

Ideaction

Innovative Thinking and Innovative Organization

A Credentials Presentation

Toronto, December 2008

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction
2.	Who We Are
3.	Our Organization
4.	Our Products and Services
5.	What We Believe About Innovation
6.	Our Approach to Innovation Education
7.	Our Approach to Creating More Innovative Organization
8.	The Ideaction Methodology
9.	Some of Our Clients
10.	Testimonials
11.	Description of Relevant Projects

1. Introduction

Ideaction is a Canadian-owned training and consulting company focusing on innovation and innovative organizations and operating in North America and Europe. Our mission is to help organizations become more innovative, systematically and sustainably, using the Ideaction innovation process.

The Ideaction process has also proven very effective for change management and productivity improvement initiatives as well as to improve current processes such as Project Management or Marketing.

The services we offer include consulting, training and public speaking in the application of innovation to all aspects of organizations.

2. Who We Are

Ideaction focuses on innovation and its application to improving organization's performance. Ideaction was originally created as a training company specializing in individual creativity at all levels of the organization.

Based on that experience, and realizing that individual creativity was only a small part of the issue of innovation facing organizations, we developed a series of concepts and methodologies to improve organization's effectiveness by fostering innovation and change management. Since 1985, Ideaction has successfully implemented innovation programs in over 30 companies.

Ideaction has also developed new models for Innovative Strategic Planning and Innovative Marketing Planning based on the Ideaction methodology. The strategic planning model has been used by organization such as TD Bank, Manulife Canada, Maclean Hunter, Munich Reinsurance Worldwide and Canada Post.

Claude Legrand, founder and Managing Partner of Ideaction is the founder and Program Director of the Centre of Excellence in Innovation Management at the Schulich School of Business in Toronto.

Rob LaJoie, MBA, Managing Partner of Ideaction was a senior executive at Bank of Montréal and ZS Consulting and joined Ideaction in 2007. He brings over 25 years of implementing innovation in large and complex organizations.

3. Our Organization

Ideaction was founded in 1983. It has continuously focused on innovation since its creation. It is located in Toronto and managed by Claude Legrand and Rob LaJoie.

4. Our Products and Services

Ideaction works solely in the area of innovation, innovative thinking, strategic innovation and creating and managing innovative organizations.

The training products we offer are:

- ***Better Brainstorming***
- ***Individual and small team Innovative and Creative Thinking Skills***
(2 day program)
- ***Facilitating Innovation*** (3 day program)
- ***Creating and Managing the Innovative Organization for Managers***
(3 day program)
- ***Leading Innovation for Executives*** (1 day program)

In the area of consulting, we focus on the following areas:

- ***Creating and sustaining an innovative organization***
- ***Idea Generation and Prototyping***
- ***Innovation readiness audits and recommendations***
- ***Integrating innovation in existing processes including marketing planning and execution, strategy planning, business operation planning, business improvement processes***
- ***Using innovative thinking techniques to help a group adopt a radical culture and process change in an organization***
- ***Strategic Innovation***

In addition we have done extensive public speaking on innovation.

5. What We Believe About Innovation and Innovative Organizations

We believe:

- Innovation is a process that can be taught and managed. The most prevalent thinking system currently (the "school or IQ brain operating system") was great for the industrial economy and for command and control organization structures, but it is not adapted to the knowledge world in which we operate today.
- Innovation should never be a goal in itself. It is only an enabler of the organization's strategy.
- Innovation happens when individuals or small teams apply innovative thinking. **Organizations do not innovate**, they can only enable individuals or prevent them from being innovative.
- Everyone can be innovative. **Everyone can learn** to be more innovative.
- Innovation is **applied creativity**. It means change and risk, and that is why, although everyone is in favor of innovation, few people actually do it effectively and sustainably.
- An innovative organization is **more flexible**. It will be more successful handling outside change and imposing change on its competitors.

6. Our Approach to Innovation Education

Our approach to teaching innovative thinking is based on our understanding of how innovation really happens in organizations and what prevents individuals from being systematically innovative.

How innovation happens

Innovation only happens through individuals and small teams.

Cultures, organizations and their managers can only enable or prevent innovation. Therefore, our approach is, on the one hand, to train the Managers in the art and science of managing an innovative organization and teams and, on the other hand, to train the individual employees to be able to think effectively in an innovative manner when they need to.

What prevents innovation in organizations

There are many reasons why innovation is stifled in organizations but over the past 20 years we have identified two critical reasons for the resistance to innovation.

First, individuals rarely learn formally to think in an innovative way. The only way they have ever learned to think is the school system. That school thinking system is measured by IQ-type tests and is based on a few simple principles such as:

- There is only one question and one answer.
 - Questioning the question is risky.
 - Giving another answer than the one in the book is risky.
- The question is what the teacher asks and the answer is what the teacher expects.
 - Any other answer can be dangerous
 - There is a premium for a fast answer.
 - You will always succeed by giving the answer from the book.

It is the reliance on only one thinking system that prevents innovation in most people. The question is never “questioned” and the first answer is the answer. That system was very effective in the old Industrial Economy and “command and control” industrial organizations. Today, it prevents individuals from being innovative and from dealing with change effectively.

