

2020  
MOVES<sub>THE</sub>NEEDLE  
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**impackathon<sup>TM</sup>\***

**\*Impackathons are 2-3 day “hackathon” style events where teams don’t simply code, but apply human-centered design, rapid experimentation and agile principles to validate ideas**

## Drive Impact

Uncertainty exists across your organization. Impact comes from reducing this uncertainty wherever it exists, whether from learning how to manage remote workers or leveraging new technology to address customer needs.

Impackathons span time horizons, helping you drive impact today while also preparing for future growth.

## Solve for Outcomes

Don't "innovate" for innovation's sake: solve for outcomes. Tackle challenges that represent need, whether customer-facing or internal business issues.

Needs exist across the business, from improving everyday productivity and collaboration, to deeper understanding of customers, to achieving growth.

## Innovation is for Everyone

Today, some level of uncertainty is the only sure thing. It exists at some level everywhere in your organization, so everyone can benefit to learn how to manage it.

Smart people solve wicked problems. Unleash your people's natural creativity and problem-solving skills to drive impact in your organization.

## Impackathon ROI

The purpose of an Impackathon is to generate and test ideas that inspire employees to create value, resulting in real impact to the organization, while demonstrating the capabilities your people have to operate effectively in the 21st century.

Impact is derived from:

- Cost savings
- Increased productivity
- Increased process efficiency
- Increased revenue
- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Increased employee engagement

You can accomplish this through using this guide and your internal resources, or perhaps with a bit of outside help. Moves The Needle is ready to meet you where you are with world-class proven tools and talent.

In fact, we are so sure that you will drive a positive return on investment, that we're willing to guarantee it. Devil is in the details, of course, but reach out and we're ready to share.

## Remote Impackathon

Even in the best circumstances, organizations might want to run the Impackathon as a remote event. Remote events provide social connectivity and promote collaboration among distributed locations, employees who work from home, and can include third party organizations, such as partners.

During the pandemic, obviously, remote is a requirement. Rest assured, remote Impackathons still work! In many respects, Impackathons make great collaboration events since teams primarily work on their own, as opposed to spending a majority of their time in a main room.

Find specifics in this guide to make your remote event highly impactful.

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## Impackathon DIY

Impackathons are fun, inspirational, and productive 2-day events where participants launch “internal” startups to begin solving real business issues.

This is different than similar events, where teams focus on building solutions. The question that needs to be answered, however, is not **can** we build it, but **should** we?

That’s what the Impackathon is for. The event is focused on learning new skills, driving impact to the company, and having fun doing so.

The Impackathon is run like many other corporate events, requiring registration, space, virtual connections, food and drink, managing compliance regulations, clean-up, sharing results and collecting feedback.

## The “What”

Let’s look at what make Impackathons unique.

### Innovation is for Everyone

Impackathon participants include any organization or employee. You might cap the number of participants based on budget and space considerations, but the event itself is able to scale linearly.

Philosophically, anyone should be allowed to attend, but you might allow for participant selection by managers or leadership. Event activities are doable by anyone and the more cross-functional the better.

Teams typically range in size from 3 to 8 people, but there’s no hard rule. Teams of 1 can actually do fine. Teams larger than 5 or 6 often include members who participate less – but it’s their loss!

It’s important that you schedule up to 3-5 senior leaders to attend the final share-out, during which team members share what they’ve learned. The best leaders are those who might wish to fund projects, or leaders who have submitted challenges to the Impackathon.

### Where & When

The event should be 2 days long. A typical “hackathon” often starts on a Friday night and ends Sunday evening. Some companies hold the event all day Friday and Monday with working over the weekend optional. Any 2 days will work, subject to labor laws and contracts. Impackathons work best when managers and leaders allow their employees to dedicate 2 full workdays to the event.

Some companies host the event in appropriate space “on campus”, others acquire space from the community. Teams require working space. Best practice is to have roundtables and seating that accommodate 8. Spaces that allow teams to hang working posters, utilize tear-off sheets, and use whiteboards work best. Breakout rooms or spaces made available in lobbies work fine. When organizing a virtual event, use virtual collaboration tools such as MURAL, Zoom to create breakout rooms, whiteboards, and working posters.

