

Gartner for Research & Development Leaders

# How to Fill the R&D Funnel With High-Quality Ideas



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## Introduction

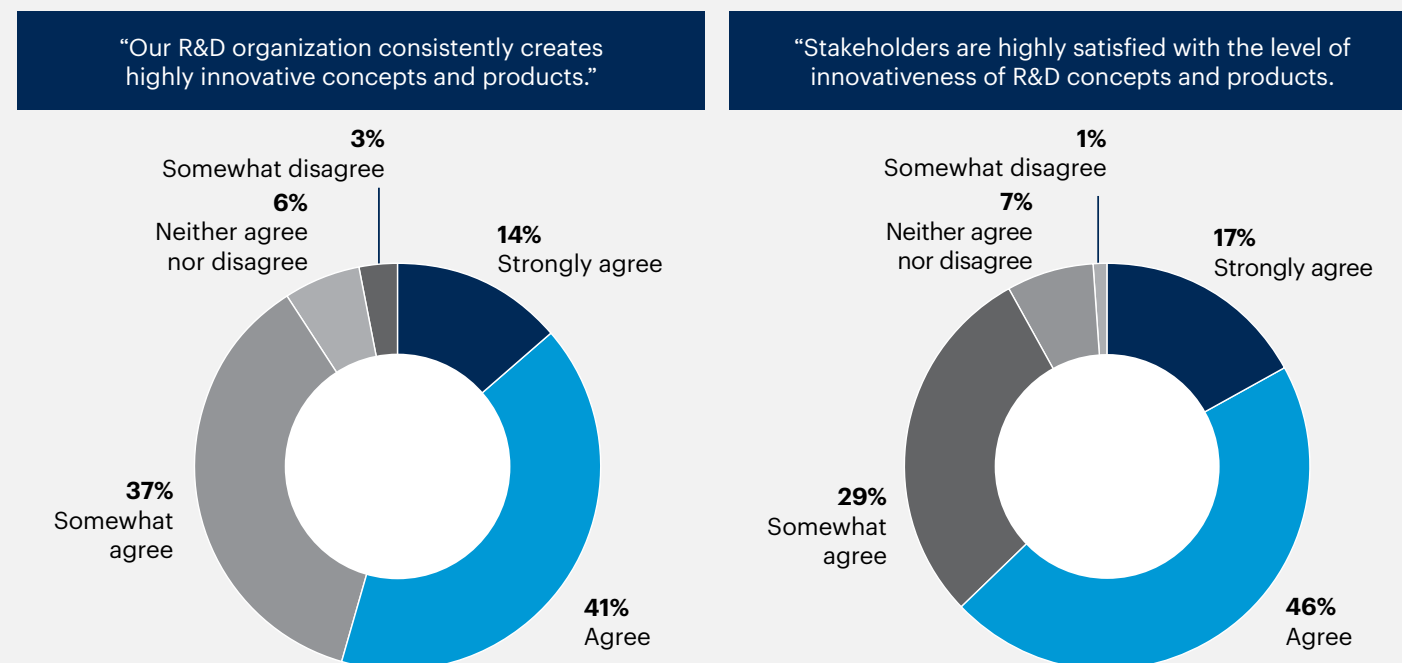
R&D leaders face pressure to drive growth through innovation. Generating high-quality ideas demands that they overcome entrenched obstacles. Gartner identifies three barriers that stand in the way: silos within R&D, lack of psychological safety and limited experimentation.



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Figure 1: Middling R&D innovativeness

Percentage of respondents



n = 400

Q. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements: "Our R&D organization consistently creates highly innovative concepts and products."; "Stakeholders are highly satisfied with the level of innovativeness of R&D concepts and products."

Source: 2023 Gartner High Performance R&D Environment Survey

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

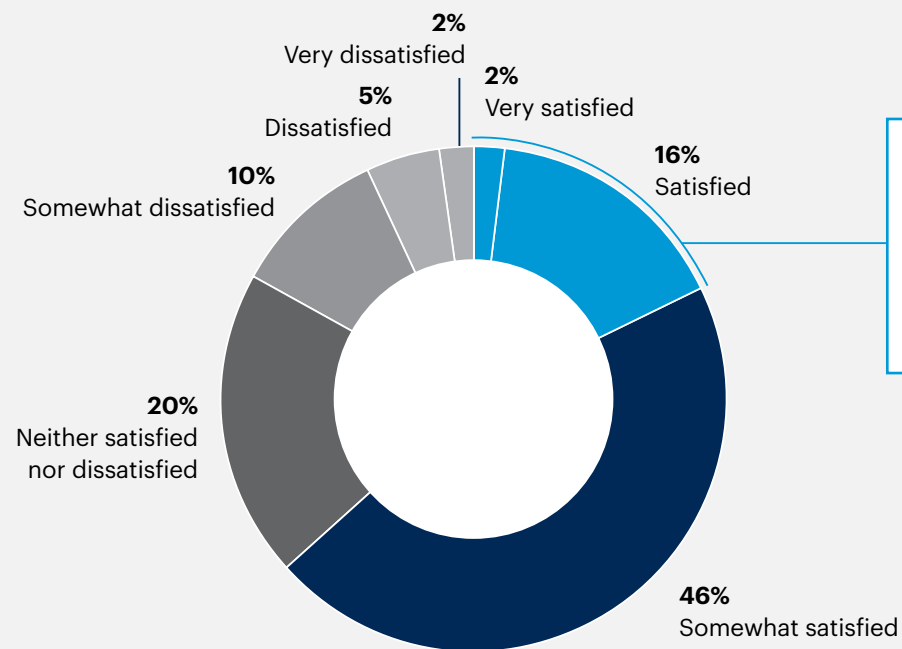
## Break down silos within R&D

Silos block collaboration and stifle ideas. Leading organizations unite teams through interactive workshops, cross-functional meetings and shared process guides. By integrating diverse perspectives, they fuel innovation and unlock creative solutions.



