



Tapping Your Genius

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Categories : [Strategic Planning](#)

Date : April 21, 2009

This is the first entry for my new blog, which over time will offer my thoughts on any number of issues affecting the School. I will not post something every day, but I hope to have a couple of entries each week. I am especially interested in your thoughts and reactions, so please feel free to make comments. The blog will cover more than strategic planning, but this entry is about our planning process because it is on my mind.

We have shifted to an important stage in our strategic planning—the opportunity for all of you to generate ideas and proposals for how the School can have an even greater impact. A [New York Times](#) article from a few years ago illustrates why it is essential that you share your ideas with the DAC. It described a software company that allows any employee to propose an idea for a new product or an efficiency improvement. The ideas become stocks on an internal market and employees express their feelings about the stocks (ideas) by investing “opinion money.” The president of the company was unenthusiastic about one employee’s idea for a new technology. It generated overwhelming support among company employees on the internal stock market—they developed the idea and now it accounts for 30% of total sales.

Here’s the point. According to the company president, “the most brilliant insights tend to come from people other than senior management. So we created a marketplace to harvest collective genius.” That’s exactly what we are trying to do in this stage of the School’s strategic planning process—tap into your collective genius. The article concluded that “creativity is no longer about which companies have the most visionary executives, but who has the most compelling ‘architecture of participation.’” In other words, how do you structure opportunities for everyone to contribute ideas? The DAC has tried to create an architecture that gives you maximum flexibility in developing your ideas and proposals. You have the knowledge, experience, and the creativity to increase our impact, and I encourage you to develop proposals on your own or with others. We can’t do it without you.