



About FoW

Led by Professor Lynda Gratton, and with researchers in London, Singapore and Mumbai, the FoW Institute is one of the emerging thought leaders in its field. Over the last three years, the team has worked with over 60 multinational companies from Europe, the USA and Asia to build a deep understanding of the external forces that are shaping the context of work; the internal organisational responses to these forces with regard to people-practices and processes; and the manner in which future-oriented practices can be identified, embedded and scaled.

The core of the Institute's research capability is 'collective intelligence'. Using a combination of technological platforms, including tailored portals, 48-hour Jams and sophisticated surveys, the team is able to rapidly assimilate the knowledge of communities drawn from both within and outside of a company.

Introduction

One of the novelties of our increasingly joined-up world is that technological advances are creating connections between people who would never have met before, and are most likely different from one another in profound ways. The bonds of cooperation and trust that are so crucial to collaboration are relatively straightforward and robust when people know each other, have spent time with each other, and have common interests. In these situations, trust emerges organically and is maintained implicitly. However, collaboration becomes much more complex at distance. When people are strangers, have spent little or no time with each other, and have very little in common beyond their ability to connect, trust must be crafted and actively maintained.

The ability to facilitate Complex Collaboration underpins the future business strategy of many companies, yet the environment within which such collaboration takes place is being continually redefined by a number of external forces. The means by which individuals, teams and communities work together are constantly evolving. These developments will bring greater opportunities for collaboration within the corporate agenda. However, they will also bring challenges that will require executives to have a deeper and more nuanced view of what collaboration is, and the means by which it can be supported in an increasingly virtual and fast-moving world.

This Future of Work report summarises the key emerging insights from the 48-hour online jam, one-day masterclass and the latest academic research. The following pages highlight some of the salient views from Consortium members on the impact of complex collaboration within the organisation, and touches on some of the opportunities and strategies to support and enhance collaboration in an increasingly globalised and technology-driven world. In total, 293 people from 28 organisations across the world participated in the conversation, which centred on the following provocations:

1. **Development and Context of Collaboration**

The capacity to be collaborative sits at the heart of many future-proofed areas, including Open Innovation, Generational Cohesion, and Boundary-Spanning Innovation. What are the most effective means by which an organisation can maximise its collaborative potential with regard to its practices and processes? How can the individual skills and habits of collaboration be developed? **(Page 3)**

2. **Fast and Virtual Trust**

Natural trust emerges out of a combination of proximity, shared time, and common experiences. Increasingly, people will be called upon to develop trust in circumstances that lack these factors. Developing trust at distance, within a short timeframe, and with a diverse range of people will be challenging, but is increasingly important as more work becomes virtual. What are the ways, if any, that this fast and virtual trust can be developed? And in a team working virtually, what are the best strategies to leverage face-to-face events, rare as they may be? **(Page 5)**



3. **Open Innovation and Virtual Communities**

Rapid developments in collaborative technology have enabled companies to reach out into their internal and external communities for ideas, inspiration and problem solving at low cost. Do these communities form a natural taxonomy and, if so, what are the different sequences of intervention and support that best capitalise on the collaborative potential? How can we best understand this taxonomy, and how can we define and differentiate the implications of different forms of innovation? **(Page 9)**

4. **Hyperspecialization**

In the age of Hyperspecialization, people will be called upon to collaborate with a diverse range of highly specialised workers, each with different approaches to their roles. As ever, productivity and innovation will emerge from the successful combination of these people and ideas, and will falter when collaboration fails. How will specialists be trained and supported to both build deep and specialised skills in a secure space and, at the same time, be prepared to transcend these barriers of specialisation to create a shared language and develop common ground when working with experts from different fields? **(Page 13)**

Professor Lynda Gratton
London Business School
Future of Work Consortium



1. Development and Context of Collaboration

The rise of globalisation has produced more geographically distributed organisations, with cross-functional teams being located in different locations. This has made virtual teaming an integral part of work. New and evolving technologies have led to the hyperspecialization of work, and deep specialists find it difficult to work together across functions, producing fault lines across which knowledge no longer flows. Technological advances in mobile communications have made it possible and cost-efficient to work remotely, yet this is often seen as pulling against human nature, and the intrinsic wish to collaborate. In short, the rise of virtual environments presents challenges to collaborative work, making the development and context of collaboration more complex and difficult to develop. In this context, organisations and individuals need to more consciously orchestrate collaboration.

