

BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)
The General Role of Government in Encouraging Space Industry Applications (1)

Author: Mr. Douglas Comstock
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States, doug.comstock@nasa.gov

Ms. Diana Hoyt
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States, diana.hoyt@nasa.gov

PROUDLY FOUND ELSEWHERE: NEW METHODS OF INNOVATION AND RESULTS AT NASA

Abstract

There are many sources of innovation that can be applied to NASA's challenges in aeronautics and space. Identifying and accessing these sources of innovation can increase the efficiency of NASA's pursuits and uncover new innovations that may not otherwise be found. Individuals, companies, universities, and other non-traditional sources could have needed solutions and great innovations, but how does NASA go about accessing these reservoirs of innovation? NASA has been pioneering the use of several open innovation tools and other methods to yield innovations that can be proudly found elsewhere. Examples include Centennial Challenges – NASA's incentive prize competitions for the citizen inventor, external web-based challenge tools such as NASA Innovation Pavilion at innocentive.com, internally focused innovation with NASA@Work, technology scouting with Yet2.com, software innovation through the NASA Tournament Lab with TopCoder, and the Academic Innovation Challenge. Some of these models have highlighted innovators who have, as a result, been able to build on their initial success to create or expand companies in pursuit of NASA and commercial business. A summary of these several innovation methods and associated results and lessons learned will be described in this paper. NASA is learning from pilots with these models and pursuing new models for innovation as well, in an effort to strengthen the culture of innovation in NASA, increase the breadth of innovation sources, and accelerate the pace of exploration and discovery.