

Compliments of **IBM**

IBM Limited Edition

Cognitive Teamwork

FOR DUMMIES[®]

A Wiley Brand

Learn:

- The challenges of the modern workplace
- How to team for success
- About conversational collaboration
- The future of teamwork

Ami Dewar
Matt Holitza



Cognitive Teamwork

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

IBM Limited Edition

by Ami Dewar and Matt Holitza

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Cognitive Teamwork For Dummies®, IBM Limited Edition

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2017 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, The Dummies Way, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. IBM and the IBM logo are registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, or how to create a custom *For Dummies* book for your business or organization, please contact our Business Development Department in the U.S. at 877-409-4177, contact info@dummies.biz, or visit www.wiley.com/go/custompub. For information about licensing the *For Dummies* brand for products or services, contact Branded Rights&Licenses@Wiley.com.

ISBN: 978-1-119-33581-8 (pbk); ISBN: 978-1-119-33582-5 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher's Acknowledgments

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Project Editor: Carrie A. Burchfield

Editorial Manager: Rev Mengle

Acquisitions Editor: Steve Hayes

Business Development Representative:

Sue Blessing

Production Editor: Tamilmani Varadharaj

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	2
Icons Used in This Book.....	3
Beyond the Book.....	3
 Chapter 1: The Challenges of the Modern Workplace	 5
An Evolving, Modern Workplace.....	6
Improving work-life balance.....	6
Increasing remote employees/virtual teams.....	7
Increasing reliance on technology	7
Business agility and flexibility	8
Changing leadership expectations	8
A Disruptive Workplace	9
Dealing with distractions.....	9
Managing information overload.....	9
Doing the tool tango.....	10
Staying connected (without always being connected)	11
A Workplace that Depends on Teamwork.....	12
Meshing different working styles.....	12
Lacking trust and accountability.....	13
Miscommunicating	13
Missing purpose or alignment	14
Lacking momentum	14
 Chapter 2: Teaming for Success.....	 15
Recognizing the Value of Effective Collaboration.....	16
Stimulating fresh thinking.....	16
Encouraging innovation	17
Clarifying communication	17
Looking At the Practices that Facilitate Effective Teamwork	18
Sharing a purpose.....	18
Creating an environment of trust	18
Ensuring everyone is in the know.....	19
Allowing people to work naturally	19
Keeping the flow	20

Getting Familiar with Collaboration Capabilities.....	20
Connecting.....	21
Conversing.....	21
Managing content	22
Creating.....	22
Meeting.....	22
Tracking commitments	23
Recognizing Your Role as a Contributor.....	23
The Machine.....	24
The Coach.....	24
The Maverick.....	24
The Executive.....	24
The Team Player	24
The Lone Wolf.....	25
The Expert	25
The Connector	25
 Chapter 3: Advancing Conversational Collaboration	 27
The Evolution of Conversational Collaboration	28
Messaging as a platform	28
The bot ecosystem.....	29
Digital assistants.....	30
Putting Watson to Work for You (and Your Team).....	31
Pulling together all your channels.....	32
Minimizing disruptions	33
Smart interactions, naturally	33
Driving to outcomes.....	33
Reducing friction	34
Staying aligned	34
 Chapter 4: Envisioning the Future of Teamwork	 37
Prediction 1: Augmented Intelligence	38
Prediction 2: Personalized Collaboration	38
Prediction 3: Intelligence-Infused Collaboration.....	39

Introduction



IBM has long been a recognized leader in the collaboration space. IBM brought the concept of groupware software to the business world in the early 1990s, enabling remote business professionals to collaborate for the first time. Since then, IBM continues to innovate and evolve, introducing its Connections social networking solution in the late 2000s and year in and year out named a leader in the collaboration market.

In recent years, a lot has been said of cognitive and IBM Watson. IBM Watson is best known for competing against and defeating Jeopardy champions Brad Rutter and Ken Jennings in 2011. However, since that time, IBM has been applying Watson and its cognitive capabilities to many customer challenges, including healthcare, customer service, analysis of social media trends and sentiment, and now everyday work.

As business professionals seek to collaborate effectively today at work, they're blessed and cursed by the wealth of data and available consumer and business apps that the mobile revolution has fostered. Blessed, because they now have access to amazing new tools that are easy to get, intuitive, and are either free or reasonably priced. Cursed, because they're adding to their already overloaded repertoire of tools that ironically exacerbate collaboration challenges and make it difficult to focus on the work that will move their goals forward.

About This Book

To collaborate in today's highly digital environment, you need to be aware of common pitfalls and challenges facing teams in the modern workplace, but it's not all bad news — there are many new practices for teams to adopt to achieve productivity. This book provides an overview of teamwork, how you can optimize your current collaboration efforts, and how advancements in cognitive technology are bringing an intelligence to software that will truly elevate how you work with others.

Watson Work is a portfolio of communication, content, and workflow services infused with cognitive technology. Its aim is to provide an intelligence that improves every aspect of how you and your team work so that you arrive at your goals faster, and with more innovative business outcomes.

By putting Watson to work for you and your team, you get:

- ✔ Built-in expertise and intelligence
- ✔ Enhanced discovery
- ✔ Deep human engagement
- ✔ Improved processes and organization

Imagine finally having the time and the space to concentrate and effectively collaborate on just the work that will add value for your business and your customers, while letting Watson take care of all the rest. These capabilities come to life with the introduction of Watson Workspace, a collaborative app that exemplifies Watson Work Services, a new, open cognitive collaboration platform.

Cognitive Teamwork For Dummies, IBM Limited Edition, helps you understand the potential of cognitive collaboration and how advancements in technology fundamentally change the way you work individually and with your team.

Foolish Assumptions

Many people and teams can benefit from reading this book and learning more about teamwork, cognitive technology, and working with Watson Work and Watson Workspace, but we took the liberty to assume the following about you:

- ✔ You're a business professional, business manager, or business director, and you work on a team.
- ✔ You have a basic understanding and awareness of the topics surrounding cognitive computing, artificial intelligence, and chat bots, but you've never explored them on an experiential level.
- ✔ You want more time to think and focus on strategy, creativity, and work.
- ✔ You'd like to achieve a more sustainable work-life balance.

Icons Used in This Book



For time- or frustration-saving ideas, we give you information within the Tip icon.



Information found here gives you basic rules and ideas that you can take from the discussion and file away in your brain for later.



