

Running Effective Hackathons

The Microsoft Way

And with Microsoft technology

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about STEPHEN


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**Disclosure: I work
at Microsoft but
this report is an
expression of my
views entirely.
More...**



I've been participating
in hackathons on and
off for the last 15 years
and even won a few
times. This is what I
have learned, most of
that time while
working at Microsoft.



The Garage is a Microsoft program and dedicated team that deliver the hackathons and other programs and experiences that drive collaboration, creativity, and experimentation.

[More](#)



Microsoft Hackathons The VxWay

CEO'S PET PROJECT

**Hackathon
Archive**



Satya Nadella launched the first all company hackathon for global employees in 2014 soon after his tenure started as a way to shake up innovation and the Microsoft culture. [More here.](#)

Innovation Hacking



Hackathons are organised innovation events that involve as many people as you like in a concerted drive to come up with ideas and develop them in a short period of time.

Think software design, development sprints and innovation culture forming, all in one.

What is it?





The Means

Microsoft Teams as the collaboration front end and Power Platform as the low/no code platform for Apps is a perfect combination of toolsets for getting started with hackathons. But you can go much further.

Your employees are the citizen developers who's ideas you can unleash to innovate and drive new business value.

You just need the right approach.

-
1. The right plan
 2. The right tech
 3. The right stakeholders

Steps
to Success



The Right Plan



COLLAB/COMMUNITY

Microsoft Teams for organisers, Viva Engage for users, SharePoint for content.



TIMING

Make sure you plan before and after phases, these are what will ensure a successful "during".



PLANNING

Consider Planner, Project or your favourite tool and integrate into Microsoft Teams



NUMBERS

Are you targeting the whole organisation or a smaller test group. Depends on your experience level.



PRIZES

Swag will do for all participants but winners should get something special.

AZURE AND GITHUB

For the hardcore / pro hackers, Azure is the platform, GitHub is the code repository

IDEATION

A central portal for employee ideas should be created to capture and progress ideas formally - use a Microsoft or 3rd party solution to do this

AI INFUSES EVERYTHING

TEAMS

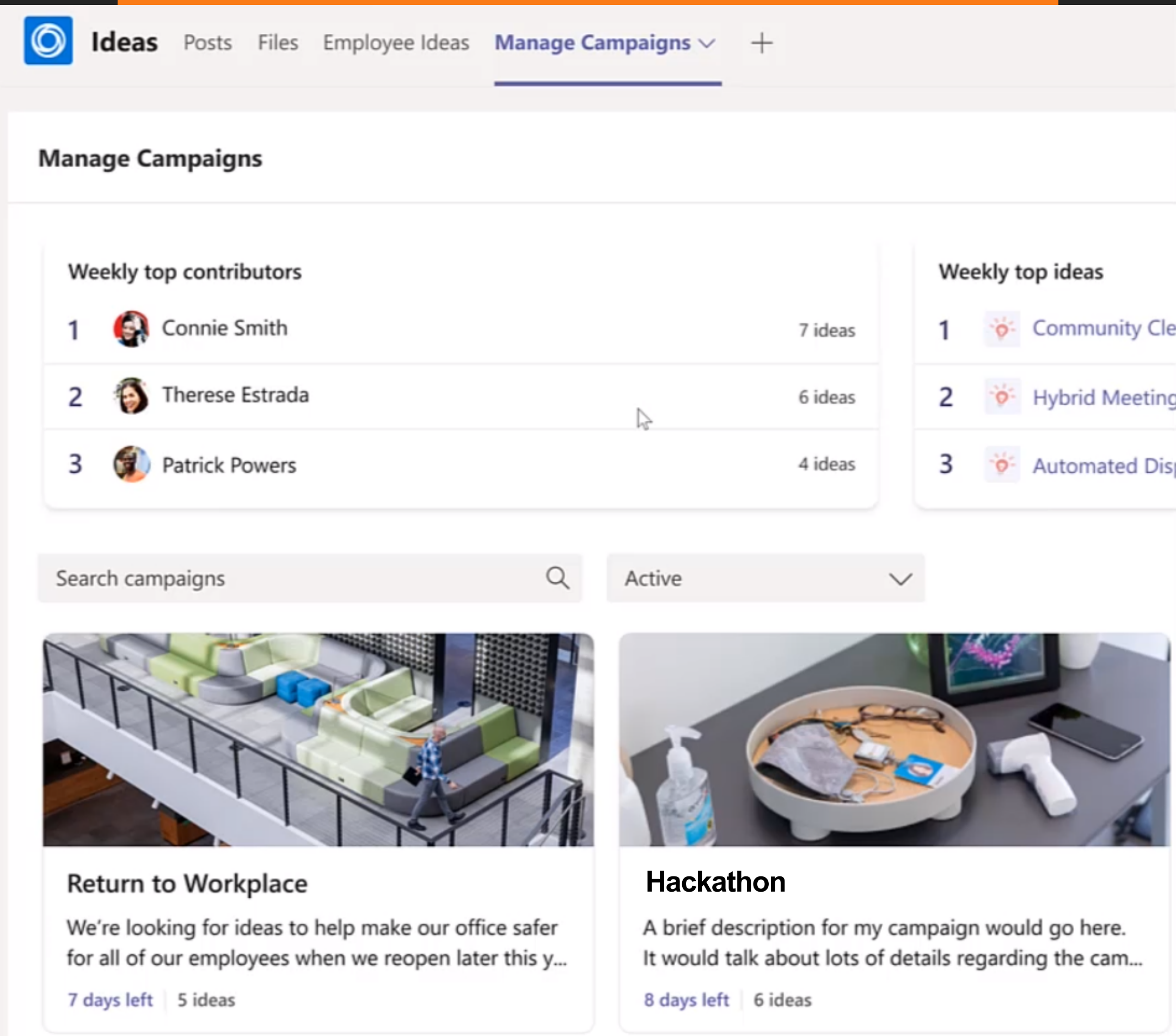
Where collaboration happens but also where enterprise Apps can be developed and consumed. Use production, ringfence participants

