The Open Organization Workbook

Working galley proofs produced:

November 27, 2017 at 13:27:43

The Open Organization Workbook

How to build a culture of innovation in your organization

with an introduction by Jim Whitehurst

Copyright

[individual article designations go here]

1 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/

Colophon

Typeset in DejaVu[2] and Overpass.[3] Produced with LibreOffice[4]. Cover design by Abby Gartner.

Version 1.0

December 2017

2 http://dejavu-fonts.org/wiki/Main_Page

3 http://overpassfont.org/

4 https://www.libreoffice.org/

Also in the series

From Harvard Business Review Press

The Open Organization: Igniting Passion and Performance, by Jim Whitehurst

From Opensource.com

The Open Organization Field Guide: Practical Tips for Igniting Passion and Performance, by the Opensource.com community

The Open Organization: Catalyst-In-Chief, by Jim Whitehurst

The Open Organization Leaders Manual: Instructions for Building the Workplace of the Future, by the Opensource.com community

The Open Organization Guide to IT Culture Change: Open Principles and Practices for a More Innovative IT Department, by the Opensource.com community

Additional reading

Every week, Opensource.com publishes new stories about the ways open principles help innovative leaders rethink organizational culture and design.

Visit *opensource.com/open-organization* to read more.

Contents

Unit 2: Inclusivity

Unit 3: Adaptability

Unit 4: Collaboration

Unit 5: Community

Appendix

Learn More

Preface

Bryan Behrenshausen

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas venenatis semper egestas. Fusce ullamcorper mi non feugiat tempor. Aliquam pellentesque magna sit amet luctus suscipit. Donec eu tincidunt dui. In convallis magna et massa bibendum, sed aliquam orci pulvinar. Proin mattis sagittis nulla. Fusce ac nisl ante. Proin facilisis ac orci quis interdum. Nam rhoncus, purus et iaculis efficitur, odio tellus dictum justo, quis posuere diam magna sit amet nisl.

Vestibulum dolor urna, auctor ac odio lobortis, ultricies cursus leo. Ut eros quam, dignissim semper quam non, iaculis vestibulum mi. Vestibulum nec sem euismod, ultrices velit nec, euismod urna. Vivamus cursus justo id dui venenatis, a elementum metus sagittis. Fusce Sed tempus, dui vel tincidunt dapibus, felis ipsum fringilla tortor, vel commodo dolor neque at leo. Morbi eleifend eros eget nisl mollis, ut semper elit fermentum. Suspendisse non erat nec diam sodales faucibus nec eu urna. Etiam lacinia tellus id laoreet volutpat. Aenean nec lectus auctor, tempus orci sit amet, lobortis mi. Sed euismod elit libero, ac sollicitudin mi tincidunt et. Fusce ultrices, leo eget porta faucibus, nisi diam tempor magna, et iaculis elit est eget mi.

Cursus condimentum purus, ut varius eros blandit in. Phasellus tristique facilisis turpis, mollis porta lorem vestibulum vel. Sed faucibus, orci nec sodales congue, nunc purus ullamcorper lacus, ac egestas diam dolor ut nisi. Mauris at augue massa.

Sed tempus, dui vel tincidunt dapibus, felis ipsum fringilla tortor, vel commodo dolor neque at leo. Morbi eleifend eros eget nisl mollis, ut semper elit fermentum. Suspendisse non erat nec diam sodales faucibus nec eu urna. Etiam lacinia tellus id laoreet volutpat. Aenean nec lectus auctor, tempus orci sit amet, lobortis mi. Sed euismod elit libero, ac sollicitudin mi tincidunt et. Fusce ultrices, leo eget porta faucibus, nisi diam tempor magna, et iaculis elit est eget mi.

Integer congue, nulla at aliquet vulputate, neque nulla fringilla massa, eget vestibulum nunc lectus non dui. Donec vel orci arcu. Nulla non nisi eget lacus ultricies imperdiet. Fusce nec viverra orci, in convallis nibh. Phasellus sit amet ex lorem. Aenean condimentum dignissim est sit amet porta. Pellentesque in ultrices eros. Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

Dr. Bryan Behrenshausen works for Red Hat as a writer and editor for Opensource.com, where he manages the site's Open Organization section and edits the Open Organization book series.

Introduction

Jim Whitehurst

When we published *The Open Organization* in 2015, it ignited a spark of curiosity among companies of all shapes and sizes about what having an "open" culture really means. Even when I have the opportunity to talk to other companies about the benefits of working with our products and services, it doesn't take long for the topic of conversation to shift from technology to people and culture. It's on the mind of just about everyone interested in driving innovation and maintaining competitive advantage in their industries.

Senior leadership teams aren't the only ones interested in working openly. The results of a recent Red Hat survey[5] found that 81% of respondents agreed with the statement: "Having an open organizational culture is currently important to my company[6]."

But there was a catch. Just 67% of respondents to that same survey agreed with the statement: "My organization has the resources necessary to build an open culture[7]."

These results echo what I'm hearing in my conversations with other companies: People want to work in an open culture,

---

5 https://www.redhat.com/en/blog/red-hat-releases-2017-open-source-culture-survey-results

6 https://www.techvalidate.com/tvid/923-06D-74C

7 https://www.techvalidate.com/tvid/D30-09E-B52

but they just don't know what to do or how to get there. I sympathize, because how an organization does what it does is something that's always difficult to capture, assess, and understand. In *Catalyst-In-Chief*[8], I call it "the most mysterious and elusive to organizations."

The Open Organization makes the compelling case that embracing a culture of openness is the surest path to creating sustained innovation during a time when digital transformation promises to change many of the traditional ways we've approached work. When we wrote it, we focused on describing the kind of culture that thrives inside Red Hat on our best days—not on writing a how-to book. We didn't lay out a step-by-step process for other organizations to follow.

That's why it's been interesting to talk to other leaders and executives about how they've gone about starting this journey on their own. When creating an open organization, many senior leaders tend to attack the issue by saying they want to "change their culture." But culture isn't an input. It's an output —a byproduct of how people interact and behave on a daily basis.

Telling members of an organization to "work more transparently," "collaborate more," or "act more inclusively" won't produce results you're looking for. That's because cultural characteristics like "transparency," "collaboration," and "inclusivity" aren't behaviors. They're the values that *guide* behaviors inside the organization.

So how do you go about building an open culture?

Over the past two years, the community at Opensource.com has collected best practices for working, managing, and leading in the spirit of openness. Now we're sharing them here

8 https://opensource.com/open-organization/resources/catalyst-in-chief

in *The Open Organization Workbook*, a more prescriptive guide to igniting culture change.

Just remember that change of any kind, especially at scale, requires commitment, patience, and plenty of hard work. I encourage you to use this workbook as a way to achieve small, meaningful wins first, as you build toward larger victories and changes over time.

By picking up a copy of this book, you've embarked on an exciting journey toward building the kind of open and innovative cultures your people will thrive in. We can't wait to hear your story.

Jim Whitehurst is President and CEO of Red Hat, the world's leading provider of open source enterprise IT products and services, and author of The Open Organization*.*

Getting Started

Getting started with change: Are you ready for open?

Sam Knuth and Jen Kelchner

We know that most change efforts in organizations—across all industries, sectors, and sizes—fail[9]. We also know that for many years both academics and practitioners have developed models of change that are known to bring about beneficial and lasting change, the kind that helps the organization remain focused and competitive.

Following open organization principles (as outlined in the Open Organization Definition—see the Appendix) is one approach to change management that helps change efforts succeed. As you'll see in the case studies that follow, open organizations focus on participation in all stages of change efforts, which leads to greater buy-in from the beginning and makes implementation easier.

Working in an "open" way—being transparent, inclusive, adaptable, collaborative and community-oriented— can be a successful model for approaching the continual change that's a requisite part of life in most organizations today. But it's far more than just some nice-sounding, motivational words.

Being open requires a high level of self-awareness, comfort with feedback, and a willingness to personally change and

9 http://www.reply-mc.com/2010/09/19/why-70-of-changes-fail-by-rick-maurer/

adapt as you take in more data and context. Being a truly open organizational leader (whether you're an individual contributor leading a project, a manager leading a single team, or the leader of a department or larger group) will test you in potentially new (and uncomfortable) ways.

That said, the beauty of open thinking is the tendency toward *sharing*. When we share our failures and our triumphs, we all help one another get more comfortable with openness.

That's what the case studies in this book are for.

In the following pages, we establish the context for the example cases you're about to read by discussing some common challenges you may encounter when leading (and facing) change in an organization. First, Sam Knuth begins by discussing the difficulties associated with being challenged and explains how to overcome them. Then, Jen Kelchner describes how to build self awareness through vulnerability and reframing. Finally, we both describe some essential tools for you to consider as you begin your journey.

Prepare to be challenged

Being transparent means being challenged—transparently. I (Sam) have worked in an open organization for most of my career. I nevertheless still feel a churn in my gut and a reflexive desire to lash out in defense when someone questions something I've done on an internal mailing list. I've learned to let this emotional first reaction pass, think about it for a while, and try to objectively assess the merit in my challenger's argument. I wrote about this experience for Opensource.com a couple of years ago[10], and I still need to work hard to remind myself not to take the criticism of my ideas personally—no matter how per-

10 https://opensource.com/open-organization/15/6/eviscerated-front-entire-company

sonal it may feel. Each of us needs to accommodate our own needs in facing these kinds of direct challenges.

