



Jeff DeGraff

Top innovation speaker, business professor, bestselling author, and “Dean of Innovation”

Jeff DeGraff is a top innovation keynote speaker, author, Professor at the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, and founder of the Innovatrium. His simultaneously creative and pragmatic approach to making innovation happen has led clients and colleagues to dub him the “Dean of Innovation.”

Jeff's biography

Jeff DeGraff Background

Jeff DeGraff is the Professor of Management and Organizations at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. He teaches MBA, EMBA, BBA, and Executive Education courses on leading [creativity](#), [innovation](#) and change. Jeff's research and writing focuses on innovation strategy, change and innovation competency development, creativity and innovation practices and methods, creativity communities and innovation networks, and [leadership](#) development.

He is an author and co-author of the books *Innovation You*, *Creativity at Work: Developing the Right Practices to Make Innovation Happen*, *Leading Innovation: How to Jumpstart Your Company's Growth Engine* and *Competing Values Leadership: Creating Value in Organizations*. His book, *Making Stone Soup*, was a finalist for several book awards. In his newest book *Innovation Code: The Creative Power of Constructive Conflict*, he argues that diversity of thought is essential to innovation. He urges everyone to practice constructive dialogue and work in diverse teams to find hybrid solutions and develop unique approaches to solve difficult problems.

Jeff's mission is “the democratization of innovation.” He brings innovation to everyone, every day and everywhere through his books, his public television program (*Innovation You*), columns (*Inc.*) and radio program (*The Next Idea*). His articles and thought leadership on contemporary business matters have been covered by *Business Week*, *US News and World Report* and the *Wall Street Journal*, to name a few.

His client list reads as a ‘who's who’ within the world of innovators, including, among many others,

General Electric, Coca-Cola, American College of Surgeons, and Google. In working with these prominent firms, he has developed a broad array of widely used change and innovation methodologies and tools. Jeff was a member of the executive team at Domino's Pizza when it was one of the fastest growing businesses in the world in the 1980's. Jeff's creative and direct take on making innovation happen have made him a world renowned thought leader and have prompted his clients and colleagues to dub him as "The Dean of Innovation."

Jeff is a Managing Partner of Innovatrium, an innovation center and consulting practice that specializes in teaching companies how to grow and become more innovative. He serves as an advisor to think tanks and governments. Jeff has worked all over the world, with significant experience in Europe and Asia, and in most industry and market segments.

Jeff's talks

- **Creativity and innovation in the new world of work**

The future has come and gone, and you missed it. Why you were looking for star trek or star wars or wishing on a star, everything changed. Worldwide pandemics. Financial crashes. Cybercrime. Add whatever drives your own anxiety to the list. The future isn't what it used to be. Our boundaries used to protect us. Nation states. Institutions. Traditions. They were stable and reliable. But not anymore. There is a new reality and a new world of work. What does it all mean? What happens next? What do we do now?

There is no data on the future. The biggest barrier to moving forward is getting stuck in the planning cycle. You know, the meeting about the meeting. The report about the report. Seeing the future first is hard because it starts with thinking differently about the present.

Professor Jeff Degraff has been at the forefront of some of the most significant and subtle changes and innovations of the past thirty years. Called the "dean of innovation" because of his influence on the field, he has advised hundreds of fortune 500 companies how to look beyond the obvious—technology, science, and the usual utopian and dystopian prattle.

This talk is about using a creative mindset to spot incongruities and anomalies that are happening today, and how they can help you recognize emerging opportunities and act upon them. We recommend you make some time for q&a with Dr. Degraff.

- **Leading innovation: how to jumpstart your organization's growth engine**

"The amount of innovation a company produces is inversely related to the number of powerpoint slides or elaborate process diagrams it makes about innovation." — The Degraff Hypothesis
Productivity is no longer enough. Leaders are finding the drive for growth is pushing strategic innovation initiatives down into operating units where the management and staff have few of the tools and little preparation to really make it happen. Leading organizations are pursuing innovative strategies and processes only to find that they lack the culture, competencies, and leadership practices required to execute and sustain innovation. In this session organized around the innovation genome, leaders will learn a simple approach to recognize, develop, and launch creative ideas into winning solutions that create value.

- **Business design in the new tech centric world**

"The worst of all growth strategies is to have an increasing share of a decreasing market." — Jeff Degraff

You've heard all the buzz about the new world of work: millennials, ai, ar, 3d printing, blockchain

and digital everything. But the dynamics of how innovation really works, or doesn't, have remained relatively constant...until now. Modern corporations have become captives to their business models, trying to create the next big solution with the old rules and tools. In this lively and challenging session, jeff will contrast the old world of work with the new, and demonstrate how to integrate the two to make innovation happen.

- **The power of diversity and teams**

“One size never fits all, so throw out your checklist.”— Jeff degraft

Innovation is a form of positive deviance. It's the opposite of standard operating procedures, which align your organization, creating efficiency and quality. But if you want something new, you need to tap the creative power of constructive conflict. You need to have people in your organization with diverse views, skills, and experiences, who can take different approaches to creating value. This session will introduce you to a new way of thinking about diversity and how to make it work for you: how to identify the strategic situation, its appropriate culture and competencies, and specific leadership practices necessary to produce growth.

- **Connecting the dots of innovation: making collaborative innovation work where you work**

“Innovation seldom fails in a function or region. It fails in the handoffs between them.”— Jeff degraft

Innovation used to be confined to the realm of tech. Now vertical approaches to innovation—such as tech centers, stage-gate systems, and product portfolios—are expected to operate in sync with horizontal federations like idea markets, creativity clusters, and collaborative open-innovation networks. The key to successfully leading innovation is to develop a new mindset and shared language to connect the dots. This way marketing knows what manufacturing is doing, and dallas knows what shanghai is doing, all without the extensive data inputs and outputs. In this dynamic and compelling session, jeff will show how to sync up your innovation strategies and practices to achieve your goals and create value.

- **Doing the creative work the company can't**

“The most creative work your people do is in the coffee shop across the street.” — Jeff degraft

Are your people doing their most creative work *at work*? While the motion picture industry was developing ever more sophisticated innovation methods, pixar was meeting in a local cafe. If you're focusing on complex development processes, micromanaging new product portfolios or tormenting designers with a dizzying array of metrics, your most creative people walk out of your door every day—unnoticed, uninspired, and untapped. So how can an organization make innovation happen? In this lively and compelling session, jeff focuses on the creative development of the person: how they feel, how they think and how you should act to encourage individuals to design and follow their own creative path.

- **Innovation you: four steps to becoming new and improved**

“The greatest innovation you create is yourself.” Jeff degraft

One day it hits you: the game has changed. You no longer feel like you are growing. What if you were a product or a service? How do you make yourself better or new? You would do an inventory of what gives you energy and what takes it. You would assess your real strengths and weaknesses. You would, in short, innovate. In this lively and inspirational session, jeff shows the best practices from the most innovative organizations in the world. Their strategies and tactics will be explained, and more importantly, how they can be applied to make yourself new and improved, and help others do the same.