During the online Jam, many consortium members reflected on the shifting nature of collaboration in an increasingly virtual workplace:

“ I think that collaboration is a genetic or an evolutionary aspect of human nature, but one that is primarily about self-interest. We collaborate to survive, or to get greater group rewards as a consequence of that collaboration.

- Tim Yendell, Head of The Choice/Flexible Working Programme, Royal Bank of Scotland

“ I believe that real-life collaboration is waning in society in general, with the very obvious exception of a crisis, where people undoubtedly pull together with apparent ease.

- Pauline Salomons, HR Business Partner, BT Global Services

“ The majority of organisational practices are centred around individuals. Does that require fundamental re-engineering of work and work processes to drive a collaborative environment?

- Shishir Misra General Manager, Group Human Resource, Aditya Birla

“ Our culture is still very much predicated on personal performance, and collaboration comes "at a price" in terms of time and energy to invest in networks and the sharing of good practice.

- John McIntosh, Employee Proposition Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland

Designing reward and incentive structures to encourage collaboration in this context is challenging. Recruiting for collaborative traits requires an understanding of where and how collaboration occurs:

“ We asked our sales people whether they would change the way their incentives were based (the ratio of team vs individual). But the 'team' we were talking about rewarding were not the people they were collaborating with.

How do we 'organise' people by tasks and outputs rather than simply because they do a similar job? And how do you simplify a performance management process which would take that into account?

- Kerry Freeman, Human Capital Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland

“ At Save the Children International, we have clarified what our collaboration value looks like in practice by outlining on job descriptions the skills and behaviours we expect candidates to demonstrate.

- Anna Shannon, International HR Manager, Save the Children



“ We use various assessment tools in the recruitment process. These cover cooperative aspects, and help to identify the more competitive profiles. In general we look for a collaborative behaviour as well as an ambitious and target-oriented profile.

- Poul Utzon, VP Org. Development & Strategy, Novo Nordisk

Jam participants also provided examples of induction practices that help encourage and entrench collaborative behaviours after recruitment:

“ The on-boarding process should include an introduction to the tools we use. New joiners should test how to have virtual meetings by trying the tool in a safe environment.

- Birgitte Krejberg Petersen, Novo Nordisk

“ If you took away a formal agenda for an induction and instead had a series of tasks or 'challenges' for the new starts to do, you create a virtual team. Give them the collaboration tools to achieve this, set up the resources to provide the info and you're creating a learning and knowledge sharing experience with a bit of fun thrown in!

- Kerry Freeman, Human Capital Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland

4 Steps to Creating a Cooperative Mindset

1. The employee selection process should attract cooperatively-minded people to join, while selecting against those that are overly competitive and individualistic.
2. Senior executives must adopt the role of mentors, providing a top-down behavioral role model for the rest of the company.
3. Team-based collective rewards should be introduced as a means of dissolving the of barriers towards cooperation that individualized rewards have raised.
4. Organisational structures should rely on peer-to-peer working to instill the notion that cooperation is necessary to succeed. A culture of cooperation cannot spread through an organization unless it is preached and practiced at all levels.

Finally, a number of members discussed how collaboration could be measured in a systematic and benchmarked way, and considered what a Collaboration Index could entail:

“ Some thoughts to measure complex collaboration: 1) Voluntary support extended; 2) No. of cross-functional assignments and their success rate; 3) Outcomes of mentoring and coaching sessions.