## Innovation Mindset

Em Empathy

Ex Exploration

Ev Evidence

Eq Equilibrium

Et Ethics

# The Event

There is no great event tablet gifted us from the gods. That being said, this flow works well:

## Day 1

Welcome

- Short, inspirational keynote
- Event agenda and logistics
- Share process rules, methods, and tools

Challenges

- Everyone who has an idea presents it
- All other attendees choose their team
- Teams find their working space

Rest of the day

- Teams go off to work on their own
- Snacks and beverages should be provided
- Best if a working lunch is provided
- Send food delivery vouchers to remote participants
- Teams continue to work as long as they'd like

## Day 2

Welcome back

- Short talk or retrospective on previous day
- Share day's agenda and logistics, if needed

Bulk of the day

- Teams continue to work on their own
- 1-2 hours before share-out, teams are reminded to prepare for presentation

Share-outs

- Teams share their learning journey
- 5-10 minutes max per team
- Judges often allowed a couple of questions
- Sharing can be very time consuming and surprisingly fatiguing after 2 days of hard work. Best to err on side of short and sweet

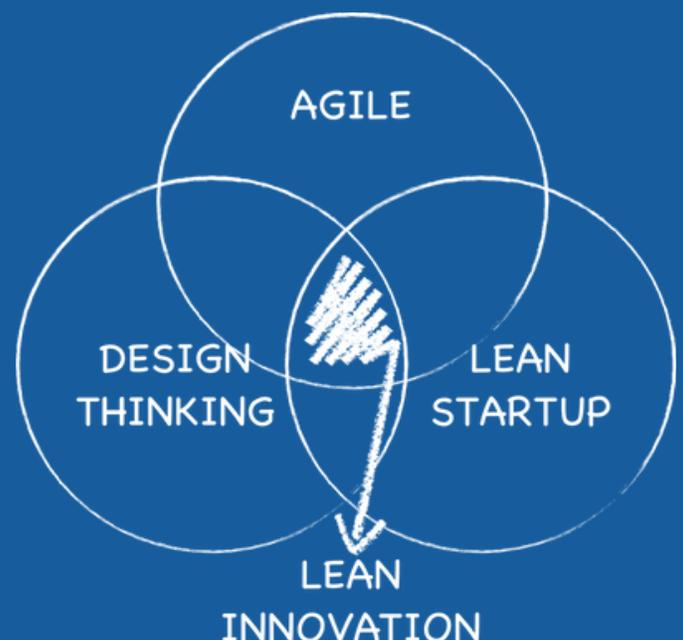
The winners are

- Judging is based on quality of evidence generated, not quality of idea
- Sometimes winners awarded a prize
- Sometimes ideas are funded

Advanced notes

- Some organizations make tools available for teams to use, including specific methodologies, software or prototyping material
- Common workshop materials, such as sticky notes, sharpies and other creative materials should be supplied (virtual if this is not an in-person event)
- Sometimes a small budget is allocated to teams for running experiments or making customers happy
- Organizations with strict compliance regulations should share rules of engagement for interacting with the public
- Some organizations provide how-to talks and mentoring at scheduled times during the 2 days
- Often organizations take the time to prepare final judges on proper judging criteria
- Organizations often provide coaching and other resources, such as development, design, marketing on an as-needed basis over the event to participating employees. You can augment this with our curriculum with advanced lessons designed to help participants spread Lean Startup capabilities.

## Lean Innovation



# What makes this unique

## The Challenges

Teams work on trying to solve issues that are faced by different groups inside your organization. These challenges, big and small, are everywhere.

A challenge might be:

- The design team is not interacting efficiently with the manufacturing team
- HR is considering a new recruiting system
- Executives believe there's a need for a new digital platform to replace existing products
- Salespeople want to modify a cold-call script
- Engineers have a new product idea

To source challenges:

- Encourage individuals to bring their own ideas
- Pull ideas from an internal resource
- Reach out to leadership
- Senior executives submit ideas to be tested
- Use customer data on greatest pain points and unmet needs

The best challenges are those that face uncer-

tainty. In other words, if they are truly pressing issues, the reason they haven't yet been tackled is because there are too many "unknowns" when it comes to resolving them.

That's exactly what the Impackathon is about. Using the time to find solutions to pressing problems.

## Market Access

It's vital that team members get access to customers. For many of the challenges, the "customer" might be a fellow employee. It's helpful if these employees are notified ahead of time that they will be contacted and so should be on the look-out. (They can also opt-out.)

Consumers are often found without prior notice, by going to where consumers go, including tourist destinations and malls, for instance or online in forums, social media, or professional groups. For in-person impackathons, holding them close to such destinations or public transportation is extremely helpful.

