Borderless Collaboration

Creating value together in the new world of work

Terence Brake

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▶ Personal Note

Some years ago, at my 21st birthday party, my father decided to say a few words (a very few words). "What can I say about my son," he said. "Well, he's an individualist!" I knew what he meant, but ironically my life at that time was defined by collaboration in the form of a band.

I had started the band with a childhood friend. He had a tambourine, but neither of us had or could play any other musical instrument. Not to be put off, we sent for a mail order guitar. We figured we could learn to play as we went along. We didn't realize when we took it out of the box that it wasn't tuned properly, but that didn't stop us. We kept it tuned the way it was and made up our own chords!

Even though we hadn't been involved in each other's lives for some time, we quickly discovered a shared passion: self-expression through song-writing. Even when we had only made up three chords we started crafting music and lyrics. There wasn't anything formal about the collaboration; we didn't, for example, divide up roles. Sometimes

I would create the music and lyrics, and sometimes he would. Sometimes I would get a fragment of a tune, and he would build on it, or vice versa. Other times I would put some lyrics together, and he would say, "They would be perfect for this tune I'm working on." It was very fluid, very natural, and unforced.

Even though I have been involved in many other collaborations since the band, I still find that I return to the same questions I asked in those early years:

Do we…
- have a shared passion?
- keep our promises?
- find a way through disagreements?
- contribute our fair share of the work?
- listen and stay open to each other's ideas?
- value the differences we each bring to the collaboration?
- keep learning and developing?
- have fun in the process?

So what about the band?

Other musicians found ways to play along with our out-of-tune guitars and homemade chords, and we recorded two albums for a major record company. Collaboration rocks!

Collaboration: The Value Engine

Collaboration: The Value Engine

▶ Borderless Collaboration Defined

What is borderless collaboration?

Here is a simple definition: borderless collaboration is creating value together virtually. Let me break that down:

Creating: 'Something' exists after collaboration that wasn't there before (and so it's not a simple exchange of information). The created 'something' could be as tangible as a product, or as intangible as an idea.

Value: The 'something' has worth. 'Worth' is subjective, but in business is usually measured in objective terms, e.g., profit, market share, customer satisfaction, productivity.

Together means we are not doing this alone. We are amplifying our individual capabilities and resources to produce something of value that we could not have created separately. The output is greater than the sum of the parts.

Virtually means most - or all - of the work is done through digital communications and collaboration technologies.

▶ Two Basic Types of Collaboration

Structured collaboration is formal, planned. It is clearly defined in terms of desired outcome, membership, tasks, roles, rules, scope, timeframes, technologies, and standard processes, e.g. virtual project teams.

Emergent or informal collaboration is unstructured, flexible, and often spontaneous. This kind of collaboration is associated with communities and networks, and is called 'emergent' because leadership, participants, accountabilities, processes, tasks, and outcomes emerge as the collaboration progresses.

Both structured and emergent types can contribute to an actual collaboration and both have their own benefits and drawbacks. For example,

Structured

- Benefit: We know our roles, tasks, deadlines, etc.
- Drawback: We focus on our own narrow tasks; no mutual support.

Emergent

- Benefit: We tap into expertise across the organization.
- Drawback: We create a gossip network with no added value.

▶ Your thoughts

- What types of collaboration have you participated in the most (Structured or Emergent)?

- What benefits/drawbacks have you experienced with each type?

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▶ Why Collaboration?

> " Given that the demands many leaders face today are beyond the limits of any one individual's capacity, one of the most important qualities [of a leader] is an interest in collaboration, leveraging shared efforts and group processes. "

Ted Bililies, World Economic Forum Agenda, 2015 [2]

Driven By Complexity

Consider this relatively simple training exercise.

Participants sit in a circle with their backs toward the center (they cannot see each other). Each person has cards on which are written small bits of information. Taken together, the 'bits' provide enough information to solve a problem. Participants simulate having a teleconference with the objective of sharing information and arriving at a solution.

The exercise sounds simple, but it is not. Very few guidelines are given about how to share the information except that all information must be exchanged verbally. There are no guidelines on communication protocols or how best to organize the information to make it meaningful.

The exercise has profound lessons for the Borderless Workplace, most notably:

"No one knows everything, everyone knows something, all knowledge resides in networks."

Pierre Levy [3]

The world is exceedingly complex, and full of ambiguity and uncertainty. Each of us has different facts, perspectives, and interpretations. We are pushed and pulled by interdependent forces like globalization, digitization, regional conflict, climate change, technological convergence, demographic changes, and shifts in market power. Leadership in this age is becoming a collective, network phenomenon. In other words, the only way to navigate successfully through our age of entanglement is through leadership respectful of collaboration.

Complexity is neither good nor bad in itself, it simply is. Complexity in the global business environment spills over into the complexity of our business organizations, and that spills over into the complexity of our teams and onto the individuals who populate them.

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▶ Why Collaboration?

Collaboration: Importance & Performance

"Advancements in the ability to collaborate are driving extraordinary improvements in overall business performance."
Forbes Insights, 2014 [4]

In April, 2015 Bloomberg BusinessWeek published an article on the top skills needed by businesses. Bloomberg polled 1,320 MBA recruiters who could pick up to five skills from a list of 14 [5]. The top three sought after skills were:

- ■ Communication — 68%
- ■ Analytical Thinking — 60%
- ■ Ability to work collaboratively — 55%
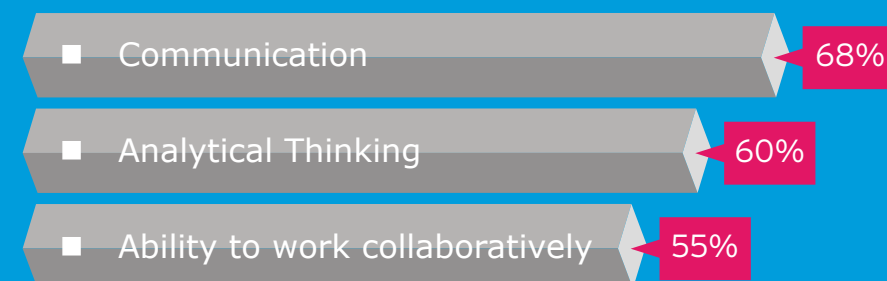
The ability to work collaboratively was also one of the top three skills wanted in various industries:

- ■ Technology — 2nd
- ■ Consumer Products — 2nd
- ■ Health Care & Medical — 3rd
- ■ Manufacturing — 3rd
- ■ Pharma & BioTech — 3rd

Hard data on improved performance from collaboration, based on findings from Dion Hinchcliffe and McKinsey & Company, point to benefits in the following three areas:

Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration - Collaboration

Financials

Customers

Organizational Effectiveness
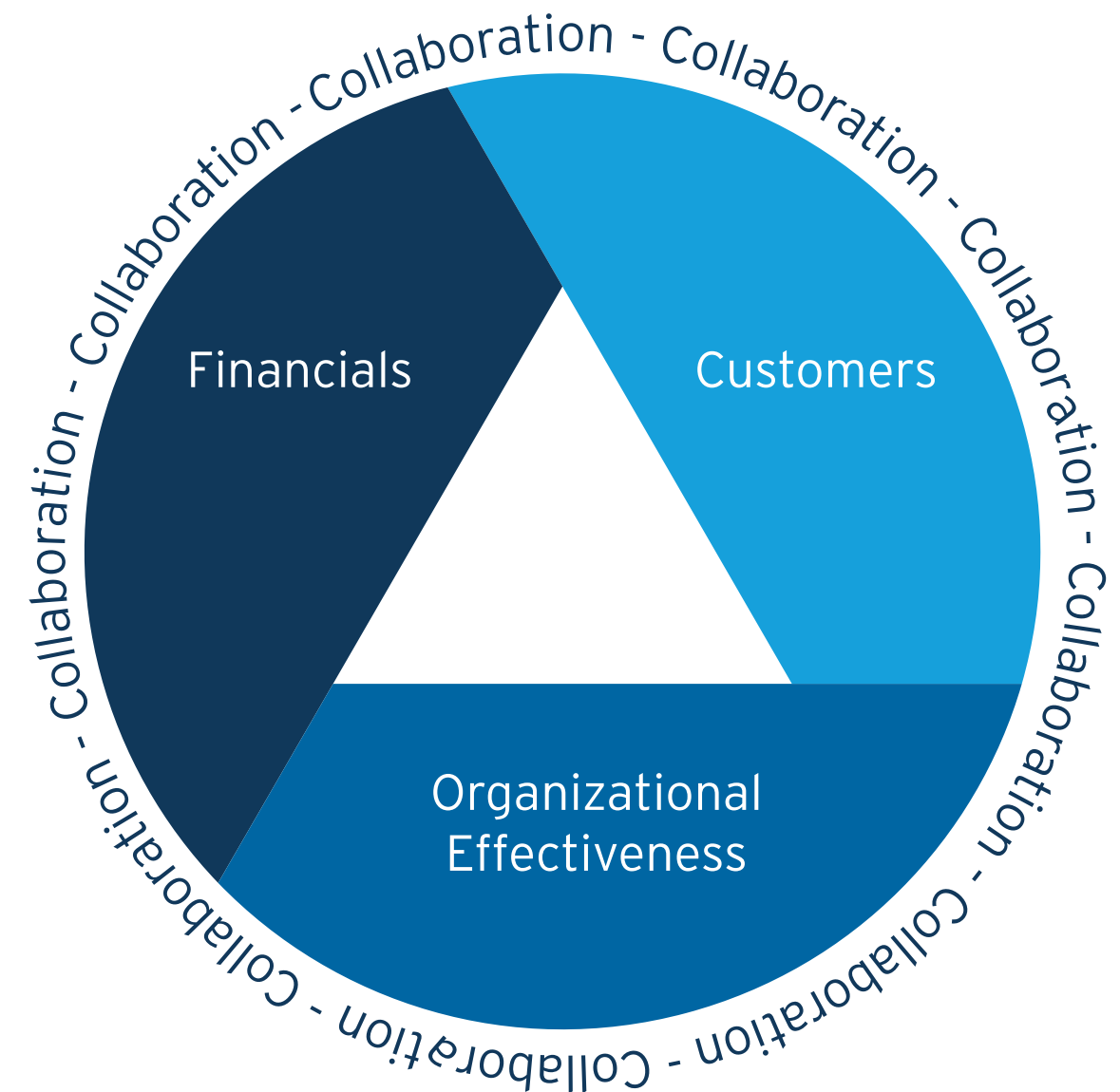
Collaboration: The Value Engine

▶ Why Collaboration?

Customers

- Customer Retention **+10%**
- Customer Satisfaction **+18%**

Collaboration Benefits: Better products and services are delivered; customers experience the organization in a more cohesive way; response times are faster; improved collaboration with customers.

Organizational Efficiency & Effectiveness

- Finding Expertise **+15%**
- Finding Knowledge **+30%**
- Innovation **+15%**
- Time to Market **-20%**
- Worker Productivity **+25 - +30%**
- Worker Satisfaction **+20%**

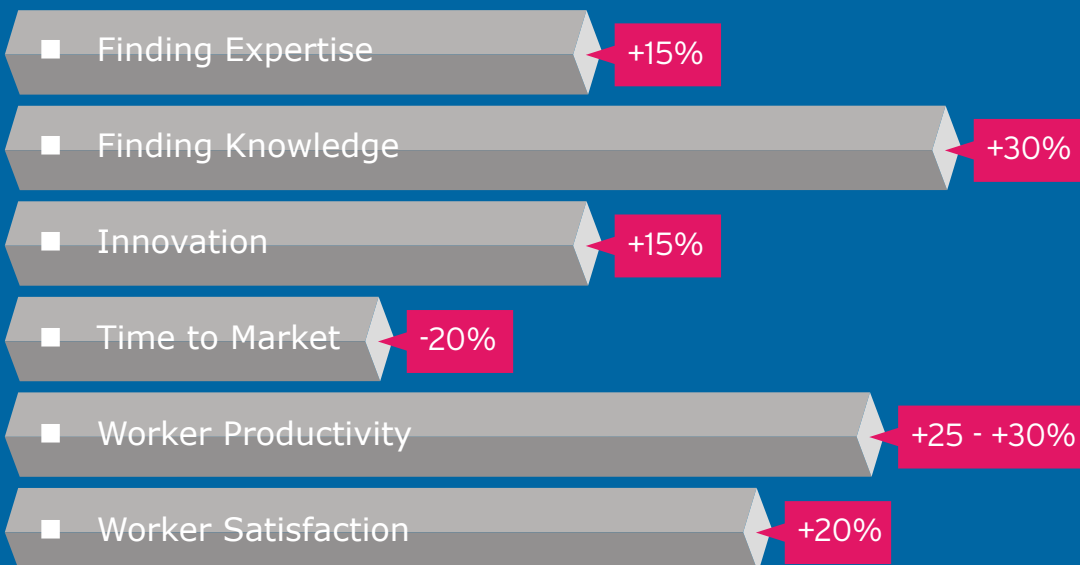**Collaboration Benefits:** Increased knowledge worker productivity and engagement; talent retained longer; more tacit knowledge and best practices exchanged; reduced errors; higher levels of trust; better cross-pollination of ideas; increased organizational agility; decisions made on broader and deeper analysis; increased stakeholder engagement.

Financials

- Lower Operating Expenses **-10%**
- Profit Growth **+26%**
- Revenue **+10%**
- Travel Costs **-20%**

Collaboration Benefits: Better leveraging of resources; new revenue opportunities identified; greater economies of scale/scope; decisions based on joint gains rather than the least common denominator or winning and losing.

▶ Your thoughts

- How do you rate your organization overall in its current ability to generate the benefits of collaboration?

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- What important collaboration benefits (if any) are not being achieved?

- How do you rate your own specific area of the organization in generating collaboration benefits?

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- What important collaboration benefits (if any) are not being achieved?

Collaboration: The Value Engine

▶ Collaboration Is All Very Well, But . . .