For me, being comfortable with having my ideas challenged publicly has taken years of reflection and introspection (not to mention a lot of reading and some professional coaching). Even at Red Hat, a company that very deliberately strives to maintain its open culture, I see examples of people who are not comfortable sharing ideas in a truly open manner. This can come in the several forms:

- **Resistance to sharing:** not sharing work at all, sharing late in the process, or sharing only partial work all reduce the likelihood of getting tough feedback (but also reduce the buy-in of the work)
- **Sharing but not sharing:** posting work where technically anybody could see it if they knew it was there, but not doing anything to proactively make people aware of it. ("This has been out there in the open for six months, and I didn't get any feedback so I took that as approval.")
- **Reacting defensively:** Rapid fire responses to emails or discussion posts pointing out why the feedback isn't valid. ("I'm not being defensive, but here's why your points are wrong.")
- **Taking feedback without acting on it:** Acknowledging feedback and declaring the intention to ignore it ("We hear you, and you have some valid points, but we've decided to proceed as planned...")

To be successful leading change openly, we need to learn to recognize these reactions and patterns in ourselves and work to deliberately counter them. It's not easy and it runs up against our insecurities, fears, and doubts. We have to ask ourselves tough questions and answer honestly:

- "Am I doing all I can to seek feedback and share my decision making process? If not, why not?"
- "Am I reacting this way because I don't like the way the feedback makes me feel, or because I have thought through the arguments and found them invalid?"
- "Am I really prepared to change my work or roadmap based on the input I get from my peers and constituents? If not, can I?"

Answering these questions honestly will require significant self-reflection and a willingness to challenge yourself—which is great practice for embracing challenges by others. Challenging yourself requires self awareness and an ability to be vulnerable.

Knowing who you are

Key for anyone undergoing change, regardless of role, is becoming self-aware. "Self-awareness" means having a clear perception of your personality—including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivations, and emotions. It also means understanding the value of your contribution during change.

When previously writing about how to frame transformation[11], I (Jen) stated "Real transformation isn't about tiny shifts. It requires bold pivots." Bold pivots can be uncomfortable at times and that level of change will ask three things of you.

Vulnerability. Vulnerability requires exposure, something most people fear. Yet our vulnerability in moments is what

11 https://opensource.com/open-organization/17/7/digital-transformation-people-1

makes us human and allows others to understand and then connect with us. It's a crucial trait for leaders seeking to *really* engage people.

Being vulnerable with ourselves is perhaps the hardest part of this exercise. It requires taking time to self-reflect and essentially lay yourself open for inspection. To prepare for change and vulnerability, try engaging with the following exercise when confronting a fear as it arises or at the start of any change initiative you are leading.

Start by reflecting and then creating a list of your fears in this particular situation. If during this self-reflection you discover a particular pain point that arises within yourself, spend a few minutes with it to honor that part of yourself. Do not, under any circumstance, dismiss any of the feelings that you encounter while in self-reflection; acknowledge each of the feelings or memories before moving on. Each of those pain points *or fears* will actually help you during change and connecting with others —but you have to acknowledge and own them first.

Next, as a leader, you'll need to be vulnerable to others. Don't let this possibility concern you more than it should. But you can be vulnerable without sharing the details of a sensitive situation.

Often we think that to be vulnerable, or to share our stories, we need to recount "all the sordid details" of a situation. That's false. Being vulnerable is taking the risk to share your ideas, values, or emotions because you value those things and know they can help or encourage those with whom you're sharing them. People do not connect, build relationships, or follow leaders based on exact details. They do it because of shared emotions.

For example, if you were a bit eccentric or quirky growing up and your mannerisms came off as awkward—which led to being left out, mocked, bullied, etc—you could share that you have always felt misunderstood. This would allow others to connect with you over that shared emotion. This allows for people to connect on the feeling without your complete disclosure of intimate experience details.

Change is personal. In The Power of Vulnerability, Dr. Brené Brown teaches readers:

> In our culture, we associate vulnerability with emotions we want to avoid such as fear, shame, and uncertainty. Yet we too often lose sight of the fact that vulnerability is also the birthplace of joy, belonging, creativity, authenticity, and love.

Creating change requires you to leverage the power of vulnerability both for yourself and with others.

Reframing your thinking. The power of transformation lies in changing the way you think. As we develop new habits and patterns of thought, we literally create new neural pathways[12]. Changing the way you think is initially an arduous task, as it requires consistent intention every day. But much like starting a new workout at the gym, you're pretty sore the first two weeks of a new regimen.

And then, suddenly, it gets easier. It isn't that the workout got easier; rather, you became stronger. The same is true of changing the ways we think.

Begin to explore new perspectives and points of view from others that allow you to see and broaden your level of understanding. Gather perspectives from your people to gain new insight. Allow yourself to stretch your current understanding

12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuroplasticity

without feeling defensive. Remember this is a stretch and that particular area *may not have been used in a while*.

Lastly, begin to remove your barriers to understanding. Every person carries with them thoughts and words that have taken up residence based on our past experiences. These "old tapes" often play themselves during times of change in order to convince us (in one way or another). Address these thoughts and words as they come up and ask yourself: "Is this true?"

While earlier in this chapter we discussed not acting on your immediate impression, let's clarify the difference between the two situations. Previously we were referencing an emotional reaction. While in this section, we are referencing an intuitive understanding. One is a *reaction;* the other is *knowledge*. Your immediate gut reaction is the truth; anything after a few seconds is not. While this may not seem like a tactic one would use in business, it is one of the strongest tools to keep in your leadership playbook.

Knowing your positive contribution value. Each of us processes information—and thus change—differently. Typically, when we encounter someone who doesn't buy into or adopt change as quickly as we do, our reaction is to "write them off" as someone who's "against" us or the initiative. Too often this reaction leads us to exclude a potentially positive change agent that we'll actually *need* in order to sustain our transformations.

There are four dimensions through which we filter change, and new information:

- Details
- Emotion
- Risk
- The unknown

Each of these dimensions elicits a personal response that causes us to *Pause* (wait) or *Pounce* (move). While each of us often has varying tendencies to pause or pounce that can be situational, we still show a strong primary response that is innate to our makeup[13].

At LDR21, the open culture and leadership consulting firm where I am CEO, we've created an instrument that identifies the positive contribution value of an individual during change and then reveals that person's strengths as a change agent. It is powerful information to have during our self-awareness efforts, and even more powerful for leaders to know for their teams.

Imagine knowing exactly how your team processes change—and then assigning responsibilities of a change initiative based on that positive contribution. You'd be able to move your *Maintainers* (who drive stability and legacy) to post-implementation roles to begin the follow-through and curation of buy-in to create sustainability. Or leverage the *Analyzers* and *Protectors* to identify any pitfalls in the strategy plan or to create the detailed roadmaps for implementation.

Leaders continue to ask for adaptable people in their workplace. An adaptable organization begins with understanding each person's potential, positive contributions so that we can unleash the power that transformation can bring.

Fear and failure filters

Two emotional cousins, fear and failure, seem to go together like peanut butter and jelly. These are two factors that can cripple even the strongest, most intelligent and educated of people. Fear is an emotion that arises when one perceives something or someone as a threat. Similarly, feelings of failure are the perceptions and emotions around some expectation not being met, something not functioning properly, or a lack of

13 See MaryJo Burchard's exercise in this volume.

success. Fear paves the road for *the fear of failure*, which is why we must address fear first in order to redefine failure.

Fear filter. Throughout my career advising leaders, I've found that no matter how one processes change, leaders still go through a series of "what if" scenarios before moving forward. These "what if's" can be crippling as we bear the burden of potential perceived failure outcomes.

- "What if this leaves me with nothing?" The overwhelming amount of uncertainty and the inability to see exactly what it looks like is grounded in our need for stability or discovery.
- "What if I'm no longer relevant?" We fear losing control of the situation for which we're responsible, which can cause us to be concerned about trusting others with the direction and vision required for executing change.
- "What will people think or say about me?" We all seek a measure of approval from those we lead and thus worry about how decisions affect our reputation.
- "What if people see me as a fraud?" Feeling unprepared to handle the change can often result in feeling fraudulent, inadequate in our ability to deliver results, which then shakes our confidence.
- "What if it happens again?" Our past perceived failures begin to replay in our mind's eye casting doubt—"If now is the right time? Am I the right person for this? Is this the right thing to do?—which leads to pulling back from being transparent.

As you think through the above questions, I challenge you to pause and ask yourself, "Is there any truth to this statement?"

If you identify a "yes," then examine why and create a plan to turn it around. For example, while you're likely not a fraud, you may have identified a new competency to learn to solidify yourself in a particular area.

Failure filter. Failure has become this ugly monster that we have defined as a nuclear event. However, I would charge you to redefine failure as a neutral event. It is something that happened *at one moment in time* and often *with the best information we had available at that time*. If we continue to hang onto that event, no matter how disastrous, we're essentially making the decision to stay in that moment forever—rather than live in the present. We also allow it to define us going forward.

