

## Thomson Reuters Case Study: Innovation

When Thomson Reuters approached Duke CE about a learning and development program for a group of high-potential leaders, the company held specific ideas about the learning outcomes it wanted to achieve. Thomson Reuters hoped the educational program would equip its managers with practical tools and frameworks to apply to the job and stretch the way managers thought about their own businesses and Thomson Reuters as an integrated company. In response to these challenges,

a joint Duke CE/Thomson Reuters project team developed the *Accelerate* program, which aimed to increase the ability and intent of leaders to innovate in ways that would enable Thomson Reuters to grow organically.

In addition to *Accelerate's* challenges, the Thomson Reuters program sponsor, a member of the executive team, issued an

individual challenge to the program participants. He encouraged each participant “to identify an opportunity or problem within your business or function that [would] require you to think innovatively to help Thomson Reuter’s grow organically—whether by growing the top line, achieving efficiencies, or executing more effectively.”

To effectively achieve each of these goals, Duke CE utilized *Market as the Classroom* to encourage participants to think about how different global markets can impact their overall strategies and understand how consumer mentality can shift according to where customers are based. *Market as the Classroom* is an experiential learning method where participants are immersed in an unfamiliar market to learn how to think about and do business differently. Duke CE has worked with Thomson Reuters to offer the three-day *Accelerate* program in New York, London, and Shanghai.

In the creation of each of these programs, one of the key design guidelines was to leverage the distinctiveness of each market as a source of innovation for Thomson Reuters’ business models and operating procedures. In Shanghai, the market came to life via visits to the city’s fabric markets, trips to the city Urban Planning Museum to envision Shanghai’s past and future growth, and neighborhoods that exemplify Shanghai’s colonial past.

Another highlight of the Shanghai *Accelerate* program was the *Painting from a Blank Canvas* exercise.

The group explored ways to strategize, plan, and execute for growth and development, in order to spark their thinking and give them new ideas about driving innovation within their respective parts of the business. They toured the Pudong New Area of Shanghai, including the Lujiazui Financial District, Zhang Jiang High Tech Park and Jinqiao Biyun International Community to gain firsthand insights into Shanghai’s rapid ascent to one of Asia’s key commercial centers. In addition to facilitated and self-guided tours, the group met with local officials to learn how they planned and executed the projects.



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**“The Accelerate program ... aimed to create a culture and climate of innovation that enabled Thomson Reuters to grow organically.”**

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As a result of the *Market as the Classroom* experience, participants gained several concrete and actionable insights that they could apply to their businesses at Thomson Reuters. The experience increased the awareness of how they could effectively lead diverse teams and be more innovative in their jobs, as well as how to use brainstorming to integrate ideas and knowledge quickly. Within the team environment, participants also learned how to work collaboratively toward a common goal or vision.

Following the program, participants were interviewed on how effectively they were able to implement their learning at work. Several cases were highlighted as examples of how participants were able to help Thomson Reuters grow the business whether by improving performance or finding efficiencies. These success cases are shared within Thomson Reuters, thereby providing tangible and measurable evidence of the behavioral and business impact of Accelerate. The data and insights gained through this method also provide the means by which the Thomson Reuters/Duke CE project team continues to raise the bar for future *Accelerate* programs.