

**WHAT COLLABORATIVE HABITS CAN EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS
TOWARDS HEIGHTENED INNOVATION OUTCOMES FOR THE
CHANGING 21ST CENTURY OF WORK?**

By

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ABSTRACT

This research study set out to determine how individuals, particularly those working in freelance situations, expected to form a significant component of the workforce in the near term, could be empowered with collaborative habits for a changing nature of work in the 21st century whereby innovation outcomes are considered to be of ever-increasing priority. An extensive literature review was conducted to identify contemporary principles regarding the drivers of successful collaboration for individuals and in small team settings. It sought to unearth human behavioural factors of collaboration as opposed to factors of process, or technology or space. A literature review illuminated key aspects in terms of individual mindsets and behaviours for collaboration which served to produce stimulus statements and prototypical habits. These stimulus statements and prototypes were then explored in semi-structured interviews with participants who met a criterion of being experienced professionals who work frequently in collaborative environments with desired innovation outcomes. These professionals served as co-creators of the final proposed 8 collaborative habits that represent the final outcome of this project.

Keywords: collaboration, innovation, habits, creativity, freelance, workforce

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PART ONE: BACKGROUND

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

Business and academic publications are actively chronicling the requirements for both individuals and businesses to find radically new ways of working to achieve or sustain success in the drastically changed business environment that exists in the 21st century. Two widely-discussed key components of this radical new way of working include the importance of innovation and working in more collaborative ways.

Work can be defined as the processes and activities undertaken for commercial purposes by individuals and organizations as part of a public economy.

Industrial-era companies have predominantly shaped this work, as we currently know it, as their success and growth led to the development of bureaucracy and the consequent command and control corporate hierarchy and culture that developed into the organizational norm.

With these traditional hierarchical cultures come organizational habits that pose barriers to the kinds of change that many new thinkers believe will pave the paths to new futures. Rules and processes served as the pathways to getting things done; in this context, without much awareness or intention, organizational habits emerged (Lazarcic, 2000; Duhigg, 2014). These entrenched working habits, lived and passed on by individuals over decades, still permeate many of our modern

work styles. These habits include mindsets and perspectives as well as functional behavior paradigms, and all come together to comprise deeply entrenched systemic ways of working in what we consider to be the working world.

However, habits can be shaped. In *The Power of Habit*, author Charles Duhigg explains how habit can completely transform even the most dysfunctional of organizations. By focusing on building a habit of excellence in safety procedures, a small manageable activity that every worker in the entire Alcan organization understood, CEO Paul O'Neill took the company from consistent decline to industry leadership.

And further a new context for which these habits can be made more empowering seems to be here today. What is apparent in the immediate term is the emergence of an unprecedented level of independent work, with a growing global freelance economy. The size of this workforce is considerable, with 34% of the U.S. workforce being freelance (Horowitz & Rosati, 2014). Further, there is little to indicate that this is a trajectory that will alter, as these freelancers attribute this independent work situation to be one of choice and 77% of those surveyed believe that the best years of freelancing are yet to come (Horowitz & Rosati, 2014).

Significant shifts in the workforce composition, coupled with many other trends altering the way we work, signal that a new era of work may on the horizon. Some suggest we may be on the verge of adopting more flattened organizational

structures as Dan Pontefract speaks of in Flat Army and Joe Phelps champions in Pyramids are Tombs. Their vision of the future of work is united in believing that hierarchy will be replaced with flatter, network-based organizational structures, whether it be Holacracy, currently in beta at Zappos, the pod-structure most recently outlined in author Dave Grey's, The Connected Company or via some other organizational model that emerges as an alternative to traditional hierarchy. Whether that comes to bear is to be seen.

Whatever the form, the changing nature of the present day workforce along with the visions of these authors suggest that the future of work is shifting significantly and that central to that shift is the reorganization of how work will get done and a prioritization of the kind of outcomes that work demands.

THE PERSISTENT DEMAND FOR INNOVATION

Since the industrial era, with Ford's radical development of the assembly line, innovation has been heralded as key to competitive advantage. Today, we are awed by the achievements of innovation giants like Apple, Disney, Google or even Procter & Gamble. In a 2008 McKinsey survey of senior executives from around the world, more than 70% saw innovation as key to their company's growth over the next three to five years (Barsh, Capozzi and Davidson, 2008).

While innovation is heralded as a critical driving element for societal success and change, the reality is no where near aligned to the expectations. In fact, as Vijay

Kumar notes in 101 Design Methods for Innovation, “Research shows that less than 4% of the innovation projects undertaken by businesses are proven successful; the remaining 96% of the projects fail” (Kumar, 101 Design Methods, p. X).

Innovation in reality is an increasingly fleeting achievement. Robert Gordon in his challenge to any assumed certainty of continued innovation and economic growth notes: “Since Solow’s seminal work in the 1950s, economic growth has been regarded as a continuous process that will persist forever. But there was virtually no economic growth before 1750, suggesting that the rapid progress made over the past 250 years could well be a unique episode in human history rather than a guarantee of endless future advance at the same rate” (Gordon, R, 2012, p3).

And yet innovation persists to increase as a key focus for business leaders; in 2010, “84 percent of global executives told us in a recent survey that they believe innovation is extremely important to their growth strategies” (Capozzi, Gregg, Howe, McKinsey, 2010, p. 1).

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Explorations of innovation invariably bring references to human creativity.

“Mistakes, failures, and false starts have been the basis of a host of innovations,

and so have serendipity... and idle curiosity, chance, and creative inspiration.”

(Rosenfeld, R., *Leadership in Action*, 2008, p. 2).

DiLiello and Houghton explored the links between innovation and creativity, finding that “creativity may be generally defined as the formation of novel, appropriate and useful ideas by individuals or small groups” and noting that “innovation usually refers to the implementation of creative ideas in an organizational context”, they determined that individual and team creativity serve as the origin of organizational innovation” (2006, p. 321).”

Though innovation does not end with creativity, it is a crucial element at the start; fostering creativity of individuals and teams can be considered a critical factor in achieving innovation (Amabile, 1996).

So where might the seeds of creativity be planted, so that more individuals can adopt more creative thinking styles and thereby support achieving more innovation? Where creativity was once considered a gift belonging only to a few geniuses and revolutionaries, creative thinking is modernly considered to be a style of thinking that every individual is capable of. Nancy Andreason, author of *The Creative Brain* (2006), identifies the personality characteristics or attitudinal aspects that are shown to correlate to creativity; they include: openness to experience, adventuresomeness, rebelliousness, individualism, sensitivity, playfulness, persistence, curiosity, and simplicity.

INNOVATION: THE PEOPLE ASPECT

While innovation continues to be a priority, the ways in which it is arrived at are being challenged. The McKinsey study cited above found that the structures and processes most of these executives were leaning on to aid innovation were insufficient and that in fact they believed unanimously that the most important factors in getting to innovation outcomes were the people and culture factors (Barsh, Capozzi and Davidson, 2008).

While innovation processes and methods have been the focus of many modern-day consulting organizations like Doblin or Continuum, the missing element to be addressed may well be the messier, more abstract people element. Steelcase in working to establish its innovation center, conducted its own research review and decided to walk away from a process-based approach to innovation, instead deciding to consider spaces for innovation as a complex adaptive system, where people-based factors are central (Steelcase 360 Magazine, Issue 66, Amplify Your Innovation Quotient: The New I.Q., p. 15).

“Unfortunately, innovation has hit a wall in the workplace because the human component has frequently been neglected. Organizations focus too much on the mechanics of innovation and not enough on the underlying people-based

principles. To promote innovation, leaders must first understand what drives it: people.” (Rosenfeld, R., 2008, p.2).

Consider Spain’s Irizar, a maker of luxury coaches, the market leader nationally and number three throughout all of Europe. Irizar is a member of Spain’s Mondragon Co-operative Corporation (MCC), considered the world leader in co-operative working. Cited as an organizational innovator and researched for its contributing practices, a key identified success factor was the establishment of Irizar’s work teams. “The work teams have been one of the main tools through which the company has achieved continuous, intensive co-operation between different professionals, with very different knowledge, that characterizes the process of technological innovation and the creation, accumulation and transmission of knowledge.” (Forcadell & Guadamillas, 2002)

To bring these people issues into focus, increasingly, collaboration is held up as having the most potential to improve innovation outcomes. In fact, innovation has the people-oriented factors of both creativity and collaboration at its essence. A Steelcase innovation center research initiative led to a conclusion, that “innovation is a direct result of creative collaboration.” (Steelcase 360 Magazine, Issue 66, Amplify Your Innovation Quotient: The New I.Q., p. 18).

THE URGENT NEED FOR COLLABORATION

To truly support the legions of workers today, so many of whom are independent freelancers, unsupported by formal structures of an organization, means empowering working individuals with skills and tools that they can understand and activate themselves, in an embedded, habitual, way.