To help in redefining the less than stellar moments, acknowledge and accept the following:

- "My mistakes do not define me. I control who I am and my decisions today."
- "I used the best information available to me at the time I made _____ decision."
- "I took a risk that didn't pay off as I expected. I chose to live in that moment rather than sideline myself from life."
- "I learned a lesson that I can carry forward to help me excel at the next thing."
- "I learned what wasn't right for me through that experience."
- "I learned what I am made of and what part of myself I want to grow further."
- "I was bold and courageous when I stepped out to do _________."

As a recovering affirmation junkie, I lived in fear of others opinions of me and the constant desire for acceptance. It was exhausting. It was inauthentic. It likely annoyed everyone around me. While our fears are personal and unique to each person, we can collectively acknowledge that we all struggle with fear and failure in some fashion. I remind my clients frequently that fear is a liar. If you're swimming with sharks, you fear might be legitimate. But fearing what people *might think* of you, especially during times of transformation, is likely unfounded fear. Stand up to the fear by speaking out, and it will no longer control you. You'll also likely be surprised by the positive reaction from others who see a bold, courageous act that then empowers them to step into transformation as well.

Additional tools

The Open Decision Framework. The Open Decision Framework (ODF)[14] is a tool (released by the Red Hat People Team in 2016 and available on GitHub) that does exactly what it says: provides a framework anybody can use to make decisions in an inclusive and "open" manner. That said, its significance and power as a tool are much bigger than the name might indicate.

Decisions are at the heart of the work that knowledge workers do all day, every day. And decisions are the basis of any change effort. When you think about how broadly the ODF can be used, it becomes a blueprint for maintaining an open organizational culture as well as providing a pathway to successful change efforts.

Key to many change efforts is gathering understanding, buy-in, and support from constituents in order to adopt a new strategy or initiative. Front-line employees and their managers are often key constituents because they are the ones that need to change their work or behavior in order to implement the

14 https://opensource.com/open-organization/resources/open-decision-framework

strategy. But leaders tend to overlook the frontline staff, both when creating strategy and in targeted communications (see a recent Gallup report for more on the importance of focusing on front line staff in change efforts[15]).

When you've used the Open Decision Framework consistently, you'll continually invite, consider, and incorporate perspectives and feedback from frontline team members *as you're creating the strategy*, resulting in deeper understanding and support from everyone who is engaged in the process.

In a more traditional, "top-down" approach, the bulk of effort in change initiatives is around convincing people of the need for change and encouraging their acceptance of the proposed solution as the right way forward. But, what if people don't agree that the proposed change is the right one? And, if it was made with just a few representatives from senior management, how do you know it *is* the right way forward? What if people have legitimate concerns that they don't have a place to discuss? How likely are those people to pick up the torch and carry the change forward?

Using the ODF flips the process on its head: The bulk of the work goes into developing the strategy, taking extra time to solicit ideas and feedback from constituents over many iterations, and the implementation is actually faster because less effort is leaded to educate people about the strategy and build support and buy in.

Like many facets of adopting more open principles, using the ODF is more difficult than it initially seems. If you really follow the process, it will feel like hard work. You'll experience moments of frustration and exasperation and you may find yourself questioning if it's "worth it." The reality is, though, that no

15 http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/162707/change-initiatives-fail-don.aspx

successful change effort is easy. The choice is *where to put in the effort*—wrangling opinions up front to help shape the strategy, or wrangling hearts and minds later when trying to implement a strategy that people don't understand or believe in. When considering those options, remember, 70% of change efforts fail.

To get started with the ODF, use this book and some its exercises in transparency to prepare for the shift in mindset that it requires.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE INDEX™. The Initial Response Index™ is an instrument LDR21 developed for individuals, teams, and organizations to realize and understand each person's positive contribution to change (it's a component of dragonfli™, a comprehensive change assessment and management tool my firm uses to help build agile people[16]). The The Initial Response Index™ is designed to identify the capacity for (as I explained above) *pausing and pouncing*, and to identify the roles in the process that are present and/or missing for organizational or team equilibrium to take place.

The equilibrium for which we're looking is a balance, within a team or ecosystem, of two forces: the power to not only drive change but also to sustain it. Too often, an individual's contribution to being a change agent is dismissed if they don't fall into a visionary or innovator role. By doing this we are leaving more than 50% of our talent's contribution on the table—or even letting this talent go unknowingly.

While different environments require varying levels of *Pause* and *Pounce*, sustainable change is something we desire in any environment. The only way to have sustainable change is to

16 http://dragonfli.co/

leverage every change agent in the process—whether they are drivers or sustainers.

Adaptability requires two things: the capacity to proactively adjust to changes in the environment and the capacity to sustain the adjustments that are made. The capacity to proactively and adeptly *adjust to change* requires a tendency to see the potential for growth and forward momentum and *pounce* on the change. The capacity *to sustain change* requires a tendency to do everything necessary to mitigate risks, listen to concerns, optimize stability, and *pause* to take precautions.

We hope you'll keep some of these notes on change (and change management) in mind while you explore the powerful and instructive cases in this workbook.

Sam Knuth leads the Customer Content Services team at Red Hat and is an Open Organization Ambassador.

Jen Kelchner is a founding member of the Forbes Coaches Council and is a leadership and management consultant who solves problems and develops people. Her company, LDR21, focuses on change management, open principles, and cultural and operational change due to digital transformation.

Getting started with the exercises in this book

Laura Hilliger

The exercises we've collected in this book apply co-design and participatory methodologies. "Participatory" means that an exercise invites input from participants. Rather than "presenting" information, the facilitator involves participants in the educational experience to help define and solve problems, putting the power of learning in their hands. The exercises in this book aim to be:

- **Participatory:** They engage and activate participants from the beginning, getting them moving and interacting (rather than listening and watching).
- **Purposeful:** They help participants work toward the goal of becoming more open and understanding, so our organizations can create meaningful change.
- **Productive:** They strive to be well-planned, so that participating produces concrete outcomes in the allotted time (and participants feel that time was well spent).

These methods will help you collaborate, teach, learn, and explore the five characteristics of open organizations—which are the five themes guiding this book.

Each unit concludes with a series of exercises. Exercises are of three basic types:

- **Introductions** designed to introduce the underlying concepts
- **Reflections** designed to help participants think more deeply about those concepts
- **Actions** designed to offer simple but effective ways you can begin making change in your organization

At the beginning of each exercise, you'll find a breakout box outlining how long the exercise might take, as well as the materials is requires. As reflection is an important part of learning, most exercises also conclude with instructions for guiding thoughtful reflection on their outcomes.

On facilitation

Facilitating learning with a group of people is an art. A monotone, disinterested, mentally dissociated facilitator may have a clear, concise, well crafted lesson plan, but still fail to accomplish learning objectives. Likewise, an enthusiastic and sporadic social butterfly may let loose a random stream of consciousness but change perceptions and inspire real growth and learning.

Your best bet is to assemble a team of co-facilitators who can help you shape and run your exercises. We recommend a ratio of at least one facilitator for every 20 participants.

Although our exercises address serious topics, we nevertheless encourage you not to underestimate the value of having fun when facilitating. The exercises in this book provide tips and tricks for solving potential problems, but, in the end, your own drive and passion in facilitating these exercises are the keys that will make or break your sessions.

On setup

Facilitating most of these exercises comfortably requires a room that can accommodate all your participants. The ability to move chairs and other furniture to create a large space or multiple groups is essential for most activities as well.

We've presented all exercises in this book in the same format so they're easier to read and enact. To demonstrate, here's an example activity you can use in just about any scenario.

Example: "If you really knew me"

Laura Hilliger

EXERCISE

Time required: 10–15 minutes for up to 20 people; 20 minutes for up to 50 people

Materials necessary: A circle of chairs

Activity type: Introduction

Both leadership and team development from training and bonding exercises are contingent on creating a space that eliminates preconceived hierarchies. Any successful participatory workshop starts by shifting the power balance participants are expecting. This exercise is a great way to initiate any of the activities included in this book.

Facilitation steps

Step 1. Before the session, move all the chairs into a circle and put a big sheet of paper labeled "Parking Lot" on the wall.

Step 2. As people join the session, welcome them and chat with your participants. Announce that you'll give everyone a few minutes to join, and allow everyone to settle into a chair.

Step 3. Once people have settled in, have a seat in the circle. Do not introduce yourself.

Step 4. Say a sentence of welcome and briefly introduce the topic your workshop is covering. Do not go into detail explaining the topic, simply explain that today is about a particular theme.

For example, you might say something like: "*Today we're going to have a critical look at diversity and inclusion. It's a complex topic, so throughout the day, if you have ideas or questions about this topic, but don't want to bring them up in the current exercise, you can add them to the Parking Lot. At the end of the session, we'll have a look at those items and begin any discussions. This is a participatory session. We'll have active discussions and debates. Be respectful of the people around you. If you are the type of person who talks a lot, try to listen more. And if you're the type of person who doesn't speak much, please speak up and share your ideas. The more you put into this session, the more successful learning experience it will be for everyone.*"

Step 5. Do not talk for more than 60 seconds!

Step 6. Say: "*We'll start by introducing ourselves but to avoid an endless round of introductions, we're going to follow the format I'll demonstrate.*"

Step 7. Say "*Hi, my name is [name].*"

Step 8. Say "*I'm from [city, company, team or department].*"

Step 9. Say, "*If you really knew me, you'd know that [a fun fact about you].*" Examples might include: "*If you really knew me, you'd know that I hate raw tomatoes,*" or "*If you really knew me, you'd know that I was born in Bolivia,*" or "*If you really knew me, you'd know that I have two left feet and can't dance at all.*"

Step 10. Once everyone has introduced themselves, explain the first exercise.

