ITONICS

Your Guide for Successfully Implementing Innovation Software

Maximize the benefit of your software
solution with a solid roll-out plan.

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Introduction

Making the decision to systemize and scale your innovation activities with software is the first big step to drive transformation and growth within your organization. But it's only the beginning of your journey. The next challenging phase is seamlessly integrating your new system into the backbone of your business. Implementing a software system requires commitment and resources and can be a massive change process for organizations. Especially for companies with multiple business units, departments, and offices worldwide, this undertaking needs careful consideration and planning in order to make the roll-out as smooth as possible. This guide offers practical tips that will help organizations plan, implement and drive the adoption of a new system, and ultimately harness the power of innovation software.

A solid roll-out plan defines the scope, goals, timeline, communication and support channels, and onboarding approach. With this plan in place, you can engage users in the right way using the right channels and set your organization up for success right from the start. We defined the steps outlined in this guide based on years of experience and expertise with a wide range of global clients.

"Implementing (new) innovation software can be a real game-changer for an organization. However, it's essential to have a well-planned roll-out strategy that takes into account the existing work practices of the organization and encourages employees to adopt the new software. By doing so, you can create a unified source of truth that drives innovation and growth across your company."

Dr. Tassilo Henike,
Director Innovation Consulting,
ITONICS

Your cheat sheet to plan a successful software roll-out

Set the roll-out scope

Choose between a
Big Bang or soft roll-out.

Consider the goals

Put yourself in the user per-
spective to answer
key questions.

Define a timeline

What tasks have to be
performed before, during,
and after the roll-out.

Determine
communication channels

Use a variety of channels
to reach the right
audience.

Create support
channel(s)

Be prepared for requests and
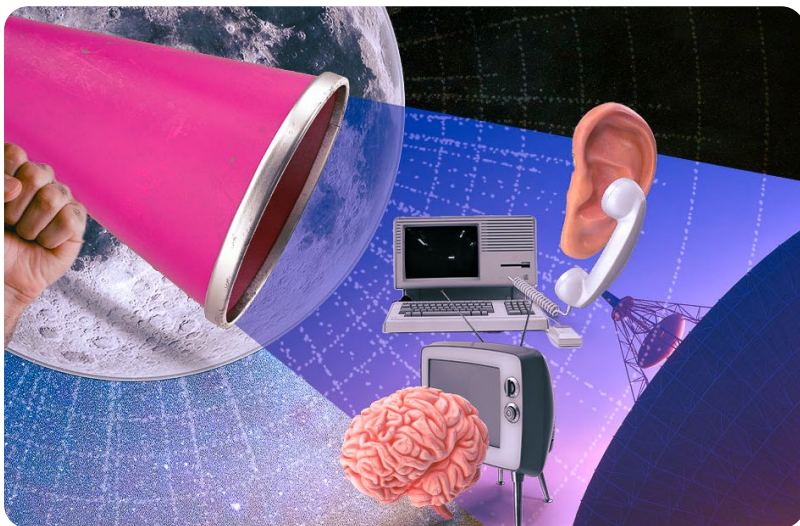suggestions for
improvement from users.

1. Set the scope of the roll-out

When implementing innovation software, we suggest you choose one of these two strategies to help focus your efforts:

- Company or department-wide roll-out (also called 'Big Bang' roll-out)
- Soft roll-out (or 'power user' roll-out)

Big Bang roll-out

As the name suggests, this approach involves rolling out the platform to a large number of users, for example, across all locations and departments in your organization.

Ideally, this is done at non-critical times such as weekends, holidays, or vacation periods. The goal should be for the platform to be fully available to the end user at the defined time.

Pros for a Big Bang roll-out at a glance:

Uniformity:
A big bang roll-out ensures that all users are using the same software at the same time, which can improve consistency and communication across departments.

Speed of implementation:
A big bang roll-out allows the organization to implement the software quickly across the entire organization, minimizing delays and allowing users to start using the software immediately.

Disruption:
A big bang roll-out may be preferable for organizations that want to minimize the disruption caused by a software implementation, as users only have to adapt to the software once, rather than multiple times over a longer period.

Soft roll-out

A soft roll-out introduces the platform in a series of steps. This allows the onboarding process to be more thorough by going through it step by step. This approach requires a more resource-intensive process, and soft roll-outs target only a specific (smaller) group of users, such as a department, user group, or business unit. Therefore, this roll-out plan should begin by identifying the department(s) or business unit(s) that will be the first to adopt the platform.

