Five Outcomes for Connected Hybrid Work

Table of Content

Welcome & Thank You

We are living in extraordinary times where we have a once-in-a-generation, if not once-in-a-lifetime, opportunity to shape the **Next World of Work**. Your leadership can help people apply productive and healthy connections to better innovate, execute and thrive at work.

And with a slight twist on the wisdom of the great philosopher Spiderman – "with great opportunity comes great challenge." Accelerated and amplified by the events of the past several years, the next world of work arrived suddenly, leaving most without the new mental models and tested approaches on how to operate effectively. Unfortunately, today's work environment is littered with a cacophony of platitudes and attitudes on how we should connect in the next world of work. We aim to slice through this noise by exploring together the context, content and course of action for effectively connecting in the hybrid workplace.

The good news is that many members of our community have been exploring and applying the importance and impact of productive connections at work for decades. From that work we know that addressing an opportunity of this magnitude requires **collective intelligence - -** gathering diverse perspectives, experimenting and learning together. We propose that this learning journey is one that leverages just such collective intelligence.

Applying decades of research we offer a structured staring point, a hypothesis on the possible pillars for a Connected Enterprise in Five Outcomes for Connected Hybrid Work. We have invited a diverse group of both professors and practitioners to share their insights, but most importantly, we want to explore and learn together. While the mental models based on the research lay the foundation, we want to empower you with the practical resources to apply them personally and with your organization.

Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to going on this learning journey together.

Rob Cross
Founding Member
Chief Research Officer
Connected Commons

Deb Zehner
Founding Member and
Director of Operations & Applied
Research

Michael Arena
Founding Member
Chief Science Officer
Connected Commons

Carrie Bevis
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Communities Partnerships
Institute for Corporate Productivity

Kevin Osborn
Senior Director
Member Development
Institute for Corporate Productivity

Greg Pryor
Founding Member
Connected Commons

Connected Commons Mission in Action

This learning journey is an exciting evolution of our community and further deepens our mission in action. If you are new to our community, Connected Commons is a community of academic, business and human capital thought-leaders who believe that positive and intentional connections are increasingly the new currency driving success and satisfaction in the next world of work. We operate in partnership with the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp), conducting research, creating resources and cultivating relationships that help empower positive and productive relationships enabling individual, team and organization success and satisfaction. .

Research
We co-create applied research and case studies focused on the practical application of organization network principles, patterns and practices. Our perspectives are shared with members and published in many of the world's most respected business journals including the Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review and the California Management Review.

Relationships
Believing in the power of networks to drive transformational change, we operate as an intentional learning community with thought-leaders representing more than 150 leading organizations who connect to share, understand and apply network concepts to enable their workforce.

Resources
In collaboration with the members of our community, we have a suite of digital resources including tangible toolkits, assessments, courses, and expert-led workshops that bring these concepts to life.

Social Capital Matters

i4cp Collaboration Effectiveness Index

Ensure employees collaborate effectively with external stakeholders
- High-performance: 50%
- Low-performance: 31%

Ensure all employees are able to find/access organizational expertise
- High-performance: 43%
- Low-performance: 25%

Ensure newcomers assimilate quickly and know who to turn to in order to contribute
- High-performance: 44%
- Low-performance: 17%

Ensure employees collaborate effectively across internal business functions
- High-performance: 43%
- Low-performance: 20%

Recognize / reward collaborative behaviors that make others more effective
- High-performance: 42%
- Low-performance: 20%

Ensure people don't become overloaded with collaborative demands
- High-performance: 42%
- Low-performance: 20%

■ High-performance organizations ■ Low-performance organizations

4x **High-performance** organizations emphasize **social well-being** at a rate more than **4x** than lower performers.

Through the partnership with the Connected Commons, i4cp has been at the forefront of helping organizations and individuals understand the impact of social capital and connections on both productivity, performance and wellbeing in the Next World of Work. Based on your membership access we recommend reviewing these thoughtful research reports.

An i4cp Report
From **Cube** to **Cloud**™
The Next Era of Work

An i4cp Report
Flexibility or Flight:
Hybrid Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

An i4cp Report
The Essential Talent Practices for Productive Collaboration

Purposeful Collaboration:
The Essential Components of Collaborative Cultures

Source: i4cp Purposeful Collaboration: The Essential Components of Collaborative Cultures

Context

We appreciate that "all meaning is situated in context". Our research and perspectives are designed to help make sense of the collaborative trends and imperatives facing individuals and organizations.

Explored more deeply in session one, we believe that the world is experiencing three fundamental shifts in the collaborative nature of work which have been accelerated and amplified by the extraordinary events of the past several years.

This extraordinary time has created a Psychological Narrative for a generation of leaders and professionals that require us to achieve five critical outcomes to address the collaborative imperatives in the Next World of Work.

Say Hello to the Next World of Work

As organizations navigate an increasingly fragmented business environment, optimizing hybrid collaboration will be imperative to future success.

To enable more effective collaboration, companies should consider key practices to cultivate team intentionality, reciprocity and autonomy.

Hybrid work is here to stay — but with countless new variables shaping collaboration in a hybrid world, leaders may simply lean back into pre-pandemic work modes that no longer effectively serve their organizations. [1]

SHIFT HAPPENS

A seismic shift in the way we connect and collaborate was underway forming the **Next World of Work** well before the pandemic. This has accelerated and amplified the criticality of five collaborative outcomes.

Forces Already at Work
Three Drivers of Next World of Work

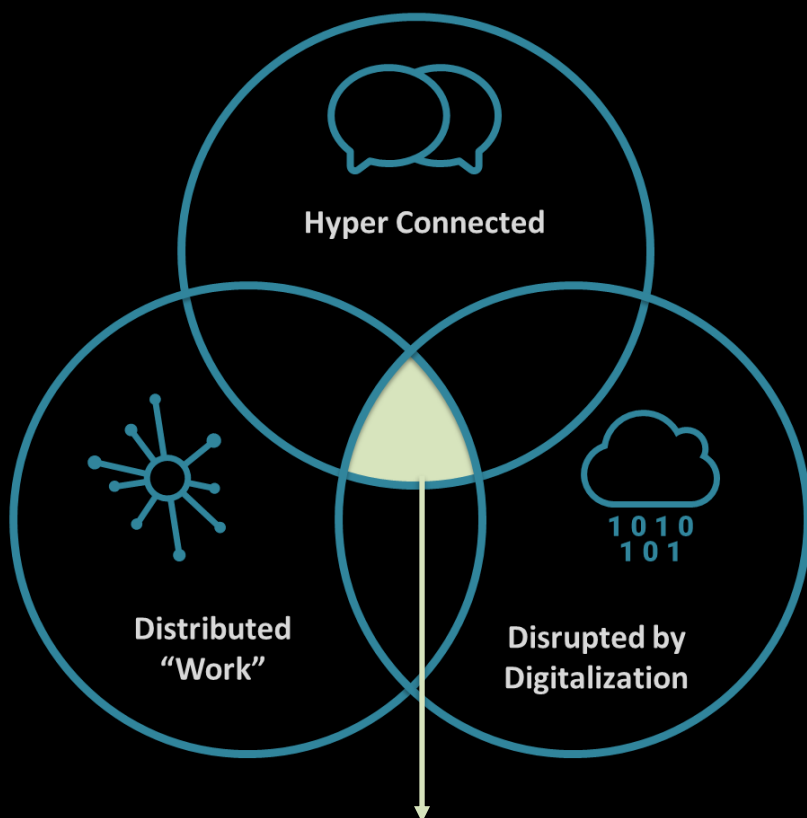**Accelerated During the Pandemic**
How the Pandemic Pummeled our Networks

Amplified a Perspective on the Future of Work
Psychological Narrative of a Generation is Driving Five Collaborative Outcomes

Three Drivers of Next World of Work

Hyper Connected

Distributed "Work"

Disrupted by Digitalization

1 0 1 0
1 0 1

Potential Collaborative Implications

2. "Transitions" Skyrocket

4. Culture Dilutes

1. Social Agency Premium Grows

3. Innovation & Execution Stalls

5. Belonging & Burnout Suffers

The Next World of Work Dominates the Headlines

Well before the pandemic, the Connected Commons community in partnership with the i4cp Research Team actively monitored and explored a number of forces that were already driving dramatic changes in the collaborative patterns and practices of work. While not limited to the factors below, we believe that the three drivers will have a dramatic impact on the future of collaboration and connectivity at work.

Distributed Work

Whether across functions, roles or locations, the future of work will be **distributed**. Facing most organizations immediately is the challenge of location and hybrid work. Gallup estimates 70+ million U.S. workers can do their job working remotely. Only two in 10 remote-capable employees are currently working fully on-site. When an employee's location preference doesn't match their current work location, burnout rises while engagement drops.[2] Twenty to twenty-five percent of the workforces in advanced economies could work from home between three and five days a week, representing four to five times more remote work than before the pandemic.[3]

Disrupted by Digitalization

The continued digitalization of the work world is driving massive change. Following decades of AI "false starts", the reality of AI is hitting the world like an avalanche with both promise and peril. AI could contribute up to $15.7 trillion to the global economy in 2030, more than the current output of China and India combined. Of this, $6.6 trillion is likely to come from increased productivity.[4] Adoption of this new technology has been blistering. Chat GPT received more than 30 million users in its first two months, making it one of the fastest-growing software products as compared to Instagram which took nearly a year to get its first 10 million users.[5]

Hyper Connected

First popularized in our 2016 Harvard Business Review cover story on Collaboration Overload, the collaborative intensity of work has been skyrocketing and is quickly creating a wellbeing epidemic. Since February 2020, Microsoft reported a 252% increase in their weekly meeting time with the number of weekly meetings increasing 153%. Despite the increase in time connected, 43% of leaders say relationship-building is the greatest challenge in hybrid and remote work. Employees who have thriving relationships with their immediate team members report better wellbeing than those with poor relationships (76% versus 57%). They also report higher productivity (50% versus 36%) and are less likely to change employers in the year ahead (61% versus 39%).[6]

There are a number of collaborative implications that result from these drivers including: 1) how the premium on social agency grows and becomes more important, 2) how the "great" resignation, "great" restructuring and/or "great" reduction requires the majority of the workforce to transition into new roles, new teams and new organizations, 3) why strategic innovation and execution stalls due to broken bridging ties, 4) where there is potential for cultural dilution especially with new joiners and 5) a growing epidemic of employee burnout and loss sense of belonging. Anyone of these, never mind the cumulative effects, are costly and erode organization competitiveness and productivity.

Forces Behind the Three Drivers of the Next World of Work

HYPER CONNECTED

The collaborative intensity of work is increasingly rising to keep up with fundamental changes in nature, velocity and connectivity of work.

Collaboration Overload

Microsoft reports a 252% increase in weekly meeting time with the number of weekly meetings increasing 153%. Our research reveals that Priority and Collaboration Overload overwhelms employees, creating burnout and reducing the energizing connections central to innovation, execution and thriving.

From Teams to Teaming

The increasingly complex Next World of Work requires the effort and expertise of an ever-increasing broad network of people to discover, develop and diffuse ideas. The historical intact teams are being replaced with networks.

Social Wellbeing

Too much and too little social connection is tearing the productive fabric of relationships. Employees who have thriving relationships report better wellbeing, higher productivity and greater retention. 43% of leaders say relationship-building is the greatest challenge in hybrid and remote work.

DISTRIBUTED WORK

The distribution of work across geographies, people and organizations explodes the diversity of context and number of connections required for successful collaboration.

Decentralized Workplace

Now labeled as remote and hybrid, the globalization of the workplace and workforce was already well established, not to mention the huge percentage of workforce working where the customers are in the consumer sector.

Democratized Work Ecosystem

New work arrangements and economic models embodied by the "uberization of work" move beyond the fixed traditional employment, organizational and hierarchical boundaries.

Deconstructing Jobs and Jobholders

Empowered by skills insight and AI-driven opportunity marketplaces, the centuries old idea of a job (designed to replicate the manufacturing line control of human work) was already being challenged to unlock the full potential and portfolio of people's skills and improve organization agility.

DISRUPTED BY DIGITALIZATION

Accelerated and disruptive digital changes are fundamentally changing the experience of work, the workforce and the workplace.

Digitalization of Everything

Companies are racing toward digitalization and the use of digital technologies to change business models, provide new revenue and create value-producing opportunities. It has significant impact to work, the workforce and the workplace.

Disrupted by Augmentation

While the promise of human and machine co-creation have long been touted and mostly leveraged in manufacturing, we are on the verge of a radical shift in the application of AI to augment non-manufacturing work and workforce.

Dramatic Skill Shift

The evolving nature of work will create a sudden and dramatic change to the skills required for success. This shift will change the make-up of core, agile emerging and enduring skills, placing a premium on essential human and social skills as machines augment and automate tasks.

Hyper Connected

Distributed "Work"

Disrupted by Digitalization

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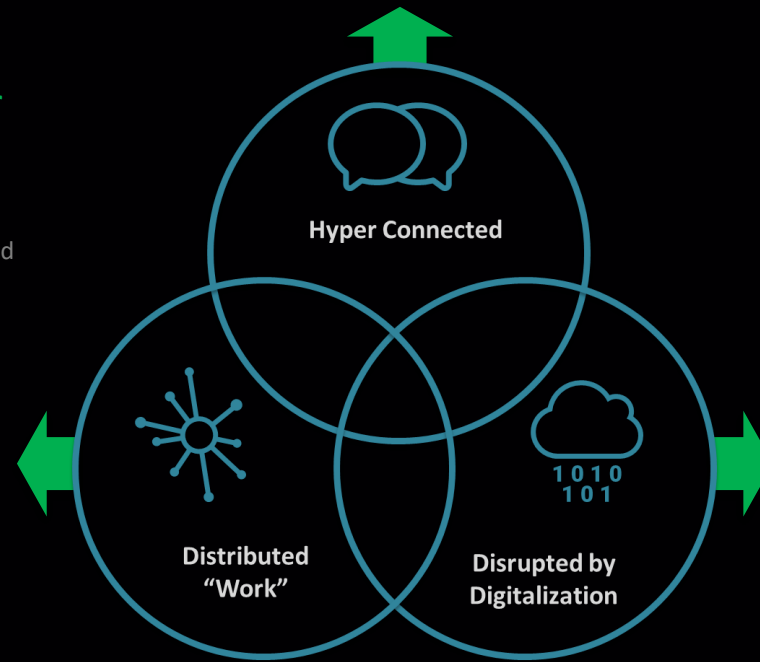
How the Pandemic Pummeled our Networks

In a series of articles published during the pandemic, Connected Commons co-founder Michael Arena explored how the pandemic pummeled our networks and accelerated the seismic changes in the collaborative nature of work. In this Covid Compendium, he explores key issues and their implications including:

The Neighborhood Effect
Understanding the neighborhood effect and its implication on hybrid work is essential for HR professionals. Our centricity toward human capital solutions that narrow in on the development of an employee's skills, experiences, and knowledge must shift toward social capital centric solutions. We will need to become much more focused on how well someone is socially positioned to leverage his or her skills, experiences, and knowledge. We must also intentionally facilitate the building of bridge connections, in a hybrid world, to span the network voids across neighborhoods. Finally, we must cultivate an environment that will help to restore the local bonding connections that fuel trust and tacit learning

Innovation Erosion
The decay rate of bridging social capital is intensified when other bridge connections are actively eroding within the network. Such rapid decay of bridging relationships creates a bleak picture for innovation in a virtual environment, especially when it comes to generating new ideas and then scaling innovations across an organization for broader support. As HR professionals, we have a responsibility to help our organizations see the whole picture. We need to help them resist the temptation to leap into a new normal of working-from-home without first considering the downside risks to long-term innovations. We must also offer a new set of solutions that help to cultivate bridging social capital, the lifeblood of innovation.

Energy & Burnout
A silver lining of this extraordinary time is that leaders are now more accessible to their teams because it now takes less time to connect directly with any one of them. Leaders appear to have stepped into the gap and taken on the challenges of their employees. They have leaned in hard on issues such as team performance, burnout, retention, hiring, and local communications and have led with great empathy, actively engaging their teams to ensure greater employee well-being.

