Crowdsourcing and Open Innovation: Harnessing the Wisdom of the Crowd

Today's public and private sector organizations face an extraordinary situation: although their budgets are declining, the expectation that they can and should do more is actually increasing. This growing gap between resources and expectations comes at a time when organizations’ missions and business issues are becoming more complex than ever. Booz Allen Hamilton believes one way to close the gap—and resolve the difficult issues—is through open innovation. By increasing the diversity and volume of thought and applying those insights to real-world challenges, organizations can identify new ideas or concepts to achieve levels of performance and mission success that may otherwise be out of reach.

Booz Allen Can Help You Develop Unique Budgetary Solutions

Our approach to open innovation is solution-based—driven by the imperative to address mission challenges that are large-scale, complex, and essential. We accelerate traditional problem-solving by using a challenge-based methodology that harnesses the power of crowdsourcing and incentives. Initiating a challenge is a proven approach to solving important problems by accessing the latent talent of staff or external communities who have expertise and diverse perspectives. Monetary prizes, recognition, experiences (such as internships or externships), and continued funding are just a few of the incentives that attract problem solvers to challenges. Our challenge-based methodology increases the participation of stakeholders and promotes transparency and buy-in to create a user-driven and collaborative process that is repeated, measured, and managed.

We help clients navigate the use of crowdsourcing from initial strategy through implementation. This includes implementation of best practices tailored to specific needs through a full range of services:

- Pre-launch strategy, planning, and topic development
- Problem deconstruction and reframing
- Tool selection and set-up
- Full-cycle communications to target audiences
- Leadership coaching
- Facilitation of challenge-based process
- Support for site moderation
- Idea evaluation and analysis, as needed
- Messaging to share the impact of participants’ ideas
- Metrics and reporting

What Innovation Challenges Do Organizations Face?

- Lack of access to a diverse external network
- Ill-defined processes for managing the innovation life cycle
- Lack of enough time to synthesize and apply best practices
- Lack of effective resource allocation for innovative initiatives
- Organizational barriers to creating an innovation culture
- Difficulties managing an innovation pipeline
Our Crowdsourcing Partners

Our firm has first-hand experience with government and commercial clients on a range of projects. We have also partnered with industry leaders in crowdsourcing platforms: InnoCentive® and IdeaScale. Together, we have a proven track record of delivering actionable solutions to our clients.

Booz Allen and InnoCentive®

InnoCentive® is one of the pioneers of crowdsourcing problems to the world’s smartest people who compete and provide ideas and solutions to important business, social, policy, scientific, and technical challenges. Its global network of millions of problem solvers, combined with a proven challenge methodology and cloud-based innovation management platform, helps our clients innovate through rapid solution delivery. Using InnoCentive’s @Work platform, Booz Allen has helped to bring Fortune 500 and US government agencies the internal ability to rapidly generate creative ideas from employees in a way that solves problems faster, more cost effectively, and with less risk.

Booz Allen and IdeaScale

Since its launch in 2008 to answer the Open Government Directive set by newly elected President Barack Obama, IdeaScale has helped organizations take advantage of their digital connection to internal and external networks. Through IdeaScale’s crowdsourcing platform, Booz Allen clients are rapidly building communities around innovation by sharing their needs with geographically dispersed staff and networks—collecting feedback, responding to ideas, and stewarding them through the ideation life cycle.

Helping Organizations Through Unbiased Advice

We pride ourselves on being honest brokers—providing objective advice. Unencumbered by any organizational conflict of interest, we serve as a trusted partner to private and public sector clients, helping them develop, implement, and maintain critical business and technology programs.

Whether you’re struggling to solve a tough issue or want to harness the wisdom of your workforce, Booz Allen can help you achieve results. Our strategic partnerships and expertise in open innovation platforms and crowdsourcing strategy can help transform innovation from a buzzword into a real change with impact.

About Booz Allen

Booz Allen Hamilton is a leading provider of management consulting, technology, and engineering services to the US government in defense, intelligence, and civil markets, and to major corporations, institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. Booz Allen is headquartered in McLean, Virginia, employs more than 23,000 people, and had revenue of $5.76 billion for the 12 months ended March 31, 2013. To learn more visit www.boozallen.com.

(NYSE: BAH)
In a large organization with a dispersed community, employees may be unaware or unable to access available expertise to help solve a client problem. Relevant knowledge or expertise may lie outside one’s team or market, and would cost significant time and energy to identify through individual networking. This negatively impacts our ability to bring the full force of the organization’s resources to bear on tough and seemingly unsolvable problems.

Booz Allen Can Help You Generate Solutions

Booz Allen can provide a platform enabling leaders and managers to leverage Challenge Based Innovation to define and solve problems. By providing channels and incentives, staff can go beyond their project work and outside their network to collaborate and create solutions. Organizations can thereby access latent creativity to create new ideas or identify novel ways to apply existing solutions.

Ask Yourself:

+ Are you able to quickly access knowledge and expertise across your organization?
+ Do your staff have an outlet for their professional creativity?
+ Do you have a means of identifying and activating latent innovators, and leveraging their ingenuity in areas of need?
Program Differentiators

+ Provides access to the full breadth and depth of an organization’s knowledge and experience
+ Allows staff to post a tough problem as a “challenge” to the enterprise
+ Provides an outlet for innovative staff to flex and showcase their abilities
+ Identifies and activates latent innovators
+ Facilitates collaboration across teams
+ Incentivizes staff to voluntarily engage in activities that support firm goals and operations
+ Diversifies inputs - a key success factor for solution identification and development

Program Results

+ Improved need identification and solution development through crowdsourcing brainpower, experience, and expertise from across the firm
+ Managers can bring much more than their team’s capabilities and experience to bear, leveraging the entirety of the organization on various organizational issues
+ Staff can demonstrate expertise, connect to new capability areas in the organization, and share their knowledge across markets
+ Challenge Based Innovation shows improved engagement and retention of staff
+ Organizations are able to generate robust solutions

Helping Organizations Through Unbiased Advice

We pride ourselves on being honest brokers—providing objective advice. Unencumbered by any organizational conflict of interest, we serve as a trusted partner to private and public sector clients, helping them develop, implement, and maintain critical business and technology programs. Whether you’re struggling to solve a tough issue or want to harness the wisdom of your workforce, Booz Allen can help you achieve results. Our strategic partnerships and expertise in open innovation platforms and crowdsourcing strategy can help transform innovation from a buzzword into a real change with impact.

About Booz Allen

Booz Allen Hamilton is a leading provider of management consulting, technology, and engineering services to the US government in defense, intelligence, and civil markets, and to major corporations, institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. Booz Allen is headquartered in McLean, Virginia, employs more than 23,000 people, and had revenue of $5.76 billion for the 12 months ended March 31, 2013.

To learn more visit www.boozallen.com.