This approach allows application owners to gather feedback after the soft launch and iteratively incorporate it into the platform before rolling out the software company-wide. In this way, the application owner(s) gain valuable experience early on.

Ultimately, the decision to use a soft roll-out or a Big Bang roll-out should be based on the specific needs and goals of your organization, as well as the potential risks and benefits associated with each approach.

Pros for a soft roll-out at a glance:

Gradual implementation:

A soft roll-out allows organizations to gradually introduce the software to users in smaller groups or departments, allowing for a smoother transition and minimizing disruptions.

Testing and troubleshooting:

With a soft roll-out, the organization can identify and address any issues that arise in a controlled environment before rolling out the software to the entire organization.

Training:

A soft roll-out enables organizations to provide more targeted and personalized training to users, helping them to better understand the new software and adapt to changes in their workflows.

Success story of Toyota Motor Europe

When implementing a new digital software system in a large organization, make sure to win over crucial stakeholders as supporters and to not force the implementation on them. You should include the people who will be most affected by the new system.

When Toyota Motor Europe launched the ITONICS Innovation OS, they started with a small user group to get key stakeholders engaged on the system before gradually onboarding more parts of the organization. Employees should feel a sense of ownership of the system and have a voice in shaping it. After winning key stakeholders, they trained more than 150 employees who will carry the platform further into the organization in the future.

> *"Having a single source of truth [for innovation] in an organization is a massive benefit. But you need to have some sensible boundaries so that you don't invade other people's work areas or try to impose something on them."*
>
> **Andrew Willett,**
> **Senior Expert,**
> **Toyota Motor Europe**

2. Consider the goals

The goal should be to create a roll-out that is seamless and engaging. As an application owner, try to think like a user, not an administrator.

Users should be able to answer two key questions:

- What value does the new platform bring to me?
- Is it clear what my role is on the platform and what tasks I need to perform?

Keep in mind that your users are likely already working with other platforms and may view this new platform onboarding as additional work.

Begin by asking yourself the following questions:

? What are specific users most interested in?

? How does the software address the users' current pain points?

? What are the benefits users would gain from working with the system?

🎯 First impressions last.

Think about how to make the first impression on the platform powerful. Make sure everything is well planned and that users can easily navigate the system. It should be clearly defined and obvious to users what their role is and what activities they can and should perform on the platform.

Examples of key benefits for organizations and innovation teams:

☑ A central tool and single source of truth for innovation

☑ Increased visibility over other teams' activities across the organization

☑ Helps break down information silos

☑ Improved collaboration and knowledge sharing

☑ Better understanding and utilization of resources available in the organization

💡 Pro tip:

Take the role of the user. If you are the administrator, log in with a different role to see the system from a user's perspective. The first time you enter the system - is everything clear? Do you know what to do right away? This will help you make it easier for users to get started on the platform.

3. Define a timeline

The plan for implementing the innovation platform should include the preparation for the roll-out, the roll-out itself, and the post-roll-out period.

The timeline for a roll-out is different for each software and depends on the scope of the use case(s), the roll-out scope, and internal requirements. Therefore, the proposed timeline should serve as guidance.

3-4 months before the roll-out:

☑ Create a roll-out plan

☑ Prepare your IT team/ registration/ login process

☑ Fill the platform with first content

☑ Create a communication plan / prepare your internal communications

> 💡 **Pro Tip:**
>
> Informing departments about the plan early on and involving them in the process will make the further roll-out of the software much easier.

1-2 months before the roll-out:

☑ Talk with test users/ business units to validate the use cases

☑ Gather and implement feedback from test users

☑ Finalize the content on the platform and landing page/ brand management if applicable

☑ Announce the roll-out

2-3 weeks before the roll-out:

☑ Go over the roll-out readiness checklist

☑ Intensively testing

Roll-out week:

☑ Make your roll-out an event

☑ Keep communicating the roll-out

After roll-out:

☑ Follow-up communication/ share success story

☑ Gather ongoing feedback

4. Determine communication channels

Effective communication is critical to a successful software roll-out. We recommend using a variety of channels to communicate before, during, and after the roll-out to ensure that all potential users have access to the information.

✉ **Emails** are an effective way to communicate updates and announcements, as all users will naturally have access to emails. We recommend sending newsletters directly from the software *(if available)* to build familiarity and trust with the system. Emails are a great way to communicate with users, but it should not be the only way.

▶ **Videos** are engaging. Use them to explain the purpose of the tool or provide a user guide on how to navigate the system and communicate in your Intranet, for example.