The bad news, however, is that this has come with a significant cost. Their jobs have become 10 times harder. Consequently, leaders are becoming more chronically stressed, burned out, and exhausted. This should come as no surprise because we know, based on years of academic research, that social connections are the primary factor in overall wellbeing.

The Fragility of Connections
The implications of new hybrid patterns could be quite dramatic in the long term. As many have highlighted, when left to chance, physical proximity can facilitate informal interactions. Yet, all is not lost. There are plenty of ways to increase informal interactions, even for predominately remote employees. It just can't be left to chance.

Perhaps, we can best learn from the degree of intentionality we have placed on our formal interactions. In this case, we have already overcome the proximity bias, or as Kevin Osborne from i4cp suggests, "intentionality trumps proximity." Of course, this leads to the core question for HR professionals, "How can we employ the same level of intentionality with our informal interactions?" These are critical questions that must be asked and answered.

Connected Commons | i4cp | **HR Exchange**

Covid Compendium
LEVERAGING SOCIAL CAPITAL
Articles appearing in HR Exchange by Michael Arena
May 2020 – January 2023

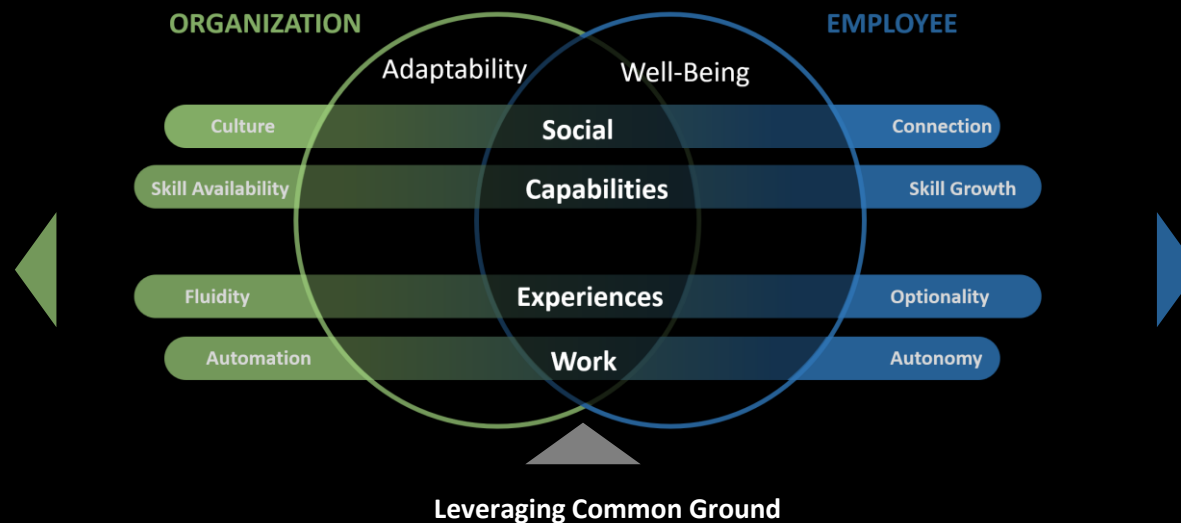# Psychological Narrative of a Generation is Driving Five Collaborative Outcomes

At one of our very first Connected Commons summits, London Business School professor Tammy Erikson shared the idea of how a "psychological narrative" created through a series of lived and intensive experiences **frames and filters** the fundamental way we see the world. While Tammy shared this idea primarily in the context of human development theory specifically for adolescents, we believe that the sudden and extraordinary events of 2020 has created just such a narrative – one for employees and one for organizational leaders.

For Organization Leaders:

We theorize that the "psychological narrative" for organization leaders is prioritizing the **adaptability** required to quickly respond to an increasingly VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world.

In his 2016 book, Thank You For Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations, New York Times columnist and Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas Friedman suggests that in 2007 the world entered the great acceleration, ushering in a dizzying and disorienting era of change that will be the challenge of our time. He suggests that based on the three biggest forces at play: technology, globalization and climate change, the world is changing at an accelerating rate, making it essential that we are ready to **adapt** to whatever comes.

Psychological Narrative of Generation

ORGANIZATION   **EMPLOYEE**

Adaptability   Well-Being

Culture	**Social**	Connection
Skill Availability	**Capabilities**	Skill Growth
Fluidity	**Experiences**	Optionality
Automation	**Work**	Autonomy

Leveraging Common Ground

While on the surface these two narratives may appear to be in conflict, we believe there is a point of commonality and mutual benefit that should serve as a starting point for common ground as opposed to the attitudes and platitudes dominating the media.

To empower the goals of both parties, we believe that improving intentional social connection will address employee need for connectivity AND the organization's priority to preserve culture. Building capabilities together addresses the organization's skills imperative WHILE meeting an employee's need for career wellbeing. Creating access to career experiences give employees career optionality AND organizations flexibility. Shifting the point of primacy from jobs to work will enable cognitive automation while empowering employee autonomy.

For Employees:

We theorize that the "psychological narrative" for employees is prioritizing personal wellbeing which includes physical, emotional and financial wellbeing, but is increasingly social and career wellbeing.

On the US Surgeon General's website site for **Current Priorities,** Dr Vivek Murthy is clear and convicted that "Workplace mental health and well-being is a critical priority for public health." He suggests it has "numerous and cascading impacts for the health of individual workers and their families, organizational productivity, the bottom-line for businesses, and the U.S. economy."

In our research we see the growing importance of productive and healthy connections at work being central to job success and satisfaction.
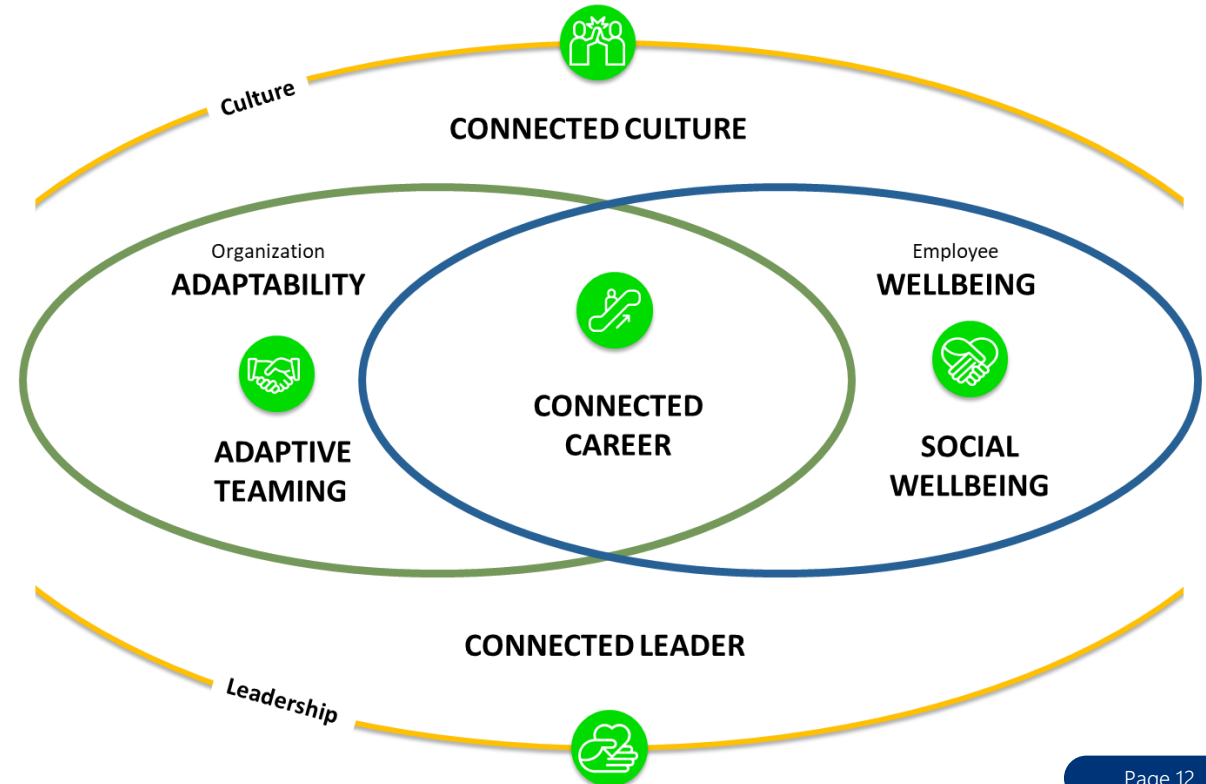
Psychological Narrative of a Generation is Driving Five Collaborative Outcomes

To address these imperatives and respond to the psychological narratives of a generation of leaders and employees, we see five critical collaborative outcomes that both organizations and individuals need to achieve to maintain success and satisfaction in the Next World of Work.

Beginning with individuals it is critical to address the need for **Social Wellbeing** and connectivity. Groups and teams need to understand and enable **Adaptive Teaming**. Collectively, leaders and employees have the opportunity to create a next generation of **Connected Careers** where developmental spirits focused on work-to-be-done deepen both capabilities and connections. At the organization level, we need to help leaders who are increasingly overloaded and overwhelmed engage more effectively and efficiently. Finally, organizations need to created **Connected Culture,** where employees feel a deep sense of belonging with a connection to colleagues, customers, the company and the organization's mission.

5 Outcomes for Connected Hybrid Work

Culture
CONNECTED CULTURE

Organization
ADAPTABILITY

ADAPTIVE TEAMING

CONNECTED CAREER

Employee
WELLBEING

SOCIAL WELLBEING

CONNECTED LEADER

Leadership

Our 2023 Learning Journey

To first explore the context and then deep dive into the content for each of the outcomes, we have structured our learning journey into six group sessions. The following pages introduce the sessions, the relevant research and resources that members can use to achieve these outcomes. Click on the session below for more information, to watch a replay and to register for an upcoming session.

February 21, 2023
11:00 AM -12:30 PM ET

April 5, 2023
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM ET

June 6, 2023
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM ET

August 7, 2023
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM ET

September 20, 2023
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM ET

December 4, 2023
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM ET

Content & Course of Action

Priding ourselves in being a community of **pracademics** (partitioners applying academic-based insights), we strive for our research to reveal the patterns, practices and behaviors that individuals and organizations can apply to achieve the five critical collaborative outcomes.

For each of the five collaborative outcomes, we describe the focus and goals for the session, a portfolio of relevant research and the specific resources that you can apply to help individuals, groups and organizations achieve these outcomes.

Content: Research Overview

- How to Make Hybrid Work Effective, Engaging and Empowering
- The Adaptive Hybrid: Innovation with Virtual Work
- From Human To Social Capital, with Michael Arena
- Optimizing Return-to-Office Strategies With Organizational Network Analysis
- What is the Impact of Virtual and Hybrid Working on Innovation?

Context

- The Three Cs for Cultivating Organizational Culture in a Hybrid World
- Culture Renovation
- Use Networks to Drive Culture Change
- Cultivating an Inclusive Culture Through Personal Networks
- How Successful Women Manage Their Networks

- Adaptive Space
- No Team Is an Island
- For an Agile Transformation, Choose the Right People
- When Collaboration Fails and How to Fix It
- Adaptive Space: Shifting from Structural to Social Design
- How Adaptive Teams et Hybrid Work Right
- How to Make Sure Agile Teams Can Work Together

- The Microstress Effect
- The Hidden Toll of Microstress
- How to be a team player -- without burning out
- Don't Let Micro-Stresses Burn You Out
- Sink or Swim? Navigating the Invisible Sea of Micro-stressors in an Always On World
- Beyond Collaboration Overload
- Collaborative Overload
- Do You Have a Life Outside of Work?
- The Secret to Building Resilience
- Collaboration Overload Is Sinking Productivity
- Collaboration Without Burnout
- Physical Health is Not a Solo Sport

CONNECTED CULTURE

Culture

Organization
ADAPTABILITY

Employee
WELLBEING

ADAPTIVE TEAMING

CONNECTED CAREER

SOCIAL WELLBEING

CONNECTED LEADER

Leadership

- How to Succeed Quickly in a New Role
- Let Your Top Performers Move Around the Company
- Work without Jobs: How to Reboot Your Organization's Work Operating System
- Driving Personal Growth Through Relationships
- Reinventing Jobs: A 4-Step Approach for Applying Automation to Work
- In a New Role? Here's How to Hit the Ground Running
- Connect and Adapt: How Network Development and Transformation Improve Retention and Engagement in Employees' First Five Years

- A Noble Purpose Alone Won't Transform Your Company
- The Invisible Network Strategies of Successful People
- A Smarter Way to Network

- Incorporating social networks into leadership development: A conceptual model and evaluation of research and practice
- Outside In - How Leaders Engage Networked Ecosystems For Team Success

Based on more than a decade of research and writing related to the growing imperative of collaboration and connections, we have curated what we endearingly refer to as the **Fascinating 40 -** our favorite 40 research resources related to these collaborative outcomes and written by the faculty.

While don't expect that you to review all of them, we wanted to make sure you had them in your virtual bookcase for reference as required. Media forms include:

Books recognized as some of the world's leading experts on effects, impacts and importance of collaboration, our faculty facilitators have written some the definitive books on these topics.

Articles / Reports given our orientation as "pracademics" (research-based with practical application) our research typically appears in the world's most reputable applied business and academic publications including: Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review, California Management Review and Organization Dynamics.

Podcast Videos curated by HR thought-leaders and popular video channels, podcasts and videos offer a mobile and consumable version of content.

Course of Action: Resource Overview
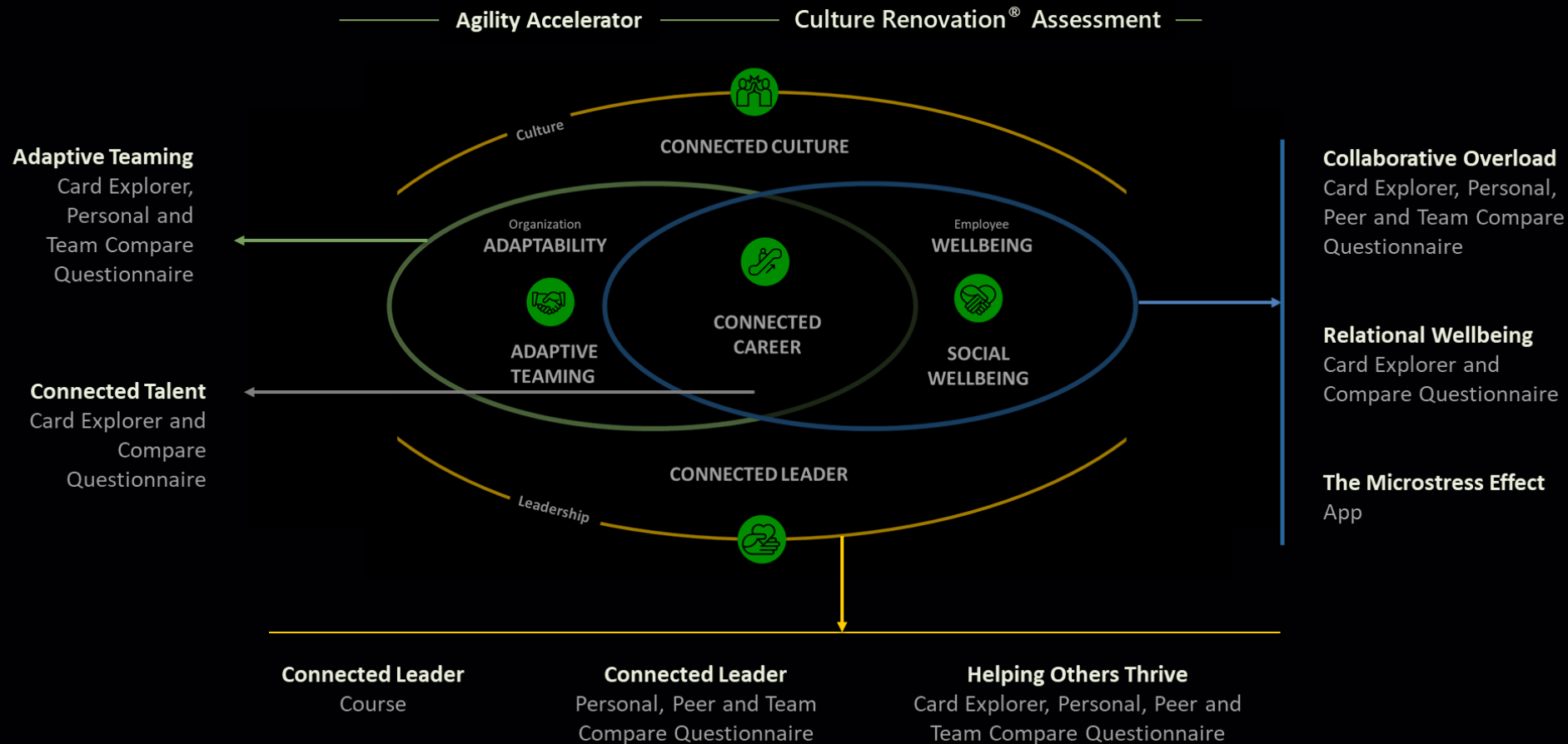
In addition to an extensive portfolio of research for each of the five outcomes, we have developed a series of research-based resources and tools to empower members to assess, address and improve the behaviors critical to these outcomes.

