

How the sustainable food product ideation guide works

The sustainable food product ideation guide is designed for Accenture consultants to assist food manufacturers in creatively developing sustainable food products. It is to be implemented during the ideation phase of a typical R&D process for food manufacturing employees of new product development. The guide encourages users to think creatively and frequently about sustainability throughout the entire food product development process. Moreover, it enables product development teams to take concrete steps towards the creation of sustainable food products.

The guide is structured in the form of a card deck that comprises four phases: Creativity Booster, Problem Definition, Break Free with Ideas, and Narrow Down. Each phase consists of one explanation card and five activity cards. The break free with idea phase consists of fourteen more cards than the other phases, these are the sustainability inspiration cards, as the core of the ideation guide.

Creativity Booster 2+ person 10 min
Repurposed product

How

1. Each person in the group finds a product.
2. Present three purposes it could serve aside from the original purpose.
3. Pass this product to the person on your right-hand side.
4. Repeat step 2.

Result
Feel more creative and start thinking about how to reuse existing products.

Problem Definition 1+ person 15 min
Desirable future

How

1. Ask yourself the following:
 - What are the current situation and problem?
 - What is the desired outcome, and why?
 - What is the obstacle, and what causes the constraint?
2. Write down the answer to all three questions.
3. Reformulate the obstacle and why this is happening.
4. How you can generate an idea about how to take away the obstacle.

Result
Form a clearer understanding of the current situation and what is in the way to get to the desired situation.

Break Free 1+ person 15 min
How to..?

How

1. Divide your problem into subproblems and write them down on a flip-over.
2. Take one of the sub-question and for 1 minute, write as many solutions as possible.
3. Continue until all sub-questions are answered.
4. Circle all solutions you find exciting and combine them into an idea.

Result
This activity will generate solutions to sub-questions and a combined solution for the main problem.

Break Free Sustainability Inspiration
Easier to keep

Example Questions

1. Can this product be kept under a broader range of temperatures?
2. Can this product be kept under a wider range of humidity?
3. Can this product be made of another ingredient?
4. Can this product be made in other consistence?

Narrow Down
Compare method

Result
This activity helps generate a comparison between an existing product and the new product ideas.

How

1. Arrange all the design solutions and criteria in a matrix.
2. Compare the properties of the new designs with those of the original situation:
 - a. = less good than the original
 - b. = better than the original
 - c. = same as the original
 - d. ? = need more investigation



Preparation

The case presented involves a food manufacturer that produces various food products, including ice cream, with a product life-cycle system that has identified a significant greenhouse gas emission from the ice cream, of which more than 60% is attributed to retail operations. The product manager responsible for the ice cream seeks to identify a solution to reduce this number, within the scope of the company's operations.

Seeking assistance, the manager enlists the services of an Accenture consultant who employs the sustainable food product ideation guide. He brought the card deck with him. In collaboration with the product manager, cards were selected for each phase, the R&D and marketing team were gathered for the ideation session. Participants were given post-it notes and markers, and everyone stood around a table with a stack of flip-over papers. Then the ideation session starts.

Ideation activities

First the 'Creativity Booster'. This phase is designed to prepare the users for the ideation activity and to get them into a creative mindset by providing a variety of sustainability or food design-related exercises. The 'Problem Definition' phase aims to set a clear and common understanding of the problem to be solved. The 'Break Free with Ideas' phase involves general ideation activity cards and sustainability inspiration cards. The sustainability inspiration cards provide a range of possible measures on how to tackle a problem sustainably across the product's entire environmental influence. The 'Narrow Down' phase requires users to evaluate the value and environmental impact of each idea and end up with a list of assumptions and questions about a promising sustainable idea.

The result

The session concludes with the division of tasks among the team to check the assumptions and questions generated and to further discuss and develop the sustainable product ideas.



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