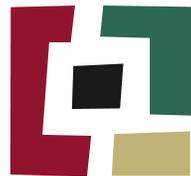


# Global Innovation Tournament Organizer Toolkit

Provided by



STANFORD  
TECHNOLOGY  
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## OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Organizing and running an innovation tournament is a fun and effective way for students to experience the entrepreneurial process, including seizing opportunities, leveraging limited resources, and bringing ideas to life. This fast-paced competition is based on STVP's Global Innovation Tournament.

The Innovation Tournament is based on a simple set of rules:

- Students get a simple but provocative challenge.
- They have a few days in which to complete it.
- They tell the story in a short video.
- Prizes are given for the most compelling solutions.

Past challenges include creating as much value as possible from a pack of post-it notes, water bottles, or rubber bands; or conceptual challenges such as making saving money fun. Successful completion of these challenges requires creativity, teamwork, execution, and value creation.

## ORGANIZING & RUNNING A TOURNAMENT

As an organizer you will select the tournament challenge, set the schedule, and organize judges and prizes. You will also promote the tournament challenge online or assign the challenge to students. Try placing the emphasis on fun and unleashing creativity rather than on competitive aspects of the tournament.

Once the challenge has begun, students will have just a few short days to create as much value as possible around the challenge and to upload a video to YouTube to show a record of their progress. At that point, judges will evaluate the video entries and winners will be selected.

Teams can be of any size, from one person to many. Also, we suggest giving students somewhere between four and seven days, including a weekend, to complete the challenge and upload their video. If you are assigning an innovation tournament as part of a university course, the time period just after mid-term examinations seems to be optimal for performance.

[See example tournament video submissions on ECorner, Stanford's Entrepreneurship Corner website.](#)

### Required steps for organizers:

- Set the tournament schedule and decide on the challenge.
- Arrange a team of judges, such as local educators, entrepreneurs and luminaries.
- Solicit and assemble prizes to award to tournament winners.
- Promote or assign the competition to encourage students to participate.
- Announce your challenge online and send emails to registered participants.
- Participant teams load videos to YouTube and submit the URL and contact information.
- Judges watch entries and select winners.
- Announce winners and award prizes.

### Optional steps for organizers:

- Create a tournament website or webpage.
- Consider using online forms/tools to gather and manage entries.
- Conduct a showcase event to highlight local winners and pursue media attention, if desired.

# JUDGING & PRIZE SUGGESTIONS

We encourage tournament organizers to focus judging criteria on the value a team creates. You may also want to favor projects that actually attempt implementation of their ideas by “taking them to market,” as opposed to teams that only present an idea. Remember to provide specific deadlines for team video submissions and detailed instructions on how to complete this step.

Once videos have been submitted, ask your panel of judges to watch designated videos and select winners. If you expect a small number of submissions, have the judges review all submissions. If there will be a large number of submissions, distribute them among the judges; let them choose the best from that set; then watch all "best" submissions as a group to pick the winners.

Name awards and assign prizes to fit the submissions you receive that warrant merit recognition. You can even award an audience prize if you debut participant videos at a showcase event. Here are some ideas for prize categories:

- Biggest Impact Prize
- Creativity Prize
- Green Prize
- Guerilla Marketing Prize
- Most Awesome Flop

Beyond certificates, gift cards and parties as prizes, don't forget to reach out to local entrepreneurs and business leaders for experiential prizes, such as lunch with a startup founder or business executive, or one-on-one meetings with investors or venture capitalists. You can also seek out donations of resources to help young entrepreneurs to build the next iteration of their products.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Does it cost anything to run an innovation tournament?**

It costs time, but there should be very little out-of-pocket costs to put on a local tournament. Prizes are optional, and you can solicit those as donations from supporters and the community.

## **How do we encourage people to form teams, sign-up, and participate?**

If you are a school or other youth-oriented organization, we suggest making this an assignment for formal or extra credit in various classes, chapters, etc. Innovation tournaments are an incredibly fun and engaging assignment for students to learn entrepreneurial thinking by creating value with limited resources.

## **What if our students/members do not have access to video equipment?**

Many students have ways to produce videos from their personal computers, smart phones, etc. If that is not the case for your group, one suggestion is to find volunteers with video cameras who would be willing to tape student submissions and to help them upload their videos.

## **What if our students/members do not have access to computers?**

You can certainly conduct a modified, low-tech version of the tournament. For example, you can let participants give their presentations in person to the judging panel.