Chapter 4

Social Knowledge Case Study:
Innovation Linked to the Collaborative Socialization of Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

The premise of this chapter is that Innovation Growth is tightly tied to the collaborative process of socializing knowledge. Case examples from leading companies leading the way in socializing knowledge leading practices will be profiled. These companies will be a mix of new stories from a mix of both profit and not for profit organizations, in a mix of industries. The leaders of these organizations recognize that the socialization process of knowledge is core key to innovation growth. This chapter tells the story of change agents that are helping to move from vision to execution successfully. You will hear of experiences where the full enablement of their programs are not fully funded, or necessarily aligned across all levels of management where the generational gaps between understanding community and value network networks vs those based on linear "one way flow" models continue to conflict with one another; The case studies all started off with a small project well scoped and defined, and organically evolved vs a big bang approach. Each of these cases is rooted in a clear business need either for employee engagement or customer engagement needs.

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly executives realize that innovation is rooted in the health of their corporate culture, and is evidenced in their business practices, cultural behaviors, and norms which either foster open collaboration and knowledge sharing or stifle these trust building and risk taking competencies.

Never before has collaboration and innovation been so important to an organization's survival. As the war for talent intensifies, Generation X and Y's will become increasingly sought after talent pools. They have more choices for employment than any other generation in the past due to the rapidly retiring Baby Boomers. They will join

organizations that enable them to communicate and interact using social mediated and collaborative technologies to perform their job functions.

They will live by the "law of two feet" as their loyalty mantra in an organization is either "*let me be empowered to collaborate using next generation collaboration solutions or I will leave to an organization that has these investments in place*." The millennials loyalty is based on being part of a cohesive and community generating culture that is stimulating and fun to work in provides a rich interactive learning environment, and balances business and social responsibilities.

What we know from our Helix Commerce International Inc. (www.helixcommerce.com) research is that for organization's to successfully compete in the new Knowledge Economy that ease of access to collaborative social mediated technologies that improve knowledge worker productivity will be a key success factor to attract, develop and retain talent.

Currently, the majority of Fortune 500 organizations are just starting to recognize the importance of applying Web 2.0 and collaborative solutions to their business processes. Web 2.0 technologies such as: blogs, micro blogs, podcasting, social mediated technologies, virtual worlds and wikis are now being rapidly applied in innovative ways to improve business practices.

DEFINING COLLABORATION

Collaboration Defined

"In the long history of humankind (and animal kind) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."

Charles Darwin

Collaboration refers to the business process of bringing together a group of people to work together or the act of working jointly. It usually occurs when two or more people interact and exchange knowledge in the pursuit of a shared collective goal.

A recent IBM international survey of 765 CEOS confirmed that practically all CEO's will say they are for collaboration and for radically shaking up their business models to increase their innovation speed. Yet, when asked how their organizations are accomplishing collaboration for the purpose of innovation, they rank their ability to collaborate effectively in emerging markets at 73%, global markets at 51%, and in mature markets only 47%.

Collaboration requires an aligned business strategy where knowledge assets are valued to increase innovation and achieve competitive advantage. It also requires an understanding that cultural behavior, work process and appropriate technology capabilities need to be aligned to evolve an organizational culture's collaboration values and competencies. Developing a healthy and effective collaboration capability in an organization requires a number of success factors:

- **Culture** - A culture that encourages authenticity, teamwork, cooperation, trust-making, openness, transparency, networking, social responsibility and risk-taking will have healthier collaboration execution capabilities. It is well proven that organizations are able to innovate more successfully to sustain competitive advantage with collaborative core values.

- **Process** – Organizations that embed collaborative business models and trust sense-making approaches into core business processes and practices increase knowledge worker productivity and improve organizational intelligence. This dynamic and iterative learning process design provides more learning loops for knowledge exchange, and more rapid continuous improvement opportunities.

- **Organization** – Companies that invest in collaboration and knowledge worker in-

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