To support a diversity of needs these resources are easily administered and applied in variety of formats.

Digital Card Explorer invites participants to explore the practices - why they matter and what you can do; including short engaging videos. Chosen cards generate a detailed growth plan.

Compare Questionnaires help participants examine how their approach compares to the research-based best practices and provides a growth plan with strengths and opportunities. Some are available with other rater and team assessment capabilities.

Course & Certification Programs provide more structured learning programs in on-demand or blended formats.

Diagram text

Agility Accelerator — Culture Renovation® Assessment

CONNECTED CULTURE
Culture

Organization
ADAPTABILITY

Employee
WELLBEING

CONNECTED
CAREER

ADAPTIVE
TEAMING

SOCIAL
WELLBEING

CONNECTED LEADER
Leadership

Adaptive Teaming
Card Explorer, Personal and Team Compare Questionnaire

Connected Talent
Card Explorer and Compare Questionnaire

Collaborative Overload
Card Explorer, Personal, Peer and Team Compare Questionnaire

Relational Wellbeing
Card Explorer and Compare Questionnaire

The Microstress Effect
App

Connected Leader
Course

Connected Leader
Personal, Peer and Team Compare Questionnaire

Helping Others Thrive
Card Explorer, Personal, Peer and Team Compare Questionnaire

CONNECTIVITY & COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

5 Critical Outcomes for a Connected Hybrid Work

February 21, 2023 | 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM ET

1

Five Critical Outcomes for Connected Hybrid Work

February 21st

Since the pandemic, most companies continue to struggle with the shift to a distributed workforce. In parallel, US productivity rates have been falling faster. Join the first meeting of 2023 to explore and understand how the dynamics driving the next world of work are requiring both organizations and individuals to grow new capabilities that are required for the five critical outcomes necessary to succeed in a hybrid environment.

Take aways:
- How three critical drivers will change the future of work, the workforce, the workplace forever
- How the psychological narrative of a generation is shaping the way they see and respond to the future of work
- Why so many organizations are failing to attract workers back to the office and how the elements of an engaging and effective framework that could be the answer
- What are the five key outcomes required to succeed in a connected hybrid environment

Discussion Leaders

Michael Arena
Chief Social Scientist
Connected Commons

Phil Willburn
Vice President People Analytics
Workday

Greg Pryor
Founding Member
Connected Commons

Carrie Bevis
Managing Director,
Communities & Partnerships
Institute for Corporate Productivity

HR Exchange
NETWORK

How to Make Hybrid Work Effective, Engaging and Empowering

HR Best Practices Based on Evidence-Based Studies and Scientific Research

**BASED ON
LEVERAGING SOCIAL CAPITAL,
A COLUMN BY MICHAEL ARENA**

Summary.

HR leaders are hungry for information on how to promote human-centric experiences that fit into the workplace transformation underway while meeting the needs of hybrid workers. To meet this moment, Human Resources professionals must better understand how to help remote and in-person workers feel good about their place in the world.

While there's a lot of people doling out contradictory advice, University of Pennsylvania Professor Michael Arena cuts through the noise by offering evidence-based research that provides a framework on how to better manage the hybrid workforce.

In this guide, Arena, who is a bestselling author and top HR influencer, provides insight into how to collaborate with remote and in-person workers to promote productivity, innovation, and success. It's a must-read for anyone trying to navigate the post-COVID world and balance the needs of employees with those of executives.

Download this report to:

- Discover the findings of studies related to remote and in-person workers.

- Learn how the shift to all-remote work kicked off a workplace transformation and changed the dynamic among all the players in a business.

- Understand the best path forward when it comes to getting people in the office and to meet in person for collaboration and forging bonds among co-workers.

- Find out about ways to improve the manager and employee relationship.

Read the Report

The Adaptive Hybrid: Innovation with Virtual Work

By Michael Arena, Glenn Carroll, Charles O'Reilly
John Golden and Scott Hines

March 2022

Summary.
The COVID-19 pandemic has led many organizations to embrace virtual work, with some initial data suggesting that productivity may have increased. But these short-term gains may mask a longer-term threat to the ability of organizations to innovate. Drawing on social network theory, we show how each of the three stages of innovation (idea generation, idea incubation, and scaling) can be undermined by virtual work.

We propose an alternative organizational design that leaders can adopt to overcome these limitations—the Adaptive Hybrid Model. This approach recognizes that the network connections needed for each of the three stages of the innovation process require different types of social capital and identifies how managers can blend virtual and face-to-face work to avoid the loss of connections and social capital that virtual work brings.

Review the Research

WORKPLACE STORIES
by RedThread Research

Adventures in Hybrid Work:
From Human To Social Capital, with Michael Arena

Summary.

This week's guest is Michael Arena, who brings the unique perspective of leading talent development and management for not just major New Economy global brands like Amazon Web Services, but also stalwart Old Economy blue chips like General Motors and Bank of America. Along the way, he's also done serious research and training in network analysis and the power of social science to truly understand what's happening with today's corporations. That combination of frontline management and crisis response and a lens for viewing all our recent challenges in people practices, gives him, we'd argue, the right to be heard on what he thinks is really happening out there for both individuals (and especially a voice often left out of the Future of Work conversation, the leader) and teams as we progress through what he jokes is both, Dickens-wise, 'the best and the worst' times to be in work right now. If you're still skeptical, a few minutes on his evidence of bridging and bonding social capital and its impact on the Hybrid Workspace we're seeing evolve around us will change your mind. Social capital is a tool, we predict, that you'll soon be using as much as Michael is in his new role in Connected Commons.

Listen to the Podcast

Optimizing Return-to-Office Strategies With Organizational Network Analysis

By Rob Cross and Peter Gray
June 2021

Summary.
Leaders of organizations large and small are struggling to define return-to-office strategies that reflect an appropriate balance of in-person and virtual interactions. In the absence of data, many leaders are advocating for hybrid models based on intuition. You don't have to look far to find examples of companies advocating for policies fueled by a desire to get back to "seeing people," or the blanket belief that engagement or innovation is suffering in virtual settings. But such approaches don't optimize business performance, innovation, or engagement, because they are blind to the informal networks through which collaborative work happens.

For most organizations, the balance between in-person and virtual interactions will certainly shift as a result of the pandemic. In order to coax back employees who have personally experienced the benefits of fully remote work, leaders will need to offer a compelling rationale for why work models that include some degree of in-person collaboration are not only good for the company but also valuable for employees.

Review the Research

What is the Impact of Virtual and Hybrid Working on Innovation?
An Interview with Michael Arena

Summary.

There should be little doubt that human capital is a firm's greatest asset, however, this isn't enough. Organizations must also ensure that individuals are relationally positioned for success. In other words, bringing in the best people is only part of the solution. Firms must also bring out the best in people and that requires us to more intentionally leverage social capital. Those are not my words, although I wholeheartedly agree with their sentiment, but of Michael Arena, my guest for this week's episode of The Digital HR Leaders podcast.

Michael is the author of the brilliant book, Adaptive Space, How General Motors and Other Companies are Positively Disrupting Themselves and Transforming Into Agile Organizations. He is also a faculty member in Penn's Masters in Organizational Dynamics and he is currently the VP for Talent and Development at Amazon Web Services. He is also one of the world's foremost experts on Organizational Network Analysis.

Listen to the Podcast

CONNECTIVITY & COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

Connected Well-Being

April 5, 2023 | 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM ET

Connected Wellbeing

April 5th

The US Surgeon General has identified workplace mental health and well-being as a critical priority for public health highlighting the importance of connection and community as one of five imperatives. Rob Cross, founder and Chief Research Scientist at Connected Commons, and co-author Karen Dillon will share insights from their latest book, The Microstress Effect: How Little Things Pile Up and Create Big Problems--and What to Do about It. Microstresses are the hidden epidemic of small moments of social anxiety that infiltrate both our work and personal lives. While we can't eradicate all of them, we can take measures to reduce their negative effect on our well-being and performance by counterbalancing them with healthy relationships and habit.

Take-aways:
- How to identify microstresses impacting employee well-being
- Best practices to counter toxic workplace relationships or unhealthy culture
- Personal network strategies to build relationships that support personal, team, and organizational resilience

Discussion Leaders

Karen Dillon
Co-author of
The Microstress Effect

Winifred Ernst
Co-Founder, Executive Coach, Expert Facilitator at Blue Waters Associates

Rob Cross
Connected Commons Co-founder
Co-author of The Microstress Effect

Chris Ernst
Chief Learning Officer, Workday
Author Boundary Spanning Leadership

The Microstress Effect

by Rob Cross and Karen Dillon
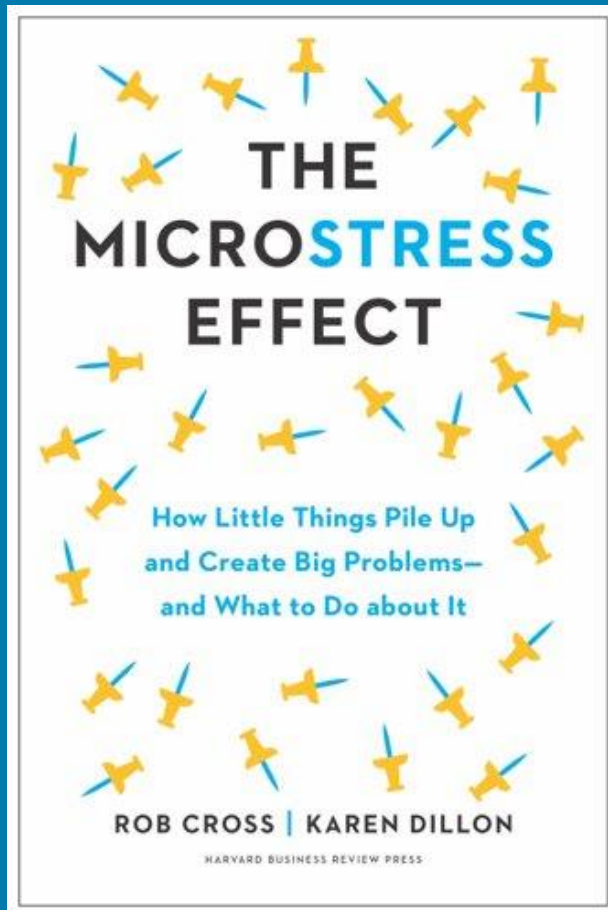
Summary.

How a million little things are dragging you down, and what to do about it.There's a force we encounter every day that we aren't aware of—and it threatens to derail otherwise promising careers and lives: microstress.

This hidden epidemic of small moments of stress has insidiously infiltrated both our work and our personal lives with invisible but devastating effects. Microstress doesn't trigger the normal stress response in our brains to help us deal with it. Instead, it embeds itself in our minds and accumulates daily, one microstress on top of the other. The long-term impact can be debilitating. Unregistered microstress weighs us down, damages our physical and emotional health, and contributes to a decline in our well-being. What's more, microstress is baked into our lives. The source is seldom a classic antagonist, such as a demanding client or a jerk boss. Instead, it comes from the people with whom we are closest: our friends, family, and colleagues.

The good news is that once you understand microstress, you can fight back. Drawing on fresh research, Rob Cross and Karen Dillon explain the science behind the phenomenon. They also share the secrets of a small set of people who've endured their share of microstress but have still managed to cultivate relationships that enable them to thrive both at work and in life. Compelling interviews with these high achievers bring to life best practices that show you how to build resilience against microstress and ultimately how to find purpose—purpose that helps you break free from this quietly invasive force that's stealing your life.

Order the Book

The Hidden Toll of Microstress

Small, difficult moments can zap your performance. Here's how to restore your well-being.

by Rob Cross and Karen Dillon
February 07, 2023

Summary.

Microstresses are small moments of stress that seem manageable on their own — think a vague, worrying text from your teen flashing on your phone while you're in a meeting, the appearance of a colleague who always wants to vent to you, or having to tell your team that the project you've all been grinding out extra hours on is no longer a priority. But these microstresses aren't as harmless as they seem.

Because they're so small and brief, they don't trigger the normal stress response in our brains to help us cope; instead, microstress embeds itself in our minds and accrues over time. The long-term impact of this buildup is debilitating: It saps our energy, damages our physical and emotional health, and contributes to a decline in our overall well-being. But once you understand the science behind microstress and where it comes from, you can fight back. Fresh research will teach you how to recognize and manage microstress's most common forms.

Read the Article

TED **ideas worth spreading**

How To Be a Team Player --
Without Burning Out

Summary.

Collaboration in the workplace is more important than ever -- but it's making us less productive in some ways. Here's what collaboration pioneer Rob Cross says is driving us to take on way too much -- and how we can reclaim our time and our peace of mind.

Watch the Ted Talk

ROBCROSS

TED

Don't Let Micro-Stresses Burn You Out

By Rob Cross, Jean Singer and Karen Dillon
July 2020

Summary.

Stress comes to us all in tiny little assaults throughout our day — what we call "micro-stresses" — for example, the frustration of a colleague missing the mark on a joint project, or the emotional toll of a trusted work colleague moving on. These micro-stresses come at us all day long, through relationships and interactions that are too numerous and high velocity to easily shake off. The problem is that most of us have come to accept micro-stresses as just a normal part of a day. We hardly acknowledge them, but cumulatively they are wearing us down. And what's worse is that the sources of these micro-stresses are often the people — in and out of work — with whom we are closest. We don't have to accept micro-stresses as destiny. This article discusses the tools we need to mitigate these stresses in our lives. Stress patterns are often predictable, and if we see them for what they are, we can build the support network, mindset, and constructive responses that we need to head them off.

Review the Research

Connected Commons | PUBLISHING

Sink or Swim?
Navigating the Invisible Sea of Micro-stressors in an Always On World

By Rob Cross, Karen Dillon, Danna Greenberg
and Jean Singer

June 2020

Summary.
The volume, diversity and velocity of relational touch points we all experience today is beyond anything we have previously seen in the workplace. With our connection to an ever-widening span of relationships at work and at home comes increased exposure to a steady stream of what we are calling relationship-based micro-stressors. Through this research we identified 12 common "relational" micro-stressors and three strategies successful people employ to combat this invisible enemy.