Figure 2: Low collaboration satisfaction

Percentage of respondents



n = 61

Q. How satisfied have you been with the methods you chose to improve the quality of collaboration within the R&D team?

Source: Gartner September 2023 Polling

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

## Foster psychological safety and candor

Employees thrive when they share ideas, challenge assumptions and learn from failures. Supportive leadership and open communication unlock creative potential across teams. Psychological safety sparks honest feedback and encourages bold thinking, creating an environment where new ideas flourish.



Figure 3: Innovation idea presentation guidelines for R&D workforce

### Percentage of respondents

SNOW day idea presentations	
Guidelines for presenting ideas	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No slides, no sitting, no fear
<input type="checkbox"/>	One to five minute presentation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feed unique ways to present
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation content should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Idea definition</li><li>• Business fit</li><li>• Learnings</li></ul>
Executive feedback	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek executive guidance for ideas presented
<input type="checkbox"/>	Executives will provide feedback on the business fit of the ideas and help in refining the ideas
Results	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Idea scores are displayed on the innovation board.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Idea scores displayed are anonymous and identified by their idea names, not individual names.

Source: Gartner

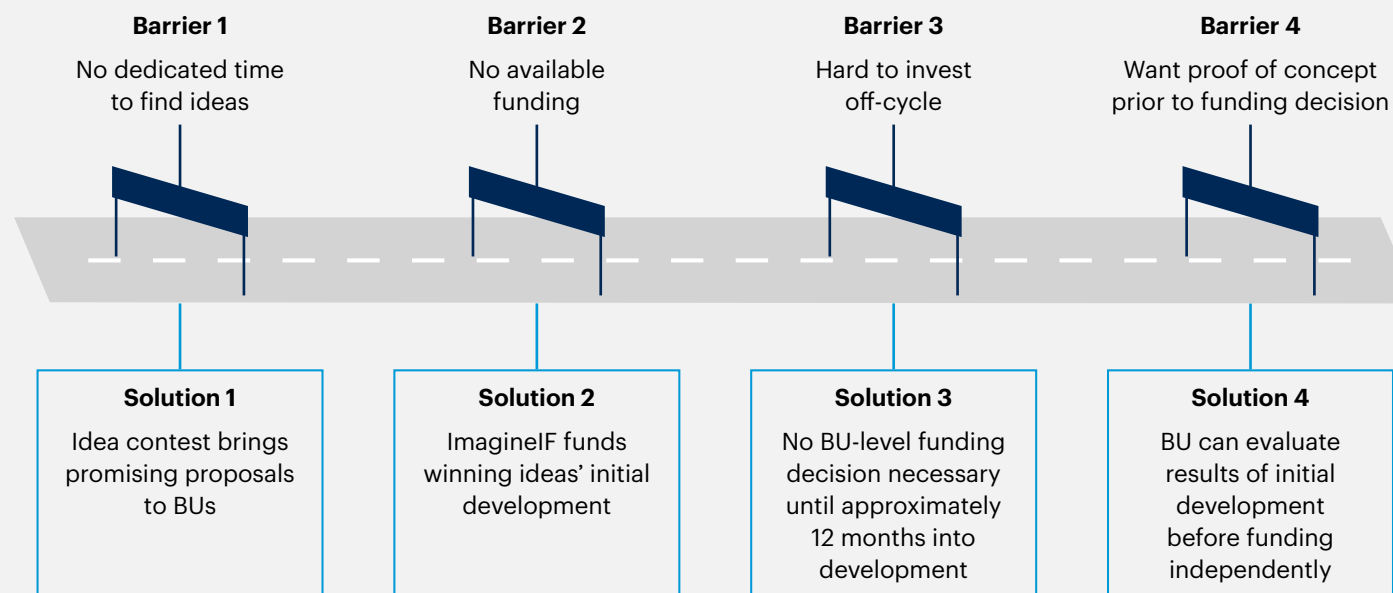
## Enable experimentation

Teams advance when they test new concepts with freedom, resources and support. The most innovative organizations treat mistakes as learning opportunities rather than setbacks. Innovation funds, risk-free ideation sessions and leadership endorsement drive experimentation and help teams discover breakthrough solutions.



Figure 4: Overcoming barriers to leadership investment in innovation

Percentage of respondents



Source: Gartner



## Recommendations

- Leverage tools, events and training sessions to improve collaboration and communication within R&D.
- Champion a work environment of psychological safety and candor by inviting staff to share ideas and suggestions, and responding productively to the feedback received.
- Help staff overcome organizational barriers to innovation by giving teams agency to experiment with innovative concepts, as well as to make mistakes and fail.



Figure 5: Imperatives to fill the NPD pipeline

	 <b>Action steps</b>
 <p><b>Break down silos within R&amp;D</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leverage tools, events and training sessions to improve collaboration and communication within the R&amp;D function.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Embrace opportunities to integrate newer members of your R&amp;D team and share institutional knowledge held by more tenured staff.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Foster psychological safety and candor</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Champion a work environment in which staff proactively share ideas, embrace failure and are not hesitant to speak up.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite constructive feedback and respond productively to the feedback received.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Model humility by acknowledging risks and uncertainties and sharing when leaders make mistakes.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Enable experimentation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Give R&amp;D teams agency to experiment with innovative concepts.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Help staff overcome organizational barriers to innovation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adopt everyday practices as well as host special events and programs to encourage an experimental mindset among R&amp;D staff.</li> </ul>

Source: Gartner

# Actionable, objective insights

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