- Anil Agarwal, VP HR Telecom Business, Aditya Birla

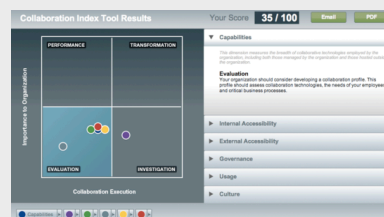
“ 1) Using "ability to collaborate" as a measure in hiring. 2) Stressing the premium placed by the organisation on collaborative behaviour. 3) Quality of learning programs centred on the theme of collaboration for employees. 4) Proof of concept by showing the differential success through a group from same function as compared to a group from diverse functions/roles for the same project/task. 5) Collaborative initiatives taken with other external organisations, including competition.

- Chandrashekhar Chavan, Joint President HR Cement Marketing Division, Aditya Birla

Benchmarking Collaboration

Cisco has developed an online Collaboration Index tool that can be used to rate collaboration across a site, department or entire organization.

The short assessment provides suggestions for how collaboration can be improved, as well as producing a chart that illustrates the strengths and weaknesses across dimensions of collaboration, capabilities, governance, usage, culture and internal and external accessibility.





2. Fast and Virtual Trust

Modern, sophisticated projects require teams that are large, virtual, diverse, and composed of highly educated specialists. Yet those same four characteristics make it hard for teams to get anything done. Trust is an essential aspect of team development and effectiveness, and the way that it emerges in virtual teams is different from the way that it emerges in face-to-face teams.

Trust is crucial in virtual teams, since only trust can prevent the geographical and organisational distance of the global team members from becoming a psychological distance. During the FoW Jam, many members reflected on whether virtual trust was harder to initiate than face-to-face trust:

“ I guess this depends on your 'base presumption' of whether you generally trust or do not trust people. People tend to suffer from 'confirmation bias', pre-selecting information to support their initial ideas.

- Koen Timmermans, Sr. Strategy Advisor HR, Shell

“ I've been working on projects where everyone is in the same building but still trust is hard to build. One of the things that stops us from trusting people is doubt about their personal motivations, a difficult thing to define.

- Kerry Freeman, Human Capital Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland

“ Trust rests on respect for each other's opinions, a common understanding and desire to reach the same goals and clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Technology allows this to happen more virtually.

- Tim Yendell, Head of The Choice/Flexible Working Programme, Royal Bank of Scotland

There was a consensus within the Jam conversation that global virtual teams differ with regard to cross-cultural communication. Participants shared how they prevent misunderstanding in cross-cultural teams:

“ I have several examples of how understanding cultural differences can create insights into otherwise perceived strange behaviours of people coming from different countries, cultural background etc. This insight led to increased trust.

One example involved an Asian and European group of workers. The workshop illustrated how differences in short and long term priorities (family versus company) helped explain an apparent lack of commitment to the family on the one hand, and to the company on the other. In reality, both groups had the same life priorities but over different timescales.

- Tony Glassborow, Europe HR Director, ManpowerGroup

How to Build 'Fast Trust'

- The importance of 'earning trust'. Trust may be given upfront (on credit), but it must be understood that it is still earned.
- Virtual teams work across countries. People must understand a team language, and terminology should mean the same to all members wherever they are.
- Brand is crucial when creating teams across functions or borders, as it provides common references, highlights shared networks.
- We trust people because we believe they are competent: reliability is a key indicator of trust.
- Self-disclosure is an important basis for mutual appreciation.
- It is important to create information-relationships between people, while making face-to-face time as productive as possible.
- Introversion should be recognised, with the establishment of quiet time for 1:1 working.



“ If teams are cross cultural, some cultural training can also be very beneficial. How people view trust, build trust and communicate can vary amongst cultures and can be quickly and inadvertently destroyed or delayed without this understanding.

- Lisa Banner, VP Global Human Resources, ManpowerGroup

Once initial trust is established, it must be maintained. In teams with a high level of trust, members explicitly and promptly respond to messages, and show that the messages have been read and evaluated. Many Jammers reflected this:

“ I do think that regular communication is vital to a virtual team who may never see each other. Short but regular communication either via phone, email or instant messenger truly builds the relationship. Not the length of time doing so.