Review the Research

Beyond Collaboration Overload

How to Work Smarter, Get Ahead and Restore Your Wellbeing

by Rob Cross
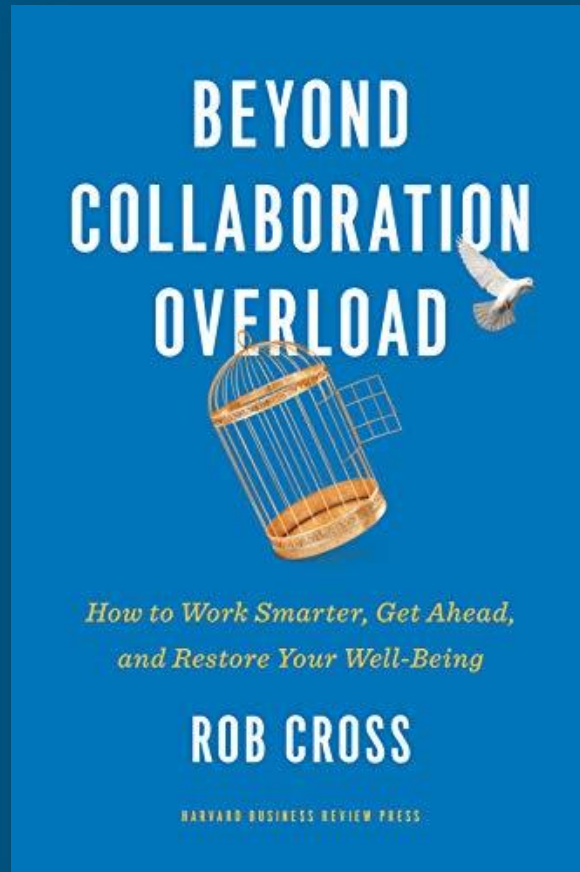
Summary.

Most organizations have created always-on work contexts that are burning people out and hurting performance rather than delivering productivity, innovation and engagement. Collaborative work consumes 85% of employees' time and is drifting earlier into the morning, later into the night, and deeper into the weekend.

The dilemma is that we all need to collaborate more to create effective organizations and vibrant careers for ourselves. But conventional wisdom on teamwork and collaboration has created too much of the wrong kind of collaboration, which hurts our performance, health and overall well-being.

In Beyond Collaboration Overload, Babson professor Rob Cross solves this paradox by showing how top performers who thrive at work collaborate in a more purposeful way that makes them 18-24% more efficient than their peers. Good collaborators are distinguished by the efficiency and intentionality of their collaboration—not the size of their network or the length of their workday. Through landmark research with more than 300 organizations, in-depth stories, and tools, Beyond Collaboration Overload will coach you to reclaim close to a day a week.

Order the Book

Collaborative Overload

Too much teamwork exhausts employees and saps productivity. Here's how to avoid it.

By Rob Cross, Reb Rebele, and Adam Grant
January- February 2016

Summary.

Collaboration is taking over the workplace. According to data collected by the authors over the past two decades, the time spent by managers and employees in collaborative activities has ballooned by 50% or more. There is much to applaud about these developments— but when consumption of a valuable resource spikes that dramatically, it should also give us pause.

Review the Research

Do You Have a Life Outside of Work?

By Rob Cross May 13, 2020

Summary.

In studying professionals for two decades, the author has found a predictable pattern where well-adjusted and purposeful people with diverse interests go off track. They become unidimensional, focusing solely on work success as providing the money, status, and meaning they think they'll achieve through it. Often this is done with the best intentions by people who identify themselves as choosing this path in order to be providers to their families. Often it goes wrong, and they end up unhealthy, possibly divorced, and with limited friends or activities to help them get out of the trap.

Review the Research

The Secret to Building Resilience

by Rob Cross, Karen Dillon and Danna Greenberg
January 29, 2021

Summary.

The ability to bounce back from setbacks is often described as the difference between successful and unsuccessful people. Resilience has been shown to positively influence work satisfaction and engagement, as well as overall well-being, and can lower depression levels. But resilience isn't just a kind of solitary internal "grit" that allows us to bounce back. New research shows that resilience is also heavily enabled by strong relationships and networks. We can nurture and build our resilience through a wide variety of interactions with people in our personal and professional lives. These interactions can help us to alter the magnitude of the challenge we're facing. They can help crystalize the meaningful purpose in what we are doing or help us see a path forward to overcome a setback — these are the kinds of interactions that motivate us to persist. Are your relationships broad and deep enough to help support you when you hit setbacks? Here's an exercise to help you think that through.

Review the Research

Collaboration Overload Is Sinking Productivity

by Rob Cross, Mike Benson, Jack Kostal, and RJ Milnor

September 07, 2021

Summary.

Many people have had the experience of being asked to do something and knowing with every fiber of their being that they should say no, but in a nano-second convince themselves why they need to do this thing after all. They jump in and then wonder six weeks later why they never have time for work that interests them. Collaborative work — time spent on email, IM, phone, and video calls — has risen 50% or more over the past decade to consume 85% or more of most people's work weeks, and the Covid-19 pandemic caused this figure to take another sharp upward tick. These invisible demands are hurting organizations' efforts to become more agile and innovative. And they can lead to individual career derailment, burnout, and declines in physical and mental well-being. But there's a lot that organizations can do to equip their employees to work more efficiently in this context, ultimately improving employee well-being, productivity, and retention

Review the Research

Collaboration Without Burnout

By Rob Cross, Scott Taylor and Deb Zehner

July-August 2018

Summary.

As organizations become more global, matrixed, and complex, they are requiring employees to collaborate with more internal colleagues and external contacts than ever before. According to research, most managers now spend 85% or more of their work time on e-mail, in meetings, and on the phone. And although greater collaboration has benefits, it also leaves significantly less time for focused individual work, careful reflection, and sound decision making.

Organizational solutions are, of course, necessary to eradicate collaborative overload across the board. But research shows that with some strategic self-management, individuals can also tackle the problem on their own, clawing back 18% to 24% of their collaborative time.

The first step is to understand why you take on too much work for and with others; this often involves challenging your identity as a "helper," a "team player," or a "star performer." Next, figure out how you add—and from where you derive—the most value and eliminate any collaborations that distract from that work. Last, ensure that the collaboration you continue with is as productive as possible.

Review the Research

Physical Health is Not a Solo Sport

FOR BETTER HEALTH, DON'T JUST CHANGE
YOUR WORKOUT - CHANGE YOUR NETWORK

By Rob Cross, Jean Singer and Karen Dillon
September 2021

Summary.

Our research is clear: Improving and maintaining physical health is not a solo sport. We found specific ways that connections with others help to initiate a healthier trajectory, to create "stickiness," so it's not abandoned when work becomes pressing, and importantly, to create benefits of identity, friendship and belonging that embed new health behaviors in our lives We heard how relationships played a role in undertaking new fitness routines or healthier eating, but what we were most interested in understanding was how they were able to help those new routines stick. How did the very busy people we spoke with successfully integrate new habits into their lives and avoid backsliding? We often heard a sequence of events that followed the pattern below:

- Elevate physical health as a priority
- Make commitment visible or shared with others
- Create "stickiness" in both work and home contexts
- Identity and social benefits reinforce for the long term

Review the Research

The Microstress Effect App

Available at no cost on both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, The Microstress Effect App empowers users to choose up to five microstressors, watch videos, explore strategies, receive a personalized report, read key insights and get coaching tips. Ideal for workshops, conferences, team meeting and critical relationships, the conversation feature helps facilitate powerful conversations to reduce the effects of microstressors.
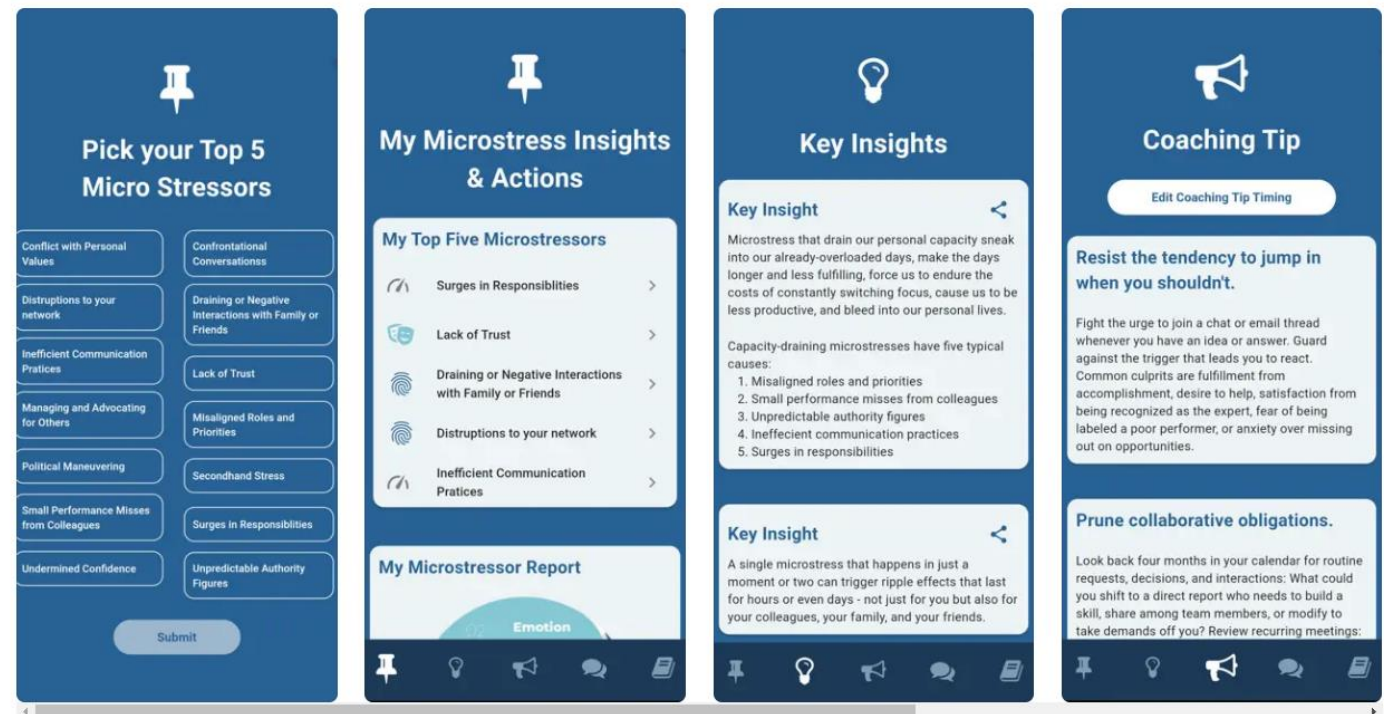
[Get App from Apple Store]   [Get App at Google Play]

Collaboration Overload Digital Card Explorer

Designed for an individual on-demand or a group activity, this digital card explorer helps people identify a small number of practices they can apply to gain back 18-24% of their time. Participants sort through the practices, explore what it is, why it matters and watch a video with Professor Cross. Choosing 3-6 practices automatically generates a personalized report with strategies, access to video of Professor Cross and even a case study showing how a successful professional applied this practice.

Digital Card Explorer

Personalized Report & Case Studies

Professor Cross Video

Watch an overview video
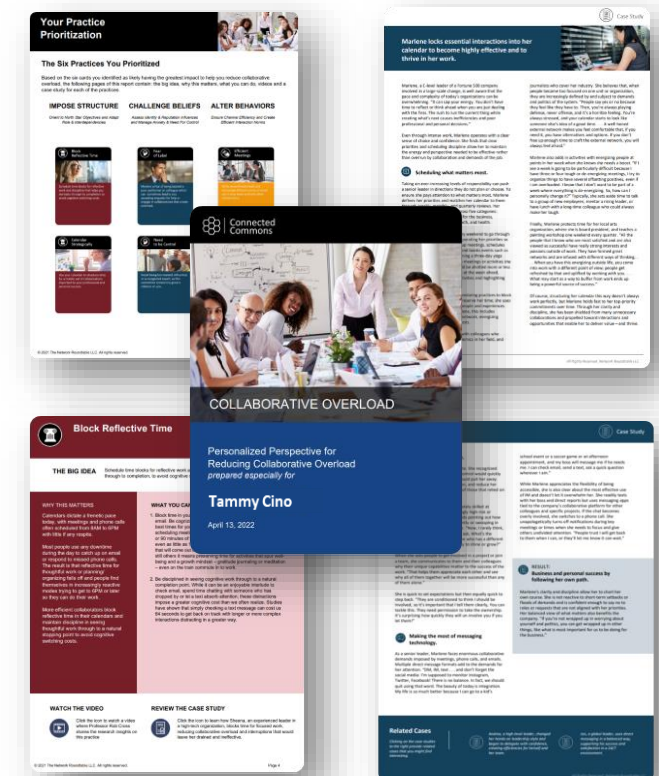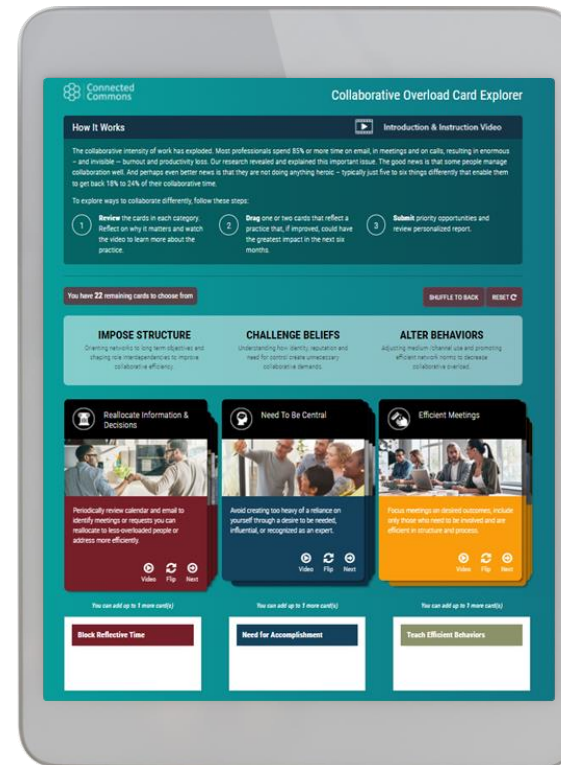
Collaboration Overload Personal & Rater Questionnaire

While embracing new behaviors as an individual is essential, our experience is that taking on new collaborative practices as a team has a greater success rate. Team members can be easily added, tracked and reminded by a team leader. Team reports are immediately available once three team members have responded. Team reports describe which practices are relative strengths and improvement areas, calling out a strength and growth areas for each of the three principles for a total of six practices. Each of the six practices describes why that practice is important and specifically how it can be improved or sustained as a strength.

Collaboration Overload Compare Questionnaire

Personalized Report & Case Studies

Add Rater Page

Collaboration Overload Team Compare Questionnaire

Building on the Collaboration Overload Personal Compare Questionnaire, team leaders can easily add team members who can complete the Questionnaire. Team insights are included and available in the team report.

Collaborative Overload Compare Questionnaire

Team Administration Page

Team Report

How Successful Teams Reduce Collaborative Overload Together

Collaborative Overload Team Report

Team Report Example

Help Others Thrive Digital Card Explorer

Some people are very successful in creating high-quality connections in networks and a context for helping others to thrive. These people are more likely to have upwardly mobile career trajectory as information, opportunities and talent flow to them. These practices explore the way they create pull in networks and do better over time because of the way they lead performance, innovation and engagement in others.