Current approaches to innovation still fail to take into consideration the important concepts of the independent workforce, the potential flattening of hierarchy and the constant increasing strength of peer networking. Miller and Skidmore (2004) term the shift we see in work environments as “Disorganization”, noting how rampant advances of technology are changing organizational structures to flatten hierarchies and accommodate the provision of highly valued human benefits of enhanced creativity, flexibility and autonomy. In these new work environments with these characteristics, a new economy is emerging, one that has been referred to as ‘the collaborative economy’, one where mass collaboration is the concept that reigns supreme in the pursuit of the new levels of success (Tapscott, D. & Williams, A. D., 2008).

With the achievement of innovation increasingly uncommon, much new focus is being placed on how to facilitate innovation in a new context of globalization and technological acceleration. Innovation teams, such as one deployed by Intuit in its Design for Delight initiative, are sometimes established in large companies as a small team subset within the larger organization; these teams are separated from the rules and processes of the bureaucracy to experiment and explore in an

unhindered way (Martin, R. L. The Innovation Catalysts, Harvard Business Review, June 2011). These approaches derive mixed success and have their shortcomings. Perhaps most widely trumpeted is the importance of leadership sponsorship in the quest for innovation; analysts claim universally the singular importance of the backing of the most senior leaders in order for cultures of innovation to exist and any hope for the outcomes of innovation (Govindarajan, V. & Trimble, C., Stop the Innovation Wars, Harvard Business Review, July/August, 2010). Yet this leader-driven approach to innovation squares in opposition to the shifting nature of work; collaborative habits, if easily integrated into the activity of individual workers, can become embedded across an army of workers and thereby empower productive collaboration that has a much broader and more sustainable impact in terms of innovation outcomes.

The ingoing hypothesis of this research study is the belief that, with the dynamics of work changing significantly, organizationally-driven or leader-led change does not need to be the norm any longer; in fact, given scenarios of dwindling organizational loyalty, rampant employee movement and the growth of the independent worker, perhaps change can be most effectively activated by armies of individuals behaving with new skills in new ways. To reiterate, this project brings an ingoing belief that there is imminent opportunity to empower those individuals in particular working in freelance situations, expected to form a significant component of the workforce in the near term, with the collaborative habits that can help drive the innovation that has been evaluated of priority to the business world.

In the context of new work dynamics, what collaborative habits can empower individuals towards heightened innovation outcomes for the changing 21st century of work?

This question is considered in a context whereby much of behavior is the outcome of habits, defined by Merriam-Webster as “a way of acting fixed through repetition”, having attitudinal bases (Lazaric, 2000), and whereby 21st century collaboration requires building new individual work habits to bring about people-led innovation.

This research study is founded on agreement with the statement that *“the ability to get things done with collaborative networks is the next generation in human productivity.”* (Leavitt, M. & McKeown, R., Finding Allies, Building Alliances (2013).

This research study is invested in a future vision of work but importantly one that understands the current context, works with it, and strives to empower independent workers, versus leaders, with new behavioural tools to navigate it.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR EMBEDDED COLLABORATION

There is much discourse regarding collaboration, its benefits and how it can be seen as a critical tool for improved work scenarios as well as more creative innovative outcomes of that work. Collaboration is a topic of many publications, making the cover of many professional magazines and serving as the basis of a full issue of Harvard Business Review in 2012; the reference list for this paper alone sheds some light on the volume of attention that collaboration receives. However, the bulk of this conversation still resides in a theoretical framework. Discourse is academic and complex, and little work has been done to succinctly, behaviorally drill down known theories into set of activities that the average worker today, whether 25 or 65, whether senior or junior, whether introverted or extraverted, whether independent or part of a huge organization, can action when they walk into their next collaborative experience. And yet, this appears to be precisely where the opportunity exists to truly make collaboration happen. To empower the legions of independent workers around the world with some simple behavioural tips that can quickly provide enhanced competency as a collaborator in a collaborative experience. As Michael Kaufman of InnovationLabs states: “the next level of productivity gains will come from improving the way humans interact with each other” (Kaufman, p. 1).

An entire paper could be devoted to exploring the myriad interpretations of collaboration. For the purposes of this paper, we will rely on the most basic definition put forth by Briggs et al. (2006) and Briggs and Vreede (2005), where

they define it simply as joint effort towards a group goal. Collaboration remains a nebulous construct. In Collaboration “Engineerability”, Kolfsschoten et al. (2010) explored whether collaboration was a happenstance outcome of the immeasurable synergy in human interaction, or if in fact collaboration could be designed and translated into practices for collaborators to “execute for themselves without ongoing support from collaboration professionals (p. 301).

“One could argue that engineering disciplines focus on structure, rationality, and rules, while collaboration is a process of people, relations, discussion, and emotion. Therefore, one could question whether it is possible to predict and prescribe solutions for collaboration? To what extent can we create, build, or design collaboration? To what extent does collaboration just ‘happen’? (Kolfsschoten et al., 2010, p. 302)

The authors conclude their investigation noting that an intentional engineering-style design of practices can enhance the achievement of goals in the collaborative process. (Kolfsschoten et al., 2010).

This is where the opportunity for “embedded collaboration” comes in. Michael Kaufman of Innovation Labs uses the term in his paper A Comprehensive Approach to Designing Collaborative Work, referring to the opportunity of embedded collaboration as having the potential to be a strategic asset bringing “speed of response to market, creativity, improved employee engagement” to organizations (p. 4). Yet this advantage does not have to be considered as only an advantage to organizations. In a context of a shifting landscape of work,

where the independent freelance workforce is on the rise, this has potential advantage to everyone. It can be a tool for every working individual to do what Jon Husband believes is a necessary element of success in the work environment of today, to “navigate on one’s own through a constantly shifting landscape of work” (Husband, J, 2015).

PART TWO: BUILDING NEW HABITS

WHY HABITS?

Why does this paper focus on habits? Because this paper centres on the opportunity that exists in the people-oriented aspects of change i.e.: the human and the social aspects. There is much reference in the theory of knowledge management in general and in particular with respect to the field of information technology, to the guiding parameters of people, process and technology in the analysis and understanding of systems of management be they for projects or systems. The thinking is that approaches to knowledge management, particularly given the contemporary context of major information technology considerations, can be framed comprehensively by reference to the people aspects, the process aspects or the technology aspects (Pee, L.G., & Kankanhalli, A., 2009).

The role of people and the process of knowledge management as a precursor to innovation appears more and more frequently in the discourse; “the role of innovation for growth is strengthened by advances in new technologies, and a greater focus on knowledge creation and use.” (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007, p. 6)

While it is true that process can be a valuable tool in guiding efforts, and that technology offers a useful platform to facilitate efforts, the people aspect

nevertheless lies at the heart of what it means to work, and therefore people aspects play the most essential role in shaping successful collaboration. It is possible to have collaboration without process or technology, as long as the people aspect is represented. The reverse can not be said to be true for either process or technology independently. For this reason, this paper is based on the belief that all the process and all the technology in the world can not make people into collaborators without the mindset and the behaviours that can help shape individual and social activity in that direction, productively.

The establishment of habit can be an extremely powerful basis for establishing new ways of working and facilitating broad change that starts with an individual worker.

The understanding of what shapes habit was originally explored by Veblen in *The Instinct of Workmanship* (1914), as well more recently by French sociologist P. Bourdieu in *Les regles de l'art* (1992) (Lazarcic, 2000). In Veblen's mind, habits are formed through the impacts of history and community whereby individual's experiences generate instincts which are then behaved as habits of thought. This explanation doesn't root itself behaviourally enough to inform this research study. Instead Bourdieu gets closer to a working definition that can have some behavioural practicality in its implication. Bourdieu agreed with Veblen is seeing the source of habit as being attitudinal in origin, and he acknowledged these attitudes had an impact on behaviours by putting limits on the possible range of actions of an individual. One important element of both Veblen and Bourdieu's

take on habits is in their determination of the attitudinal or thought-based components of habits. But most important is the observation of Lazaric (2000) in that:

“Basically, this means that in a market situation, individuals do not follow predetermined rules that establish their behaviour, nor do they rely on complicated calculations to adjust their behaviour and maximise their own utility. Instead they follow social conventions and habits which are part of the normal running of any market.”

It is the automatic nature of the individual’s behavior and the dominant reliance on habit that puts the establishment of habits front and center as an objective of this research study. To that end, it is important that we understand the origins of their formation as in attitudinal and thought-based as well as their expression as behavior, consistent with the observations of Veblen and Bourdieu.

Charles Duhigg, in *The Power of Habit* (2014), also brings perspective to the mechanism that establishes habit. The power of habit lies in activating the habit loop, whereby triggers, routines and rewards conspire to create a perpetuating feedback loop - one that becomes increasingly automatic - and whereby eventually “a habit is born”. And where habit is born, transformation can bloom.

The hypothesis is that if individuals can identify collaborative opportunities, to cue collaboration, if they have the knowledge of the routine behaviours and mindsets that will facilitate collaboration, and if they know that those routines will increase

the likelihood of rewarding productive collaborations that support creativity and bring about innovative outcomes, then we can successfully create new experiences, new instincts and put collaborative habits in place that, with time, can empower an army of change-makers.

In Ray Ozzie's 2010 Memo to Microsoft entitled Dawn of a New Day (2010), he alludes to the importance that individual habit can play in creating transformation. While he notes the impact that technological progress and development will play, he upholds the role of the individual and his/ her behaviours and mindsets in their ability to be transformative.