The Ideaction methodology is a complete system that individuals and small teams can use any time they need to be innovative. It emphasizes focusing first on the problem and understanding it perfectly (including its boundaries) before applying creativity. It allows individuals to accept ambiguity as a necessary part of the problem solving process.

The second main cause for the lack of innovation, in particular in large organizations, is the misunderstanding between creativity and innovation. Our definitions are:

- Creativity is having ideas, any new ideas.
- Innovation is successfully implementing useful new ideas.

Most organizations cannot handle a steady stream of creative people running around with great ideas because they fear it would cause a complete chaos in the organization. After a few people try to be really creative, creativity initiatives are usually placed on a shelf, never to be heard about again.

Ideaction is based on a rigorous process that defines at the outset the boundaries within which the good ideas must fit. These real boundaries (as opposed to obsolete paradigms and assumptions) define what is implementable and ensure that the teams work to find real solutions that will create better change, not just “creative” ideas.

7. Our Approach to Creating More Innovative Organizations

Training intact teams

We recommend training intact teams (teams working together) with their managers.

Our experience has demonstrated without ambiguity that training participants at random in a large organization does not change behaviors, unless the whole organization is trained over a very short period of time. In the case of innovation, we are asking participants to change some of the most fundamental aspects of their success, the way they think and solve problems.

If we train participants at random, they are enthusiastic after the session. However, when they return to the workplace and work with co-workers and, more importantly, with managers who have not attended any of the Ideaaction session, they are reluctant to apply what they have learned, and, if they try, the managers may not understand what they are trying to do and may not encourage the new behavior. In these cases, the training program becomes an event rather than a new process. Even in the most successful cases, the new processes and tools can only be sustained for a few weeks or months at best for the most motivated learners without management support.

Training managers first

We recommend training and coaching the managers first so they understand the importance of their role in the innovation process. Their role is to encourage their employees, to help them identify opportunities for innovation (asking questions, such as Why? Why Not? What if? And How to?). They also need to encourage the use of the process, remove road-blocks, align ideas and innovations with business priorities and become the champion of their employees' innovative ideas.

It is critical that managers understand that, despite all the training and external coaching they receive, they can prevent innovative behaviors in their "ward" without realizing it. It is, in fact, much easier for them to do so than to encourage innovation. Finally, they need to role model that they value innovative thinking and innovative approaches.

Training internal experts or facilitators

In our experience, it is extremely beneficial for the organization to train a small group of internal "champions" and coaches who can encourage the use of the innovation methodology with their peers and ensure many projects are successful.

The champions are all volunteers (usually young high potential employees) and receive 2 additional days of training in consulting with the Ideaaction process and in team facilitation. The added skills enable them to become internal innovation consultants and problem solvers.

Customizing the training to each target group

Ideaction will customize the program to answer the needs of each target group. For example, the program for the Sales force would probably be very different than the program for the Marketing staff.

Working on actual issues during the sessions

We recommend working on actual problems during the pilot sessions (for example: How to improve innovation in our Department?) This Action Learning model specifically enables the participants to identify clearly and jointly what innovation really means for them and their departments, and to build their confidence in using the Ideaction innovation tools.

Continuous coaching, learning and recognition/reward

We recommend planning a follow-up coaching and reinforcement program for all participants. Our experience is that innovative attitudes cannot come solely from training programs. Developing new habits and reflexes on the job can take from 6 to 18 months and reinforcement is necessary.

The Managers' role is critical in this regard and Managers should discuss Innovation initiatives at every Management meeting. In addition, the Innovation task group could become permanent as an "Office of Innovation" that can play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the innovation process and in ensuring that the process is adhered to.

Innovation efforts and successes should be regularly rewarded. We recommend in particular that Innovation initiatives and participation in Problem Solving teams be part of everyone's personal objectives, including senior management.

Integrating Innovation in all the organization' core processes

We recommend that the organization review all its internal processes for opportunities to integrate the new innovative thinking methodology and tools into them. This will align all the processes with the innovation objectives and "hard-wire" the behaviours (innovation becomes the way you work).

Using the Ideaction Innovation Planning Process

When appropriate, we recommend that organizations build an Innovation Plan to manage the transformation process (just like you do an IT or a Marketing plan).

The decision to build the plans can be made upfront or it can be made after the training has been completed and the teams want to get a better focus on the process of transformation.

The Innovation Plans are done at two levels:

- by the Executive team (supported by the Innovation team if necessary) for the overall Plan
- by each team for their own area

In order to ensure maximum ownership by each team, Ideaction limits its intervention to introducing the format and the process during the training and to coaching and supervising the teams on an as needed basis.

(see Table of Content of a standard Innovation Plan in Appendix #1)

8. The Ideaction Methodology

All Ideaction services and products are based on the Ideaction 4-step thinking methodology. This rigorous methodology has proved uniquely successful over the past 15 years. The steps are:

Step 1 - Framework

- What problem or opportunity do you want to work on?
- What does each word in the problem statement mean?
- What is the context?
- What are the boundaries?
- What type of thinking do you want (incremental or revolutionary, short or long term, etc.)?
- What are your ideal and your worst possible outcomes?
- What process will you use to resolve the issue?
- Who is the “owner” of the issue?

