



THE MICROSOFT HACKATHON PLAYBOOK

The Microsoft Garage produces the Global Hackathon and has created this guide to help other organizations leverage the key elements of the hacking culture. You don't need to be a big company, or even a tech company, to have a successful hackathon that inspires employees.

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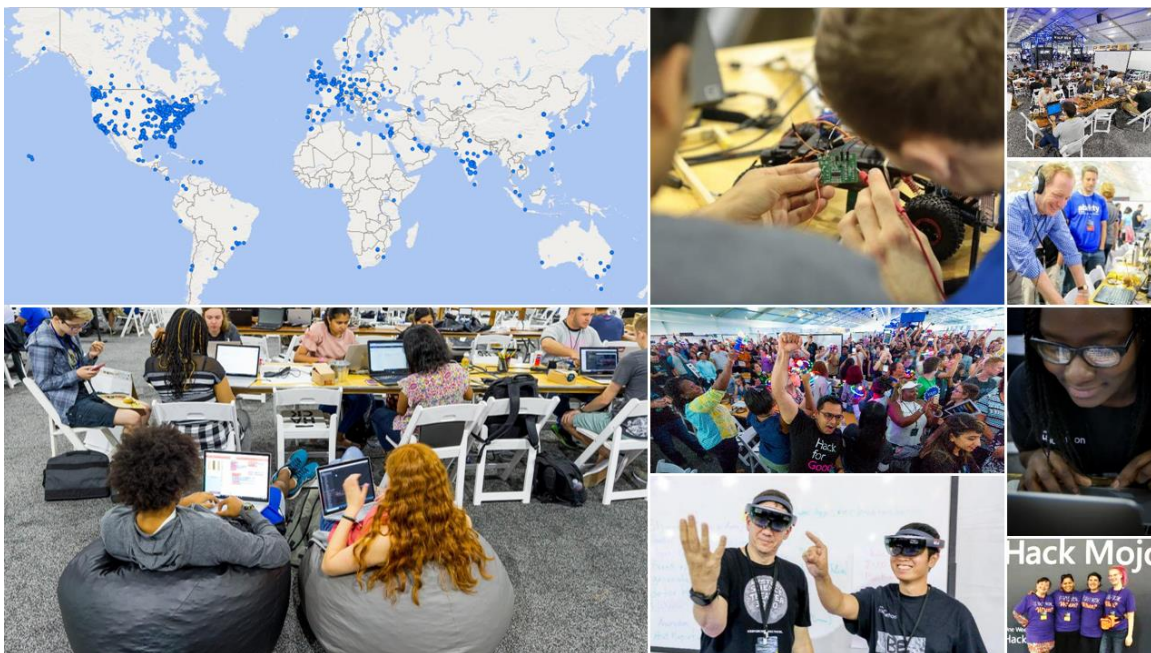
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What is hacking?

While the term can have positive or negative definitions, here “hacking” means a group of people coming together to focus on innovating new ideas and solutions. Hacking is not just about writing code... it’s about being curious, exploring your creativity, making new connections with people outside of your work group, learning new skills, and moving forward with inspired ideas.

The Microsoft Global Hackathon

The Microsoft Global Hackathon is the company-wide, multi-day, global event produced by the Microsoft Garage that brings employees and interns from all over the world together to create, innovate, and hack on ideas that inspire them. It’s the largest private hackathon on the planet.



The Microsoft Garage

The Microsoft Garage drives a culture of experimentation. We deliver programs and experiences to our employees, customers, and ecosystem that encourage experimentation and creativity. We have a bias for action. Our motto is “Doers not Talkers.”

The Garage is an innovation program for everyone – all employees and interns around the world are invited to join and be a part of it. The Garage promotes a safe space to express creativity and learn by doing. We believe that every person — regardless of their background, their professional tenure, their time at Microsoft, or their seniority — can have a great idea. We believe that diverse teams have better outcomes, and that failure is essential to learning.

The Garage, a small team that evolved from after-hours grassroots innovation activities, has been producing the Microsoft Global Hackathon since the first event in 2014. Satya Nadella had the vision for an all-company hackathon and tapped The Garage to roll out a high-energy, anything-goes event to put the new growth mindset culture into action.

The Garage has integrated hacking into several other programs, including the Garage Experimental Outlet, www.microsoft.com/garage, that helps teams share experimental projects with customers to test product hypotheses and gain insights. The Garage also enhances the employee experience at Microsoft in multiple locations worldwide through programming like workshops, talks, hacking activities, and communities.