"...the power and responsibility to truly effect transformation exists in no small part at the edge. Within those who, led or inspired, feel personally and collectively motivated to make; to act; to do. In taking the time to read this, most likely its you."

RESEARCH METHODS IN SUMMARY

As outlined, this research study sought to explore how we might build new collaborative habits that can empower individual workers towards heightened levels of innovative work outcomes.

Secondary research served to build the foundation in advance of primary methods. Secondary research helped to uncover “stimulus statements” used as probes in primary research, as well as to serve in the development of the early prototyped habits, also used as probes and co-creation stimulants in the primary research interviews. Primary methods included in-depth interviews, where participants responded to research stimulus provided during interviewing.

Research was conducted via one-to-one interview at the place of work of four (4) professionals working actively in innovation within organizational environments in Toronto. Interviewees represented a range of gender, and age, all with real-world tangible ability to comment on the processes of creativity, innovation and collaboration in organizational environments.

These interviews included a customer innovation principal with the second largest enterprise technology company in the world, a content developer working in one of Toronto’s most influential entrepreneurial start-up hubs, a foresight strategist working at a highly-regarded boutique innovation consultancy in Toronto as well as a Senior Vice President and Creative Director at Canada’s largest communications agency. All these individuals were recruited for their ability to provide real-world tangible input regarding their experiences with

collaboration, as well as respond with practical-minded feedback to the theory uncovered through secondary source reviews and the resultant prototypes shared.

Interviews took place at the respondents' place of work, and lasted approximately 1 hour 15 minutes each. The loosely structured discussion was shaped by three parts: a) general perceptions regarding what defines collaboration and a productive collaborative experience, b) reaction to, and grouping by perceived importance of, a series of stimulus statements capturing the principles derived from the literature review regarding foundations of collaboration and c) reaction to and suggested iteration of the 7 habits prototypes.

The stimulus statements activity aided the principal researcher in validating the setting of priority for the characteristics that had formed the basis of the seven habits prototypes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review of more than 35 sources explored current theory in collaboration, team science, innovation, and creativity. Throughout the literature review, factors deemed relevant to the human or social aspects feeding mindsets and/ or behaviours that had been found to support productive collaboration were captured.

WADING THROUGH AMBIGUITY

Approximately 100 independent “stimulus statements” were recorded and grouped into buckets of similarity; these stimulus statements were proposed parameters or hypotheses that might drive the design of productive collaboration habits as derived from the literature review. They were identified as the result of a frequency of mention across sources; if a principle appeared in a number of unrelated references, it was captured as a stimulus statement for review in primary research with interview participants. For example, multiple sources refer in varying ways to functional team composition factors in the building of collaborative groups i.e.: the ideal number of individuals to form a team and the ingoing relationships of those individuals who compose the team. These separate principles were grouped to comprise a category called “team composition”. This category captured commonly referenced principles that related to Team Composition; while it was unclear at first how it might represent the basis for an individual habit, it was maintained due to its perceived importance as determined by frequent of mention across sources.

Upon going through the process of this categorizing, there emerged approximately 40 collaborative “stimulus statements” to work with, all deemed to

be people-oriented factors (i.e.: individually or socially related) in the activity of productive collaboration. Upon arriving at these 40 factors, there was not clear opportunity to further integrate without loss of concepts, yet there were still far too many to be transferable into habits that could be easily recalled and applied by individual workers.

THE SENSE-MAKING JOURNEY

The process of affinity mapping served as a sense-making method for the principal researcher, facilitating the emergence of a logical organization and synthesis of the 40 collaborative factors already discovered. A rough view to this process can be seen in Figures 12 and 13 in the Appendix.

The first natural distinction that emerged is referred to as a ***FEEL versus FUNCTION*** framework. Some of the collaborative factors could be deemed factors relating to how a collaborative experience should ***feel***, where others could be deemed as factors relating to how a collaborative experience should ***function***.

In this context, FEEL is meant to refer to the participants' emotional experience of the collaborative activity and FUNCTION is meant to refer to the participant behaviors that are driving the collaborative activity.

And additionally it emerged that there was a relationship between the feeling aspects and the function aspects. It appeared that productive collaborative experiences need to function in certain ways in order to support and encourage the feeling aspects and further that both the feeling and the functional aspects of productive collaborative experiences are co-dependent, requiring both for successful outcomes.

Based on earlier references to the nature of habit as having an attitudinal origin, while an interesting discovery, it is not all that surprising.

With this framework of feel and function discovered, the 40 collaborative factors could be synthesized further. It was discovered that certain factors function in relation to one another, and in combination support a key feeling aspect of the collaborative activity.

Through the continued affinity mapping process, leveraging the discovery of the feel and function aspects of collaborative activities, emerged seven (7) key people-driven pillars of collaboration.

Each of these seven (7) pillars as mentioned had feel and function qualities to them, which we were able to structure with more clarity, as identified in the image(s) below. Upon identifying these seven (7) pillars, the principal researcher

was able to identify the people aspects i.e.: the mindset and behaviour habits, as noted in the far right column, that individuals could embrace as likely to shape productive collaborations and innovative outcomes.

Figure 1: Feel and Function Components Moving Towards Habit Prototypes

PROTOTYPING AND ITERATION

Based on findings and synthesis from the secondary source literature review, seven (7) prototyped habits were created. Each of these habits were assigned a) a title, b) a very short high-level description for the conceptual basis of that habit, and mounted on a card to facilitate discussion in the one-to-one interviews methods used in the primary research phase.

The seven habits in their prototypical representation were as follows:

Figure 2: Habit #1 prototype/ design probe for primary research

Figure 3: Habit #2 prototype/ design probe for primary research

Figure 4: Habit #3 prototype/ design probe for primary research

Figure 5: Habit #4 prototype/ design probe for primary research

Figure 6: Habit #5 prototype/ design probe for primary research

Figure 7: Habit #6 prototype/ design probe for primary research

Figure 8: Habit #7 prototype/ design probe for primary research

KEY FINDINGS

- **Collaboration Must Be Defined:** Interviewees reported that it was important within the context of a collaboration to clarify what “collaboration” is, given that the activity is subject to interpretation, with all seeing the critical element that defines a collaboration being that time is actively spent working together i.e. not solely as coordinated individuals working towards an outcome, though that may be part of it, but importantly, that collaboration happens in, and depends on, times of actively working together on a common task. To be clear, a collaboration for the purposes of innovation benefits from individual time and contribution i.e. the cave aspect, however a team experience can only be defined as a collaboration once a shared commons aspect of the work exists. This is an aspect of collaboration that is frequently misunderstood: that a criterion for the definition of collaboration is that the component of collective work exists but that a productive collaboration for the purposes of innovation must also integrate the component of independent work. The establishment of the habits, are intended in part to begin to shape a definition of collaboration as a shared emergent understanding that comes from having the experience of productive collaboration aligned to the learning of this project.
- **There May Be An Innate Aspect to Collaboration:** Some interviewees felt there might simply be an innate aspect to collaboration i.e.: some

people may have personalities that are simply more suited to being collaborative. Therefore, providing a set of principles to support those who come by it naturally as well as those who do not, was deemed useful.

- **Interpersonal Aspects of Collaboration:** Interviewees felt the strongest connection to the interpersonal aspects of collaboration, believing them to be the most critical predictors of success and the most critical levers. In particular, PROTOTYPED HABIT #4: FLEXIBLE OPEN-NESS and PROTOTYPED HABIT #5: BRAVE EXPLORATION. This was perhaps where the bulk of time was spent. Interviewees felt that the interplay between these two qualities of collaboration were essential. It appears that some engage in collaborative situations in a controlling manner, seeking to bring lots of ideas and contributions and to have the dominant voice. Conversely there are those who approach collaborative situations believing that the way to be a good collaborator is to “lean back” in collaborative settings, to play a listening role, and to be cooperative. It appears that in fact neither of these approaches is ideally productive. One of the most important pieces of feedback from interviewees was the importance of achieving a healthy yin-yang dynamic between these two habits in a collaboration, of achieving a balance whereby there is a free-flow exchange between both listening and speaking, both of cooperation and of challenge.

- **Team Formation as Kick-Start To Collaboration:** Feedback to the prototypes led to a number of refinements, in particular to PROTOTYPED HABIT #1: WIN TOGETHER, LOSE TOGETHER, which has been revised to provide greater clarity regarding the role for TEAM FORMATION, leveraging much of what secondary research posits and backed up by interviewees own personal experiences. This habit now refers to an importance stage of team initiation, whereby assembly and agreement to a working process serve to kick-start the collaboration. This is a stage which initiates the balancing act of the feel-function aspects of collaboration. It exists as an opportunity to establish functional guidelines for the team, which establishing the emotional temperature, the feel aspects of the collaboration, upon which the success of the experience to follow hinges.
- **Team-Led, But Also Project Managed:** There were also changes made to PROTOTYPED HABIT #3: TEAM LED, to bring in an element that most interviewees felt was important to productive collaboration, and that was for the role of “a wrangler”. Interestingly, this is a word that came up spontaneously by one interviewee and when floated was perceived to be the most accurate description of the function by all interviewees. While all agreed with the principle of Team-Led in terms of making decisions and broadly guiding the direction of the collaboration, all felt that there was an important functional need for someone, a peer member of the

collaboration, to play a role similar to a project manager. This person is there to coordinate the logistics of communication and collaboration.

