

Ryan Companies Builds a Culture of Innovation by Supporting Employee and Customer Engagement

**Industry:**

Construction Management,
General Contracting, Real Estate
Development

Geographies:

Offices in 11 U.S. states

Employees:

1,500

Planview Solution:

Innovation Management

CHALLENGE

In an effort to engage employees from across the business and provide extensive value to customers, Ryan Companies created an Insights and Innovation department to build a new ideation program and find the right technology to support the initiative. Without any prior innovation management practice in place, the department wanted more than a piece of software but a partnership with a provider who could guide them in ideation and implementation best practices.

SOLUTION

The VPs of Insights and Innovation chose the Planview Spigit™ innovation solution because of the expert consultation from Planview®, as much as the ease of use and functionality of the software platform. In the past year, Ryan Companies has leveraged Spigit to roll out six ideation challenges, three of which were focused on customer engagement, that amassed participation from more than 60% of its employees.



"Using Planview Spigit with our customers shows that we are a partner committed to solving their problems. As a customer-driven company, nothing makes us happier."

– Mike Prefling, VP of Innovation at Ryan Companies

About Ryan Companies

Ryan Companies U.S., Inc. was founded in 1938 and has become a national builder, developer, designer, and real estate manager based in Minneapolis. Employing approximately 1,500 workers, Ryan specializes in integrated project delivery, building information modeling, Lean construction practices, and sustainable design.

Challenge: Fostering a Culture of Innovation from the Ground Up

The Insights and Innovation department at Ryan Companies is driven by four main goals: increasing the customer experience by being a trusted partner, optimizing resources, streamlining processes, and making sure all employees are engaged. Understanding that ideas to accomplish these goals can come from anywhere in the company, the newly formed department identified the requirement for a formalized platform to promote engagement and ideation. They needed to know how to build momentum, ensuring ideas weren't only coming from a few executives but from anyone who has an idea, despite their location, job title, or role.

Solution: Supporting Employee and Customer Engagement

The Innovation team chose Spigit because its intuitive platform was easy to deploy and use, giving the department a way to collect and organize ideas and provide visibility into idea progression. Even more, the team valued Planview experts' advice on how to build an innovation program around the technology. "We have offices around the country with job sites and people everywhere," says Mike Prefling, vice president of Innovation at Ryan Companies. "Spigit gives us a way to make sure everybody feels equal. We now have a connected program with limitless boundaries of engagement."

In only a year, the Innovation team has rolled out six ideation challenges to the enterprise, three internally focused on process improvement, and three externally focused challenges focused on solving the needs of three of their most strategic customers. While the company has seen success with the internally focused challenges by generating winning ideas, it's the

externally focused challenges that have driven the most excitement among executives and employees alike because of the positive customer response.

"We want our clients to view us as their partners who solve their problems, not just sell them our services," says Prefling. "We asked them what their challenges and innovation goals were and formulated the challenge question we could put out to our employees to solve. Top idea contributors were able to work on teams and compete against each other Shark Tank-style in front of the clients. It was a huge hit with everyone involved and went a long way in not only driving our own culture of engagement and innovation but inspiring our clients to do the same. They think of us as a partner that is committed to solving their problems, and as a customer-driven company, nothing makes us happier."

Results: Equal Opportunity for All

Since deploying Spigit, the Insights and Innovation department has been happy with how many people have engaged with the challenges so quickly. Of its 1,500 employees, more than 60% have participated and executives are wanting more challenges, particularly those that can be run with clients. "The ideas we are getting are helping achieve our goals, but the bigger impact is the organic thought process to spread a culture of innovation that goes beyond our own walls," says Mike Ernst, vice president of Insights at Ryan Companies. "Some ideas succeed, others don't, but people are openly sharing their ideas which empowers others to do the same."

Future: Scaling Planview Spigit

The success of the first six challenges has received attention from other departments who are now using Spigit for their own ideation challenges aimed to solve specific issues. As the popularity of the platform grows, the Innovation team plans to use the momentum to build a pipeline of ideas at the corporate level as well as at the location or departmental level, allowing for some autonomy in how they use Spigit to drive value. The vision for continual customer success will mean more partnerships with clients as they work together to solve problems using the ideation platform. The Insights team will measure the success of Spigit through surveys and other metrics.

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