Within this icon, we give you content that may be challenging or cause you to stumble over some hurdles in your quest for productive teamwork.



You don't necessarily need to know this information for your greater understanding of teamwork and cognitive advances, but if you're an overachiever looking for extra tidbits, you may find this information interesting.

Beyond the Book

Abraham Lincoln said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." IBM recognizes that it can't define the future of teamwork alone. There are countless ways IBM could apply cognitive to your collaborative efforts, but it's all about making it work for you. Join the quest to contribute and evolve a collaborative platform that makes you more effective, helps you get work done, and lets you realize your greatest achievements. Find out how at ibm.com/teamwork.

Chapter 1

The Challenges of the Modern Workplace

In This Chapter

- ▶ Recognizing how the modern workplace has evolved
 - ▶ Looking at the disruptive workplace
 - ▶ Identifying the challenges of teaming
-

The workplace is constantly changing. The competitive nature of today's market forces organizations to seek newer and better ways to be stronger, more flexible, and more focused. Ultimately, organizations are looking for the means by which to coax exceptional levels of performance out of their employees and to establish world class teams that will be the first and the fastest to deliver innovative solutions. Change, on one hand, can be very positive, bringing advancements and improvements to once conventional practices and policies; however, change can also introduce new challenges and obstacles for organizations to overcome such as an escalation in noise and distractions, too many tools, and massive amounts of information to manage.

Teamwork, alone, can bring its own set of challenges. It's important for organizations to be aware how the workplace is evolving, as well as the challenges they can anticipate and must address in order to be as successful as they ultimately desire. Watson Work provides services and solutions that are adaptable to your circumstances and can help you overcome the challenges covered in this chapter and get to outcomes faster.



A workplace study performed by Fierce found that 86 percent of respondents blame lack of collaboration for workplace failures. More than 97 percent of those surveyed believe the lack of alignment within a team directly impacts the outcome of any given task or project. Nearly 100 percent of respondents said they prefer a workplace in which people identify and discuss issues truthfully and effectively.

An Evolving, Modern Workplace

Change in today's workplace stems from many factors, including the advent of new technology, more generations in the workforce than ever before, and an intense desire to be innovative in an extremely competitive landscape. Interestingly enough, at one time, direction in the workplace was driven by the largest organizations because they faced the greatest threat of disruption; however, today, many trends are championed by some of the smallest companies. The startups are driving a heightened awareness of an evolving business environment and the entrepreneurial mindset that everyone seeks.

This section shows you the areas in which the modern workplace is evolving and provides recommendations for how cognitive technology helps you and your team win in this challenging climate.

Improving work-life balance

In recent years, the work-life balance pendulum has swung more to the life side of the equation, with organizations providing more flexibility to allow their employees to better manage their time. As employees are given more freedom, however, there's a new expectation to be always on and always available, which has led to more adverse effects. One of these issues is the rapidly blurring lines between personal and professional lives. Most employees do place a premium on work-life integration, and while technology allows you to work on the go, it also interrupts your personal time because it forces you to always be online.

Increasing remote employees/virtual teams

Even as some larger organizations are pushing on “back to the office” and colocation strategies, the number of employees that work remotely continues to rise because employees find value in the opportunity to be flexible in their work. This opportunity works remarkably well for businesses, too, because they can now hire the best talent regardless of their location. Organizations are employing individuals that can really do their jobs from anywhere at any time, work roles are shifting to accommodate remote work, and the notion of the home office has been redefined.



Nothing really compares to face-to-face interaction. With everyone working from a different location, the risks are far greater that communication will break down, work will be misinterpreted, or someone will be left out. Organizations that offer this level of flexibility also bear the burden of helping remote employees manage their individual environments, as well as collaborative work, to be the most productive.



An emphasis must be placed on securing the right tooling. Watson Work Services offers customizable services and APIs that are aimed at enabling collaborative best practices and making it easier for individuals to stay engaged and teams to be productive.

Increasing reliance on technology

You could argue that with the rise of remote employees, co-working spaces, and globalization, there’s an increased reliance on technology to facilitate work, or maybe it’s the other way around: The advancements in technology are resulting in a remote workforce. Either way, the cellphone in your pocket is no longer just for personal phone calls; you communicate with it through holding conversations, scheduling meetings, sending emails, and sharing content.

You’re always connected because the Internet is just about everywhere you go: coffee shops, public transportation, and personal vehicles. Ten years ago, this scenario was far from

the case. Advances in communication technology and Internet availability have given employees the ability to get their jobs done without missing a beat, no matter where in the world they are or what time of day it is. Don't expect this trend to change any time soon.

Business agility and flexibility

More and more organizations are realizing the importance of being agile and having business processes that are flexible in order to quickly respond to changing market and customer demands. No matter the size of the organization, the ability to adapt quickly to unexpected changes as well as having processes in place that allow for this flexibility are critical in today's changing marketplace. Even the most risk-adverse organizations realize that in order for innovation to become a natural part of their culture, they have to be able to pivot quickly, take risks, and learn when it doesn't pan out. It's often referred to as *fail-fast*.



Self-organization is a key trait of business agility. It refers to the ability for employees to spontaneously form teams and communicate for the purpose of making decisions or forming ideas. Self-organization is a key driver for innovation. Also, instilling a culture of evolution, where the organization will develop products and services, learn from feedback, and constantly iterate is recognized as a strong sign of business agility.

Changing leadership expectations

Many organizations, regardless of size are much flatter in their hierarchy than they used to be. It's much less top down. For leaders to invoke innovation, they have to be more inspirational, more collaborative. Flatter organizations tend to promote more autonomy and self-organization among their employees, which many attribute to greater productivity. Eliminating extra levels means that employees are more involved in decision making and are typically able to execute more quickly.

A Disruptive Workplace

Interruptions and information overload eat up an estimated 28 billion wasted hours a year, at a loss of almost \$1 trillion to the United States economy. Time is money, and it's a precious commodity that no one can afford to waste.

How often do you hear that there's simply too much to do but not enough time to do it? The reality is that it's not really that there's too much to do, but with all the interruptions that occur as a natural course of work, employees simply can't get into a flow and focus on the work they're responsible for. Interruptions come in many different forms, but the end result of a disruptive workplace is typically the same. Work becomes a vicious cycle of stress and frustration, leading to mental fatigue and inefficiencies, and this ultimately impacts employee morale because employees can't meet the deadlines that have been set for them.

This section helps you see the many forces behind the disruptive workplace.