Laura Hilliger is a writer, educator, and technologist. She's a co-founder of the We Are Open Co-op, an Open Organization Ambassador at Opensource.com, and is working to help Greenpeace become a more open organization.

Unit 1: Transparency

Introduction: What is transparency?

Philip A. Foster

We hear about transparency a great deal, especially in the context of open systems. But what does "transparency" really mean?

Its literal translation is "the ability to see through something." However, in the context of open systems, transparency is the product of sharing something in such a way that all are aware of it and can see it.

When "open" becomes a systematic, cultural approach to operating an organization, transparency becomes one of its key components. Open organizations embrace transparency because they focus on keeping information, knowledge, skills, and process out in the open for all to access. Here, "transparency" connotes an environment where the free flow of information enhances collaboration, because transparent processes tend to invite all members of the organization to participate in them.

This approach to constructing organizational culture is valuable for helping overcome biases and office politics. A decision is "transparent" when made not in a vacuum but "in the open," where everyone can contribute to the decision-making process.

Transparency creates a healthy tension within the company's ecosystem. When properly engaged, transparency creates an environment where people can freely contribute, come up with better solutions, and share equally in the outcomes of those solutions. Without transparency, decisions can appear arbitrary—even without merit. Transparency, then, ensures that organizational members receive all the information necessary for embracing the reality of each circumstance; it forces leadership to share complex issues with the broader population of the organization.

A high degree of transparency coupled with explicit communication allows members of an open organization to get behind a problem and advance the best solutions possible. Conversely, organizations that lack transparency tend to create a workforce that is helpless to affect positive and useful change in the organization.

Dr. Philip A. Foster is the author of The Open Organization: A New Era of Leadership and Organizational Development*. He is a business consultant, international speaker, and the host of Maximum Change TV.*

How working transparently united our engineers

Jordan Morgan

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Buffer
>
> Employees: 71
>
> Industry: Social media management
>
> Challenge: Extend the company's cultural emphasis on transparency to its work developing software

It's incredible to think about how much has changed for technology companies in the last decade. Start ups pop up seemingly by the hour. The most financially successful company on earth freely shared an entire programming language[17]. And the open source community is thriving in ways we didn't think possible.

In short, transparency seems to be spreading in many different forms.

It used to be the case that some facet of leadership didn't want information freely and transparently shared across an organization. But it's different now. The prospect of sharing your business' most sacred commodities or secrets is no longer off

17 https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2015/12/03Apple-Releases-Swift-as-Open-Source/

limits. The way we think about transparency in the workplace is changing, and we all seem to be keenly aware of it.

It's exciting, but what does transparency really *do* for a company? How does it help, and what problems does it solve? How can it go from being a great one liner on your company's "About" page and grow into a tool to leverage across your teams?

I work as an iOS developer at Buffer, one of the most open tech companies around[18]. I've seen transparency in action for several years now and firmly believe it can streamline solutions to many different problems.

I'll walk you through a recent challenge we faced internally at Buffer and show how transparency helped play a pivotal role in fixing it.

You're transparent—now what?

At Buffer, we've instilled transparency as a core value impacting the way we do things across the company. Our revenues, profits, and stock information is open for anyone to see. Our employee salaries are public domain. Even our product road map is accessible to anyone that has access to the internet[19].

You'd think that as a transparent tech company, we'd be heavily involved with the open source community too. It should be inherent to our culture. And it was, but really only in the sense that we *used* plenty of open source code. We just weren't sharing much of our own.

Why?

18 https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/inside-buffer-company-complete-transparency.html

19 https://buffer.com/transparency

I spent time really grappling with that question. How come we weren't sharing more code to the open source community?

What I discovered is that even though we were a transparent company, we needed to learn to *leverage* that freedom of choice, knowledge, and autonomy in an deliberate, actionable way.

In this case, transparency was both part of our problem and nearly the entire solution.

Diagnosing issues via transparent communication

We only recently discovered this open source contribution gap at Buffer. It's something that most of us just assumed was happening due to our transparent nature. Sure, there were a few projects we had open to the public, but there were certainly things we could've released and made the community more aware of.

It was something our CEO, Joel Gascoigne, noticed, too. In our internal tool for communication, Discourse, Joel raised the question more or less asking "Why do we not open source more of our code?"

It was a fair question to ask, and one that would've just began and ended as a casual talking point in a meeting—if it hadn't been posed to the entire company.

This is the first point at which transparency worked to solve a problem we had. It made us realize which people were in a position to take on this challenge—and how they were spread far and wide across the company. It also initiated a dialog between all of us in a natural way, to get the conversation started. It's a stark contrast to the closed doors, "higher ups" meetings that seemed to be standard at other companies I've worked for.

From talking around the company, it was clear that we were in a unique position to share our code with the world. Our CEO approved of doing it, our direct management thought it was a great practice, and our engineers were eager and willing to contribute.

For us at Buffer, the issue was never "we shouldn't do this" or "we don't have the time." In fact, it was quite the opposite. By chatting with different engineering teams, I soon learned that the problem was simply that we didn't know how.

Finding the answer

Arriving at that conclusion took some digging. I started taking notes about the barriers engineers claimed they encountered when attempting to work with open source code, and I posted those to a public document for others to collaborate on. After three or four informal chats, all of the engineering teams had created a rough outline of any roadblocks that existed and the various forms of stop energy they were hitting.

The above paragraph will either seem very practical and uninteresting to you—or radical and different depending on the type of company you work for.

I've been in both corners of the room: the one where the managers take action without much input from the team and work alone to produce change, and the one where everyone is called upon to be part of the solution and identify the real, common problems.

When you practice the latter more than the former, you start to cultivate a sense of empathy for your team—as well as a stronger degree of trust. You don't have all the answers; no single teammate likely does. But if you form them all together, a clearer sense of direction results.

At Buffer, I ended up creating nothing more than a public FAQ that helped engineers open source their code. It had the answers to the questions we were asking *ourselves* but not *each other*, and it outlined logistical steps to making code public (along with few tips on how to share it).

That's exactly all we needed: fewer assumptions on the state of open source and a quick write-up explaining how to share our code. Since the creation of that simple FAQ guide, 80% of our open source projects have been released.

The best part? We've since shared that FAQ[20] with the world too, in the hope that it could help solve the same problems at other tech companies.

Leveraging transparency

That small example of transparency in action might seem to have a bit of an anticlimactic ending—until you consider the way it helped us get where it did.

First, our CEO initiated a dialogue across the board about the state of open source. Then, engineering teams started to realize that not many of us were actually open sourcing code. At this point, the floor was open to let anyone who felt they could help solve the problem to freely jump in.

In this case, that was me. I made sure anyone who had ideas on how to get open source rolling would have their ideas heard, and went to all of the teams to figure out ways to do it. This was quick to do, because at this point we were all aware of the problem I was trying to help solve. The proper steps forward came into focus directly from this clear, encouraging, and egoless communication.

20 https://open.buffer.com/guide-open-source/

Now, consider this: What if Buffer did not have a culture of transparency in this particular case? What might've happened, and why did transparency help?

Traditionally, managers might've huddled together and thought of ways to encourage their team. A brainstorm meeting likely would have occurred, and people might have tossed ideas back and forth. Then they may have agreed on a course of action put it into place.

Business has been done this way for a long time, and there is certainly nothing right or wrong about those methods. But we're not asking if it's right or wrong; we're pondering how transparency helps in the workplace.

In that case, then, we can anticipate problems arising from the fact that (in this scenario, anyway) the people working toward solving the "end goal"—in this case, open sourcing code—were not the ones involved in making the decision on how to do it. The *real* issues that may have existed or the barriers in place might not have ever been known to the managers trying to solve the problem.

Further, managers are just that: managers. They are skilled, empathetic team leaders who help ensure their units succeed and have what they need to do so. But they aren't typically on the front lines, like the employees they manage. When they work without the context of their front-line teammates, they often have difficulty getting the amount of information they need to get at the heart of an issue. At worst, their work becomes a series of wild guesses.

This works both ways, too, as managers have valuable insight that those who are on the front lines often don't. Considering this, it stands to reason that the best way to make work more efficient is to ensure that both sides have an open line of communication they can use to bounce ideas back and forth. If that line only travels one way or the other, then communication becomes less collaborative, informative, and helpful—and more of a firm decision that seemingly came out of nowhere.

Consider that last point for a moment. In this case, not only did the solution to open source more code come from those without all the context required, but it could also can come across as an unexpected failure to the team. Thoughts like "Were we not doing a great job here?" or "I didn't even know that was a priority" could be common.

Thankfully, everyone can effectively side-step scenarios like that with open, honest, and collaborative communication. Transparency is not a silver bullet for your entire business—but it certainly can help when it comes to fostering empathy, knowledge, and trust among your team.

Considering transparency

We've seen that transparency in the workplace can be a very powerful tool. If used properly, it can ensure that the right people have access to the right things. It can enable outside perspectives and additional context that might've been lost without it. If you choose to make some parts of your organization (or all of it!) embrace transparency, then be willing to tackle problems that your team encounters and be passionate about solving them.

