

3M Inspire Challenge 2022 Case Themes

1. Sustainable Materials
2. The New Paradigm (A Pandemic Aware World)
3. Equity (Through Science and Technology)

1. Sustainable Materials

How can 3M integrate renewable and recycled materials to advance a global circular economy by enhancing the circularity of any or all of the following: water, packaging, products, and/or by-products from production processes?

The global economy is at a crossroads.

Corporations have an opportunity to embrace new circular business models – ones that are regenerative and that replenish natural resources rather than depleting them.

As industry develops new ways to create a sustainable future, new innovations across design, processing and manufacturing will result, driving toward a circular future for all.

Your team should propose ideas that enable 3M to do one or more of the following:

1. Do more with less, and/or
2. Extend the lifespan of products and/or incorporate upcycling/recycling
3. Reduce waste and pollution through design, and/or
4. Restore and regenerate ecosystems.

2. The New Paradigm (A Pandemic Aware World)

How can 3M evolve its business model, supply chain, office design, and/or work models to continue adapting to a new normal that incorporates the pandemic indefinitely?

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the world when it emerged in late 2019, fundamentally transforming the way society interacts, lives, and works.

Countries shut down borders; jobs, schools and universities went remote; people, businesses, governments, and organizations had to adapt.

Initially thought to be temporary, the ongoing reality of the pandemic has ushered in a new paradigm. Businesses have transformed, with huge shifts around supply chain, infrastructure, health care, and the workplace.

Your team should propose ideas that enhance 3M's:

1. Business and supply chain models, and/or
2. Technology infrastructure (e.g. virtual meetings, doctor appointments, remote work and advanced communication), and/or
3. Work model (hybrid/remote), and/or
4. Workspaces (e.g. further enforce physical distancing, face coverings, cleanliness, continuously).

3. Equity (Through Science and Technology)

How can 3M enhance its culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion to stay innovative?

The future requires diverse thinkers to solve diverse problems.

Equity in the workforce leads to better problem-solving, expands the talent pool, and is important for long-term economic growth. When we give more individuals opportunities to work in the sciences, we create new avenues and new solutions to solve diverse problems.

Industries are recognizing the current and historical disparities, and are setting goals to improve and increase equity in their organizations. Unfortunately, women and minorities remain particularly underrepresented in science and technology roles. Their underrepresentation contributes to a lack of new ideas and perspectives from diverse backgrounds.

Your team should propose ideas that improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at 3M to:

1. Improve problem-solving, and/or
2. Expand the talent pool by accelerating representation across all dimensions of diversity, and/or
3. Systematically review and adjust our practices for fairness and equity, and/or
4. Create meaningful change rooted in scientific thinking, and/or
5. Improve local access to STEM at any level to solve local problems (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).