



June 17, 2018

The Carolinas Chapter of PDMA held their Innovate Carolina 2018 9th annual conference in Raleigh, North Carolina with a theme of “Ignite Your Innovation Vision: Practices Large and Small Companies Can Teach Each Other.”

The topics this year encouraged both large and small organizations to come together to share their experiences. Large organization may have innovation programs in place, but their efforts often can be hindered by corporate inertia. These organization often have a desire to infuse a start-up mentality to drive innovation and growth. Small organizations and perhaps start-ups have a desire to be successful, yet may not have implemented the processes that bring a continued steady stream of innovations to their portfolio. In bringing together these two diverse communities, the opportunities to learn and continue to thrive with innovation benefits all. This Innovate Carolina 2018 conference brought many together that have a common interest – finding those nuggets of information that they could immediately put to work in their organization to impact their innovation strategies. The event also provided a great opportunity to network with others. Again this year we sponsored a student competition. Student teams from North Carolina State University, UNC Charlotte and Claflin University all submitted ideas. The entries covered medical devices that can solve for patient needs, ensure sanitary supply availability, understand student social-emotional health and delivering custom beauty products to users.

Our pitch to the next generation of product innovators is simple...

- NEW! First places teams receive invitation to present their ideas at the 2018 National Conference
- An opportunity to win a scholarship – we offer 1st and 2nd prize for both undergrad and grad
- Practice presenting your product idea and marketing plan
- Receive feedback from leaders in the innovation space
- Conference admission and networking opportunity with those in the business

We hope that our program and those of other local chapters can build a platform to inspire future leaders.

Would you expect to hear about Raising Baby Elephants at an Innovation Conference? Duke Chang, from Fidelity Labs used this analogy in his keynote presentation. Elephants equal those large, mature companies who have evolved their innovation programs through their learning. Have you heard of innovation theatre? Many companies try to do innovation with building out an innovation space, engaging young energized, talent, providing casual jeans environments, and food to show they are like other inspired innovative companies, but yet can't change their culture to adapt to embracing innovation. Duke also shared how their internal incubator has processes in place to see trends and then they may decide to create a small startup within their organization to fund, test and learn further.

Duke's presentation was only one of the fantastic presentations the audience embraced. The conference featured an all-star lineup with an opportunity to learn and take back actionable information including:

- Zach McDowell (Planview), *Being a Rock Star Product Manager in a Lean and Agile World*"
- Leslie Wainwright (RTI International), *"Building Bridges: Successful Ways Entrepreneurs and Established Organizations Work Together"*
- Mark Brooks (AICPA) *"Innovating Through the Startup Ecosystem"*
- Tom Snyder (NCRiOT) *"Ecosystem Approach to Economic Growth"*
- Herve Buisson (Veolia) *"Improving our Innovation Engine for Water Treatment"*
- Dan Roselli (Packard Place) *"Here's to the Crazy One's"*
- Jennifer Peavey (Eastman Chemical) *"When the Customer Becomes the Teacher"*
- Patrick McGowan and Raven Manocchio (The Service Design Group) *"Panel Discussion: Seeing the Big Picture - Using Visual Tools to Speed Innovation in Large and Small Organizations"*

The conference demonstrated the possibilities if you already have an innovation program in place and want to learn techniques other have found successful, or if you have a desire to build on your foundation, or start to build one.

The community through Innovate Carolina brings together companies of all disciplines and the opportunity to learn how others found success. The interaction of this community brings with it a collaboration of shared experiences in developing innovation within an organization, integrating tools, and bringing together crowds to obtain ideas. It is through the collaboration of the community that we can find ways to bring success and often "scrappiness" to create innovation in efficient ways. As we heard, as innovators we should seek the abnormal, mix the normal with the abnormal, and nurture and develop the opportunities between them for innovation.

The conference is made possible through great sponsors who support the goals of Innovate Carolina. They were North Carolina Biotechnology Center, Planview, NK Patent Law, RTI International, The Service Design Group, Trig, StoneLaurel, Railinc, and Duke Energy

Planning is underway for our 2019 Conference to be held in Charlotte, North Carolina. Be sure to sign-up on our website to get more information as it becomes available: <http://www.innovatecarolina.org/>

[PDMA](#) is the premier global advocate for product development and management professionals. Our mission is to improve the effectiveness of individuals and organizations in product development and management. Your local [Carolinas Chapter](#) of PDMA supports that mission with strong local programming. These events typically involve an opportunity to network with those interested in innovation management and learn how others approach similar challenges.

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