- Helene Ghosh, HR Manager, BT Global Services

Jam participants also shared their insights on the role of the manager in running virtual teams and how it differs from managing co-located teams:

“ The manager needs to provide clear vision and direction for the members in terms of work goals, and also establish a set of ground rules or ways of working with the team at the initial team formation stage.

- Joanne Lui, Senior Advisor HR Strategy & Internal Communications, Shell

“ Virtual leaders need to be able to create loyalty around a task. They have less control over distant employees and they know less about their context or conflicting priorities and this requires them to have more skills.

- Birgitte Krejberg Petersen, Novo Nordisk

Building Trust in Virtual Teams at TCS

85% of employees at TCS now work virtually. It is a standard working practice in this highly driven, performance orientated organization.

At TCS, virtual trust is all about culture. There are four key components to creating a culture of trust:

- **Shared goals** – decide goals and the rules of play, success factors, define commitments, roles and frequency of measurement
- **Leadership style** defines the vision, sets the boundary, but does not control until the outcome phase and creates freedom within the boundary. Facilitators take the lead if needed.
- **Commitments** must be communicated to peers. This does not have to be physical, it can be email. Understanding the tasks.
- **Trust** is what makes a difference in the highest performing teams. The culture is ‘trust someone until they are unworthy of trust’ people have to live up to the trust. Trust can be worked on.

Creating High Performing Virtual Teams

The Preparation


- Ensure there is clarity about the outcome
- Make expectations clear
- Clear, standard procedures
- Make use of video technology
- Create appreciation of team members

The Meeting

- Keep virtual meeting short and focused
- Support active and appreciative listening
- Create team rules such as ‘yes, and’ rather than ‘yes, but’
- Accountability and discipline through follow up

The Goal

- Create exciting challenges, sense of purpose, build shared goal
- Create clarity around the deliverables
- Put the right people in the facilitation role



Once established, the benefits of virtual teams reach far beyond the ability to communicate and collaborate at distance. Many Jam participants expressed their high expectations of virtual teams, particularly in terms of their potential to increase innovation:

“ Teams become virtual in order to gain wider access to talent beyond the current location; and if used effectively, can deliver results not possible before.

- Derrick Yuen, Senior Manager, Human Capital Metrics, Abbott

“ They break silos of information enabling wider information flow. Organisations should use virtual teams as tools of organising innovative work.

- Jukka Koistinen, Manager, Collaborative Applications, Outotec

“ For a really cool example of a "virtual innovation organisation" that encourages lots of virtual teams and complex collaboration and measures individual contributions down to the cent you might have a look at www.quirky.com. It seems to show a quick snapshot of a potential future of work.”

- Kathrin Moslein, Professor, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

However, getting a virtual team to a stage of maturity that is conducive to innovative work may be a challenge. When orchestrating virtual teams, the initial focus must be around tasks, but can then shift to a more relationship-oriented approach once the team is established. During the Jam, participants reflected on their experiences when operating in virtual teams, and touched on how this balance may be region-specific:

“ This is very culture dependent. It is my experience that Asia and Southern Europe seem to put more emphasis on the relationship before task whereas Northern Europe tends to focus more on task.

- Poul Utzon, VP Org. Development & Strategy, Novo Nordisk

Multicultural Teams at Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk uses a cultural wizard tool that helps to outline cultural differences. They used this tool when bringing together teams from Denmark and India to form a basis for future collaboration and a platform for discussing differences as well as expectations.

This turned out to be very valuable. Another activity which was highly appreciated by Indian colleagues, was to visit the family of a colleague in their private home, which again provided a basis for discussing cultural differences.

- Poul Utzon, VP Org. Development & Strategy, Novo Nordisk

Not all distributed teams are in different geographical regions. Even the slightest sense of physical isolation from other colleagues can result in a team effectively becoming virtual:

“ Even the members of a team within New York City were in different buildings. And I assure you that people in midtown Manhattan never saw people in Lower Manhattan due to traffic alone.

- Shurawl Sibbles, Senior Managing Director, Head of Strategic Workforce Management, TIAA-CREF



“ It is not necessary to have virtual teams in various countries. You may have people wanting to work on flexible time or working from home etc.