Step 2 - Issue Redefinition

- What are all the components of the issue, all the different ways to attack the issue?
- How does the issue look from various, non-linear points of view?
- What problem or problems do you want to resolve?

Step 3 - Idea Generation

- What are the best creativity techniques to resolve the issue?
- What are all the possible solutions?
- Which are the best solutions to resolve the real issue?

Step 4 - Implementation Planning

- What is the best way to implement the idea(s)?
- What could go wrong during the implementation?
- What can we do about it?

The Ideaction methodology has been effectively adapted to address problems small enough to be solved in an hour, as well as major issues such as the strategic directions for some of Canada's largest companies. We have successfully trained small entrepreneurial organizations as well as large financial institutions and Government departments.

9. Some of Our Past Clients

AOL Canada
Apple Canada
Atlas Publishing France
Astral Media
Bank of Montreal
Canada Post
Canadian Tire
Canwest
CMA - Certified Management Accountants
CIBC
Cossette Advertising
DRDC – Defense R&D Canada
Environics Communication
First Canadian Title
Glaxo Smith Kline
Gordon Capital
Harris Bank (US)
HRPA
ING Insurance
JM Bruneau (France)
J. Walter Thompson Advertising
Kimberly Clark
Leo Burnett Advertising
Maclean Hunter
Manulife
Munich Reinsurance
National Post
Novartis
Nycomed
Ontario Co-operative Association
Parc Technologique ValCartier
Pfizer Canada
Quebec Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation
Reader's Digest
Royal Bank of Canada
Staples Business Depot
SunLife
TD Canada Trust
TD Waterhouse US
Teva-Novopharm
Wunderman Advertising
Yves Rocher Cosmetics
3 Suisses Catalogue (France)

10. Testimonials

"Thank you very much for an excellent learning experience. Our involvement with you and Ideaaction is already paying dividends. Ideaaction has probably been the most effective and actionable innovation process that I've ever been exposed to."

*Jacques Lapointe
Former President, Glaxo Canada*

"We found Ideaaction to be an excellent system of nurturing innovation and finding new perspectives on old problems. During one of our two-day sessions we made substantial progress on a number of problems and in the very first week after the program, enough applications were found in client situations to cover the cost of Ideaaction. The experience is one I would heartily recommend to any company that needs to be innovative..."

*Mona Goldstein, Former President
Wunderman International*

"Ideaaction's approach and processes prove that everyone can be creative. By focusing on the right question, by re-framing the issues, by channeling our energies to get constructive results, we can and do achieve breakthrough creative that sells."

*Greg Cochrane, Former President
Mariposa Communications*

11. Description of Representative Projects

Bank of Montreal

In 1994 the Bank of Montreal created its Institute for Learning. After a North America wide selection process, Ideaction was selected to become the exclusive provider of training in the area of innovation and innovative thinking.

Over the next 7 years, we trained over 1500 employees at the Bank of Montreal, mbanx and Harris Bank in Chicago. In particular we trained whole teams in the Cash Management department, the Internal Audit department and mbanx Marketing department. We also trained the management teams of some regional offices.

In repeated measurement we were able to identify that the individuals trained as part of an intact team were much more innovative after 6 and 12 months than the individuals trained "at random".

Yves Rocher Cosmetics International

In 1986, Yves Rocher was Ideaction's first client, following a competition amongst the best innovation companies in Europe. The objective was to improve the innovative capacity of the marketing departments in all the countries where Yves Rocher operated. For 14 years, we trained all the marketing teams in the 3 major markets of France, Europe and North America.

In addition to the training, we also facilitated major problem solving sessions in France and Germany. In 1996, we were the lead consultant on a major initiative to change the culture of the Marketing departments in over 14 countries where Yves Rocher operated. The project was successfully completed leading to a return to profitability.

The Ideaction methodology is still used in all the offices of Yves Rocher and the continuous success of the company speaks for itself.

TD Canada Trust Marketing

In 2000 TD Canada Trust decided to redesign its marketing processes to ensure a more innovative and a more rigorous approach.

Ideaction was selected to develop the new process, integrating rigorous marketing methodology and innovative thinking. Over four years, we trained over 150 members of the TD Canada Trust Marketing Team as well as the 75 members of the TD Waterhouse Team in New York (USA). In each case we first trained the entire Executive Team followed by a rollout to all staff.

The result was a more systematically innovative approach to each project, better and more consistent quality marketing communication and, as an added bonus, a dramatic reduction in work that needed to be redone

Presented by:

Ideaction Inc.

Claude Legrand, Managing Partner

Rob LaJoie, Managing Partner

34 Oriole Gardens

Toronto, Ontario, M4V 1V7

Telephone: 416 929 4097

Email: claudio.legrand@ideaction.net

rob.lajoie@ideaction.net

Web site: www.ideaction.net