

Doing Business Today Means Confronting Pressures and Challenges on All Fronts

Today's business environment is characterized by:

- The globalization of commercial networks and infrastructures
- Industries in flux as industries converge and new ones are introduced
- A buyer-driven economy in which customer needs are ever-changing and demand is unpredictable
- Shorter product life cycles as competition accelerates the pace of imitation
- A marketplace in which the power of brands gives way to the power of the customer's experience

Leaders must not only successfully navigate these challenges, but do so within the context of financial markets that are more demanding than ever.

It's clear that productivity initiatives, process improvement, downsizing, and other reduction-oriented endeavors can only take an organization so far. The viability of an organization depends upon innovation.

For organizations needing to accelerate growth and achieve critical business objectives, Leading Innovation: From Concept to Customer Value™ provides supervisors, team leaders, managers, and middle managers from all functional areas with a framework, best practices, and tools required to make innovation pay off. Leading Innovation is best suited for leaders who:

- Are expected to engage employees and others to come up with new and innovative ways to provide value to internal and external customers
- Make decisions about innovations to pursue and those to stop
- Are responsible for implementing innovation and managing obstacles and roadblocks that occur

Unlike many programs that concentrate exclusively on creativity and/or the “fuzzy front end”, Leading Innovation: From Concept to Customer Value™ develops skills and competencies around building a culture of innovation, as well as the capability to manage and facilitate a process that will bring results to a new level. This process not only helps participants understand their role as innovative leaders, it also helps create a common language and serves as a critical focal point for appropriately prioritizing and deploying the effort and energy of all involved.

Unit 1: The Heart of Innovation

“Innovation” is used to describe everything from market-shifting breakthroughs to incremental improvements. And, while there may be disagreement about its exact definition, there is clear consensus that innovation is among the most powerful competitive advantages in today's business environment. Effective and sustained innovation is the result of structured, premeditated steps that proactively harness creativity and marry it with unparalleled implementation rigor.

In this unit, participants are introduced to the nature of innovation. They develop a shared understanding of what it is and what it's not, clarifying the challenges they and their organizations face. Participants discover the cultural characteristics that support innovation and generate specific steps they can take to boost innovation and innovative results.

After actively participating in this unit, participants will be able to:

- Define innovation for their organization, pointing to specific examples of various forms of innovation
- List the challenges they face in creating and supporting innovative results

- Explain how creativity and execution drive innovation success
- Evaluate their organization's culture relative to innovation
- List actions they can take to create a culture of innovation

Unit 2: Your Role in Innovation

Organizations that excel at innovation have succeeded in making innovation everyone's responsibility, not just R&D's or a select club of creative thinkers and top level strategists. At the same time, because of the inherent challenges innovation presents, these organizations also appreciate the pivotal role leaders must play in making innovation happen. Leaders at all levels need to commit to making innovation a priority before they can expect others to do the same. And deep executive support or not, innovation won't happen unless employees believe their direct manager or supervisor is behind it.

In this unit, participants are introduced to a process that is at the core of what leaders do to bring innovation to new levels. They explore how to convey their commitment in ways that matter most, moving beyond words to day-to-day actions.

After actively participating in this unit, participants will be able to:

- Apply a structured process to promote innovation/create a common language
- Describe the key role individual leader commitment plays in innovation success
- Take high-impact actions to demonstrate their commitment to innovation

Unit 3: Optimizing Diversity

Innovation requires looking everywhere and listening to everyone for ideas, associations, perspectives, and trends—including people inside and outside of your organization, in the next cubicle, and even thousands of miles away. Breakthrough innovations often have an element of serendipity—the unpredictable moment when perspectives collide, combine, and connect in a moment of brilliance. Tapping into diversity on this scale sets the stage for serendipity.

The broader and deeper the pool of diverse perspectives and inputs from which to draw, the more likely a breakthrough idea will occur. In this unit, participants identify the diverse range of voices they will include in their own innovation network. In addition, they explore the many combinations of viewpoints, knowledge, skills, and characteristics available to them to leverage diverse thinking. Leaders cannot force serendipity to occur. Introducing the right structures in the right balance can ramp up the likelihood that those breakthrough moments occur.

After actively participating in this unit, participants will be able to:

- Define the impact diversity can have on quality and quantity of idea generation
- Identify and tap into sources of innovative ideas
- Identify the mix of perspectives, skill sets, and capabilities that maximize diversity

Unit 4: Sparking New Thinking

Optimized diversity creates the opportunity and space for varied perspectives to bounce up against each other and combine creatively into something unique and new.

If, however, some of those perspectives are based on the same tired information, frame of reference, and set of conventional assumptions, nothing truly new and innovative will emerge. Innovation needs a boost, a spark. In this unit, participants will learn ways to broaden, freshen up and connect the perspectives that, in turn, lead to new ways of thinking. Given that many innovations stem from an intense customer connection, participants learn how to put the customer perspective front and center of idea generation.

After actively participating in this unit, participants will be able to:

- Take action to broaden exposure to inputs that fuel innovative thinking
- Identify ways to bring the customer perspective into the innovation process
- Challenge perspectives that block new thinking

Unit 5: Shaping and Selecting Ideas

Boosting the volume of ideas is not enough to boost innovative results. Leaders must know how to select and shape promising ideas into viable opportunities, protecting, advancing, and promoting those ideas as appropriate throughout the organizational system. Instead of relying on the simplicity of go/no go “gates,” leaders must have the skill to facilitate any number of adjustments—large or small—that allow the concept to develop until its viability is proven or disproven.

In this unit, participants become more alert to promising opportunities even when the concept is in its infancy. They explore ways to shape and support early ideas through idea coaching, messy learning, collaboration, and experimentation.

After actively participating in this unit, participants will be able to:

- Define the two ends of the protect/promote continuum and explain the conditions demanding each
- List leadership actions along the protect/promote continuum
- Practice a conversational model that helps to advance ideas at any stage of development
- Explain the essential nature of messy learning
- Suggest a range of messy learning actions to advance concepts, helping to prove or disprove their viability

Unit 6: Executing Innovation

Innovation excellence requires a level of rigor beyond even the most comprehensive project management processes—it only makes sense! Innovative actions and ideas, by their very nature, assault past experience and introduce something entirely novel. As a result, leaders must expect and anticipate confusion, resistance, and other challenges—both from inside and outside the organization. Disciplined—yet fast and flexible—execution is the key to working through the complexity and translating viable ideas to marketplace results.

In this unit, participants are introduced to the practices of implementation success. They assess their organization’s effectiveness at developing and deploying the strong teams required to execute innovation, managing the range of changes associated with innovation, and solving the problems that are a natural part of the innovation process. They explore criteria

for making tough decisions about when and how to terminate innovations that are not delivering appropriate returns on investment and prioritize their personal next steps to support innovation in their organizations.

After actively participating in this unit, participants will be able to:

- Explain the hallmarks of implementation success
- Assess their organization’s ability to effectively execute innovative ideas
- List criteria and steps for appropriately terminating the execution of an innovation
- Plan personal actions for supporting innovation within their organizations

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