- Anshoo Kapoor, Human Resources, Tata Consultancy Services

Designing for Collaboration at Fosters + Partners

To avoid teams becoming virtual unnecessarily, the collaborative nature of physical space is crucial. In our FoW Masterclass, the architectural firm Foster + Partners highlighted how buildings should be designed to enhance teamwork. Collaborative space has increased from 5% in the 1980s, to 50% in their most recent commissions. Collaborative encounters can be engineering by the use of space in the following ways:

- **Visibility:** the liberal use of public space, including sky gardens, encourages open and dynamic exchange and creates a visual and social focus for village-like clusters to be established.
- **Proximity of groups:** encourages cross-boundary working and avoids co-located teams from falling into virtual means of communicating unnecessarily.
- **Circulation space:** the use of escalators over elevators, and integration of cafes encourages spontaneous interaction between employees.
- **Shared space:** the development of a street layout with communal areas and informal zones helps reinforce the notion of community, collaboration and spontaneous interaction.

If a virtual environment is necessary, then it is important that engagement and trust are encouraged and maintained. During the FoW Jam, a number of participants emphasised the importance of face-to-face meetings, however infrequent, in ensuring that relationships of trust form:

“ Seeing one another gives a massive advantage in team working and engagement. Tele-conferencing or photos on your email profile immediately allows the team to feel as though they have met in person.

- Pauline Salomons, HR Business Partner, BT Global Services

“ I am leading global project teams and it works well, but as mentioned, after the face to face meetings there is an increased sense of openness and trust.

- Carel Krugal Oberholzer, Manager Organisation Design & Development, Sabic

3. Open Innovation and Virtual Communities

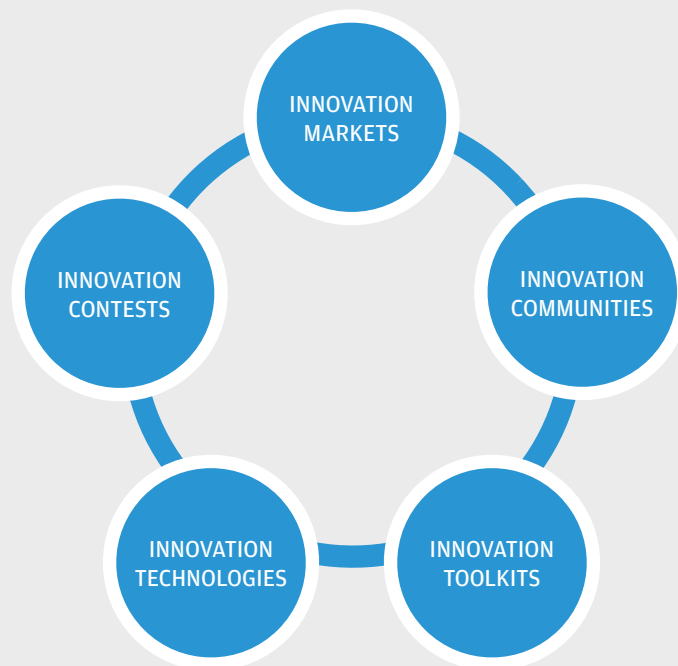
Open innovation is the process of innovating with partners by sharing the risks and rewards associated with developing a concept. As this process typically involves establishing relationships with innovators beyond the traditional boundaries of a firm or department, the increasing speed and richness of communication technologies is creating enormous opportunities in this area.

The ability to develop virtually connected open innovation communities has already become a core competency of many technology organisations, and reflects four growing assumptions:


1. Intelligence is ubiquitous rather than concentrated within the firm.
2. Profit emerges from collective creation rather than ownership.
3. It is the ability to leverage ideas rather than come up with ideas that produces a viable product.
4. Collaboration opens up more innovation opportunities than command-and-control management.

