Strategic initiative manager, Durham County, NC

3-person team (Help run programs around innovation and change efforts and offer program change consulting) to help with organization continuous improvements.

Strategic plan

- Managing for results: includes “culture of innovation” creates a lot of programs that includes innovation.
- Strive for employee ideas starting from front line for innovation ideas that will help empower them to take action

Durham innovation vision: Take action forward without permission, give employees the power to make changes within the organization.

Employee input gathering

- Employee survey
- In person forum for inputs on approach for idea management
- Fall idea blast- First Campaign
- In google docs for employee inputs of ideas, that encourages employees to submit ideas.
- Six Categories:
  - Morale Builder, Money Saver, Replicate, it takes two, talk about the passion, odds and ends

Few insights and observations: Decision point: team/committee versus open forum for vetting and decisions.

Decision point: “Facebook style” idea posts versus closed form based idea submissions or google style. Believe it’s a lot easier to manage using Facebook style, want to move into a more interactive forum in the future

Ideasphere: to seek and manage employee’s ideas. While testing and having a success and failure testimony.

Innovation Academy Project: 6-17 innovation academy team conceived Ideasphere amongst its 12 members. Wanted to create something that will inspire change. Platform to share ideas amongst others and giving the opportunity for support of ideas.

Benchmarking Research; Durham County Library, Durham County DSS, Durham, NC, Oak Park, IL, Goodyear, AZ

In google docs for employee inputs of ideas, that encourages employees to submit ideas.

Prototyping/ initial design

- What’s the structure for idea process?
- Just do it, let’s try it out or not just ready to do it at this time.
- Keep communication open so people know where the idea is going
Caley Paten, Management Analyst, Office of performance and innovation, budget and management services, City of Durham, NC

2016- Innovation Academy determined need for idea campaign
2017- First idea campaign
2018- Second idea campaign

IdeaStarter Kick off Checklist
- Cross - departmental team
- Application
- Application site
- Road show schedule
- Open office hours
- Timely evaluation and selection (Select 12 finalist)
- Recognition

What is IdeaStarter 2018? Second annual campaign to collect employee’s innovative ideas that: Improve a process, increase customer satisfaction, maximize resources

Marketing material: more engaging gif pics to attract young people to submit ideas. (Really want to make connection with front line employees)

2016- Innovation Academy determined need for idea campaign
2017- First idea campaign
2018- Second idea campaign

Project 1: Custodial door sign
Idea: Pilot a door hanger that would be designed to allow customers to notify the custodial staff when cleaning services are needed.

Project 2: Innovate Durham
Idea: Pilot program for entrepreneurs to apply to develop, test and scale innovation solutions with city of Durham data and infrastructure to solve community problems and improve city operations. Cost was free to test idea.

Project 3: Populating Urban Spaces, test movable park furniture to address under-utilized green space in high pedestrian locations. Risk would the tables and chairs go missing? Test the demand that people want chairs. Cost of project: $2300

Project 4: Durham Wood Yard
Recycle wood to residents instead of disposing to land waste

Project 5: Bike trail patrol
Idea: Test whether using bicycles decreases maintenance hours while increasing the number of trail miles that can be covered in a day.

Lessons learned: Innovation doesn't have to be expensive, total of 6 projects less than 3,000. 10k per year allocated for innovation ideas
- Ensure they have the daily time to follow through with idea.
- Just do it instead of continuous measuring the risk and cost.
- Develop a project timeline to help ideas move along quicker.
- Better engage department executives.
- Don’t be afraid to support staff to help project management.

Listed below are some discussion topics and/or questions that you can use to initiate conversation with team members or stakeholders if you want to explore this idea further in your organization.

City of Durham & County of Durham:

1. Both of you mentioned aspect of the road show going to different departments highlights your programs, could you go into more depth of program aspect and what are you building on from that?
- Doing a road show you must be flexible with department flexibility up very early to network with many as possible and understanding your audiences what would appeal them to submit ideas. must reach out to each department during staff meetings especially when making contacts during your first year. Also, you have to take paper applications for individuals who are not usually at a computer every day. Quick rundown of who, what, where and why explanation briefly during a short time frame. Ask for adjectives for what ideas they are looking for within the organization. Most important to be flexible and relentless.

