

PREFACE

Collaboration continues to be one of the difficult challenges for individuals and organizations. This year's ICKM coincides with the world's largest collaboration exercise, the UN Global Climate Summit in Copenhagen, where collaboration capabilities between stakeholders from government, business, science, and civil society determine our future. While our collaboration infrastructure has advanced significantly over the last few years with the development of social computing tools and models, we still need to rethink our strategies and business models to become more adaptive and responsive, focusing less on formal structure and hierarchies. Social collaboration and network tools allow us to "prepare the mind" for partnerships and different forms of thinking. Many of our traditional business models, public organizational structures, and educational systems are not yet ready for new forms of decision-making, problem-solving and collaboration that go beyond organizational boundaries. Concepts like "open innovation", "value networks", "wisdom of crowds" are some of the ideas that influence our thinking on collaboration and information sharing.

The move to open innovation and value networks can be attributed to advances in information and communication technology. We are now living in a knowledge-based society, where value is created through complex dynamic exchanges between individuals and organizations. Drawing upon intellectual capital theory, collaboration can be regarded as relationship capital which creates tangible and intangible value.

Our new understanding of the value of collaboration also takes us back to the roots of Knowledge Management as a social and human discipline. Social aspects of collaboration provide most of the value, while the networks, tools and enabling technologies are only part of the taken-for-granted basic communication infrastructure. Collaboration requires more than the ability to publish, display or aggregate information but rather requires the ability to leverage the know-how of many individuals.

The Internet and the Web are facilitating the dissemination of information and communication exchanges, empowering us to engage in new forms of collaboration, like in the way we gather and create new ideas. Open innovation is a paradigm that assumes organizations should use external as well as internal ideas to sustain their growth.

Many of the knowledge processes such as knowledge creation, utilization and transfer depend on the frequency and density of interaction as well as openness and willingness to adapt to the changes in the business environment. The ability to innovate and create new

knowledge has become a major source of competitive advantage in the knowledge society. Today, most innovations are brought into the market by a network of organizations that realized the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing. This realization is characterized by the complexity associated with the new products and services, the distribution of skills and competency in different regions of the world. The knowledge economy has opened the door for organizations to tap expertise and skills remotely without the need to physically bring such skills into one geographical location as it was in the industrial era.

Managing collaboration goes beyond merely managing technologies necessary for people to communicate. It involves leveraging partner's capabilities as well as gaining access to the knowledge and relationship that partners possess. Successful organizations focused on knowledge transfer between teams and building collaborative capabilities with the objective of maintaining competitive advantage. We are moving from the decade of personal and organizational productivity to the decade of inter-personal productivity where value is created through relationships and networks.

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