Tools for Open Innovation

In the FoW Masterclass, Kathrin Moslein provided an overview of the tools that organisations can use to implement and manage open innovation activities. These can be grouped into five basic categories:



- Innovation Contests focus on a problem, e.g. Google Lunar Prize. The solutions are provided by self-selected people who are interested in the challenges and are rewarded with prizes.
- Innovation Markets are virtual places where seekers and solvers meet to exchange innovation-related services. They are mediated by intermediaries such as InnoCentive and NineSigma.
- Innovation Communities are large groups of people that come together to work on innovation projects. An example is Apple's iOS Developer Program.
- Innovation Toolkits foster innovation by channeling creativity. An example is the LEGO Factory, where individuals can influence product development through the use of online design tools.
- Innovation Technologies enable innovators to bridge the gap between the virtual and the real world.



During the Jam, a number of members described their aspirations in opening up the organisation to new ideas by connecting across boundaries:

“ How about a "Collaboration Bazaar", where a group of employees showcase their skills/thoughts/ideas for collaboration and there are internal buyers (employees) of such skills/thoughts/ideas?

- Chandrashekhar Chavan, Joint President, HR Cement Marketing Division, Aditya Birla

“ I love the idea of a Collaboration Bazaar! Many companies are already experimenting with this sort of thing, but I think the idea that each employee has a certain amount of 'currency' that they can invest in individual projects is a really interesting one, and mirrors Kickstarter.

Companies could allocate each of their employees with a virtual fund every year, which employees could then use as they wish within the innovation platform to help fund proposed projects. Whichever reached their funding goals would be considered for development!

- Lynda Gratton, CEO, Hot Spots Movement

The notion of an open innovation community as a democratic marketplace of ideas reflects the notion that innovative thinking occurs at a greater rate within networks characterised by high levels of diversity. This notion was reflected by the experiences of other Jam members, who highlighted the importance of peripheral inside innovators - employees within an organisation whose main tasks are unrelated to the innovation process:

“ We now have data over 3 years from companies like Munich Airport or DATEV that involve "peripheral inside innovators". They can be wonderful boundary-spanners between external innovators and the internal core innovation team.

In our new pilot projects we include boundary innovators: i.e. people who are either inside the firm, but feel primarily external (e.g. trainees, apprentices, newly incoming employees), or people who are outside the firm, but feel primarily inside (e.g. early retired employees and recently retired employees, but also young parents in maternity leave etc). We include these people in innovation task-forces and they take the main boundary spanning role.

- Kathrin Moslein, Professor, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

“ Internally, we are increasingly drawing on 'peripheral inside innovators'. Last year we had a 'small innovation' initiative where the general employee base was invited to create ads for our new 'Let's go' campaign. Such initiatives are generating positive excitement and provide the opportunity for all staff to put our aim of 'being the most competitive and innovative energy company' into practice.

- Koen Timmermans, Senior Strategy Advisor HR, Shell

“ We actively recruit people who are 'connectors' i.e. able to span boundaries and collaborate. There is a clear set of behaviours associated with boundary spanners and it's certain that not everyone can span boundaries.

I wonder whether it's easier for those in the peripheral workforce to span boundaries, as for those at the core there are political (and other) pressures to protect / sustain the organisational interest.

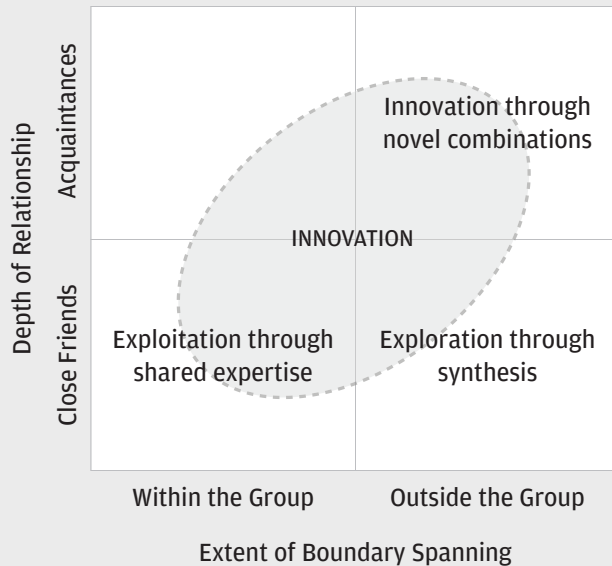
For me it's helpful to consider organisational boundaries as a little bit 'porous' when it comes to collaboration, but there are risks associated with that.