2. **Would it be possible for you to share different questionnaires used when reaching out to staff for ideas? (Pt. 2 question) Is City of Durham using SharePoint interim?**

   - City of Durham: Yes SharePoint (Pt. 2 question answer)
   - County of Durham: What impact would idea have on the city, what is the story behind your suggestion, will funding be required to support your idea? How will you test the idea in the next 3-6 months and will you be able to follow through with the idea. What impact will idea help. Help identify barrier prior to starting the idea. Seek for employees to give a rough estimate of idea cost. What resources will be needed? Are you available to execute your plan by June 18th? So, people understand that there is a timeline of completion expected.

3. **In terms of software did you have a formal method of cataloging staff ideas?**

   - Employees submits idea in SharePoint but other employees can’t see each other ideas. Email responses back to employee giving a confirmation that their idea has been received during the submission time (City of Durham). Which we manage the question through an excel sheet.
   - County of Durham, uses google forum. Employees get a receipt that their idea has been received. Looked at using user echo for employees to submit ideas. Concern that Facebook style posting will allow others to comment and respond to others idea. Not good.

4. **In the 5 ideas that move forward, how did you all manage the incentives for local business to trouble shoot the municipal challenges, another follow up to that which problems are being solved? Can you speak to the criteria to filter through the idea?**

   - Referring to innovate Durham, Ben keelson, City of Durham Budget Analyst
   - 34 local startups and entrepreneurs submit a proposal to partner with the city. Selected 4 startups to partner with one of those is drop park to help find parking founded by a graduate student at NC state. Also, partnered with 3 companies out of American underground which is startup hub with google in Durham. partnered with a company called talented, a gamified human resource training app. partnered with 8 rivers network which is a communication system that allows us to test internet access with some remote buildings we have. Partnered with the city and county planning department to help visualize upcoming affordable housing plan the city is working on. visit our city website and click on our budgeted and management services page to learn the criteria of selection and what is expected to partner with startups and the city.
IdeaStarter Evaluative Criteria

The following evaluative criteria will be ranked on a scale of 1-5, 1 indicating the idea does not meet the objective and 5 indicating the idea exceeds the minimum standard of the objective. Please circle the number that you believe most closely aligns with the criteria. Each idea will be assessed by the Innovation Team Selection Committee. The scores will be averaged and the employees that submitted the top five ideas will be contacted to present their idea to the Innovation Team Selection Committee.

What is the idea you wish to test?

- Development 1 2 3 4 5
  - Does the idea submission include a well-developed plan of action?
  - Did the employee describe what success looks like?

- Cost/Benefit 1 2 3 4 5
  - Does the cost of the test justify the benefit?
  - Is the amount requested feasible?

- Originality 1 2 3 4 5
  - Is the idea a new concept, process, or practice in the City of Durham?

How will you conduct the test?

- Prototype 1 2 3 4 5
  - Can the idea be tested on a small scale?

- Transferable 1 2 3 4 5
  - Does the idea have the ability to be implemented through the department and/or organization?
What do you hope to learn?

- **Level of Commitment**
  - Does the employee demonstrate commitment to testing and implementing the idea?
  - Did the employee develop the idea based upon first-hand work experience?

- **Collaboration**
  - Did the employee mention collaborating with other employee/work group/department?

What might the impact be?

- **Relation to the City of Durham Strategic Plan**
  - How closely does the idea align with a goal(s) of the SP and support goal accomplishments?

- **Resource Impact**
  - Does this idea have the potential to positively impact personnel or operational cost?

- **Potential to improve service delivery or customer service**
  - Does the idea have the potential to provide residents or employees with exceptional service?

**Total Score**

Please record the total score of the idea here.
One of a local government's greatest sources for solutions is their staff, the professionals dealing with these tasks all day, every day. But, how can you better hear and act on their ideas?
About the Alliance

Inspiring Innovation to Advance Communities

Convene and Engage Networks of Thought Leaders

Provide Training to help Organizations Build and Sustain a Culture of Innovation

Identify, Distribute Leading & Emerging Practices/ Trends Important to Local Gov

Tweet with Us: #StaffSuggestionBox or #localgov

@transformgov
@CityofDurhamNC
@DurhamCounty
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Clicking the arrow on your Go To Webinar Toolbox opens and closes your viewer.

All attendees are muted, but we do want your participation!