> " Every sin is the result of a collaboration. "
>
> Lucius Annaeus Seneca

The reality is there are many groups of smart people who just can't collaborate, or do it well. Why is it so difficult? There are, of course, multiple reasons, some of which have to do with individual egos, mindsets, skills, and behaviors, as well as a history of bad experiences in the past.

Most often the cause is not a lack of good intentions, or anti-collaboration behaviors, but a lack of awareness and respect for the causes of collaborative pain. Smart people believe that it should be relatively easy for them to come together and solve problems (after all they are smart).

Chris Huxman and Siv Vangen developed the concept of collaborative inertia, and they see it as happening when, "the output from a collaborative arrangement is negligible, the rate of output is extremely slow, or stories of pain and hard grind are integral to successes achieved." [6] There will always be unknown risks and uncertainties, but with a greater awareness and respect for possible risks, a group can be more proactive and vigilant.

Collaboration: The Value Engine

▶ Collaboration Is All Very Well, But . . .

Be alert to risks from, for example:

- Competition: For recognition, resources, etc.
- Complexity: Structure and processes become too difficult to manage
- Continuity: High participant turnover
- Costs: Too high for expected benefits (including opportunity costs)
- Differences: Difficult gaps to bridge between, for example, vision, cultures, practices, interests, power levels, skills
- Legacy: Lack of trust from previous collaborations (burden of the past)
- Politics: Too much maneuvering and game playing

Is there an easy way to decide whether or not to collaborate? Not really, although Morten T. Hansen did develop a calculus for differentiating between 'good' and 'bad' collaboration – what he calls the Collaboration Premium [7]:

Projected Return minus **Opportunity Cost** minus **Collaboration Costs** = **Collaboration Premium**

Projected Return = cash flow the collaborative project is expected to generate

Opportunity Cost = the cash flow an organization passes up by devoting time, effort, and resources to the collaboration project instead of something else

Collaboration Costs = costs arising from the challenges of collaborating across boundaries, e.g. travel, increased coordination, time delays due to conflicts over objectives or resistance to sharing information, out-of-control budget overruns, loss of quality and sales, and damaged customer relationships.

While collaboration is very important in today's hyper-competitive and complex business environment, we must be careful not to make it the one size fits all or default solution. Collaboration is the means, not the end.
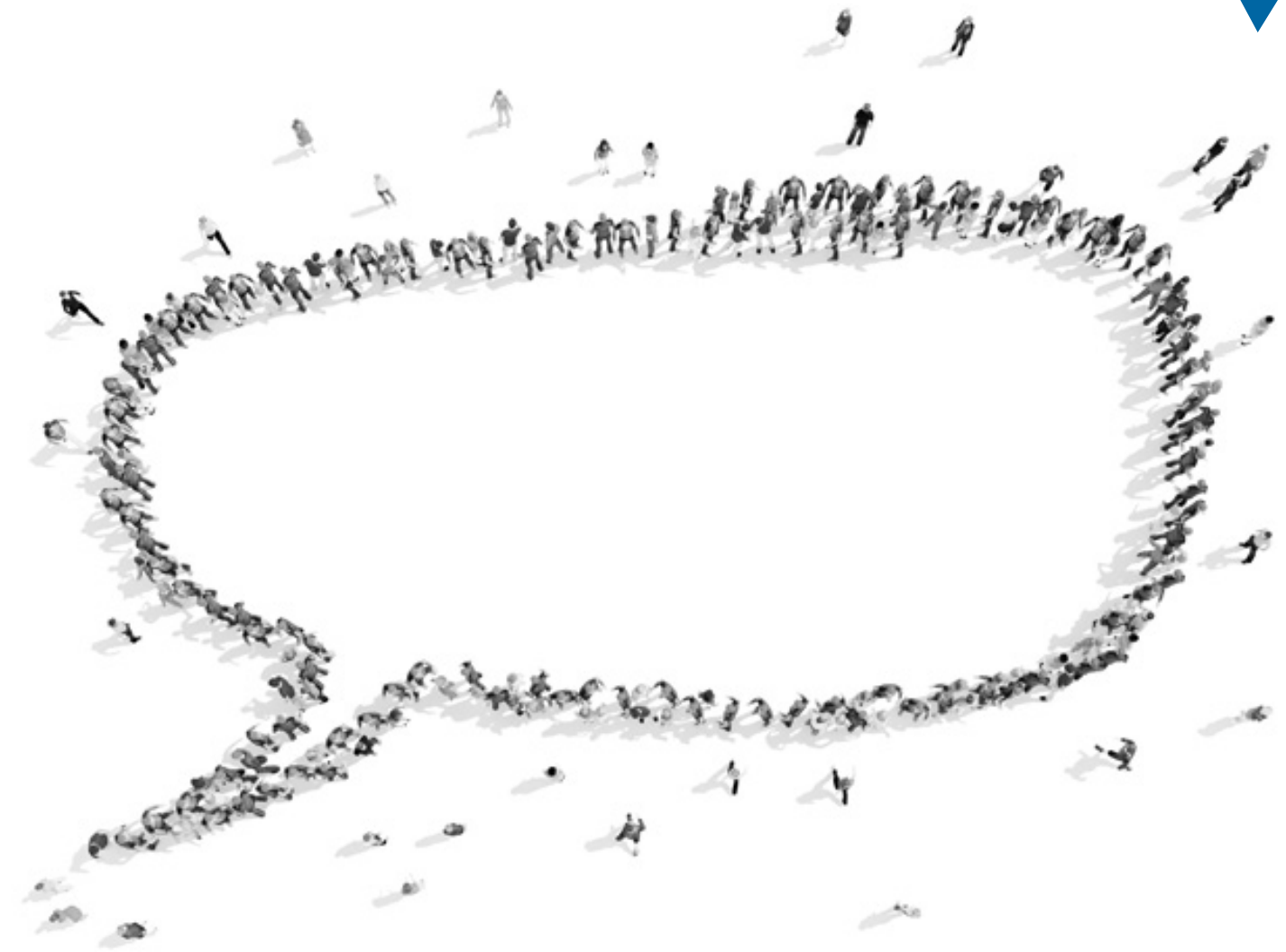
▶ Your thoughts

- In your experience, what are the major risks to effective collaboration in your organization?

- What could you do within your sphere of influence – or in collaboration with others – to lessen the impact of those risks?

Collaboration: The Value Engine

▶ Borderless Collaboration in Today's Workplace

> " The internet and cell phones have infiltrated every cranny of American workplaces and digital technology has transformed vast numbers of American jobs . . . For most office workers now, life on the job means life online. "

Pew Research Center, December 30, 2014 [8]

Traditional collaboration involved a group of people physically getting together in a room and working together toward an outcome that was sometimes well-defined, and sometimes not. Enter the world of digital technologies and the whole world of collaboration possibilities is transformed.

The current borderless collaboration workplace is composed of three main sectors. While the sectors are distinct, any collaboration initiative can utilize all of them.

Borderless
Team
Collaboration

Borderless
Community
Collaboration

Borderless
Social
Collaboration
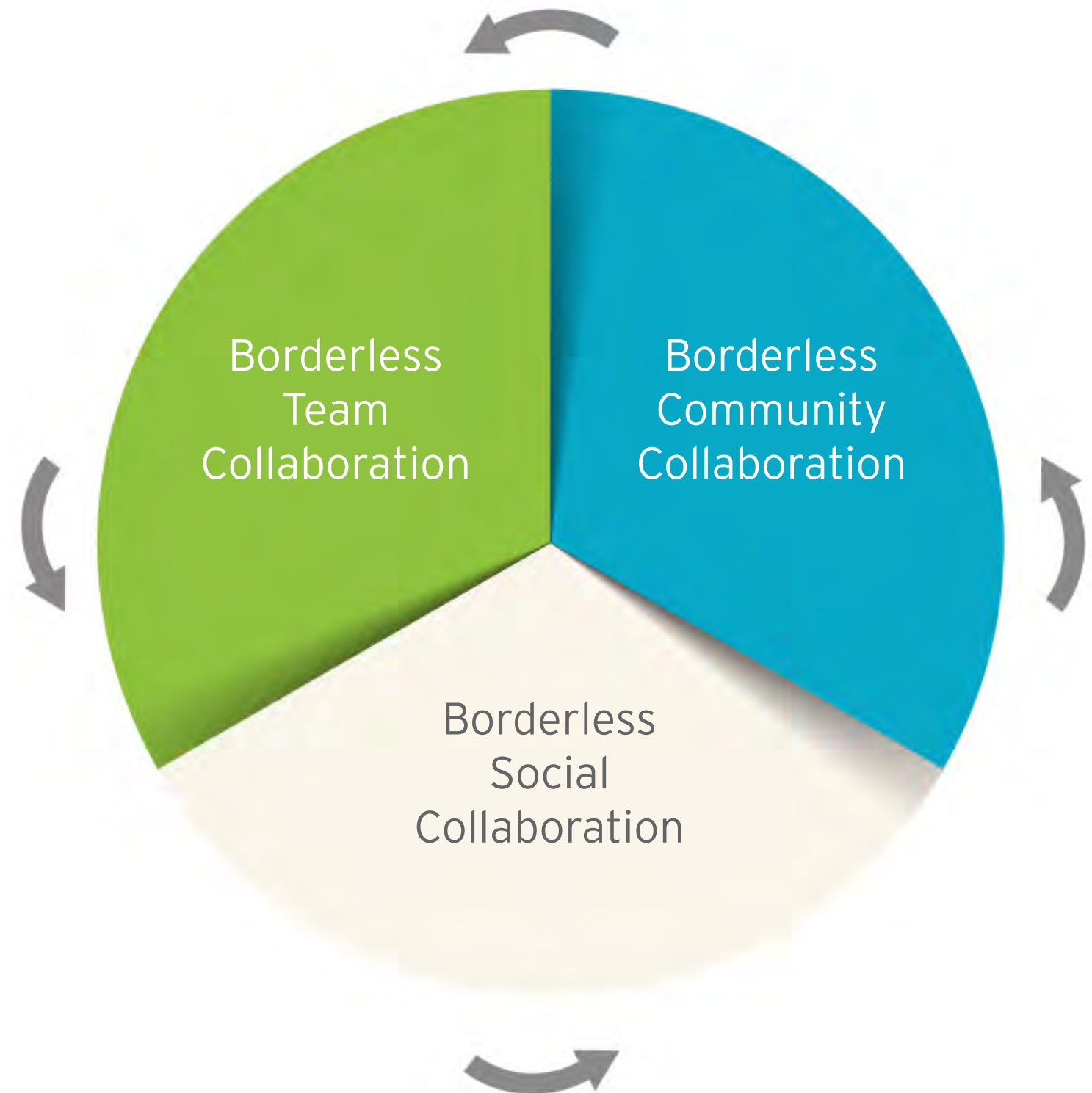
Collaboration: The Value Engine
Key Messages

- Borderless collaboration is creating value together in a shared digital environment.

- There are two major forms of collaboration: Structured and Emergent.

- Collaboration is driven by increased complexity.

- Customers, Organization Effectiveness, and Financials are where the benefits of collaboration make a significant impact.

- Collaboration should not be a default methodology. Collaboration is a means, not an end.

- The Collaboration Premium is Projected Return minus Opportunity Cost minus Collaboration Costs.

- There are three main sectors in today's borderless collaboration workplace: Team, Community, and Social

Borderless Team Collaboration

" In today's knowledge economy, virtual teams are the norm. With expertise distributed around the world, teams 'swarm' to complete a task and depart when finished. Knowledge work is not performed in linear, production-line fashion; it involves idea-sharing, iterative discussions and real-time modifications. "

Future of Work Enabler:
Virtual Collaboration,
Cognizant [9]

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ Challenges of Borderless Teams

Distributed virtual teams are those with members collaborating on achieving a shared goal(s) while working from different locations – sometimes thousands of miles apart. They work together by using shared communication and collaboration technologies. Such teams are responsible for achieving many of the strategic and tactical objectives in today's organizations. According to a 2012 Society for Human Resources survey, 28 percent of US-based corporations use virtual teams, while 66 percent of multinational corporations have adopted them [10]. Occasionally virtual team members will meet in the same location, but for the majority of their time they are working at a distance. Some teams will never meet face-to-face.

A virtual team is usually formed to bring together distributed knowledge and skills to collaborate on a defined project.

A pool of virtual workers is not the same as a virtual team. The only thing the pool members may have in common is reporting to the same manager; they may have no reason to collaborate with one another.

For the most part, virtual teams are engaged in structured collaboration, but face the challenges of virtual distance. According to the main researcher in this field, Karen Sobel-Lojeski, "Virtual distance is a sense of psychological and emotional detachment that begins to grow little by little and unconsciously when most encounters and experiences are mediated by screens on smart devices." [11] People can be in the same building (co-located), but still experience the effects of virtual distance. Even the perception of distance can result in behaviors like deception and reduced cooperation. There are three main factors in Sobel-Lojeski's model of virtual distance:

Physical distance - caused by separation associated with geography, time zones, and organizational affiliation

Operational distance – caused by the sense of disconnect caused by communication challenges when people don't share the same operating context and/or repeated use of an inappropriate communication channel. Other causes include: multitasking, lack of technical support, and feelings of isolation or too many people on the team being located in one place that holds a lot of power, e.g. headquarters.

Affinity distance – caused from too little commonality among members, e.g. lacking a shared vision, having no experience of working together, having different status levels, or different cultural values and styles. Affinity distance means we are not able to foster the kinds of relationships that meet our social needs. Team members may feel the need to comply, but not collaborate.

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ Challenges of Borderless Teams

In comparison to physical and operational distance, affinity distance is the most difficult – but also the most critical to address.

Sobel-Lojeski and her colleagues say high virtual distance leads to:

- 90% drop in innovative behaviors
- 80% decline in trust
- 80% fall in cooperative and helping behaviors
- 75% decline in role and goal clarity
- 50% drop in project success
- 50% fall in organizational commitment and satisfaction

In my experience with virtual teams there are three primary challenges (all generated by virtual distance).

