



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Employee Suggestion Initiative - "Ideas that Work"

Date:	September 14, 2012
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of the 2011 "Ideas that Work" pilot program and reports on the feasibility of an ongoing program. Based on an evaluation of the City's pilot and similar programs in New York and Ontario Public Service it is recommended that the City of Toronto shift its focus from running a corporate-wide sponsored employee suggestion program to a continuous improvement direction of encouraging employee input on specific Divisional initiatives and reviews including, for example, customer service improvement initiatives and the Service Review and Efficiency Studies.

The following actions will support the new focus and will ensure the most effective use of City resources. A new Customer Service Improvement Framework has been created that includes the objective that "City of Toronto staff will be engaged in the customer service improvement". Divisions will be supported to achieve this objective by the corporate staff who developed Ideas that Work. The tools and processes tested in the corporate program may be used by Divisions to get employee input. Employee ideas may also be sought in specific Service Efficiency studies. The method for getting staff input will be determined by the scope of of the specific study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. The Government Management Committee receives this report for information.

Financial Impact

"Ideas that Work" will have no financial impact beyond the 2012 operating budget. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On March 29, 2011, the Government Management Committee requested staff of the City Manager's Office to report on the development of an "Idea Market" on the City of Toronto's website to encourage employees to participate in the City's goals to better city services.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.GM2.18>

On June 1, 2011, the Government Management Committee received a report detailing the preliminary results of this initiative. The Committee requested that the City Manager report back on the success of the program and on the feasibility of continuing on an ongoing basis.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.GM4.11>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

"Ideas that Work" was a pilot employee suggestion program for the Toronto Public Service. It was based on research about suggestion and idea management programs including the New York City "Idea Market" and the Ontario Public Service "OPS Ideas".

The goal of the "Ideas that Work" pilot program was to engage employees in identifying ways to reduce costs and improve service efficiency.

"Ideas that Work", was launched between June 3 – July 31, 2011 across all City divisions. A total of 782 ideas were submitted and subsequently analyzed for potential cost savings and/or service efficiency impact. The program was implemented in conjunction with the City Manager's Core Service Review. "Ideas that Work" engaged employees in the Core Service Review by inviting them to submit positive and practical cost savings and service efficiency ideas. <http://insideto.toronto.ca/ideasthatwork/index.htm>

COMMENTS

Employee Engagement

The "Ideas that Work" pilot program had a multi-path communication strategy aimed at reaching all employees. The program was communicated through pay stub inserts, email announcements including a request for managers and supervisors to relay the information to their staff, in the City's employee Monday Morning news broadcast, and the City's e-news distribution system. The original deadline for submissions was extended from one to two months to give employees more time to review, consider and prepare their submissions. Employees could submit their ideas by email, on paper or directly to the "Ideas that Work" web site.

The response to the "Ideas that Work" pilot was relatively low but consistent with similar results from both the New York "Idea Market" and the Ontario Public Service "OPS Ideas" programs. The Toronto Public Service "Ideas that Work" program generated 782 ideas submitted by 370 individuals or groups. This represents participation by 1.2% of the Toronto Public Service. The New York "Idea Market" had a similar response rate. The "OPS Ideas" program ran from 2006 until 2010. In the first year of the program, 1442 ideas were submitted from a base of 65,000 employees. This represents 2.2% of the OPS. In the final year, only 550 ideas were submitted. This represents less than 1% of the OPS.

Reducing Costs and Improving Service Efficiency

All the ideas were reviewed, categorized and analyzed, at both the corporate and divisional levels. Figure 1 illustrates the main themes identified in the idea submissions.