Dealing with distractions

Basically, if something else controls your attention, something else is controlling what you're capable of. We doubt that anyone would disagree that to do great work you must apply your full attention. Distractions are the enemy of productivity.

Learning to put on blinders and work in a focused state for set periods of time increases your productivity and mitigates the frustration that stems from constant distractions. Rather than pivoting with every single occurrence of something the moment it happens, imagine the value of relying on intelligent summaries of what has occurred once or twice a day. This is the value that cognitive technology can bring.

Managing information overload

Information overload is extremely problematic in both the workplace and life in general. As technology and the ability to create, duplicate, and access vast amounts of information evolve, information overload has reached new heights.

People receive more and more information in the form of emails, websites, documents, social media, messaging apps, and conference calls every day, and that can all be downright overwhelming to manage. Bottom line, it's not unusual for you to be dealing with more information than you're able to process in order to make decisions. The result? You take too long to make a decision and progress slows, you make the wrong decisions and negatively impact business outcomes, or you make no decisions and hope someone else does.

The reality is that, on its own, information overload isn't going away any time soon. Different communication solutions, such as persistent chat, have been introduced and really only shift the problem. What used to be primarily an email problem is now an email and a persistent chat problem. Effectively, the human brain becomes a bottleneck because, while computer processing and memory capacity are better, people (who must process the information) aren't getting any faster. However, those that learn to deal with it effectively will actually be at a major advantage.



Leveraging cognitive technology with Watson Workspace helps you keep your head above water despite the flood and scatter of information. Intelligent prioritization helps you identify the activity you should focus on and the actions you should take. Cognitive capabilities have the ability to reduce distractions and enable individuals to focus, freeing up more time for teams to engage more effectively and deliver value.

Doing the tool tango

The influx of new productivity tools targeted at both individuals and teams results in more interruptions for employees. How often do you upload content only to forget where you put it? Or someone points you to an artifact, and you can't access it because you don't have the right tool or credentials? Then you have to stop and spend the time to either find or get access to the file. Then there are times when you have to use too many tools to accomplish one task. You find yourself switching between a document editor, presentation software, planning software, websites, and social networks. Your experience ends up feeling very chaotic and leaves you frustrated. The reality is, with so many different productivity tools, it's no longer just about *information* overload but also about *input* overload.



Take advantage of the rich collaborative experience that Watson Workspace provides, which allows you to work within one tool, while accessing your other tools and taking action in context. You can reduce the number of times you actually need to pivot from where you're working to find someone or something else in order to complete your task.

Staying connected (without always being connected)

Today's collaborative technology, such as tablets and smart-phones, enables employees to work more flexibly than the traditional 9 to 5 work day. Employees are able to work from home or on the road and even take advantage of real-time collaborative capabilities with remote coworkers around the world at any hour of the day.

Despite all the benefits, this flexibility also perpetuates an "always on" tendency. The more everyone is responding in real time because they have the devices in their pockets, they feel the pulse on their wrists, or they hear the pings in their bags, the more these real-time conversations occur and the more everyone feels they have to participate. With email, there was always a general expectation that you will respond when you can, but with group chat, the expectation is that you'll respond immediately. Today, we live in an ASAP culture. Employees have a fear of missing out or not having a say if the decision is being made without their involvement because they weren't participating at the very moment it was discussed. But this can feel like something you're chasing all day. If you're participating in multiple conversations, you may find it impossible to stay caught up and then when you do return, the amount of unread messages can be overwhelming.



The ideal scenario is one where you feel connected to what is happening even when you aren't. Watson Workspace provides you a way to completely disconnect by muting the conversation and then leveraging summaries to catch up on what you missed. Don't feel the need to read every line; instead, hone in on the critical moments where the actions or decisions relevant to you were discussed.

A Workplace that Depends on Teamwork

The intention of teamwork is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, meaning a team will accomplish much more than just the individuals doing the work independently. It's not always easy managing your own individual responsibilities within a changing work environment; try to think about how your experience can be compounded when it comes to working with others.

What gets in the way of your team becoming effective? This section explores the impediments that teams must recognize and work to overcome in order to be truly successful.

To understand the best practices for teaming, check out Chapter 2, and in Chapter 3, you discover how Watson Work intends to help with these teaming challenges.

Meshing different working styles

Everyone in a team is unique and has a different working style. *Work style* is the way an employee thinks, structures, organizes, and completes work. Diversity in the workplace is a good thing, but it can also prove to be problematic. Imagine if a team of individuals with unique working styles all came together to solve a problem. This situation is more the norm than not. But the team is now faced with finding its own working rhythm amid a sea of different personalities and opinions. Typically, the issue isn't just that there are different working styles to account for, but also different departments may employ different processes and different tools, so when it's time to collaborate across disciplines or departments, implementing one single process or relying on a single set of tools that works well with different work styles can be challenging.

You can bet that most everyone will continue to approach different scenarios in different ways, at least for some time until the kinks can be worked out and collectively the team determines how best to operate as a single unit versus a team of individuals. Unfortunately, teams that can't overcome different personalities are at a serious disadvantage.

Lacking trust and accountability

The very nature of teamwork calls for everyone to have a say in decisions that are made. However, teams face two common scenarios:

- ✓ Too many leads in a single team (also known as too many cooks in the kitchen) and not enough individuals to actually complete the work
- ✓ Team members not trusting their peers to meet commitments, make deadlines, and pull their own weight

Neither scenario is good. For one, it's great to get input on a project, but when too many people are involved, all that feedback can cause more harm than good. Differing opinions can just pull everyone in different directions, and the team ends up losing sight of the real objective, while allowing a team to have a level of autonomy can actually promote creativity.

On the other hand, trust in teamwork is the equivalent of safety in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Trust is one of the building blocks of high-performing teams and true cognitive collaboration. If you don't trust your teammates to make and meet commitments, you don't have a "team" working together toward a shared goal. Instead, you just have a group of individuals doing similar things without any consideration for each other. This will lead to an imbalanced workload, resentment, information silos, and poor team morale. To truly be a team player, you may have to accept "majority rules" over your own ideas for the sake of the team.

Miscommunicating

Poor communication is right at the top of the list of impediments that can stall cognitive teamwork. Conversation is core to the collaborative process. On one hand, if team members don't feel like they can talk or that their ideas are being heard, they may get discouraged and often disengage.