When it comes to user onboarding, face-to-face or remote **meetings** are more personal and engaging. Consider holding one or more onboarding sessions to introduce the new tool, which can be recorded for those who cannot attend.

Pro Tip:
If you have a number of topics to cover, create one or two videos on specific topics instead of one long and overwhelming video.

👍 Most of the communication will be user-centric. Use internal "**social media**" tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Yammer groups to spread the word. In some cases, it's beneficial to target not only the user but also an audience outside your organization to create awareness. LinkedIn is also a great channel to share milestones or the success story of the newly launched platform with a larger community. Remember, the roll-out process doesn't end with the user invitation, so your communications shouldn't either.

5. Create support channel(s)

Once the platform is set up and running, and end-users are using it, you should be prepared for requests and suggestions for improvements.

Think about a way to collect improvement suggestions on an ongoing basis, e.g. with a support button on the platform or a dedicated email address where requests can be submitted.

Use the system statistics *(if available)* to track the activity of users on the platform. This will help you plan and monitor your roll-out and set specific goals for platform usage.

Your roll-out readiness checklist

System readiness preparation

- ☐ The number of maximum users is known
- ☐ The user login process is clarified
- ☐ SSO
- ☐ User invitation

Configuration preparation *(if applicable)*

Check whether everything is configured

- ☐ User configuration
- ☐ Permissions
- ☐ Brand management
- ☐ Login page background
- ☐ Newsletter settings/ signature/ footer
- ☐ Cookies, Privacy, Terms and Conditions

> **Pro Tip:**
>
> Creating an appealing landing page in your system can support a smooth onboarding experience. It is the first point of reference and will guide users to use the system the way you intend.

Communication preparation

- ☐ The roll-out date/time is known
- ☐ Legal aspects: Cookies, Terms & Conditions are adjusted, approved by the legal team, and turned on
- ☐ Notification email *(if available)*: Test emails are confirmed for branding, compatibility, configuration, etc.
- ☐ Internal IT contact in case of technical issues is determined
- ☐ The technical support team is informed about the roll-out
- ☐ Communication **before** the launch: Announcement of the roll-out, communication of training sessions, internal user onboarding guide, contact person for questions, etc.
- ☐ Communication **after** the launch: Feedback after 2-3 weeks, regular newsletters, events, etc.

💡 Keep in mind: Software alone will not change behavior

You should not assume that just putting software in the place will catapult a behavioral and cultural change. Introducing a software system at any organization does not end with the implementation. The initiative requires dedicated and focused efforts to properly engage and involve employees, e.g.

☑ Win key stakeholders in different teams, departments, or business units

☑ Continuous communication on internal platforms and with regular newsletters about ongoing and planned innovation initiatives, ideation challenges, etc.

☑ Report on successes and KPIs

Also see: 10 Software Features That Unlock Engagement and Collaboration in Innovation

All of this is deeply rooted in the culture of the organization. A culture that promotes change coming from inside the organization is a much easier springboard for introducing an innovation system than one that resists change.

About ITONICS

We are a leading Software-as-a-Service provider of systematic innovation management, serving organizations of any size and public institutions globally. Due to increased comprehensiveness, speed, and accuracy in analyzing data, our Innovation Operating System eases decision-making and increases efficiency as well as effectiveness.

The ITONICS Customer Innovation Success Management Team supports organizations in developing innovation management capabilities, creating growth trajectories, benefiting from our software solutions, and bringing innovation projects to work with long-term impact.

ITONICS is a trusted partner of global innovation leaders such as adidas, AUDI, Toyota, Mondelez, Intel, CISCO, Johnson & Johnson, and KPMG.

Strategic Approach

The ITONICS methodology and tools link strategy, innovation, and execution and can be managed by teams and organizations of all sizes.

Partnership for Excellence

Our best practice workshops, periodic health checks, benchmarks, and training sessions guarantee sustainable and world-class innovation management.

Global Engagement

We manage and operate global innovation challenges and enable worldwide technology and trend scouting projects. You can trust our vast cross-industry experience.

Trust

Protecting your data assets is one of our major obligations. Getting certified in our ISO/IEC 27001:2017 underlines this ongoing endeavor.

Contact us

If you have questions or need further assistance to roll-out the ITONICS Innovation OS in your organization? Get in touch with our experts!

To discover more about how ITONICS can help you systemize all activities from strategy to execution, schedule a demo with us today.

Get a Demo   **Let's Chat**

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