The Microsoft Hackathon is different than most hackathons

It's got the traditional elements:

**Code-based, caffeine-fueled, time-boxed challenges,
proof-of-concept deliverables...**

And it has non-traditional elements:

**Non-coders, cross-discipline, virtual teams, multi-location, diverse perspectives...
but still, yes, caffeine**

The Microsoft Hackathon is different than most hackathons because it emphasizes the inclusion of all employees and interns in the company, from all roles, backgrounds, locations, and business groups. The Hackathon is flexibly structured to accommodate worldwide and companywide participation.

There are several ways employees can take part in the Hackathon: being part of a project team, offering expertise to hackers, submitting ideas for projects, and interacting online to lend encouragement and guidance to hacking teams.

The outcomes can be broad: prototypes, demos, business plans, marketing campaigns, process improvements, etc. At the conclusion of the hacking, we ask every participating team to create a 1-3 minute video about what they made and upload it to our internal platform. That way, judges and others can see their outcomes.

The benefits of hacking

The Hackathon has benefits for many entities and has helped evolve the company culture at Microsoft. Because of its broad appeal, hacking can bring value in a number of ways.






Benefits for:

Individuals	empowerment, trying new things, learning skills, feeling valued
Projects + Ideas	applying tech in novel ways, moving ideas forward
Organizations + Teams	engagement, collaboration, broader perspectives
Locations (if you have multi-venue hacking)	high company-wide employee satisfaction, visibility, demonstration of a united company
The Company	positive energy, culture shift, business value, ecosystem

All of these benefits are demonstrations of the Microsoft cultural pillars of having a growth mindset, being diverse and inclusive, making a difference, being customer-obsessed and operating as “One Microsoft.” The Hackathon also exemplifies being a company that values its employees. Many companies say they want to hire the best and brightest people in the world, but how many are giving every employee — in any position in any division in any location — the opportunity to share an idea, and if that idea gains momentum, providing the possibility of sharing that idea with the highest level executives in the company. This is what the Hackathon is all about. People want to work for a company that values their ideas.

The competencies of a hacking culture

Hacking is not just a 48-hour caffeine-infused event. It can be an event over any specific time period, or a set of activities, or a way of working all year long. These five elements are the framework for hacking at Microsoft.

				
Ask for ideas	Build teams	Hack	Share	Move forward
An open forum for creative thinking	Lots of input from various skills, roles, backgrounds.	Focused time for teams to work on their proof of concept	A place and time to share projects and project outcomes	Mechanisms to advance ideas, all year long

Ask for ideas

Have a forum that encourages creative thinking. Have a mechanism (place, platform, tool) for getting ideas from people and encouraging them to share their ideas with others. Make sure to be inclusive in asking for ideas: everyone can participate.

--- TIP ---

Great ideas can come from anywhere.

Build teams

Collaboration is a key component to meaningful hacking. Enable people to team up and work on ideas together. Make everyone feel welcome! Get lots of input from various skills, roles, and backgrounds. Diverse teams have the best outcomes.

Hack

Have time set aside to focus on hacking. Give express permission from leadership and managers to pause on daily workload for a predetermined amount of time. Plan and support hacking activities through productivity tech tools and/or team events. As appropriate, define challenges or topics. Encourage a goal of a proof of concept or prototype as much as possible.

Share

Use the ideas platform or some other mechanism for sharing the outcomes of hacking. Give teams a way to share what they did and to get input from others.

Move forward

Don't let the goodness and energy of hacking end after a hackathon. Devise mechanisms that enable project teams to continue to move their ideas forward, and encourage hacking 'habits'

Hacking is for everyone

Employees from across the company tell us they participate for many reasons, including to have fun, learn a new skill, and collaborate with others. They come from all roles! We execute a focused campaign on reaching people that might consider themselves in non-traditional hacking roles. Here is an example of the messaging we use to encourage participation from all corners of the company.

IS HACKING FOR ME?

Collaborate across the company ● Try a new skill ● Solve a problem ● Pursue a passion
● Do something outside your day job ● Contribute your expertise



Engineers and Technical-focus

Are you in a technical role and familiar with hacking? Great! Also, aside from the technical aspect, the Hackathon is a great opportunity for you to work on something outside of your day job, to collaborate with people across the company, or to pursue a passion. Anything goes!



