



Effective Collaboration

EPP IT-Policy Group

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Outline

- I am not an expert
- But I have done some research
- Let me share with you what I learned
- Consider three scenarios:

Scenario 1

- A producer, actors, musicians, and stage hands are thrown together. Each is highly skilled and they know one another only by reputation, but have never worked personally together. They have 3 weeks to produce a quality play.

Scenario 2

- As a newly-elected member of a local government, you are trying to promote environmental conservation. Having just graduated from EPP, you are able to leverage research and science to support your ideas. You must convince not only the other council members, but also your constituency.

Scenario 3

- An open forum is promoting an industry-standard way of scoring computer vulnerabilities. The participants are a collection of product security vendors, researchers and representatives from enterprise application companies. Participation is volunteer, and the end goal is not conclusive.

What do they have in common?

- They must all work together to accomplish their goal
- They have limited (if any) prior relationship
- Success of their project depends on effective collaboration, and adoption of the initiative

What **don't** they have in common?

- Motivations for participating (money, job, ideology)
- The end goal (a play, public policy, industry standard)
- Communication channels (face to face, tv/newspaper, email/wiki)

Consider these comments

- “as individuals come to share a **vision** of the issues ... they become **stakeholders**. This shared appreciation creates an **identity** for the domain, and **mutually agreed upon directions and boundaries**, which may be perceived and experienced as a permanent structure.” (Hardy and Phillips 1998)
- “we find that people contribute ... when they perceive that it **enhances their professional reputations**, when they have the **experience to share**, and when they are **structurally embedded** in the network.” (Wasko and Faraj 2005)
- “when individuals have a common practice, **knowledge readily flows** across that practice, enabling individuals to create social networks to support knowledge exchange” (Wasko and Faraj 2005)

Many Fields

- These issues contain the spirit of the challenge we share: **how do you influence participation from different people about your idea?**
- They touch on research from many fields:
 - organizational behavior
 - negotiation
 - social networking
 - public policy
 - technology
 - communication

Contributions come from:

- **Individual Motivation**
 - ideology
 - reputation
 - altruism
 - fear of exclusion
 - approval
 - status
 - respect
- **Social Capital**
- **Structural Capital**
- **Cognitive Capital**

Social Capital

- “resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive action”, ‘social capital resides in the fabric of relationships between individuals and in individuals’ connections with their communities”
- More likely to contribute where there is:
 - shared history (values, practices)
 - high interdependence
 - frequent interaction
 - perceived obligation/responsibility to participants (commitment)
- “individuals’ position in the network influences their willingness to contribute knowledge to others”

Social Capital (2)

- “Organizations whose members share common understandings and language are better suited for the creation of new intellectual capital”
- In order to contribute knowledge, individuals must:
 - “think that their contributions to others will be worth the effort and that there will be some value, some of which they will receive”
 - have expectation of personal benefit from approval, status, respect
- In opensource projects, “social status is determined not by what you have, but **by what you give away**”

Structural Capital

- **A dense collective**: network of people with direct, strong ties between one another
- “Collectives characterized by **high levels of structural capital** [dense collective] are **more likely to sustain collective action**.”
- “The more individuals are in regular contact with one another, the more likely that are to develop a **‘habit of cooperation’**”
- “individuals who are centrally embedded in a collective have a relatively high proportion of direct ties to other members, and are likely to have developed this habit of cooperation”

Cognitive Capital

- Refers to “resources that make possible shared interpretations and meanings within a collective:”
 - individual expertise
 - experience with applying the expertise
- “trust develops when a [history of favorable past interactions](#) leads to ...positive future interactions”
- “sharing in electronic networks is facilitated by a strong sense of reciprocity – favors given and received – along with a strong sense of fairness

What can you do?

- Provide people with a [sense of belonging](#)
 - This can be done by building a common value-based community
- Offer [equity](#) or ownership in the idea
- Promote [trust](#) among participants
 - Achieved through prior successes
- Be [inclusive](#), not exclusive with tasks, opportunities, praise
 - “low power” stakeholders to contribute (enabled through low cost of participation)

What can you do?