On the other hand, general communication that's vague or needs clarification can lead to confusion and negate the efficiency of your team's efforts. If poor communication results in the improper handling of one team project and then another, this can ultimately cripple an entire organization's ability to innovate.

Missing purpose or alignment

Without clear direction and a path forward, energy can be easily wasted on the wrong things and time can slip away before you know it. This situation is common when several stakeholders are involved in a project, yet they aren't all on the same page or are starting from different frames of reference. Decision making can become very complex.

Lacking momentum

It's not unusual for collaboration to get stuck or lose steam. Countless factors can wreak havoc on a team's momentum. These factors include

- ✓ Lack of information and expertise
- ✓ Lack of resources
- ✓ Indecisiveness or lack of direction/focus
- ✓ Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities
- ✓ Changes in priorities



If your team is experiencing any one of these factors, it can suffer team flow issues and easily stagnate any forward movement. This situation makes achieving your desired objective in a timely manner difficult (if it happens at all).

Chapter 2

Teaming for Success

In This Chapter

- ▶ Benefiting from collaboration
- ▶ Identifying best practices
- ▶ Exploring collaboration capabilities
- ▶ Establishing your role

Success isn't just about a one-of-a-kind vision, strong leadership, the brightest employees, or the best tools and services. It's about how all of these factors come together. The success or failure of an organization can actually ride on how well people work together.

The importance of teamwork, or *collaboration*, isn't new; it has just become increasingly important in today's workplace. The business climate is one where speed and effectiveness are table stakes for competing. Well-connected teams that are on the same page and can quickly make the right decisions give businesses a distinct advantage.

Simply by working together and sharing ideas and expertise to accomplish a mutual goal, employees can deliver results that are greater than what could be achieved had they been working independently. And when more people are involved in the outcomes that matter to an organization, everyone wins.

The rise of cloud computing, mobile technology, pervasive and faster Internet connections, and agile or lean practices have advanced collaboration more so than ever before. With that in mind, collaboration isn't just about a willingness to team, but organizations also need to have the right set of tools for effective collaboration.

In this chapter, you discover how combining the right practices, the right tooling, and a clear understanding of your role can spell the difference between winning and losing in today's workplace.

Recognizing the Value of Effective Collaboration

When considering the importance of collaboration, innovation should be at the top of the list. Effective collaboration is all about bringing together different perspectives to solve problems and generate ideas. Collaboration is a means by which you can transfer knowledge, and it's been proven that members of a team retain longer what they learn in those teams. When employees collaborate in a context that's commonly understood, their iterative discussions will actually improve and refine their ideas.



According to a study from Work.com, 97 percent of employees and executives agreed that the level of collaboration directly impacts the outcome of a task or project. When a team or department is collaborating smoothly, openly sharing information and communicating seamlessly, it's able to work at its most effective level.

In this section, you discover the different factors that lead to effective collaboration and how Watson Work can help.

Stimulating fresh thinking

Collaboration is all about embracing diversity and blending different people with different interests and expertise to uncover new ways of achieving more effective outcomes. Generating new ideas and thought processes can actually challenge the team members to consider solutions that wouldn't have ordinarily been considered had they worked independently — and larger pools of people typically generate more ideas. Collaboration can spur creativity, reinvigorate how an organization approaches its overall goals, and generate a lifeline of new ideas.

Encouraging innovation



A 2014 study of over 19,000 knowledge workers, by Harvard Business Review and the The Energy Project, found that 72 percent of employees don't feel that they have enough time to focus on strategic or creative thinking.

The same environment that encourages fresh thinking (see the preceding section) also strives for innovation. Innovation is all about bringing those new strategies and ideas to life. A culture of innovation stems from a culture of collaboration. When employees feel free to self-organize and explore new ideas, they often don't feel constrained by the thought of failure.



According to Nielsen's 2014 Consumer Packaged Goods Innovation report, two in three consumer product professionals rank collaboration among the top three most critical factors for innovation success, outpacing strong leadership and access to financial resources. Speed and engaged employees, two positive side effects of collaboration, are huge advantages to innovation. They can mean the difference between leading and following in today's fast-paced environment.

Clarifying communication

We talk a bit about how challenging miscommunication can be in Chapter 1, but if you're collaborating on a team, you can significantly reduce miscommunication. Miscommunication often comes from information silos existing within a given organization. Individual employees only have a subset of the information they need to effectively complete their jobs. However, when individuals work together, it deepens everyone's understanding of different ideas and considerations, which improves the quality and speed by which decisions can be made. Collaboration promotes continuity of thought and clarity of ideas (so everyone can be on the same page) within a given environment, both of which are core to strong communication. Collaboration makes it possible for employees within different cross-functional teams to come together and quickly coordinate their efforts on a given project much more so than a single individual that bears the burden of keeping many others in the know.

Looking At the Practices that Facilitate Effective Teamwork

We know that collaboration is about people working together to achieve extraordinary things, and it's these extraordinary outcomes that make collaboration a priority at most organizations. But success can be quite elusive if you and your team aren't equipped to face the challenges that accompany collaboration and if team members don't work well together (we cover these challenges in more detail in Chapter 1).

Collaboration is a balancing act — you need to carefully plan your collaboration efforts but never attempt to police them so much that all creativity is stifled. This section describes a series of best practices for effective teamwork and how Watson Work can help facilitate that.

Sharing a purpose

No team can exist without a goal or purpose. So it makes sense to start every collaborative effort by identifying the need or desired outcomes and what you have to do to realize this purpose and make that the motivating factor for your team.

Your shared purpose doesn't have to solve for world peace; it could be as simple as "let's decide where we are going to eat lunch today" or slightly more involved like "we need to renew this customer's contract," but identify a purpose that will become the driving force your team needs to make it a reality.

Creating an environment of trust

In collaborative experiences, people cite the importance of trust in their relationships. Team members must trust each other if they are to work together successfully. This not only means that they trust them to do what they said they would do but also extends to valuing and respecting the experiences and perspectives of their colleagues.



Demonstrating that you trust your team members often comes before others will trust you. Encourage others to share their ideas and then take their ideas and input seriously. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, avoid talking behind their backs, and work to avoid unnecessary conflicts. All of this will put your team well on its way to building the type of rapport that's critical for teamwork.

Inspiring a culture of trust and transparency has been proven to have a direct correlation to high-performing teams. An open, collaborative environment instills loyalty among team members and ultimately drives productivity.