Designers

Ways to get involved in hacking are as varied as Design roles! Your skills are the most sought-after among Hackathon project teams – whether it's product design, UI expertise, or general design thinking, teams are wanting your input. Or create your own project! You will find inspiration galore.



HR, Finance, Legal

Don't think of yourself as a typical "hacker"? Think again! You are already a hacker when you create a new-and-improved biz plan, internal process, or employee program. And technical teams often need your expertise, so find the many ways you can hack and show your innovative spirit.



Sales & Marketing

Leave robots and flying toasters to other hackers... YOU know our customers and what they want! Create a marketing campaign, a solution to a pain point, or join a team to bring your customer insights. Collaborate with people across the company on an idea or hack on a personal passion.



Interns

Intern teams have become Hackathon's best-kept secret. With unfettered enthusiasm, interns take on projects from business groups to drive an innovative approach. It's also a strategic way for interns to meet people from across the company and get visibility with hiring teams.

Internal hacking platforms

Since our first Hackathon in 2014, we've built an internal website called HackBox that serves as our collaboration platform for the worldwide Hackathon and for other smaller hacking activities. We'll describe what we learned and found to be useful. Not all of it is required... you could use whatever format, tools, and elements make sense for your hacking.

Availability: It needs to be available across the company to enable collaboration.

Confidentiality: It needs to be confidential if intellectual property is part of your hacking.

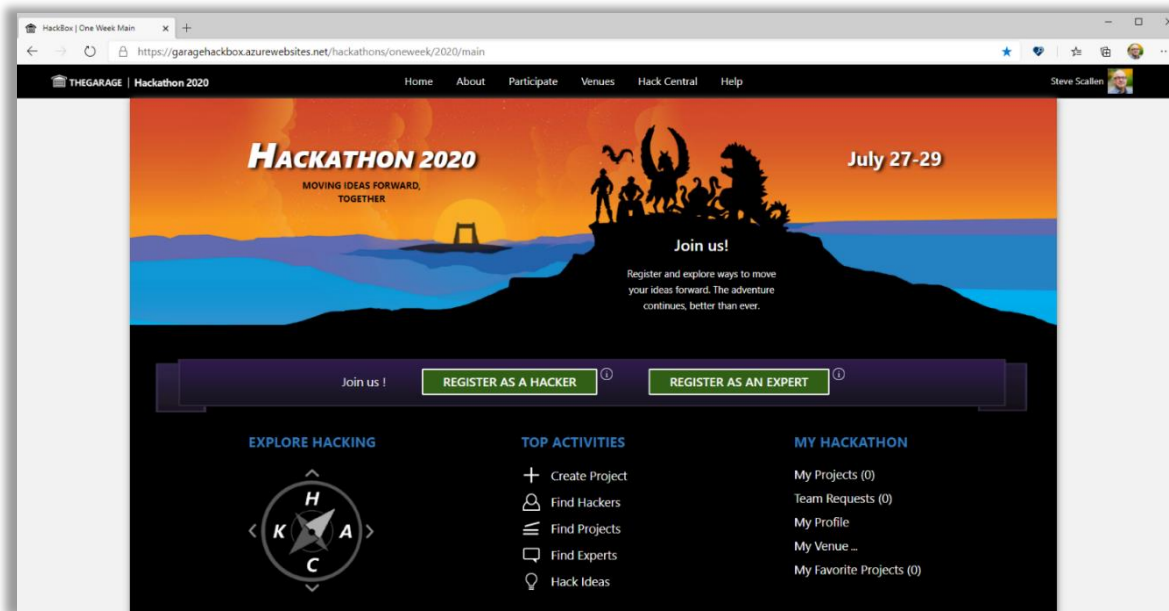
Simplicity and Clarity: It needs to be relatively simple and clear. Don't make things too complicated!

Functionality: it can enable certain specific functions for the hacking.

- Register and create a profile: employees and participants need a way to say "I'm in!" and to become part of the hacking community. We enable people to create profiles. More on that later.
- Create a project: participants who have an idea for a hack project need a way to submit/post them and, if they are open to having people join them (which is encouraged), there needs to be a way for others to find the project and join it.
- Finding projects: there needs to be a way for people to search and find projects, to join them, or to see what is being hacked on, or, perhaps, later to evaluate their final outcomes.
- Searching profiles: To build a diverse project team, hackers need a way to search for other hackers with specific skills.
- Finding resources: hackers need a way to find information they need to progress on their project, and ways to find others who are subject matter experts.
- Participants need a way to find event details and logistics.
- Policies and compliance information needs to be available for reference.

