



SUCCESS STORIES

Over the years, Jeff DeGraff and his team at the Innovatrium, his innovation lab, have worked with many organizations around the world: from American Airlines to Yahoo, from non-profit organizations such as the Association of Art Museum Directors to government organizations such as the Federal Reserve, and to tech giants such as Microsoft.

JEFF'S WORK CENTERS ON FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGING THE WAY LEADERS THINK AND BEHAVE: to analyze challenges from different innovation strategies and find opportunities in new ways. Organizations learn to develop the right innovation capabilities, promote different behaviors from their leaders, and employ pro-innovation practices to create their own innovation playbook and sustainable growth.

These organizations find new opportunities, embark in breakthrough ventures, and launch billions of dollars in new products and services, such as Coke Zero, Hulu, and Thomson Reuters Light. They learn to embrace the innovation mindset and apply various innovation principles that are the fundamentals of the Certified Professional Innovator program in various segments of their organizations, such as recruiting practices, operating rhythm, and training programs. General Electric, who has embedded Jeff's training in their program for more than a decade, continue to be on the front-line of groundbreaking work in renewable energy, medical devices, and digital solutions through its Ecomagination strategy.

Go to www.jeffdegraff.com/speaker/testimonials to read more and watch video testimonials.

Very recently, Bosch North America received almost one billion dollars as their first order of their newly launched innovative rear view mirror device, which was conceived and developed in the Innovatrium. Working with Jeff's team, Bosch's team learned to not just create new ideas, but also to execute and continually revise their innovation plan to solve unforeseen problems and to push it through the organization. With the help of the Innovatrium, they developed a new innovation process, increased the diversity and quantity of new ideas in their pipeline, and collaborated between different departments.



The Munger Graduate Residences at the University of Michigan is another recent example of a project jumpstarted at and supported by the Innovatrium, using living and working space as a catalyst for innovative collaborations between students and faculty from all 19 schools and colleges in the University of Michigan. Changing the way higher education functions, Munger is launching action learning interdisciplinary initiatives to tackle real life issues.



In Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory is learning to enroll collaborators and sponsors, identify low-cost opportunities to pilot projects, and create low-fidelity prototypes to seek venture capital and approach investors, all leading to the creation of an innovation incubator.



Similarly, on the other side of the country, Honeywell Aerospace is creating an internal start-up by converting a conference room into a hacker space and empowering a team of highly-skilled (but underutilized) engineers and designers with money, guns, and lawyers to create a new product in less than half the time of the industry standard.



With each experiment and project, these organizations continue to revise and refine their approaches to innovation and are developing their own innovation process and playbook to create sustainable innovation by developing the right innovation culture and competency within. They are, in their way, to create their own version of the next Hulu.

Read on to learn about several stories of products and services that have reinvented their industries. For more, please go to www.jeffdegraff.com/consultant/success-stories.



Not too long ago there was a very large shift in the way that people watch television; many (the younger generation first) wanted to watch a program that they wanted, when they wanted, not when it was shown on television. Faced by declining numbers of viewers, NBC contacted Jeff.

While NBC had an incredible pool of talented and experienced people in broadcasting, it did not understand the purchasing and decision-making processes of the younger generation and how to create new products/services for them. Based on Jeff's recommendation, NBC hired a young man who had previously worked for one of the most famous internet providers in the world. He hired his own team and rented a warehouse, which he covered in black paper to keep all prying eyes out.

In three weeks, with Jeff's guidance, a brand-new concept of an internet media provider was born. After several iterations, the product was then launched as Hulu. It has remained as one of the most popular media streaming services.



Coca-Cola called Jeff when they launched a new diet cola called C2 in the U.S. with disappointing results. It was supposed to appeal to men, who were not won by Diet Coke, but it didn't work. Jeff helped them deconstruct their failure, realize the actual value of the product, and think of the product in new ways.

After a few product and market experiments, Jeff saw that they could make a new cola that had a very similar taste to the original Coke, but with no calories. Therefore, instead of defining it as a new unrelated cola, it should invoke the original product and emphasize the difference at the same time. Voila: Coke Zero was born. Ten years later, it is still one of the best selling soda drinks in the world.

Jeff also saw that there were actually two additional products: the sweetener and the packaging. The new, zero-calorie natural sweetener, derived from the leaves of a plant, was then sold separately to other food companies as an ingredient and as a direct-to-consumer product called Truvia. The new aluminum bottle, which kept the beverage cool for a longer period of time and took up less space on the shelf, was sold to other beverage makers such as those in the beer industry.



As a large conglomerate in the early 2000s, General Electric was having difficulty keeping their many departments in-sync and making sure that they were growing as a unit instead of just individually. Jeff was brought in to “connect the dots” and to leverage the abundance of expertise and talents in GE to create a predatory advantage to its competitors.

Jeff started with creating a common vision and language for innovation for the entire firm. GE would have to innovate horizontally across departments and learn that experiments are the key to innovation. Failures and testings are necessary components to success. As a company that is highly driven by success and high performance, GE needed to adjust its fundamental way of thinking. Jeff started taking GE’s executives on “field trips.” They visited several thriving companies who utilize different approaches to innovation and the Henry Ford Museum to inspire out-of-the-box thinking and learn concrete evidences of practices that yield success.

Through careful analysis of their companies’ strengths and public need, GE executives came up with a handful of large-scale problems that they would like to solve and created hand-picked task teams to start solving them. These groups would need to use Jeff’s innovation principles to run a wide variety of experiments, accelerate the failure cycle, and collaborate horizontally in order to sync it up and become successful.

Jeff worked closely with the team tasked with improving water treatment. The team came up with 5 or 6 experiments, tested and modified them, and finally had a success in their hand! They found a way to remove harmful chemicals from water in a relatively, but revolutionarily, simple way. The low cost and simple method are both crucial to their product reaching all parts of the developing world in serious need for clean water. The funny thing is this solution would never have been found without collaborating with the other task teams: i.e., the solution was found through horizontal innovation.

Jeff’s methodologies and processes ended up creating the cornerstones of the revival of GE as a global giant in almost every major field. Even more than that, through these different projects, an eco-friendly movement was jumpstarted in the business world and GE still remains one of the leading firms in the green technology industry through its Ecomagination strategy.