- **A Progressive Common Goal That Can Be Shared:** While there was much agreement to the intended essence of PROTOTYPED HABIT #3: PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION, it could benefit from a more down-to-earth conveyance, one that clearly identified the importance of “a common goal” and the articulation of that goal as the foundation for the team’s story, as well as championing the principle discovered through secondary research that the nature of this goal be progressive and visionary versus defensive and problem-oriented.
- **Self-Governing Accountability for Productive Collaboration:** Finally, as an offshoot of discussion regarding PROTOTYPED HABIT #7: PERSISTENT ACCOUNTABILITY, one interviewee in particular felt that perhaps the management of productive collaboration should be self-led, and that collaborators can be trusted to have the desire to be a good collaborator, they simply need the means to be able to persistently monitor and evaluate themselves in that process. This insight has led to the potential for the future development of a self-governing collaboration tool that collaborators can use to monitor and evaluate their own level of adherence to the seven habits of productive collaboration.

Informed by the input and feedback from primary research interviews, the habits of productive collaboration were iterated; language was revised multiple times

throughout discussions and at some times habits expanded to eight or reduced to six in the prototyping phase. In the end however, while the principal researcher was open to expansion or synthesis of habits, it persisted that each of the seven (7) habits offered an important principle to be upheld, and that expansion was unnecessary. What results in the balance of this paper are the detailed descriptions of the final seven (7) habits of collaboration, which individuals can come to understand, embrace and apply immediately in any working environment, to bring their own contributions to productivity of collaboration in the hopeful outcome of enhanced team creativity and innovation.

PART THREE: THE HABITS OF 21ST CENTURY COLLABORATION

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

Even something as simple as defining with simplicity and clarity what exactly collaboration is, there is a difference of perspective. In its most general sense, as outlined by the Global Community of Information Professionals in “What is Collaboration?”, collaboration is any instance whereby multiple people come together to work together, in myriad ways, i.e. “synchronous or asynchronous” to achieve some goal.

This description of the two forms of interaction, synchronous and asynchronous are related to the notion of cave and commons referenced earlier. What it clarifies is the definition of collaboration as having the criterion of featuring time whereby multiple individuals work together on a common task in real-time interactions; this is the synchronous part of the collaboration. This definition is also the source of much misunderstanding as it relates to collaboration for innovation outcomes, which also benefit from a commitment to asynchronous activities which do not occur together in same-time interactions. As we proceed to outline the habits and the nature of the experience upon which productive collaboration for innovation can occur, please first understand the established definition of a collaborative experience as being one that is comprised of both synchronous and asynchronous activities yet characterized by multiple individuals working collectively on a common task.

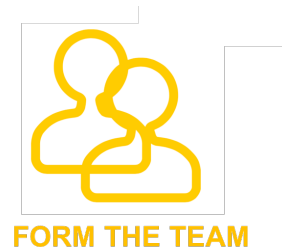
THE FEEL AND FUNCTION OF COLLABORATION

Through the secondary source review and as a result of the affinity mapping process, an important insight emerged in regards to the foundational platform of the collaborative experience. For each of the habits that are outlined below, there will be clarified a “function” component of the experience and a “feel” component of the experience. For each habit to be fully activated, there is an outcome of success that appears in the form of the way the experience feels and the way it functions. Both emotive gauges and behavioural gauges can be applied to evaluate success with the activation of the habit.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #1:

FORM THE TEAM

This is the feel & function habit that establishes a trusted common ground membership in the collective collaborative team.



The Form The Team collaborative habit is #1 by no coincidence. Without the establishment of this habit, successful collaboration is unlikely. As authors Mike Leavitt and Rich McKeown note in *Finding Allies, Building Alliances*, “*Value alliances require that participants subordinate their egos, their agendas, their preferred styles, and their biases—not to mention their organizational agendas—in favor of a shared benefit.*”.

But what exactly does it mean to Form The Team? It is proposed that at this stage, each individual collaborator orients him/ herself to the collaborative experience at its outset. Though it is individuals that come together to form a team for collaboration, and while the individual aspect remains important throughout collaboration (see Habit #6), a critical transition of the individual to embrace being a part of a collective can help collaboration proceed most successfully.

Commitment to Forming The Team means embodying a habit of togetherness throughout and across all of the team's collaborative activities. It means upholding a commitment to the team unit, through all the peaks and valleys along the collaborative journey, celebrating when there are peak moments while being an encouraging force when there are valley moments.

As with all the habits, there are elements of the Form The Team habit that relate to the feeling that the collaborative experience needs to embody and then there are elements that relate to the way it should function.

The most important element of the Form The Team habit is establishing it on an emotional level by setting the foundation for Trust. Trust may seem like it is either unimportant or obvious but it is the most fundamental quality to be

established in successful collaboration with any hope of innovative outcomes (Lencioni, 2005).

Which is why there are functional measures that are put in place at the outset of a collaboration; as always they need be only as laborious and extensive as the team desires. But by putting some standards in place, overtly, at the outset of the collaborative experience serves a functional purpose, to help form the feeling foundation of trust within the collaboration, to support the Win Together Lose Together habit.

So what are these functional elements that can be structured in order to support the formation of a collective unit committed to Forming the Team. Many experts including Leavitt and McKeown (Value Alliances, 2013) laud the value of formalizing, simply, common ground rules as a tool for productive teamwork. Further, rules actually enhance creativity, an important component of innovation; Leigh Thompson in Creative Conspiracy (2013) finds with extensive empirical evidence that teams with no rules are less creative than teams with rules. Some of the common ground rules are based on empirical knowledge about collaborative practices that will guide productivity of the collective; others may emerge through the collaboration.

The rules that are proposed as standard collaborative common ground rules relate to: team size, team composition, measurement and rewarding success, and common collaborative space(s).

Small Teams: Those who research or write about collaboration are unified in the belief that collaborative teams are better when small. A Steelcase innovation study concluded that 6-8 people was the ideal team size, with even smaller often working even better (Steelcase 360 Magazine, Issue 66). The reason for the power of smaller teams is due to what Harvard psychologist Richard Hackman calls the coordination cost (Coutu, Harvard Business Review, 2009) as well as what University of San Diego Professor of Management, Jennifer Mueller, calls the “relational cost” (Hosanagar, Mueller & Vitorino, 2012). The more people on a team, the greater the efforts to co-ordinate people, and the more each individual feels less significant relationally as a member of the collaboration, both of which contribute to decreased efficiencies and ultimately effectiveness in collaboration. To keep it simple, just follow Jeff Bezos rule: *“If a team can’t be fed with two pizzas, its too big.”* (Giang, 2013)

Diverse + Familiar Composition: Explored more extensively in Habit #5, the most energetically discussed element of collaboration is its requirement for diversity. The truth is that collaboration can happen amongst people of great similarity or of great diversity; the fine point is that diversity is a critical element should the goal of collaboration be to encourage creativity and stimulate

innovative outcomes. It also follows that bringing diversity into collaboration requires and benefits to an even greater degree from the collaborative habits we are describing in this paper. What kind of diversity supports productive collaboration? Diversity of professions, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, competencies (Steelcase 360 Magazine, Issue 66, Amplify your Innovation Quotient). Difference is what forges new and differences can be fuelled by ensuring diverse representation in collaboration. But there is a further stipulation for the rules of team composition. Remembering the purpose of the common ground rules is to support establishing a foundation of Win Together Lose Together of which trust is a critical component, Lynda Gratton and Tamara Erickson in 8 Ways to Build Collaborative Teams (2007) found that this element of trust is best facilitated by ensuring that 20 to 40 percent of a team's members know each other.

Team Success, Team Rewards: A study of collaboration by McKinsey (Cross, R., Martin, R.D. & Weiss, L., 2006) illuminates the truth around measuring success and rewarding that success; McKinsey notes the dominant history of individual measures of performance and individual reward structures in organizations. To support the establishment of the Form The Team collaborative habit, requires functionally supporting the formation of the critical trust via collective measurements of success and collective delivery of rewards. The common ground rule in this case must be to establish measures of success for

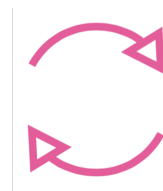
the team as a unit and to reward success to the team and to every member of the team as a unit.

Common Collaborative Space(s): While Jeff Gothelf's Lean methodology speaks of the added value that comes through the physical "co-location" of collaborators, most who comment on collaboration acknowledge the decreasing likelihood that that physical co-location for all collaboration will continue to be possible. As the referenced Steelcase study found, the reality is that collaboration today needs to be able to happen both in physical settings and virtually. Leigh Thompson in *Creative Conspiracy* (2013) articulates the most compelling point on that matter, noting that what is important is that collaborators must have heightened control over collaboration spaces. Collaborations at the outset must stipulate the ground rules regarding their physical space and its use, as well as their virtual space as its use.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #2

TEAM-LED, PROJECT-MANAGED

This is the feel and function collaborative habit that sets a commitment to the collective team as the ultimate leader, superseding the role of the individual in setting the collaborative direction.