Please ask your questions using your Go To Webinar Toolbox throughout the webinar.
Today’s Panelists

Michael Davis
Strategic Initiative Manager, Durham County, NC

Caley Patten
Management Analyst, Office of Performance and Innovation, Budget & Management Services, City of Durham, NC
Welcome to Durham

- Population: 294,000 (County)
- Part of the Research Triangle (Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill)
- Duke University and NC Central University
- High-tech, startup and life sciences industries
- Foodie culture
- City and County governments love collaborating!
Durham County Strategic Initiatives

What We Do
✓ Strategic Planning
✓ Innovation Support
✓ Consultative Services

Call. Email. Stop by. We’re here to help.

Michael Davis
Visit: 4th floor County Admin Building
Call: (919) 560-0062
Email: mdavis@dconc.gov
Context: Change in Durham County

- Strategic Plan
- Managing for Results – includes “culture of innovation”
- But what does innovation mean for organization?
- How do we empower employees to suggest ideas and how do we support them in this work?
Innovation Vision for Durham County

- Every Durham County employee feels empowered to suggest and test new ideas to improve service delivery to residents and fellow employees alike
Energy Around This Project!

- Our 2016-2017 Innovation Academy team conceived Ideasphere
- Considered other projects, but kept coming back to idea management
Innovation Academy Project

- Design an **idea management system** / tracker that allows employees to submit ideas and for ideas to be tracked, vetted and tested or implemented. This system could include some combination of the following:
  - Technology platform for gathering and reviewing ideas
  - Governance structure and process for managing ideas for submission to testing and implementation
  - Communication approach / strategy to encourage ideas and provide information about how they have been tested or implemented
- Executive Sponsors: County Manager, Chief of Staff and five GMs
What We’ve Done

- Problem / Opportunity Analysis
- Benchmarking Research
- Employee Input Gathering
- Prototyping / Initial Design
- Test campaign (Nov. 6 - Jan.5)
Problem Analysis: Cause and Effect Diagram

- Problem: Employees are not empowered to or given time to suggest/act on ideas
- Effect: Frustration and discontent
Benchmarking Research

- Durham County Library
- Durham County DSS
- Durham, NC
- Oak Park, IL
- Goodyear, AZ
- Philadelphia, PA
- Fort Collins, CO
- Gainesville, FL
- King County, WA
- Assorted research across multiple organizations
Employee Input Gathering

- Employee survey with ~ 200 respondents
- Asked about current state, barriers and ideal attributes of an idea management system
- Last spring, held two interactive employee forums
Prototyping / Initial Design

- What’s the structure for idea process?
  - Just Do It
  - Let’s Try it Out
  - No, Not at This Time
“Fall Idea Blast” – First Campaign

- Nov. 6 – Jan. 5: Complete short online form to submit ideas
What Kinds of Ideas?

Six categories:
- Morale Builder
- Money Saver
- Replicate
- It Takes Two
- Talk About the Passion
- Odds and Ends
Ideasphere Process

Submit Ideas
Nov. 6 – Jan. 5

Consider Ideas
January

Pick Ideas
February

Test Ideas
Spring
A Few Insights and Observations

- Decision Point: Team/committee versus open forum for vetting and decisions
- Decision Point: “Facebook style” idea posts versus closed form-based idea submissions
- It’s OK to change your initial plans
- Employees need to have “skin in the game” and own it
A Few Insights and Observations

- Positive Thing: Not a complaint box
- Closing the loop is so important, even if the answer is “no”
- Engage staff on the concept at all levels, up and down and across enterprise
- Reject Perfection: Test a process and iterate – you’ll learn through experience
Transition: A Word About Collaboration
Submit your innovative idea today!

Caley Patten, Management Analyst
Office of Performance and Innovation
OPI serves as internal consultants, helping City departments accomplish Durham’s One Vision and Five Goals through:

- Advancing the City’s strategic plan
- Increasing data-driven decisions
- Fostering a culture of innovation
- Leading process improvements
City of Durham Process

2016
Innovation Academy determined need for idea campaign.

2017
First idea campaign.

2018
Second idea Campaign
IdeaStarter Kickoff Checklist

- Cross-departmental team
- Application
- Application Site
- Marketing materials
- Road show schedule
- Open office hours
- Timely evaluation and selection
- Recognition
First IdeaStarter Campaign (2017)

Do you have an idea to improve a process or increase customer satisfaction?

If so, share it with us and apply for today!

