Engaging leaders and aligning around a common vision for using data in business

The Advanced Group, www.advancedgroup.com, helps their clients hire top talent across a variety of functions and industries. They provide sophisticated workforce business solutions helping their clients achieve success. The Advanced Group is: Advanced Clinical, Advanced Resources, Advanced RPO, and WunderLand Group.

They placed over 3,000 people in 2016 and worked with just over 1,000 firms across the US. In spite of all their success, Advanced Group wanted to improve the way they manage their business, to do a better job of placing candidates with their clients and, most importantly, to help their clients have more confidence when working with Advanced Group versus other talent placement agencies.

"It became clear very early on that all of the executives really wanted to have a direct role in this project. Datascope did a great job of getting people excited and making it clear that this would in fact lead to outcomes that we had not been able to achieve before."

Tim Jackson, Vice President, Technology & Operations

datascope *case study*
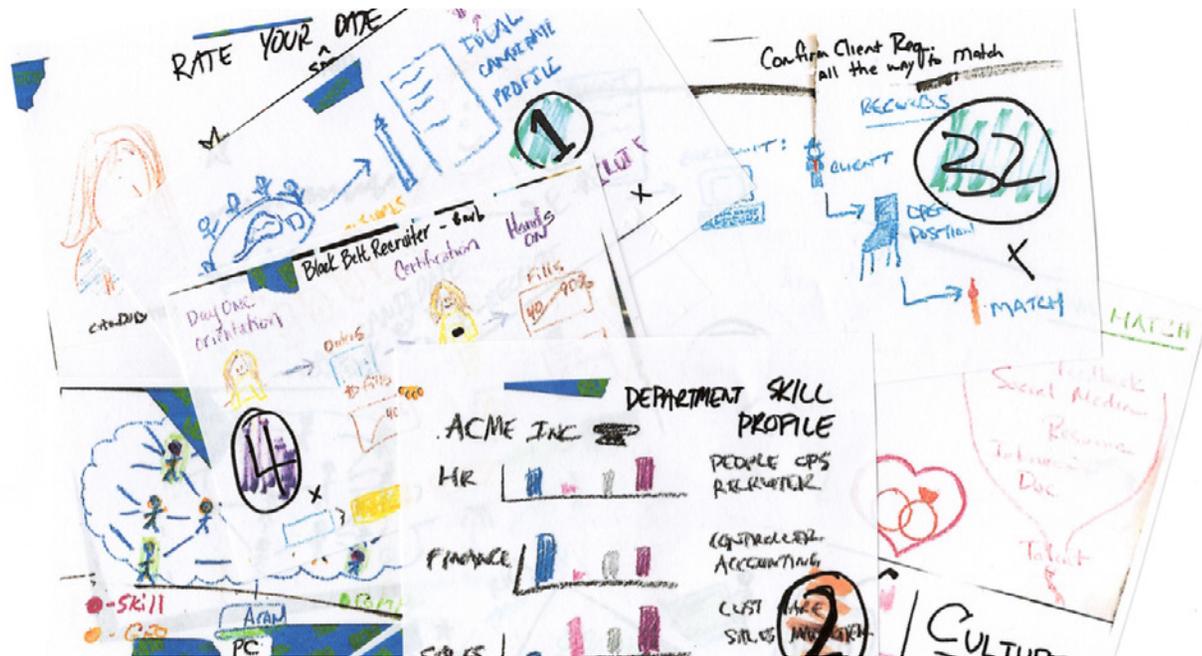
Advanced Group

Datascope filtered 600 ideas down to 32 particularly promising ones.

A Leadership Summit

To help Advanced Group understand how they might use data to help scale their business, Datascope ran an Ideation Workshop—a two-day event that explores the realm of what's possible. Datascope regularly uses these workshops as a systematic approach to developing valuable and feasible operations improvements or new product opportunities for our clients. It combines activities from Stanford's d.school,

the LUMA Institute, and IDEO's Human-Centered Design Toolkit as well as our own experience.

Our Ideation Workshops start with a handful of pre-workshop interviews with key stakeholders at Advanced Group who would have influence or input in the main topic of our workshop. The workshop brought together the entire leadership team from the business and technology sides of the

business. By generating ideas, identifying priorities and opportunities, and developing coherent prototype concepts, the workshop enabled its participants to understand how they can use data to improve their business and to align their entire team around a common vision.

Day One

We started with an activity to cultivate various topics for brainstorming, which generated nine different starting points for brainstorming. In the 90 minutes before and another 90 minutes after lunch, the workshop generated well over 600 ideas for how Advanced Group could better scale its business and become more data-driven.

While having 600 ideas is helpful, it's not always clear how to get started in a tangible way. To find a foothold, we conducted a few quick filtering activities to identify 32 particularly promising ideas that covered a wide range of opportunities. Importantly, we made these ideas visual by using half sheets of paper and "crayola tech" to quickly visualize the core concept behind a particular idea so that we could remember them on Day Two and beyond.

Advanced Group

> "The result was very compelling and gave our team a clear vision for the types of solutions that we really ought to aim for as a company. Datascope made this real for us in a way that we hadn't been able to do before. This is an extremely effective leadership exercise and it has helped propel our business ever since we completed it in late 2015."

Leo Sheridan,
CEO and President of
Advance Group

Day Two: From Concept to Prototype

Starting with the 32 compelling ideas that we identified on Day One, we led an activity that prioritized the ideas based on their difficulty (a proxy for cost) and importance (a proxy for value). This allows us to see all 32 compelling ideas in a grid and to identify "idea threads" between quick wins that are obviously easy and important that can bridge the gap to deliver higher difficulty yet important solutions.

Based on these idea threads, we spent the rest of the morning and early afternoon creating hand-drawn prototype sketches of how these user interfaces might work in practice. We started with a very specific use case and persona in mind, and designed solutions that would enable that person to do their job better or to find more value in Advanced Group.

With the complete buy-in from Advanced Group's leadership team, Datascope was able to lead them from greenfield opportunity, to 600 unfocused ideas for improvement, to 32 compelling concepts, to 3 prioritized, prototyped, and implementable
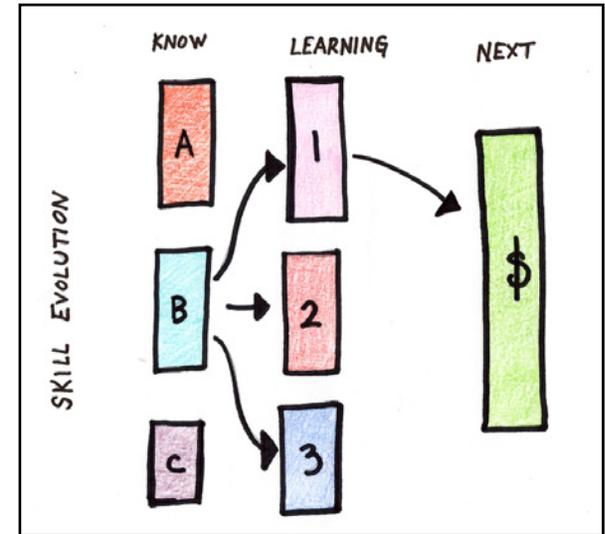
Crayola Tech

business improvement strategies in just two days. Advanced Group is currently using many of the concepts that emerged from our Ideation Workshop.

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