



Help Your
Team Make
Game-Changing
Contributions

I.D.E.A.
INCUBATOR
GUIDE

COURAGEOUS CULTURES

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Are you hearing your employees' best ideas?

Every day your employees are barraged with problems. They cringe as they try to soothe customer frustrations they can't fix. Or, they face their own battles with inefficient systems, outdated policies, and procedures.

67% said management operates under the notion "this is the way we've always done it."

49% said they are not regularly asked for their ideas

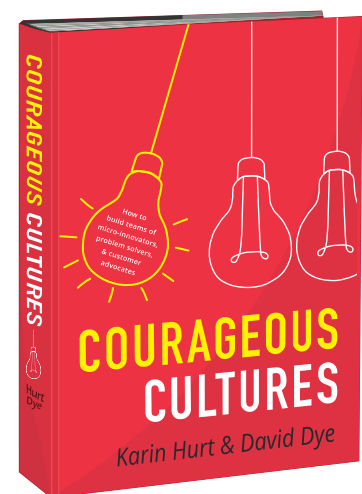
57% said nothing would happen with an idea they shared

40% reported lacking confidence in sharing an idea

Our research shows that employees have game-changing ideas for how to solve these issues but frequently don't speak up to share them. As a result, you **waste money and miss opportunities** to create better experiences for your customers.

In our book *Courageous Cultures: How to Build Teams of Micro-Innovators, Problem Solvers and Customer Advocates*, we share a comprehensive and practical roadmap to help you tap into the innovative thinking of every employee.

So, to spark your interest, we have provided a few simple tools in this document you can use with your team to: tap into their best thinking, improve results, and build stronger, trusting relationships along the way.



Roadmap



Own the U.G.L.Y.

Use this technique as a strategic conversation starter to help your team quickly identify and prioritize strategic opportunities



Refine the Opportunity

Next, work with your team to define what success looks like by identifying the desired outcomes, success criteria and key stakeholders.



Ask How Can We (Generate Solutions)

Once you've identified what success looks like, use this "How Can We" approach to overcome FOSU (fear of speaking up) and draw out the best ideas from each team member.



Vet Your Best I.D.E.A.

Use the I.D.E.A. technique to vet your best ideas against the success criteria and discuss practical next steps.



Make Your Plan or Pitch Your C.A.S.E.

Now you're ready to either turn your idea into action through an action plan, or prepare your C.A.S.E. for additional support.



Own the U.G.L.Y.

Own the U.G.L.Y. is a technique to help your team quickly identify and prioritize strategic opportunities.

Approach

STEP 1

Break your team into four groups. Assign each group a strategic question to discuss (e.g. Group 1 takes U- What are we Underestimating).

STEP 2

Have each group take 15-20 minutes to brainstorm answers in their area of focus. Then ask each group to prioritize their best 3 opportunities for discussion with the larger team and write them on an easel sheet.

STEP 3

After each group has read out their top three focus areas, post the four easel sheets (one from each group with 3 opportunities each) on the wall and give each team member three stickers. Instruct each team member to “vote” for the area they think is most important for additional conversation by putting a dot next to the opportunities they think warrant future discussion.

STEP 4

Circle the top 3 items with the most dots. Choose one of these three to move forward.

(We recommend using the item that received the most votes, if possible. If there's a tie, you can do another round of voting. Record the other two items and include them on a future agenda for discussion to use the following tools.)



Own the U.G.L.Y.

U

*WHAT ARE WE
UNDERESTIMATING?*

Competitive pressures? New technology? The opportunity that we “don’t have time for?”

G

WHAT'S GOTTA GO?

What are we doing now that doesn't make sense anymore? What processes are more habit than value? What meetings are wasting our time? What's gotta go for us to be remarkable?

L

WHERE ARE WE LOSING?

Where are we still under-performing despite our best efforts? Why? Who's doing it better? How?

Y

WHERE ARE WE MISSING THE YES?

