

MasterCard Labs is MasterCard's global Research and Development division, focused on the evolution of technological and consumer trends and the implication of these evolutions on the payments and commerce industries. Our tried, tested and proven methodologies enable us to generate new ideas from a variety of sources, and fast-track the best ideas from concept through prototype, pilot and into commercialization.

MasterCard Labs plays a key role in furthering the innovative culture within MasterCard by engaging the wider business in idea generation processes and innovation competitions. The Innovation Management team focuses on managing the programs and processes that generate, qualify, shape and develop innovation opportunities and ideas. We do so by delivering innovation programs to the wider MasterCard organization. Our goal – to identify and drive disruptive, breakthrough innovations in commerce.

Our current programs include:



Aspire is a crowd sourcing platform for capturing new ideas and concepts based on a focused challenge. Think of it as an online brainstorming tool where you can provide or get fresh perspectives from employees across the organization.

The Aspire platform regularly fields regular internal challenges sponsored by a variety of departments. Employees participate not only by submitting their own ideas, but also by viewing, commenting or building upon submitted ideas.



Innovation Express is a two-day, round-the-clock innovation challenge which sees cross-functional teams collaborate to create new business solutions in a fast-paced environment. It all begins with solving a customer or business problem. Teams then have just 48-hours to come up with an innovative but credible solution to the problem by showcasing their best idea as a prototype complete with business plan and video demonstration.



LaunchPad is a one-week collaborative sprint with cross-functional teams comprising of business, product, technical and design skill-sets focused on accelerating product development to solve for a singular business challenge. Through the use of rapid prototyping and regular feedback, new solutions are generated to an advanced prototype stage in just one to two weeks.

One of the main reasons that LaunchPad works to produce something tangible *fast* is that it brings together the right people to get it done. All of the participants have a stake in the event and are intently focused on the outcome. Core team members spend 100% of their time working side-by-side in the same physical location throughout the intense program, while contributors (including idea owners and senior executives) step in at key times to provide guidance.

Typically, the most promising ideas are taken through the LaunchPad program when being considered for incubation. Outputs such as a working prototype, business plan and go-to market strategy help facilitate the decision to pilot and commercialize an opportunity.

We also use this innovation program in partnership with MasterCard customers through our Labs as a Service consultative group.



Involve is a company-wide innovation competition where teams of employees compete for the chance to see their innovation brought to market and launched as a real product. Teams work together outside of their day jobs to develop a disruptive and transformative product, tied to corporate strategy, which has the potential to go all the way to market and become a commercial success.

To progress in the competition, teams present fully developed products, including prototype, business case and go-to-market plans to senior MasterCard executives to seek executive sponsorship. Teams who receive executive sponsorship pass through further checkpoints and qualifiers, before the five most innovative and commercially viable ideas are selected for the grand finale.

The grand finale sees finalists' pitch and demo their products to the entire company via a live webcast. MasterCard employees globally vote to determine the ultimate winner. Any participating project may be awarded funding for development as part of MasterCard's incubation program.



Ignite is a Labs program focused on *quick* submission, *quick* evaluation, and *quick* implementation. It gives participants the opportunity to submit disruptive ideas in response to focused challenges. The program is open to all MasterCard employees and ideas are submitted individually or as a team. Once idea submissions are received, an evaluation group – consisting of Labs employees and experts representing each challenge – select the ideas. Finalists present to the executive judging panel who determine the winners.



Take Initiative is a two-day global event designed for and taking place in all of MasterCard's tech hubs. The program is built for employees to have an opportunity to take a step back from the day-to-day, to get creative and to solve challenges that are meaningful to them, the team, and the region. Each location has local sponsors and facilitators who host the event and guide teams through the activities.

The event brings together teams consisting of a mix of functions and roles to compete to develop an innovative solution in just two working days. The first day begins with inspiration, collaboration, and ideation – then quickly leads into solution-building with a judging finale.

Teams are asked to come up with a solution in response to a range of challenges determined by company needs and interests. One of the most interesting challenges is to take a feature from the distant horizon of the product roadmap and pull it forward – getting it done right now. By the end of the event, the teams' solution includes a working prototype and a summary business canvas.

Teams are encouraged to consider using current MasterCard and external open APIs as part of their solutions. At the end of the event, teams give a 5-minute demo their prototype to judging panel and are awarded prizes.



IdeaBox is our newest program and it is all about getting ideas off the ground and running through providing a “desert-island kit for innovation.” Through a series of guided steps, employees have the opportunity to really make a difference and potentially create their own startup within MasterCard. If selected, MasterCard will work with the individuals or teams to help scale the project.

To get started, employees submit their idea for a new product that would create a breakthrough experience for our stakeholders. Employees provide specifics about their idea, describe what an innovative person they are and disclose their previous achievements . . . whatever it takes to win us over.

Once an idea is submitted, the IdeaBox is rolled out in three stages:

- **The Orange Box (exploring)**
Provides you with a framework to explore your ideas further. You will build one idea out and be pitch-ready by the end of the Orange Box Journey. You will pitch your idea to a member of the IdeaBox Panel. Only the best ideas will make it past this stage and be awarded a Red Box. It’s not easy to pass this stage. (\$1,000 prepaid card; 60 days to create the pitch.)
- **The Red Box (building)**
Should you be successful to reach this stage, you’re a real survivor, but your journey will be tough! The Red Box is all about moving away from ideas and building out your concept in structured way. Your product will have been validated in the market and supported by a strong business case. Strong enough to attract MasterCard executive support. If you are successful, you will then be awarded a Green Box. (\$25,000 prepaid card to use for development.)
- **Incubation (commercializing)**
The Green Box is all about incubation. If you reach this stage, you have secured executive support to “spin-out” your concept into an internal startup within the MasterCard Labs incubation hub. You will own this product and move full time to working on this product within Labs.

Ideabox is about creating innovators, not just innovations.



MasterCard Start Path is a group within MasterCard Labs designed to support early-stage startups developing the next generation of innovative and breakthrough commerce solutions. Since launching in early 2014, StartPath has worked with more than 40 startups including Nymi, a wearable technology device that allows you to seamlessly unlock devices, remember passwords and more, using your heartbeat's unique signature.

MasterCard Start Path recently expanded globally, bringing key benefits to startups in Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australia and Africa. Start Path Global has been designed to put startups first and aims to help promising startups scale faster. In addition, startups have access to over 60 MasterCard experts with the business acumen to help them navigate regulatory challenges, shape ideal technology platforms and build a clear brand strategy.

As MasterCard Start Path expands internationally, startups will also benefit from Start Path Partners, a group of more than 20 leading players in banking, retail, and technology including Rakuten, Samsung Card, Target, Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Santander Innoventures. Start Path connects startups with corporate partners by working with their senior leaders of innovation, investment, product, and business development to deliver value for their company and test solutions for its customers.

Start Path connects the right partners with the right startups to build the future of commerce together.