The Lean Startup is a process for turning ideas into commercial ventures. Its premise is that startups begin with a series of untested hypotheses. They succeed by getting out of the building, testing those hypotheses and learning by iterating and refining minimal viable products in front of potential customers. That’s all well and good if you already have… However, many people don’t know where to start. There isn’t a well-charted course from inspiration to implementation. Other fields — such as physics, biology, math, and music — have a huge advantage when it comes to teaching those topics. They have clearly defined terms and a taxonomy of relationships that provide a structured approach for mastering these skills. The Lean Startup became a business-school staple and a blockbuster—it has sold more than a million copies—and Ries has gone on to advise dozens of companies of all sizes. In a new book out this month, The Startup Way (Currency/Penguin Random House, $30), Ries draws on his experience to describe how Fortune 500 companies can adopt a culture of “entrepreneurial management.” In this edited excerpt, he recounts how he persuaded managers at General Electric (ge), a 125-year-old, 300,000-employee behemoth, to embrace a different kind of thinking. —Matt Heimer.