

# 5 Must-Have Innovation Workflows!



## A GOOD WORKFLOW IS KEY!

This is probably one of the most common onboarding questions that we hear. And the answer is usually the same, "well, it depends on what your goals are..."

But to make it a little bit easier, we wanted to share some common (and successful) processes that you can recreate in your own innovation program.



81% of the highest-performing innovation programs have a defined process for stewarding ideas through to completion.

## Most innovation workflows have a similar structure...

- STEP 1 → Creativity & brainstorming
- STEP 2 → Validation
- STEP 3 → Evaluation
- STEP 4 → Selection and development
- STEP 5 → Iteration and incubation
- STEP 6 → Commercialization and launch!

Sometimes an organization will mix this-up (maybe they'll iterate immediately after ideation, for example) but this is a very common recipe for new ideas.

All of the following workflows come from real innovation programs.

## #1. COST SAVINGS WORKFLOW

- STEP 1 → **Suggest and Prioritize**  
Community members share ideas and vote on the idea of others to prioritize.
- STEP 2 → **Management Review**  
Managers review ideas and triage the best for further analysis.
- STEP 3 → **Expert Analysis**  
Experts analyze the potential costs and impact.
- STEP 4 → **Leadership Selection**  
Leadership identifies those most aligned to goals and moves them forward.
- STEP 5 → **Implementation**  
The selected ideas are adopted!

## #2. NEW PRODUCT WORKFLOW

- STEP 1 → **Ideation and Voting**  
The community shares their ideas for new product offerings and others vote.
- STEP 2 → **Review**  
An initial review by business owners identifies some promising ideas.
- STEP 3 → **Team Building**  
Those promising ideas find teams with relevant experience or piqued interest.
- STEP 4 → **Proposal Building**  
The teams do additional research and put together requirements.
- STEP 5 → **Expert Review**  
Experts review their findings and analyze potential costs and benefits.
- STEP 5 → **Leadership Review**  
Leadership evaluates proposals against organizational priorities.
- STEP 6 → **Prototype and Launch**  
The best ideas are prototypes and successful products are launched.

## #3. PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

- STEP 1 → **Suggest and Vote**  
Individuals share their suggestions on how things can be better, faster, or cheaper.
- STEP 2 → **Explore**  
Small teams explore the possibilities and present initial thoughts on value and implementation plans.
- STEP 3 → **Develop**  
Experts take those plans and develop the new process to test it out.
- STEP 4 → **Results**  
The results of the test are shared so that everyone in the community understands impact.
- STEP 5 → **Implementation**  
Once initial results are shared, the successful ideas are marked as implemented.

## #4. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENT WORKFLOW

- STEP 1 → **Ideation and Voting**  
Community members share the ideas that they think would matter most to improve customer experience.
- STEP 2 → **First Review**  
Business unit leaders review those ideas against problems to solve.
- STEP 3 → **Proposal Building**  
Initial plans and estimates are assembled to help guide prototyping.
- STEP 4 → **Prototyping**  
Initial processes or products are developed with expert teams.
- STEP 5 → **Testing**  
Prototypes are tested against criteria and the best are rolled-out on a large-scale.
- STEP 6 → **Archived or Launched!**  
Successful ideas are shared with all and the rest are archived for another time.

## #5. WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENT

- STEP 1 → **Vote and Share**  
Anyone can share an idea on how to make the workplace better or vote on the ideas of others.
- STEP 2 → **Research**  
Business unit experts research the top-voted ideas for feasibility and requirements.
- STEP 3 → **Prioritization**  
Leaders prioritize the best ones for implementation.
- STEP 4 → **Selection and adoption**  
The top ideas are developed and moved into wide adoption.
- STEP 5 → **Implementation**  
Successful ideas are marked as implemented.

Pick the process that's right for you... but pick one!



According to Accenture 72% of companies allow innovations to languish because there is no formalized process or organizational home for such initiatives.