**TEAM-LED,
PROJECT-MANAGED**

In the journey of collaboration, once the collective has formed and the common ground rules set in place to form the foundation for collaboration, the flame has merely been lit and the activity yet to begin. Only once collaborative activity - the work - begins do interpersonal dynamics emerge and decisions need to be able to be made. A shortcoming in historical innovation efforts is in the expectation that innovation and team activity is most effective when it is 'other-led' - whether sponsored by the most senior executives in the organization, or assertively guided by a single emergent team leader.

What Collaborative Habit #2 states is that leadership from above or by any single individual within a team is best shirked in favour of a commitment to letting process emerge and decisions be made, such that the full team self-organizes, self-manages. Each individual collaborator must accept, embrace and protect wholeheartedly the importance that the collaboration be "team-led".

As with all the habits, there is both feeling and function elements to it: a commitment to 'team-led' is as much about a feeling the collaboration needs to embrace but also about how it functionally behaves.

First, to imbue the feeling of being team-led into the collaboration, each individual collaborator must make an internal personal commitment. He/ she must choose to believe deeply and authentically that the outcomes of a team will exceed those

of any one individual, and so to agree to personally ensure a deep commitment to the importance of the team, and to the collaboration.

And secondly, to further imbue this feeling of being team-led, acknowledging and embracing the notion that while individual's efforts, intelligence and ideas will serve as critical inputs to the collaboration, when time comes for decisions to be made, and activity to proceed, the team as a unit, will determine that process. Each individual must become accustomed and comfortable with with instances in which they will say: "I may not agree with this specific decision, but I believe in the importance of the team, and so I will energetically and authentically accept and work with the team's decision in this situation." And in these situations, each individual collaborator must be prepared to act in accordance with this statement.

The team-led collaborative habit requires empowering the team to self-direct, to self-manage, and not be directed by senior sponsorship from above or from a single emergent leader within the team; this is what can truly enhance collaborative outcomes.

Of course, there is also the functional component of team-led collaboration, and in regards to how a team should function to ensure it is team-led versus other-led, the theory is divided. While some believe that a clear structured process is best to support productivity (Isern, J., Meaney, M.C., & Wilson, S., 2009), others

(Gratton & Erickson, 2007) find that productivity is increased when the path to a goal is left ambiguous for the team.

Ensuring that the team self-directs and self-manages isn't simply a feel-good element of collaboration, it serves an important productivity function. Work today - complex, hyper-connected, fast-paced, and information-intensive - drives an urgent need to enable enhanced productivity. It is this work context that has spurred the need for the productivity that can come of teams that self-direct and self-manage. It is this work context that has brought about the emergence of the Holacracy as an organizational style. Las Vegas based online powerhouse store Zappos identified the potential in the Holocracy and the power of self direction in discovering research that found that "every time the size of a city doubles, innovation or productivity per resident increases by 15 percent. But when companies get bigger, innovation or productivity per employee generally goes down." (Ross, 2014).

Doug Kirkpatrick, one of the pioneers of Self-Management (Ross, 2014), describes this shift simply: "The command-and-control management model, a relic of the Industrial Revolution, no longer harmonizes well with a world where information moves at the speed of light."

So the question becomes not whether clear process or ambiguous process is best for team-led collaboration, but instead how to build team processes that are consistently team-led. If a commitment is truly made to the team-led

collaborative habit, then the decision regarding clear process or ambiguous process should indeed be determined by the team. Consequently, what appears to be the most suitable way forward is to heed Soren Kaplan's advice (Fast Company, 2013): that the best teams can determine for themselves to receive structure and support, as little or as much, as and when they deem necessary.

That said, there was agreement amongst interviewees in primary research that the role of a "wrangler" is important in the functional project management side of the collaborative experience. Some felt this could be a role assigned to a single collaborator, others felt it could rotate among collaborators, one even felt it could live external to the core collaborative team. Whatever the form, a project-management function that wrangles the team's activity is seen as an important component in the habit to be Team-Led, Project-Managed.

What is most important is that team activity be left to flow freely when it is working and have a mechanism to activate process supports when it hits rough patches. The team can decipher a slowdown if there are workflow accountabilities (see collaborative habit #7) that are being missed or if the team sense a risk in accountability to come. This mechanism to activate process supports is very basic but equivalent to calling 'time-out' in a sports game. It is a judgment-free way for any member of the team to metaphorically ask for process support.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #3:**ARTICULATION OF THE COMMON GOAL**

This is the feel and function habit that references the orientation that each individual member of the collaboration experience and hence the collaboration in entirety must embrace: an orientation towards progressive transformation which takes the form of an articulated common goal.



There are three aspects to this orientation to articulating the common goal, two which are function related and one which comprises the feel element:

1. the importance of having a goal that unites the team (function),
2. the specific nature of that goal (feel) and,
3. the elements by which that goal is expressed and carried by the group (function).

Collaboration theorists are resonant and aligned in their declaration of the importance of setting a goal to unite a team's activity. Leigh Thompson of Creative Conspiracy (2013) refers to a team's need for "serious stretch goals", Soren Kaplan advises "Be Intentional with your Innovation Intent" (2013), Jon Husband of Wirearchy speaks of the importance of the "aim" as a core element of social human activity, Jeff Gothelf refers to the innovation teams need for "the problem to solve" (2013), and Mike Leavitt and Rich McKeown of Value Alliances

refer to the requirement for “A Clearly Defined Purpose” and/ or “A Common Pain” (2013).

In its quantified support, a McKinsey study of corporate transformation in 2009 concluded that setting “a well-defined stretch target is the single tactic most tied to success—indeed, 90 percent of transformations that lack such a target fail” (Isern, J., Meaney, M.C., & Wilson, S., 2009).

However, knowing that innovation success is so low, this same McKinsey study identified a more specific element of goal setting that contributed to successful outcomes. They discovered that progressive goals had significantly heightened success outcomes than defensive goals. “The most successful transformations are those that are both offensive and proactive— we call them “progressive”— which have a 47 percent success rate.” (Isern, J., Meaney, M.C., & Wilson, S., 2009).

And finally this progressive goal can be made more inspiring and sustaining by bringing it to life through storytelling. By imbuing the activity of the collaboration with symbols and languages and lessons and purpose as the great fairy tales and fables from the ancient Greek myths to the contemporary lessons in *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson; the formation of story supports knowledge transfer that is easily understood and emotionally moving, and that can therefore both sustain momentum during a collaborative activity and persist

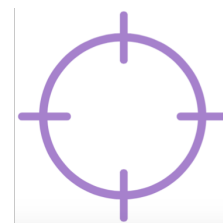
as an artifact of that collaborative activity for socialization, application and implementation.

This storytelling function serves the purpose of ensuring that collaborative activity will be understood and embraced; as the McKinsey study referenced above states, it helps to “instill the new mind-sets, symbols, and language” (Isern, J., Meaney, M.C., & Wilson, S., 2009). Lynda Gratton and Tamara Erickson in Harvard Business Review’s Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams (2007) refers to these storytelling elements as “signature practices”, they serve to ‘symbolize’ the work of the collaborative team, a concept important to Soren Kaplan as well who states “Those who intentionally curate the innovation symbols of their companies essentially curate their innovation cultures (2013). Knowing that the team’s effort will have impact forms a critical foundation for maintaining the momentum of the collaborative team activity. Storytelling forms an important basis for ensuring the translation of the team’s efforts into outcome.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #4:

FLEXIBLE OPENNESS

This is the feel and function habit that involves committing to an environment of flexibility and openness. These are aspects of the collaborative experience that ensure the social conditions and emotional mood for creativity can thrive. While it is a habit that offers direction to how each



**FLEXIBLE
OPEN-NESS**

individual team members must be oriented to other team members, it also has implication for each individual team member's orientation to self.

This habit is perhaps the most universally-known and accepted component of collaboration. Individual workers seem to understand that collaboration is difficult, and that it will require at a basic minimum a willingness to contribute to the creation of a social container for collaboration. This may well be the consequence of the prevalence and acceptance of “brainstorming” as a method for group work. Brainstorming, as a well-known concept which strove to set the “rules” that would support groups to solve problems. Brainstorming originated in 1953 when Alex Osborn named the activity in his book *Applied Imagination*. Osborn outlined the basics of productive brainstorming which stipulated goals to go for quantity, withhold criticism, welcome wild ideas and to combine and improve ideas. Osborn’s “rules” were at least in part intended to support flexibility and openness. The concept of brainstorming was embraced broadly within the business community for many decades and is a regularly used tool in group activities today even as it begins to come under scrutiny (Chamorro-Pramuzic, 2015). Yet, big ideas often get lost in translation, and as Leigh Thompson points out in *Creative Conspiracy* (2013), most people don’t have a strong grasp on the four cardinal rules of brainstorming and therefore they are routinely violated.