Isolation of team members – resulting from reduced - or no - personal contact, difficulty of forming a team identity and trusting relationships, and the out-of-sight/out-of-mind mentality of some virtual team leaders.

The countermeasure to the isolation challenge is developing team member **engagement**.

Fragmentation of team effort – as a consequence of too little attention paid to guiding and structuring the team in the early phases. Typically, virtual teams need more clarity around purpose, goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities, decision making, and processes than do face-to-face teams. Co-located teams have more opportunities on a daily basis for negotiating what, why, when, who, and how issues.

The countermeasure to the fragmentation challenge is increasing team **cohesion**.

Confusion in team understandings - resulting from too little or too much team communication, imprecise communication, lack of understanding of each other's contexts, and hidden assumptions.

The countermeasure to confusion is **clarity** of communication. While tolerance for ambiguity is an important attribute in collaborating across borders it must be balanced with a passion for clarity.

▶ Your thoughts

- Of the three major virtual team challenges – isolation, fragmentation, and confusion – which one is causing most damage on your current virtual team(s)?

- How do physical, operational, and affinity distance contribute to your major challenge?

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ A Shared Collaboration Framework

> " We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, while others are bright, some have weird names, but they have to learn to live in the same box. "

Anonymous

What I have found to be a major cause of underperformance in virtual teams is that many lack a shared mental model or framework for their collaboration – a common understanding of what team leaders and members need to focus on if they are to work together and create value. Without a common framework the challenges of isolation, fragmentation, and confusion multiply.

The Six Cs collaboration framework was designed to help global collaboration teams find their way to a successful outcome. Each 'C' is a performance variable that needs constant attention. For each 'C' team leaders need to play specific roles and develop the relevant team mindsets:

The Six Cs	Leader Role	Team Mindset
Cooperation: Developing moderately strong ties across geographies, time zones and cultures	**Partner:** Taking the lead in building mutual trust and support	We help each other
Convergence: Developing a strongly held team purpose and sense of direction	**Pathfinder:** Taking the lead in defining goals, plans, priorities, and performance indicators	We pull in the same direction
Coordination: Developing rich information accessibility, and processes for organizing work flows	**Synchronizer:** Taking the lead in helping the team to work seamlessly	We stay organized
Capability: Developing the conditions in which everyone can and will contribute fully to team performance	**Synergizer:** Taking the lead in sharing knowledge and skills to build team capabilities	We share what we have
Communication: Developing shared understandings within the team	**Clarifier:** Taking the lead in uncovering and managing different interpretations	We pay close attention to each other
Cultural Intelligence: Developing a virtual environment inclusive of value and style differences	**Conductor:** Taking the lead in leveraging differences to continuously improve	We play well together

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ A Shared Collaboration Framework

There are two phrases I would like to clarify about Cooperation in the Six C framework

'Moderately strong ties'

Virtual team members don't need to develop strong, close family ties, but on a virtual team in which core members will be interacting over a prolonged period (e.g. a year or more) the development of moderately strong ties should be encouraged to promote trust and support. A strong tie is someone you know well. You may not know everything about them, but you interact often, the conversations are two-way, and to a large extent you share the same information and interests. Weak ties – which are typically more numerous and more tenuous - are also important and helpful, particularly in distributed knowledge or skill networks.

'Taking the lead'

Leaders of virtual teams need to be both 'hands on' and 'light touch'.

Hands on – when virtual team members first come together the levels of uncertainty and ambiguity are likely to be high. Very quickly, the leader needs to reduce those levels by communicating a clear vision of what the team needs to accomplish (purpose), outlining how the team can go about achieving its purpose (strategy), and conveying how each of the team members will be contributing to the outcome (competence).

Light touch – while virtual team leaders can do a lot to manage the challenges of virtual distance they cannot hope to manage the functioning of the team single-handedly. Shared leadership among the members of the team must be encouraged and supported.

You might ask, "Aren't these Six Cs relevant to face-to-face teams also?" The answer is "Yes". Virtual teams, however, are typically more difficult to manage so it is important to have a much sharper awareness of what it will take to make them successful.

▶ Your thoughts

How do you rate your current virtual team(s) on the Six C framework?

Cooperation

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent

Convergence

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent

Coordination

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent

Capability

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent

Communication

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent

Cultural Intelligence

Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Good	Very Good	Excellent

Do your team colleagues agree with your assessment? Find out.

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ Top Tips – Maximizing Virtual Teamwork

Cooperation: Developing moderately strong ties across geographies, time zones and cultures

- Focus on relationship-building first, but don't take too long before moving on to task.
- Demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment to the team.
- Role model reciprocity. Ask what you can do to help team members meet their personal goals – give as well as take.
- Set clear expectations around mutual support, transparency, openness, keeping promises, confidentiality, accountability, and shared ownership of results.
- Identify potential 'quick wins' to keep the distributed team engaged.
- Make sure reward and recognition is distributed across the team, not localized.
- Encourage spontaneity between team members, and not just the following of routines.

Convergence: Developing a strongly held team purpose and sense of direction

- Communicate overall vision, purpose, goals, and priorities as clearly and precisely as possible.
- Identify and communicate stakeholder needs and wants.
- Negotiate navigational reference points for the team, e.g., strategy, goals and objectives, key tasks, priorities, performance indicators.
- Keep the whole project visible to team members, not just their individual parts.
- Create a virtual team charter of critical information to act as a common reference point.
- Be alert for surface agreements that could mask differences.
- Remind team members on a regular basis about purpose, strategy and priorities.
- Be alert to local priorities that could take the team off track.

Coordination: Developing rich information accessibility and processes for organizing work flows

- Understand what work can be done independently, and what requires team collaboration.
- Identify and bridge important differences in current technologies and tools (e.g. calendars, project management software).
- Identify specific roles/responsibilities and decision rights on the team.
- Map goals, objectives, tasks and timings by individuals/sub-groups.
- Clearly map processes shared by team members. Identify owners.
- Create a contact list, role locator and interface map: who/what/interdependencies.
- Create a responsibility matrix with clear decision making guidelines.
- Break down large teams into smaller and temporary task teams while keeping them connected to the wider team.

Capability: Developing the conditions in which everyone can and will contribute fully to team performance

- Create opportunities in meetings for members to exchange knowledge, skills and experiences and learn from one another.
- Make sure you know the developmental goals of individual members.
- Ensure everyone on the team is able to participate fully, i.e., not allowing geography to become a disadvantage.
- Empower individuals to take on other responsibilities, e.g., lead virtual meetings.
- Monitor individual and team performance and provide regular feedback.
- Provide virtual coaching to individuals, as needed.
- Create periodic opportunities for the team to analyze its capabilities and recommend performance improvement strategies.
- Look to other virtual teams for examples of best practices.

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ Top Tips – Maximizing Virtual Teamwork

Communication: Developing shared understandings within the team

- Communicate frequently and check for accurate interpretations – don't close off discussions too quickly.
- Ask team members to be very transparent - 'working and thinking out loud'.
- Encourage spontaneous as well as formal communications.
- Develop shared protocols for using communication tools effectively, e.g., email, tele-, video-, and web-conferences.
- Develop agreements on a virtual meeting process and on meeting protocols, e.g., turn-taking.
- Respond quickly and thoughtfully to emails, voice mails, and other communications.
- Follow-up meetings with a written record of key decisions taken and actions/ deadlines.
- Establish a team 'memory bank' – an online repository for sharing and storing documents.

Cultural Intelligence: Developing a virtual environment inclusive of value and style differences

- Prepare for most likely cultural differences, but relate to individuals not stereotypes.
- Be alert for organizational and professional cultural differences, not just those related to nationalities.
- Role model use of inclusive language – 'we' rather than 'I'.
- Role model inclusive behaviors, e.g. listening with an open mind, seeking multiple points of view.
- Provide opportunities for team members to educate each other on their cultural contexts, and what approaches enable them to perform well.
- Be creative in accommodating different ways of contributing to the team.
- Always look for the value in different ways of thinking and doing.
- Check with individuals periodically to see if they feel able to contribute their best work.

▶ Your thoughts

- Think about your last virtual team experience. Which top tips listed above could have had the most beneficial impact on your team's efficiency and effectiveness?

- For your next virtual team, what will be your top ten best practices recommendations?

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ Thirteen Capabilities for Virtual Team Leaders

> " The best in class [companies] say they'll need leaders with much stronger customer focus, global expertise, a huge capacity to manage complexity, the ability to drive innovation, and a truly collaborative approach – while remaining agile and poised to maximize opportunities. "
>
> Best Companies for Leadership, 2014. Hay Group [12]

Leadership isn't getting any easier. Not only is the environment complex, the leader must carry out many activities in a virtual space. Here are thirteen capabilities virtual team leaders should focus on:

1. Ability to communicate readiness: A race car driver visualizes the track before a race, knows his or her strengths and vulnerabilities, and analyzes potential "What ifs" like weather changes. The virtual team leader should do the same. Virtual teams have many barriers to performance, e.g. different time zones, cultural differences, different reporting relationships and loyalties.

2. Ability to instill trust and purpose: On virtual teams, trust is required to sustain the life of the team and overcome challenges like isolation, fragmentation, and confusion. But, to achieve the highest levels of performance, trust must be powered by purpose. In his new book, Team of Teams, General Stanley McChrystal says, "A fighting force with good individual training, a solid handbook, and a sound strategy can execute a plan efficiently, and as long as the environment remains fairly static, odds of success are high. But a team fused by trust and purpose

is much more potent. Such a group can improvise a coordinated response to dynamic, real-time developments." [13]

3. Ability to be clear: Too much confusion on a virtual team sends it spiraling into dysfunction. Virtual leaders must always look at their communications from the perspective of the receiver; what is the probability the message sent will be the same as the message received? Also, not challenging the vague language and implicit assumptions of others invites chaos.

4. Ability to maintain virtual presence: No matter how much you clarify a virtual team's goals, objectives, tasks, and processes it will never be enough. As a project progresses there will be further clarifications to be made, unforeseen problems that need new thinking, new circumstances that emerge, and different team members coming in and going out. Enterprise collaboration and social networking technologies enable a virtual leader to *be present* with the team. The leader lacking a virtual presence creates uncertainty

which creates anxiety which harms performance.

5. Ability to identify information gaps and missing linkages: It's not unusual for information gaps to be present on virtual teams. Each member is situated in their own location, and has specific roles to play. Team interactions are more limited than on co-located teams, and communications tend to be leaner. It is easy for members to become preoccupied with their piece of the project puzzle, and fail to pay enough attention to critical information coming from elsewhere. Virtual leaders must put themselves in a prime position to identify and manage information gaps and missing linkages as they occur.

6. Ability to be transparent: Nothing kills a virtual team faster than a lack of transparency. Social networking and other collaborative tools enable information to be shared quickly and easily. Team members are able to filter out what is not important to them. Virtual leaders must be careful about assuming they know what information the team needs, and when.

▶ Thirteen Capabilities for Virtual Team Leaders

7. Ability to build virtual team spirit: It's very difficult to build a good team spirit by sending out a periodic email. As Sebastian Bailey says in a Forbes article, "…virtual teams often feel like no more than globally dispersed individuals working on the same project." [14] Be people-centric, not technology-centric. Have personal check-ins at the beginning of meetings, share stories and not just facts to create an inclusive and vibrant team culture.

8. Ability to communicate sufficient context: Every virtual team project has a context: the importance to the business; the major stakeholders and their expectations; the conditions faced by team members. If team members don't understand the context, how can they act with intelligence?

9. Ability to give feedback to individuals as well as the team as a whole: A common complaint of virtual team members is that they receive insufficient feedback (or none at all), or they only get feedback when something goes wrong. A virtual team leader is still responsible for giving constructive feedback and coaching even if the team members report directly to someone else. Some virtual leaders only give feedback to the team as a whole. But, giving individual feedback is vital for uncovering issues that might not be raised in team conversations, as well as for promoting team member inclusion, and engagement.

10. Ability to focus on outcomes: You cannot see what your team members are doing during the work day. You may not even be working at the same time. It's very easy to start assuming team members are 'slacking' and slip into leader paranoia. You have to manage by performance outcomes: What was agreed to, and what was delivered? If you can do so, 'keep eyes-on', 'hands-off'. Think effectiveness and fulfilment of purpose before efficiency.

11. Ability to negotiate shared operating agreements: It is important for virtual teams – particularly those with members from different cultures – to negotiate shared operating agreements, e.g. how will we make decisions or communicate? Without them, the team will always be 'reinventing the wheel' or be forced into following the majority approach. Not everything needs to be negotiated; just those team activities/ processes that have a large impact on the success of the project.

12. Ability to plan virtual communications: Create a robust communication plan with the team that provides regularity of contact and a common view of the total project. Spontaneous communication by instant messaging is excellent for daily communications between individuals and even groups, but a virtual team needs to build a strong, binding identity, and a shared understanding of where the project is and where it's going. Ask:

- When will we connect as a whole team?
- How will we connect?
- When will we connect?
- How long should each meeting be?
- What must be covered in each meeting, and what is unnecessary?
- Who needs to be in the meeting?

13. Ability to uncover and manage virtual conflict quickly: Conflict on virtual teams often lies beneath the surface of everyday interactions and becomes sneakily toxic. Virtual team leaders need sensitively attuned antennas to what is said, what is not said, and how something is said. Those in virtual conflict often don't want to explore the conflict in a teleconference, but just get off the call as quickly as possible. You can address the conflict off-line with the individuals involved. If you don't bring the conflict to the surface and deal with it quickly, it can fester in silence (become hyper-personal) and spread like a virus.

Borderless Team Collaboration

▶ Thirteen Capabilities for Virtual Team Leaders

What level of self-confidence do you have for each of the virtual team leadership capabilities?

