

UK CABINET OFFICE SURFACING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT WORKING WITH SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES



CabinetOffice

The UK Cabinet Office supports the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, and ensures the effective running of government. It is also the corporate headquarters for government, in partnership with HM Treasury, taking the lead in certain critical policy areas. The Cabinet Office is a ministerial department, supported by 18 agencies and public bodies.

The Challenge

The United Kingdom Cabinet Office was searching for innovative solutions from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that could provide high-value products and services to the public, and of course, save the government money. However, historically SMEs have felt that they are at a disadvantage to larger companies in engaging with government procurement processes, or have lacked the awareness and resources to do so.

The Cabinet Office wanted to bring SMEs and government heads of procurement together and prove to SMEs that there are opportunities available to them, whilst communicating internally that SMEs can deliver value. It wanted to seek out SMEs offering innovative solutions that could benefit the government in providing better value for money.

In order to gather a diverse pool of opportunities, the decision was made to seek proposals from SMEs directly. This, of course, would mean

CHALLENGE

The United Kingdom Cabinet Office needed ideas that could provide high-value products and services to the British public, and save the government money. Proposals would need to be sourced from 100s of SMEs from around the UK.

SOLUTION

The Cabinet Office launched its Innovation Launch Pad (ILP) with Mindjet's Spigit software to run its first Open Innovation Challenge. Over the course of six weeks, the programme gathered proposals from SMEs and surfaced the finalists in Spigit.

RESULT

The Innovation Launch Pad exceeded the expectations of the Cabinet Office team with 355 proposals submitted and nearly 13,000 votes cast. All of the SMEs that participated reported that they were now better positioned to both work with government and pitch their value proposition.

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David Gigg
UK Cabinet Office SME Programme

managing and reviewing hundreds of proposals, which would require significant resources to manage. “We needed a way to collate ideas from what would potentially be hundreds of SMEs, with the ability to analyse all of them objectively in a reasonable timeframe,” said David Gigg of the UK Cabinet Office SME Programme.

The Solution

The Cabinet Office developed its Innovation Launch Pad (ILP), supported by Mindjet’s innovation management software, Spigit. An Open Innovation Challenge was designed to gather proposals from UK SMEs.

In collaboration with the Mindjet Innovation Services team, the Cabinet Office devised a six-stage programme format for the initial ILP challenge, which began with a month-long submission phase, before enabling additional commenting and revision of submitted proposals in phase two. Phase three engaged civil servants and expert groups from consultancy houses to review all submissions and highlight top proposals, followed by voting within Spigit that incorporated input from civil servants as well as those that had registered during phases one and two. “Spigit let us involve participants in the job of selecting ideas, providing us with further input and taking the burden off of the limited resources of the expert groups. It has made it possible to hold a challenge this large,” said Gigg.

A final analysis (taking into account voting, reviews, and feasibility) was undertaken. A selection of 25 proposals were recommended for an intensive mentoring process, during which a mentoring group helped the SMEs develop their value propositions and produce full proposals.

During the final stages of the programme, nine finalists were selected by discussion and voting that fed automated idea graduation within Spigit, significantly reducing the manual work required to identify the most popular ideas. A final ‘Dragon’s Den’ style presentation was held, which showcased the nine best participants.

To gain interest and participants for the challenge, the ILP was widely publicised through national media outlets, direct communication with SMEs, and press releases. Participation was further incentivised by the potential media exposure that could raise their business profiles, as well as the opportunity to be mentored by UK business leaders and network with some of the top procurement professionals in the UK government.

The Result

The Innovation Launch Pad exceeded the expectations of The Cabinet Office with over 2,100 registered users and 355 proposals submitted through the Spigit platform; surpassing the initial goal of just 100.

The ILP was viewed over 170,000 times and, although targeted at and open to UK SMEs only, interestingly gained a worldwide audience with visitors from 85 different countries. “The response to the Innovation Launch Pad on Spigit surpassed our expectations,” said Gigg. “It’s not just the quantity of the responses, but the quality of the submissions that were selected by the crowd that really made the difference.”

The Innovation Launch Pad was regarded by all parties to have achieved its goals and demonstrated the value SMEs can bring to the UK government.

Spigit was founded to help companies unleash the power of their employees, partners, and customers to drive innovation. Spigit is the leading software for crowdsourced innovation, and is used by leading companies in systems integration, financial services, insurance, pharmaceutical, healthcare, technology, and more, including IBM, Capgemini, Citibank, and Pfizer. Spigit’s 4.5M users from 150+ countries have generated over \$1B in increased revenue from their enterprise innovation programs. Spigit is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mindjet, and is headquartered in San Francisco with offices throughout the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, and Australia.

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