Get the right participants** – Involve a range of evaluators, from product sales to development, to instill a sense of end-to-end and collective ownership for the selected ideas. Cases of hosting “ideathons,” awarding select ideas and not taking them forward are common. Having the right panelists who possess an innovative mindset will ensure the ideas are realized.
- **Articulate expectations from each idea** – Aim to have clarity on the following by the end of the evaluation -
  - o **Value proposition** – who will it impact, what problem will it solve, or what need will it address
  - o **Parameters to achieve the outcome or create value** – details on cost, execution model etc.
  - o Initial thoughts on value capture, which get refined along the way

Amazon is an apt benchmark as the company insists that a one-page PR and a detailed FAQ accompany ideas.

- **Eliminate bias in the initial rounds** – It is imperative to set the stage for a neutral evaluation by removing bias based on seniority, gender or academic background, for example. A good idea can spring from any relevant source.

## Execution Excellence: Making Ideas Tangible for Results

An idea remains unless adequately executed to be able to deliver tangible results. Venture capitalist John Doerr succinctly said, “Execution is everything.” Infosys’ vast experience in bringing ideas to fruition gave rise to these recommendations.



## Lessons to Carry Forward

In conclusion, fostering innovation demands a holistic approach beyond ideation. It mandates a cultural shift, where leaders acknowledge their team's collective intelligence, cultivating an environment that learns from both success and failure. Infosys' journey, outlined in this discussion, underscores the significance of a robust innovation ecosystem. By following the recommendations in this article, organizations can establish a culture of innovation that fosters continuous growth and success.



### Author



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Anand is an industry veteran with over 25 years of experience in consulting and IT services. He is currently the Global Delivery Head for the extremely fast growing, Infosys Microsoft practice. Anand has a flair for driving synergies and growth for both Infosys and the Microsoft ecosystem and is leading the delivery of innovative and exceptional solutions for digital workplace and business application customers.

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Anand is passionate about leveraging technology to create value for customers and society. He has also been a champion for change, leading and participating in initiatives across performance management, culture transformation, diversity and inclusion, and next generation production support for organizations.

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