But your actions have to meet your ambitions. Simply *wanting* to be transparent isn't enough.

At Buffer, we wanted to open source more code, we had the green light to do it, we had plenty of helpful code to share—but *wanting* to share it was usually where the story ended. We had to bring all of these ideas together into one, cohesive, and comprehensible flow—a flow formed by taking input from the whole team, leaders, and the community to create something truly useful.

The magic, then, comes about when you encourage your team to be transparent while matching all the ideas that sprout up into decisions taking place—either now or later. The magic, then, arrives as you encourage your team to be transparent and commit to hearing everyone's input. You'll likely find yourself with more ideas than you'd have gotten if you'd taken a different approach. Take your time, weigh the options, and follow through. Then you'll be in a great place to take some action. Organizations have never lacked decision makers. What they *have* historically lacked is important context.

You wouldn't buy a house without first asking your partner or family what would work best for them, what price is most affordable, or where you should live. You open a dialog, allow others to be a part of it, and *then* get things done.

The same should be true in any organization today, and transparency can help foster it.

Jordan Morgan is a iOS developer at Buffer. He is from Ozark and also founded Dreaming In Binary. He is focused on helping the community, creating things that inspire others, doing talks over iOS, and constantly being a student of any form of software engineering.

Review and discussion questions

- "In short, transparency seems to be spreading in many different forms," Jordan writes. Do you agree? Have you sensed your team or organization increasing its emphasis on operating transparently? How will your team respond to this cultural shift?

- At Buffer, Jordan realized that he wasn't the only developer who felt strongly about working more transparently—he just didn't initially know how to gather like-minded developers and coordinate their work. Do any similar barriers exist on your team, in your department, or across your organization?

- Jordan describes two approaches to leadership: "the one where the managers take action without much input from the team and work alone to produce change, and the one where everyone is called upon to be part of the solution and identify the real, common problems." Which describes your approach to leadership? What about the leadership on your team? Is this something you can change, or would like to? Why or why not?

Dismantling departmental silos through chat transparency

Guy Martin

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Autodesk
>
> Employees:
>
> Industry:
>
> Challenge: Increase transparency and collaboration by migrating entire organization to single, shared many-to-many chat platform

Collaboration and information silos are a reality in most organizations today. People tend to regard them as huge barriers to innovation and organizational efficiency. They're also a favorite target of software tool vendors of all types.

Tools by themselves, however, are seldom (if ever), the answer to a problem like organizational silos. The reason for this is simple: Silos are made of people, and human dynamics are key drivers for the existence of silos in the first place.

So what *is* the answer?

Successful communities are the key to breaking down silos. Tools play an important role in the process, but if you don't build successful communities around those tools, then you'll face an uphill battle with limited chances for success. Tools *enable* communities; they do not build them. This takes a thoughtful approach—one that looks at culture first, process second, and tools last.

However, this is a challenge because, in most cases, this is not the way the process works. Too many companies begin their journey to fix silos by thinking about tools first and considering metrics that don't evaluate the right factors for success. Too often, people choose tools for purely cost-based, compliance-based, or effort-based reasons—instead of factoring in the needs and desires of the user base. But subjective measures like "customer/user delight" are a real factor for these internal tools, and can make or break the success of both the tool adoption and the goal of increased collaboration.

It's critical to understand the best technical tool (or what the business may consider the most cost-effective) is not always the solution that drives community, transparency, and collaboration forward. There is a reason that "Shadow IT"—users choosing their own tool solution, building community and critical mass around them—exists and is so effective: People who choose their own tools are more likely to stay engaged and bring others with them, breaking down silos organically.

This is a story of how Autodesk ended up adopting Slack at enterprise scale to help solve our transparency and silo problems. Interestingly, Slack wasn't (and isn't) an IT-supported application at Autodesk. It's an enterprise solution adopted, built, and still run by a group of passionate volunteers who are committed to a "default to open" paradigm.

Utilizing Slack makes transparency happen for us.

Chat-tastrophe

First, some perspective: My job at Autodesk is running our Open@ADSK initiative. I was originally hired to drive our open source strategy, but we quickly expanded my role to include driving open source best practices for internal development (inner source), and transforming how we collaborate internally as an organization[21]. This last piece is where we pick up our story of Slack adoption in the company.

But before we even begin to talk about our journey with Slack, let's address why lack of transparency and openness was a challenge for us. What is it that makes transparency such a desirable quality in organizations, and what was I facing when I started at Autodesk?

Every company says they want "better collaboration." In our case, we are a 30-year-old software company that has been immensely successful at selling desktop "shrink-wrapped" software to several industries, including architecture, manufacturing, and entertainment. But no successful company rests on its laurels, and Autodesk leadership recognized that a move to Cloud-based solutions for our products was key to the future growth of the company, including opening up new markets through product combinations that required Cloud computing and deep product integrations.

The challenge in making this move was far more than just technical or architectural—it was rooted in the DNA of the company, in everything from how we were organized to how we integrated our products. The basic format of integration in our desktop products was file import/export. While this is undoubtedly important, it has led to a culture of highly-specialized teams who work in a more siloed environment than we'd like and don't share information (or code). Prior to the move to a cloud-based approach, this wasn't as a much of a problem—but, in an environment that requires organizations to behave more like open source projects do, transparency, openness, and collaboration go from "nice-to-have" to "business critical."

21 See Tom Benniger's chapter in this volume.

Like many companies our size, Autodesk has had many different collaboration solutions through the years, some of them commercial, and many of them home-grown. However, none of them effectively solved the many-to-many real-time collaboration challenge. Some reasons for this were technical, but many of them were cultural.

When someone first tasked me with trying to find a solution for this, I relied on a philosophy I'd formed through challenging experiences in my career: "Culture first, tools last." This is still a challenge for engineering folks like myself. We want to jump immediately to tools as the solution to any problem. However, it's critical to evaluate a company's ethos (culture), as well as existing processes to determine what kinds of tools might be a good fit. Unfortunately, I've seen too many cases where leaders have dictated a tool choice from above, based on the factors discussed earlier. I needed a different approach that relied more on fitting a tool into the culture we wanted to become, not the other way around.

What I found at Autodesk were several small camps of people using tools like HipChat, IRC, Microsoft Lync, and others, to try to meet their needs. However, the most interesting thing I found was *85 separate instances of Slack in the company*!

Eureka! I'd stumbled onto a viral success (one enabled by Slack's ability to easily spin up "free" instances). I'd also landed squarely in what I like to call "silo-land."

All of those instances were not talking to each other—so, effectively, we'd created isolated islands of information that, while useful to those in them, couldn't transform the way we operated as an enterprise. Essentially, our existing organizational culture was recreated in digital format in these separate Slack systems. Our organization housed a mix of these small, free instances, as well as multiple paid instances, which also meant we were not taking advantage of a common billing arrangement.

My first (open source) thought was: "Hey, why aren't we using IRC, or some other open source tool, for this?" I quickly realized that didn't matter, as our open source engineers weren't the only people using Slack. People from all areas of the company—even senior leadership—were adopting Slack in droves, and, in some cases, convincing their management to pay for it!

My second (engineering) thought was: "Oh, this is simple. We just collapse all 85 of those instances into a single cohesive Slack instance." What soon became obvious was that was the easy part of the solution. Much harder was the work of cajoling, convincing, and moving people to a single, transparent instance. Building in the "guard rails" to enable a closed source tool to provide this transparency was key. These guard rails came in the form of processes, guidelines, and community norms that were the hardest part of this transformation.

The real work begins

As I began to slowly help users migrate to the common instance (paying for it was also a challenge, but a topic for another day), I discovered a dedicated group of power users who were helping each other in the #adsk-slack-help channel on our new common instance of Slack. These power users were, in effect, building the roots of our transparency and community through their efforts.

The open source community manager in me quickly realized these users were the path to successfully scaling Slack at Autodesk. I enlisted five of them to help me, and, together we set about fabricating the community structure for the tool's rollout.

Here I should note the distinction between a community structure/governance model and traditional IT policies: With the exception of security and data privacy/legal policies, volunteer admins and user community members completely define and govern our Slack instance. One of the keys to our success with Slack (currently approximately 9,100 users and roughly 4,300 public channels) was how we engaged and involved our users in building these governance structures. Things like channel naming conventions and our growing list of frequently asked questions were organic and have continued in that same vein. Our community members feel like their voices are heard (even if some disagree), and that they have been a part of the success of our deployment of Slack.

We did, however, learn an important lesson about transparency and company culture along the way.

It's not the tool

When we first launched our main Slack instance, we left the ability for anyone to make a channel private turned on. After about three months of usage, we saw a clear trend: More people were creating *private channels* (and messages) than they were *public channels* (the ratio was about two to one, private versus public). Since our effort to merge 85 Slack instances was intended to increase participation and transparency, we quickly adjusted our policy and turned off this feature for regular users. We instead implemented a policy of review by the admin team, with clear criteria (finance, legal, personnel discussions among the reasons) defined for private channels.

This was probably the only time in this entire process that I regretted something.

We took an amazing amount of flak for this decision because we were dealing with a corporate culture that was used to working in independent units that had minimal interaction with each other. Our defining moment of clarity (and the tipping point where things started to get better) occurred in an all-hands meeting when one of our senior executives asked me to address a question about Slack. I stood up to answer the question, and said (paraphrased from memory): "It's not about the tool. I could give you all the best, gold-plated collaboration platform in existence, but we aren't going to be successful if we don't change our approach to collaboration and learn to *default to open*."

