

JOIN OUR TEAM



I2I (Ideas to Innovation) Manager

We are seeking a professional who is passionate about learning, ideas, and their application to a vibrant consulting practice! The I2I Manager will serve in two critical capacities.

First, as a member of the CFAR consulting team: The I2I Manager will work on several consulting engagements at any given time, contributing fully as a project team member and learning CFAR's methods and approaches. These engagements will serve to ground the I2I Manager in our work.

Second, as ideas "lead": The I2I Manager will partner with a team of consultants—from Founders and senior leaders to new Managers—to drive the effort of distilling and embedding learning (drawn from their own immersion in client work and rigorous collaboration with colleagues) about CFAR's unique methods, approaches, and ideas across the firm. These learnings will represent both further insights on CFAR's core ideas, grounded in systems thinking, as well as new innovations; work on consulting projects will represent application of these learnings.

Taken together, the I2I Manager's ultimate strategic task will be to help identify, develop, and institutionalize ideas, innovations, and practices that can become a part of CFAR's consultancy and generate value for the firm.

A multi-dimensional role by nature, the ideal I2I Manager candidate will be passionate about things like:

- Serious discussion and debate about complex subjects—being able to back up points of view with experience and/or outside research
- The latest ideas and topics in business literature
- Taking complex, often academic ideas and translating them into accessible, readily understood principles to be applied in the service of resolving client dilemmas
- Working and building relationships with a diverse team of colleagues
- Connecting the dots, seeing the trees for the forest, and drawing conclusions from both a granular and a high-level view

Who are we?

Born out of the intellectual and academic movements of the 1970s and 1980s, The Center for Applied Research, Inc. (CFAR) began as the only multi-disciplinary research center within the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. After roughly 10 years inside Wharton, by mutual agreement and continuing support, CFAR was spun out to become a private firm in



1987. Our Founders joined together as serious thinkers with deep mutual respect and a shared belief that they could make it work as a private consulting firm with academic roots that included continuing ties to Wharton. Their combination of skills, assets, creativity and professional experience laid the foundation for what CFAR is today. Our firm's founding rested on the understanding that, while analytics are neither hard nor soft alone, the deliberate, systematic combination of financial, marketing, and other kinds of metrics with the people dimensions of organizational life, the interpersonal and group experiences that animate organizations so they close the gap in realizing their potential, will always accelerate getting to the heart of what does and does not work for organizations with high aspirations.

As our name indicates, CFAR has always been a consulting firm with an “applied” focus: we bring ideas to life through our work, using them to resolve very practical and often elusive dilemmas that get in the way of organizational excellence. We believe ideas can be a pathway to resolving issues inside organizations—ideas applied.

What is I2I?

An internal working group, I2I was formed to institutionalize ideas by evolving them into a set of codified, scalable, and accessible innovations that as a whole represent CFAR. I2I is a cross-sector, role-spanning group that is led by a CFAR Founder and includes other senior leaders, Managers, and Support Staff. As a team, I2I is responsive (to client needs, emerging trends, etc.) while remaining firmly grounded in the academic traditions of systems thinking, psychodynamics, economics, etc.

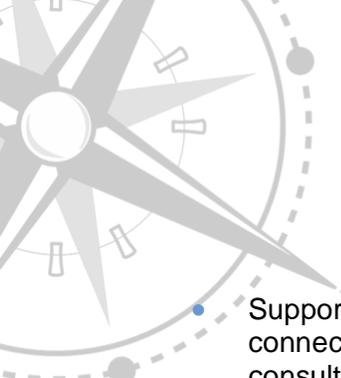
I2I's goals include:

- Establish a framework to focus our efforts on turning ideas into innovation
- Clarify how innovation will be supported by the firm; create commitment to putting the time in to do the work of turning ideas into innovation
- Measure and track the progress of our collective work of turning ideas into innovation

I2I is a fun, dynamic team, peopled with serious thinkers who take pride in their work. The I2I Manager will ultimately drive our work around codification and innovation, in partnership with the I2I Leader and other key leaders across the firm.

Specific responsibilities for the I2I Manager include:

- Under the guidance of I2I Leader (a CFAR Founder), set priorities, goals, and a workplan for idea development at CFAR, with the opportunity to assume increasing leadership of the area over time
- Serve on one to three consulting engagements at any given time, in order to ground ideas in current practice and stay close to our applied work
- Lead regular project reflection meetings to create space for team-based learning and draw pattern-level lessons to be further developed, shared, and applied across the firm



- Support the further development of a firm curriculum that highlights core ideas, and connects resources, cases, and useful content to support the continued training of the firm's consulting staff
- Sustain, develop, and/or implement mechanisms to bring thinking and learning into the work of the firm—e.g., book clubs and other discussion forums
- Be a thinking partner and driver of a writing agenda, in partnership with senior consultants, to support the advancement of CFAR ideas in the market

Though not set in stone, the ideal I2I Manager candidate will hold some combination of these requirements:

- Advanced degree in business or social science
- Five-plus years of experience in a professional services setting, ideally as a consultant with experience applying ideas and methods in client settings
- Experience with applied research in a relevant field (e.g., psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology)
- Knowledge of (and ideally experience with) academic and/or business publishing
- An understanding of stakeholder engagement and leading stimulating, inclusive processes that generate peoples' best ideas (and make good use of their time)

Other details:

Location: Greater Boston, MA or Greater Philadelphia, PA

Travel: You can expect to spend anywhere from 10% to 30% of your time traveling to client sites.

