Creating High Velocity Organizations

“Some firms outperform competitors in many ways at once—cost, speed, innovation, service. How? Steve Spear opened my eyes to the secret of systemizing innovation: taking it from the occasional, unpredictable ‘stroke of genius’ to something you and your people do month-in, month-out to outdistance rivals.”

—Scott D. Cook, Founder and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Intuit, Inc.

Program Details
Some organizations achieve such exceptional levels of performance—time to market, quality, safety, affordability, reliability and responsive, dependability and adaptability—that it puts their rivals to shame. Though few in overall number, they exist in high tech and heavy industry, product design and production, manufacturing and services such as health care delivery. The select few are capable of generating and sustaining such high velocity, broad based, relentless improvement and innovation, that they achieve unparalleled levels of excellence. Learn what drives the success of these companies.

The Learning Experience
Creating High Velocity Organizations employs several teaching techniques—presentations, case discussions, video dramatizations, and an in-class simulation—emphasizing a participatory style to maximize the opportunities for “learning by doing.” The program material is organized into thematic modules designed around the four key principles of building the discovery capability in an organization—smart work design, creative problem solving, continuous knowledge sharing, and developing of discovery skills among employees. Each module consists of several sessions, which demonstrate, first, the positive impact through successful application of those key principles, and then provides examples of negative results when those principles were clearly needed but not applied. Each session is punctuated by facilitated small-group exercises, in which participants can actively apply the ideas and examples offered in class to their own specific, real-life situations.

Takeaways
This program will enable participants to:

• Create an organization where work is done by harnessing the best-known approaches available and signaling the need for new knowledge
• Solve problems as they arise and to develop new understanding that prevents the problems from recurring
• Multiply the impact of local discoveries by making them useful systemically throughout the organization
• Lead an organization where discovery is encouraged, supported, and promoted at all times

Assignment Required Before Arrival
This program will provide multiple opportunities for participants to explore their own processes. Participants should come prepared to work on an important challenge in their organization.

The MIT Edge
Traditional business-school curricula tend to focus on teaching decision-making skills as a way to success. However, many companies today—especially those in relatively new industries—find themselves lacking the information or the experience needed to make the decisions that could determine their future. That is where the leaders’ ability not only to think, but also to behave like innovators, becomes vital to the success of the organization. Known for its commitment to innovation, with this program MIT Sloan offers a rare opportunity for participants to learn how to channel their curiosity into innovative behavior.
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Sample Program Schedule
(subject to change)

Day 1
7:45 AM–8:30 AM: Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30 AM–9:00 AM: Introduction and Program Objectives
9:00 AM–10:30 AM: How High Velocity Organizations Systematize Improvement, Innovation, and Invention to Discover Their Way to Greatness
10:30 AM–11:30 AM: Failure Modes to Avoid (video case)
11:30 AM–12:30 PM: Lunch and Reflection: Applying lessons learned so far to your business critical process (Round 1)
12:30 PM–3:30 PM: Principles for System Design Improvement (simulation)
3:30 PM–4:30 PM: Developing High Velocity Skills in Others; “Table top” Redesign: Applying lessons learned to your business critical processes (Round 2)
5:00 PM–6:00 PM: Reception

Day 2
7:45 AM–8:30 AM: Continental Breakfast
8:30 AM–12:00 PM: Perspectives on Organizations; Psychology of Human Behavior and Decision Making
12:00 PM–1:00 PM: Lunch and Reflection: Applying lessons learned so far to your business critical processes (Round 3)
1:00 PM–3:30 PM: Creating High Velocity Innovation on a Mega Scale
3:30 PM–4:30 PM: Reflections & Report Out: Creating High Velocity in Your Own Organization

Participants
Creating High Velocity Organizations is designed for managers with responsibility for core products, services, or mission-critical processes; subject matter experts on process excellence; and senior leadership, whose understanding and support are vital in developing the discovery capacity within the organization.

Another group that can benefit greatly from participation in this program are entrepreneurs in any industry, but especially in new and emerging fields, where there is little or no established knowledge base required for successful decision-driven leadership.

To get the highest impact of this program, we recommend that participants attend in groups comprising managers and executives from the organization. Please inquire about group discounts for teams of three or more.

Program Faculty
Please note that faculty are subject to change and not all faculty teach in each session of the program.

Roberto M. Fernandez, is the William F. Pounds Professor in Management/Professor of Organization Studies. He is an organizational sociologist who currently serves as the head of MIT Sloan’s Behavioral and Policy Sciences area, and as co-director of its Ph.D. program in Economic Sociology. His executive teaching duties include the management of innovation, change, and human resources; negotiations; networks; and power and politics in organizations.

Steve Spear, MIT Sloan Senior Lecturer and this program’s Faculty Director, is a well-recognized expert on how select organizations manage complex development, design, and delivery efforts to create unmatched rates of internally generated, broad based improvement and innovation. Spear’s book, The High Velocity Edge: How Market Leaders Leverage Operational Excellence to Beat the Competition (McGraw Hill, 2010), has won several awards including the Shingo Prize for Excellence in Manufacturing Research and the Philip Crosby Medal from the American Society for Quality.

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