This habit stipulates the importance of establishing a true social container for collaboration; while we can add to the understanding of a more complex set of requirements for collaboration, what Osborn uncovered as it relates to the social container persists as critical (1953). In a group environment, it is essential to set a feel environment that is non-judgmental, that withholds criticism, that is flexible and spontaneous and that is appreciative and considerate.

Flexibility and openness are identified here as the two best descriptors for this social container and as serving the best terms to represent both the feel and function components of this habit. While establishing an environment that feels open, pursuing flexibility is viewed as the functional aspect that can help ensure it. Not coincidentally, openness to experience is one of the big 5 personality traits, those traits that characterize who we are as individuals in our natural or born form, versus our nurtured form. Openness is seen as the trait that offers the strongest predictors of creativity; the more one is open to experience, the more creative outcomes that will result (Kaufman, 2013).

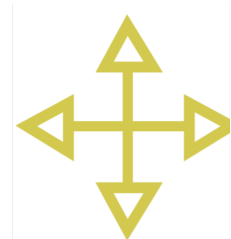
Flexibility on the other hand is proposed here as the functional means by which an individual might cultivate their own openness in a collaborative experience. This involves behavioural aspects that see individual work towards interpersonal and psychological flexibility to help lay the foundation for openness. More specifically, psychological flexibility refers to an individual's willingness and attempts to adapt and shift to changing situations. Pursuing flexibility put simply

means to strive to “go with the flow”, it means “holding our own thoughts and emotions a bit more lightly” (Archer, 2015).

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #5:

COURAGE TO QUESTION

The feel/ function habit that must be balanced with Habit #5: Flexible Openness. While often the least comfortable, this is the habit that steers a collaboration away from dominance, away from safe thinking, into new waters and towards potential for innovation. The courage to question may entail conflict however conflict is not it's goal; this is an important distinction.



**COURAGE TO
QUESTION**

This is an important habit, and one which interviewees presented the most discomfort with. In Habit #1, you will recall there was a specific goal set out in regards to the formation of the team, with an intentional call to build teams of diversity should the goal be productive outcomes for innovation. With diversity brings inherent difference of perspective and hence the potential for conflict increases. And that is a good thing. Patrick Lencioni, author of the Five Dysfunctions of a Team identified Fear of Conflict as one of the most basic dysfunctions of a team (2005). And yet it is identified by many in the theory that creativity and potential for innovation can not be found without that conflict providing inflection points upon which to grow (Nakano, 2013; Thompson, 2013).

There are two opportunities to reframe this fear of conflict. First, there is issue with the language; words like “conflict” and “challenge” feel adversarial and uncomfortable to many people and illuminate the second part of the fear, an unfamiliarity with how to navigate conflict when it emerges. Conflict is often avoided because it is associated with an adversarial negative experience aggravated by the fear that should conflict emerge, it might not be navigated safely back to the shores of a positive feel function within the collaborative experience.

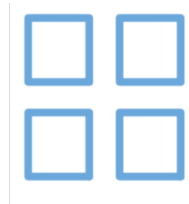
Consequently, Habit #5 has been named “Courage to Question” in order to reframe the role of conflict in more functional terms and to align to a positive emotional quality of Courage. To activate against this, team members must understand that questioning has to serve a functional role; it’s intent can not be not to be difficult, not to present discord, not to shift the emotional balance of the team experience for no important functional reason. Questioning must be understood by all in the team, and encouraged by the entire team as having a functional purpose to push boundaries of thought. If it is productively used and collectively viewed as a courageous action, it can be activated within the team. This Courage to Question, which must be used in balance with Habit #4: Flexible Openness can open the field to a feel environment where team members can feel more comfortable with Questioning activities, viewing them as ways to get to enhanced shared understanding. This is in stark contrast to the fear and

avoidance of conflict, deemed critical for innovation, but where the outcome is the emergence of a winner or a loser in disagreements.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #6:

RESPECT FOR THE CAVE AND THE COMMONS

The feel function habit that acknowledges the role of the individual and the importance of individual work as a key contributing element to the productivity of collaboration for innovation outcomes. It is a habit that stipulates the intentional integration of independent and collective work for the most productive outcomes.



RESPECT FOR
THE CAVE AND
THE COMMONS

The importance of the individual in work outcomes has come on the radar in recent years, largely influenced by the voice of Susan Cain and her admonition in her book *Quiet* (2012) that the introvert who prefers working alone is an overlooked and under-used resource in a world that over-values the qualities of extroverts. She is not alone in her admonition.

Psychologists have long warned of the dangers of groupthink, an occurrence within group environments where social dominance, and human tendency towards consensus, trend discussions to safe areas (Irving, 1972). As recently as 2015, Harvard Business Review shared results of a meta-analytic review of over 800 teams showing that more original ideas are generated when individual

do not interact with others (Chamorro-Pramuzic, T., 2015). Creative Conspiracy author Leigh Thompson (2013) has identified this dynamic as being particularly important in environment and situations where creativity is important, in goals such as innovation. She notes that “First, people need to carefully process and understand the ideas in the group – this is known as attention. Second, they need to reflect on the ideas – this is known as incubation.” It is her assertion that these activities must take place in an interplay of group environments and individual environments, in fact in a “fine orchestration” of the two; she refers to the individual environment as the “cave” and the collective environment as the “commons”. An integration of the two is seen as critical to a productive collaboration for innovation outcomes. The principal researcher has decided to adopt the references of “cave” and “commons” as meaningful terms that convey effectively. In this report, references to the “cave” will signify work that occurs independently, whether synchronous or asynchronous, and then is shared with and incorporated by the team. In this report, references to the “commons” will signify work that occurs by the team collectively while together, whether physically or virtually.

To truly activate this habit within a collaborative experience again requires an orientation to the feel components and an orientation to the function components. This at its most basic requires an emotional empathy on the part of all team members for the individual value of each team member’s uniqueness; it requires a deep acceptance that difference is valued and encouraged. The respect for

the cave and the commons interplay is not as simple as respecting work orientation preferences: extraversion versus introversion. It is about acknowledging the value of the individual contribution, whether by extravert or introvert in addition to and as deeply as the value of the collective contribution, whether by extravert or introvert.

From a function perspective activating this habit means making an intentional plan to interplay activities between independent work and collective work. The project managing aspect of the experience must clearly delineate times and accountabilities for independent work and as clearly map the integration of that independent work into the collective setting.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #7:

PERSISTENT SMALL STEPS

ACCOUNTABILITY



**PERSISTENT SMALL
STEPS
ACCOUNTABILITY**

The feel function habit that ensures positive momentum in the collaborative experience. It is achieved by self-awareness and self-management along with elements of project management that breaks the project into small steps which serve to maintain accountability but also to preserve energy and motivation.

The habit of persistent small steps accountability is in part a habit that refers to process but it is not a prescriptive perspective on process. McKinsey identifies

process as a critical element of success in the achievement of transformation outcomes (Isern, J., Meaney, M.C., & Wilson, S., 2009). Jeff Gothelf, innovator and author of Lean UX, while less explicit about process as a foundation to team work does advocate for task-setting that is “granular” in nature, allowing for “smaller risks”. Yet, as Wikipedia learned in the trajectory of their own growth, it is only “a bit of process” that is helpful to facilitate collaboration, and as “process creates culture”, its use must be considerate of the team (Knott, 2014).

As it has been described in other habits, team processes are best when they are team-led and yet some process is needed to ensure productive function of the collaborative experience for innovation outcomes. Namely, persistent small steps accountability as a process-related goal refers again to the need for both a feel and a function component of the collaboration. Persistent small steps accountability serves to support both these components.

The feel component of this habit lies in breaking the collaboration down into small steps, serving the purpose of maintaining energy and momentum in the collaborative experience. When confronted with the collaborative task, to avoid the team feeling overwhelmed, the breaking down into small steps is the figurative equivalent of breaking down the elephant into small pieces in order to eat it. It makes the task seem more achievable and helps to preserve energy by providing intermediary points where a sense of achievement can occur on the path to what might be a much larger, much more distant end goal.

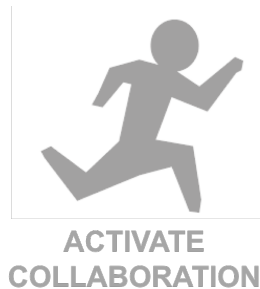
Persistent small steps accountability of course also has a function component to it, to support some of the other habits identified, namely respect for the cave and the commons. Establishing a team-led workflow is a functional means to build the interplay of the cave and commons work-style; clearly outlining and indicating areas of independent work and areas of collective activity, setting a stage for the most productive collaboration. Further it can serve to clarify and unite the group towards it's common goal as well as reduce the risk of unnecessary conflict emerging as opposing to courageous questioning.

TOWARDS AN EIGHTH COLLABORATIVE HABIT

In the process of collaboration throughout the journey of this project, multiple involved participants mentioned the opportunity for an 8th collaborative habit. This would involve a means by which to monitor the success of the habits of collaboration. Spurred by the faculty advisors, inspired by the contribution in the primary research phase of one working professional in particular and in keeping with the inherent spirit of collaboration, the 8th Collaborative Habit seeks to achieve this goal to monitor and measure the functional activation of these habits and the positive affective feel experience of the collaboration by means of a self-assessment tool.

