



How can Leaders Obtain Better Quality Solutions from Their Teams?

John Brooker

Have you ever rejected a solution from people on your team because it was not well thought through or not clear enough?

Despite being a good idea, one reason a solution can fail to gain support or funding is because the innovator fails to either explain it properly or convince decision makers they have thought it through thoroughly. This can lead to negative responses, critical questioning and a chastened innovator. For the company, it can mean potentially good solutions lost and perhaps fewer ideas submitted in the future.

In this short and practical article we explain how people on your team can develop a clear and powerful statement that enables the relevant people to understand it and make a sound decision on whether to proceed.

As a general rule, the proposition statement should include the following points:

- Specify who the problem impacts
- State what problem the proposition solves
- Describe the solution, explaining how it solves the problem (benefits) and how much of the problem it solves
- Explain how it differs from competing products.

These four points provide a statement that explains the basic proposition. Now to appraise and hone that proposition people need to:

- Show the issues and risks to be managed
- State who else has a significant stake in this solution, how interested they might be in it, what their level of influence is and how likely are they to use it
- Be clear on any data / information needed to progress
- Suggest solutions to overcome difficulties



- Identify the resources required to progress the solution
- Outline the immediate next steps (which may include the decision needed) and a short timeline.

People can craft the final proposition statement around these points, or write out the proposition and use them as a checklist. This is a thinking tool rather than a set of steps and as every proposition, is different you may find that you use them in a different order or miss one out. This is fine if done knowingly.

Below is a fictional statement from the payment business that I have worked in for many years. It uses a real service (Dynamic Currency Conversion) developed a number of years ago and used widely now. However, I was not involved in developing the service and use it as an example simply to illustrate how the inventor(s) of a real product / service might have presented it. If you know how it was actually presented, please let me know!

EXAMPLE

The proposition is to enable merchants to convert the currency of the card transaction at the point of transaction rather than have the international payment system convert it. How will you explain this idea to the decision makers? This statement includes only one example for each point, to keep the article brief. It is prudent to keep real statements fairly brief so as not to lose attention:

*“Acquirers of card transactions [**Who the problem impacts**] work on tight margins. One reason is that they earn no revenue from currency conversion on international card payments because payment systems con-*

*vert the currency and share the revenue only with the card issuer [**Problem the proposition solves**].*

*We will develop software to convert the currency at the point of transaction [**Describe the solution**] rather than in the payment system [**How it differs from competitors**] and share the revenues with the acquirer and merchants. This will improve acquirer margins, give merchants a reason to use the software and provide us with a solid revenue stream [**How it solves the problem / benefits**].*

*Payments systems and card issuers [**Whom it will impact**] may react adversely to our solution [**Issues and risks**] and it may not be legal. We need to assess and plan for their potential response and ascertain the legality [**Information needed**].*

*To reduce adverse reactions, we might seek ways to share the revenue amongst more stakeholders [**Solutions to overcome difficulties**]. If approved to proceed, we will talk next with stakeholders and regulators and develop a business case showing potential revenues and resources need to develop and launch the product [**Immediate next steps**].”*

You may have spotted that I did not include “how much of the problem it solves”. This is because there are two problems here; at a higher level are the tight margins that acquirers have, which this solution partially solves.

At the lower level is the problem that acquirers do not receive revenue from currency conversion, which this solution resolves completely if the service is used. It is important to be clear in your mind at what level you are solving the problem. You can find an article on how to do this [here](#).

I use this template in my innovation workshops to:

- Help focus teams on what they are really proposing
- Clarify the proposition for everyone



- Ensure they explain the proposition in a way that decision makers are likely to approve rather than argue with.

If your team uses the template, it will provide a consistent input for your decision-making, give you a sense that the proposition has been well thought through and enable you to compare different options in a similar format.

We use this tool in our Inn8® Workshop Programmes. If you would like to find out more about this structured way to develop innovative propositions and create strategies to implement them in a time efficient way, please read our book “Innovate to Learn, Don’t Learn to Innovate” or visit our website <http://www.yesand.eu/maximise-opportunity/>.

John Brooker I Yes! And. Think Innovatively.

About the Author



John Brooker is a former Senior Vice President and innovator in Visa and is now the MD of Yes! And, where he has worked internationally with multi-cultural teams since 2001.

John has developed the Team Impetus Model, based on Solution Focus, to help teams develop

strategies to achieve targets and resolve complex challenges. He has also developed his Inn8® Approach to help teams maximise opportunities innovatively. You can listen to clients discuss these approaches at our website, www.yesand.eu. John is an Open University MBA and tutored on the Creativity, Innovation and Change course for 14 years. He is a director of the international Association for Solution Focus In Organisations.

To receive regular articles, register at our website: www.yesand.eu and receive Section 1 of John’s book, “Innovate to Learn, Don’t Learn to Innovate”, with our compliments. We guarantee not to share your details. Or you might buy John’s book at Amazon now: “Innovate to Learn, Don’t Learn to Innovate.”



Contact Us

Learn: www.yesand.eu
Facebook

Talk: +44 20 8869 9990

Write: hi@yesand.eu



Contact Us

Learn: www.yesand.eu
Facebook

Talk: +44 20 8869 9990

Write: hi@yesand.eu