This percentage is not fixed, and will vary over time. In any given month, it may be lower or higher depending on the location of your clients.

For now, we are conducting nearly all of our work remotely to ensure the safety of our staff and our clients.

Visas: CFAR is not providing visa sponsorship for this position.

How to apply:

If you believe you have the skills, qualifications, and passion to contribute to our growing firm, please send a cover letter and résumé to I2Imanager_recruiting@cfar.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!



More About CFAR and How We Think About Innovation

About CFAR

We bring a commitment to unleashing potential and maximizing impact for our clients, through management consulting and executive coaching services that deliver both desired outcomes and improved relationships. A growing small firm, we have, for close to four decades, provided guidance and expertise to tackle the thorniest issues—ones often rooted in a misalignment between important organizational goals and individual beliefs about what it will take to achieve them. We come to our work as curious problem-solvers. Our heritage as the Wharton School's only multi-disciplinary, applied research center lives on in our continued dedication to advising leaders on complex organizational issues where both people and performance matter.

CFAR has always been a consulting firm with an “applied” focus: we bring ideas to life through our work, using them to resolve very practical dilemmas that get in the way of organizational excellence. And we remain on the cutting edge of the problems that our clients face today, whatever they are—those that are often not yet clarified, systematized, or understood. Though the world may have changed, our mission remains the same as the day we were founded: to help leaders activate organizations to achieve their highest aspirations—productively, meaningfully, profitably, and with impact. We partner with leaders in a variety of organizational types and industries, including healthcare, family enterprises and owner-led businesses, higher education, and other for- and non-profit entities.

We have several distinctive characteristics:

- Our people are passionate about our work—with our clients and with each other.
- Our approach embraces the fundamentals of both economics and human behavior—because we know that one informs the other in any organizational system.
- We have a proud history of applying new ideas to novel, complicated problems for which traditional solutions have been found ineffective, particularly in organizations with multiple stakeholders holding diverse interests.
- We engage in rigorous and creative analyses of our clients' business dilemmas, help our clients work through their dilemmas to reach solutions appropriate to their organizational culture, and equip them with the skills and structure to sustain change going forward.
- We embrace the value of different disciplines and perspectives, which is reflected in the wide variety of advanced degrees our consultants have earned—including business, economics, anthropology, public health, psychology, political science and diplomacy, and communications.
- We aspire to be a firm where each of us feels motivated by our purpose, collaborates to achieve our strategy and goals, grows professionally, and personally contributes at their highest potential. To best deliver on our aims, we seek to be rich in diversity of all kinds and focus on practicing inclusion.
- We are committed to helping everyone at our firm become lifelong learners, with committed annual development plans for each person.



Our project teams consist of senior lead consultants, supported by Analysts and Managers. Internal administrative work (IT, finance, communications, etc.) is managed by our Support Staff.

How We Think About Innovation

To create value for the firm, we need to find ways to institutionalize ideas by evolving them in a set of codified, scalable, and accessible innovations that as a whole represent CFAR. Such institutional innovations could begin as “found pilots” developed by teams in their work for a specific client, through the work of teams formed specifically to generate innovations (i.e., what used to be “focus areas”—groups we initially created to codify methods in strategy, collaboration, and change), or through the creative work of individuals. In any of these cases, the outcome of the investment in innovation is something that can be used by the firm as a whole.

While many may think of innovation as only describing the application of radically new ideas, we should understand innovation in the broadest sense. Thus, we define an innovation as: “any idea that is applied in a novel way, that is consistent with our values, creates economic value for the firm, and creates sustainable solutions and value for our clients.”

Novel application of interesting ideas (what we are calling innovation here) is critical to CFAR’s success for several reasons:

- Innovation distinguishes us from our competitors and reinforces our position as an “ideas firm”
- Innovation keeps us connected to our clients’ needs and forces us to continually improve the ways we work
- Innovation reinforces our “firm-ness” by creating a common set of tools, methods, and ways of working

Building learning into our work

The most important source of potential innovations is our work, and theories of knowledge development in management consulting firms tell us that cases are the most direct way for people to engage in conversations about points of view, methods, and tools. While we engage in case conversations in our Family Enterprise and Owner-Led Business and Healthcare Practices, we don’t have any specific structures that help us mine these cases for insights that could drive innovation across the firm as a whole. Throughout our internal culture work, we heard from people that it is challenging to create the time and space for the kind of reflective practice that can yield learning and insights, and there is a clear desire for more support in this area.



Institutionalizing “innovation”

Institutional innovations can take several forms:

- Innovations can help us do our work better. These innovations tend to be incremental, and improve upon our methods, tools, or internal processes. That vast majority of innovations are incremental improvements—which, while often generating less value, are typically less expensive to develop and use.
- Innovations to create new ways of working. These innovations are the big ideas that define how we work in new ways. These big ideas tend to be rare, and often are expensive to develop and codify, but when successful, can generate significant value for the firm.
- Innovations can be created from new ideas generated within the firm. These innovations are likely to arise through experience and experimentation.
- Innovations can be created by applying existing methods or tools in new and unique ways. Existing methods and tools could be drawn from other businesses or creators, or they could be new applications of existing CFAR tools and methods.