This article will help you:

- Collect ideas for optimization from different parts of the company
- Build an idea submission form ranging from simple to detailed
- Find and use tools that help you create your own form

If you generate a backlog of optimization ideas, collect ideas from around the entire organization, and create strong documentation, you can use these to build a culture of experimentation. All three of these can be supported by an idea submission form.

An idea submission form is exactly what it sounds like: a form or quick survey that employees use to submit their test or personalization idea. Many teams use this submission system to gather perspectives from all over the organization, socialize data-driven optimization at the company, and create a pool of ideas for the team to choose from. Submissions are sent to the optimization team for evaluation.

Pool productive submissions with the ideas you generate during brainstorming, then turn them into full hypotheses for your optimization roadmap.

Some teams build two forms -- each with a distinct purpose. The first is a simple form that gathers ideas. The second form asks for additional context such as the purpose of the test or campaign, its origin, and the likelihood of success, to help you document and prioritize the idea.

Learn how Hotwire uses a “Big Test Challenge” to source ideas from all around the company. Or, check out how Trinity Mirror strengthens their experimentation culture in our Optimizely Academy course.
Optimizely Program Management also enables teams to submit ideas, prioritize, collaborate, and view experiment results.

Google Forms is a popular choice for submission forms, because they’re easy to create and share. But it is by no means the only option. If you’re looking for alternatives, check out this review of the most popular form builders. Some programs build submission forms on top of project management solutions, such as JIRA and Trello, as well.

Simple form

The purpose of a simple form is to quickly capture an insight or idea. The value of this form is that it generates a backlog of specific test or campaign ideas and broader optimization concepts. By not asking for too many details, the simple form encourages employees to quickly submit an idea when inspiration strikes. This form can be used by anyone in the company, including the optimization team itself. A simple idea submission form includes:

- Submitter’s name
- Test or campaign name
- Brief description
- Primary goal
- A numeric selection on how likely the test is to be successful

Example:

Here’s an example built using Google Forms.
The purpose of a detailed form is to flesh out simple optimization ideas and create the beginnings of experiment or campaign documentation. Additional fields in the form allow the submitter to provide information about specific variations they may want to test or experiences they want to personalize and the rationale behind each one. This information can help your optimization program evaluate and prioritize this idea in your backlog. Additional fields also encourage submitters to support their ideas with data; socializing this practice can help you build a culture of optimization at your company.

The details in the form will vary based on your particular site and company goals. Some suggestions for what to include are:
• Submitter’s name
• Test or campaign name
• Brief description
• Explicit hypothesis
• Number of variations
• Variation descriptions
• Example URL of page where the test or campaign will run on
• Targeting conditions
• Audiences to include
• Primary goal
• Other goals
• Platform (desktop, mobile web, native app) the test or campaign will run on
• Resources/skillsets required for test setup
• Estimated duration
• A numeric selection on how likely the test is to be successful

Example:

Here’s an example built using Google Forms.
Idea Submission Form - Detailed

Create an expanded test idea by thinking through its requirements and completing this form. This should take about 3 to 10 minutes to complete.

* Required

**Your Name**
Who is submitting this test idea?

**Test Name**
What should this experiment be called?

**Test Description**
Describe what this test is about. This description will be entered in the Optimizely platform during test setup and will help the team to quickly recall what the purpose of this test was.

**Hypothesis**
Please write an explicit hypothesis that includes A) a statement of the problem, B) detail about what the variations will do differently from the original and C) an explicit statement about the impact to a specific metric. Hypothesis Formula: [Problem Description] [Statement to Address Problem] [Impact on Change]

**Goal**
What is the primary goal or metric you are trying to impact for this test (e.g. purchases, average order value, test form submissions etc.)?

**Variations**
Including the original, how many total experiences (i.e. original plus variations) will there be? Please describe each one.

**Location**
Where will this test run? Select an option from the list below or use the "Other" option to provide an example URL. (Note that detailed targeting conditions will be described in the test plan document.)

- Global - it will run on every page
- Homepage
- Product Page
- Category Page
- Search Results Page
- Specific landing page
- Other:

**What platform will this test run on?**
Please select all that apply. Note that if you would like to run a test on a mobile app, that test will be a separate test from tests on desktop web or mobile web.

- Desktop Web
- Mobile Web
- Mobile App
- Other:

**Which of the following resources will be required to complete this test’s setup?**

- Test Management Platform
- Data Analytics Platform
- Custom Code
- Other:
Foster a culture of experimentation

Encourage company-wide use of your forms by sending out an email that asks people to bookmark the link. Remind other teams to use the form during meetings and when you communicate experiment and campaign results. Regular communication of optimization ideas can help you increase the quantity of submissions.

If your company has an internal wiki, consider publishing two variations and asking employees to vote on “which one won?” Add your idea submission form at the bottom to encourage employees to submit their ideas. Or, create an email signature that asks, “Have a test idea? Send it to me here.” And link your idea submission form.

Some ideas will be great for generating key insights; others may not be efficient or impactful enough to run. Once you start to get submissions, your team should use your prioritization criteria, business intelligence, and customer feedback to evaluate and prioritize the ideas.

If you decide to test or personalize based on an idea submitted through your form, make sure to mention it in company-wide communications about optimization. In the long term, your idea submission form will help you foster a data-driven culture at your company.

Tip:

Download these templates to create a test idea competition poster or a hackathon poster.

For more downloadable resources, check out the Optimizely Testing Toolkit.