1 = None
2 = Lacking most of the time
3 = Lacking some of the time
4 = Have it most of the time
5 = Have it all of the time

1 ▶ **Communicating leader readiness**

2 ▶ **Instilling trust and purpose**

3 ▶ **Communicating clearly**

4 ▶ **Maintaining virtual presence**

5 ▶ **Minding information gaps and missing linkages**

6 ▶ **Being transparent**

7 ▶ **Building virtual team spirit**

8 ▶ **Communicating sufficient context**

9 ▶ **Feeding back to individuals, not just whole team**

10 ▶ **Focusing on outcomes**

11 ▶ **Negotiating shared operating agreements**

12 ▶ **Planning virtual team communications**

13 ▶ **Surfacing and managing virtual conflict quickly**

Borderless Team Collaboration
Key Messages

- Virtual distance is the psychological and emotional detachment among team members when interactions are mediated by technology.

- Three main types of virtual distance are: Physical, Operational, and Affinity.

- Virtual distance results in three major challenges for virtual teams: Isolation, Fragmentation, and Confusion.

- The Six Cs framework is a tool for focusing borderless team attention onto key factors for collaborative performance.

- The virtual team leader needs to guide members by being both 'hands-on and 'light-touch'.

Borderless Community Collaboration

Borderless Community Collaboration

▶ Communities of Practice (CoP)

A CoP is a group of people who share to a significant extent a way of doing things (a practice). A practice is based on a shared domain of knowledge or know-how (e.g. data processing, marketing, management). The community shares their interests, problems, and experiences in order to deepen their knowledge and expertise and – ideally – generate new know-how through their group activities.

Underlying the community form of collaboration is a significant shift in how we perceive the world and knowledge – from a Push to a Pull world, and from Knowledge Stocks to Knowledge Flows.

In the Power of Pull: How Small Moves, Smartly Made, Can Set Big Things in Motion, the authors described what they saw as 'The Big Shift' (from Push to Pull) driven by digital innovations [16].

The Push and Pull worlds mobilize resources in very different ways:

Push: A world in which success is based on achieving economies of scale. A model that is most appropriate for a relatively stable and predictable environment. Push approaches are characterized by:

- Information pushed down from the top of the organization
- Detailed demand forecasts and operational plans
- Systems designed for greatest efficiency
- Clearly specified resources to meet anticipated demands
- Standardized products pushed to customers on fixed schedules
- Repetitive tasks performed by employees within standardized guidelines/processes
- Hierarchy (otherwise you can't get the scale effects)

In the Push world we rely on existing 'stocks' of knowledge to help us create value for an indefinite period of time. In reality, the useful life span of our stocks of knowledge has been getting shorter and shorter.

Pull: A world of ongoing disruption and constant flow in which continuous innovation is the only way to respond successfully. The Pull world is based on scaling continuous learning to keep pace with a constantly unpredictable marketplace.

In the Pull world we must continually refresh our stocks of knowledge by participating in non-linear knowledge 'flows': interacting with others in networks to create or transfer knowledge. Much of the knowledge created in this world is tacit rather than explicit because "there is no time for it to be distilled, encoded and communicated before the next shift happens." Learning in this world is social.

Borderless Community Collaboration

▶ The Value of Communities

" Although it is difficult to measure, based on different indicators, the knowledge shared by CoPs is used extensively. This is, no doubt, related to the Bank's acknowledgment that its global knowledge and expertise represent a tangible product equal in stature to its lending operations. "

World Bank [17]

A primary value of a CoP is in handling complex, unstructured problems, and sharing knowledge. Knowledge and best practices have potential value beyond new or legacy boundaries like hierarchies, divisions, units, functions, and teams.

Focus points for CoPs are diverse, e.g. a function or process, an ongoing problem, a topic of interest like technology or innovation, a profession, an industry, or the strategic goals of the business.

Some of the expected benefits from CoPs are:

- Increased distribution and improved filtering of knowledge and ideas.
- Improved organizational memory, particularly of tacit knowledge.
- Faster problem solving across organizational boundaries.
- More consistent terminology around important topics.
- More rapid responsiveness to customer needs.
- Strengthening core organizational capabilities.
- Increased innovation through cross-fertilization of ideas.

- Enhanced sense of a professional community, increasing motivation and engagement.

CoPs can meet face-to-face, but they are increasingly virtual utilizing social networking tools. Commonly used tools are:

- A platform for posting rich profiles, location details, and enabling file sharing, archiving, and peer-to-peer and group communication.
- A community wiki for collaborative writing.
- Photo and video sharing (e.g. a new product assembly idea).
- Mashups – combining features from one application with another, e.g. photo app and a map app.
- Social bookmarking for recording valuable references.
- Blogs and threaded discussions.
- RSS (Rich Site Summary) customized aggregators for keeping the CoP updated on changes to frequently visited websites.

One outstanding example of a company that has derived great value from the CoP concept is CEMEX - a $15 billion global building materials supplier and cement producer with some 47,000 employees across 100 countries. They chose to place company-wide collaboration and innovation at the center of their organizational evolution.

Borderless Community Collaboration

▶ The Value of Communities

Their 'Shift' collaboration platform (as in shifting the way we work) was designed to engage CEMEX global employees in discussion and action around the company's strategic initiatives. A social media worldwide collaborative community was created around each one of the initiatives:

- Sustainability
- New market strategies and channels
- Fuel and energy efficiency
- Creating a twenty-first-century company
- Global transformation of collaboration practices

'Shift' took the best features of social networks - wikis, blogs, discussion boards, RSS, tagging, jams, real-time collaboration tools, video creation and access - and closed the gaps between geographies, functions, generations, and organizational levels.

'Shift' launched in April, 2010 with 2,000 members. One year later, participation had grown to 20,000 employees, and today almost every employee participates. Every individual can join any community regardless of their personal expertise; the employee just needs to explain why they want to contribute to a specific community.

Each community is sponsored by a business executive who represents the community in the 'formal' organization, and a technology executive who acts as steward of interactions and outcomes. When a community reaches a critical mass, it takes on responsibility for defining its mission, as well as long-term planning and implementation. About 450 grassroots communities have emerged beyond those initially defined.

The payoff according to CEMEX is lower cycle times, faster time to market, and real-time process improvement [18].

▶ Community Types and Individual Roles

> " As it approaches the two decade milestone, the concept of community of practice faces what can be described as a midlife crisis. It has achieved wide diffusion, but users have adapted it to suit their needs, leading to a proliferation of diverging interpretations. "
>
> Enrique Murillo [19]

CoPs are of two basic types – Self-organizing and Sponsored:

Self-organizing: They are voluntary and informal and aim to share lessons learned, act as distribution points for best and emerging practices, and provide forums for raising and resolving issues. Trying to manage or control these CoPs can result in them disbanding or 'going off the radar'. Membership is somewhat fluid as the CoP adapts to changing issues and interests, which paradoxically makes them both fragile and resilient. In time, if the benefits to the individuals and the organization are tangible, the CoP might become more formally structured.

Sponsored: These CoPs are initiated and resourced by management. The expectation is that they will achieve measurable value-added results for the company. These types have become more common as businesses look to leverage their intellectual resources.

Borderless Community Collaboration

▶ Community Types and Individual Roles

Common roles in sponsored CoPs include:

Sponsor: Executive champion who forms a bridge between the CoP and other senior leaders, and ensures sufficient resourcing.

Leader: Guide and main motivator of the CoP. Leadership may be fluid as CoP issues and concerns change and other leaders emerge.

Facilitator: Creator of a structure and rhythm to CoP activities. Informs members, makes sure dissenting viewpoints are heard and understood, and runs meetings.

Technologist: Ensures appropriate social tools are available to meet community needs. Also troubleshoots when technology fails.

Curator: Ensures information and data is well-organized and easily accessible.

Expert(s): Subject matter or practice specialist who is most familiar with current knowledge and methodologies.

Members: Participants contributing insights, experiences, and information; actively engages in forum discussions and other network exchanges.

Whether a CoP is self-organizing or sponsored they embody the spirit of the Japanese term Yokoten ('across everywhere') – the horizontal sharing of knowledge and experience and the horizontal deployment of practice improvements. Yokoten is most associated with the Toyota Production System.

One of the trends over recent years is for CoPs to become more formally tied to the host organization and its strategic objectives. This is frowned upon by some champions of CoPs who see their value as being tied to their spontaneous creation, self-regulation, and freedom from organizational demands.

Your thoughts

- Are you aware of CoP activity in your organization?

- If your organization has CoPs, how would you describe them: self-organizing or sponsored?

- If your organization doesn't have CoPs, how are best practices developed and shared?

- Currently, what role(s) in a CoP would you be most comfortable with?

Borderless Community Collaboration

▶ Community Best Practices

A research project carried out by Gilbert Probst (University of Geneva) and Stefano Borzillo New York University) studied 57 CoPs from major European and US companies [20]. Their central research question was: through which specific governance mechanisms are CoPs successfully guided? The study resulted in what they call their 10 commandments for the successful development and sharing of best practices:

Stick to Strategic Objectives: Setting clear and measurable objectives (e.g. cost reduction, revenue increase, time reduction, and/or increase in customer satisfaction) gives CoP members a concrete direction to follow.

Divide Objectives into Sub-Topics: Classifying objectives into sub-topics provides members with total clarity about goals and direction.

Form Governance Committees with Sponsors and CoP Leaders: Establishing this committee allows activities of the various CoPs in a functional area to be assessed – do they make strategic sense.

This approach enables:

- Sharing of best practices across CoPs
- Opportunities to merge CoPs
- Opportunities to benchmark activities across CoPs

Have a Sponsor and a CoP Leader Who Are 'Best Practice Control Agents': Empowering these agents establishes a way to monitor a CoP's contribution to developing and sharing best practices. An agent may assign a minimum contribution with a given timeframe as well as performance criteria, e.g. time savings, better output, higher revenues, and/or cost savings.

Borderless Community Collaboration

▶ Community Best Practices

Regularly Feed the CoP with External Expertise: Bringing in internal or external experts can make a positive impact by contributing both specialist knowledge and motivational energy.

P**romote access to other intra- and inter-organizational networks:** Promoting access to other internal or external CoPs increases discovery and benchmarking opportunities. Practices from other CoPs may need little adaptation to be useful.

The CoP Leader Must Have a Driver and Promoter Role: Making the CoP attractive by, for example, dividing the CoP into sub-topics while coordinating the CoP as a whole. Members are more willing to access best practices from a platform that clearly announces what it offers. Members also post and share best practices more enthusiastically on a platform when they know their practices will match other members' needs.

Overcome Hierarchy-Related Pressures: Minimizing hierarchical differences helps create a risk-free climate. Members must feel free to a ask naïve questions, admit they have gaps in their knowledge, and be able to critique ideas openly from anywhere in the organization.

Provide the Sponsor with Measurable Performance: Linking best practices to quantifiable improvements in, for example, cost savings, revenue increases, and productivity increases, provides top managers with evidence for ongoing investment and support.

Illustrate Results for CoP Members: Encouraging members to post how they achieved positive business results through implementing or recalibrating a best practice motivates members, and increases identification and engagement with the community.

As well as these guidelines, the researchers identified five main reasons for CoP failure:

- Lack of a core group that regularly participates in meetings, contribute fresh ideas, and actively problem solve.
- Low levels of interaction between members.
- Members only trusting their own practices and not those originating elsewhere.
- Lack of identification with the CoP resulting from, for example, an ambiguous value proposition.
- Practice intangibility, e.g. members are unable to illustrate the practice in a concrete way that is easy to understand and visualize.

▶ Your thoughts

- If you are experienced with CoPs, which of the 10 commandments would you say are followed least?

- What are the most common causes of CoPs not fulfilling expectations in your organization?

Borderless Community Collaboration
Key Messages

- A CoP is a group engaged in a way of doing things (a practice) based on shared knowledge.

- The goal of the CoP is to deepen members' knowledge and expertise, and generate new know-how.

- The value of a CoP is in creating new knowledge/best practices across organizational structures.

- CoPs are of two basic types: Self-organizing and Sponsored

- Common roles in sponsored CoPs include: Sponsor, Leader, Facilitator, Technologist, Curator, Experts, and Members.

- CoPs fail because of a lack of core group engagement; low levels of interaction; rigidity; lack of identification with the CoP; and lack of tangible results.

Borderless Social Collaboration

> " [Wirearchy] a dynamic two-way flow of power and authority, based on knowledge, trust, credibility and a focus on results, enabled by interconnected people and technology. "

Jon Husband [21]

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ The Wirearchy Principle

According to social media researcher, Jane McConnell, "A multi-year perspective shows that organizations are moving towards ways of working that reflect the principle of wirearchy." [22].

Whereas a traditional hierarchy operates on the basis of command and control, wirearchy operates on champion-and-channel – championing ideas and innovation (generated in the social network) and channeling time, energy, authority, and other resources to testing those ideas. Within a wirearchy, knowledge flows tend to be more horizontal than vertical, and problems are solved by engaging with distributed knowledge sources within social networks.

According to Jon Husband, "Wirearchy will not render hierarchy obsolete, nor the need for direction and control; rather it will render them more necessary. However, it will change the meaning of those terms and how they are used and experienced." [23] Within a wirearchy, vertical structures would not be fixed; instead they would become more emergent and temporary (loose hierarchies). When social technology is embedded in the workspace, teams can also form (and dissolve) very quickly on an ad hoc basis depending on need and interest. Sébastien Pacquet referred to this capability as Ridiculously Easy Group Forming, e.g. Twitter groups forming based simply on the use of hashtags.

To support the creation and maintenance of a wirearchy, Husband identifies a number of contributing factors:

- Crystal clear vision and values
- Strategically designed and integrated technology infrastructure
- Comprehensive, clear and open communications
- Pertinent objectives and focused measurement
- Characteristics of culture that create, support and enable responsiveness, adaptability and fluidity
- Leadership that is clear, focused, open, authentic and shared

▶ Your thoughts

- What is the relationship between networks and hierarchies in your organization? Could the relationship be more productive?