Figure 1 - "Ideas that Work" – Main Idea Themes

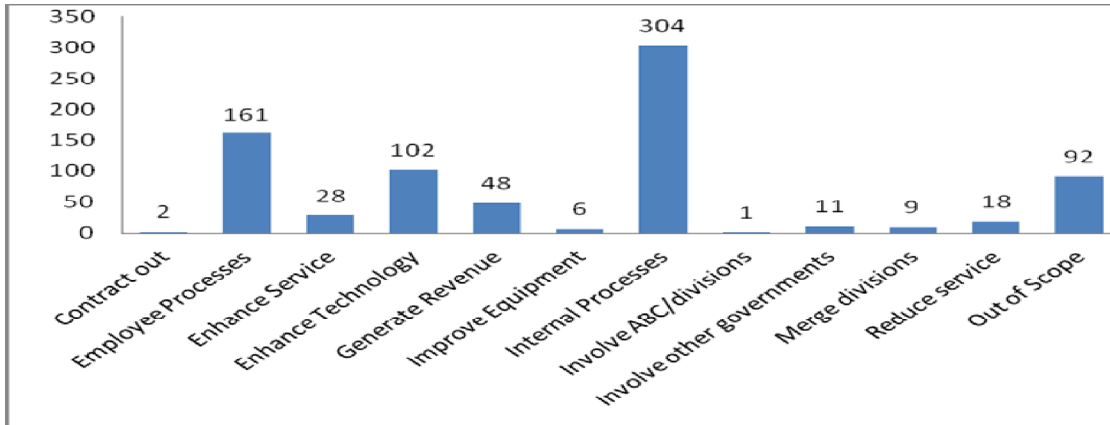
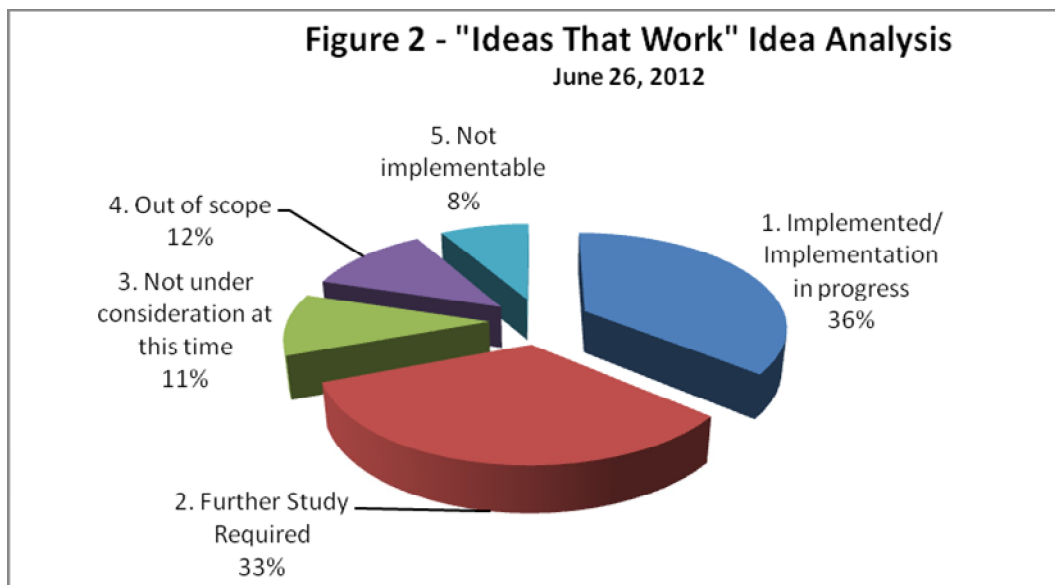


Figure 2 illustrates the analysis of the ideas submitted as of June 26, 2012. 36% of the ideas submitted were already a corporate or divisional project and were in the process of being implemented. 33% of the ideas were identified as "further study required". These ideas have some merit but require further review, cost benefit analysis or are an individual activity that is difficult to mandate (E.g. defaulting to lower print quality for draft documents). 11% of the ideas are difficult or unlikely to be implemented as they require significant investment to fully develop.