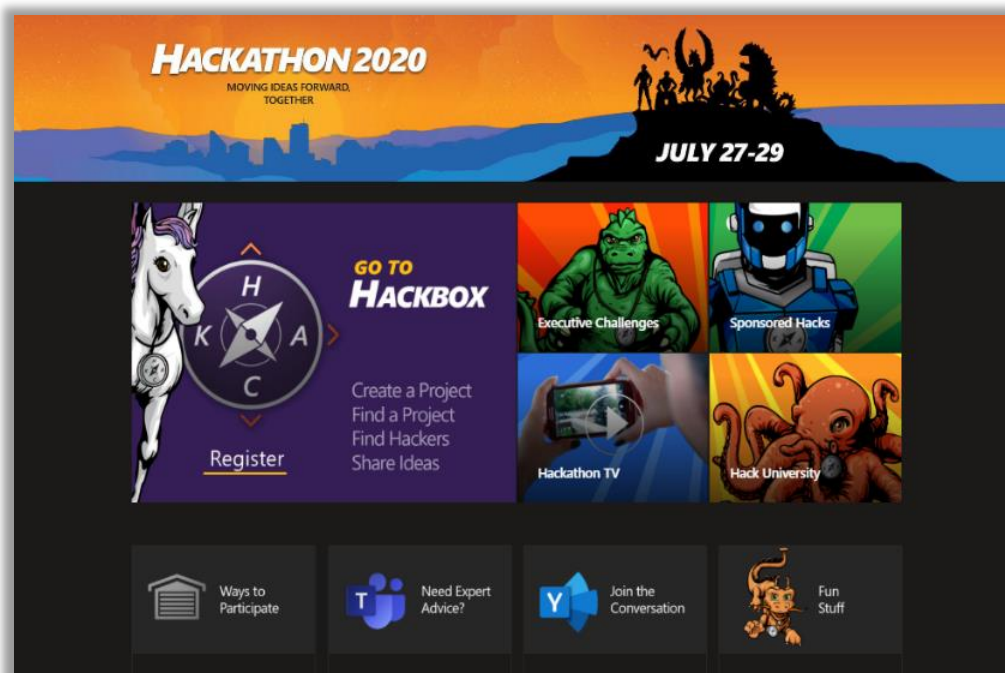
Database: It's nice to have a central spot to gather and share info on participation, teams, projects, and other info.

For context, here is a screenshot of the 2020 HackBox landing page.



HackBox is an internal site, but the positive response to it has shown that there is a demand for the platform as a product. A roadmap for an externally available version of HackBox is in development. For more information, email Hack@Microsoft.com.

Along with HackBox, we have an internal SharePoint site we call Hack Central, and we use it to share supplementary content and tips for hackers. Here is a screenshot of the landing page to give you an idea of the Hack Central content.



In 2020, The Garage pivoted to produce a fully-virtual hackathon. Our platforms were already intended for hackers worldwide, so we were fundamentally prepared. But see [“Insights on hacking virtually,”](#) below, for many more ways we supported virtual hacking for teams working from home, worldwide.

What do people hack on?

Some hackathons have pre-defined challenges or topic areas, others are wide open. People hack on solutions, a new technology, improvements to an existing tech, passion projects, philanthropic efforts, learning a new skill, and many other topics. A hackathon can also be a team-building exercise with a specific hack topic.

To add structure to the event, we have challenge categories for projects. Challenges present an opportunity for a company, a product team, or a business group to share priorities and imperatives for the business. At Microsoft, we ask every member of our senior leadership team to issue a challenge to employees that represents a strategic area of focus, growth, or concentration for the company. This enables a leadership team to make clear to the employees what's important in the next period of time and gives employees an opportunity to focus their work on the highest priorities of the company. We also include challenges related to current events, global issues, and philanthropies.