- Does your organization enable Ridiculously Easy Group Forming as business needs and interests change?

Borderless Social Collaboration
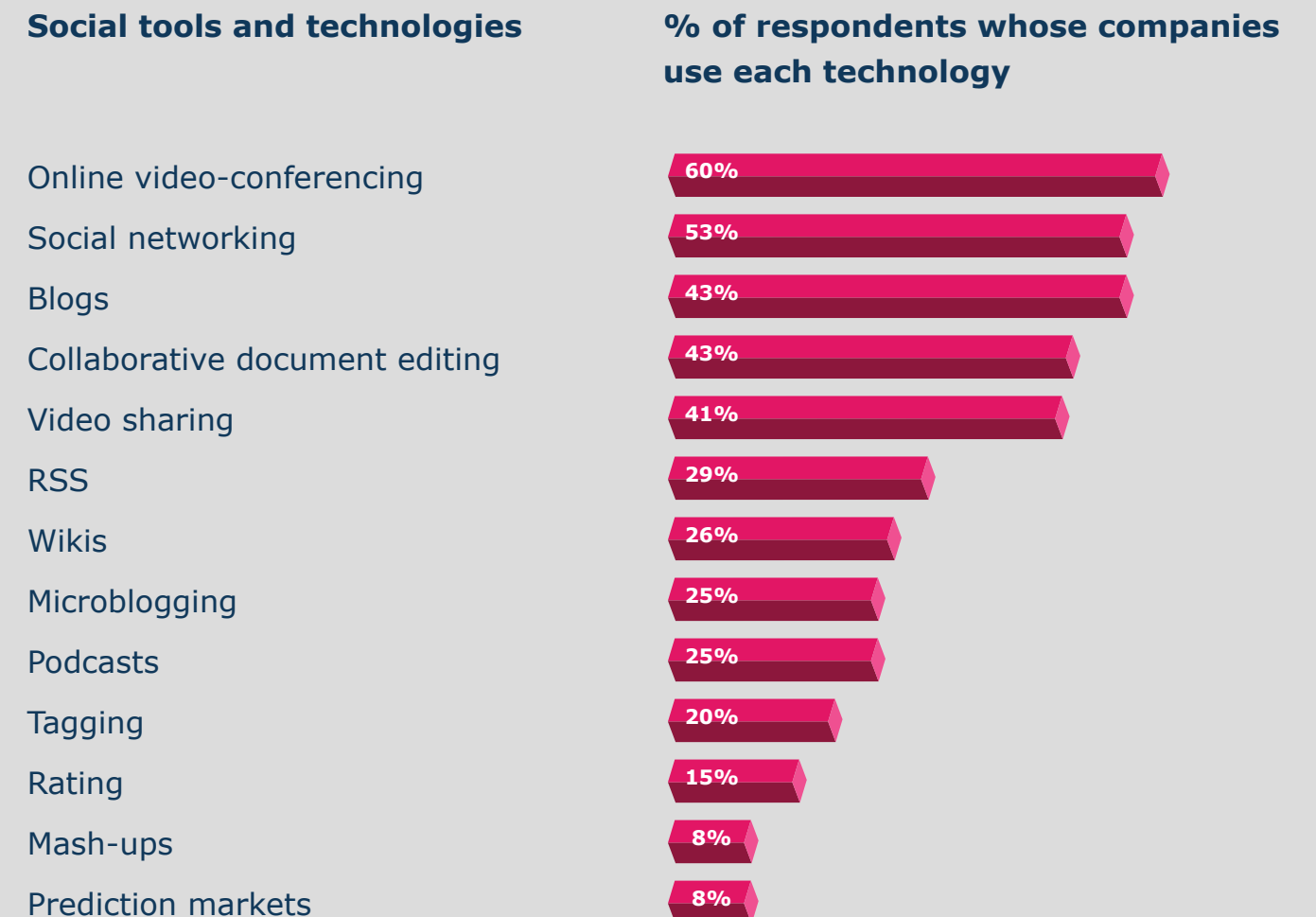
▶ Social Collaboration in Business

> " By 2016, 50 percent of large organizations will have internal Facebook-like social networks, and 30 percent of these will be considered as essential as email and telephones today. "
>
> Gartner [24]

Social collaboration tools in business aim to get work done more efficiently and effectively through networks. The networks need not be restricted to internal employees; they can include, for example, customers, suppliers, and partners, and the wider public. The 'open enterprise' looks to source innovative ideas from beyond its corporate boundaries by collaborating with customers in the co-creation of products and services. It might also engage in open, mass collaboration through crowdsourcing ideas and solutions. Gartner predicts that by 2017, more than half of consumer goods manufacturers will source 75 percent of their consumer innovations from crowdsourced solutions [25].

In 2012, the most used social tools and technologies used by companies were:

Social tools and technologies	% of respondents whose companies use each technology
Online video-conferencing	60%
Social networking	53%
Blogs	43%
Collaborative document editing	43%
Video sharing	41%
RSS	29%
Wikis	26%
Microblogging	25%
Podcasts	25%
Tagging	20%
Rating	15%
Mash-ups	8%
Prediction markets	8%

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Social Collaboration in Business

Some business technology observers use the term 'collaborative networks' rather than 'social networks' to differentiate more clearly between business and personal networking. The dividing line can be somewhat blurred. Facebook@Work allows any business to create its own social network among employees that looks and feels like Facebook. Facebook employees have been using such a system to communicate with colleagues, share news and documents, and plan meetings for the last 10 years [26].

While formal teams can utilize social collaboration tools to brainstorm, solve problems, innovate, and discover opportunities, social collaboration works primarily through emergent rather than structured collaboration. It facilitates access to a much wider range of people and information than a team (or even a community). While the ties created in a corporate social network are likely to be weak (infrequent) ties, they can still be of great value in solving immediate and future challenges.

Business social collaboration began with the introduction of specific tools like blogs and wikis. This created a fragmented – usually departmental use – of social collaboration tools. The focus now is on developing enterprise social collaboration platforms or hubs – utilizing mobile and the Cloud - to create a more cohesive approach. Analytics tools are becoming part of everything and the data will guide social collaboration users more efficiently to the most relevant content and collaborators.

Do social collaboration tools already improve productivity? Yes, according to a 2012 McKinsey study [27].

Activity	% productivity improvement
Reading and answering email	25-30%
Searching and gathering information	30-35%
Communicating and collaborating internally	25-35%
Role specific tasks	10-15%
Total	20-25%

▶ Your thoughts

- What part – if any - does social collaboration play in your organization's internal business strategies, e.g. leveraging global talent, continuous innovation?

- From your perspective are current social technologies in your organization used effectively? What changes would you like to see?

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

> "   We are now more aware of how social technology can be a competitive differentiator. Rather than accept modest improvements from these technologies, executives should aim high and pursue the greater gains that can come by embedding collaboration into specific processes, incentivizing collaborative behaviors and thinking more strategically about these important technologies. "
>
> Andrew Wilson, Accenture CIO [28]

In looking at how the benefits of social collaboration can be achieved, let's consider two perspectives: the Organizational and the Individual.

An Organizational Perspective

First, we need a reality check. Charlene Li, CEO and founder of the Altimeter group wrote in an April 2015 Harvard Business Review article that "less than half of the enterprise collaboration tools installed have many employees using them regularly." [29] Her research showed that leadership participation is critical to success. Instead of being actively engaged, leaders would say things like, "I don't have enough time" or "Nobody cares what I had for lunch." The primary factor, however, was that leaders feared that engaging would "close the power distance between them and their employees, thereby lessening their ability to command and control." To become an engaged leader, Li has three recommendations:

Listen at scale: She tells the story of Red Robin, a chain of over 450 casual restaurants and its implementation of

Yammer (an enterprise social network). In 2012, the chain launched its Pig Out Burger. Using Yammer, employees let executives know that the new menu item was getting negative reviews from customers. Executives listened and started talking on Yammer. Within 4 weeks Red Robin rolled out a new version to customers, a process that the CIO and senior vice president of business transformation, Chris Laping, said would have taken 12 to 18 months previously.

Share to shape: The 17,000 employees of UPS North California District don't see much of each other because of the nature of their jobs. Rosemary Turner uses Twitter to keep people connected and share real-time updates, e.g. a traffic problem or key points from a customer conversation. She gets much more reaction than if she was to send out an employee survey. She uses Twitter because it's a platform UPS employees are already familiar with. Her employees can reach her anytime which also fits with a company mandate for openness.

Engage to transform: The CEO of Telstra – the largest telecommunications company in Australia – demonstrated he was serious about using the company's enterprise social network. He posed the question, "What processes and technologies should we eliminate?" Within the first hour he had received over 700 responses. What really made an impact in the business was that the CEO and the executive team used the platform for follow-up discussions.

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

Top Tips

- Be present on social media, and continually form ties (strong and weak); create a degree of social connection, as well as task connection.
- Use influence – not coercion – to bring people into the network with complimentary ideas and skills; take the fear out of participating; be collegial.
- Communicate that contributions from up, down, and across the organization are valued.
- Challenge negative network behaviors, e.g. lurking – following, but not contributing; trolling – posting deliberatively provocative messages to cause maximum disruption and argument.
- Demonstrate transparency – think and work out loud; pass on information quickly; share personal experience and expertise.
- Role model how to manage conflict constructively.

From an organization perspective, some other lessons learned include:

- Connect social collaboration with the overall business strategy and critical processes.
- Drive awareness over time; don't overwhelm people.
- Think about the user experience as well as solution features.
- Make collaboration tools accessible in existing work flows; avoid additional logins or multiple window switching.
- Don't over-engineer the social collaboration solution; allow for serendipity and experiment.
- Stress innovation, not just communication or knowledge exchange.
- Communicate the benefits to individuals, not just the organization.
- Adjust reward and recognition systems; stress the need to share, not just the need to know.
- Develop measures based on business objectives.

▶ Your thoughts

- What could leaders in your organization do differently to achieve the benefits of social collaboration?

- What could you do differently?

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

How Three Companies Are Applying Social Collaboration

HCL: Indian global IT services company

"HCL's unique culture of grass-roots, business-driven, customer-focused innovation provides every employee the license to ideate – and we see this integral to our culture of 'Ideapreneurship'." [30]
Social Platform and Launch: 'Meme' modeled on Facebook, April, 2011.

Rationale: Desire to respond to the changing preferences of the younger workforce. Call from management was to "connect, share, learn, and grow." HCL refer to 'Meme' as "the bedrock of company culture."

Global employees share posts, photo uploads, and comments along with documents and resources for collaborative working.

'Career Connect', an app on 'Meme', enables employees to crowdsource advice, seek referrals, and co-create development plans with a network of counselors, including an expert of their choice.

Growth: About 75,000 employees have subscribed to 'Meme' since it was launched, creating 2057 groups.

Benefits: There are over 300 project specific workgroups on the platform. HCL says they have helped in creating business ideas with benefits over $25 million dollars. 'Meme' has significantly improved employee productivity by creating a direct interface with support functions like HR, IT Help Desk and Other Service Desks. Communication between the organization and employees is faster, more open and more personal. It is quickly replacing email as the main vehicle of internal communication in the workplace.

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

PwC: A global accounting and consulting firm across 158 countries with over 180,000 people

"The problem was that in the old days if I wanted to access some deep knowledge about a complex tax matter, I would have to find the expert and visit them . . . and that just is not scalable."
Simon Levene, Global Knowledge Channels Leader, PwC [31]

Social Platform and Launch: 'Spark' (based on Jive software), 2012.

'Spark' was launched in a series of 90 day sprints with the intention of promoting quick adoption. This provided ongoing demonstrable success to support further adoption.

Another feature of the launch strategy was "going where the energy is" – working with those who were most passionate about the platform and its potential opportunities for their business. Going where the energy was also enabled them to create a community of 1,000 enthusiastic advocates (from all levels of the business) to champion 'Spark'. As one advocate said, "A good implementation strategy is to be looking at the business, finding a team or area which would really benefit from 'Spark' and getting them onboard. You can then use those success stories again and again."

For each of the 21 lead territories someone at the Director level was responsible for driving the engagement of 'Spark'.

Rationale: Provide **one** common social networking & collaboration platform accelerating the ability to **connect** and **collaborate** to **create value** for the company and its clients. [32]
PwC has a young workforce (average age 28) - many couldn't adjust to the 'old-fashioned way' way they were expected to work.

PwC is a knowledge intensive business, and requires "strong connections and constant interactions between different communities, groups and teams." [32]

Growth: Adoption in some countries is up to nearly 100%, and more than half the network logs on each day.

Benefits: According to PwC, 'Spark' has been a genuine success. Measurable benefits include: faster business proposals and tenders, improved expert location, cost savings, greater capture of market insights, increased employee engagement, and improved company cohesion.

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

General Electric:

"So from an ROI perspective, we didn't spend any time figuring out the dollar nuts and bolts on this – we know the value is there."
Ron Utterbeck, CIO General Electric Co. [33]

Social Platform and Launch: GE Colab (GE Collaboration), 2012

Platform incorporates activity streams (like Facebook), the real-time connection of Twitter, and customized internal search capabilities to enhance, expedite, and enrich workflows.

Started with a soft launch to the company's core of knowledge workers, followed by corporate how-to communications, and word-of-mouth.

GE didn't wait until the platform was 100%. Easy feedback mechanisms were installed, and that feedback powered quick releases.

Rationale: Employees were inundated with unconnected collaboration tools. Intent was to bring them together into a platform and drive some consistency. Key questions, included: How do you connect people globally? How do you make it so that you can search and get the right skill sets very easily? How do you make GE a lot smaller place? How do you get a lot of people not only sharing documents, but then sharing those ideas and concepts?

Growth: In first 11 months had been utilized by 115,000 employees worldwide. Attracts about 1,000 new users every few days. One in three connections are across functions; one in four is across geographies; one in five is across business units.

