

United States Department of Agriculture

The Problem – *Reduce wasteful spending*

During the economic downturn of 2009 President Obama challenged all US Government employees to make cost saving suggestions for the annual US Budget process. This was part of a larger effort to ensure that the US Government agencies invested taxpayer dollars in programs and initiatives that have proven records of success and fix or end programs that do not. The USDA needed to reach out to all of its employees to find ways to reduce wasteful spending.

The Analysis – *Employ crowd-sourcing to generate and discuss ideas*

While many ideas were submitted through emails, meetings and other venues — there was no easy way to share and discuss them amongst the USDA staff.

Another effort involved the use of an internal blog to collect feedback. Unfortunately, not many people participated and felt that a particular group was trying to control the topics being discussed rather than hear the ideas and thoughts of the community.

The agency decided that it wanted an online space using a cutting-edge, interactive tool, on which people could provide suggestions for reducing costs and improving operational efficiency. Employees would be able to see each other's suggestions and vote on them. No suggestion is a bad one, or a wrong one, and no cost would be too small to avoid.

Ideas could be as simple as turning off a light before leaving a room, or reducing the use of office supplies. Or, it may involve a larger change in how a program is implemented. Whatever the idea, employees would be encouraged to share their ideas with their colleagues and they would do the same.

The Solution – *Create a community based innovation space*

The USDA community collected over 400 ideas, 1,000 comments and 7,000 votes with their community based idea and innovation website. All of this crowd-sourcing was accomplished in less than one week. Agencies were able to quickly identify which suggestions were receiving the most votes and which ones were being talked about most.

IdeaJam™ made all of this possible by providing the community with a friendly, easy-to-use system that made them feel comfortable sharing their ideas, thoughts on others ideas as well as their support, through voting for their peers ideas.

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Elguji Software, LLC

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The logo for Elguji Software, LLC, featuring the word "elguji" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are colored in a gradient from orange to red.

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