- Ben Emmens, Director of HR Services, People in Aid

Boundary Spanning

Networks that incorporate highly diverse individuals in various combinations of acquaintances and close relationships tend to produce innovation and push for deeper exploration of ideas.

Networks that span to acquaintances and associates outside of established knowledge sets, and even outside the boundaries of the organisation, tend to perform better than those that don't.



How to Develop 'Boundary-spanning' Capabilities:

- Encourage people to speak 'multiple languages' and develop strong intellectual connections between discreet and well developed areas of expertise.
- Identify potential 'boundary spanners', who function as the channels of interdisciplinary knowledge sharing.
- Rotate people between skill areas so they can build collaborative skills across functions and create networks with other departments.

Throughout the Jam, participants highlighted a range of skills and leadership qualities that were seen as prerequisites to working in an open innovation environment:

“ I would put the following key skills as essential ingredients for successful innovation: dealing with ambiguity, networking skills, intellectual curiosity and learning to learn.

- Shishir Misra, General Manager, Group Human Resources, Aditya Birla

“ The key role of senior management would be to embed open innovation in the culture of the company / organisation. Bring visionary leadership to motivate people and engage them.

- Devjeet Haldar, Director of Technology Solutions, Abbott


“ Leading by example is also a good way. If senior management would more often practice what they preach, this might lead to cool effects.

- Kathrin Moslein, Professor, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

Collaborative Innovation at Rite Solutions

All employees engage in an interactive collaborative game that provides everyone a voice in what technologies the company will pursue, and where they can best be applied.

Even corporate management is aligned through an innovative organizational concept that is more community based, rather than the authoritative structure of the hierarchy. The result has been a truly innovative company rather than a company that only uses innovative technologies.



Jam participants also acknowledged that there are different models of open innovation for different scenarios, as well as different partners for different stages in the innovation process:

“ I think innovation can be fully open and partially open. Fully open in my view is more of a B2C (Business-to-Consumer) model. Partially open is allowing a level of openness between customers and suppliers.

- Andy Wood, Head of Communication & Collaboration, KCOM

“ My experience so far is that different partners can help at different stages. Key suppliers often bring new ideas, tools, etc. that can move into the pilot/scale-up phase much quicker. Universities, however, often work better at the beginning of the process to bring in new ideas.

- Willem Manders, Manager Learning Strategy & Innovation, Shell

The development of ideas through these new innovation processes challenges the conventional notion of ownership. For years, intellectual property has been seen as the key asset of organisations in the knowledge economy, but the collaborative nature of open innovation challenges this assumption. During the Jam, members discussed the extent to which their organisations are witnessing a shift in how IP is handled in this context:

“ A restrictive approach to IP is not only difficult to police but could deter strong performers from applying to organisations. If you cannot own and highlight what you do, what could an organisation offer to motivate and retain you?

- Anna Shannon, International HR Manager, Save the Children

“ In high tech industries, where technology is changing at a fast pace, even a product patent does not help. IP only works when there is no change in the external environment.

- Anil Agarwal, VP HR Telecom Business, Aditya Birla

“ While I see some movement in IP ownership towards employees, the common model in the software industry is for the company to own the IP. There are more venues for people to participate in open marketplaces with the IP, but only a very small fraction makes enough money to quit a day job.

- Harald Becker, Senior Business Strategist, Microsoft

4. Hyperspecialization

The emerging trend towards hyperspecialisation will have substantial and long-lasting effects on how work is conducted and coordinated. In the context of increasing technological and organisational sophistication, it will be crucial for individuals to develop deep specialist knowledge and skills within a number of areas that feed into a broader community of talent. Participants in the FoW Jam are already observing the effects of hyperspecialization:

“ The most common environments where I've encountered hyperspecialism are: 1) universities, research institutes; 2) large scale technology companies; and 3) private entrepreneurs with deep knowledge having large amount of customer.