What must we say “Yes” to in the next 6-12 months? What new opportunities are yearning for our attention? Where must we invest more deeply

Our #1 opportunity:



Refine the Opportunity

Now that you've identified a priority, you'll work with your team to refine the opportunity by defining what success looks like, identifying success criteria, and key stakeholders.

Refine the challenge or problem to be solved:

State the desired outcome (*e.g. we need to stop losing our high value customers to our competition*).

Success Criteria: What will a great solution do? What constraints will it fulfill?

(*eg: Improve client retention by 5%. Not require new technology.*):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Who needs to be involved?



Ask How Can We?

You've identified a strategic opportunity and clarified what success looks like. Now it's time to come up with potential solutions by asking, "How can we?"

The Process:

1. Start by giving each member of your team 3-5 index cards and ask them to answer the question: "How can we _____ (insert your refined challenge here)?"

For example, *"How can we improve client retention by 5% without using new technology?"*

2. Then, collect the cards and shuffle them back to team members. Ask the team to sort them into groups of common themes.
3. Guide the team in discussing each proposed solution. Eliminate those that don't fully satisfy the success criteria from Step 2. Discuss additional pros and cons.
4. Pick the two or three ideas that best meet your objectives from Step 2. If there are multiple good ideas, you may need an extra round of voting to narrow it down.

OUR TOP IDEAS:



Vet Your Best I.D.E.A.s

So far, you've identified a strategic opportunity, defined what success looks like, and selected two or three ideas that might work. Now you will take each of your best ideas and vet them with the I.D.E.A. criteria. Select the idea which best meets these criteria. It has the best chance of success.

Doable

Is this idea something we could actually do?

How would we make it happen?

What would make it easier or more difficult?

Actions

What are the most important actions needed to try this?

How would we start?

What is the next step to take?

Interesting

Why is this idea interesting?

How does it align with the strategic opportunity you identified?

How does it fit your success criteria identified in step 2?

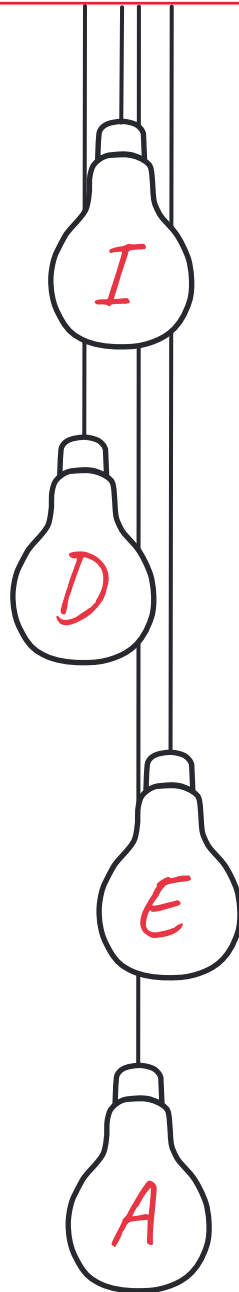
Does it also align with any other strategic priorities in your organization?

Engaging

Who would we need to engage to make this happen?

Why should they support it?

Where are we most likely to meet resistance?



OUR IDEA WITH THE BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS:



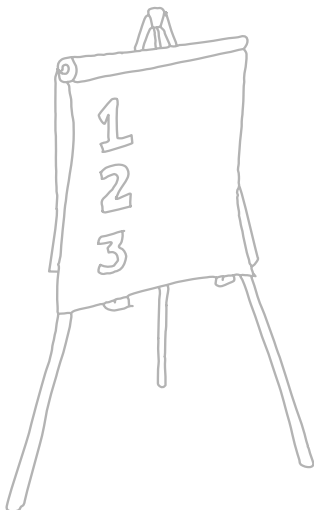
Make Your Plan OR Prepare Your C.A.S.E.

Once you've selected your best idea, it's time to take action.

OPTION 1

If you and your team can do it yourself, make an action plan (who, will do what, by when and how will we know). Then do it.

