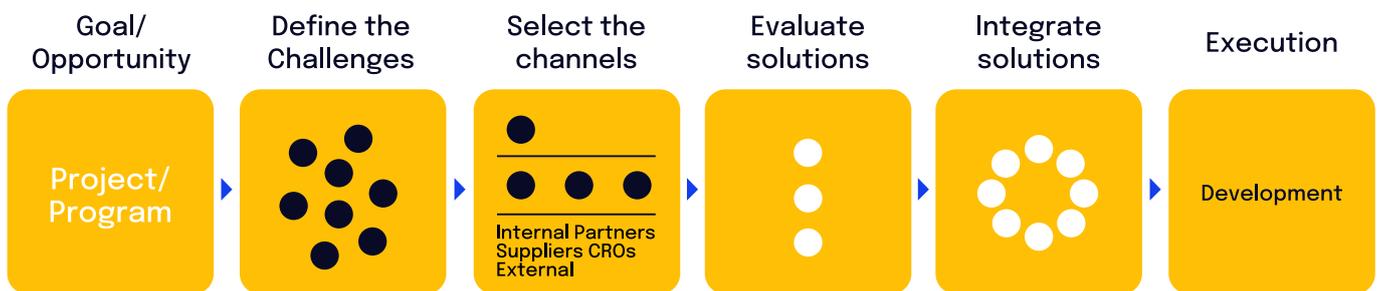# Planning a challenge - Part Three

Underpinning the success of so many innovation programs is an approach that uses challenges. A technique that brings focus to an element of business which is often open-ended, challenges help businesses create value through innovation.

By asking participants for solutions to real problems, companies are better positioned to innovate in a continuous, scalable manner. This guide is the second of a three-part mini-series focusing on one of the most vital elements of this challenge-driven methodology: the planning.

In part one, we discussed challenge background. In the second guide, we looked at challenge framing. Now, we will outline the final element of challenge planning: communications.

We'll break the communication phase down into five areas and illustrate how the messaging should change at different stages of the challenge process. We will discuss what to communicate and when, all the way from initial 'teaser' communications, through challenge launch and live, all the way to the communications sent out once the challenge is completed.

→ The Challenge-Driven Methodology: An Overview

Goal/ Opportunity	Define the Challenges	Select the channels	Evaluate solutions	Integrate solutions	Execution
Project/ Program		Internal Partners Suppliers CROs External			Development

Above is the challenge-driven methodology that Wazoku developed for starting an innovation program. It is simple and completely customizable to any business needs. We designed it to be universal, to allow the organizations that we work with – regardless of industry or scope – to move towards scalable, sustainable innovation.

With this structure in place, so that people in the organization can see the process in its entirety, it's easier to visualize how challenges work. This makes buy-in at the start, and the eventual success of the challenge a lot easier to deliver.

➡️ Challenge Communications Process: Teaser Comms

Teaser communications refers to the earliest part of this communication strategy. It's the time when the audience is least familiar with the challenge. As such, it is vital that scoping questions are answered by the challenge management team prior to launch.

Here, it's important to understand the best way to reach the target audience. This audience are likely receiving tens if not hundreds of communications a day, so standing out can be difficult. Equally critical to establish is who on the challenge management team is responsible for sending out teaser communications.

Finally, it can be handy to think about any upcoming events that the organization is running which could act as a nice tie-in. For example, if the challenge is looking to improve the environmental credentials of the business and there is an event around sustainability coming up, mentioning the challenge at that event can be beneficial.

➡️ Challenge Communications Process: Launch Comms

Once these initial points have been answered, it is advisable to move on to the communications around the launch of the challenge. The audience is familiar with the challenge coming up, now it's about telling them how they can take part.

The questions that need to be answered here include:

How do the audience access the platform?

Can people participate on different devices?

➡️ Challenge Communications Process: Challenge Live

Having teased the challenge, and then launched it, we're now looking at how to discuss the challenge when it's live. Maintaining the attention of the audience during the live stage is critical to increasing participation and success.

Some companies prefer to send important messages via email but be careful not to over communicate. Messaging software such as Teams can be used, but be sure to deliver communications here that stand out and don't feel too lightweight.

There is a finite timescale in which people can submit their responses to the challenge. Techniques such as a "fake end date", set a week or so before the challenge closes, can be a good way of ensuring that anyone who missed this deadline can still take part.

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➔ Challenge Communications Process: Idea Selection

Even when submissions are closed, keeping communications going is advisable. Audience visibility of the entire challenge process is critical for buy-in that helps with any future challenge that will be run.

The questions that need to be answered in this phase include:

> Will there be a live pitch to a panel of the selected submissions?

> How will the outcomes be communicated?

> How will the winning idea(s) be celebrated?

➔ Challenge Communications Process: Follow-Up Comms

When the challenge has closed and the winning idea has been awarded, the importance of challenge communications should not be forgotten. Follow-up communication or check-ins that see how the winning idea fares when implemented can be a great way of illustrating the value of challenges to the target audience. Solvers that have worked on a challenge will feel pride about seeing the impact of their work, and those who didn't participate will get to see the benefits of taking part in challenges.

➔ Conclusion

In this final guide on the challenge planning process, we have looked at Challenge communications. It is vital to know who in the challenge management team is responsible for these communications at each of the five stages.

Whether it is the first time an organization has run a challenge, or the hundredth, there is always room for improvement. Perfection of challenges will take time, but these guides and their steps will ensure you are on the right path to delivering successful open innovation.

➔ About Wazoku

Wazoku is a pioneer in open innovation, crowdsourcing, and innovation at scale. For more than two decades, we've been helping our clients deliver sustainable and scalable innovation practices. As both for-profit and for-purpose, our software and expertise have been used to gain competitive advantage and overcome humanitarian crises around the globe, all of which are underpinned by the belief that anyone can be an innovator.

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