Low/no code platform for citizen developers. Decide on modules supported:
Power Automate; Power Apps; PowerBI; Power Virtual Agents; Power Pages

POWER PLATFORM

The Right Technology

Importance of Idea Management



Above is an example idea management portal from Microsoft using a Power App template ([more here](#)). This is useful to help channel employee ideas effectively and as a way to catalyse and encourage more ideas with voting, socialising, etc.

1. Execs - from IT
and from the
business

5. Hack team
leads

6. Organisers

4. Advanced
hackers -
from IT

2. Judges

3. Basic hackers
- from the
business

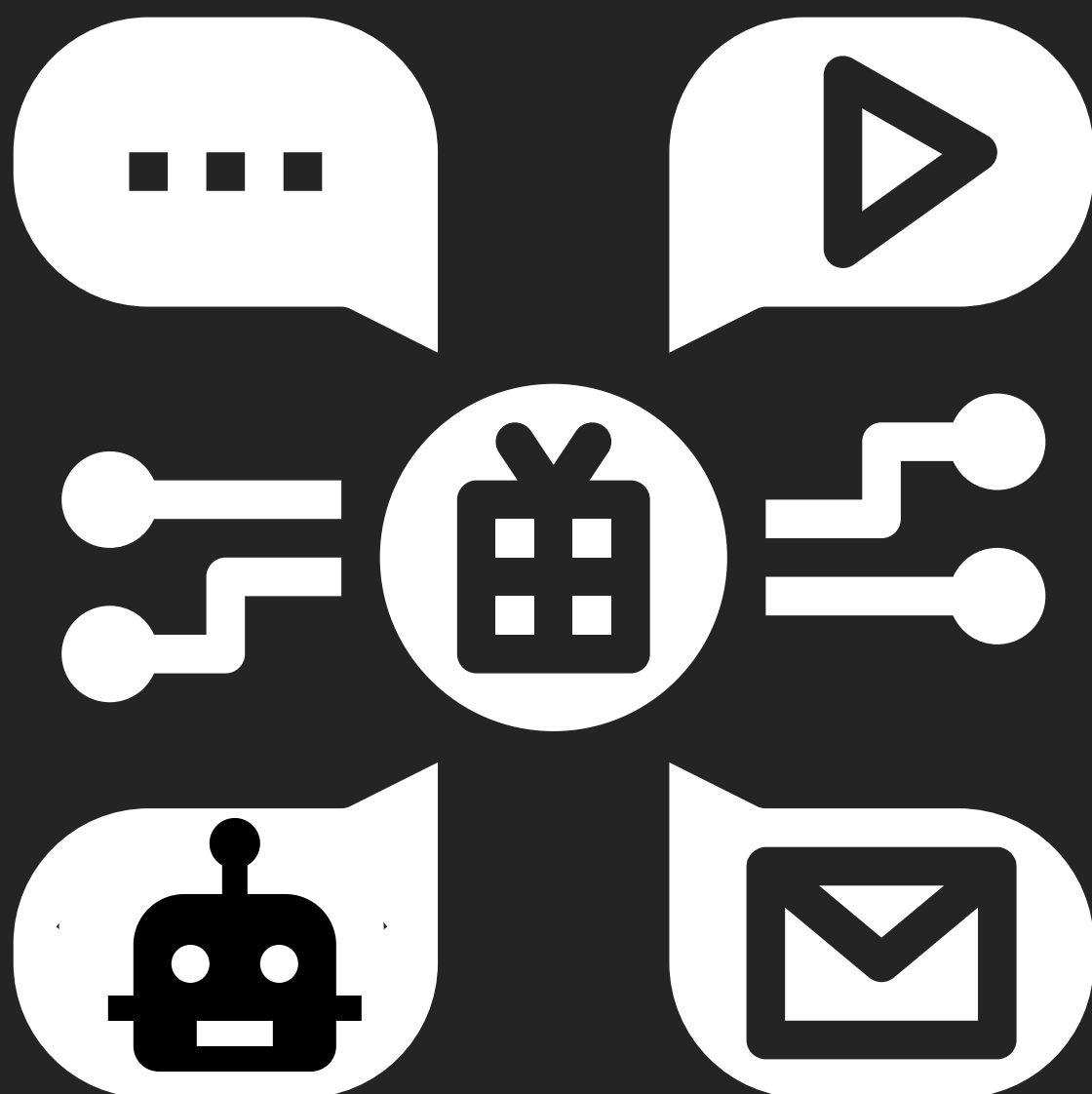
7. External for
open innovation
- customers,
partners, ...

