SHORTLISTING

Idea Selection

The goal of an innovation contest is to identify the winning ideas among a pile of many submissions. Online innovation contests can result in hundreds and thousands of submissions. The determination of the best ideas is a challenging process that goes through different phases.
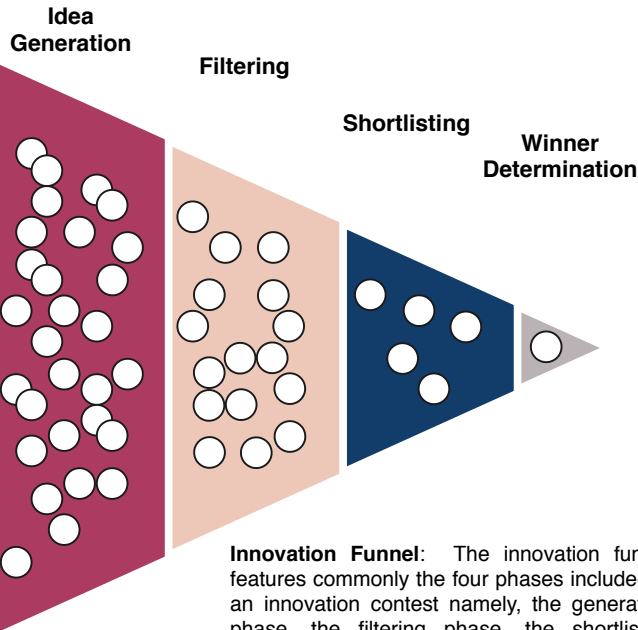
Selection Challenges

Selection challenges exist when problems occur during the idea selection. Such challenges can result in additional effort, time and resources.

Selection Methods

Using the right method to evaluate the ideas and filter out the best, is crucial. Each selection method provides certain attributes according to the selection requirements.

Innovation Funnel

Idea Generation

Filtering

Shortlisting

Winner Determination

Innovation Funnel: The innovation funnel features commonly the four phases included in an innovation contest namely, the generation phase, the filtering phase, the shortlisting phase, and the winner determination phase.

Sarigianni, C.; Windmüller, S.; Konecki, P.; Seeber, I.; Maier, R. (2018)

⚠ Selection Challenges

Similarity of ideas
An idea generation phase can result in submissions with similar characteristics. In such cases the evaluators face challenges during the assessment.
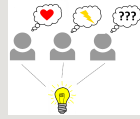
Lack of shared understanding of selection criteria
When the selection criteria are strictly defined, the evaluators might assess the ideas in a superficial way and fail to achieve the optimal results.
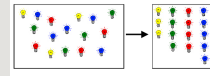
Lack of expertise of raters
Selecting the best ideas requires a certain level of expertise, especially when the idea assessment requires domain-specific knowledge.
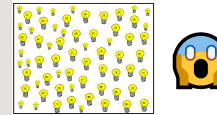
Divergence of opinions among raters
The raters have diverse opinions due to different levels of expertise, lack of shared understanding or personal goals.

Too many ideas to be processed
As human resources are usually very limited, the evaluation team has to come up with a good strategy on how to deal with the workload.

Fear of missing out on good ideas
In many cases the raters deploy hard criteria to reduce the amount of ideas, which might result in missing out on good ideas.
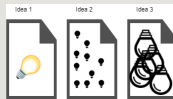
Lack of objectivity
The idea assessment often can be influenced by personal relationships between the raters and ideators, certain interest on the domain or other subjective factors.

Inadequate amount of idea content
Even when the submission requirements are set clear, ideators submit ideas that do not fully meet the expectations.

Missing crowd opinion
In several cases taking into consideration the opinion of the crowd can be a good solution. Unfortunately, the opinion of the crowd can often be biased or misleading.

Misfit of rating scales
In some cases, the croteria can increase the complexity of the evaluation when they 1) are not strictly define, 2) are too many, 3) are too fine-graned or 4) are too coarse-grained.

💡 Selection Methods

Post-it voting
Post-it voting facilitates the selection of the best ideas, through multiple voting. The method ensures more proportional representation and allows for multiple ideas to be further pursued.

Now-Wow-How Matrix
The Now-Wow-How matrix supports the idea selection process by targeting two criteria namely the degree of idea originality and the difficulty of idea implementation. The resulting ideas (Wow ideas) would be those that require both relatively low implementation effort and high degree of novelty.

Affinity Diagrams
Affinity Diagrams are useful for sorting large amounts of ideas into groups. The technique facilitates complexity reduction.
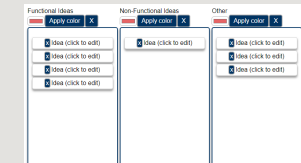
Four Categories
The four categories method categorizes the pile of ideas by their perceived abstractness. In this way the teams can take into consideration also ideas with low degree of rationality but potentially interesting.

Bingo Selection
Similar to the Four Categories method, the Bingo Selection lets its users categorize ideas into various factors like business applications.