Here is an example taken from Hackathon 2020:

Hackathon 2020 Executive Challenges		
Challenge	Executive Sponsor	Challenge Text
Hack for Growth Ideas	EVP & Chief Financial Officer	Show us big ideas for a new business at Microsoft.
Hack for Microsoft	EVP, Corporate Strategy	Show us ideas to adapt to stay connected and productive in a secure environment.
Hack for Living our Culture	EVP, Human Resources	Help advance the employee experience by reinforcing the importance of our culture.
Hack for a Trusted Cloud	EVP, Cloud & AI Platform	Use our platforms to show how a trusted + secure environment empowers our customers.
Hack for Good	EVP & CMO + VP, Philanthropies	Partner with a nonprofit to empower them using Microsoft technology solutions.
Hack for Modern Life & Learning	EVP, Experiences & Devices	Create something that helps learners of all ages be more productive using our products.
Hack for Modern Work	EVP, Experiences & Devices	Build something to help businesses enable modern work.
Hack for Crisis Management	EVP, Azure	Show how Azure can be the technology first responder to our customers facing crisis.
Hack to Protect Data	CVP, CISO	Find innovative ways to secure devices, apps and services for Microsoft and customers.
Hack for COVID-19	EVP & Chief Technology Officer	Create something to respond to crisis management and plan economic and business rebound.
Hack for GitHub	CVP, Developer Services	Build GitHub Apps that make your life easier, more productive, and fun.
Hack for Security of Remote Work	CVP, M365 Security & Compliance	Share ideas to help our customers keep their people, apps, devices, and infrastructure secure.
Hack for Gaming	EVP, Gaming	Take Xbox to the next level.
Hack for Customer Success	CVP, Teams	Create a project inspired by a real customer challenge or opportunity.
Hack for Sustainability	President & Chief Legal Officer	Use leading data to build tech solutions for company and global environmental challenges.
Hack for Web Experiences	CVP, Web Experiences	Grow and evolve search, ads, news, geolocation services, and our new browser.
Hack for Industry	EVP, WWCB + EVP & Pres, GSMD	Create something that helps industry customers accelerate their transformation.

We also see that there are general trends in project topics. Each year we track the topics as an indication of employee interest.

"What are you hacking on?" Top 10

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Azure	Azure	Azure	Azure	Azure
Windows 10	Artificial Intelligence	Machine Learning	Machine Learning	Microsoft Teams
Android	Machine Learning	Cognitive Services	Office 365	Web
Machine Learning	Cognitive Services	Natural Language Processing	Natural Language Processing	Office 365
Bot Framework	Android	Office 365	Android	Azure ML
iOS	Bot Framework	Speech/Text/Facial Recognition	Cognitive Services	.NET
Universal Windows App	Office 365	Android	Internal Tools	Tech & Research
Bing	Internal Tool	Internal Tool	Speech/Text/Facial Recognition	Android
Cognitive Services	iOS	Other AI	Microsoft Teams	Cognitive Services
Windows Phone	Cortana	iOS	Other AI	Visual Studio

Building a project team

There are no firm rules to what makes a great project team. But we know that diverse teams have better outcomes, so hackers should be sure to think broadly as they consider their project needs. Here are some common roles for a hacking team:

- **The Idea Person:** You noticed a problem or a need, and you already have a vision for a solution, and you knew that the Hackathon is the time to focus on it. You know the people and things that need to come together to make it happen.
- **The Organizer and Cat-Herder:** You are usually a PM – someone to make sure collaboration is organized and the project gets and stays on track. The project team needs you and they *know* they need you. Critical!
- **The Designer:** You are someone with an eye for (and the skill for) bringing to life things in a compelling way with all the right visual and spatial cues. Meaning, you make things beautiful and effective.
- **The Builders:** You figure out the buttons and screens and transitions and functions and build them to work. You make sure the backend runs seamlessly with APIs and data and every other connection needed. You love the Hackathon... It's your time to show what you've got.

- **The Customer-Industry-Domain Expert:** You know the big picture of what's happening in the industry and domain of the topic area. You watch data to know what others are doing and what is trending. You know what customers love now and know how to figure out what they will love next.
- **The Business Strategy and Acumen Person:** You think in terms of business feasibility and how to get there; you think in terms of ROI and revenue and strategic partnerships. Better to have you at the table from the beginning instead of as an afterthought!
- **The Marketer:** Not just a spin-master... You know how to help plan a great product story and catch the customer's attention. You make it compelling and know how to represent the project idea in a way that makes buyers, well... *buyers*.

As mentioned above, the hacking platform you build would ideally enable "finding" other hackers in roles, product and services areas, and locations, in order to build project teams.

Sharing project outcomes

As mentioned above, "sharing" is a key competency of hacking. It can mean many things during and after the hacking events, but no matter how it happens it is important and motivating to hackers.

Project Videos

At Microsoft, the Hackathon project team 'deliverable' is a 1-3 minute video showing what the team did. The video is posted on the Hackathon platform. That format enabled all of the project outcomes to be seen by everyone regardless of location. See below for more on judging projects.

