


IDEA PATH

1. Try this thought experiment with other leaders and managers in your organization:

A frontline team member has an innovative idea. The idea isn't perfect, but with a little experimentation, it has the potential to solve a major problem or provide a major benefit.

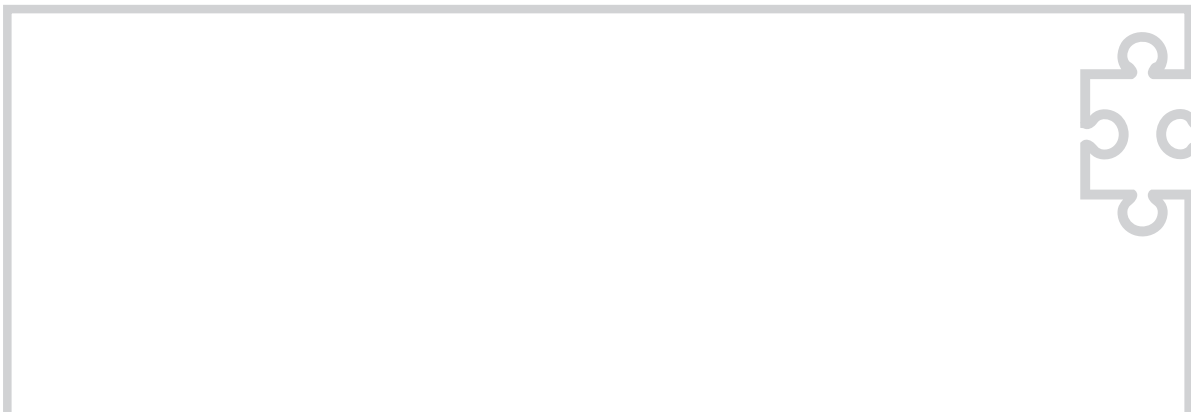
Now, imagine this person actually moving the idea from an interesting idea to implementation. Be as detailed in your thinking as you can. What specifically would they do? Talk to someone, fill out a card, schedule a meeting, etc.? What would happen then?



Now write down every step the originator of the idea would go through as well as everyone associated with implementing the idea. Who would need to authorize it? How long would each step take?

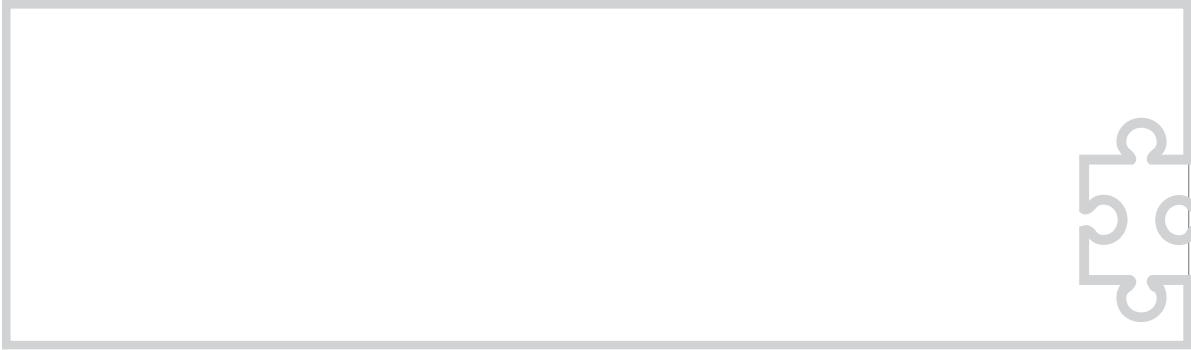


Write out the entire process and the time frame. Be brutally honest with how things actually work in your organization (not how you'd like them to work).



As you review the process you just outlined, ask the following questions:

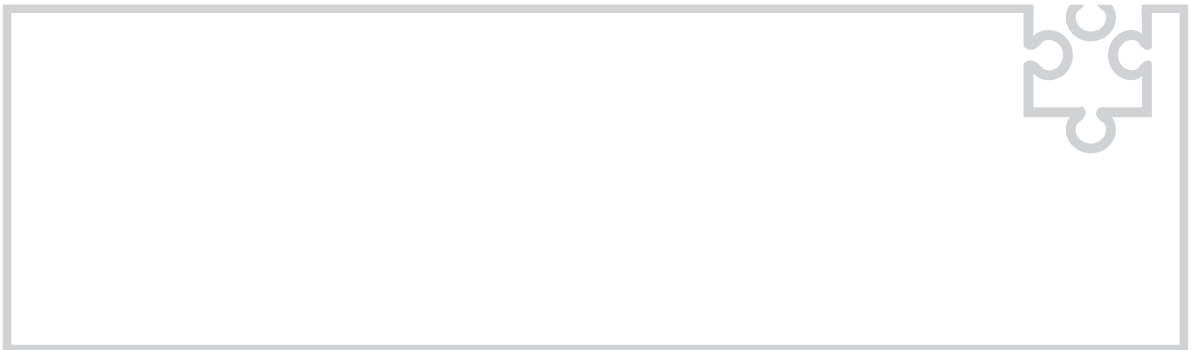
2. How long did it take from the time the person shared their idea to the time a pilot project actually happened?



3. As the idea was implemented, was there a feedback loop to improve the idea and make it viable?



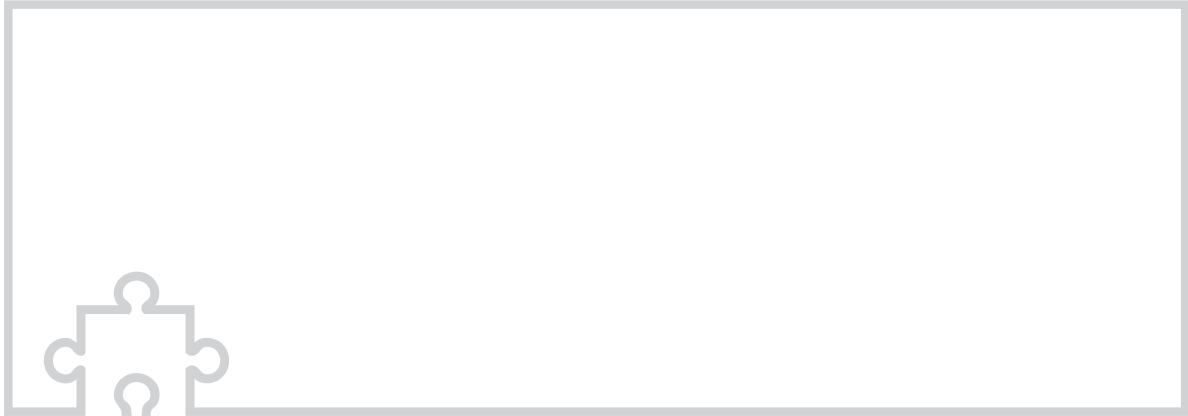
4. As the revised idea was implemented, how was the originator involved?



5. How were they recognized and thanked in a meaningful way?



6. As a leadership team (or by yourself if you've done this one alone), review your answers to the last four questions and ask yourself: If you were a frontline team member, would it be worth your time and energy to think of solutions and new ideas (much less to share them)?



7. If your answer to the last question is "No", where can you make changes to improve the process, remove barriers, and increase recognition?