Benefits: Challenges are being managed more efficiently and effectively through posting problems and gathering fast feedback from others. Knowledge has become contextualized – not only is a file stored on the system, but also the interactions/ conversations that led to its creation.

Your thoughts

- Have the three applications above sparked ideas for establishing/ improving social collaboration in your organization?

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

> " . . . technology has officially pulled well ahead of the workplace skills of even the most proactive manager or line worker. "

Dion Hinchcliffe, 2015 [34]

An Individual Perspective

Three Competency Clusters
Dion Hinchcliffe is one of the most respected observers and commentators on digital business models and enterprise collaboration. If he says digital skills are lagging behind, we should pay attention. The competencies needed for social collaboration are continuously evolving because the technologies and required behaviors are very dynamic.

While it is unlikely that social collaboration will displace email in the near future, the use of social networking tools will force many of our existing work habits and competencies to be recalibrated. The more conversational, non-linear, context-rich, and visible workflows enabled by social tools will challenge many of us. In my experience, there are currently three competency clusters that an individual needs to develop:
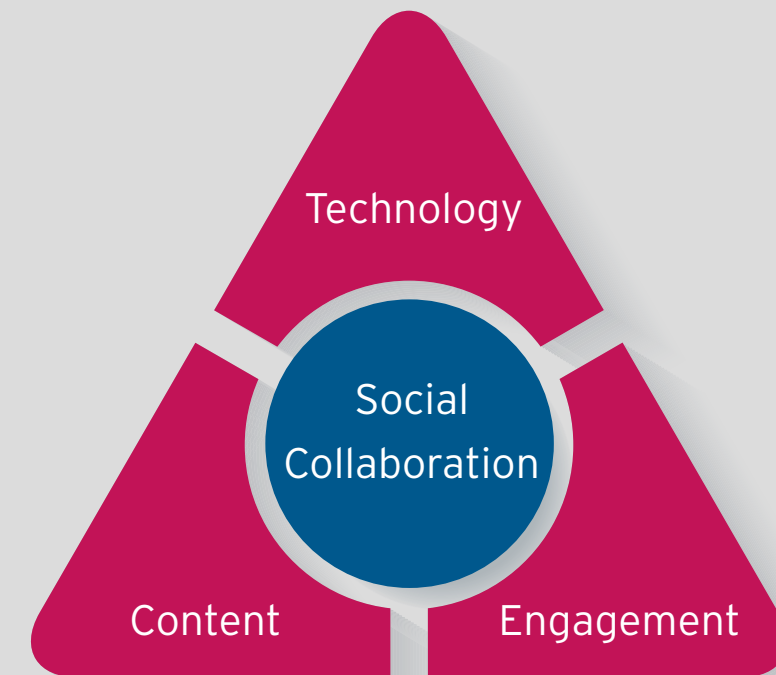
Technology
Awareness: Being aware of the social collaboration platforms or discrete tools available within the organization, and their potential for improving individual, group, and organizational performance.

Fluency: Ability to use available asynchronous and synchronous social collaboration tools effectively – separately and together – to achieve desired outcomes.

Learning: Ongoing development of personal know-how and adaptability as social technologies evolve and business uses change.

Engagement
Communication: Ability to utilize the media capabilities of social networking tools to create impactful messages that inform, influence, develop relationships, and provide context (e.g. working-out-loud – also called observable working and narrating work).

Networking: Forming ties (strong and weak) with diverse individuals and groups inside and outside the organization.

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

Self-Branding: Creating and maintaining an authentic and rich online profile that establishes who you are – personal information, current work context, experience and expertise, and how to contact you.

Content
Organizing: Ability to utilize routines and methods for locating, analyzing, filtering, critiquing, curating, and archiving content, e.g. social media calendar, activity streams, alerts, tagging, social bookmarking, and use of aggregation tools.

Participating: Engaging frequently in a range of consumption and production activities that contribute to network flows and value-creation, e.g. Likes, Comments, Subscriptions, Sharing, Forum Discussions, Updates, Blogging and Microblogging, Mashups, Collaborations. [35]

Sense-making: Ability to derive the meaning and significance of content from multiple and fragmented sources/contexts, e.g. themes, patterns, trends.

▶ Your thoughts

How do you rate your social collaboration competencies?
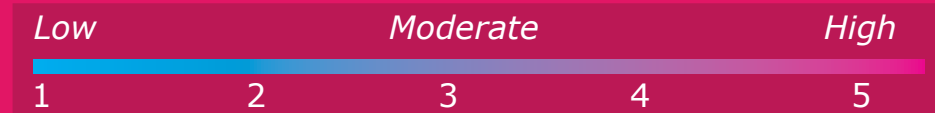
Technology
Awareness
Fluency
Learning

Low		Moderate		High
1	2	3	4	5

Engagement
Communicating
Networking
Self-Branding

Low		Moderate		High
1	2	3	4	5

Content
Organizing
Participating
Sense-Making

Low		Moderate		High
1	2	3	4	5

What can you do to develop your strengths and minimize your weaknesses?

Borderless Social Collaboration

▶ Deriving the Benefits of Social Collaboration

Social Collaboration Leadership

"CEB [Corporate Executive Board] research shows that very few leaders have the competencies and drive necessary to be effective leaders in a more collaborative, networked, and knowledge-based work environment."

The Rise of the Network Leader: Reframing Leadership in the New Work Environment, 2013 [36]

Realizing the benefits of social collaboration in an organization will depend to a large extent on the demonstrable commitment of senior leaders. The CEB study suggests that there is a senior leadership commitment deficit. Two findings of the study are particularly relevant:

- 70% of senior leaders lack flexibility to effectively create and lead networks
- Only 30% of leaders prefer a new, unfamiliar role (network leadership)

Part of the problem is an inability among many leaders to challenge their assumptions about the implications of social collaboration for leadership. Hierarchical leadership is not dead, but leadership encompasses more than one form.

The three competency clusters – Technology, Engagement, and Content – apply to formal leaders as well as every other participant in a network. For leaders, we should overlay three other competency clusters.
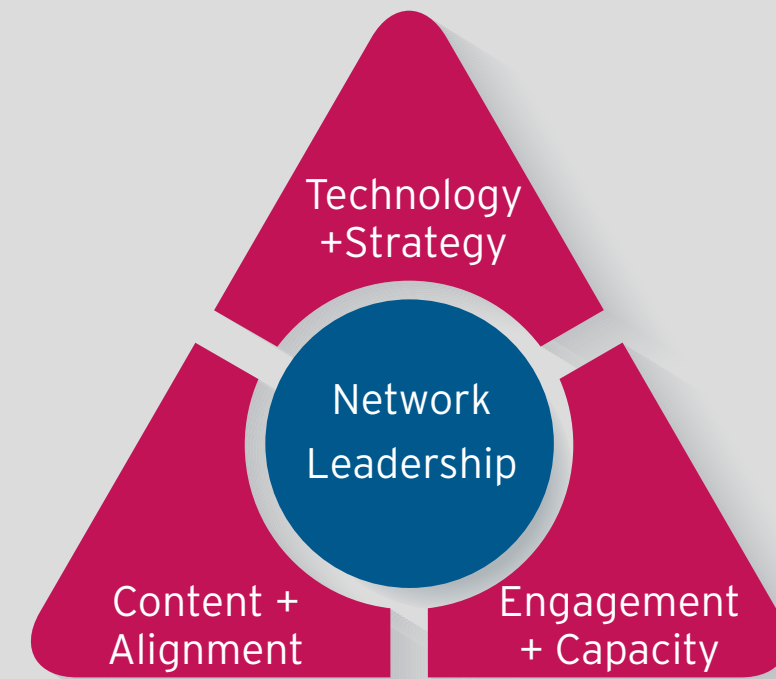
Technology + **Strategy**: A network leader must not only pay attention to the social technologies available and use them fluently, but also think about them strategically. How can the platform/tools contribute directly to the achievement of strategic business objectives, e.g. innovation, market entry, profitability?

Engagement + **Capacity**: Beyond engaging with individuals, a network leader must consider the vibrancy and utility of the network as a whole. What can be done to increase the breadth and depth of network activities across the organization? What can be done to nurture positive business outcomes?

Content + **Alignment**: A network leader should not try to dictate content flows on the network – that would defeat the purpose – but there is no reason why a leader cannot guide the network through vision and values. The leader can also help participants align around shared terminology and concepts.

A final piece of advice for leaders and others from Dion Hinchcliffe - let the network do the work!

Borderless Social Collaboration
Key Messages

- Wirearchy is the organizing principle for the networked, social collaboration era.

- Rather than command and control, a wirearchy operates on champion and channel.

- Social collaboration works primarily through emergent rather than structured collaboration.

- It is critical that senior leaders commit to – and demonstrate their usage of – social collaboration tools.

- Individually, we must work at developing competencies in three clusters – Technology, Engagement, and Content. Leaders need to overlay these with the competencies of Strategy, Capacity, and Alignment.

- Let the network do the work.

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

" ...the best way to attract and retain people and their knowledge will come from designing environments that turn today's increasingly virtual workplace into an attractive place for people to spend their time and do their work, regardless of their employment relationship, as well as regardless of where and when they work. "

Daniel W. Rasmus, Management by Design, 2010 [37

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Beyond Connecting to Designing Experience
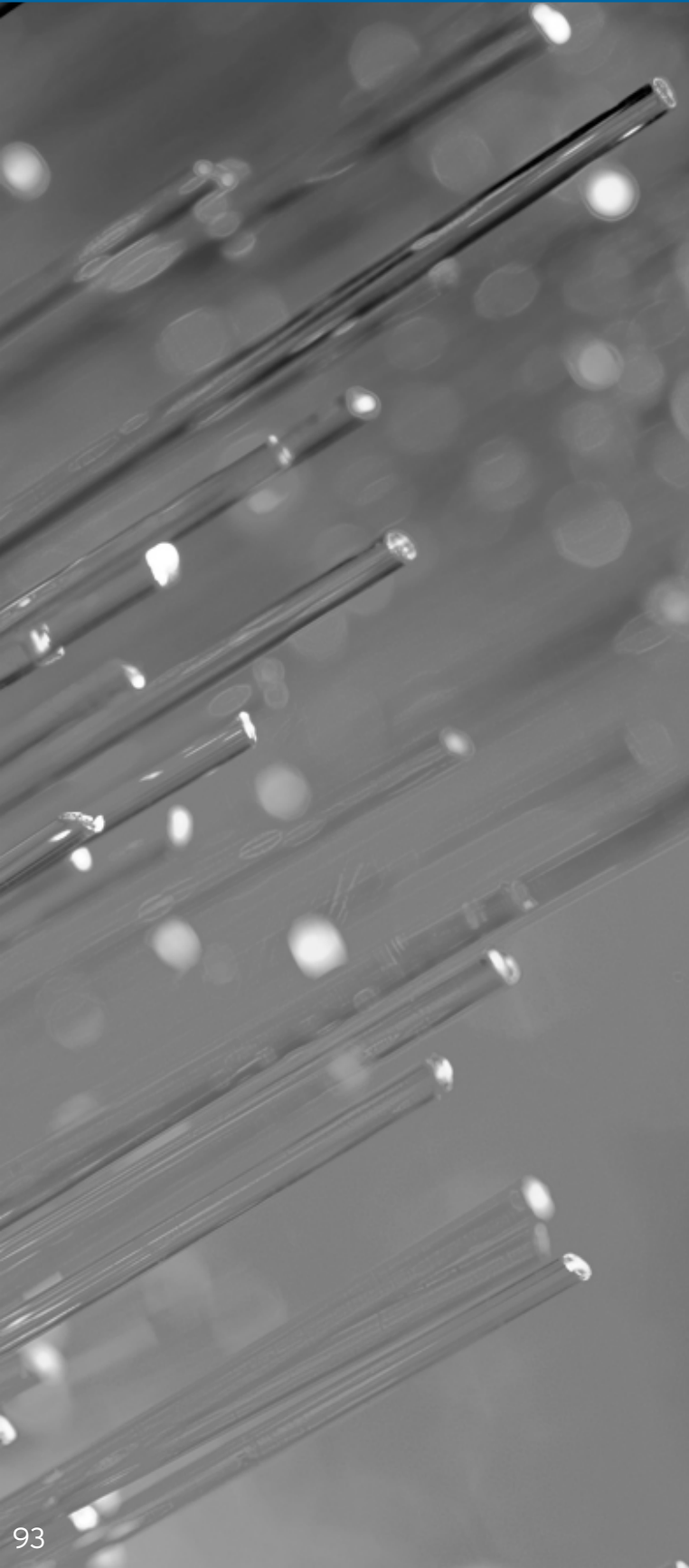
When we think of human habitats we think of places and spaces where we conduct our daily lives, e.g. home, neighborhood, office, coffee shop, shopping mall, and parks. These are all habitats made up of matter (atoms), but human habitats are changing. To our physical habitats, we must now add the borderless, virtual, or digital habitat. The worlds of the atom and the worlds of the bit and byte are merging.

In the not too distant future, the digital habitat will fade into background of everyday life. It will simply be there like the air we breathe. As Kay Boycott, CEO of Asthma UK says, "Having a digital strategy will soon look as ridiculous as having an electricity strategy." [38]

When we enter into virtual collaborations, we usually pay little attention to how we are going to create a great collaborative experience. What if we approached virtual, borderless collaboration from an experience design perspective?

The following could be a representative example of an email from a virtual team leader to virtual team members at the start of a project:

From: Virtual Team Leader
To: Virtual Team Members
Subject: Kickoff Meeting
I'm really looking forward to our working together on this important project.
Please let me know your availability ASAP for a teleconference on either
July 17, 18 or 19. Thanks. VTL.

You can imagine the life of this team - a stream of one-to-one or one-to-many emails punctuated with teleconferences. It is the product of a purely functional mindset, and usually adequate for short-term, relatively low-risk virtual projects that require little collaboration. When the stakes are higher, the duration extended, and the collaboration is more complex something more than a purely functional mindset is needed. An experiential mindset should be adopted; a mindset that takes seriously the 'design' of the team experience.