Ensuring everyone is in the know

Effective collaboration depends on everyone having thorough knowledge of all that's happening. To establish transparency, you must break down any silos that exist and work to ensure everyone has awareness of all the key elements of your project. Let team members know everything that matters and the reasons behind any decisions that were made. When information isn't shared, trust is hard to come by, and the team will get skeptical of your real intent (see the preceding section on trust). Err on the side of overcommunicating, but to prevent information overload, develop a plan for how to organize and highlight key details and outcomes so that team members will have easy access to what's most important in order to understand where to focus their attention first and foremost.

Allowing people to work naturally

At the end of the day, collaboration shouldn't be something that people have to really think about; it should just be what they want to do. People have to feel empowered to work the way they want to work from wherever they are, in whatever manner they want. Working in an enriching environment will no doubt have a positive impact on job satisfaction.



This concept goes back to the adaptability of the collaboration technology your team is using. Make sure that it helps people communicate, create, and share as naturally as possible. Technology, as advanced as it is today, should work for you — it should connect you with others, enable collaboration with other groups and organizations, and help your

team to innovate, develop new ideas, and solve problems in a manner that matters to you.

Keeping the flow

Without any real momentum (which we cover in Chapter 1), progress can suffer, and with many other factors constantly demanding attention, getting sidetracked is easy. If teamwork is necessary to succeed, it's important to find ways to make sure the team has the time and autonomy to keep moving toward its purpose with minimal disruptions. Allow for work to be as self-directed as possible, but if you must seek input from others, set deadlines to make sure that your team's forward movement doesn't suffer at the hands of someone else and that discussions don't get mired in the weeds when solving for the bigger picture is really what's important.



According to Steven Kotler, the author of *The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance*, “Flow is an optimal state of consciousness, when you feel and perform your best.” Unfortunately, in his research Steven found that the average business person spends 5 percent of his time in a state of flow.



Seek collaborative technology such as Watson Workspace that's easy to use and minimizes the number of distinct tools you have to work with. The technology should bring all your collaborative efforts together succinctly and seamlessly in a manner immediately intuitive and adaptable to how you and your team work.

Getting Familiar with Collaboration Capabilities

Collaboration is comprised of people, processes, and technology. Most everyone would agree that the way people work together has changed quite a bit over the last decade and that this has been largely influenced by the tools and technology available to them. So while the core pillars of collaboration have remained steadfast — conversations, creation, and commitments for a given context — the tools designed to facilitate

these capabilities have continued to evolve, both as a result of technological advances and changing users' expectations.

This section explores the different ways you work toward cognitive teamwork.

Connecting

No collaboration happens without a connected team. So at minimum, every team needs a way to connect, realize who's participating, know when members are available, and understand how they contribute to the team or project. Most collaborative tools incorporate some form of a profiling system that will facilitate such connections.

Prior to the rise of email and the Internet, connecting was primarily accomplished by working in the same building or talking on the phone. Today, literally thousands of tools help your team connect. These tools include instant messaging, video chat, and social intranets that use communities to connect employees and teams.

Conversing

All collaboration starts with conversation in some form — whether that's a quick chat in the hallway, the email from your boss, or the ping from your colleague. Conversation is at the core of your collaborative experience.

In recent years, we have seen a shift from exclusive communication mediums such as email toward more inclusive or transparent means of communication, including group chat and forums. This movement grew from the realities of a connected, dispersed, and rapid-based business climate and the immediacy with which value is expected.



Group messaging, perpetuated by a new wave of persistent chat tools, is particularly useful for hashing things out quickly, as well as establishing a rapport and sense of belonging. Its transparency and allowance for synchronous, as well as asynchronous communication, is appealing to collaborative environments.

Managing content

Document sharing is so much easier than it used to be, and it's no longer necessary to shuffle docs with edits back and forth by email or hard copy. Managing your content through a cloud-based content management system (CMS) allows documents and projects to be stored in one repository, so they're accessible to everyone working on the project at the same time. This is great news for today's virtual workplace, which can have employees and partners scattered around the globe.



You can manage content through simple file-sharing tools like Google Drive to more complex Enterprise Content Management solutions like Box.

Creating

Hand in hand with document sharing (see the preceding section) comes the creation of content, which can include structured examples such as a doc, presentation, or spreadsheet, or completely unstructured examples such as a quick sketch, meeting notes, a draft of a blog post, and so on.



Content creation needs vary greatly and often depend on what content is being built. Mural.ly is a great option for unstructured ideation or brainstorming, while using something like Box Notes is good for working together on a draft presentation or document.

Meeting

Meetings are often seen as a necessary evil of teamwork, but striking the right balance, using the right tools to engage your team, and striving for highly productive meetings can actually have the counter effect. Videoconferencing services are again rising in popularity. Even with team members in multiple locations, videoconferencing allows for face-to-face collaboration, which keeps participants more engaged because it allows everyone to communicate by using verbal and nonverbal cues. Videoconferencing has proven successful for board meetings, webinars, ideation sessions, and much more.

Tracking commitments

In every kind of collaborative work, a goal or purpose is important. Often that's tied to a deadline or deliverable (or both). Having a way to track your progress toward your commitments and understanding what's the latest and greatest of whatever you're working on, who's doing what, who's dependent on whom, and who you need to keep in the know are imperative to getting your team to the finish line.

You can use lightweight tools, such as flagging things as “needs action” or much more structured tools such as a KanBan board or more sophisticated release management. Whatever your scenario, look for collaboration software that allows you to keep track of your current state and ultimate outcome.

Recognizing Your Role as a Contributor

A team is comprised of individuals, and each individual is unique. When a person knows his abilities are put to good use and are contributing to the company's success, he's more willing to work with others.



A 2014 whitepaper titled “The Human Era at Work,” commissioned by The Energy Project and Harvard Business Review, found that people who derive a high level of meaning from their work are 93 percent more engaged and are 177 percent more likely to stay with their current organization.

A strong “me” creates strong teams. Team members should feel they're working toward a goal that's meaningful to everyone as a whole, without losing their sense of independence. At the end of the day, teamwork is all about strength in diversity.

Through user research, we learned that at least nine different types of collaborators exist. You're a contributor on a team, and that's important. Understanding your own traits and behaviors, the tendencies of your team members, as well as recognizing the gaps that might exist on your team and seeking to fill these will make your team stronger as a collective unit. This section helps you identify your individual role within that team.



Bear in mind that not everyone falls neatly under a single archetype — some people represent two or more archetypes. See where you fall!