COLLABORATIVE HABIT #8:**ACTIVATE COLLABORATION**

The feel function habit that supports continuous monitoring of the success of the collaborative experience and as a potential facilitator for team check-in via a self-assessment tool.



Self-assessment and its role and opportunity in the learning process has been a topic of interest to many researchers. Most notably, Australian researcher Royce Sadler stated that “for students to be able to improve their work, they must have the capacity to monitor the quality of their own work during actual production” (Sadler, 1989, p. 119 as cited in Stiggins, R.J., Arter, J.A., Chappuis, J and Chappuis, S., 2007). Bringing additional value to the opportunity for self-assessment, Kitsantas, Reisner and Doster noted that self-assessment measures contribute positively to achievement outcomes and motivation levels in learners (2004 as cited in Noonan, B. and Duncan, C.R., 2005). Bringing this knowledge to bear, collaborative habit #8 provides collaborators with a simple tool that can support an ongoing monitoring and experience tracking of the collaboration, in both its feel elements and in its functional elements.

The Activate Collaboration Self-Assessment Tool pictured below is to be completed individually by each collaborator on a periodic basis, as frequently as daily and weekly at a minimum depending on the intensity of the team

collaboration experience. It is a tool that may remain personal and private, or a tool that can facilitate shared understanding amongst the team. In keeping with habit #2: team-led, project-managed, the nature of whether the tool is to remain a personal and private tool or to serve to facilitate shared understanding amongst the full team, remains a decision to be made at the discretion of the team.

ACTIVATE COLLABORATION SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Form The Team (Composition Guidelines; Common Ground Rules)	"I believe we have achieved a productive team composition and have agreed-to clear common ground rules"	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Team-Led Project-Managed	"I believe we are making decisions as a team (no one individual) and we have effective project management in place"	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Articulation of the Common Goal	"We have an explicit expression of our goal that is positive, motivating and easy-to-share."	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Flexible Open-ness	"I am personally maintaining an attitude of openness and flexibility"	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Courage To Question	"I am personally questioning courageously for productive purpose only."	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Respect for the Cave and the Commons	"We have a working plan in place that respects both time working independently and collectively."	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Persistent Small Steps Accountability	"We have small stages of accountability at which we celebrate interim achievements."	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Overall Feel Rating of the Collaborative Experience	"I personally feel a positive energy in this collaboration"	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Overall Function Rating of the Collaborative Experience	"I personally feel that we are functioning effectively in this collaboration."	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								
Overall Rating of the Collaborative Experience in Terms of Outcomes	"I personally believe we are headed to successful outcomes in this collaboration."	Yes								
		Not Sure								
		No								

Figure 9: Collaborative Habit #8: Activate Collaboration Self-Assessment Tool

USE OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

- At each check-in the individual collaborator is to complete each of the rows in the table.
- For each row, note agreement or disagreement to the statement by placing an x in the relevant section (yes, no, not sure).
- Separate yes, no, not sure sectioning makes it simple to note patterns throughout the extent of the collaborative experience.

INTERPRETATION

- Not Sure responses are to be minimized as they suggest lack of engagement; if you are responding not sure repeatedly, seek to understand or open this up to discussion with the team.
- No responses are also to be minimized; if you are responding no, act quickly to seek to understand either through introspection or by opening this up to discussion with the team. Repeated no responses require action and indicate a need to open up to discussion with the team for resolution.
- Yes responses are the goal, however it is important to persist with self-assessment even in the face of repeated yes responses.

NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY

Business and academic publications are actively chronicling the requirements for both individuals and businesses to find radically new ways of working to achieve or sustain success in the drastically changed business environment that exists in the 21st century. While innovation has been a heralded goal for success, the ways in which it is arrived at are being challenged; increasingly, collaboration is most held up as having the potential to improve innovation outcomes. This provides a ripe context for the building of collaborative habits that can be activated at the worker level. Yet workers need better guidance to be able to collaborate productively.

Industrial-era companies have predominantly shaped work as we currently know it, as their growth led to the development of bureaucracy and the consequent command and control corporate hierarchy and culture developed into the organizational norm. Rules and processes served as the pathways to getting things done; in this context, without much awareness or intention, organizational habits emerged (Duhigg, 2014). These habits include mindsets and perspectives as well as functional behavior paradigms, and all come together to comprise entrenched ways of working in what we consider to be the working world.

As discussed, we sit in the midst of an opportunity, where a freelance workforce of independent workers will reshape the work world we have known for the past 100 years. In this context, new habits that can be easily integrated into the activities of these independent workers can help to empower productive collaboration with great potential for impact in terms of innovation outcomes. These new habits of collaboration if activated amongst a new army of workers could create new competencies of value both individually and, by extension, to organizations, in the creation of cultures and outcomes of innovation for the 21st century of work.

The next steps for this project includes having the premise of the habits, their related iconography and tools professionally art directed, copy-written and produced as a printed booklet with accompanying handout and shareable pdf.

This booklet to-be-produced will be distributed as an intellectual property value-add to my private practice clients. The habits will also provide a foundation for speaking engagements either in-client settings or in other promotional settings. For a next more formal phase of development of the habits, there will be a longitudinal study with selected participants, jointly contributing to a Wiki, for the purposes of in-situ learning and iteration.

For further consideration, there may be opportunity to leverage existing tools and techniques as partnership resources to these habits. A cursory investigation reveals 3 of initial interest, of impact to Habits #1, 2, 3 and 7.

Habit #1 involves an important stage of team formation, whereby team composition can be guided by some accepted theoretical principles and a setting of agreed-to common team goals need to be established. Mind Tools (www.mindtools.com) is an online resource source and membership organization that offers a brought range of tools to individuals as it relates to professional work; they already offer a template for a team charter and could conceivably be a good partner to build out a wider set of proprietary tools to support the activating the habits.

Habit #2 stipulates the explicit requirement for project management, which also factors into Habit #7. While there are many project management tools out there, many have yet to master the management of tasks in a true team environment, while some of the successful ones are prohibitively costly for the freelance worker of most interest in this project. Redbooth (formerly Teambox) may be best poised to have success in this realm. With a focus on shared team project management, and workflow templates built-in, Redbooth puts priority on visualizing progress and milestones with a workload view, milestone calendar and streamlined charting.

Finally and for the most creative potential partner resource, Steller (www.steller.co) is a visual story-telling app which is simple-to-use and available on many platforms. Imagine that in every collaborative experience, the

articulation of the common goal in Habit #3 results in the team creation of a short yet emotive story, produced with the ease of a cultural creation tool such as Steller and available on each collaborator's mobile device to review frequently and share easily.

SUMMARY: THE EIGHT HABITS OF 21ST CENTURY COLLABORATION



Figure 10: The Eight Habits of 21st Century Collaboration Iconography

HABIT	DESCRIPTION	FUNCTION COMPONENT	FEEL COMPONENT
#1: FORM THE TEAM	This is the feel & function habit that establishes a trusted common ground membership in the collective collaborative team.	Formation of a productive team composition: diverse, small, with familiar membership, establishing team performance metrics and rewards, setting collaborative spaces (digital and physical) and setting commonly agreed-to ground rules.	Beginning of the establishment of trust at the critical stage of team formation.
#2: TEAM-LED, PROJECT-MANAGED	This is the feel and function collaborative habit that sets a commitment to the collective team as the ultimate leader, superseding the role of the individual in setting the collaborative direction.	Whereby the team begins to make decisions as a team, not by any one dominant individual or by an outside force. Whereby the team establishes project management approach, either owned by one individual or rotating.	Whereby the team evolves psychically from a collection of individuals to a team. embraces the belief that the product of the team will exceed the product of anyone individual. Where the active managed momentum begins to "feel" like teamwork.
#3: ARTICULATION OF THE COMMON GOAL	This is the feel and function habit that references an orientation towards progressive transformation which takes the form of an articulated common goal.	The team explicitly clarifies the nature of the common goal – striving for a positive, proactive, even visionary goal that can be "story-told", an articulated opportunity preferred to a defensive problem to be solved.	Further contributing to the sense of operating as a team with a special mission, contributing energy and momentum to the collaboration.
#4: FLEXIBLE OPENNESS	This is the feel and function habit that involves committing to an environment of flexibility and openness.	An orientation to others and to self that is characterized by an openness to opinion, idea and difference and a flexibility to hold one's own opinions lightly.	These are aspects of the collaborative experience that ensure the social conditions and emotional mood for creativity can thrive.
#5: COURAGE TO QUESTION	The feel/ function habit that must be balanced with Habit #5: Flexible Openness.	The courage to question means actively seeking to expand boundaries of thought through provocative questioning. While this may entail conflict; conflict is not it's goal; this is an important distinction.	Often the least comfortable habit, placing the greatest pressure on the feel experience of the collaboration, this is the habit that steers a collaboration away from dominance, away from safe thinking, into new waters and towards potential for innovation.
#6: RESPECT FOR THE CAVE AND THE COMMONS	The feel function habit that acknowledges the role of the individual and the importance of individual work as a key contributing element to the productivity of collaboration for innovation outcomes.	This habit stipulates the intentional integration of independent and collective work through the project management function for the most productive outcomes.	Effective interplay between cave and commons brings enhanced creativity to the collaboration along with respect of varied working modes.
#7: PERSISTENT SMALL STEPS ACCOUNTABILITY	The feel function habit that ensures positive momentum in the collaborative experience.	It is achieved by breaking the project into small steps which serve to maintain accountability.	Whereby the small steps accountability also provides multiple moments of achievement to preserve energy and motivation.
#8: ACTIVATE COLLABORATION	The feel function habit that supports continuous monitoring of the collaborative experience via a self-assessment tool.	A tool to accommodate regular functional check-ins, one that is simple-to-use: revealing patterns over time, identifying areas of concern and providing a foundation for team discussion.	A tool to accommodate regular feeling check-ins: facilitating self-reflection, reinforcing success, and bringing rationality to the reveal of issues.