Digital Card Explorer
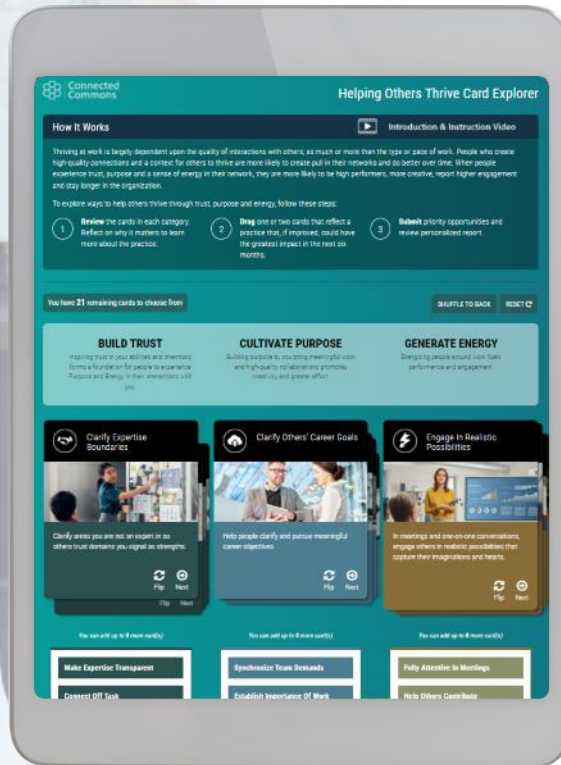
Personalized Report
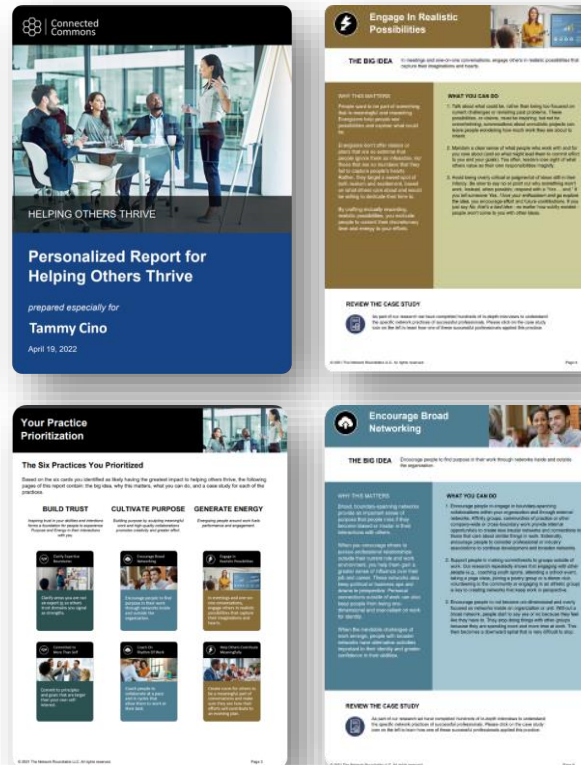
Real Life Case Studies

Watch an overview video

Help Others Thrive Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire

Increasingly important to support and engage employees in a post-pandemic workplace, leaders can use this tool to understand how they show up compared to the 27 practices our research revealed drive performance, engagement and innovation. In addition to a self-reflection, participants can easily ask others to provide their perspective on the their performance.

Compare Questionnaire

Personalized Dashboard

Case Studies

Learn more from Professor Cross

Help Others Thrive Team Compare Questionnaire

Creating a culture where team member's thrive through positive and productive relationships is increasingly critical to high performance, innovation and engagement. Teams can apply the **Help Others Thrive Compare Questionnaire** to understand how their behaviors compare to the 27 practices our research revealed. Easily administered by a team leader, completing the Compare Questionnaire provides team report with practice strength and practical recommendations on how to improve.

Help Others Thrive Compare Questionnaire

Team Report

Team Administration Page

Sample Team Report

Relational Well-Being Digital Card Explorer

The extraordinary events of the past several years have resulted in dangerously high levels of employee burnout and lack of mental well-being. These challenges have been amplified by limited AND overloaded collaboration and connects at work. Through our research we have identified 55 practices that improve relational well-being at work and home. The Relational Well-Being Card Explorer empowers participants to review these practices, watch videos, read case studies and creates plan to improve the quality and quantity of connections.

Digital Card Explorer
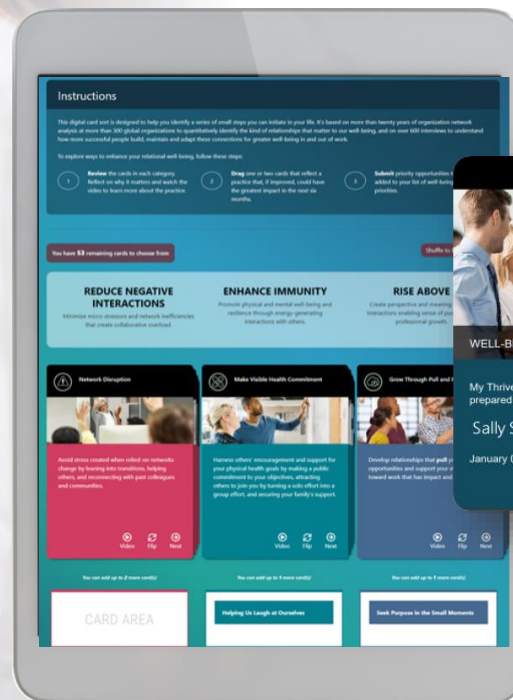
Personalized Report

Videos & Case Studies

Read the Case Study of Patricia

Relational Well-Being Compare Questionnaire

By self-assessing how often critical behaviors are applied, participants receive a real-time report of how their "go-to approach" compares to the best practices of those who nurture positive and productive relationships that result in both success and satisfaction at work and home.

Compare Questionnaire

Personalized Report

Videos & Case Studies

Check out an example of the Professor's Perspective on Strategic Calendaring

CONNECTIVITY & COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

Adaptive Teaming

June 6, 2023 | 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM ET

Adaptive Teaming

June 6th

Although organizations strive to become more agile and resilient by organizing around a network of teams, challenges remain for practitioners who seek to successfully lead teams in a new hybrid environment. This has never been truer than in these times—characterized by the effects of the pandemic and financial uncertainty—in which people are more dispersed and needing leadership and guidance more than ever. Many leaders still rely on old models of teamwork, not realizing that the definition and role of teams have changed in fundamental ways.

Join this session to learn about the key outcome to support connected hybrid work: adaptive teaming. Our research revealed strategies used by high-performing team leaders that provide powerful insights for academics and managers alike to significantly improve the success of their teams.

Take-aways:

- Why the old approach of team forming, storming, norming, then performing is not responsive enough to meet the Next World of Work

- What are the Six Dysfunctions of Teams and how can you proactively mitigate them

- What are the next practices our research revealed to build the critical bridging, bonding and cohesive connections required for team success and satisfaction

- What are the active interactions necessary for a team to ensure on-going discovery, development and diffusion

Discussion
Leader

Michael Arena
Chief Social Scientist
Connected Commons

Adaptive Space

How GM and Other Companies are Positively Disrupting Themselves and Transforming into Agile

by Michael Arena

How GM and Other Companies are Disrupting Themselves and Transforming into Agile Organizations

ADAPTIVE SPACE

MICHAEL J. ARENA

Chief Talent Officer for General Motors Corporation

Summary.

Lack of Agility is the kiss of death. Position your company to succeed in world of change. To edge out the competition in today's disruptive environment, you need to ensure that your company is agile—that it can respond to change instantly and effectively. Because fast and furious change is the only thing you can count on in business today.

Network expert Michael Arena helped enable GM's legendary turnaround. In these pages, he explains how you can transform your own company through the concept of adaptive space.

Based on hundreds of interviews and the author's own groundbreaking study of dozens of organizations spanning a variety of industries, Adaptive Space shows how to position your company for today—and for the future—by enabling creativity, innovation, and novel ideas to flow freely among teams, across departments, and throughout the company.

Using GM as the main case study—along with the stories of other highly adaptive organizations, like Apple, Amazon, Disney, and Gore—Arena provides a model you can follow to reinvent your company. It's about inspiring employees to explore new ideas, empowering the most creative people and teams to spread their ideas across the organization, and operationalizing the entrepreneurial spirit so adaptability is set in stone.

Hesitation is a killer in today's business landscape. With Adaptive Space, you have everything you need to confront disruption with smart, confident actions and seize the valuable opportunities that come with change.

Order the Book

California
Management Review

No Team Is an Island

How Leaders Shape Networked Ecosystems For Team Success

By Inga Carboni, Rob Cross, and Amy C. Edmondson

November 2021

Summary.

Today's organizations rely on networks of dynamic systems of "agile" teams to get work done. Teams are distributed, transient, and loosely bounded in service of responsiveness and innovation. The key to this new way of doing work is managing the networked ecosystem in which teams are embedded. But in the context of leading multiple teams with fuzzy boundaries and shifting membership, the average overwhelmed manager quickly defaults to what is nearest in urgency: managing internal team dynamics and responding to internal customer demands. Drawn from field interviews with 100 top-performing team leaders, this article presents a framework-for-action to leaders who want to engage the networked ecosystem with intention and precision, including specific tactics for identifying and influencing high-leverage stakeholders.

Review the Research

For an Agile Transformation, Choose the Right People

Identify your "hidden stars" and other vital players.

By Rob Cross, Heidi K. Gardner, and Alia Crocker
March–April 2021

Summary.
Agile methodology, created to fast-track software development, is now being used throughout organizations by teams that want to execute projects quickly. But those efforts often don't pan out, say Babson's Rob Cross and Alia Crocker and Harvard Law School's Heidi K. Gardner. Their research reveals that many large agile initiatives not only miss their goals but also cause organizational disruption—including staff burnout, the loss of key talent, and infighting among teams.

What's going wrong? With the help of organizational network analysis—a methodology for mapping how people collaborate—the authors have identified where unforeseen barriers undermine agile initiatives. The main problem they found: Traditional practices for executing agile projects are ineffective. Companies err by staffing agile teams only with stars, isolating them from the main business, and dedicating members 100% to teams. This article offers alternative approaches: tapping "hidden stars," who will be less overloaded, for agile initiatives, and then identifying and reaching out to highly connected potential resources who can bring in expertise as needed.

Review the Research

When Collaboration Fails and How to Fix It

Leaders can diagnose team dysfunction by looking for six common patterns.

By Rob Cross and Inga Carboni
December 08, 2020
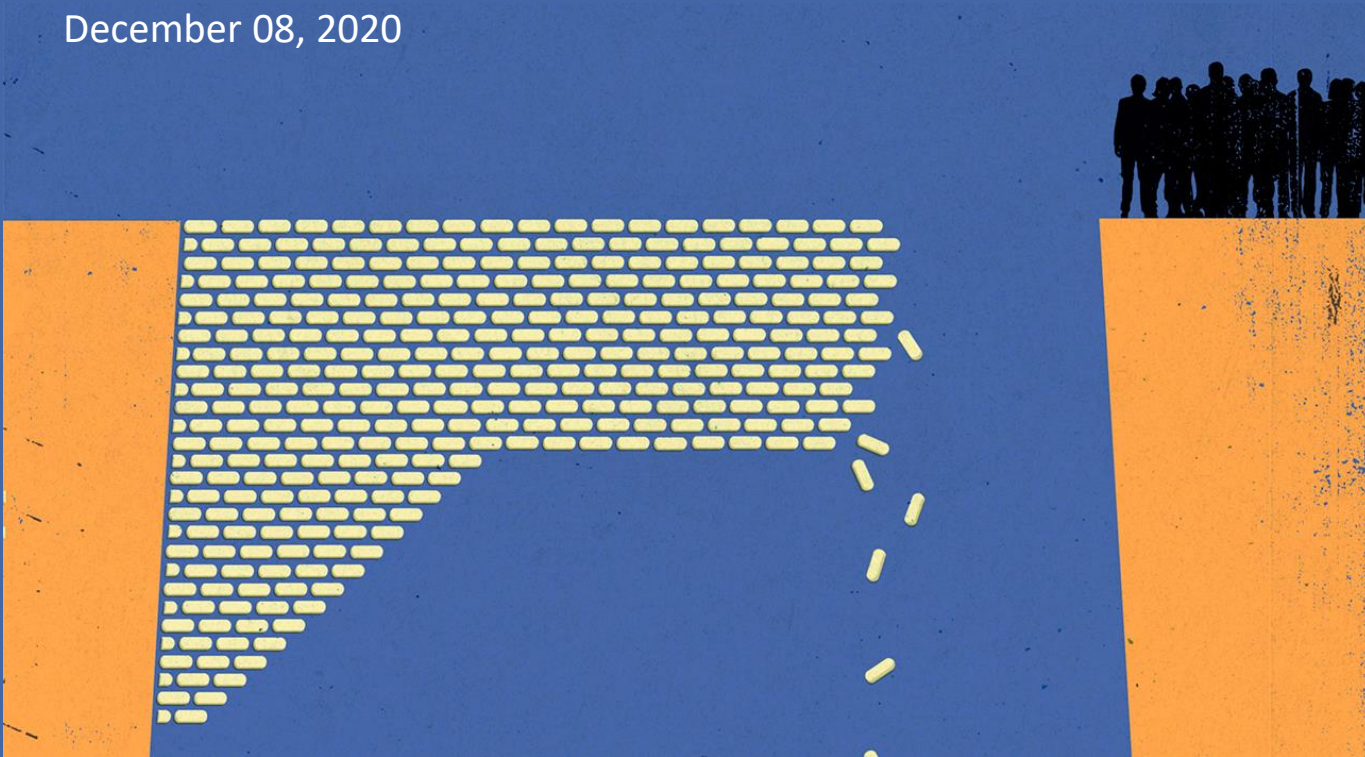
Summary.
The success of teams of all types and sizes is dependent on the ability of people to collaborate. Two decades of conducting organizational network analysis has revealed six patterns of collaborative dysfunction that undermine performance in 88% of the organizations studied.

While one solution doesn't fit all collaborative failures, leaders and groups can use this more nuanced guide to diagnosis and resolve six common patterns of collaborative dysfunction.

Review the Research

Adaptive Space: Shifting from Structural to Social Design

By Michael Arena
Winter 2021

Summary.
One of the biggest challenges facing organizations today is the need to be agile. To achieve this goal, leaders must seek a deeper understanding of the power of social interaction in furthering the flow of ideas, information, and insight. Michael Arena explains how building relational structures that foster 4D connections, discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption, can usher in the new, innovative ideas and concepts necessary to positively disrupt.

Review the Research

How Adaptive Teams Get Hybrid Work Right

Discussion with Kevin Oakes & Michael Arena

December 8, 2022

Summary.
Michael Arena, former Amazon talent leader, author of Adaptive Space, and co-Founder of Connected Commons will join us for our final installment of Getting Hybrid Work Right this year.

He will discuss:

- How to design and support adaptive teams suited for different types of work

- What team leaders need to do to manage both internal and external collaboration Identifying critical relationships that hold a team together and how to foster these connections

- Developing psychological safety and belonging for healthy teaming

Watch the Video

How to Make Sure Agile Teams Can Work Together

By Alia Crocker, Rob Cross, and Heidi K. Gardner
May 2018

Summary.

As growing uncertainty creates an increasingly volatile business environment, agile collaboration has become more important than ever. But while these practices may sound great in theory, many companies struggle to effectively incorporate them into their operations. To make agile implementation a reality, the authors suggest four key strategies for managers: First, identify and manage the centers of your collaboration networks. Second, be sure to engage with the players on the fringes of those networks. Third, build bridges between silos within the organization. Finally, build systems into your organization to more effectively integrate and communicate between various internal and external stakeholders.

Review the Research

Adaptive Teaming Digital Card Explorer

The nature of teams and teaming is quickly evolving to meet new demands for greater organizational agility and improved employee well-being and performance. Our research has revealed 26 collaborative practices that improve team performance. These practices cut across internal network structures, relational enablers and even external stakeholders outside the team's boundaries. The Adaptive Teaming Card Explorer helps participants identify the 3-6 practices that could have the greatest impact and apply the specific strategies to improve team success and satisfaction.

Digital Card Explorer
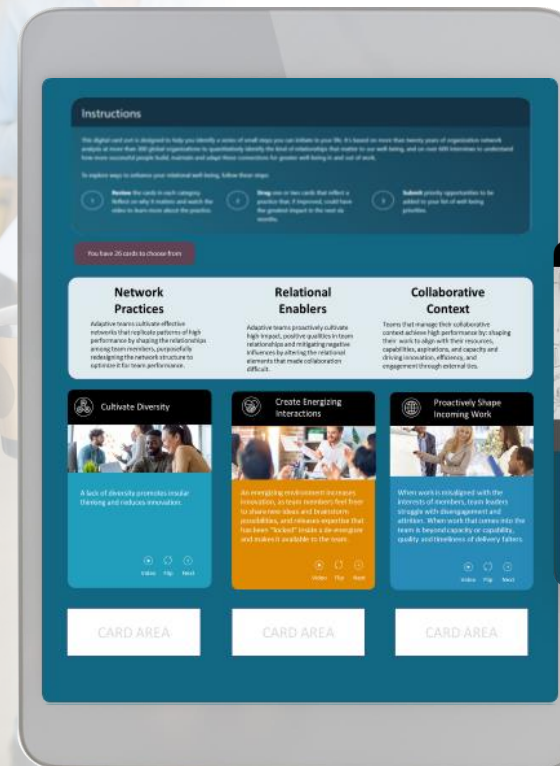
Personalized Plan

Videos

RESOURCES

Adaptive Teaming Compare Questionnaire

The Adaptive Teaming Compare Questionnaire is designed to provide insights and actions for both team and individual. The questionnaire helps team members compare how their team's behaviors stack-up against to the 26 collaborative practices and six dysfunctional patterns revealed in our research. The personalized report provides insights for both the team and individual including the connection preference, relational benefits and playbooks to improve individual and team effectiveness.