The Machine

Disciplined, systematic, and reliable, the Machine persona is highly organized and predictable. With established processes, these folks produce results in an efficient manner. Uncomfortable with change, they may be inflexible.

The Coach

Engaged, trusting, and conscientious, the Coach persona values individuals but is focused on the team's goals. Aligning goals with individuals, Coaches promote collaboration and drive action. At times, they could be described as caring too much or as people who micromanage.

The Maverick

Mavericks are rigorous and exceedingly knowledgeable and problem solvers in their domain. Known for providing reliable information, they spend their time responding to others' needs. As such domain-specific experts, the contributions of these people, at times, can be seen as too narrowly focused.

The Executive

Constantly transitioning, the Executive requires knowledge to be accessible on demand. Held accountable for things getting done (others' work), there is an imperative focus on outcomes and deliverables. Executives dislike vagueness, information overload, muddled thinking, and could be viewed as self-serving.

The Team Player

Perceptive and social, Team Players' actions demonstrate their belief in teamwork. Diplomatic in nature, they're readily available/willing to maintain balance. This persona avoids confrontation and can be easily persuaded.

The Lone Wolf

Lone Wolves are self-directed and independent, doers, and more productive when working alone, in their own way. They're leery about active teamwork and reluctant to engage unless required.

The Expert

Rigorous and exceedingly knowledgeable, Experts are the problem solvers in their domains. Known for providing reliable information, they spend their time responding to others' needs. As such domain-specific experts, their contributions, at times, can be seen as too narrowly focused.

The Connector

Highly extroverted, enthusiastic, and influential, Connectors value recognition and have a very large network. They're focused on their continual advancement and do so by exploring new opportunities, practicing what they preach, and preaching what they practice. However, they have a tendency to lose interest when the spotlight is no longer pointed on them.

Chapter 3

Advancing Conversational Collaboration

In This Chapter

- ▶ Examining the evolution of conversational collaboration
- ▶ Looking at the future of work with Watson

Collaboration is comprised of people, processes, and technology; therefore, it stands to reason that any advancements in technology will always have a direct bearing on the evolution of collaboration. In the current landscape, a prominent trend we see is the rise of everything conversational.

Think of it this way — what's the easiest way to initiate anything with another person? To talk with them, of course!

When you couple the evolution of conversational collaboration with cognitive technology, teamwork that brings together many people by using different channels can be as simple as a messaging app with intelligence that grows with each interaction you have.

In this chapter, you discover these trends and how Watson Work with its cognitive technology leveraging conversational canvases is now redefining the rich collaborative experiences available via social tools, online communities, and systems of engagement.

The Evolution of Conversational Collaboration

With conversations being core to teamwork, it's actually hard to determine if it's the fact that teamwork has become so important that it's behind this rise of messaging apps and bots or if the popularity of messaging as a service has spurred the increased focus on collaborative technology. Either way, conversations are often the impetus for collaboration, and messaging apps and bots dominating the market bode well for the future of teamwork.

In this section, you examine how application developers are now bringing their services to messaging apps — often as bots — so consumers can interact with specific capabilities via messaging as if they were talking to a person, not a tool.

Messaging as a platform

A few years ago it was thought that the smartphone operating system was the new platform, and people ran out to build native mobile apps for their products or solutions. But current app usage patterns suggest that the trend of downloading and installing many apps is either moving beyond that movement or that it was never really a thing. Yet, even with the decline of the number of apps on a user's device, messaging apps are rising to the top of the app usage ranking lists.

The messaging app is now viewed as *the* platform, and third-party app developers, by the masses, are producing their apps as services that exist and operate within these messaging apps. This means that individuals or teams can directly interact with the third-party service within the conversational user interface (UI). There is no new app to download, install, and learn how to use. Working with a new tool or service now is as simple as conversing with the service to get the data or answers you need.



The interesting thing about this movement toward messaging (or conversations) as a platform is that these platforms are now being seen as the breeding grounds for rich collaborative experiences. They eliminate the need for users to pivot

between multiple tools and provide a single adaptable experience that pulls together all the tools your team might need to effectively collaborate. They also account for the fact that the capabilities your team might need or use could be different from those that another team needs.

Every service, game, social experience, e-commerce product, and marketplace is now clamoring to get on the messaging train, which translates to endless possibilities for messaging as a platform and a very exciting future for collaboration.

The bot ecosystem

As more and more consumers are narrowing their focus to just a handful of apps, messaging apps being at the forefront, bots have begun to emerge as a more consumer-friendly way to automate both business and consumer tasks within these conversational UIs.

Imagine you're in your messaging app and you want to know the weather. Naturally, you would just ask someone "What is the current weather?" So what if you have a third-party service integrated into your messaging tool that can give you real-time weather data? Instead of clicking some buttons or using a specific command that you have to remember to give you the weather, why not just ask the service for the weather like so: "@weatherbot what's the temp in Denver?" The service responds just as naturally with "It's 82 degrees and sunny."

More and more bots are being introduced to do just this and more — basically everything from posting messages across social media channels, to answering help questions in an app, to finding the closest Pokémon. They're seen as a much more user-friendly way of communicating with third-party services within conversational platforms.

As you can imagine, messaging apps and bots have fundamentally changed how we converse, share, and interact with others, tools, and services. Each message essentially has the potential to be its own mini application, opening the door for all kinds of cognitive solutions that can make how you work and team smarter and more efficient without changing the way you've been working in the collaborative platform you use daily.

Where did “bot” come from?

The word robot was first used in a 1923 Czech play, titled “Rossum’s Universal Robots.” The play’s author, Karel Capek, formed the word robot from the Czech word *robota*, which means “forced labor.” In the mid to late 1980s, the term bot was shortened from robot to delineate between phys-

ical machines and software programs. In the past decade, the use of “bots” has gained popularity in development organizations as they needed to automate the mundane tasks associated with continuously deploying software in SaaS environments.



To build a bot, you need programming skills; however, some new bot and integration frameworks do exist that allow non-developers to create useful, tailored bots. One of these frameworks is IFTTT, which allows users to create “applets” to integrate the products they use every day by using a visual wizard. For more info on IFTTT, visit <https://ifttt.com>.

Digital assistants

When Apple’s Siri came on the scene in 2011, the age of virtual personal assistants began. While there were others before Siri, it really was the most usable assistant in that it was integrated into a device, the iPhone, that people use every day. Siri is well versed in what it can do, being able to interpret natural language and respond to millions of questions often with a dose of humor.

