

Brightsparks

The IPS staff suggestion scheme

Prepared by SJ Lawrence

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Not protectively marked

Background – What is IPS?

- The Identity and Passport Service (IPS) was established as an Executive Agency of the Home Office on 1st April 2006. The Agency builds on the strong foundations of the UK Passport Service to provide passport services and in the future, as part of the National Identity Scheme, ID cards for British and Irish nationals and foreign nationals resident in the UK.
- The IPS works closely with the Border and Immigration Agency, UKvisas and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to deliver consistent service standards for identity documents across these organisations. The Agency has a key role in transforming the way government interacts with UK citizens and businesses by developing common standards in identity management.

Brightsparks – a history



- Brightsparks was launched on 13th March 2003 to coincide with National Ideas Week
- The scheme has gone from Bronze to Platinum Status with IdeasUK
- The scheme covers over 6000 staff across eight regional sites, three headquarters sites and 68 satellite interview offices
- The scheme averages 1500 suggestions a year which is a 21% participation rate

Brightsparks Ideas

The purpose of the scheme

Is to encourage suggestions from all staff to improve the performance, efficiency and level of customer service we provide as an Agency

The aim of the scheme

Is to actively encourage staff participation in the achievement of corporate objectives and visibly reward their innovation

Awards can be made as follows:

A nil award is allocated if the idea is not original, not practical or does not meet the award criteria.

A £10 award is allocated for an idea which will not be implemented but shows merit and promise.

A £10 award is allocated to an idea that shows promise but needs further investigation.

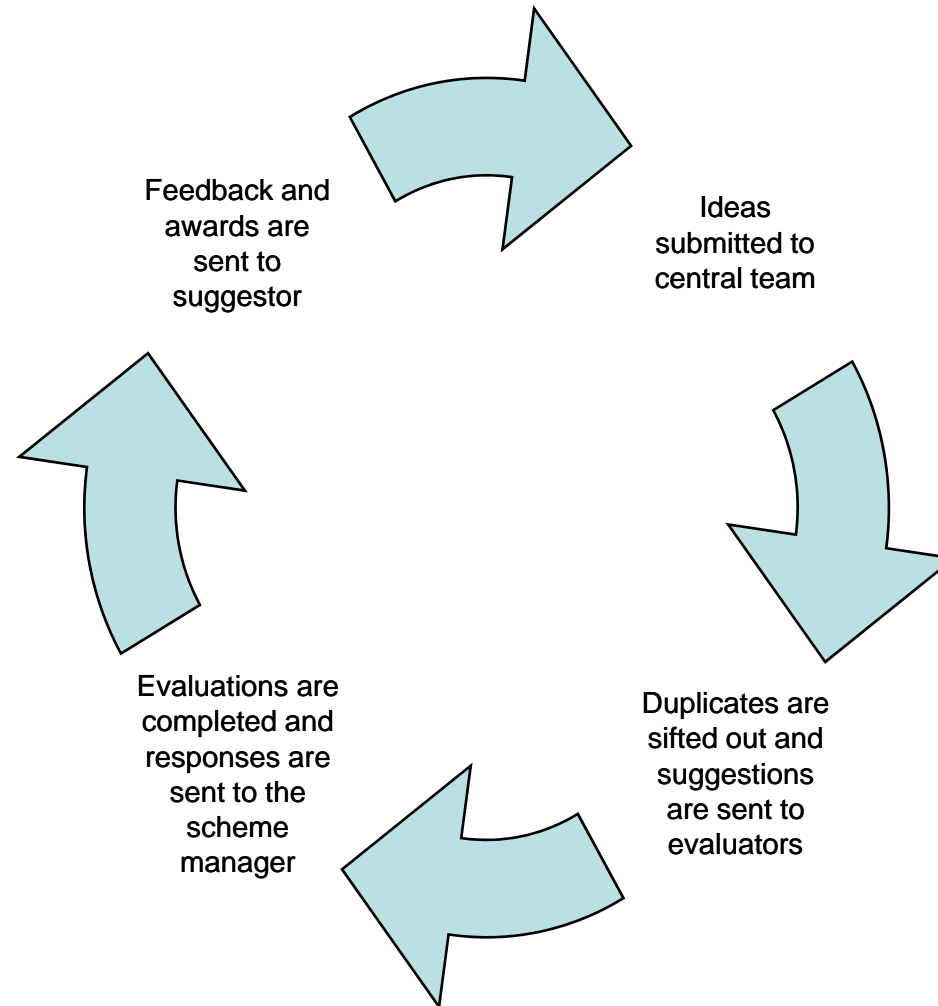
A £30 award is allocated to a suggestion which will be implemented locally.

A £50 award is allocated to a suggestion which will be implemented nationally.

Response letters will be sent to each suggestee detailing which type of award has been allocated and why.