Compare Questionnaire

Personalized Report

Items above are illustrative as solution is still in development

CONNECTIVITY & COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

Connected Careers

August 7, 2023 | 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM ET

Connected Careers

June 6th

Helping employees, teams and organizations survive and ideally thrive in a world shifting from jobs to work, where opportunity / talent marketplaces accelerate skill building and talent mobility nurtures key networks is a critical outcome. Adding the social capital lens (to the necessary but not sufficient human capital lens) will usher in a new career framework that unlocks what we know through who we know and accelerates career success.

Whether by 'great' resignation, reorganization, redesign or reduction; employee transitions between teams, jobs, and companies will be in the fabric of the Next World of Work. This on-going 'great' reshuffle will require customized, coordinated efforts to help teammates get acclimated to new networks and prevent costly disruptions.

Take-aways:
- How has the fundamental shift from jobs to roles, increased role of talent / opportunity marketplaces and agile ways of working increase the need to more quickly and effectively build productive connections
- Which practices did the research reveal enables Fast Movers to achieve job success and satisfaction 3 times faster than their peers when transitioning into a new role
- How might the Next World of Work's career framework look much less like a ladder and much more like intentionally connecting through oscillating waves of career connection discovery, delivery and diffusion
- Why is intentional talent mobility so critical, with high-performance organizations being twice as likely to emphasize talent mobility versus low-performance companies

Discussion Leaders

Greg Pryor
Founding Member
Connected Commons

John Boudreau
Professor Emeritus of Management and Organization and a Senior Research Scientist with the Center for Effective Organizations, at the Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California

How to Succeed Quickly in a New Role

Five ways to build a strategic network

By Rob Cross, Greg Pryor and David Sylvester
November – December 2021

Summary.
A role transition, whether it's a promotion, a move to a new organization, or a fresh challenge in an existing job, can be a huge boost to one's career. But in today's hyper-collaborative and dynamic workplaces, successful moves aren't as easy as they once were, even for the most qualified, hardworking people. After analyzing employee relationships and communication patterns across more than 100 diverse companies, and interviewing 160 executives in 20 of them, the authors discovered an overlooked prerequisite for transition success: the effective use of internal networks.

That involves five practices: *surging* rapidly into a broad network by asking a lot of questions and discovering boundary-spanning, innovative people across the organization; *generating pull* by understanding, energizing, and adjusting to new connections; *identifying* how to add value, where one falls short, and which people in the broad network can help fill any gaps; *creating scale* by using the network to engage other key opinion leaders, expand the scope and impact of one's projects, and more efficiently deliver outsize results; and *shaping* the network for maximum thriving by making connections that enhance one's workplace experience.

Review the Research

Let Your Top Performers Move Around the Company

By Kevin Oakes

August 20, 2021

Summary.

As a manager, it's human nature to want to hang on to the superstars in your group, department, or division. But ultimately, that's detrimental to the organization and to the individuals involved. Multiple studies on talent mobility show that actively moving employees into different roles is one of the most underutilized, yet most effective, development and cultural enhancement techniques in companies today.

In fact, research has shown that high-performance organizations are twice as likely to emphasize talent mobility versus low-performance companies. Building a culture of mobility is a trait of very healthy organizations, and the benefits are clear. Cross-functional collaboration increases, departmental cooperation is enhanced, innovation improves, and companies begin working more as one cohesive team instead of separate fiefdoms.

Review the Research

Work without Jobs: How to Reboot Your Organization's Work Operating System

By John Boudreau and Ravin Jesuthasan

2022
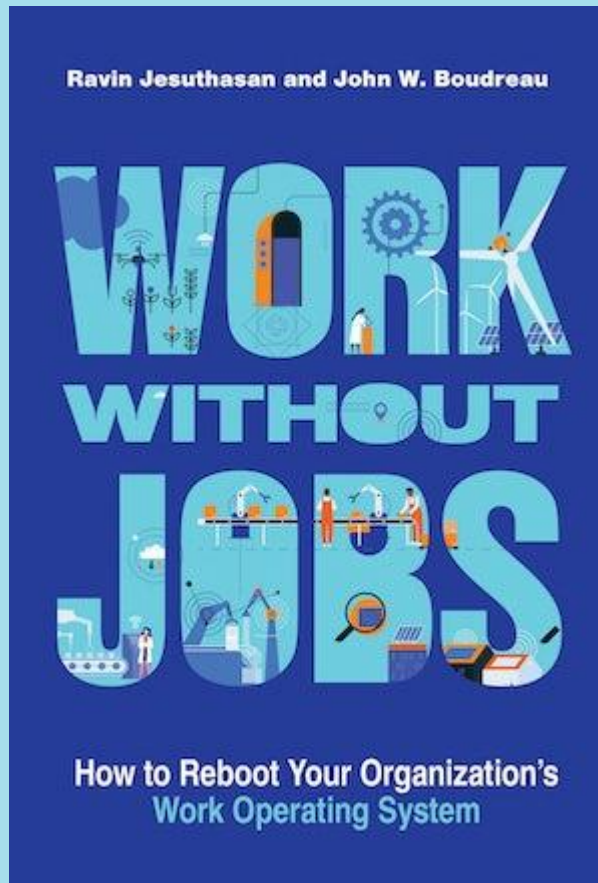
Summary.

Work is traditionally understood as a "job," and workers as "jobholders." Jobs are structured by titles, hierarchies, and qualifications. In Work without Jobs, the Wall Street Journal bestseller, Ravin Jesuthasan and John Boudreau propose a radically new way of looking at work. They describe a new "work operating system" that deconstructs jobs into their component parts and reconstructs these components into more optimal combinations that reflect the skills and abilities of individual workers. In a new normal of rapidly accelerating automation, demands for organizational agility, efforts to increase diversity, and the emergence of alternative work arrangements, the old system based on jobs and jobholders is cumbersome and ungainly. Jesuthasan and Boudreau's new system lays out a roadmap for the future of work.

Work without Jobs presents real-world cases that show how leading organizations are embracing work deconstruction and reinvention. For example, when a robot, chatbot, or artificial intelligence takes over parts of a job while a human worker continues to do other parts, what is the "job"? DHL found some answers when it deployed social robotics at its distribution centers. Meanwhile, the biotechnology company Genentech deconstructed jobs to increase flexibility, worker engagement, and retention. Other organizations achieved agility with internal talent marketplaces, worker exchanges, freelancers, crowdsourcing, and partnerships. It's time for organizations to reboot their work operating system, and Work without Jobs offers an essential guide for doing so.

Read the Book

Driving Personal Growth Through Relationships

For Personal Growth, Don't Build a Plan, Build Relationships

By Rob Cross, Jean Singer and Karen Dillon

January 2022

Summary.
While it might seem as though personal growth requires us to sit down and draft a five-year plan, we find that growth trajectories are far from that orderly. More so than planning, personal growth relies on relationships that open our worlds up to new opportunities. As we build relationships characterized by trust and dimensionality, we gain emotional and practical support and the ability to sculpt roles in ways that help us to realize our full potential.

Review the Research

HBR
IDEACAST
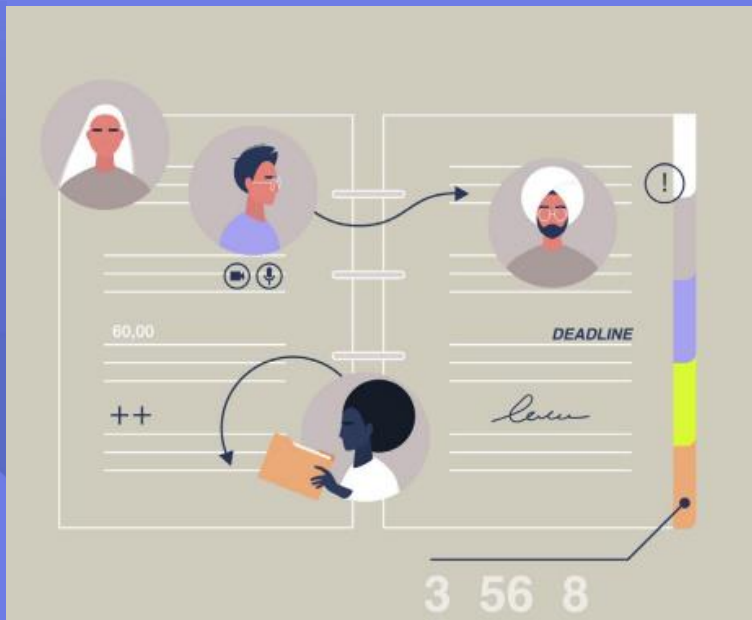
In a New Role? Here's How to Hit the Ground Running

A conversation with Babson professor Rob Cross about pitfalls to avoid.

November 16, 2021

Summary.

Rob Cross, management professor at Babson College, says people are changing jobs more than ever and too often falling short when they do. Surveys show nearly half of people promoted within their own companies are underperforming 18 months later. And up to half of executives in new roles are seen as eventual disappointments.

Cross says research shows that's because today's hyper-collaborative workplaces demand new skills. He shares evidence-based practices to improve a role transition. Those include developing strategic networks and expanding the scope and impact of one's projects. Cross is a coauthor of the HBR article "How to Succeed Quickly in a New Role."

Listen to the Podcast

Reinventing Jobs: A 4-Step Approach for Applying Automation to Work

By John Boudreau and Ravin Jesuthasan

2018
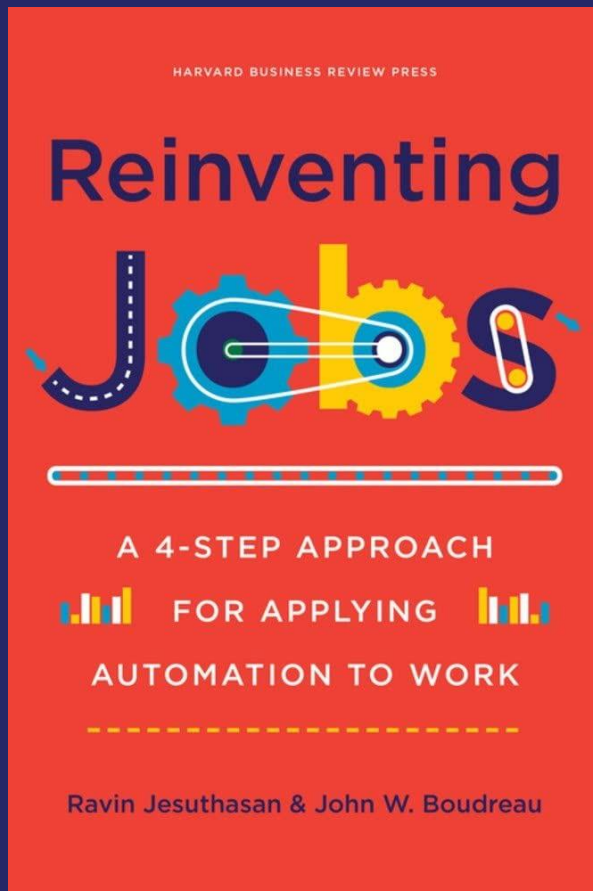
Summary.

Your organization has made the decision to adopt automation and artificial intelligence technologies. Now, you face difficult and stubborn questions about how to implement that decision: How, when, and where should we apply automation in our organization? Is it a stark choice between humans versus machines? How do we stay on top of these technological trends as work and automation continue to evolve?

Work and human capital experts Ravin Jesuthasan and John Boudreau present leaders with a new set of tools to answer these daunting questions. Transcending the endless debate about humans being replaced by machines, Jesuthasan and Boudreau show how smart leaders instead are optimizing human-automation combinations that are not only more efficient but also generate higher returns on improved performance.

Based on groundbreaking primary research, Reinventing Jobs provides an original, structured approach of four distinct steps--deconstruct, optimize, automate, and reconfigure--to help leaders reinvent how work gets bundled into jobs and create optimal human-machine combinations. Jesuthasan and Boudreau show leaders how to continuously reexamine what a job really is, and they provide the tools for identifying the pivotal performance value of tasks within jobs and how these tasks should be reconstructed into new, more optimal combinations.

With numerous examples and practical advice for applying the four-step process, Reinventing Jobs gives leaders a more precise, planful, and actionable way to decide how, when, and where to apply and optimize work automation.

Read the Book

Connect and Adapt: How Network Development and Transformation Improve Retention and Engagement in Employees' First Five Years

By Rob Cross, Tina Opie, Greg Pryor, Keith Rollag

2017

Summary.

In their 2016 Global Human Capital Trends Survey, Deloitte Consulting found that only 12% of respondents felt they understood "the way their people work together in networks." But leveraging networks is one of the most powerful and impactful ways to develop and retain your best employees. You still need to provide training, coaching and all of the physical and online resources newcomers need to get up to speed quickly, but their longevity in your organization is largely based on the energy, challenge, inspiration and the joy they get through their teammates, colleagues and managers. Using a network-based approach to ensure that employees satisfy their evolving needs for productivity, inclusion, efficiency and purpose will keep them motivated and committed to your organization for years to come.

Review the Research

Connected Talent Digital Card Explorer

Even beyond the "Great Resignation" or "Great Reshuffle," enduring strategies including talent marketplaces and agile teams are significantly increasing the number of team transitions employees experience. While it typically take a professional 3 years to replicate a high-performer network, our research revealed a group of people (we call the Fast Movers) who applied 12 practices to replicate high-performer networks 2-3 times faster then their peers. The Connected Talent Digital Card Explorer helps new joiners understand and apply these practices through a personalized plan with the 3-6 practices they believe could help most. The plan explains why the practice matters, how it can be applied and includes a video with Professor Rob Cross and real-life Fast Mover case studies.

Digital Card Explorer

Personalized Plan & Case Studies

Professor Cross Video

Watch the Connected Talent Video

Connected Talent Compare Questionnaire

Customized for each of the four transition types, the Connected Talent Compare Questionnaire helps participants understand how their approach compares to the Fast Mover's practices. The personalized plan highlights the new joiner's strengths and the priorities for attention. The plan explains why the practice matters, how it can be applied and includes a video with Professor Rob Cross and real-life Fast Mover case studies.

Compare Questionnaire

Personalized Plan & Case Studies

Videos & Case Studies

Watch an overview video

CONNECTIVITY & COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

Connected Leaders

September 20, 2023 | 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET

Connected Leader

September 20th

The collaborative intensity of work has exploded over the past decade, accelerated further by the move to remote and hybrid work where more meetings are being squeezed into elongated work hours and leaders are expected to engage in omni-channel communication.

Today's leaders need to be able to cut through collaboration overload while remaining invested in building the right kind of quality relationships that support innovation, productivity, and resilience. Join our fourth Connectivity & Collaboration session to learn about the fourth key outcome to support connected hybrid work: connected leadership.

Take-aways:
- What is the increasingly critical role that energizing relationships play in leadership effectiveness and what's the impact of its post-pandemic disappearance
- How do leaders leverage connections to build purpose, energy, and trust to earn interest, effort and creativity
- Why does emergent innovation through open interactions in the network produce innovative solutions by tapping Into a broad network early in problem solving
- Why should network development be a central part of leadership development and how do you ensure it sticks

Discussion Leaders

Deb Zehner
Director of Applied Research
Connected Commons

Kristin Cullen-Lester
Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Mississippi
Chief People Scientist, Network Leader

A Noble Purpose Alone Won't Transform Your Company

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS THAT NURTURE INTERPERSONAL COLLABORATIONARE THE TRUE DRIVERS OF CHANGE.

