



Goodyear Strengthens Bonds with Suppliers

Through Collaborative Innovation Efforts



The Company:

A world leader in tire manufacturing.

The Goal:

To take better advantage of the technical knowledge and research advances of its strategic suppliers.

The Results:

An Open Innovation event achieves 100% participation and jump starts a new channel for Goodyear's collaboration with suppliers.

In today's intensely competitive and globalized tire industry, the success of its key players demands strong execution in just about every part of their businesses. Over the long haul, however, success for tire manufacturers ultimately hinges on their ability to drive innovation into every part of their value chains.

The roots of innovation

That's because in the tire business, the technical roots of innovation run deep. Beneath every new development—whether it's a better gripping tread design, better puncture resistance or extended

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*- Yves Sinner, Idea Portfolio Manager
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company*



longevity—is a series of complex technical challenges that needed to be overcome to make it possible. One example is the development of advanced chemical and polymer formulations—or compounds—that are capable of delivering the specific physical properties needed to meet the demands of the new tire product. Creating the complex processes by which these new compounds are manufactured is yet another dimension to the challenge.

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To complement its formidable technical resources, one global tire manufacturer is increasingly willing to turn to its strategic suppliers to help push the boundaries of progress. While sharing information with key suppliers isn't new, there's a growing sense that the most effective way to address complex technical challenges is by actively encouraging collaborative innovation within the supply chain. It's an idea that has taken firm hold within The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, and Imaginatik has played a key role in making it a reality.

The impetus for action came from Goodyear's purchasing and technical communities, which together sought to shift the emphasis in supplier relationships from a traditional focus on cost to a more value-oriented relationship built around collaborative innovation. Their specific aim was to create a new channel through which Goodyear and its suppliers could not only focus their joint efforts on solving specific problems, but also share information about breakthroughs in compounds, materials or processes that could provide a competitive advantage.

Extending a successful relationship

As a highly satisfied user of Imaginatik's Idea Central for five years, Goodyear saw Imaginatik's External Access Module - an add-on to Idea Central designed to facilitate Open Innovation - as the ideal platform. Goodyear engaged Imaginatik's professional services team to design, implement and manage what came to be known as the Supplier Innovation Event. At the core of the event were 17 technical challenges—composed by Goodyear's in-house specialists—which were directed to the 32 strategic suppliers invited to participate in the event.

To highlight the initiative's importance to the company, Goodyear hosted a lively, interactive meeting with these

suppliers at its Akron, Ohio headquarters. Attended by Goodyear's CEO, procurement officer and other high-profile executives, the meeting gave suppliers an up-close look at how Goodyear managed technical issues and, more importantly, how the company sought to engage suppliers more closely within these practices. By conducting the meeting in the weeks leading up to the actual Supplier Innovation Event, Goodyear sought to provide suppliers with a context—a sense of the bigger picture—that would both encourage participation and deliver the most productive responses.

Given the complexity of the subject matter, participating suppliers created dedicated teams of experts to deliberate and compile a response to each technical challenge. By the conclusion of the six-week campaign, a total of 195 responses had been logged through the Imaginatik Open Innovation portal—all kept secure by the solution's granular access control. Upon receiving responses, Goodyear assembled its own panel of compounding and material science experts from its Goodyear Innovation Centers in Akron and Luxembourg—the hotbeds of its ongoing research—and systematically classified and evaluated them using Idea Central's built-in ratings tools.

Today, in the months after what has been judged a successful campaign, Goodyear is working with suppliers to create practices that keep them plugged in, to ensure that the best ideas get realized. To Yves Sinner, Goodyear's Idea Portfolio Manager, success at this stage isn't reflected in new products or processes, which typically take several years to come out of the pipeline. "Goodyear's success lies in creating a productive, efficient and secure environment for solving complex problems collaboratively within the supply chain," says Sinner. "We see Imaginatik as an important part of that success."