Experience design is a field that has developed over the last decade or so and is centered on creating quality experiences for customers, users, audiences, employees – anyone in fact who interacts with a brand, a product, service, an event or even an environment – physical or digital.

When we enter into a virtual world – like an online game, website, or e-learning program – we are aware of the designer's 'hand' in shaping the logic, interactivity, duration, and intensity of the experience. In this virtual habitat, we have some control in defining the experience and outcome, but the environment is largely pre-defined.

When we come together as a virtual team we are entering a digital space that is undefined and unstructured. The team leader and members co-create the experience (for better or worse), usually without conscious awareness that they are creating an 'experience' – one that will influence their productivity and sustainability.

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Beyond Connecting to Designing Experience

The quality of a customer's experience is defined by the quality of the physical and digital touch-points he has with brands, products, and services. The customer's journey can be thought of as a 'touchline' along which are specific touch-points such as website search, selection, purchasing, delivery, and after-sales service.

What makes a virtual collaboration experience successful is the quality of the collaboration touch-points (CTPs). For example, in the beginning phase there are likely to be initial formal communications between leader and others, introduction meetings, and project and task definition meetings. When the collaboration is underway, there will be regular check-in and update meetings. This is not to imply that all touch-points will be formal; there will also be informal, spontaneous touch-points. The CTPs are not necessarily Person-to-Person, but also, for example, Person-with-Technology, Person-with-Content, and Person-with-Process.

How should we define a successful virtual collaboration experience? It will be one in which the overall quality of the CTPs bridges distances to help generate valuable working relationships and outstanding results. The overall collaborative experience is one which members would be happy to repeat because they found it productive and enjoyable!

What indicators would point to the quality of the CTPs? It would depend on the nature of the collaboration, of course, but five possibilities are:

- ■ Uncomplicated: Easy to connect and stay connected
- ■ Compelling: Grabs my attention and keeps my interest
- ■ Meaningful: Helps me feel part of something bigger than me
- ■ Inclusive: Helps me feel comfortable and valued
- ■ Desirability: Keeps me wanting to come back

Not all of these indicators would be present at each touch-point, but they would be well represented, and the virtual collaboration habitat could be said to be in good shape.

▶ Your thoughts

- ■ What factors have contributed to your having a good virtual collaboration experience?

- ■ What factors have contributed to you having a bad virtual experience? Was there something you could have done at the time to turn the experience from bad to good?

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

> " Technology and behaviors are at the core of the collaboration problem. "

In creating the borderless collaboration experience, we have so far just scratched the surface with our collaborative touch points. What makes these touch points possible are two underlying capabilities

- Digital Know-How: The ability to utilize digital communication and collaboration tools (separately and together) to create virtual experiences that facilitate successful collaborations.
- Cultural Know-How: The ability to co-create a shared cultural environment that supports building social capital and collaborative behaviors.

Digital Know-How

The technologies we use, when they are used, and for what purpose influence virtual collaboration outcomes. Technologies shape the patterns of interaction (structured and emergent) in the virtual habitat. We can think of our digital tools as offering us different types of communication channels:

Asynchronous channels: tools enabling non-simultaneous communications between senders and receivers, such as email, threaded discussions, wikis, and recorded podcasts.

Synchronous channels: tools enabling real-time communications, such as instant messaging, live webinars, live audio and videoconferencing, and web-conferencing.

Lean-Back channels: tools that require the user to be a passive listener and/or observer, a consumer of information in a linear fashion as in recorded videos and podcasts.

Lean-Forward channels: tools that actively engage the user in scanning for content, making choices, even contributing and editing content in a non-linear process.

Low context channels: tools with a limited capacity for conveying visual, auditory and social cues, e.g. email, threaded discussions, and instant messaging.

High context channels: tools with the capabilities to convey large quantities of visual, auditory and social cue information (such as body language). In approximating the richness of face-to-face communication, high context channels will often mix multimedia combinations of text, audio, video, animation, and interactivity.

High context channels typically increase the salience of other people, i.e. their social presence. This increases the likelihood participants will recognize that they are communicating with real people rather than a technology.

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

One type of channel isn't right and another wrong; they serve different purposes and generate different experiences for those in the collaboration. Audioconferencing is a real-time communication channel, but is not very engaging; neither does it really support the development of the trusting relationships needed in extended and complex collaborations. For an introductory getting-to-know-you meeting a web-conference in which participants can see each other, and engage in interactive exercises around the team's goals and objectives could be more appropriate.

We must ask:

- What technologies are available to myself and others?
- What outcomes do we want?
- Which tools are most likely to achieve those outcomes?

Your thoughts

- Do I tend to use one channel most of the time when collaborating, e.g. email?

- If not, how do I decide which channels to use, and when?

- Do others find my choices most beneficial to the collaborative experience?

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Change in our digital habitat is fast and furious and convergence is the name of the game. Over the last 50 years, we have experienced various waves in the evolution of computing:

1st Wave: Mainframe
2nd Wave: Minicomputer
3rd Wave: Distributed PC
4th Wave: Internet PC

We are now being lifted by the 5th Wave: SMAC

Today the focus is on enterprise technology - integrated solutions for delivering new digital experiences for consumers, employees, and partners. This is made possible by SMAC, i.e. the convergence of Social, Mobile, Analytics, and Cloud technologies. SMAC convergence (and the synergies created) signals a revolutionary change in how businesses come to understand customer preferences and behavior and how people work and collaborate.

As more digital natives enter the workforce and management they will expect "collaboration that's social-, mobile-, analytics-, and cloud-enabled. They're looking for the same anytime, anywhere, and any-device convenience

that they're familiar with in their personal lives through applications from companies such as Amazon and Facebook." [40] SMAC provides the new digital habitat for borderless collaboration.

Social: Social networks allow people to communicate and collaborate in real and/or delayed time, and they facilitate the release and sharing of knowledge held by individuals, flatten organizational hierarchies, and enable new internal and external global collaboration possibilities, e.g. crowdsourcing. Social media can also provide insights into each other's collaboration preferences.

Mobile: Mobile devices like tablets and smart phones enable critical applications and information to be shared and updated with people in real-time and in any location. We live and work in an era of continuous connectivity and agile collaboration on-the-go.

Analytics: What happens to all the data made available through social, mobile, and Cloud computing? Raw data is only useful when meaningful patterns and insights have been

discovered through analytics. Analytics is not simply about tracking clicks and linkages (the what?), but also about generating learning and insights (the why?), and even predicting (the what next?).

Cloud: Cloud computing is a type of computing that relies on sharing computing resources. Different services – like applications and storage - are delivered to an organization's computers via the Internet. Well known Cloud collaboration tools include: Slack, Google Drive, and Google Apps, as well as Unify's Circuit, and Cisco's Project Squared.

By itself, SMAC is not sufficient for developing the collaborative business habitat. Cultural Know-How is also necessary.

Your thoughts

- What changes to the digital environment have I seen in my organization?

- What positive impact on our ability to collaborate have these changes had?

- If the positive impact hasn't been significant, why do you think that has been the case?

- What could have been done differently to increase the positive impact?

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

> " There is an inverse relationship between control and trust.' Trust is a two-way exchange – more than most people (especially leaders in power) realize. Trust is a mutual relationship of transparency and sharing – the more ways you find to reveal yourself and listen to others, the more you build trust. Give people control and we will use it. Don't and you will lose us. "
>
> Jeff Jarvis, What Would Google Do?
> [41]

Social Capital & Trust

Social capital refers to the specific benefits (for individuals and groups) that flow from trust, reciprocity, information and cooperation associated with social networks.

At the heart of social capital is **trust with the potential for reciprocity** (doing something for others with no immediate expectation of repayment or reward). Trust is the decision to be dependent on someone (or something) based on our confidence that the person or the 'something' (e.g. a computer network, a piece of software, or an electronic process) is highly dependable and can be relied upon. The inclusion of the 'something' in the above definition is important because so many of our interactions with people are conducted through electronic objects and systems. The lack of trust in a technology can influence our perceptions of those we are collaborating with.

Developing trust in a virtual space can be difficult because of physical, cultural, and psychological distance. One important factor is the time frame of the collaboration: short- or long term.

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Short-term: Some virtual teams come together at short notice and for brief time periods and must start working immediately; they rely on the formation of swift trust. In short-lived teams, people gain very little evidence from one another about their trustworthiness. In these teams we need to adopt the stance of 'trust now and verify later'. Swift trust happens when people appreciate the time constraints, recognize the need to act despite uncertainties, focus on goals and roles, and presume that others have earned their place on the team.

As one researcher says, "Swift trust is less about relating than it is about doing." [42] Others have looked at specific behaviors that contribute to swift or deeper trust:

Swift Trust	Deeper Trust
Competence Openness with information Integrity Reciprocity	Compatibility Benevolence Predictability Security Inclusion Accessibility

Long-term: Over the longer term there is more time to establish trustworthiness through:

- Taking time to learn about one another
- Demonstrating commitment
- Opening up a range of communication channels (asynchronous and synchronous) for frequent and regular contact
- Demonstrating consistency and reliability
- Continued showing of support
- Establishing routines and shared behavioral norms

Your thoughts

- In your experience of working virtually, what factors cause you to trust quickly or to withhold trust?

- Do you think people immediately perceive you as being trustworthy?

- If yes, what do you think you do to make them feel that way?

- If not, what could you be doing differently?

> " Culture is a verb. "

Brian Street
Social & Cultural Anthropologist [43]

Big Culture & Small Culture

Big culture refers to organizational culture, while small culture is at the level of teams, communities, and networks. Small cultures should be aligned with the big culture, but not simply as a mirror image; small cultures may innovate ways of relating, thinking, and doing that could greatly benefit the wider culture of the organization. A requirement for both levels of culture is that they support the development of social capital for building trust.

In very simple terms, culture is 'the way we do things around here'. Underneath the 'do', of course, are sets of assumptions, values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that shape the 'way we do things'. The 'we' is important because it signifies that culture is shared; it is a group characteristic.

The quote from Brian Street that opens this section is an important one. Most often, 'culture' is thought of as a noun and, therefore, it takes on the quality of a 'thing', a 'given' that all members of a cultural group share. It can lead us into

the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' – the error of treating something like an abstraction/idea as if it were a concrete thing, e.g. confusing a model with the reality.

A culture no matter how it might appear – is never homogeneous or completely stable. There is always movement and inner conflict. That means that while cultural change can be difficult, it is not impossible. Strong, continuous commitment and role modeling of desired behaviors from management, and reinforcement from coaching, and reward and recognition systems will facilitate culture change.

One other fact we need to keep in mind is that culture is learned; we are not born with a culture. If a culture can be learned, it can also be unlearned (not that it is easy to do that). When we think of culture as a verb, we acknowledge the part we play in its ongoing creation, maintenance, and change.

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Big Culture

In 2012, Don Tapscott gave a TED talk called "Four Principles for an Open World." [44] His premise was that the technology revolution, the global economic environment, and the growing influence of 'digital natives' is opening up the world. The Internet enables us to collaborate on an astronomical scale across multiple borders, and the walls built by our Industrial Age institutions and organizations are becoming more porous and fluid. He identifies four principles for thriving in this evolving world, and they are a good place for thinking about a collaborative organizational culture. (Note: Tapscott begins with the umbrella concept of openness and puts his four principles of collaboration, transparency, sharing, and empowerment underneath. I begin with the umbrella concept of borderless collaboration).

Borderless Collaboration: Creating value together virtually.

Openness: A collaborative culture is rooted in open minds and open boundaries. How would it be possible to develop a collaborative culture without this principle? Openness doesn't mean liking everyone you work with, but always being open to the possibility that cooperation and collaboration are the rational choices for solving complex problems and innovating.

What are some signals that a culture encourages openness?

- Everyone is approachable; people bounce ideas off one another without fear
- There is a burning desire to learn and continuously improve
- All significant stakeholder interests and views are represented
- There is a willingness to experiment and take risks
- Listening is prioritized over talking
- People ask instead of assuming
- Differences are respected and valued

Transparency: A collaborative culture is rooted in a high degree of information transparency. Being transparent doesn't mean every piece of information is available to everyone; proprietary knowledge and confidential information should have limited availability although interpretations of what those are will vary. On their first day, every software engineer at Google gets access to nearly all of Google's code, and every employee can look at the personal goals and objectives of every other employee. In some sense, Google can be said to be radically transparent; consider this anecdote from a Google employee: "I remember the first time I complained about someone in an email and my manager promptly copied that person, which forced us to quickly resolve the issue. It was a stark lesson in the importance of having direct conversations with colleagues." [45]

Some signals a culture encourages transparency:

- Problems are solved quickly
- Uncertainty is reduced (or at least understood)
- Political game-playing becomes more difficult
- Feedback is asked for, not just given
- Relationships are more authentic
- Everyone speaks candidly and respectfully
- Leaders are told what they need to hear, not just what they want to hear

Sharing: A collaborative culture is rooted in the free sharing of knowledge and ideas. Jobs in our complex organizations are knowledge-based and interdependent. Research shows that knowledge-sharing is positively linked to productivity and profitability as well as to "growth and innovation, bottom line savings, increased customer satisfaction, increased shareholder value and learning." [46] Traditional knowledge-management tools like document repositories have often failed to engage people.

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Some signals a culture encourages sharing:

- Sharing is made simple
- Employees are trusted to think
- People experience benefits from sharing (e.g. reputation, influence)
- Leaders role model cooperation and sharing
- Competence and credibility are valued higher than formal status
- People feel comfortable asking for help
- Spontaneous exchanges often take place outside of formal processes
- People ask, "What have we learned?" Can others make good use of this information?"