By Rob Cross, Amy Edmondson and Wendy Murphy
Winter 2020

Summary.
It's a common misconception, both in businesses and in management articles and books, that a sense of purpose is what matters most when it comes to engaging employees.

Many leaders concerned with attracting and retaining top talent believe that nothing motivates people as much as the larger good they might be doing or the chance to change the world. Accordingly, they extol the higher virtues of their companies' missions and the meaning of the work they offer.

But our work with more than 300 companies over the past 20 years, particularly our research using organizational network analysis (ONA) and our interviews with executives, reveals that purpose is only one contributing factor; the level and quality of interpersonal collaboration actually has the greatest impact on employee engagement. In this article, we'll explore why collaboration has that effect and which behaviors you can adopt and practice to nurture it.

Review the Research

Connected Commons | **PUBLISHING**

The Invisible Network Strategies of Successful People
Counterintuitive Ways to Innovate, Execute and Thrive at Work

By Rob Cross with Rebecca Garau

Summary.

Personal networks have become critical to performance and well-being as the collaborative intensity of work has exploded and the pace of change accelerated over the past decade. Yet contrary to popular belief, an effective network is not usually a big one. More than 20 years of mapping networks and individual performance in over 300 organizations has yielded some surprising truths regarding the network strategies of high performers.

Our most recent research focused on understanding the behaviors of successful people—those in their organizations' high performance category and scoring higher on measures of career satisfaction, well-being and engagement. How do these people build, maintain and leverage personal networks in ways that help them produce innovative solutions, execute work effectively and thrive in their careers?

Based on interviews conducted with 160 leaders (80 men and 80 women) across 20 organizations, we identified twelve network lessons that invisibly differentiate these people.

Review the Research

A Smarter Way to Network

By Rob Cross and Robert J. Thomas

July-August 2011

Summary.

The adage "It's not what you know, it's who you know" is true. The right social network can have a huge impact on your success. But many people have misguided ideas about what makes a network strong: They believe the key is having a large circle filled with high-powered contacts. That's not the right approach, say Cross, of UVA's McIntire School of Commerce, and Thomas, of the Accenture Institute for High Performance. The authors, who have spent years researching how organizations can capitalize on employees' social networks, have seen that the happiest, highest-performing executives have a different kind of network: select but diverse, made up of high-quality relationships with people who come from varying spheres and from up and down the corporate ladder.

Effective networks typically range in size from 12 to 18 people. They help managers learn, make decisions with less bias, and grow personally. Cross and Thomas have found that they include six critical kinds of connections: people who provide information, ideas, or expertise; formally and informally powerful people, who offer mentoring and political support; people who give developmental feedback; people who lend personal support; people who increase your sense of purpose or worth; and people who promote work/life balance. Moreover, the best kind of connections are "energizers"—positive, trustworthy individuals who enjoy other people and always see opportunities, even in challenging situations.

If your network doesn't look like this, you can follow a four-step process to improve it. You'll need to identify who your connections are and what they offer you, back away from redundant and energy-draining connections, fill holes in your network with the right kind of people, and work to make the most of your contacts. Do this, and in due course, you'll have a network that steers the best opportunities, ideas, and talent your way.

Review the Research

Incorporating Social Networks Into Leadership Development:
A Conceptual Model and Evaluation of Research and Practice

By Kristin Cullen-Lester, Cynthia Maupin and Dorothy Carter
February 2017

Summary.
Multilevel and relational views of leadership are expanding the focus of leadership development beyond individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities to include the networked patterns of social relationships linking members of dyads and larger collectives. In this review, we present a conceptual model explaining how three distinct approaches for network-enhancing leadership development can improve the leadership capacity of individuals and collectives.

We then present a review of the leadership development literature and the results of a survey of 282 practitioners to assess the extent to which these approaches have been examined in research and implemented in practice. Our review revealed that leadership research and leadership development practice are outpacing leadership development research in terms of incorporating networks. We aim to spur future research by clarifying the targets, objectives, and underlying mechanisms of each network enhancing leadership development approach in our conceptual model.

Further, we identify additional literature, not traditionally considered within the realm of leadership development that may help advance empirical examinations of these approaches.

Review the Research

Outside In
How Leaders Engage Networked Ecosystems For Team Success

By Inga Carboni, Rob Cross, and Amy C. Edmondson

October 2020

Summary.

High-performing leaders in today's collaboratively complex organizations recognize that managing their teams' ecosystems is essential work. These leaders draw upon their knowledge of the organizational network to cultivate the specific relationships with external stakeholders that pull their teams toward high performance.

Although already-time-pressed leaders may be reluctant to add still more tasks to their workload, managing a teams' ecosystem does not have to be overly time consuming. As the examples in this paper illustrate, the long-term benefits that leaders can realize in innovation, efficiency, engagement, and reputational gain far outweigh the short-term investment of time. Moreover, in the short term, this work need not—and should not—fall to the leader alone. Many of the practices that the leaders we interviewed told us about can be distributed within teams to better align the architecture of the work with the new nature of the work. When the work is architected thoughtfully, the time per person to realize high-impact benefits is quite low, as little as a few hours a week or month.

The key is to be intentional and persistent in not letting the constant urgency of the moment interfere with the execution of these critical activities. The following activity describes how leaders and team members can share the work of managing the team's ecosystem.

Any organization that seeks to become more agile through building a network of teams faces many challenges. A pandemic, financial uncertainty, and social unrest intensify¥ these challenges, leaving people more dispersed and more in need of leadership than ever. Relying on old models of teamwork, unaware that the structures and needs of teams have changed in fundamental ways, is a recipe for failure. Our research revealed strategies used by high-performing team leaders who provide powerful insights for academics and managers alike to significantly improve the success of their teams and organizations.

Review the Research

Connected Leader Compare Questionnaire

Unfortunately, most people have only a vague idea of the networks around them. They don't think about the ways connections and interactions can boost success. Even high performers with effective networks often do not see how their actions and decisions yield greater performance and thriving at work. This assessment will help you see the subtle ways personal networks and relationships impact innovation, execution and your sense of thriving and well-being. Leaders are able to provide a self perspective, ask other raters for perspective or engage their team.

Personalized Report

Connected Leader Compare Questionnaire

Connected Leader Team Compare Questionnaire

Helping a team leader understand and engage their team in building a collaborative culture where everyone can innovate, execute and thrive is increasingly important in the next world of work. The Connected Leader Team Compare Questionnaire complements and extends the individual and multi-rater assessment to help the team identify the degree to which they see the team exhibiting these critical practices. Team leaders can easily add their team member and with a minimum of three respondents receive a Customized Team Report with insights and actions.

**Connected Leader
Compare Questionnaire**

Team Report

Team Administration Page

Connected Leaders Course

This five-week learning experience will explore how to develop and manage a personal network based on proven strategies of other successful leaders.

Innovate to leverage creativity

Execute work more efficiently

Scale the impact of your work effects

Thrive, both at work and at home

Adapt to transitions in your career

Orientation Webinar
Get an introduction to the experience in the Orientation Webinar to hear how you can best share insights with the cohort and learn from others.

Bio Book and Introduction Discussion
Share your bio with the group and start connecting with others.

Action Plan
Download a document and fill out a section weekly. Check off strategies you will focus on to expand your personal network and briefly reflect on how you will implement them.

Discover Hidden Assets: Post a Request and Offer to Help
Become aware of expertise in the cohort in this two-part activity. First, request help on a project, initiative, or issue. Then, offer to help someone else.

Partner Meetings
Meet with a designated partner to discuss insights from the experience and the strategies you are starting to implement.

Online Discussions
Share insights with the cohort and learn from others online. Answer guided prompts in forums to participate in the discussion.
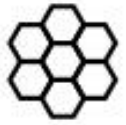
Leader Meeting
Meet with your leader to set a 6-month business goal and brainstorm connections that could help you achieve that goal.

Coach's Corner (optional)
Have a question or want to discuss a topic further?
Post your question in the Coach's Corner forum.

CONNECTIVITY & COLLABORATION COMMUNITY

Connected Culture

December 4, 2023 | 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM ET

Connected Culture

December 4th

The task of fostering a culture never ends, but when grounded in network science, leaders can design and implement interventions that help their organization adapt, grow, and thrive in new and powerful ways. ONA, combined with cultural values data, provides many unique insights into the network-based nature of each organization's culture.

Senior HR and business leaders need a clear understanding of their cultural subnetworks, a willingness to identify and engage with informal influencers, a sense of the absorption rate of new priorities and behaviors, an ability to defuse pockets of tension, and a profound awareness of emotional responses.

Join our last Connectivity & Collaboration session to learn about the fifth and final lynchpin to support connected hybrid work: connected culture.

Take-aways:
- Informal influencers can be the real cultural leaders and how they can be activated for good or "evil"
- Why certain cultural behaviors are contagious and quickly transmit across various work modes and what stops behaviors dead in their tracks
- How Why and how culture renovation benefits immensely from effective workforce collaboration and why leaders at high-performance organizations are 3.5 times more likely to structure work in ways that take advantage of the power of collaboration
- Why culture is driven by emotional engagement and cultural tension can be productive if managed well
- How the quality of connections and relationships may provide the key to inclusion, belonging and empowering diversity.

Discussion Leader

Michael Arena
Chief Social Scientist
Connected Commons

Kevin Oakes
Chief Executive Officer, i4cp
Author, Culture Renovation

The Three Cs for Cultivating Organizational Culture in a Hybrid World

By Michael Arena, Scott Hines and John Golden

January – March 2023

Summary.

For years we have known that effective organizational culture is critical to ensuring revenue growth, employee retention, and even stock price acceleration. Yet, culture change is hard. Today, in the hybrid world, most employees still spend the majority of their time working within small work teams, but team members are often remote from one another. These employee interactions are essential to sharing and modeling the norms and behaviors necessary to cultivate the desired culture.

Combining behavioral data with the use of organizational network analysis helps to overcome these limitations and provides a deeper understanding of the employee cultural experience—even in the hybrid context. In our research, we evaluated 10 attributes critical to an organization's culture from more than 50,000 employees across three years. Using passive data, we also re-constructed the employee network based on primary interactions.

Our research highlighted three critical cultural patterns that will help to more deeply evaluate culture in a hybrid context, but even more importantly, help target local solutions that can be quickly implemented. We call these the three"C's" of cultivating culture. We show that organizational culture clusters in the employee network, is contagious among employees, and is contextually dependent. We discuss our key insights on the three C's, concluding with practical applications for leaders applying these insights in their organization.

Review the Research

Culture Renovation
By Kevin Oakes
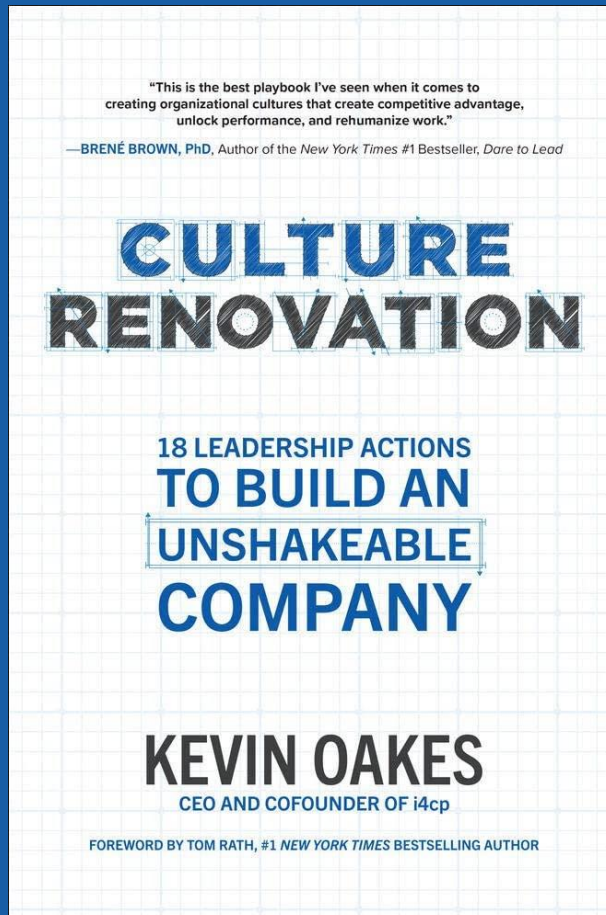
Summary.

Most business leaders understand the power of a dynamic, positive culture—but almost every effort to change culture fails. Why? The approach is often all wrong. Rather than attempt to "transform" a new culture from the ground up, leaders need to instead spearhead a culture renovation. It's all about keeping what works, changing what needs to be changed, and ensuring proper care and maintenance—much like refurbishing and living in a beautiful historic home and improving its overall value.

In Culture Renovation®, the head of the world's leading HR research firm—the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp)—Kevin Oakes provides tangible, tactical insights drawn from a robust data set and informed by CEOs and HR leaders at many of the world's top companies. You'll find everything you need to rebuild your corporate culture with care and expertise, including:

- Three phases and detailed action steps for architecting the change you want to see
- Practical insights and examples from T-Mobile, Microsoft, 3M, and other top companies
- The traits of a healthy corporate culture
- Proven talent practices to maintain your new culture for long-term success

Oakes identifies 18 proven leadership actions for turning any culture into an agile, resilient, and innovative high-performance organization. You'll learn how to best understand the culture in place today and set a new cultural path for decades to come; develop a co-creation mindset; identify influencers and blockers; ferret out skeptics and non-believers; measure, monitor, and report progress; and implement "next practices" in talent strategies to sustain the renovation.

Culture Renovation delivers everything you need to plan, build, and maintain a corporate culture that drives profits, growth, and business sustainability now and well into the future.

Read the Book

Use Networks to Drive Culture Change

By Rob Cross, Peter Gray and Michael Arena

Winter 2022

Summary.

Employers rely heavily on self-report surveys and interviews to assess organizational culture. But on their own, such tools provide a flawed view. By combining them with analysis of informal networks, leaders can gain a richer understanding of how new values take root locally. This allows them to see more precisely where desired behaviors are communicated, modeled, observed, and adopted on the ground. With that level of insight, leaders can more effectively target their change efforts in five key ways. That perspective allows leaders to drive change in more targeted ways. They learn how new ideas and beliefs spread, who the real influencers are in their organization, and how long the process can take — which makes it easier to propagate new values where they are needed and produce enduring outcomes.

Review the Research

Cultivating an Inclusive Culture Through Personal Networks

By Rob Cross, Kevin Oakes and Connor Cross

Summer 2021

Summary.

Many organizations have ramped up their investments in diversity, equity, and inclusion — largely in the form of anti-bias training, employee resource groups, mentoring programs, and added DEI functions and roles. But gauging the effectiveness of these measures has been a challenge. To get an accurate read on the progress that has been made so far, it's not enough to look for representation across demographic categories in recruitment and hiring, although that's a start. Organizations must also assess employee experience. If people aren't equitably developed and promoted once they come on board, they're not as likely to stay. And even if they do stick around, engagement may suffer, and the organization may struggle to reap diversity's potential benefits, such as increased creativity and improved business performance.

In the ten organizations we analyzed, we saw some striking differences in network connectivity across demographic subgroups. Although each organization's breakdown was unique (largely because subgroup sizes varied from company to company), we found it useful to look at how subgroups compared on average. Overall, people seeking ties with colleagues and stakeholders early on tended to stimulate larger networks where they were sought out for their knowledge and expertise. Being sought out over time was strongly associated with faster promotion and longer tenure. In our quantitative analyses and our follow-up interviews, three factors consistently correlated with faster rates of promotion and longer tenures in the hiring organization.

Review the Research

How Successful Women Manage Their Networks

By Inga Carboni, Rob Cross, Aaron Page, Andrew Parker

2019

Summary.