The following chart provides examples of the ideas submitted:

	Idea Status Category	Category Explanation	Example
1.	Implemented/ Implementation already in progress 36%	An initiative was already underway that was similar to the idea submission	<u>Webbook</u> : Leverage the City's Webbook tool for opening up constructive dialogue in support of this initiative. <u>Court Services Division</u> : Utilize Certificate evidence for Part 1 and Part 2 offences. Allows court to accept certificate evidence in lieu of police/enforcement officer appearance at trials of minor charges.
2.	Further Study Required 33%	Idea has some merit however requires further review or cost benefit analysis; or is an individual activity that is difficult to mandate	<u>Kiosk services</u> : either City of Toronto or partnership with Service Ontario instituting access at any location for customers to pay fines or file applications. <u>Individual activity</u> : defaulting to lower print quality for draft documents.
3.	Not under consideration at this time 11%	Idea implementation requires significant investments such as changes to federal/provincial legislation, Council or management decisions, collective agreements, or requires significant financial support	<u>Changes to legislation</u> : Mandatory days off for city staff similar to the mandated days off under Premier Ray. <u>Changes to Council decisions</u> : Council should get rid of Fair Wage policy <u>Requires significant financial support</u> : Have Fire Service perform fire hydrant inspections as required by Ontario Fire Code.
	Idea Status Category	Category Explanation	Example
4.	Out of scope 12%	Idea that are mean spirited, not specific enough to review for implementation, or out of scope for this initiative (i.e. beyond the City's jurisdiction, or pertain to revenue generation)	<u>Mean spirited</u> : fire all staff currently on sick leave. <u>No Specific Idea</u> : look into dust issue on Commissioner's Street. <u>Outside of Scope of Initiative</u> : Have the OPP who patrol provincial highways such as the 401 & 427 also answer calls adjacent to these highways. <u>Revenue Generation</u> : Calculate average carbon footprint of neighbourhoods and issue a rebate to those who live in that geography.
5.	Not implementable 8%	The cost of implementation outweighs the benefit, or it is contrary to recent legislation or Council decisions	<u>Contrary to recent Council Decision</u> : Stop clearing the snow off of sidewalks - in September 2011, Council decision to maintain this service.

Program Costs

The "Ideas that Work" pilot program was developed and maintained by existing corporate and divisional staff. Staff managed the communication, received all idea submissions, categorized and followed up with divisional management to evaluate the ideas. Two staff from the Human Resources Division allocated 50% of their time in 2011-2012 to manage and administer this program.

Program Evaluation

The City of Toronto "Ideas that Work" pilot program showed results similar to those in New York City and the Ontario Public Service. The volume of ideas was relatively low and the majority of the ideas focused on initiatives already underway

New York City and the Ontario Public Service evaluated their employee suggestion programs to determine the feasibility of sustaining these programs. Both jurisdictions discontinued their corporate programs as there was not a viable business case to sustain them. It was deemed more prudent to reassign the resources to support other employee engagement or continuous improvement initiatives at a Division or Department level.

Corporately run employee suggestion programs are only one way to foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. The City of Toronto, like many organizations will shift focus from soliciting ideas to implementing ideas as part of continuous improvement initiatives.

Going Forward – Staff involvement in continuous improvement

In 2013 the City of Toronto will shift focus from running a corporate employee suggestion program to encouraging employee input on specific Divisional projects including customer service improvement initiatives and Service Efficiency studies.

The following actions will support the new focus and will ensure the most effective use of City resources. A new Customer Service Improvement Framework has been created that includes the objective that "City of Toronto staff will be engaged in customer service improvement". Divisions will be supported to achieve this objective by the corporate staff who developed Ideas that Work. The tools and processes tested in the corporate program may be used by Divisions to get employee input. Employee ideas may also be sought in specific Service Efficiency studies. The method for getting staff input will be determined by the scope of the specific service efficiency study.

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