



PlanningPoint – What are key challenges, strategies, and tools for successfully bringing innovative pilot projects to scale?

What makes scaling innovation difficult? There are several factors that can limit project scalability including attributes of the project itself, the plan, organizational culture, and/or be related to community factors that the initiative is meant to benefit. Scaling can encounter people and/or process barriers. Pouezevara (2017) contends that scalability is demonstrated by a) core component replication -- the ability to bring to scale those key elements of a project that are deemed critical to its effectiveness and b) sustainability -- the project's affordability over the mid and long-term – successful operation within available resources. The literature contains information regarding the tools and techniques to effectively manage change and scale innovation.

Fembek (2016) identified eight reasons that scaling projects can be challenging. The summary below provides short descriptions of challenges and strategies for overcoming them.

Table 1. Eight Reasons Why Scaling Up Can Be Difficult

Reason	Description	Strategy
Fear of Change	Apprehension may occur from perceived ramifications surrounding change. This can happen either among college employees who are responsible for driving initiative implementation, and/or among community members who the project is meant to benefit.	Delineate Tangible Benefits. Ensure that a project's shareholders understand the initiative's benefits. Assure that any change the project necessitates aim to benefit shareholders as well as the organization.
Loss of Meaning	The urgency and enthusiasm initial innovators felt when starting an initiative may fade as the project continues.	Recognize & Incentivize. Acknowledge and commend initial developers of successful projects. Recognize their achievements and incentivize their continued innovation and leadership.
Limited Awareness or Buy In	College faculty and administrators who were not part of the initial project development, and community members such as prospective students or employers may not understand the benefits of an initiative or believe in its success.	Build Understanding & Commitment. Prioritize ensuring project shareholders thoroughly understand the project's purpose, benefits/agreed upon outcomes sought, and potential for success.
No Recipe Book	Frustration can arise from a lack of clearly defined techniques for scaling the project.	Roadmap with Mile Markers. To the greatest extent possible, lay out specific guidelines for how the scaling of a project is to proceed.
Glass Ceiling	As a project grows, it may reach a limit to the success it can achieve in its current form.	Maintain Focus & Pivot to Achieve Outcomes. Ensure that necessary adaptations, such as expanding a project's core leadership or getting assistance from additional community partners, are enacted on a timely basis as the project scales.
Direct and Indirect Impact	Participants may fear the direct and indirect repercussions of certain scaling aspects.	Pursue Win-Win Opportunities. Pay attention to how those involved in scaling an initiative <u>feel</u> about how changes will impact them personally as well as how the organization will be affected.
Multi-Stakeholder Engagement	Maintaining involvement by all the important stakeholders involved in the scaling of initiatives can be challenging. Be mindful of any emerging disconnects between critical partners such as faculty, top-level administrators or project beneficiaries.	Engage & Incorporate Stakeholder Feedback That Advances the Common Goal. Have all pertinent parties involved in the various scaling steps. Engage in active listening and frequent communication. Rally around the team's shared vision of the group's preferred future.
Missing Techniques	In this case there are not just poorly defined and poorly communicated steps to scaling, but the individual techniques have not even been determined.	Plan Your Work. Work Your Plan. Predetermine clearly defined, specific techniques that will allow scaling to progress. Then as previously mentioned, frequently communicate these techniques and where the project is in the process. What's next.

What strategies and practices contribute to successful scaling of educational innovations? DeWire, McKithen, & Carey (2017) provide additional perspectives on effective scaling strategies based on their review of and conversations with productive federal Investing in Innovation grant recipients.

Use Multiple Methods to Establish Buy-in

Use evidence and effective storytelling to demonstrate the new program's effectiveness in addressing a pressing need.
Recruit partners who will directly benefit from intervention implementation and can serve as effective champions moving forward.
Solicit and incorporate collaborator's meaningful input to strengthen project components and assist in identifying funding opportunities.
Relationship building across all levels promotes buy-in.