Why don't we see more women in top positions in organizations? For a long time, we've known that gender diversity pays off. Companies with higher rates of gender diversity among senior leaders outperform their peers by a 15% margin. Those with the highest percentages of female board directors enjoy a 53% higher return on equity, 42% higher return on sales, and 66% higher return on invested capital as compared to those with the lowest percentages. Further, gender diverse teams consistently outperform teams dominated by men.

It's no wonder that a Institute for Corporate Productivity study found that executives at high-performance organizations are over 1.5 times more likely to indicate the gender diversity of their workforce as a "high" or "very high" priority. In the face of this evidence, why is it that the number of women in senior leadership has barely budged over the years? Despite comprising nearly half of the workforce and earning more than half of all college degrees, women still represent little more than 25% of executives and senior managers, hold less than 5% of CEO jobs, and occupy less than 20% of board seats at S&P 500 companies. At this rate, the World Economic Forum estimates that the gender gap will not be closed for a whopping 217 years!

We took a deeper dive into our network data. We sought to understand which network drivers enabled some women to be successful whether or not they were in the majority. We learned that what was going on was not what we expected. In some cases, the networking strategies that work for men also work for women. In other cases, however, the strategy playbook looked different for women. Overall, we learned that four critical networking practices distinguished high-performing women from their less successful contemporaries: 1. Boundary-spanning, 2. Efficiency, 3. Stickiness and 4. Trust (and energy-building).

Review the Research

How to Catalyze Innovation in Your Organization

Executives can fuel the emergence of new ideas by understanding and tapping the power of employee networks.

By Michael Arena, Rob Cross, Jonathan Sims and Mary Uhl-Bien
Summer, 2017
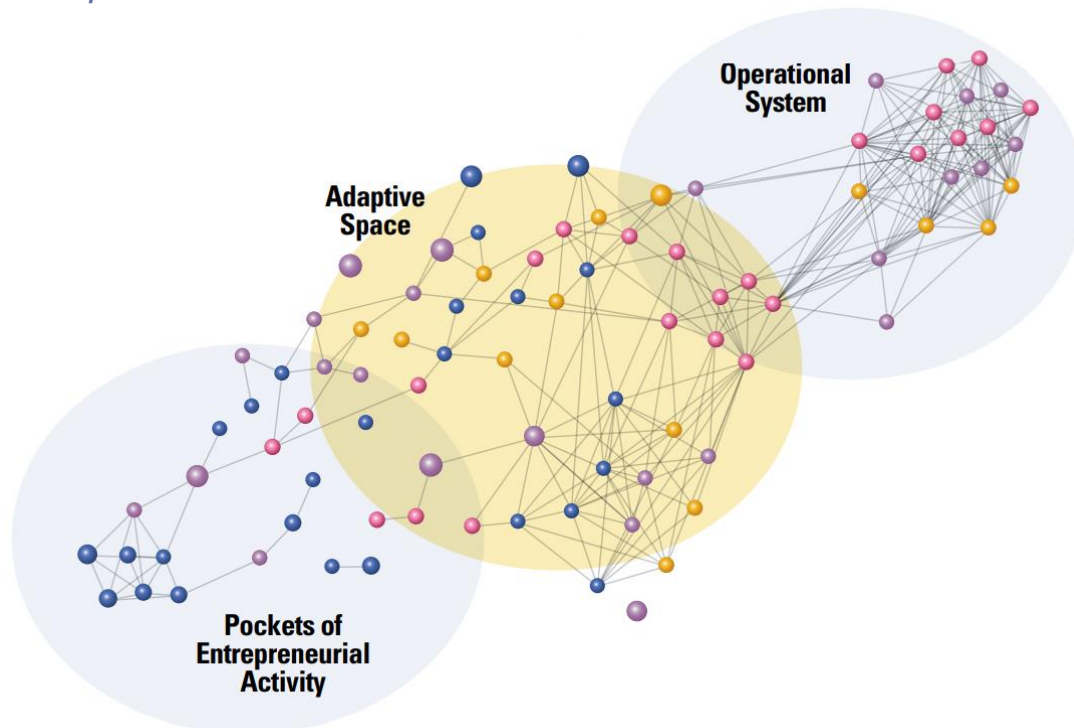
Summary.

The Adaptive Space Imperative

For a large organization, innovation is both essential and increasingly difficult. Innovating requires managers to grapple with a conundrum: How does one empower those with innovative ideas (in entrepreneurial pockets within the organization), while ensuring that their best ideas are effectively implemented (using the organizational operational system)?

The value of networks and adaptive space is that they enable influential people to tell stories about an innovation they are championing in ways that echo across the network. As these stories spread, others are attracted to engage, and the network of those engaged begins to include critical stakeholders, therefore enhancing the likelihood of organizational support for the innovation.

Our research suggests that by understanding social networks and developing an adaptive space, even seemingly bureaucratic organizations can facilitate emergent innovations.

Review the Research

Culture Renovation® Assessment

The Culture Renovation® Assessment was built to serve as a critical first step in planning a culture change initiative; helping leaders understand their organization's culture through a prescriptive model of what a healthy culture consists of. This powerful tool enables you to: 1) assess culture health by uncovering areas of strength and improvement needs and benchmarking these vs. high-performance organizations, 2) identify cultural problems and target where they are occurring and why—in order to defuse them for the future, 3) gain an accurate, holistic understanding of your culture today to correctly shape the culture you envision for tomorrow.

A core part of your employee listening strategy

The assessment combines employee listening techniques with analysis of external sentiment data – both quantitative and qualitative – to help your executives truly understand the culture via three actionable dimensions:

- High-performance mindset
- Employee experience
- Risk profile
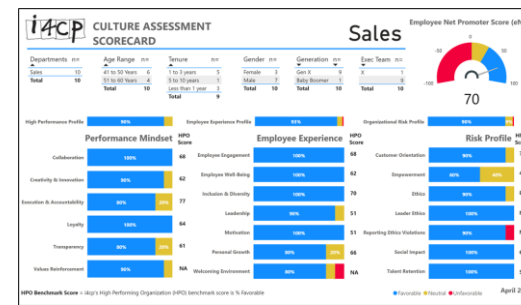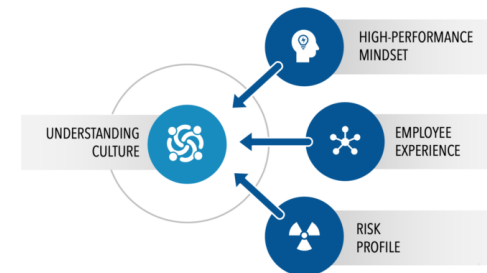
Learn More

THE FIRST STEP FOR ANY SUCCESSFUL CULTURE CHANGE.

Most organizations fail in their attempt to modify organizational culture. However, 15% achieve positive culture change to better compete in the future. i4cp's extensive research into this 15% unveiled several commonalities in their approaches:

✓ They took the time to understand the culture– and its nuances–that exist today

✓ They took a renovation approach, systematically analyzing which elements to retain—and which to change

✓ They conducted early assessments and collected feedback to set the cultural path and desired behaviors before embarking further

Agility Accelerator

The Agility Accelerator is a powerful platform that provides the means for managing this invisible resource: collaboration. Created in partnership with corporate leaders, who are members of the Connected Commons, the Agility Accelerator enables a rapid organizational network analysis (ONA) that provides group collaboration analytics at unprecedented speed.

Rapidly Obtain Deep Results To...

GAIN COLLABORATIVE INSIGHTS

Enable leaders to analyze their team's collaborative strengths and gaps.

MEASURE GROUP COLLABORATION

Evaluate group collaboration across virtual teams.

PREPARE FOR TRANSFORMATION

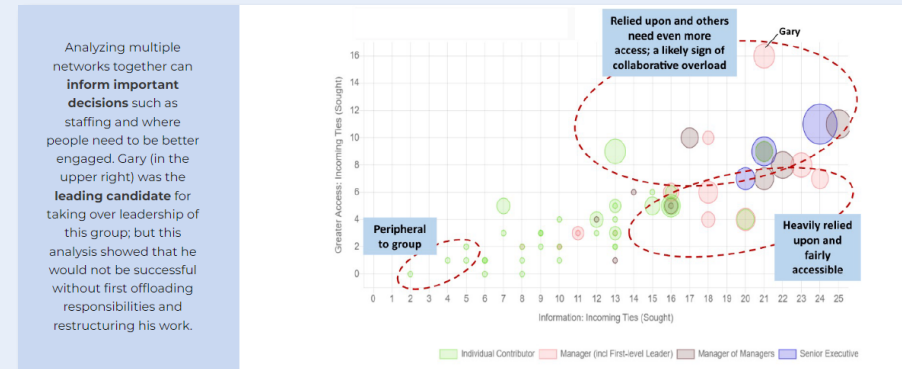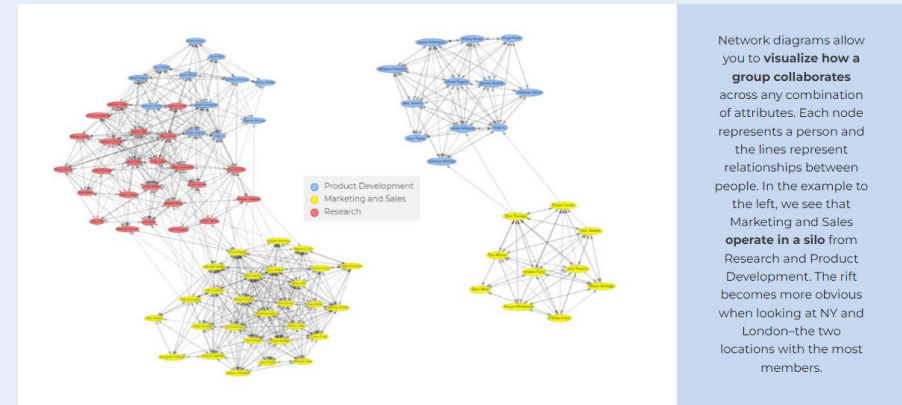Identify critical connectors ahead of organizational redesign or restructuring.

ILLUMINATE OVERLOAD & ISOLATION

Identify silos, collaborative hubs, key influencers, brokers, and at-risk players.

Learn More

Example of insights that accelerate key business outcomes

Network diagrams allow you to **visualize how a group collaborates** across any combination of attributes. Each node represents a person and the lines represent relationships between people. In the example to the left, we see that Marketing and Sales **operate in a silo** from Research and Product Development. The rift becomes more obvious when looking at NY and London–the two locations with the most members.

Analyzing multiple networks together can **inform important decisions** such as staffing and where people need to be better engaged. Gary (in the upper right) was the **leading candidate** for taking over leadership of this group; but this analysis showed that he would not be successful without first offloading responsibilities and restructuring his work.

Collaborative practices **target the strengths and opportunities** for the group as a whole, or for a sub-group via filter selections. 89% of people agreed that this group does a **good job at engaging remote & virtual workers**, but only 36% felt that it **managed collaborative overload** well.

Accessing Resources

Resource Overview

Developed in collaboration with member companies, Connected Commons offers a suite of tools and assessments enabling individuals and teams to identify strengths and blind spots, learn about better ways of working, and make targeted improvements.

Select which tools best meet the collaborative challenges faced by your teams and deploy them directly from our online platform.

Grow Connected Leadership

Connected Leader

Learn the practices to lead in next world of work by creating the positive and productive connections to effectively innovate, execute and thrive.

- Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire
- Team Compare Questionnaire
- Connected Leader Course

Accelerate Role Transitions

Connected Talent

Learn the practices that the Fast Movers applied to replicate high-performer networks in a third the time of peers when transitions into new roles.

- Digital Card Explorer
- Compare Questionnaire
- Certification Course

Reduce Collaboration Overload

Manage Collaboration Overload

As the collaborative intensity of work explodes, learn and apply the practices that our research revealed will help buy back 18-24% of your time.

- Digital Card Explorer
- Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire
- Team Compare Questionnaire

Help Others Thrive

Help Others Thrive

Empowering the Great Reconnection learn the practices proven to lead performance, innovation and engagement through networks.

- Digital Card Explorer
- Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire
- Team Compare Questionnaire

Improve Relational Well-Being

Relational Well-Being

Success and satisfaction in the next world of work requires applying new practices that help to create positive and productive relationships.

- Digital Card Explorer
- Compare Questionnaire

Enable Adaptive Teaming

Adaptive Teaming

The nature of teams and teaming is evolving to be more agile and adaptive. Learn the practices that empower collaboration in the next world of work.

- Digital Card Explorer
- Personal & Team Assessment

Resources Features

Digital Card Explorer invites participants to explore the practices - why they matter and what you can do; including short engaging videos. Chosen cards generate a detailed growth plan.

Compare Questionnaires help participants examine how their approach compares to the research-based best practices and provides a growth plan with strengths and opportunities. Some are available with other rater and team assessment capabilities.

Course & Certification Programs provide more structured learning programs in on-demand or blended formats.

Feature Availability by Resource

As part of your Connected Commons membership your organization is welcome to apply 200 complimentary Card Explorers and/or Compare Questionnaires. To help you identify which resources can best meet your needs. The table below indicates which features are available for each of the resources.

	Card Explorer	Compare Questionnaire			Certification	Course
		Personal	Multi-Rater	Team		
Collaboration Overload	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Connected Leader		✓	✓	✓		✓
Connected Talent	✓	✓			✓	
Help Others Thrive	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Relational Well-Being	✓	✓				
Adaptive Teaming	✓	✓		✓		

Reduce Collaboration Overload

Manage Collaboration Overload

As the collaborative intensity of work explodes, learn and apply the practices that our research revealed will help buy back 18-24% of your time.
- Digital Card Explorer
- Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire
- Team Compare Questionnaire

Grow Connected Leadership

Connected Leader

Learn the practices to lead in next world of work by creating the positive and productive connections to effectively innovate, execute and thrive.
- Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire
- Team Compare Questionnaire
- Connected Leader Course

Help Others Thrive

Help Others Thrive

Empowering the Great Reconnection learn the practices proven to lead performance, innovation and engagement through networks.
- Digital Card Explorer
- Personal & Rater Compare Questionnaire
- Team Compare Questionnaire

Accelerate Role Transitions

Connected Talent

Learn the practices that the Fast Movers applied to replicate high-performer networks in a third the time of peers when transitions into new roles.
- Digital Card Explorer
- Compare Questionnaire
- Certification Course

Improve Relational Well-Being

Relational Well-Being

Success and satisfaction in the next world of work requires applying new practices that help to create positive and productive relationships.
- Digital Card Explorer
- Compare Questionnaire

Enable Adaptive Teaming

Adaptive Teaming

The nature of teams and teaming is evolving to be more agile and adaptive. Learn the practices that empower collaboration in the next world of work.
- Digital Card Explorer
- Personal & Team Assessment

Purchasing, Sending & Managing Your Resources

Membership includes complimentary Card Explorers and/or Compare Questionnaires for both individuals and teams.

These resources can be accessed in the Connected Commons Store.

Check Out the Connected Commons Store

Or copy the URL into browser
https://network-toolkit.com/order-solutions

Purchasing, Sending & Managing Your Resources

Purchase and Prepare a Cohort

1. Purchase Solutions
Select the quantity of solutions (A) you want to purchase. Click **Check out (B)** and complete you order information. Identifying an **Administrator** (C) will give that person access to distribute and manage purchased inventory.

2. View Inventory
Purchased and used inventory is viewable. Invoices for past purchases are available (D).

3. Create a Cohort
To distribute inventory simply "create a cohort" and assign a solution where you have remaining inventory.

Please note that whether you are creating a cohort for a program etc. or simply sending out one resource, your solution inventory needs to be available in a cohort.

Send and Remind Participants

4. View Cohorts and Send Solution
Identify which cohort / solution you want and click "manage" to get the send page to send. You can easily send to people individually (E) or use the CSV file load (F) for a bigger group. See the date the resource was sent, completed or send a reminder if not yet complete (G).

5. Receive Email to Access the Solution
Participants will receive an email from "Network-Toolkit" with a link (H) that takes them to the solution site. Simply applying the code (I) provided will unlock the solution for a one time use.