

At a Fortune 100 Technology Company, Innovation is Everyone's Business

How an Immersive High Potential Conference Is Building the Innovation Culture Key to Success



Igniting Growth: From Strategy to Results

Strong leadership is the lynchpin of business success, and developing future executives from among the high potential ranks is critical to driving innovation and sustaining competitive advantage long-term.

How do you accelerate the development of high potential leaders, building the leadership bench strength to overcome tomorrow's challenges? How do you achieve the culture of innovation needed to drive future growth? For a multinational technology company, this challenge is at the forefront.

An industry pioneer shaping noteworthy advancements, the Fortune 100 company has since achieved exponential growth. Early flagship products proved a tremendous success in the market; strategic acquisitions opened new opportunities; recent growth rates hit double-digits. Today, the firm's broad range of software, services, devices and solutions are helping to re-define society and business.

Yet, going forward, the technology powerhouse is transforming to re-ignite a culture of innovation and is committed to achieving break-through product developments. However, success depends on effective execution, a challenge demanding thousands of employees move in the same direction. To turn the strategy into action and results, the company is making an investment in its senior high potential leaders from around the world.

Unleashing Innovation: A Strategic Initiative

To convert new ideas into value creation across the organization, the executive management team recognized innovation leadership skills as a critical enabler of success. However, building innovation capability is not easy. It requires a willingness to do old things in new ways, to develop new skills, and to challenge the thinking that originally made the firm and its leaders succeed. Fortunately, like all business disciplines, it can be learned, practiced and mastered.

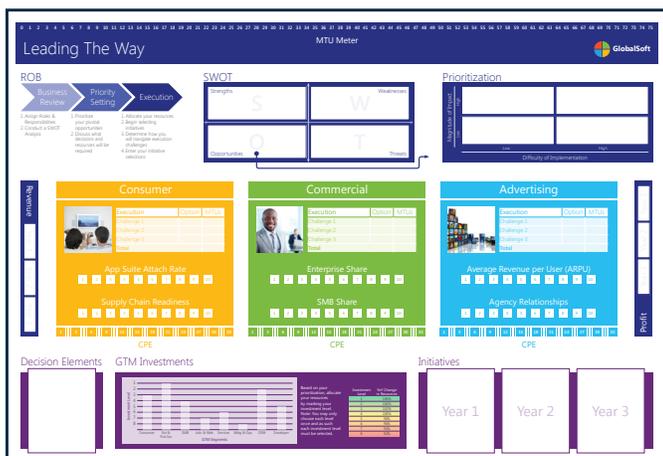
The company's executive team partnered with [BTS](#), a leading [strategy execution](#) consultancy, to develop a high-impact, experiential initiative to unleash leaders' talent, build capabilities and accelerate implementation. Targeting the most critical skills and behaviors, the immersive program was designed to:

- Drive innovation
- Inspire new ways of thinking by starting from "the outside in"
- Shape break-through solutions by collaborating across boundaries
- Enable leaders to confidently manage ambiguity and complexity
- Empower leaders to mobilize and engage the organization through high-impact stories

Bringing deep business and industry expertise, BTS consultants worked closely with the company's executive management to create an experience aligned to and reflective of the company, market position and key initiatives. Ultimately, the experiential program was delivered at a global event for high-potential leaders aimed at building out the executive talent pipeline.

The Experience at a Glance: Innovation Taught, Practiced and Mastered

Immersed in a fun and intense three day event, leaders from across all lines of business, functions and regions stepped outside of their traditional roles, collaborated in new ways, and worked together to fully understand the multinational's end-to-end business and process of innovation.



Working in small teams, leaders engaged in a customized [business simulation](#) reflecting the company, were challenged to confront real challenges, and made difficult trade-off decisions in three primary customer segments—Consumer, Commercial and Advertising. Successfully trying new things with uncertain outcomes was a stretch for the group. Fortunately, within the simulated environment, the associated risks were not at stake.

The interactive, discovery-based experience provided an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of the company's value chain and improve their decision-making skills. At the same time, leaders broke free of traditional rivers of thinking

through ideation tools, identified unmet customer needs, generated unique ideas and developed the leadership behaviors to mobilize teams and inspire action.

Engaged in group facilitated dialogue, surface polling and keynote presentations, the leaders were introduced to the tools and techniques to build a strong culture of innovation and to approach execution as a series of disciplined experiments. Disseminating best practices, leaders developed the alignment, mindset and capabilities to effectively implement the strategy and lead innovation in their area of the business.

Following the three-day event, one high potential leader commented, "We keep talking about inflection and market shifts, but the time to change is now! Let's not just talk about the change; let's embrace it. Let's make sure that the team is aware of the new approach and lead with hands and feet. Let's tell stories that inspire and impress. Let's lead the team to try, fail and try again."

Leaders Take the Company Further, Faster

For the Fortune 100 technology powerhouse, high expectations were exceeded. The program inspired high potential leaders, started a cultural foundation for innovation and helped develop the primary leadership capabilities to drive break-through innovation and product development.

Testifying to the initiative's success, a few sample insights shared throughout the experience:

- "I learned a framework for thinking about areas I need to innovate in my business. I am working through a business model for part of my team that is not effectively structured today, and will use the innovation framework to bring a broader set of ideas to how we can appropriately structure the team."
- "Innovation can happen anywhere and it is enabled when you suspend judgement and ask how something can happen as opposed to why it cannot. The business challenge I plan to tackle following this program—given the transformation into Devices and Services, it will be critical for my engineering team to move with speed."
- "I learned what elements are important in running a complex business, how to develop business plans, key factors that enable success and how to innovate. My call to action is to share this experience with my team immediately!"



Going forward, the positive momentum is expected to continue. The skills and behaviors gained by high potentials leaders will aid the company's success in re-defining the technology landscape.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we've been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It's strategy made personal.

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