



GENERAL MILLS

General Mills Invites Inventor Community to Join Its Enhanced Worldwide Innovation Network

General Mills advances connected innovation efforts through increased focus and transparency with launch of new innovation portal, powered by inno360

MINNEAPOLIS--([WIRE](#))--Today General Mills extends an invitation to scientists, researchers, engineers, inventors and entrepreneurs around the globe to visit the company's new General Mills Worldwide Innovation Network (G-WIN) innovation portal, online at [.com/Win](#). Visitors to the site can [opportunities](#) to partner with General Mills on initiatives across the company's extensive portfolio of leading consumer brands.

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The new G-WIN innovation portal provides visitors with details on [50 technical challenges](#) that the company is looking to solve. Those who join the G-WIN community by [online](#) will receive ongoing updates about specific technical challenges that match their unique abilities and expertise.

"We are absolutely committed to changing the way we invent through connected innovation," said Peter Erickson, senior vice president of Innovation, Technology and Quality at General Mills. "Connected innovation is very much a part of our culture. The new innovation portal, powered by inno360's software, provides us with a wonderful tool to make the process more efficient."

General Mills has partnered with innovation software firm [to](#) co-create the Web-based platform as part of the firm's Alpha partner program.

"General Mills has been a pioneer and leader in the food industry in embracing new methods that will create value for consumers," said Larry Huston, chief innovation officer of inno360 parent company STCI.

"We consider them to be a leader in applying the latest open innovation practices and in applying next generation thinking of how to create value through innovation. At inno360 we are so pleased to count General Mills as a partner in helping to change the innovation game."

This technology will enable General Mills to enhance and accelerate significant innovation efforts already taking place inside the company by matching outside technical expertise and resources with a broader array of businesses and brands.

The G-WIN innovation portal allows visitors to submit novel ideas and respond to the company's list of innovation opportunities. General Mills is interested in product, package and processing technologies that are applicable to the company's categories or brands, uniquely meet an unmet consumer need, have been proven technically feasible and can be applied quickly, or are potentially game-changing for the food industry. The company will evaluate proposals and will respond to all submissions within three weeks.

The added capabilities on the G-WIN portal are representative of the company's continued investment in connected innovation, which has proven to be a successful strategy for General Mills. In 2005, General Mills identified open innovation as a key strategic priority and formed a team charged with creating

programs and processes to identify and engage external partners. In the spring of 2007, the company formalized its open innovation efforts and [launched G-WIN](#) to let the world know that it was actively seeking ideas from the outside. The original G-WIN Web site, also launched in 2007, shared information about the program and invited outside partners to submit their patent or patent-pending ideas for consideration.

Today, the G-WIN team has expanded to include 15 Innovation Entrepreneurs who work inside the company with each General Mills business division to identify connected innovation opportunities.

“G-WIN is our call to outside partners to let them know that we’re serious about open innovation,” said Jeff Bellairs, director of G-WIN. “It’s about reaching outside of our company, working with other inventors and incorporating their eureka moments with our unique capabilities to create bigger innovation in the marketplace.”

General Mills is dedicated to building meaningful and sustainable relationships that will not only benefit the company and its brands, but also its external partners. Partners who help the company achieve its innovation goals can benefit from General Mills’ resources, scale and credibility in the marketplace to advance their own business.

“In the past, we relied heavily on serendipity,” Bellairs said. “Inno360 is the connection engine that will give us the ability to find partners in a more proactive, thoughtful fashion.”

Since the launch of G-WIN, more than 40 new General Mills products have incorporated a significant portion of external innovation, including [One Bars](#), [® Savorings](#), [® Light soups](#), Yoplait® , and [Ferry](#) frozen dinner kits.

About General Mills

One of the world's leading food companies, General Mills operates in more than 100 countries and markets more than 100 consumer brands, including Cheerios, Häagen-Dazs, Nature Valley, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Green Giant, Old El Paso, Progresso, Cascadian Farm, Muir Glen and more. Headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, General Mills had fiscal 2009 global net sales of US\$15.9 billion, including the company’s \$1.2 billion proportionate share of joint venture net sales. Visit [.com](#).

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