Since the success of Siri, seemingly every major technology company has created its own assistant. Microsoft has Cortana, Amazon has Alexa, and Google uses Google Now. While there’s overlap in their purpose, each has worked to establish its own persona, and while historically their interactions have been limited to specific devices or channels, these digital assistants are showing up within collaborative experiences as more focused assistant bots that are capable of performing much of the same functionality in the context of a messaging platform (see the section “Messaging as a platform” earlier in this chapter).

The value of digital assistants to collaboration stems back to the fact that natural language is really the main user interface (that's true with face-to-face interactions as well as digital or virtual scenarios). Having ways to interact with technology by using natural language is the most natural course and therefore very compelling.

The shortfall of most digital assistants today is that while they may seem intelligent, they lack the ability to reason or apply any judgment to their responses. This is where cognitive comes in. Cognitive systems are basically self-learning systems that can mimic the way the human brain works. So a cognitive system would assess the activity one person is doing differently from what another person is doing because it's accounting for what it's learning about the first person's behavior and then applying a level of intelligence to its response.

For example, you can ask a cognitive system to find the presentation that Kelly shared last week. The system is able to determine which “Kelly” (the one on your team) and which “presentation,” — the one she shared in a meeting you attended last week.

Today's digital assistants are programmed to respond to very prescriptive scenarios. The promise of cognitive has no such limitations. Watson, IBM's cognitive super computer, has the opportunity to mitigate many of the challenges of collaboration as well as infuse a level of intelligence that will make your interactions more meaningful and drive you to business outcomes faster.

Putting Watson to Work for You (and Your Team)

Teamwork has never been easy, but it has made tremendous strides in recent years. The workplace has evolved, technology has advanced, people are engaged, and processes have vastly improved.

Collaborative software providers have introduced richer tooling that targets efficiency and awareness by pulling all your communication into one place. However, with team-based collaboration comes a flood of information, exponentially

more than ever before, and you still need a way to manage all this data coming your way — a way to make sense of it all, to recall what matters, to find expertise, and to feel connected even when you can't be.

Imagine your ideal scenario, where a system actually works for you. You and your team are always in sync and able to focus on the work that matters the most. You can enjoy your time away from work, confident you can easily catch up. You can find the answers you needed, when you needed them. You can keep your flow, in an otherwise disruptive world. These are the promises of Watson Work.

For several years, IBM has been exploring how people work and prefer to collaborate within small teams. Based on initial research and feedback from early users, the vision for IBM's next-generation conversational platform has evolved into a solution designed to work especially for you, as you're interacting productively with your team. IBM recognizes that business professionals need an intelligent experience that enables them to initiate, coordinate, communicate, innovate, and achieve business outcomes. IBM Watson Workspace will not only recognize who you are and what you do, but also it will get smarter as it learns from your interactions. This section describes select capabilities that are part of Watson Workspace's overall cognitive-infused collaborative experience.

Pulling together all your channels

By using Watson Workspace, getting started with your team is as simple as starting a conversation. With conversations at the core of teamwork, any collaborative effort can be initiated by someone sending a message or simply pulling together a group of people into a space. A lot of work also starts or happens in other conversational channels — whether that's email or video or even another chat-based tool — so Watson Workspace is making it easy to start from wherever you are (think of that long, never-ending email thread that really deserves a dedicated space) and move people, content, and conversations into its collaborative experience in seconds. Now everyone can be on the same page and work in a way that works for them.

Minimizing disruptions

As your team works together, the goal is to minimize disruptions and keep you in the flow. So let's say you're working with your team and someone is looking for a piece of content or asks you to do something. Typically, you have to stop what you're doing, recall what the content was, where it's stored, figure out who has access to it, or pivot to another tool to do what's being asked of you, which can cause you to completely lose your train of thought when you return to what you were doing. Watson Workspace uses natural language processing to recognize intent and actions for you automatically in your conversations and then leverages a rich ecosystem of third-party services to facilitate those actions directly in context of where you're working.

Smart interactions, naturally

Bots are all the rage right now because they provide a way to invoke a service by using natural language, but that doesn't change the fact that you have to know what bots to engage, how to engage them, and what commands they'll respond to — yes, there are shortcuts — but isn't the real advantage of a bot in a conversation that you can talk to it just as you would anyone else?

Watson Workspace is developing a bot framework by which a user can interact with a bot through natural language, so a bot could invoke other services or bots. Now you can do everything that you would ordinarily do in a "Space" without leaving your chat input field — no calling on another service or leaving your workspace.

Driving to outcomes

We recognize that most collaboration isn't just single track (although in some cases, maybe it is). In the course of teamwork, you may have many different interactions — some tied directly to a specific outcome and others more adhoc but that are still related to a specific topic that warrants additional discussion. Watson Workspace is introducing the idea of "topics." Think of these as sidebar conversations. So your primary space conversation is still that one place for general

awareness, but if there is a specific topic that you don't want to get lost in the back-and-forth of the general discussion, you can just start a topic. Start a topic from an existing message (or messages) or initiate a topic from inception and when you have drawn your conclusions, delivered your solution, or received the high five you were looking for from your stakeholder, easily share your outcomes back into the space for awareness.



Collaboration is far more than just effectively communicating. It's about recognizing your shared purpose and driving toward that outcome. An outcome can be many things to many people: making lunch plans to planning a customer presentation. It can be comprised of conversation, content, and commitments in a given context, which means a team needs a succinct way of managing all the moving parts and pieces. Imagine workflow plus Watson and everything you need to collaborate contained in one space. In Watson Workspace, this will be as simple as tying a topic to a goal or desired outcome and letting IBM bring in the capabilities that allow you and your team to manage your efforts and drive to success.

Reducing friction

Keeping yourself and your team “in flow” is critical to delivering work more rapidly to stay ahead of your competitors. Traditional workflow products and services are very rigid and were designed for long-term, waterfall style projects. Working with partners, such as DocuSign and Box, IBM and the Watson Work portfolio is creating a new approach to workflow that's flexible and integrated into Watson Workspace. So activities like signing contracts that currently involve multiple handoffs, emails, and phone calls will become as simple as sharing a contract into a space where reviews, discussions, changes, and signoff can occur simply and seamlessly.