Science Fairs

At the end of the hackathon or soon after, be sure to have a time and place for hackers to demo their projects.* Most Microsoft Hackathon venues have a science-fair-type event right after the hackathon ends or the next day. It's usually like a high school science fair: every project has a table or booth where they put up a trifold or monitor showing some elements of their project, and they stand and demonstrate to attendees.

*Aside from in-person science fairs, we also developed a virtual-only experience where the project videos were shared online. It was open to viewers worldwide.

Judging, winning, and the perils of competition

Competition can be a valuable motivator. It can also create some unintended consequences or be a deterrent to participation. Generally, it may be beneficial to have competition but keep it as

a secondary element, behind the primary goals of empowering creativity, collaboration, experimentation, and having fun.

We put together a panel of subject matter experts to give project teams qualified insights and perspectives on their projects. Every completed video is viewed as part of the judging.

General guidelines for judging:

Make Something: Does the project make or create something tangible that can be shown or demonstrated, going beyond an idea?

Address the Challenge: Does the project address the Challenge, and present a clear and relevant solution?

Customer Focus: Is the project clear on who it is for? Does it provide a different and compelling solution for the customer?

Business Value: Does this project provide business value to Microsoft? For example, does it attract new users, make current users happier, increase revenue, do some good in the world, increase usage, retain customers, etc.? Does it align to our Microsoft mission?

Feasibility: Does the project have a reasonable chance of success or possible pathway forward to implementation and delivery to market?

Inspiration & Energy: Does the idea bring energy, excitement, fresh perspective, novelty, or delight?

Inclusion: Are you creating a solution with inclusive design in mind, incorporating the three key capabilities of inclusion: practicing awareness, exercising curiosity, and demonstrating courage? Have you considered who is being excluded from the solution you're building? Does the team working on this project accurately represent the diversity of the customers we intend to use it?

There are also local "science fairs" in worldwide venues and special-interest "sponsored hack" challenges that each have their own criteria and judging process.

For Executive Challenge winners, each first-place project team gets time to share their winning idea with key executives from the topic area. The Grand Prize team wins time to share their idea with Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO. No monetary prizes are given out.

Moving ideas and projects forward

Many teams want to continue working on their projects after the Hackathon. In The Garage, we provide services and materials to help in these key areas:

Understand: Look at the idea to more deeply understand the model, the assumptions, and the basic hypothesis. Then experiment to test assumptions, get customer input, and further assess the market.

Design: Use fast design methodologies, rapid prototyping, and testing with customers.

Build: Identify strengths and weaknesses of traditional build methods, consider Agile and SCRUM tools.

Another key to moving ideas forward is **Sponsorships**. The project teams are looking for their ideas to be adopted or considered by the business or product group that has responsibility in the given area. The Garage provides guidance and coaching to help teams at Microsoft gain sponsorships with contacts in relevant groups.

Other important elements of planning a hackathon

Communications and outreach

We communicate very purposefully to the whole company about the Hackathon, creating a strategy and execution plan to reach all employees. We have a detailed matrix of target segments of people across the company and the channels to reach them and the messaging to use to attract them.

We also partner with communications managers in all of the organizations and locations, to help them integrate Hackathon messaging into their leadership and community communications. We use numerous channels to reach our audiences, including email, online content, Teams channels, community groups, and Yammer.

The outreach also includes providing many mechanisms for participants to share their own experiences, like enabling social posts, storytelling, and sharing in the many internal channels.

Executive sponsorship, buy-in, and support

It is helpful to have an executive (or several) who are identified as hackathon sponsors or champions. Key individuals can help show potential participants that the hackathon has leadership support, which may be a deciding factor for some people. Executive sponsorship can be at different levels, from lending their 'name' as sponsor to being involved in challenges, to participating actively in hacking events. Another component of sponsorship comes from managers throughout the company. We have developed communications targeted at managers to help them understand the value of supporting their team members in hacking participation.

Finding the "Coalition of the Willing"

There are probably teams or groups across your company that can help with elements of the hackathon, and it would be beneficial to enlist their involvement. For example, a team that specializes in a particular resource that hackers would find valuable, like to help build an app, or to help connect with customers, or to provide guidance about products, or to help set up an internal website. The key idea is to leverage the strengths and willingness of others at the company to help make the hackathon a success.