Figure 11: The Eight Habits of 21st Century Collaboration In Summary

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APPENDIX A: THE AFFINITY MAPPING PROCESS

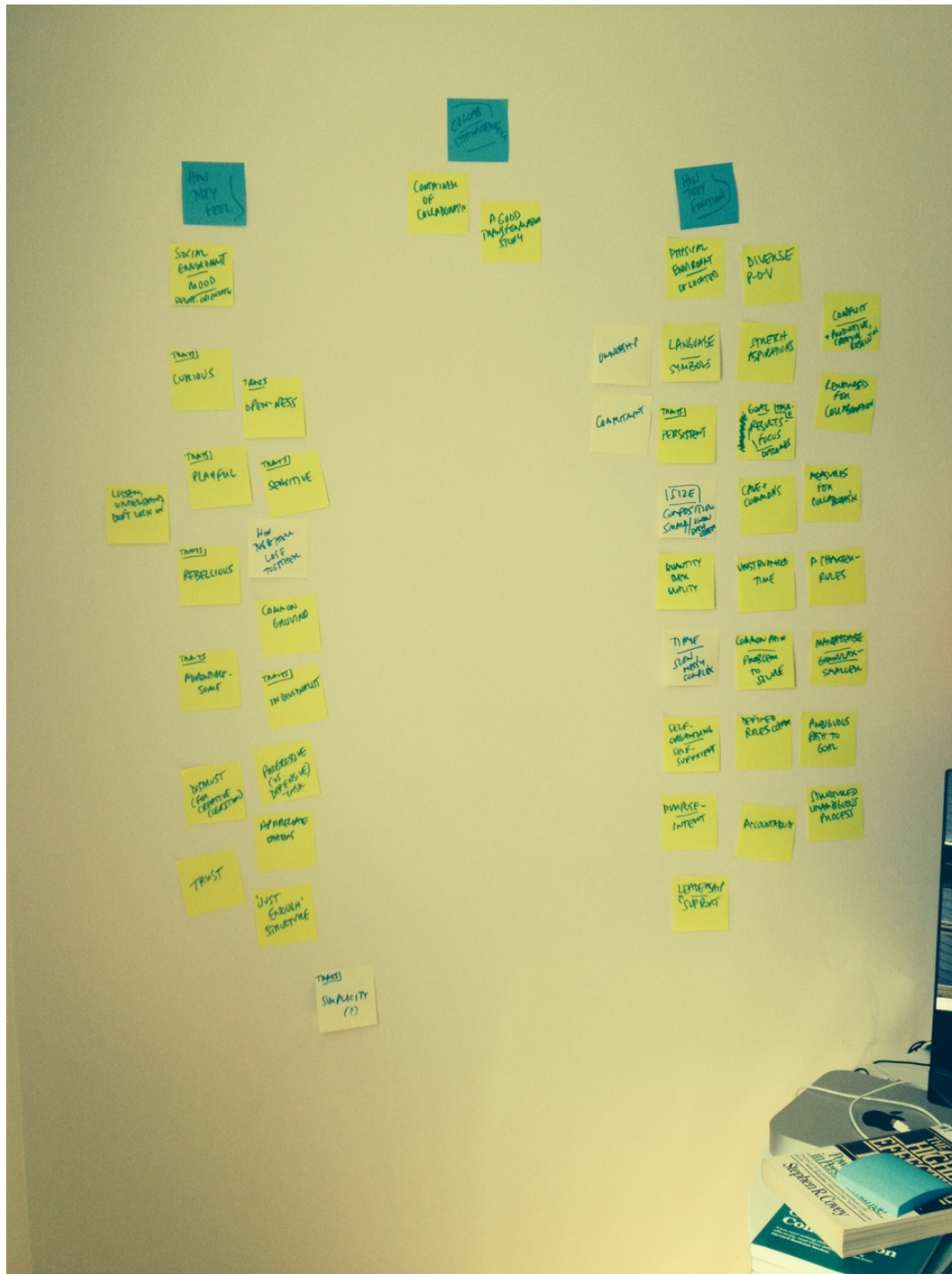


Figure 12: Stage One Affinity Mapping; Feel/ Function Distinction Emerges

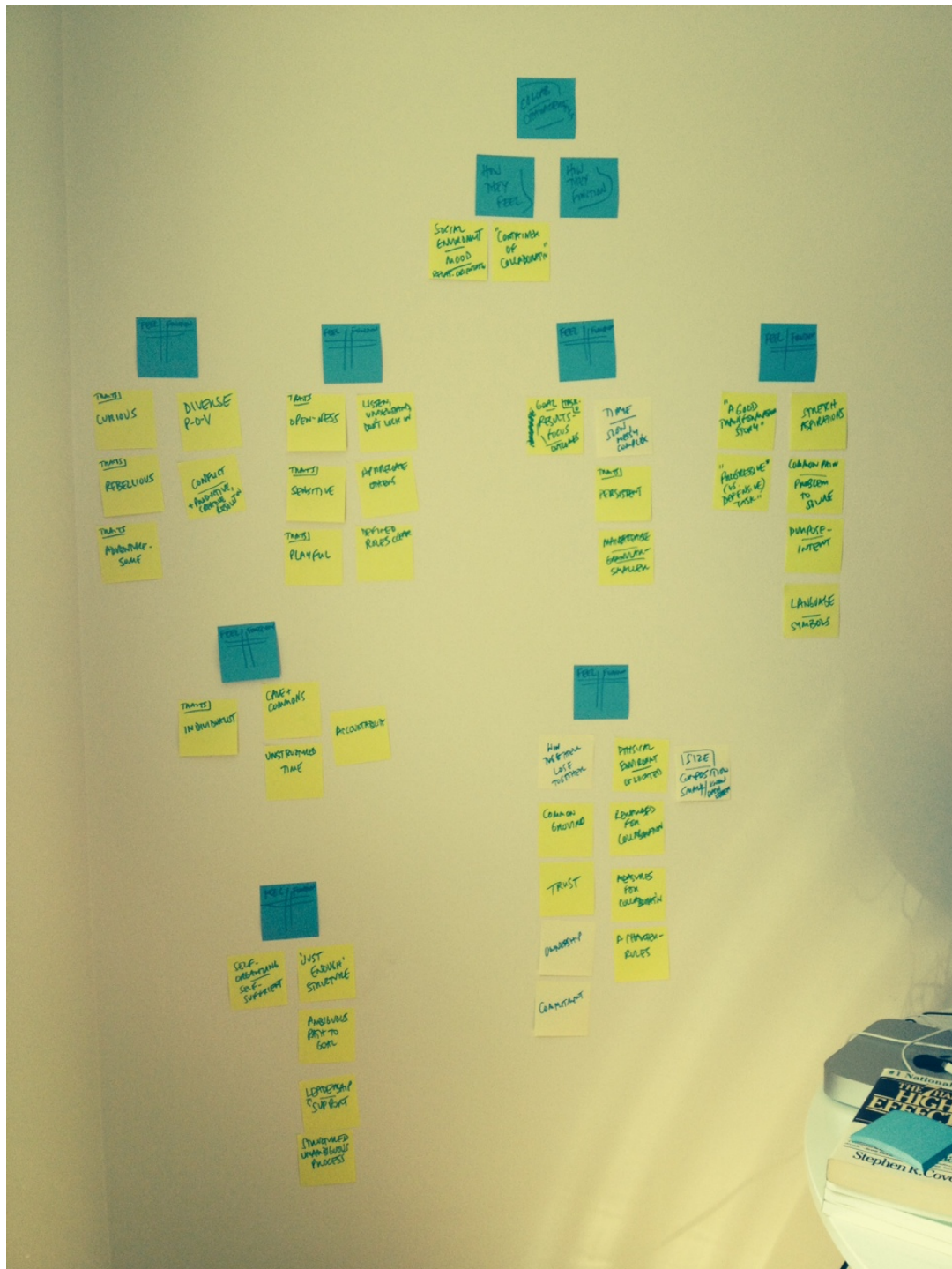


Figure 13: Affinity Mapping Stage Two; Seven (7) Collaborative Habits Emerge