The Right Stakeholders

Good

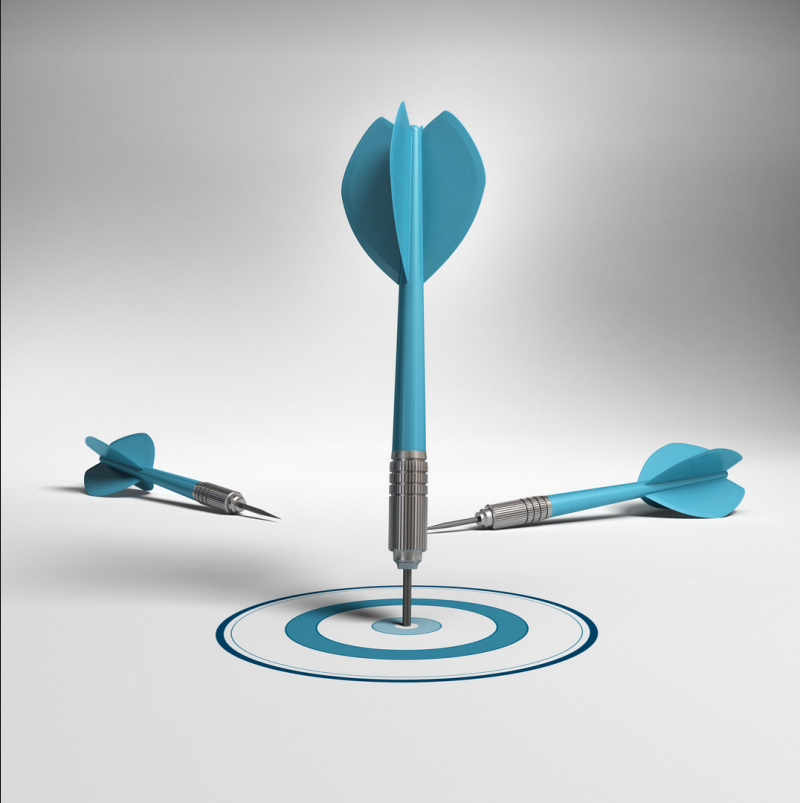
Communications

Driving engagement



- Microsoft Viva Amplify is a new internal comms tool that targets multiple channels at once - Outlook, SharePoint, Teams, Viva Engage, etc.
- Use it to reach people where they are and drum up excitement and engagement
- Get senior execs involved to drive top down engagement and a platform like Viva Engage for more bottom up, community driven engagement.

More in the same vein



The supremacy of
business outcomes
in a low code no
code world



For citizen
development to
work address
innovation culture
first



References from this
story_