Recognition of the business value of hacking... without over-emphasis of 'the next big thing'

Traditional hackathons can have an emphasis on building something big and cool that promises to be the next big star. While the outcomes of hackathons can be something with specific business value and future potential, that is not actually the main point of this hackathon. Acknowledge ideas and projects that have promise, but don't make the hackathon just about those outcomes.

One of the cultural priorities for Microsoft is to exhibit a growth mindset, and the Hackathon offers a perfect opportunity to put the cultural aspirations of Microsoft into action. We value failure as an essential way to learn, we emphasize people working with others outside of their work group. Project success is not the only form of success — with the Hackathon, people cite many things when describing their satisfaction with the Hackathon, like:

- making new connections
- learning new skills
- stretching their creativity
- even functioning in a role that's different than their day job

Hackathons have benefits and offer rich experiences for participants. As they say, it's about the journey not just the destination.

Inviting others: Hacking with customers, partners, nonprofits, students, teachers

There are many reasons to engage with people outside your organization, like a key customer or a STEM group. Consider inviting others to join the hackathon if there are shared goals and outcomes that benefit participants.

Insights on hacking virtually

Hackathons are very naturally collaborative, and virtual collaboration is enabled with great productivity tools like Teams, Outlook, SharePoint, and other programs. Virtual hacking means that all project teams hacking using digital tools rather than gathering in person using physical modes like whiteboards. There has always been a virtual component for the Microsoft Hackathon, since our collaboration has always been worldwide. The virtual collaboration happens on the project team level, meaning, all project teams will be organizing their own methods, cadence, and structure. There does not need to be an all-up online spectator event, but it can help to have a channel for communicating as a community at the time of the event.

The Tools: What to use for virtual collaboration

- Teamwork tools: Share your company's standard collaboration best practices for tools like Microsoft Teams. For example, outline tips for creating Teams for hack projects, using channels, using tabs, using digital whiteboards, integrating developer tools, using channel meetings, working in the cloud, sharing to email, and keeping security in mind.

- Virtual presence best practices: include tips for webcams, audio, microphones, lighting, backgrounds, and other video conferencing best practices.
- Tech support: include security and privacy best practices and include direct contact information for hackers who run into technical issues like laptop problems, remote access, home internet, password resets, phone authentication, and other issues.

The People: The project team, how it is organized, and workstyles

- If collaboration is worldwide, remind the teams that they need to be accommodating to differences in time zones and work hours.
- Diversity leads to better outcomes, so everyone should remember to also be accommodating to diverse backgrounds, approaches, languages, work styles, and remote work environments.
- Be sure to have a bit of time to get to know each other, your individual motivations, and discussions on who will contribute what.
- Set expectations for what tools you will use (see TOOLS section).
- Set expectations for how much each person will be available to work online, how often you will meet, milestones, outcomes, collaboration time vs individual work time, how the team will accommodate time zones, personal commitments, and other elements that could impact teamwork.
- Discuss options for work pace – e.g., keep Teams meeting open for the full time, just use Teams for check-ins, breaks for meals, break up into small groups at set intervals, virtual “stand-ups” where everyone comes together to talk about progress, etc.
- If you don’t have one, a PM would be a super-valuable addition to your team. See more above in the “Building a project team” section.
-

The Projects: tips for describing the hack project

For the Microsoft Hackathon, each project has its own project page on the platform. These tips apply to project pages but can apply to whatever platform used.

- Describe your project and its value to the intended consumer as well as to the company. Also use the description to recruit team members by showing the fundamentals of the project, the story behind the idea, the project motivations, and the areas of skill, expertise, and contribution needed.
- If available, make sure your project shows “open to join” if you want team members.
- Be sure look at other projects for collaboration possibilities or duplication of efforts. You can always reach out to other project teams.

The Hacker Workspace: Hardware and set-up tips

Participants have probably already figured out a lot of this. But hacking (versus their day job) can be a little less predictable and they will be feeling the time/deadline pressure. So here are think-ahead tips for being prepared during the time crunch.

- Hardware and peripheral suggestions.
 - a monitor or two (or more!)
 - a headset or earbuds, with microphone
 - Wi-Fi/modem with updated firmware
 - maybe even ethernet cables just in case.
- Don't forget to have:
 - extra AA and AAA batteries
 - all the cables, adapters, and dongles that you might need. At in-person hackathons, batteries and connection devices are the most requested pieces of hardware.
 - a spare power cord for every device
 - Whiteboard + pens
 - Printer + ink + paper
 - A relatively comfy chair
- Remember you might have late night/early morning meetings where you will be speaking out loud. Share your home? Think about a place you will not bother others while you talk.
- Food, snacks, beverages... Stock up! You might not have time to run to the store.
- For tech issues, know in advance where to find support when it is needed.