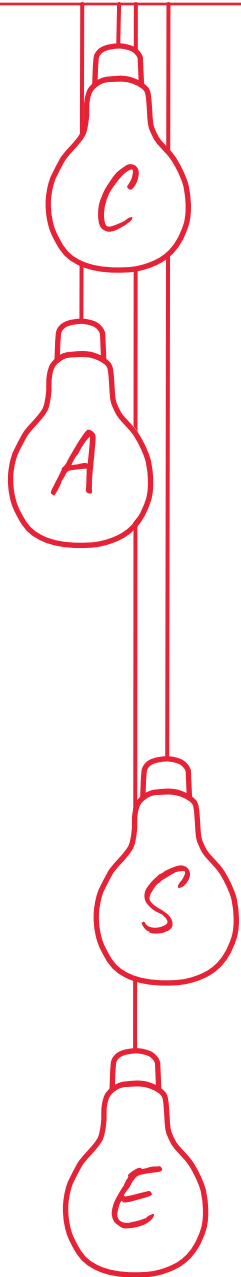
ACTION	WHO	WILL DO WHAT	BY WHEN	HOW WILL WE KNOW?



OPTION 2

If the idea requires other people's support or action, prepare a C.A.S.E. to gain the support you need (see next page).

Prepare Your C.A.S.E. (How to position a great idea)



CONSIDER YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

Who are your most important stakeholders?

What do you want them to think, do and feel after hearing your case?

ARTICULATE

How will you grab their attention in your opening sentence?

What are your 3 most compelling points?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SUPPORT

What supporting evidence, data or examples should you include in your case?

ENGAGE

How will you frame the conversation to encourage meaningful dialogue?

What's your ask?

Note: Be sure to summarize next steps and schedule the finish (who will do what by when).

Ready to rally your team and skyrocket innovative engagement with Let's Grow Leaders?

Are you looking for practical solutions to tough business challenges?

Email us - info@letsgrowleaders.com - to learn how a Courageous Cultures Team Innovation Challenge can unleash collaboration, creativity, and strategic insights for your team. Drive breakthrough results with these practical, interactive tools.



A **Courageous Cultures Team Innovation Challenge** is a fast and fun way to reinforce your strategic initiatives, while drawing out the best ideas from your team. Think "Shark Tank", only friendlier. Before the session, we'll work with your leadership team to customize areas of focus for your program.

Your team will:

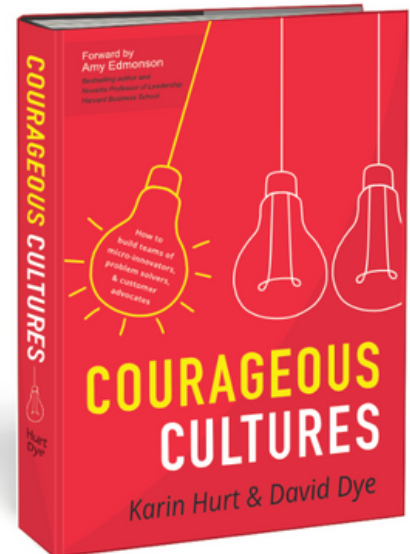
- Learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills to easily apply with their teams.
- Practice pitching their ideas for greater influence and impact.
- Contribute ideas to strategically improve the business right away.
- Build a courageous team culture through sharing innovative ideas.

Email us today - info@letsgrowleaders.com - to learn more about bringing an **I.D.E.A. Innovation Challenge** or other **Strategic Leadership Program** to your organization. Together we can nurture team innovation and problem-solving and build strategic leadership competency!

More ways to read (and share) **Courageous Cultures**

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(READ BY KARIN AND DAVID)



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For more practical ways to encourage courage, don't miss our latest book, Powerful Phrases for Dealing With Workplace Conflict: What to Say Next to De-Stress the Workday, Build Collaboration, and Calm Difficult Customers



