What is ‘VUCA’ Design

To best describe VUCA design, let’s use the example of one of our most popular programs, Managing Disruptive Innovation (MDI). Initially designed as a 3-module open enrollment program for senior executives, the program has been adapted numerous times for clients in high tech, pharmaceuticals, government services, and an international consortium. Each client recognized the common need - disruptive change in their environment - but their developmental needs varied greatly. A unique approach was created for each client, and followed adaptations in successive deliveries.

The design process begins with our established expertise and successful delivery of a learning model, and analyzes each facet of the program to create a unique approach (ex. MDI model):

1. Extent of Content Coverage – should research on Innovation in Organizations be covered in 2 hours or 2 days?
2. Length of Program Sessions/Modules – will mostly local participants meet in 4 hour blocks of time, or global participants come together for a week (and on-line)
3. Session Delivery Style – how much of the in-person time will be allocated to the presentation of Innovation content, survey tools like the Innovation Management Maturity Assessment (IMMA), activities to learn the model, organizational innovation projects, visits to leading innovative companies, etc
4. Culture of Learning – does the organization have unique learning styles we should incorporate, such as on-line resources on Innovation processes or a desire to incorporate senior leaders discussing Innovation tools and practices
5. Target participant scope of responsibility – how do the participants’ current and future roles and their experience at the company affect the type of innovation projects and amount of coaching needed during the sessions and in innovation project team activities

The result of these and other discussions will be a highly customized design that will achieve the learning outcomes, while keeping design costs low. After every delivery the impact and effectiveness of the program is assessed. Prior to the next delivery, the learning objectives are once again reviewed to fit with leader and organizational development needs. The design is altered, creating a new model built on the successful aspects of the program but addressing the new context facing the organization. This ability to adapt, and address VUCA challenges, does not stop with the design though.
**VUCA Delivery**

Even the best designs will face some challenges, particularly during a pilot delivery, but not everything can be anticipated. What makes our custom solutions successful is the adaptability of our faculty and willingness to respond to client feedback immediately. Their flexibility is what makes the NC State VUCA model so successful.

During the delivery, faculty engage participants in various activities to assess the effectiveness of the session in meeting their learning needs. This is discussed with learning & development representatives to determine if minor changes can be made to better meet the participant expectations. On the spot changes can be made in:

1. Examples and activities that are more or less industry specific
2. Adjustments to the time allocated to new material, activities, discussion of application to the organization or project work
3. Timing on the day (i.e. changes to breaks, beginning/end of sessions, and evening work)
4. New topics to be added/removed later in the program based on participant feedback
5. Additional materials or activities that can be managed on-line

At the end of the experience, the client and participants should have as much involvement in how the experience is managed as our team. This is how we deal with VUCA challenges and, in spite of them, create successful experiences.