The Resources: Find the help and information you'll need

Here are some areas you might consider organizing in advance for hacking teams.

- A list of available experts in key areas, a place to ask specific questions about technical and business topics, as well as to find curated resources for hacking teams.
- Available online content to help with specific resources and tips, trending topics, and other information that may be useful.
- For the Microsoft Global hackathon, we include information about patents, copyrights and trademarks, challenge topic articles and research, tech trends, customer feedback resources, links to internal learning tutorials, internal tools resources, and other content.

The Fun Stuff: Be part of the community and keep it interesting!

Hacking virtually can feel isolating, so consider having a way to feel like part of a larger community.

- Have an online internal discussion board (we used Yammer).
- Create a social media toolkit with guidance on fun sharing, with hashtags and shareable images.
- Offer digital assets like downloadable GIFs (see examples below), printable coloring sheets, images, templates, video call backgrounds, and other items that reflect the hackathon theme.
- Be creative! Think of other ways people will be interacting and what will appeal to them. We even created a Spirit Week and Hackathon Spotify playlists!

Hackathon Spirit Week July 20-24

Share your hack team spirit in these daily challenges

Share posts and photos on social and Yammer for a chance to appear on the Hack TV Livestream July 27-29. Use [#MicrosoftHackathon](#) now through July 24 for consideration. Follow @MSFTGarage on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and join the worldwide [Hackathon 2020 Yammer](#) community for the latest updates.



Your hack story Mon July 20	Your team picture Tues July 21	Your hack music Wed July 22	Your hack crafts Thurs July 23	Your hack mojo Fri July 24
<p>What's your team's origin story? Tell us about how you met and why you're passionate about your customer or idea, using the Team Story template or in your own words.</p> 	<p>Share your Team Picture, created with the Virtual Team Photo Booth. Style points when you show your team's personality, local pride, or costumes.</p> 	<p>Declare your team's theme song to add to the official Microsoft Hackathon 2020 Spotify playlists. We're taking song requests.</p> 	<p>Show us your craft skills! Download and print the coloring pages, cube characters or do-not-disturb signs to decorate your home hack space.</p> 	<p>Fire up the mojo machine! Find another project you love and post about why it's awesome in Yammer. Tag its creators and ask them to pay it forward. Add even more mojo with a Hackathon GIF.</p> 

Share on Social and Yammer
Always follow [social guidelines](#) and protect IP



The Hack TV Livestream starts July 27
Watch online at [aka.ms/hack](#)

The fine print: policies, IP, and other details

The nature of a hackathon is related to valuable innovation, so it is important to protect intellectual property and set the right expectations with participants.

Policies should cover:

- ✓ Who can participate?
- ✓ What are the specific rules about any competition?
- ✓ Who owns the ideas and the intellectual property?
- ✓ What can participants share about the hackathon externally?
- ✓ If external customers/guests participate, what agreements are needed?

At Microsoft, the Hackathon policies were developed in collaboration with the legal department and shared on the internal platform. There are also sections covering standards of conduct, consent to be photographed (so the planning team can use event photos broadly), and data handling guidance.

Planning checklist summary

- ☐ Identify core planning team and responsibilities for each area:
 - **Lead/project manager** to manage the team and the activities
 - **Technical/Platform** to build and maintain any online elements

- **Creative/Marcom** to manage visual identity/brand elements and communications/marketing plan
 - **In-person event logistics** as needed to plan and execute venue logistics
 - **Regional representatives** as needed to manage any other locations
- ☐ Identify any internal stakeholders and executive sponsors, and plan level of engagement.
 - ☐ Set dates and venue(s).
 - ☐ Develop a visual identity/theme/brand/creative brief.
 - ☐ Make a communications and marketing plan, including key messaging and calls to action.
 - ☐ Determine the mechanisms for registration, ideas, projects, collaboration, recognition of winners (e.g., internal website, SharePoint, shared Excel sheet, custom online database/tool).
 - ☐ Establish and publish rules, judging criteria, and overall policies.
 - ☐ Integrate accessibility in all of your plans.
 - ☐ Have a support contact email for participants
 - ☐ Determine key metrics of success (e.g., number of people registered, number of projects, post-event survey results).

Have questions for the Microsoft Hackathon team? Email Hack@Microsoft.com