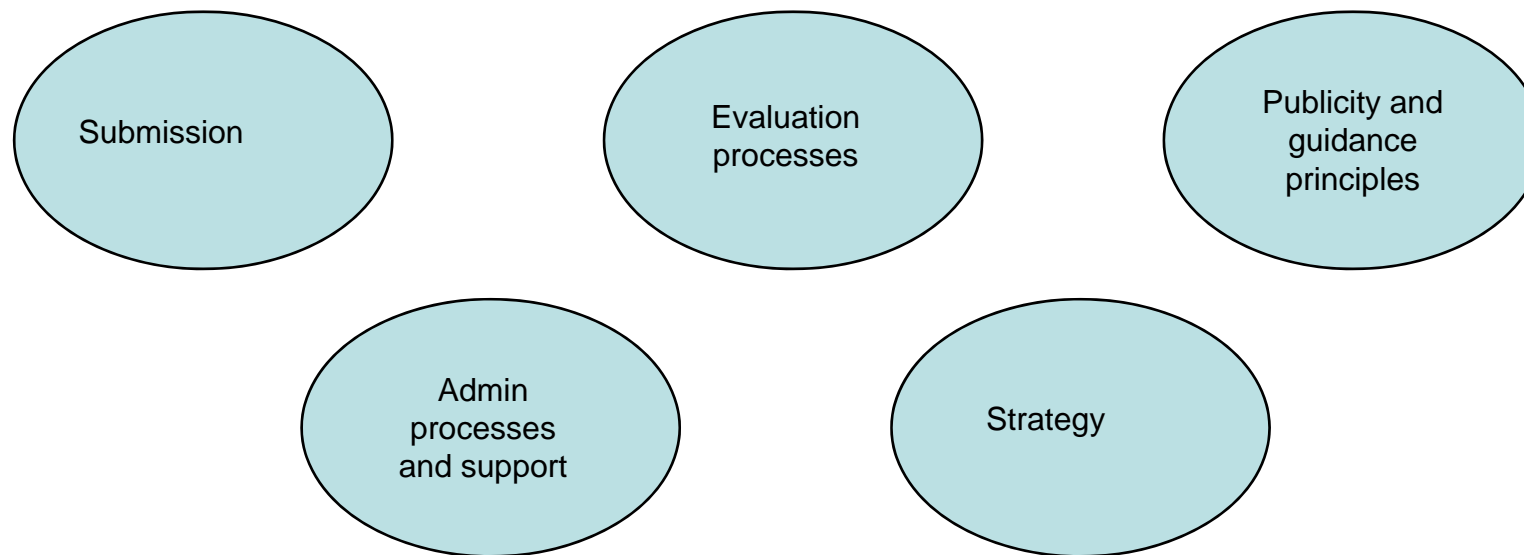
Suggestions are also eligible for **Idea of the year** and **Brightspark of the month**

Brightsparks - Processes



1. We kept the scheme developing

- One of the most important factors in running a successful scheme is keeping it alive, relevant and up to date
- Since Brightsparks launched the scheme has evolved to meet the ever changing face of our fast moving business



Scheme improvements

- On-line database in 2008 – allowed us to accept suggestions more easily from more people and made the scheme accessible to evaluators in the current climate
- Branding changes and re-launching of the scheme in 2007 – keeps a fresh perspective and interest alive
- Better involvement in the wider suggestion scheme community has helped the business forge relationships
- Idea of the year, Brightsparks of the Month and consistent refresh of publicity

2. IdeasUK and the accreditation tool

- One of the most useful tools for measuring the scheme is the IdeasUK accreditation tool
- Brightsparks moved from Bronze status to achieve Platinum Status in 2007 and 2008
- The assessment criteria acts as an educated and formulaic guidance to work against
- IdeasUK networking and benchmarking techniques allow the sharing of ideas and advice
- Consistent evaluation and measurement of the scheme keeps it alive
- If the scheme is allowed to become stagnant it will not work

3. Strategic publicity

The suggestion scheme is not a part of every persons every day job – therefore we need to remind them that it is there and remind them that there are benefits to it's usage. There are many tools for keeping promotion alive. In IPS we used:

- Idea of the year and Idea of the month
- Presentations of awards
- Updated posters or websites
- Themes and campaigns such as National Ideas Week
- Free gifts – branded to keep the publicity traveling
- Keep the scheme visible and attack all angles

4. Management buy in

IPS has always been very fortunate with management buy in. Examples include:

- Celebrating Success and Award Presentations
- Active Evaluation

How do we achieve that buy in?

- Prove that the scheme works, show them successful ideas and show them that it works

5. Stakeholder Engagement

The key to effectively engaging your stakeholders, whether it's your managing director or your local communications team, is to listen and get them involved. In IPS we tried:

- Evaluators away day
- Actively requesting feedback in the structure of our scheme
- Having a scheme theme

Points to remember:

- Show stakeholders that the scheme is a tool for free ideas and a communications route with all staff
- Remember that suggestors are stakeholders too
- Recognise the contributions people make to your scheme and take the time to thank them for it

6. Keep it simple – for everybody

- If you make it as easy as possible for people to engage in your scheme they are more likely to want do it
- Don't make your suggestors, evaluators or supporters jump through hoops. You need them to make the scheme work
- Keep your evaluation processes clear, fair and simple.
- Keep your administration process smooth, a slow turnaround time makes suggestors lose interest and you will cost the business unnecessary time and money
- Be flexible and adaptable, move with the times or they will move on without you

Public sector challenges

- **Budget**

It doesn't have to cost the world to run a scheme. People will make suggestions because they want to contribute not just because they want money. And there are many ways to recognize and idea, not just financially. Creative recognition keeps the scheme exciting and interesting and can help get others engaged.

- **Buy in**

Be open and adaptable to your stakeholders. Keep them engaged and recognize the contribution they make. Be approachable and open and establish a firm foundation for working together in future.

- **Benefits**

Benefits monitoring can be challenge, some areas may be unable to make financial savings. But they don't have to save money to make things better. Monitor your successful suggestions, show everyone how things have improved and inspire others to help in the development of your business.

Can it work?

- The public sector is looking to use all of its resources more efficiently and effectively than ever, free frontline ideas allow management to make practical and educated improvements every day
- You can build your scheme to fit your company, use all the resources you have and engage with your business to find the fit that suits you

Remember – Keep it simple

- Keep it creative
- Adapt to the needs of your business