

GLOBAL INNOVATION HUB

Fast Guide to Successful Innovation

PART
ONE



How to smash the innovation challenge application

What is the right amount of information to share when applying to an innovation call? Too little and you miss the chance to display just how perfect your company is to solve the issue being presented. Too much and you run the risk of vital information being missed by evaluators who have the task of reviewing hundreds of applications. The answer? It depends. The goal of the application is to share enough information to get you to the next stage, but not to overinvest too many of your precious limited resources. The trick is understanding what is being asked.

Understand the criteria

You should have a clear sense of what is being evaluated and if possible, the weight assigned to each of those criteria. In most cases, there will be a standard set of criteria that will be used to make the first cut – applicability of technology, potential impact towards stated goal, cost, etc. However there may be some unexpected ones. It is always a good idea to check and be sure you understand.

Understand the judges

Getting a sense for who will be reviewing your application will guide your content choices. Will it be a technical reviewing panel? Is it a more managerial funding committee? What are the goals (stated in the brief and unstated) of the organization? Developing responses to their questions before writing your response could prevent you answering the wrong questions.

Align your offering with the solution requested

The judge(s) will likely be sifting through many applications in a short time frame. It is critical to reduce the amount of work they need to do in translating your solution into their world view. Use the language and jargon of the challenge host's industry, spend time understanding exactly what they are looking for and positioning your solution in terms of their request.

Carefully evaluate risk/reward for overinvesting

The first application is usually set up to be easy and pain free for innovators to respond to and describe how their solution can solve the challenge host's problem. However, it is often the tendency of innovators, especially young start-ups, to overcomplicate the response and spend a lot of time crafting their responses (in cases where there is no word limit). Here it is important to remember that the more concisely you relay your solution, the easier it is for someone to evaluate you fairly. Do not omit critical pieces of information, but do not spend weeks creating intricate models to respond.

Ask for the information you need

If after reviewing all the details available to you (publicly and shared by the challenge host), you get the sense that you are missing a critical piece of information to represent yourself, do not hesitate to request it. It is often better to ask clarifying questions that to make assumptions that open you up to errors.

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