

Q&A with Jeff DeGraff, Executive Director Innovatrium Institute for Innovation *Where Ideas Grow*



Q. What is the Innovatrium (Innovation + Atrium) Institute for Innovation address?

A. 601 East University, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

Ann Arbor is ideally located for an innovation development community. The city anchors the high tech corridors that extend from Detroit on I-94 and M-14. It was cited by Fast Company as a hot spot for business start-ups. Close proximity to the University of Michigan allows access to the best-in-class resources, for developing growth opportunities, such as: The Life Sciences Institute; Michigan Information Technology Center; The University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index Institute; Michigan Memorial Phoenix Energy Institute; Institute for Social Research; The Erb Institute; William Davidson Institute; The National Quality Research Center; The Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship; The Tauber Institute for Global Manufacturing; Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies; and the Innovation Multidisciplinary Action Projects Program.

As a top ten rated institution with the largest grad school in the world, University of Michigan further provides a deep talent pool of thousands of technically skilled, highly qualified students and graduates to work on Innovatrium projects. In addition to being the executive director of the Innovatrium, I am the clinical professor of Management and Organizations at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, and I am proud join the university in encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and business development in our region. Visit <http://innovationeconomy.umich.edu/> to learn more.

Q. What are the key benefits of the Innovatrium?

A. *The Innovatrium will focus on collaboration across traditional boundaries in order to create opportunities for innovation not available within an existing organization. Collaboration will cross divisions (marketing, research & development, finance, etc.), disciplines (business, academia, government, etc.) and geographies (United States, Europe, China, etc.).*

Collaborative Innovation Networks (COINs) are white hot today, because they change how and where companies create. P&G, for example, doubled its revenue growth rate when it went to open source innovation (licensing innovation from other firms and vice versa). HP increased its hit rate for new products by fifty percent when it went to idea markets (cross sections of key stakeholders vote on the products that they think will be the most successful). Lilly filled its product development pipeline when it went to crowdsourcing (developing innovations with groups of free agents). But there is no physical version of these COINs—that will be the role of the Innovatrium.

The Innovatrium will provide a low-risk, 'under the radar,' site for innovation projects to obtain proof of concept, for evaluating new techniques and tools, and for leaders and their teams to experiment in order to develop core competencies in innovation and growth. Think of the Innovatrium as the 'Juilliard School of Music' for innovators.

to market, the Innovatrium is different in that its goal is 'connecting the dots' of enterprise innovation. The Innovatrium is designed to support the development of innovation communities, networks, organizational competencies and culture, and innovation practices.

Moving innovation out of corporate isolation through collaborative ventures, the Innovatrium will offer resources, training, and coaching to assist organizations in reaching their full potential. Leaders will become more effective innovators in an atmosphere of support and camaraderie with their peers from a variety of industries.

Q. What services will the Innovatrium offer?

A. The Innovatrium will have six basic services:

- 1. Leading Innovation & Growth (LIG) Workshops to develop the competencies and culture for growth;*
- 2. Think Tank sessions to layout a strategic vision for leadership teams;*
- 3. Innovation Jumpstart sessions to rapidly launch breakthrough innovation project teams;*
- 4. Innovation and Growth Summits to quickly search and reapply best innovation practices within and between communities;*
- 5. Innovation and Growth Assessment and the Innovation Index metrics to build an organizational development plan to fulfill a company's strategic goals for growth;*
- 6. Innovation Space Design through Haworth, Inc. to create workspaces that promote innovative interaction within a company.*

Additional offerings will include ongoing coaching and programs on developing a positive work climate. I expect other services to emerge, over time, as dictated by demand.

Q. What is the Web site for the Innovatrium? Phone number? Square footage?

- A.** *The web site is www.Innovatrium.org. The phone number is (734)604-1012. There is 2,886 square feet of space on the second floor along with the exclusive use of elevator lobby space on the first floor consisting of 132 square feet.*

Definition of Key Terms used at the Innovatrium Institute for Innovation

Creativity: The fuel or raw material of innovation.

Creativize Method: The ability to recognize and then incorporate creativity into ordinary business activities, systemizing a culture of Innovation that translates into growth. It can be used in any industry at any location at any level of an organization.

Creativizer: This is an informal innovation leader, a self-authorizing person who adds creativity to everyday practices such as hiring or budgeting. These facilitators lead and sustain innovation. It is key that the Creativizer should not be a lone ranger, but that they work to establish consensus and ownership at every level in the company.

Action Team of Creativizers: These people are committed to the innovation process and are knowledgeable about the company's current status and future goals. They take the responsibility for follow-through and completion of innovation projects. Through their projects they create momentum, a sustainable culture, and build sustainable competencies. They share best practices and establish an innovation community within their company.