

LEARNING JOURNEY OVERVIEW

What is a Learning Journey?

Learning Journeys, in its simplest form, are customized field trips. However, they tend to be much more than that. A learning journey is a process and *practice for exploration and discovery* through having **intense immersive experiences** developed to surface, test and shift key assumptions about the future. It's about **finding the future** in the present by experiencing the people, places, projects and prototypes that represent some aspect of **how the world is changing**; or isn't changing; or how it could or should be changing for the better. It's also about getting people out of their comfort zones and normal environment to re-perceive possibilities and trigger breakthrough insights at the personal, team and organizational level.

Learning journeys are highly customized and experiences are usually structured around key themes and hypotheses about the future of your business.

The difference between a good learning journey and a field trip or fact-finding mission is the rigorous process design. A high impact learning journey maximizes “return on learning” and “return on investment” by building in workshop time to synthesize and harvest insights from the immersive experiences while they are still fresh. A good process design and facilitator helps participants make sense of what they saw and heard through a shared framework that serves to link the insights and experience to the strategic issues of the business. (See Appendix Figure 2 for a Model Learning Journey Process)

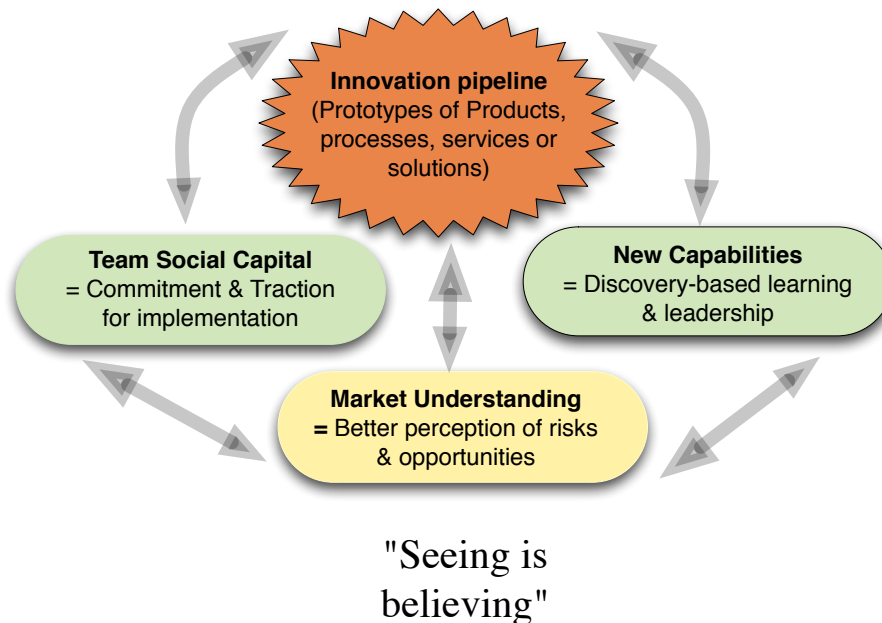
Benefits of a Learning Journey

The benefits of a learning journey are many – for the individual and the organization. They help:

1. **Educate**: internalize and **accelerate key insights** about key changes in the business environment, which can **illuminate new strategic directions**
2. **Inspire**: frame and **jump-start innovation** and development, and “see” what’s possible with new eyes
3. **Create traction for action**: **create shared understanding** and a context so that new directions and actions can be implemented more effectively
4. **Transform**: illuminate core assumptions and worldviews that help “reperceive” opportunities, and **achieve breakthrough thinking** and learning
5. **Build Capacity**: increase awareness and understanding of cross cultural communication, business issues and practices that help participants expand thinking and develop business opportunities and partnerships abroad
6. **Build and Align Teams**: collectively open minds of top talent through “aha moments” and transformative experiences that **connect teams** within or across business groups for **better collaboration and alignment around a shared vision for the future**
7. **Improve Risk Assessment & Management**: remove biases and misperceived or distorted risks inherent in applying what we know by **contextualizing the real risks** (especially in emerging markets); ultimately enabling **more informed decision-making** around cutting edge investment and partnership opportunities in new business environments

See the below figure for how these benefits ultimately fit together to catalyze a number of tangible outcomes such as an improved Innovation pipeline, increased leadership capacity, higher social capital and greater market understanding.