I didn't think anything more about that statement—until that senior executive starting using the phrase "default to open" in his slide decks, in his staff meetings, and with everyone he met. That one moment has defined what we have been trying to do with Slack: The tool isn't the sole reason we've been successful; it's the approach that we've taken around building a self-sustaining community that not only wants to use this tool, but craves the ability it gives them to work easily across the enterprise.

What we learned

I say all the time that this could have happened with other, similar tools (Hipchat, IRC, etc), but it works in this case specifically because we chose an approach of supporting a solution that the user community adopted for their needs, not strictly what the company may have chosen if the decision was coming from the top of the organizational chart. We put a lot of work into making it an acceptable solution (from the perspectives of security, legal, finance, etc.) for the company, but, ultimately, our success has come from the fact that we built this rollout (and continue to run the tool) as a community, not as a traditional corporate IT system.

The most important lesson I learned through all of this is that transparency and community are evolutionary, not revolutionary. You have to understand where your culture is, where you want it to go, and utilize the lever points that the community is adopting itself to make sustained and significant progress. There is a fine balance point between an anarchy, and a thriving community, and we've tried to model our approach on the successful practices of today's thriving open source communities.

Communities are personal—tools come and go—but keeping your community at the forefront of your push to transparency is the key to success.

Guy Martin is euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

Review and discussion questions

- Euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

- Euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

- Euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

Making transparency work for Harvard's Dataverse Project

Philip Durbin

CASE STUDY

Organization: Dataverse Project at Harvard University

Employees: 12

Industry: Higher education

Challenge: Work transparently to help researchers share data

A culture of transparency permeates the Dataverse project, contributing to its adoption in dozens of research institutions around the world. Headquartered at Harvard University, the Dataverse development team has more than a decade of experience operating as an open source project within an organization that values transparency: the Institute of Quantitative Social Science (IQSS). Working transparently helps the Dataverse team communicate changes to current development efforts, provides opportunities for the community to support each other, and facilitates contribution to the project.

Dataverse is open source research data repository software, a platform for sharing and exploring research data. In June 2007, Dataverse developers published the first open source commit to the project, but precursors to Dataverse date back to 1987. With help from the community, the Dataverse development team completed a code rewrite in 2016, which led to a significant growth in adoption. As of 2017, 26 institutions around the world run Dataverse in production and three installations, including Harvard Dataverse, offer data hosting to any researcher in the world.

Transparency from top to bottom

The Dataverse project emerged from IQSS, an organization that promotes visibility into its various operations. The IQSS webpage of roadmaps[22] indicates the institute's level of commitment to transparency, stating:

> We maintain these development roadmaps publicly so that all our faculty, students, and staff can remain on, or at least work from, the same page; we give everyone complete visibility into what IQSS is working toward, how we are going about it, and when we plan to get there. For each area of development, you will find the big picture and ways to drill down to whatever level of detail you desire; for some, you will find ongoing community discussion forums, and in many you can even see the raw computer code we are in the process of writing. We realize that this level of transparency is highly unusual in a large complex environment like Harvard, but our research indicates that we do a much better job when involving our community in our operations and empowering its members to fuel the growth and improvement of our products, services, and activities.

22 https://www.iq.harvard.edu/roadmaps

Support for transparency from its parent organization helps the Dataverse team feel comfortable opening up. The project's public roadmap provides an overview with links to dive into fine detail of any particular feature or bug. The roadmap also enumerates the project's strategic goals, helping set expectations with the community regarding project priorities. The team communicates changes to the roadmap on the public "dataverse-community" mailing list as well as on biweekly community calls. (The calls are not recorded but participants collaborate on taking notes and send them to the public mailing list.) At the annual community meeting, the team presents the roadmap and reflects on accomplishments from the past year. Planned releases on the roadmap link to a public kanban board, displaying the status of various issues as they move from the backlog to development, code review, and QA. In short, development is an open book, and the community can follow along with every chapter and even help tell the story.

Transparency in support

As adoption of Dataverse has grown, the community has become better able to support itself. Community members ask and answer questions in public channels, building a knowledge base accessible by any search engine. The team encourages the community to be bold about posting questions to the mailing list and the publicly logged IRC channel. The community is eager to help all members succeed, and the strengths of individual community members shine through.

Transparency in contribution

Increasing contribution is one of the strategic goals of the Dataverse project and the team actively asks questions that encourage publicly contributing to the project such as the following:

- "Can you please open an issue?"
- "Are you interested in making a pull request?"
- "Can you please participate in a community call so we can hear more about your idea?"
- "Can you please start a thread about your idea on the mailing list?"

The community contributes by providing ideas, improving documentation, participating in usability tests, and writing code. Recently the team started tracking community development efforts on a public spreadsheet so that it's clear who is working on what and can provide status updates on various initiatives. As members of the community make progress, an issue number is added to the spreadsheet, followed by a pull request number. By having conversations in the open, the community keeps abreast of current efforts of their counterparts at other institutions, or even the same institutions.

Challenges in transparency

Transparency is not without its challenges. Open source newcomers, both internal and external to the Dataverse project, can find a high level of transparency scary. What if people don't like my code or my design? What if the issue I open is a false alarm? What if my problem is due to something I did wrong? Nagging doubts like this are normal and as a community we must constantly remind each other that we'd rather hear an imperfect idea than nothing at all.

Security deserves special mention in the context of transparency. Like many projects, Dataverse has a private email address for receiving reports of suspected security vulnerabilities. It would be irresponsible to put customers at risk with completely open discussion of security concerns.

Transparency in design presents some challenges as well. In a talk at Ohio Linux Fest 2017, Máirín Duffy from Red Hat explains "the big reveal" from design culture and how the "release early and often" mantra heard so often in open source can be difficult for designers who prefer sharing curated, polished designs. Lately the Dataverse project has been posting unpolished designs on a separate kanban board that is public but not announced. Mockups from the board appear in usability tests and are refined until they are ready to be included in a development sprint.

Results

A positive response from the Dataverse community during a retrospective at a past community meeting has encouraged the team to continue working transparently. The community loves the community calls and only wants more notice about agenda topics and reminders to call in. They appreciate the open roadmap. They asked for issues to be flagged with "help wanted" if there is a way they can contribute. They asked for assistance understanding the system used to write documentation so they can help. In short, more information is better. Putting information into the open—rather than in private emails and messages—maximizes the value of our keystrokes.

Philip Durbin is an open source developer who has contributed to Dataverse, a platform for sharing research data. You can read more about him at his personal website at greptilian.com.

Review and discussion questions

- Phil acknowledges that "support for transparency from its parent organization helps the Dataverse team feel comfortable opening up." Do you think your team's efforts to become more transparent would receive similar support from its parent organization(s)? Why or why not?

- Even a thoroughly transparent organization like the Dataverse Project encounters challenges to operating with complete transparency. Does your team or organization share any of Dataverse's challenges? What unique challenges to transparency does your own organization seem to have?

- Phil explains specific steps the Dataverse community took to make its support processes more transparent. Could your organization do something similar—either from internal or external customers? Why or why not? If not, what *could* your organization do to make support efforts more transparent?

Making more transparent decisions

Sam Knuth

EXERCISE

Time required: 3–6 months

Materials necessary: Blank paper and writing utensils

Activity type: Action

One of the most powerful ways to make your work as a leader more transparent is to take an existing process, open it up for feedback from your team, and then change the process to account for this feedback. The following exercise makes transparency more tangible, and it helps develop the "muscle memory" needed for continually evaluating and adjusting your work with transparency in mind.

I would argue that you can undertake this activity this with any process—even processes that might seem "off limits," like the promotion or salary adjustment processes. But if that's too big for a first bite, then you might consider beginning with a less sensitive process, such as the travel approval process or your system for searching for candidates to fill open positions on your team. (I've done this with our hiring process and promotion processes, for example.)

Opening up processes and making them more transparent builds your credibility and enhances trust with team members. It forces you to "walk the transparency walk" in ways that might challenge your assumptions or comfort level. Working this way does create additional work, particularly at the beginning of the process—but, ultimately, this works well for holding managers (like me) accountable to team members, and it creates more consistency.

Facilitation steps

Phase 1: Pick a process

STEP 1. Think of a common or routine process your team uses, but one that is not generally open for scrutiny. Some examples might include:

- Hiring: How are job descriptions created, interview teams selected, candidates screened and final hiring decisions made?
- Planning: How are your team or organizational goals determined for the year or quarter?
- Promotions: How do you select candidates for promotion, consider them, and decide who gets promoted?
- Manager performance appraisals: Who receives the opportunity to provide feedback on manager performance, and how are they able to do it?
- Travel: How is the travel budget apportioned, and how do you make decisions about whether to approval travel (or whether to nominate someone for travel)?

One of the above examples may resonate with you, or you may identify something else that you feel is more appropriate. Perhaps you've received questions about a particular process, or you find yourself explaining the rationale for a particular kind of decision frequently. Choose something that you are able to control or influence—and something you believe your constituents care about.