- Jukka Koistinen, Manager, Collaborative Applications, Outotec

“ When thinking about hyperspecialisation, you might want to have a look at the new trend towards micro-task markets. These online platforms offer hundreds of thousands of micro-tasks for a few cents each (e.g. www.mturk.com or www.clickworker.com).

Open innovation markets like InnoCentive or NineSigma offer very specialised, highly complex innovation challenges that profit from the enormous variety of "hyperspecialised" specialists in the solver communities; matchmaking seems to be the challenge.

- Kathrin Moslein, Professor, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

“ The trick may be in the clever matching of specialists that have a clear affinity to a project or initiative. Once those kindred spirits start to work together on a common and passionate cause, they will create their own self-guided momentum and need no management. The challenge may remain for corporates to grasp the sometimes intangible principle of open-market collaboration.

- Belinda Johnson, Knowledge & Insight Director, Randstad

“ Within the world of contingent resourcing, there is an increasingly fundamental need and expectation that these people will hit the ground running and deliver upon immediate expectations. For them, failure on an assignment is not an option, so the skill of working within teams, virtual or otherwise, is intrinsic to their nature.


- Belinda Johnson, Knowledge & Insight Director, Randstad

StreetScooter and the Hyperspecialisation of the Car Industry

More than 50 companies took part in co-creating the design and engineering process of the StreetScooter electric car. It is built in modules with the companies clustered into 'lead engineering groups' to focus on their specialist area, while a management group resolved intergroup disagreements.

The consortium uses product lifecycle management and CAD software to substitute for the everyday coordination of a large, integrated company. This sort of technology is vital, as large-scale collaboration will only work if there is an effective means of managing outcomes.





Jam members reflected on the challenges that their organisations are beginning to face when motivating and developing the career paths of hyperspecialists:

“ With the calibre of individuals that have the potential to become hyperspecialised comes a need to be recognised for the niche skills. I believe that many will want to grow their area of new hyperspecialism and want to become an authority in their area.

- Belinda Johnson, Knowledge & Insight Director, Randstad

“ Most organisations are unclear on how to handle, motivate, engage and reward specialists. Specialists tend to collaborate with other "experts" and the quality of co-workers is an important criteria for them to co-create. Peer recognition would be helpful as it will acknowledge the specialist as the "go to" person across the organisation.

- Sunita Sinha, Portfolio Head, Org Effectiveness, Aditya Birla

“ Hyperspecialisation can in some cases become management's worst nightmares if conservative people from epistemologically different paradigms need to collaborate and, at the same time, do not recognise other people's perspectives and approaches.

- Mikkel Marfelt, Organisational Research, Novo Nordisk

“ It is quite interesting to look at the academic model of hyperspecialisation and see how it would translate to mainstream business. In academia most employees are hyperspecialists, their work is peer reviewed by other hyperspecialists in similar/adjacent fields and their reputation is built from there through recognition and publication.

- Nicola Millard, Futurologist, BT Global Services

The shift towards hyperspecialization may lead to improvements in the quality and efficiency of producing both products and knowledge. However, Jam members noted a number of challenges that could arise when pursuing a hyperspecialist career:

“ I think that the way work is done requires two types of 'costs'. The first one is transaction costs. An expert will often have lower transaction costs to do a certain task as that person is the expert. The second one is coordination costs. In a highly complex organization these costs are often higher as many different specialised elements need to be brought together.

- Willem Manders, Manager Learning Strategy & Innovation, Shell

“ If hyperspecialisation is a reality, then organisations need to gear up their thinking on career, development and pay.

- Shishir Misra, General Manager- Group Human Resources, Aditya Birla

“ In terms of employee development, segmentation is key. The methodology of segmenting a broader specialism means that individuals can rotate through a series of highly specialised areas with a mentor/ leader learning framework in a safe environment and begin to broaden their range of skills.

- Tim Yendell, Head of The Choice/ Flexible Working Programme, Royal Bank of Scotland

Company Members of the Future of Work Phase3