Multiple Benefits = High Leverage on Investment



Learning journeys also provide a number of intangible outcomes including:

1. A shared framework for the organization that can be embedded into the strategic tools of the organization
2. A deeper level transformation of teams and individuals, by challenging people to go beyond their comfort zone
3. Regeneration and a renewed collective will which emerges through stimulating and fun experiences

How Learning Journeys are Used

It's no surprise that Learning Journeys have a **wide range of applications**. Participants range from C-level executives to decision-makers within specific functional roles to members of organizations dedicated to a particular mission. See the figure below for its many uses:



Adaptive Edge Experience with Learning Journeys – Case Studies

Nicole Boyer, founder of Adaptive Edge has had extensive experience and repeated successes taking executives from a number of Fortune 100 companies on Learning Journeys throughout the world. Her local delivery network (support team) extends across innovation hubs within North America (New York, San Francisco) and Europe (Copenhagen and London) to developing countries including but not limited to Brazil, India and China. While company names must be kept confidential, descriptive examples include:

1. Business Context: A large Non-Profit Healthcare Provider needing to reinvent itself.

Scope of Learning Journey: Five separate learning journeys were conducted around the world to help them better understand game changers and trends driving the future of healthcare. The Learning Journeys centered around key themes in various locations strategically designed to generate breakthrough insights. Themes included:

- a. “Lessons in Foresight and Resiliency” – New Orleans, LA, USA
- b. “Frontiers in Globalization” – Mumbai, India
- c. “High Tech to High Touch” – San Francisco, CA, USA
- d. “Socialized Medicine” - Toronto, Canada
- e. “Policy & Financing” – Boston, MA, USA

The New Orleans Learning Journey included visits to local construction companies that were building state of the art homes at very low costs, which shifted thinking around the feasibility of serving low-income markets.

Result: This organization decided to fundamentally change its business model and move away from critical care and emergency services to becoming a provider of preventative services in underserved low-income markets.

2. Business Context: A well-known mobile phone carrier wanting to enter into new “developing world” markets.

Scope of Learning Journey: This was a multiple day learning journey in Brazil, part of the learning journey included visiting a Favella. Here, a key “aha moment” was to understand how the credit issue prevented people from starting their own businesses.

Result: Pre-paid phone cards transitioned from being small local experiments to becoming a scalable product for this multi-national. Since then, pre-paid phone cards have become mainstream providing an incredible benefit to both consumers and service providers.

Cost Estimate Ranges

As learning journeys are highly customized, their costs vary greatly depending on key variables such as:

- **Duration** – generally 1 – 5 days
- **Number of participants** – ideal cohort sizes range between 6-10 participants
- **Research & Development** – the number of content experts and facilitators required for the design, workshop delivery and synthesis.
- **Location** – the delivery support needed varies greatly based on the complexity of logistics required within the specific country. For example, some places require language translation, security, etc.

Fees range from \$20,000 to \$150,000, which include:

- Learning Journey Design
- Learning Journey Delivery (including the local delivery support team fees, logistics such as transportation, meeting venues, translators, etc.)
- Travel expenses for Adaptive Edge team

Individual participant travel is handled and billed separately.

APPENDIX: About Nicole Boyer, Founder of Adaptive Edge

Nicole is a strategist, foresight specialist, and facilitator with a passion for creating “better futures.” For 12 years, she has been on the forefront of foresight, futures thinking and innovation, and is now managing director of Adaptive Edge LLC in San Francisco, CA.

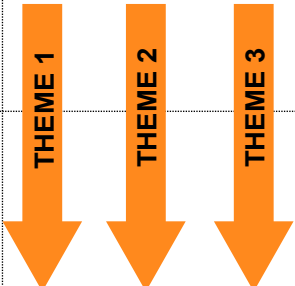

Nicole has worked in over a dozen industries and sectors around the world. Her clients are leaders from Fortune 100 companies, governments, and civil society organizations. She learned her unique tradecraft at Global Business Network (GBN), a network and think-tank in San Francisco, known for pioneering new ideas and tools such as Learning Journeys and Scenario Planning. At GBN, she was blessed with world-class mentors—many founders of the field— and has access to an important “brain trust” and network of thinkers and doers.

With a diverse career thus far, Nicole was in venture capital in Singapore in the mid-1990s financing digital infrastructure. Before that she was a pollster, market researcher, and political speechwriter. Nicole earned a B.A and M.A. in political science (with honors) from the University of British Columbia; her graduate work focused on technology policy—i.e. topics like information privacy and why Silicon Valley emerged the way it did.

Through her own company, Adaptive Edge, www.Adaptive-Edge.com and through affiliations with INSEAD and King’s College London, Nicole is focused on helping organization build capacities and generate results through learning journeys, scenario planning, innovation labs and other tools with the goal of achieving value innovation and adaptability through having a longer view.

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE LEARNING JOURNEY DESIGN

Typical 4-Day “Innovation” Learning Journey

	Day 1: Introduction & Setup	Days 2-3: Into the Field	Day 3: Key Implications Workshop
Morning	Arrivals & Checking In	Small groups (6-10 people) depart for 4-6 site visits 	LJ Debrief: Insights & Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifact wall, graphic recorder • Open Space
Midday	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setup process & conceptual framework • Group formation & icebreakers 	Regroup at dinner (often thematic) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal debrief 	Idea Prototyping  Share Output
Evening			Panel Reaction & Discussion Synthesis: Action Steps