

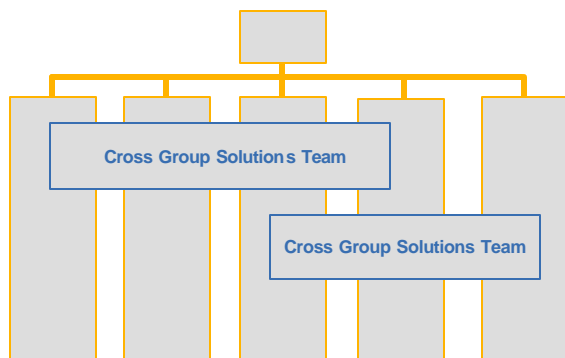
Cross Group Solutions Teams

An innovative approach for pursuing new growth opportunities “between the silos”

How can a large organization with discrete, independently-operating business units successfully identify and pursue opportunities that lie *between* organizational boundaries? Since business units are focused on their delivering against their own metrics, there is often no accountability or incentive to look for ‘new growth’ opportunities that often fall through the cracks. If an organization suspects that it could be missing a potential growth area, it has the option of creating a Cross Group Solutions Team.

This is a self-directed team of individuals chosen from selected business units who work together for a period of time and have a specific charter, often looking to identify new opportunities that combine the competencies of discrete businesses. These individuals, (technologists, consumer insights experts, marketers, manufacturing specialists, etc.) are assembled to help identify or pursue white space opportunities for which no single business group has formal accountability. In some cases the individuals relocate to a single location for the duration of the project.

The following figure illustrates the relationship between individuals who ordinarily report into different business units and come together to form a Cross Group Solutions Team.



Key considerations

When creating a Cross Group Solutions Team, the following must be considered:

- What is the rationale for investing time in the effort?
- Who will sponsor and fund the effort?
- What are the charter, deliverables, timeframes and success metrics?
- What skill sets and key stakeholders should be involved in the team?
- What milestones must be met in order to sustain ongoing management commitment?
- Is the organization's current Stage Gate[®] process appropriate for this kind of approach?
- Will the team be involved in implementation?

Case in point

SRI International had a C-level team that wanted to create new market growth opportunities within their strongly silo'd business structure. They established a dozen “watering holes” to bring researchers together from different practice areas to share various technologies and explore new solutions. As a result, four Communities of Excellence were created with formal leaders working on new IP for newly identified markets.

About InnovationPoint

InnovationPoint is a non-traditional consulting firm that helps its Fortune 1000 clients take a strategic approach to innovation. InnovationPoint blends traditional and unconventional methodologies to identify breakthrough opportunities, develop growth strategies and consumer-inspired new products, and to align organizational strategy and design in a way that supports sustainable innovation. InnovationPoint's clients include Hewlett-Packard, Kimberly-Clark, PepsiCo, Frito-Lay, Philips, Dial Corporation, Charles Schwab, Microsoft, Yahoo!, SRI, Alegant Health, Genentech, SK Telecom (South Korea) and Nestlé.