Empowerment: A collaborative culture is rooted in the belief that everyone can contribute and make an impact on the success of the organization. The digital workplace provides everyone with far greater opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise, and increase their influence on decision making. It also provides individuals with a greater degree of control on when, where, and how work gets done.

Some signals a culture encourages empowerment:

- People feel individually responsible for the success of a collaboration
- People feel confident they can prove themselves
- Engagement and commitment are high
- Hierarchy and formal status are treated lightly
- Business boundaries are porous
- Leaders are seen as guides and facilitators
- Decision making is spread deep and wide
- Mistakes are considered opportunities for learning
- Leadership behaviors are expected at all levels and locations
- Information and other resources are unlocked and accessible

Culture change, particularly at the organizational level, is a non-linear process that requires constant attention. Given the power and reach of new technologies, we can involve everyone in the organization in identifying what core principles and behaviors should define the culture (i.e. crowdsource the culture).

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach
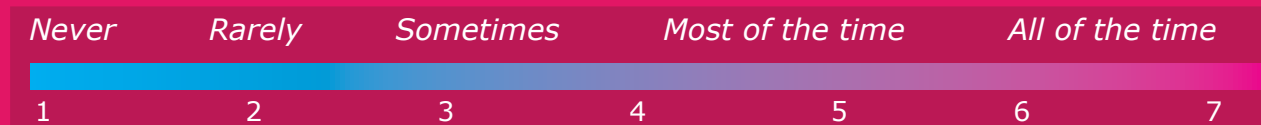
▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Tips for Changing Culture

- Align strategy and culture; remember culture eats strategy for breakfast
- Focus on a few critical shifts in behavior so as not to overwhelm people
- Draw on the strengths of the old culture rather than drive for wholesale change
- Train for the new culture
- Measure and monitor cultural change
- Identify influencers who can really move things along

Your thoughts

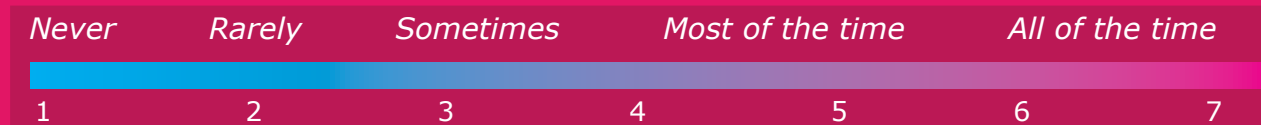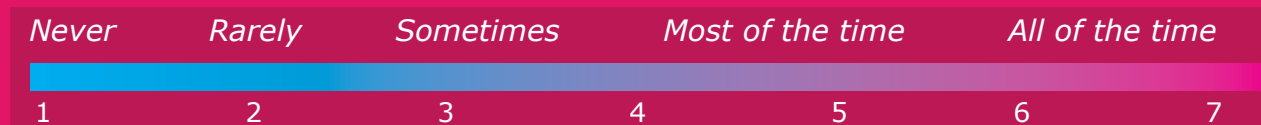On an average day, how often do your behaviors demonstrate the following values?
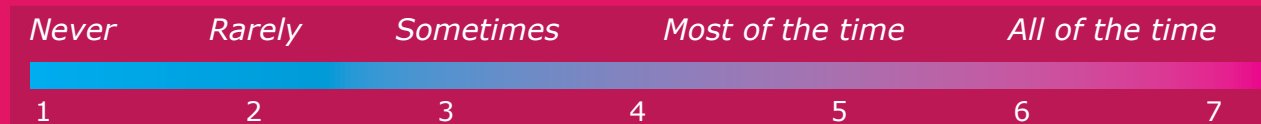
Openness

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All of the time		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Transparency

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All of the time		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Convergence

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All of the time		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sharing

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All of the time		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Empowerment

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All of the time		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- How do rate your colleagues against these same values?

- How would you rate your organizational culture as a whole?

Borderless Collaboration Success: A Holistic Approach
▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Small Culture

When we are collaborating in borderless teams, we are often interacting with others from different cultures; these cultures could be related to different geographies, organizations or professions. Misinterpretations lead to misunderstandings which lead to mistrust. Some confusion is inevitable in the borderless workplace, but much can be avoided through cultural co-creation.

Co-creation is a term often used in experience design especially when designers and clients work together to create a new product or customer experience. The product is not created by the 'expert' designers, but by different parties who collaborate to produce a mutually valuable outcome. A.G. Lafley, former CEO of Proctor & Gamble, said "You have to innovate with the customer . . . and keep her involved, co-creating and co-designing with you throughout." [47]

Several years ago, I worked with French-Japanese virtual teams to dramatically improve their ability to collaborate. The client was convinced that their problems all stemmed from cultural differences.

After talking with team leaders it became obvious that while cultural differences were an issue (how could they not be) the major problem was a lack of agreement on how they would collaborate.

I could have put the teams to work on creating shared values, but values tend to be vague - while also being fiercely protected and non-negotiable. Instead, I decided to focus the teams on co-creating shared operating agreements (specific guidelines) for activities critical to their success. These operating agreements defined their expectations of each other, and promoted accountability. Activities around which operating agreements were created included:
How are we going to...

- create goals and objectives?
- plan and budget?
- manage time?
- communicate?
- share information?
- make decisions?
- manage conflict?
- measure progress and report results?

Sub-teams of both French and Japanese members worked on one or two of the activities and drafted short operating agreements; these would be brought back to the whole group for review (and any reworking).

▶ Digital and Cultural Know-How

Operating agreements can be quite simple. What is important is that the meaning is clear and understood by all:

- ■ We respond to emails within 24 hours
- ■ We begin and end our meetings on time
- ■ We give at least two days' notice if we cannot attend a meeting
- ■ We handle conflict directly with the person(s) involved
- ■ We do not multitask during our virtual meetings
- ■ We do not introduce new agenda items during a meeting
- ■ We circulate materials needed for meetings at least 5 days in advance

What was being done in this process was the creation of a shared collaborative/working culture. The focus was not on my culture or your culture, but on our culture as a team.

The culture wasn't imposed by team leaders but was co-created and owned by all members of the team. Taking out a lot of uncertainty and conflict about how they were going to work together enabled strong social capital to be built. The French and Japanese learned about the most relevant aspects of each other's national and organizational cultures in the process of negotiating a common way forward. Prolonged and purposeful attention to technology and culture will create the collaborative advantage so necessary for competitive advantage in today's global marketplace.

Your thoughts

- ■ Think about the virtual teams you are currently working with. What operating agreements would most benefit collaboration on these teams?

- ■ What metrics could measure the impact of the agreements?

Borderless Collaboration Success:
A Holistic Approach

Key Messages

- Digital and Cultural Know-How are both required for successful borderless collaboration.

- Five design principles should guide virtual collaborations: Simple, Compelling, Meaningful, Inclusive, and Desirable.

- We can draw upon different media types: Asynchronous, Synchronous, Lean-Back, Lean-Forward, High and Low Context.

- SMAC is the convergence of Social, Mobile, Analytics, and Cloud computing to enable more integrated enterprise collaboration.

- Culture can be divided into Big Culture (e.g. organizational) and Small Culture (e.g. teams).

- Four guiding principles for a collaborative organizational culture are: Openness, Transparency, Sharing, and Empowerment.

- Functional collaborative team cultures should be based on co-created operating agreements.

▶ Borderless Collaboration Success:
An Even More Interesting Future!

" Shared
minds
need not
be human. "

Michael Schrage [48]

Borderless Collaboration: An Even More Interesting Future!

▶ Human-Machine Collaboration

As we move into the digital economy, the border is between human and machine is blurring. Machines as well as people, are beginning to be thought of as talent. What is meant by Intelligent Human-Machine Collaboration (IHMC)? Participants at a 2012 workshop organized by the Board on Global Science and Technology of the National Research Council suggested several definitions:

- Machines and humans combining each other's strengths and filling-in for their weaknesses and empowering each other's capabilities
- Humans AND machines jointly perform tasks that they would not be able to perform on their own
- Machines being partners, and not a tool for humans
- Technology that amplifies and extends human abilities to know, perceive, and collaborate

IHCM is made possible by cognitive technologies – machines that use speech recognition, computer vision, and machine learning to talk, see, read, and listen. A 2015 study at the University of Maryland had robots learn to use kitchen tools by watching videos on YouTube.

Is this all too far into the future to be of interest to today's organizations? Not according to Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends 2015 [49]. Sixty percent of leaders in the survey rated the issue of 'machines as talent' as 'important' or 'very important'. Only 5 percent of executives however, feel they have a detailed understanding of how cognitive computing will impact their workforce.

'Automation' tends to grab the headlines, but to say that these machines are aimed at replacing human workers is too simplistic. They will supplant human beings on some routine tasks, of course, but the real value will be in complementing or augmenting human capabilities.

Consider Foldit, an online game developed in 2008 by the University of Washington's Center for Game Science and the Department of Biochemistry. Proteins – which are

tiny 'machines' handling nearly all functions in living organisms - only work properly in a body if they are correctly shaped (folded), i.e. the shape allows the amino acids to engage in biochemical reactions. Predicting the shapes of folding proteins involves trillions of calculations. Understanding how a specific protein folds into the correct shape is vital to understanding causes of disease and the development of new drug therapies. Folding irregularities are associated with a range of health problems from allergies to neurodegenerative disorders.

Players of Foldit are presented with a model of a protein which they can fold by using a set of tools in the game. The game assesses how good of a fold a player (or a team) has made, and gives a score. The score is based on the stability of the folded structure. The scores are uploaded to a leaderboard, which, in the spirit of gamification, allows for competition between the players worldwide. Strategies can be shared in chat rooms and blogs.

Borderless Collaboration: An Even More Interesting Future!

▶ Human-Machine Collaboration

When a folding problem requires an intuitive leap or strategy shift, the human players outshine the computers. The highest scoring solutions are analyzed by researchers for potential application.

Foldit has produced predictions that outperform the best known computational methods. Results have been reported in the journal Nature with credit to over 57,000 authors (players). What is also remarkable is that the vast majority of players have no background in biochemistry.

In 2011, Foldit players contributed to deciphering the crystal structure of the Mason-Pfizer monkey virus – an AIDS-causing monkey virus. They produced an accurate 3D model of the enzyme in ten days; scientists had been working on this problem for 15 years. Foldit players have also worked on molecules linked to cancer and Alzheimers.

Borderless Collaboration Success:
An Even More Interesting Future!

Key Messages

- Machines as well as people are beginning to be thought of as talent.

- Intelligent Human-Machine Collaboration (IHMC) happens when machines become partners, not just tools.

▶Wrap up

The physicist, Niels Bohr, once joked that "prediction is very difficult, especially about the future." In the history of work, borderless collaboration is relatively new, and we don't know yet how to answer the question set by the management thinker Henry Mintzberg, "are these tools augmenting our best qualities or our worst?" [50]

Some years ago I visited Kenya and went on a safari. It was a wonderful trip, but I was ruining it for myself by spending most of my time seeing this incredible world through a camera lens. I couldn't put the camera down in case the next picture would be the most important picture.

I gradually came to realize that I was missing something valuable; one day I put the camera down and just soaked up the sights, smells, and sounds. The click of the shutter was silenced and I began to feel and experience the place in a more profound and satisfying way.

I'm telling this story because I'm in a similar situation today. As someone who writes about the new world of work, I am always searching for the next 'essential' piece of information vital to my understanding - a case, a piece of data, or a perspective. The clicking of the shutter has given way to the clicking of the mouse. As with my trip to Kenya, I have learned to put the technology aside and stop gathering fragmented bits of information. Instead, I spend time absorbing what I have and reflecting on my own experiences. I've learned that I work best when I limit the information I have and just think and imagine.

I do worry that the new tools will bring out an intellectual laziness encouraged by an abundance of information. As leaders and managers we must feel, think and imagine, and not just gather bits and bytes.

We must remember that the clicking of the shutter and the clicking of the mouse don't always take us to where we want or need to be.

Don't get me wrong, I think the new tools are wonderful for expanding our individual and collective capabilities, and we should all be open to integrating them into our lives and realizing the benefits.

For some, particularly in my generation, it is difficult to unlearn the past. As Tom Petrocelli, an analyst in computer technology says, "It is still the case that many knowledge workers would rather endure horribly long email chains than start a discussion in an enterprise social network. There are still a lot of files shared by way of shared network drives or through email rather than via cloud social file sharing despite the benefits." [51]

Maybe it's time for us to stop identifying as knowledge workers and start thinking of ourselves as wisdom workers!

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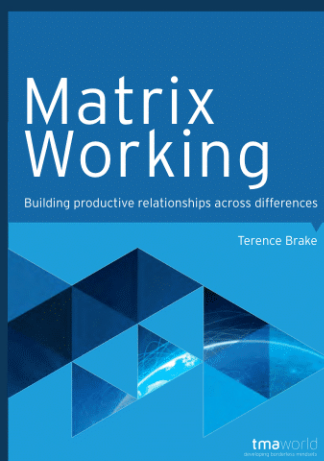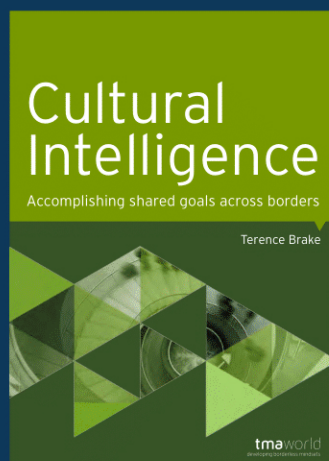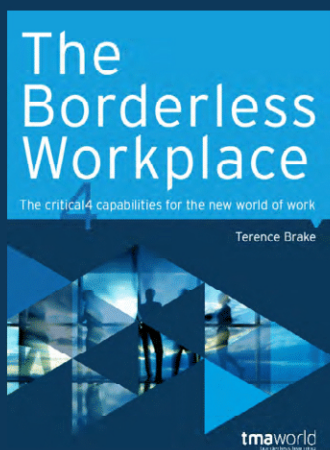
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