Staying aligned

As we know all too well, the challenge with teamwork (and even more so with persistent chat-based tools) is there's no easy way to keep up with everything that's going on. Conversations are real time in a lot of cases, and if you aren't able to participate synchronously, you have to go back and

catch up, or you just miss what was discussed, and you're completely out of the loop. This situation can get very frustrating and end up leaving you worse off than you were with a bulging inbox.



For example, you come back to your chat after a bit of time away and have 85 new messages staring at you. You could read them all as you would expect, but with Watson Workspace, you have a way to jump to a meaningful summary driven by cognitive technology of what has transpired. You can quickly identify the actions and decisions that occurred so you know just where to focus your efforts next.

Chapter 4

Envisioning the Future of Teamwork

.....

In This Chapter

- ▶ Collaborating through augmented intelligence
 - ▶ Giving a personal touch to teamwork
 - ▶ Using cognitive computing for intelligence-infused collaboration
-

If you've been reading this book from the beginning, you should have no doubt that collaboration is key to the future of innovation, and it's the people, processes, and technology that continue to shape the future of collaboration as well as mitigate the challenges you face today.

Significant advantages exist in utilizing cognitive-infused collaborative services (see Chapter 3 for more details). Imagine being able to effectively deal with the flood and scatter of information, and rather than drowning all your hopes for success, you make sense of your interactions by being provided what you need, when you need it, effectively helping you achieve desired outcomes, faster. This is the vision of Watson Work.

But this is just the beginning. As long as innovation is king, the desire for effective collaboration will remain front and center. This means that changes in today's business climate and improvements in technology will allow tools to be smarter and practices to be more efficient. How exciting is that?

As for this chapter, we asked some industry experts to share their vision for the future of teamwork. Their predictions all point to cognitive being at the forefront of what's to come.

Prediction 1: Augmented Intelligence

Rob Koplowitz, IBM Senior Offering Manager and former Forrester Analyst, stated that “In the world of collaboration, the term *augmented intelligence* is far more accurate than artificial intelligence. Humans as a species have survived and thrived based on their ability to collaborate and augment one another. Cognitive systems represent the biggest breakthrough in collaboration because the birth of the Internet allowed us to effectively work together across organizational, geographic, and time boundaries. Surely, these systems will make us all more productive by taking actions on our behalf. However, the real transformation will come as they augment humans with the ability to bring unprecedented insights from massive amounts of information to bear on the unique ability of humans to work together.”



It's pretty exciting to imagine a world where a *tool* can make the right decisions on *your* behalf. Think about how that will reduce all the mundane tasks you belabor today. This is where Watson Workspace has the cognitive capabilities to really excel — making sense of the noise so you can focus on what matters.

Prediction 2: Personalized Collaboration

Brian Carter is an American author, speaker, marketer, and comedian. He also is the CEO of The Carter Group, a digital marketing and advertising agency. Carter wrote *The Like Economy*, which details how businesses can make money with Facebook. When we interviewed him, he highlighted the need for people to collaborate in their own personal way:

Looking at not just large enterprises in corporate America, but the millions of small businesses and interdependent entrepreneurs, some of the biggest problems we need to solve are project-management related: organization, overwhelm, and execution. Collaboration and communication fail on many teams — or are at least very

inefficient. Keeping each team member organized and on task while keeping the whole team informed and prioritized is something no project management tool has fully solved.

Many teams use various SaaS products to organize projects and communications, but individuals think and work differently — no one product's method works optimally for every team member, so some do not participate fully, and some overparticipate. What's more, because of task overwhelm, task switching, and information overload, many individuals are not able to organize their time or tasks. Future SaaS products need to proactively notify and guide team members, recruiting from them what is needed most for the project.

Cognitive computing could step in to create something more sophisticated to help individual team members work in their own personal way while still interfacing productively with the team. An artificially intelligent virtual assistant (A.I.V.A.) would take the initiative to ask you questions and guide you where you and your team need to go. This A.I.V.A. may be the only way to take the entire team to the winner's circle most CEO's visualize when they dream about their company's ideal future.



End-users are now in the driver's seat when it comes to making decisions about the collaborative tools they want to use. The one that wins is the one that doesn't just solve generally for collaboration; instead the winner is the solution that tailors its experience to work for the individual collaborating with others. As Carter indicates, only a cognitive solution, such as Watson Workspace, can learn from an individual's interactions and provide feedback that's highly personalized.

Prediction 3: Intelligence-Infused Collaboration

Cheryl Burgess, cofounder, CEO, and CMO of Blue Focus Marketing, is responsible for helping clients transform their brands into social businesses by implementing strategic initiatives that empower social employee engagement and advocacy and social executive leadership. She is the coauthor of

The Social Employee, which includes success stories from IBM and other major companies.

When we talked to Cheryl, she had this to say about cognitive computing:

Imagine always knowing when it's best to check in with clients — and always knowing which channel they prefer to engage. Imagine needing a crash course on vital information for a client — and having a comprehensive summary ready for you in an instant. Imagine having an assistant that can answer your most trivial-seeming “what if?” questions — and give you the necessary context to generate real business results with the information. In terms of social employee advocacy, cognitive computing has the potential to take all the guesswork out of the equation, to provide employees with the insights they need to not only interact more efficiently with their coworkers, but also to engage and delight their stakeholders in a way that feels organic, intuitive, and information-rich. This is the future of cognitive computing — and it will be upon us sooner than many of us expected.

Cheryl predicts that cognitive computing will be the answer to what's next in collaboration; not only that, but she believes the future is basically here.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Understand the potential of cognitive collaboration

Collaborating in today's highly digital environment means your teams have to work together to be productive. This book gives you an overview of teamwork, shows you how to optimize your current collaboration efforts, and tells you the advancements in cognitive technology that bring an intelligence to software that elevates how you work with others.

- *Recognize how the modern workplace has evolved — improve work-life balance, business agility, and flexibility*
- *Discover the benefits of collaboration — stimulate fresh thinking, encourage innovation, and clarify communication*
- *Explore collaboration capabilities — connect, converse, manage content, create, and more*
- *Look to the future of collaboration — understand augmented intelligence and cognitive computing*



Open the book and find:

- How conversational collaboration has evolved
- Your role within a team
- How to give a personal touch to teamwork
- The practices that facilitate effective teamwork
- How cognitive computing is used for intelligence-infused collaboration

Go to **Dummies.com**[®]
for videos, step-by-step examples,
how-to articles, or to shop!



WILEY END USER LICENSE AGREEMENT

Go to www.wiley.com/go/eula to access Wiley's ebook EULA.