STEP 2. Now answer the following questions about the process:

- Is the process currently documented in a place that all constituents know about and can access? If not, go ahead and create that documentation now (it doesn't have to be too detailed; just explain the different steps of the process and how it works). You may find that the process isn't clear or consistent enough to document. In that case, document it the way you *think* it should work in the ideal case.
- Does the completed process documentation explain how decisions are made at various points? For example, in a travel approval process, does it explain how a decision to approve or deny a request is made?
- What are the *inputs* of the process? For example, when determining departmental goals for the year, what data is used for key performance indicators? Whose feedback is sought and incorporated? Who has the opportunity to review or "sign off"?
- What *assumptions* does this process make? For example, in promotion decisions, do you assume that all candidates for promotion will be put forward by their managers at the appropriate time?
- What are the *outputs* of the process? For example, in assessing the performance of the managers, is the result shared with the manager being evaluated? Are any aspects of the review shared more

broadly with the manager's direct reports (areas for improvement, for example)?

Avoid making judgments when answering the above questions. If the process doesn't clearly explain how a decision is made, that might be fine. The questions are simply an opportunity to assess the current state.

Next, revise the documentation of the process until you are satisfied that it adequately explains the process and anticipates the potential questions.

Phase 2: Gather feedback

The next phase involves sharing the process with your constituents and asking for feedback.

STEP 1. Sharing is easier said than done, so:

- Post the process somewhere people can find it internally and note where they can make comments or provide feedback. A Google document works great with the ability to comment on specific text or suggest changes directly in the text.
- Share the process document via email, inviting feedback
- Mention the process document and ask for feedback during team meetings or one-on-one conversations
- Give people a time window within which to provide feedback, and send periodic reminders during that window.

If you don't get much feedback, don't assume that silence is equal to endorsement. Try asking people directly if they have any idea why feedback is not coming in. Are people too busy? Is the process not as important to people as you thought? Have you effectively articulated what you're asking for?

Step 2. Iterate. As you get feedback about the process, engage the team in revising and iterating on the process. Incorporate ideas and suggestions for improvement, and ask for confirmation that the intended feedback has been applied. If you don't agree with a suggestion, be open to the discussion and ask yourself why you don't agree and what the merits are of one method versus another.

Setting a timebox for collecting feedback and iterating is helpful to move things forward. Once feedback has been collected and reviewed, discussed and applied, post the final process for the team to review.

Phase 3: Implement

Implementing a process is often the hardest phase of the initiative. But if you've taken account of feedback when revising your process, people should already been anticipating it and will likely be more supportive. The documentation you have from the iterative process above is a great tool to keep you accountable on the implementation.

Step 1. Review requirements for implementation. Many processes that can benefit from increased transparency simply require doing things a little differently, but you do want to review whether you need any other support (tooling, for example).

Step 2. Set a timeline for implementation. Review the timeline with constituents so they know what to expect. If the new process requires a process change for others, be sure to provide enough time for people to adapt to the new behavior, and provide communication and reminders.

Step 3. Follow up. After using the process for 3-6 months, check in with your constituents to see how it's going. Is the new process more transparent? More effective? More predictable?

Do you have any lessons learned that could be used to improve the process further?

Sam Knuth leads the Customer Content Services team at Red Hat and is an Open Organization Ambassador.

Having transparent conversations

MaryJo Burchard

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 45–60 minutes
>
> Materials needed: Role cards (pre-printed with instructions from this exercise); one small whiteboard, whiteboard marker set, and eraser (or two poster boards with markers); two separate rooms
>
> Activity type: Reflection

This chapter explains the importance of transparency for fostering organizational collaboration and trust. It concludes with an exercise you and your teams can conduct to hone your skills communicating, disclosing, and sharing information and context to establish more transparent working relationships.

Transparency defined

On one hand, transparency is about *access to* and *sharing* of information; on the other hand, it's about clear and authentic communication of information. Communities that run on openness will build environments that leverage both these aspects of transparency.

Working transparently also involves a willingness to share information which will either *create* barriers between people or *remove* them. How do we ensure it does more of the latter than the former? How can we build trust instead of suspicion, especially when another party knows we need their information to thrive?

One recent study[23] of 66 mid-level executives from five distinct industries found that organizational transparency grows *naturally*, where dyadic (one-on-one) and group-level trust and cooperation *is built*. Dyads representing two different departments that needed reliable information from each other could create positive climates in their interdepartmental engagement by intentionally building trust - initially between two key people, using:

- *Conversation*: Communication was consistent, strong, sensitively aligned to the other party, and reciprocal. In this communication, parties were able to clearly explain their intentions.
- *Cooperative tendencies*: Behaviors were designed to reduce threats and demonstrated personal care and concern for the other party.

Incredibly, two parties built trust through these key dyads, trust and cooperation could be transferred into the departments they represented, enabling the departments to feel increasingly comfortable sharing official content that they needed from one another.

Bottom line: Intentionally building trust one-on-one and creating a positive, altruistic climate for group-level trust and cooperation can foster effective growth of scaleable transparency across departmental and organizational lines.

23 See Cynthia, C.W. (2005). Trust diffusion: The effect of interpersonal trust on structure, function, and organizational transparency. *Business and Society, 44*(3), 357-368.

Sharing is caring

Organizational transparency, defined as "the extent to which the organization provides relevant, timely, and reliable information in written and verbal form to [all stakeholders]," begins with person-to-person openness. Despite the fact that both parties of the dyads in the study needed information from one another, quantifiable transparency did not begin with interdepartmental negotiation. It began with two people genuinely caring about each other, creating an atmosphere that enabled each other to assume positive intent from their interactions. Candid communication of intention and attitude reinforced these caring behaviors, creating stories of trustworthiness that each of the parties could take back to their respective networks, who confirmed the trust being reinforced within the dyad. What grew out of these trust stories was widespread cooperation between the departments—and an environment that fed transparency.

Open intention and context

Being transparent gets easier when you express the intention of your questions or motives and provide context when you can. Even a clear, capable communicator expressing additional context for people will help them open up and connect. Trust builds when you show you're making every true effort to build a connection with others.

In Will Wise's book *Ask Powerful Questions*, Wise writes:

> "Intention is key to connecting and asking powerful questions, for it brings clarity to others about where you are coming from. Sharing your intention allows for full transparency rather than opaqueness that leaves other guessing. Sharing your honest inten-

> tion means fully understanding the following: what you are aiming for, what your purpose is, and what you plan to achieve. When clear intention is offered the relationship can move toward a connection of trust."

Lesson: Welcoming others to share their intent, and why this is important to them—and being willing to share the same yourself—can build trust and engage others into connection.

Open behaviors, reducing threat

Sharing with transparency requires vulnerability. When people feel vulnerable, they tend to sense potential threats—especially if transparency in the workplace is new to them. Another party may come to the table struggling with comparison, competition, or fear of exposure, exploitation, or deception. When you exhibit behaviors designed to reduce these threats, you can build trust and give them a trust story to share with their network.

Threat-reducing behaviors are often counter-intuitive, because they require celebrating the other person rather than ourselves. You will need to be confident enough in your own value to make this worth the effort. For example, rather than comparing resumes verbally, you can inquire about and affirm the other person's accomplishments. Rather than expose what they do not know, you can ask them questions about things you know they are confident in. Rather than posing as a superstar (which you may be!), you can demonstrate excellence while still joking honestly about your frailties. Rather than being a cut-throat negotiator, you can work hard to hear their interests and make sure they feel fully represented. Rather than conveniently wording things in a way that could have multiple meanings, you can be clear and generous with the information you provide about your own intention and needs, modeling good faith. Whatever else people are, they are human beings first. When we treat them as humans, we make room for them to feel safe to trust us in other ways, too. Transparency is born in safety.

Lesson: Altruistic care and concern that celebrates the other person can diffuse their fear and empower them to begin to open up.

Open access

Open communities offer a variety of ways to access information, from online repositories to collaborative knowledge commons (and more). As you open your communication, attempt to create pathways to the information you are sharing so it remains living, fluid, and organic. This way, other parties (and their networks) will find their efforts reinforced with easy pathways to provide information—further enhancing willingness to collaborate. Creating unnecessary barriers prevents understanding and is often perceived as an intentional act (which can reduce or eliminate the trust you're working so hard to build).

Lesson: If you're going to start sharing information (or have an ongoing conversation), be available and provide frequent updates. Keep pathways to information open and accessible.

Open position

The fact of the matter is that you have a choice in the position you take in conversation: knowing or learning (see Figure 1). Determining which position to take requires deliberate effort and intention, especially if you intend to move beyond thinking differently, and actually listen when someone is speaking.

Lesson: Transparency is not always about us; it's about the "we," not the "me."

Listening to Win (Knowing)		Listening to Understand (Learning)
Making assumptions		Exploring possibilities
Listen to win		Listen to understand
Need to be right		Need to be open
All alone		Connected
Same old same old		Creating the new
Frozen with caution		Willing to risk

Figure 1: From Me to We[24]

Building with conversations

This activity is intended to demonstrate how our words and actions can destroy or create barriers to transparency. For it to work well, you will need at least eight participants organized into two groups of four.