Build the Scaling Support Infrastructure

Provide initial launch training and strategically schedule training at regular intervals on key topics.
Identify experienced individuals/teams who can help answer questions, offer technical support, and provide advice.

Adapt Practice Based on Evidence

Be adaptable to change and responsive to lessons learned.
Commit to continuous improvement using a variety of approaches including monitoring emerging research (on approach and population served), conducting formative assessments as milestones occur, collecting actionable stakeholder feedback, and fine tuning important intervention components.

Plan for Sustainability from Day One

Be proactive, early on, about identifying how intervention scaling up can be funded, leverage relationships to sustain implementation, and maintain the effect on student achievement.
Develop an evaluation plan to generate data to document costs and returns. Calculate return on investment/pay back from the change.

Describe underlying approaches that promote effective scaling. Sutton (2014) outlined a common toolkit for change management and scaling innovation in customer-focused organizations.

Strive to spread a mindset, rather than a footprint.

Long term scaling success builds on modifying beliefs and behaviors in people more than a rapid ramping up of the numbers.

Approach scaling as a problem of both more and less.

As an organization or program expands, traditions, strategies, practices, and roles that were once helpful outlive their usefulness, creating friction and frustration.
What needs to be streamlined or eliminated? Clear away destructive beliefs and behaviors.

What approach works best for the project?

Analyze the current situation. Should you concentrate on making people true believers, then let them localize the rituals as much as they like – or do you legislate the behaviors that have been identified as best, assuming that belief will follow?

Link hot causes to cool solutions.

Rational arguments for a change may not be enough to instill a new mindset and unseat old habits. Engagement grows when people connect to problems and solutions. The most effective scaling campaigns often stir up “hot” emotions in people (e.g., pride, aggravation, what is fundamentally fair, etc.) and then channel that energy and passion into “cool” (clear and step-wise) actions.

Connect people and cascade excellence.

To fuel scaling, build or find pockets of excellence and, in turn, use them to guide and inspire the creation of more such pockets.

Cut cognitive overload but embrace necessary organizational complexity.

As the cast of characters involved with a program grows, coordinating all those people and sustaining healthy social bonds among them is both challenging and important. Scaling starts and ends with individuals. Effectiveness spreads and sticks when people feel obligated to live the right mindset and equally compelled to hold others to the same standards.

What tools can be used to help successfully scale an innovation? Deloitte Insights (2018) identified tools to successfully scale an innovation. Among these tools are:

Roadmap

The scaling roadmap details where, when and in what order to expand the solution. It identifies the desired rate of scaling, uses data to decide where to scale next, and develops a timeline.

Checklist

A checklist documenting how to launch the innovation to each new group is important, as people who are introduced to the initiative need to be informed about roles, responsibilities, and customization opportunities. Checklists can also help plan how to evaluate success and determine areas for further improvement.

Shared Infrastructure & Common Platforms

The implementation of platforms, policies and infrastructure can serve as a foundation for scaling across all future adopter groups. This will consolidate efforts, avoid duplication, and ensure that all users have access to the same, or similar information on an ongoing basis.

What are critical success factors that will help effectively scale an innovation? Many factors that lead to successful scaling are also crucial to any organizational change. Change Management specialists Changesynergy (2018) suggest the following factors:

Shared Change Purpose

Create and share a compelling case for change that establishes urgency and generates needed buy-in.

Effective Change Leadership

Build a critical coalition/network of change leaders & champions.

Powerful Engagement Processes

Develop and implement processes needed to communicate with, involve, reward, and up-skill people new to the innovation.

Committed Local Sponsors

Ensure that middle and front-line professionals and managers are empowered with the skills, tools, information, and support needed during the scaling process.

Strong Personal Connection

Build alliances based on shared ideas and commitment to project success. Better results can be expected when participants are personally invested in the scaling process.

Sustained Personal Performance

Help people adapt personally and individually throughout the process.

There are unique aspects of change management and scaling innovation among the authors cited as well as a thread of overlap in the ideas expressed. A variety of perspectives are included because ideas articulated by one author may resonate more than others with an individual working on scaling an initiative.

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