Reaching out to customers who are professionals is a bit trickier. Organizations handle this in a variety of ways:

- Allow teams to find their own way (just like a real startup)
- Bring customers onsite
- Include account managers as a resource
- Pre-schedule time with customers
- Include a list of customers who have opted-in
- Setup video calls with customers

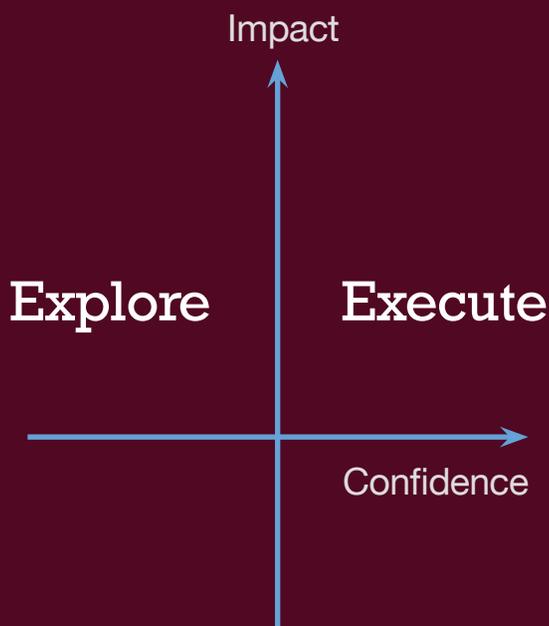
## Existing processes

You may leverage existing principles and tools already used inside your organization, such as:

- Design thinking practices like interviews, prototyping, customer journey maps, or personas.
- Agile, such as Kanban or SCRUM
- Experiment tools, such as landing pages, or other specific methods for customers

Reach out to these groups to leverage their skills and expertise as team coaches. It's important they understand, however, that the work is to be done by the teams.

# Known vs Unknown



# Need Some Help?

Many agencies and consultancies can help you pull this off. Here's what to look for.

## Event Logistics

Any corporate event agency that has pulled together a workshop, off-site summit, or virtual event should be able to manage location, catering, and event logistics. This is really the “blocking and tackling” of the 2-day event.

## Content and Process

Speaking, teaching or coaching is a bit trickier. The right fit really depends on what your organization's priorities are. Unfortunately, many get stuck with generating ideas and maybe prototyping them. The problem with this approach is that your organization likely already does this, but may fail due to a lack of real evidence to ensure solutions succeed.

In our experience, it's best to avoid the well-meaning agencies pitching these events, including:

- “Shark tanks”
- Idea competitions
- Hackathons

Design thinking shops, agile agencies, and innovation consultants, are likely able to give you the balance you need to run an effective Impackathon. But you really need to ask the questions, since many will bring their own biases to the table.

Here are a few questions to ask and look for concrete examples:

- Do participants interact directly with customers?
- Do participants run experiments?
- What is presented during the shareout?
- Are people expected to prototype or write code?
- Are prototypes shown to actual customers?

## Coaching

Thousands of coaches exist that can help your participants have a great experience and make progress on the challenges. Many of them exist

inside your organization. Here are some guidelines you can use to find the best coaches:

- Not dogmatic – You want coaches who are not pushing an agenda, but truly want to help and educate participants
- Believe in democratization – You don't want experts who believe they're the only ones who are truly able to do the work
- Able to “not-do” – Good coaches need to inspire and teach participants “how to think.” They need to avoid diving into the doing
- Inclusive – One of the more difficult (and powerful) aspects of coaching is understanding how to deal with team dynamics, such that everyone has a good experience

## Guaranteed ROI

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Moves the Needle brings Lean Startup™ to the enterprise. We provide the principles, tools, tactics and strategies that allow product teams, innovators, support groups and leaders to immediately act bolder, move faster and become more customer-focused.

“ I’ve seen Moves the Needle teach lean startup and it’s practical, action-oriented, and persuasive. - Eric Ries, Author, *The Lean Startup* ”

## About Moves The Needle

Moves The Needle (MTN) is the only firm that combines lean innovation thought leadership with practical “been there, done that” experience. We know how to help, because we’ve done it. Our programs have helped thousands of employees and leaders in organizations of all types, including financial, consumer products, manufacturing, tech, defense, retail, materials and telecommunications. We accelerate discovery, validation, and scale so teams “move at the speed of startups”, radically decreasing time and resources required to deliver real business impact.

## Our Approach

We bring lean innovation to life, helping all functions — Products, Marketing, IT, HR, Legal — make the leap from theory to practice. Our hands-on approach is informed by experience on the front lines of Lean Startup, design thinking, customer development and enterprise leadership. We literally wrote the book on how to do it, *The Lean Entrepreneur*. At the intersection of creative inspiration and scientific rigor, our methods are based on customer empathy, rapid experimentation and evidence-based decision making — at scale.

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