- **Individually engage** as many people as possible
 - Allows you to better understand their sensibilities, motivations and inhibitions
 - Strengthens personal ties (trust)
 - Easier to achieve in person, over the phone than email, wiki
- Communicate (convince them) that you're **offering something better**
 - define a clear problem and solution
 - external validation

Mom's Rules

- **One conversation at a time:** Entire group engages in one conversation. This allows for inclusivity and trust. E.g. Some First Nations peoples use a talking stick or feather. Only the person with the stick talks.
- **Stay on topic.** This provides focus for the whole group. Again, enables inclusivity, central purpose.
- **Whatever is said in the room stays in the room.** Allows freedom for people to say what they like and prevents people from feeling guarded.

Patterns

- **Proven solutions to reoccurring problems**
 - Originally developed by Christopher Alexander, an architect
 - He observed **relationships between things**: objects, spaces, light, people, passages, moods
 - Some were “**alive**,” others were not
 - Patterns capture the essence of what makes something “alive” – aka **a proven solution**
 - Later adapted to OO programming, tennis, information security, etc
 - and Promoting Change!

Patterns for Promoting Change

- **Bridge Builder:**
 - Some won't listen to even the most enthusiastic proponent if it's someone they don't know or trust, **therefore**,
 - Ask for help from others who have already adopted the innovation. Introduce them to people who have interests similar to theirs and encourage them to discuss how they found the innovation useful.
- **Dedicated Champion**
 - effectively introducing a new idea into any organization is too much work for a volunteer, **therefore**,
 - make a case for including the change initiative as part of one's job description

Patterns for Promoting Change

- **External validation**
 - before being persuaded to accept a new idea, people want assurance that the idea has validity outside the organization, [therefore](#),
 - give people in the organization external sources of useful information about the new idea
- **Group Identity**
 - It's harder to introduce a new idea when people aren't aware that the effort exists, [therefore](#),
 - give the change effort an identity

Patterns for Promoting Change

- **Hometown Story**
 - people who haven't used the new idea may not be aware that other people have used it successfully, [therefore](#),
 - encourage individuals to share their experiences with the new idea in an informal, highly interactive session
- **Just Say Thanks**
 - people feel unappreciated when they work hard and no one notices or cares, [therefore](#),
 - find everyone who has helped you and say thanks in the most sincere way you can

Patterns for Promoting Change

- **Next Steps**
 - a presentation in a training class or other event can leave attendees uncertain about what to do with what they have learned, [therefore](#),
 - take time near the end of a presentation to brainstorm and discuss how the participants can apply the new information
- **Sustained Momentum**
 - the many other things that need to be done will tempt you to put the task of introducing the new idea on the back burner, causing you and others to lose interest, [therefore](#),
 - take a pro-active approach to sustaining interest in the new idea. Take some small action each day, no matter how insignificant it may seem, to move you closer to your goal.

Patterns for Promoting Change

- **Tailor Made**
 - individuals can be intrigued by interesting ideas, but to have impact on an organization, the idea has to be more than just interesting, [therefore](#),
 - tailor your message about the innovation to the needs of the organization (i.e. prove to them how they can benefit)
- **Trial Run**
 - there are people who are objecting to the new idea. It would be daunting, or impossible, to ease everyone's worries before the new idea is adopted, [therefore](#),
 - suggest that the organization, or a segment of it, try the new idea for a limited period as an experiment

Recap

- **Knowledge sharing happens when:**
 - strong identification with others (shared identity, values, practices, status, location)
 - perceived obligation/responsibility to participants (commitment)
 - trust in others (history of favorable past events)
 - reciprocity (favors given/received)
 - high interdependence
 - frequent interaction
- **Forces for Individual Motivation**
 - ideology
 - reputation
 - altruism
 - fear of exclusion
 - approval
 - status
 - respect

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Questions?