We are excited to hear your ideas, award prototype funding, and test them in our lab!
CALLING ALL INNOVATIVE IDEAS!

IDEASTARTER 2018

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA TO IMPROVE A PROCESS OR INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION?

Submit your idea, and if selected, you will receive prototype funding and project support from the Office of Performance & Innovation. Don't wait - share today!

APPLICATIONS OPEN:
NOVEMBER 1 - JANUARY 5

APPLY ON CODI MAIN PAGE
QUESTIONS? CONTACT: CALEY.PATTEN@DURHAMNC.GOV
What is IdeaStarter 2018?

• Second annual campaign to collect employee’s innovative ideas that:
  ➢ Improve a process
  ➢ Increase customer satisfaction
  ➢ Maximize resources
DON’T WAIT – SHARE TODAY!

THAT IS A FANTASTIC IDEA.

IDEASTARTER 2018
Your Name *

Email *

What is the idea you wish to test? *

How will you conduct the test? *

Have you tried testing or implementing this idea before? *

What impact do you hope to make with this idea? What does success look like? *

What other departments or employees need to be involved in order to test your idea? *

Provide a narrative on your proposal and specifics on how funding will allow you/your department to experiment with a new management concept, an emerging technology, or an untried programmatic practice.

Explain how you plan to prototype or test the idea. What steps are involved? What challenges are faced in conducting the experiment?

Explain what the results were or the barriers you faced to try and test the idea. If you have not tried testing this idea before, enter N/A.

Describe the tools you will use to measure the results of the test. If the experiment proves your concept, what are the potential benefits for you, your department or the community?

Who will you need support from (other colleague or additional departments) to successfully implement this idea? If you do not need additional support enter N/A.
What happened in our first IdeaStarter?

- 63 employee ideas were collected exceeding our original target of 50!
What happened with our projects?

- **Project 1: Custodial Door Sign**
- **Idea:** Pilot a door hanger that would be designed to allow customers to notify the custodial staff when cleaning services are needed.
What happened with our projects?

• Project 2: Innovate Durham
• Idea: Pilot a program for entrepreneurs to apply to develop, test, and scale innovative solutions with the support of Durham data and infrastructure to solve community problems and improve City operations.
What happened with our projects?

- Project 3: Populating Urban Spaces
- Test movable furniture to address under-utilized green space in high pedestrian locations.
What happened with our projects?

- Project 4: Durham Wood Yard
- Idea: Pilot a Durham Wood Yard in order to make wood material available to residents instead of paying to dispose of it.
What happened with our projects?

- Project 5: Bike Trail Patrol
- Idea: Test whether using bicycles decreases maintenance hours while increasing the number of trail miles that can be covered in a day.
Lessons Learned

• Innovation doesn’t have to be expensive! In total the five projects cost less than $3,000!
• Project ownership from IdeaStarter applicants, from beginning to end is critical to ensuring timely execution and success.
• IdeaStarter process should consider a “Just-Do-It” route where projects receive less planning up front to get the idea out in the field and tested sooner.
Lessons Learned

- IdeaStarter process should develop a firm timeline to ensure projects get started but should also allow for flexibility depending on the applicant’s busy season (i.e. budget responsibilities, seasonal demands, etc.)

- OPI and IdeaStarter applicants should continue to evaluate when it is best to ask for executive assistance to overcome departmental silos and barriers.

- IdeaStarter should consider utilizing members of the cross-departmental review committee to help manage projects and see them through from start to finish.
Questions & Discussion
Q&A

Michael Davis
Strategic Initiative Manager, Durham County, NC

Caley Patten
Management Analyst, Office of Performance and Innovation, Budget & Management Services, City of Durham, NC
Driving Innovation
The Alliance for Innovation is inspiring innovation to advance communities. Is your community ready to take the step forward and invest in innovation, future-proof your community, and build a culture of action-leaders?
Join today...
Save the Date!
Upcoming learning events:
http://transformgov.org/en/calendar

- Managers Forum: Innovation in the Field with Veteran City Manager Peggy Merriss on 12/7
- Workforce of the Future Workshop - FL on 1/11/2018
- Workforce of the Future Workshop - CA on 1/18/2018
- Workforce of the Future Workshop - WA on 1/30/2018
Suggestion Box 2.0:
Soliciting & Amplifying
Staff Insights

Thank you for joining us today!