Each group will have the following roles:

Group 1. ("Person B" will be listening/behaving to win —"Me")

- Person A (1): Person with the information holders
- Person B (1): Person who wants the information
- Person C (1+): Other person(s) who works with the information holders
- Interviewer/Observer (1+)

Group 2. ("Person B" will be listening/behaving to understand—"We")

- Person A (1): Person with the information holders
- Person B (1): Person who wants the information
- Person C (1+): Other person(s) who works with the information holders
- Interviewer/Observer (1+)

24 Listening to Understand courtesy of We! (www.weand.me), reproduced here with permission.

Facilitation instructions

Step 1. Separate the participants into groups and assign roles to each member.

Step 2. Distribute the appropriate role card to each person. Say, "*Please quietly read your role card. Understand that you can behave and speak only based on what you see on the card. Do not share what is on your card with anyone else. The activity depends upon your ability to surprise each other with your responses.*"

Step 3. Bring Person A and Person B from Group 1 to the front of the room, and send the rest of both groups into the other room, with an observer to ensure they do not share what is on their cards. Anyone else in the room can remain as observers.

Step 4. Say, "*Person A and Person B are from two completely different departments. Person A is in a group that has information that Person B needs. They're now going to talk to each other, speaking and acting only according to what their role cards allow them to do. Person A and Person B, please feel free to get into character—just stick to the type of behaviors and words described on your role cards.*"

Have the Person B begin the conversation, and allow the two of them to continue to engage based on their role cards for two or three minutes.

Step 5. Have Person B go back into the other room or into the hallway, and have Person(s) C come in. Say, "*Person A and Person(s) C, who work together in the same department, are now going to talk to each other, speaking and acting only according to what their role cards allow them to do. Person A and Person(s) C, please feel free to get into character—just stick to the type of behaviors and words described on your role cards.*"

Have Person C begin the conversation, and allow the two of them to continue to engage based on their role cards for one or two minutes.

STEP 6. Bring Person B back in and have the interviewer/observer ask Person A and Person(s) C: "*On a scale of 1-10, how transparent do you as a team feel like being with my department?*" Tell Person A and Person(s) C to get together and agree on a score and hold it up for everyone in the room to see.

STEP 7. Allow the designated interviewer to ask Person A and Person(s) C: "*Why did you decide on this score?*" They can also ask Person B: "*What do you think about this rating, based on your actions and words?*"

STEP 8. Say, "*Thank you, Group 1. Please sit down. You will now have the opportunity to watch Group 2 experience the same scenario, with a different approach from Person B. Let's see what happens.*" Repeat Steps 1–7 with Group 2.

STEP 9. Encourage everyone to sit down and prepare to begin a group discussion.

Reflection

Begin discussion of this exercise by asking the people who observed both groups for their impressions. You might say, for example:

- "*What were the critical words and behaviors that seemed to shape the capacity to trust?*"
- "*How did the interactions between two people impact the willingness for the rest of the team to be transparent?*
- "*How does this relate to your daily interaction with others, and their capacity to be transparent with you?*"

Group 1 role card text

PERSON A. You are very highly trained in data analysis and generating reports, but feeling nervous about this new opportunity to "build bridges" with a department that wants more information included in your reports. Your team has told you to be their representative in a meeting with the other department, but what if they try to steal your department's ideas or twist what you say? You have worked hard to make sure your reports are accurate. How can you be sure they're being honest about how they'll use the information? You know how they have used the information you've given them in the past, but it's not clear to you what they'd even need this other information for. You are the best person at your job and like to share your experience and expertise about big data, but you heard they can be pretty pushy - what if they ask you something you don't know?

PERSON B. You are the top performer on your team, and you are all about the big data and how it connects performance to underlying causes and other factors. But this other department is holding out on you, so you can't make your full assessments or predictions. They have all the information you need, just sitting there. It doesn't matter why you need it—this is an open company, you're the big data expert, and they should trust you like you trust them. You don't question the accuracy of their reports. Their reports are not as detailed or as big-picture oriented as you like them, but then, you have more experience and training than their analyst, and you're not afraid to prove it to make a point. Which is why they should just stop stalling and let you access the data. This is all one company, one team, so they have no right to keep the data from you when you need it.

PERSON(S) C. You highly respect Person A. S/he has done everything necessary to garner your trust, with excellent performance, and through consistency as a person. You are very interested in his/her insights about whether or not your team should move forward with this request to provide so much more information in the reports. Your biggest questions right now are:

- Tell me how it went! What was your impression?
- Why does s/he want this information? Do you really think we can trust them with it, after all our hard work?
- I'm curious; tell me more about . . . (ask for clarification)

Group 2 role cards

Person A. You are very highly trained in data analysis and generating reports, but feeling nervous about this new opportunity to "build bridges" with a department that wants more information included in your reports. Your team has told you to be their representative in a meeting with the other department, but what if they try to steal your department's ideas or twist what you say? You have worked hard to make sure your reports are accurate. How can you be sure they're being honest about how they'll use the information? You know how they have used the information you've given them in the past, but it's not clear to you what they'd even need this other information for. You are the best person at your job and like to share your experience and expertise about big data, but you heard they can be pretty pushy— what if they ask you something you don't know?

Person B. You are the top performer on your team, and you are all about the big data and how it connects performance to underlying causes and other factors. But this other department seems nervous to trust you with some of the data they have worked especially hard to obtain. If you can gain their trust, you can make your full assessments or predictions. Beyond getting more robust reports, you see the need to work on relationships here—this is an open company. While you're the big data expert, they are data experts, too. They've worked hard, and their work has been important. Clarify that you simply want to make sure your strategic predictions for the department are aligned with their data, and that you will be clear where their data came from, and confirm that you're conveying it accurately. Celebrate and acknowledge your respect for their hard work—do they want to talk about their experience in getting it? What would make it easier for them to trust you? What are their concerns, and how can you help? Do you have anything they need to know? Would they like to see the analysis, or even work with you on it? What can you do to help them feel included? Ultimately, this is all one company, one team, so they have every right to work with you and have their questions and concerns addressed.

PERSON(S) C. You highly respect Person A. S/he has done everything necessary to garner your trust, with excellent performance, and through consistency as a person. You are very interested in his/her insights about whether or not your team should move forward with this request to provide so much more information in the reports. Your biggest questions right now are:

- Tell me how it went! What was your impression?
- Why does s/he want this information? Do you really think we can trust them with it, after all our hard work?
- I'm curious; tell me more about . . . (ask for clarification)

Dr. MaryJo Burchard, PhD, is co-founder of LDR21 and developer of the Initial Response Index and Open Index. She specializes in research and consulting that empowers people in times of change. She facilitates leadership training and organizational development for the City of Virginia Beach and teaches Organizational Behavior part-time to graduate students at Regent University's School of Business and Leadership.

Unit 2: Inclusivity

Introduction: What is inclusivity?

Flavio Percoco

Inclusivity is the quality of an open organization that allows and encourages people to join the organization and feel a connection to it. Practices aimed at enhancing inclusivity are typically those that welcome new participants to the organization and create an environment that makes them want to stay.

When we talk about inclusivity, we should clarify something: Being "inclusive" is not the same as being "diverse." Diversity is a product of inclusivity; you need to create an inclusive community in order to become a diverse one, not the other way around. The degree to which your open organization is inclusive determines how it adapts to, responds to, and embraces diversity in order to improve itself. Interestingly enough, the best way to know which organizational changes will make your group more inclusive is to interact with the people you want to join your community.

Ideally, inclusivity and diversity should have no limits in your open organization. The more inclusive you are, the more variance you will be able to introduce in your organization. The more variance you introduce to an organization, the more that organization will be able to tolerate changes—and the more you will be able to leverage your organization's diversity to make it better.

Dimensions of inclusivity

We should remember another important point, too: Being inclusive means attending to more than categories like gender and race. Gender and racial diversity are absolutely critical to an open organization, of course, but they are not the only two factors that influence your organization's relative level of diversity.

Your organization should strive to have people from different cultures, people living in different parts of the world, people from different backgrounds, with different skillsets or ability levels, and living in different social realities, for it to *really* be diverse.

Cultural differences are some one of the most eye-opening qualities you'll see at work in any organization (even if we don't often hear about these differences on the news and social media.). Being deliberate about learning from the various cultural groups in your organization can realize just how biased or partial some aspects of your organization really are—and how much you can do to improve them.

Cultural diversity pertains to the different ways people solve problems, the way people talk, the hours people prefer to work, and the way leaders interact with members of their teams. People with different cultural backgrounds differ, for example, in how collaborative or individualist they are, or in the ways they interpret spoken or written language. Cultures can be similar to each other or completely different.

Building for inclusivity

Building an inclusive organization often means acknowledging that *your* way of doing things is not the *only* way of doing things. It often involves changing the *structure* of the organization to create an environment where everyone can feel safe and valued. You have to allow its members to change it (that's why inclusivity is so closely tied to *adaptability*, which is the subject of Unit 3). If members of a organization don't feel like they can adapt the community, then it's not inclusive. If proposing and making changes to an organization is difficult, then it's not an open organization.

The processes by which you make your organization more inclusive—and therefore diverse—not only will help it grow but also keep it from derailing. They will help members of your community interact with each other in a common, shared, and familiar environment—find those shared customs and norms that they not only live *with* but also live *by*). It is possible to create an environment that different people can feel comfortable with and it, of course, comes with some trade offs. What makes your organization inclusive is not the lack of trade-offs it makes but its ability to acknowledge these trade-offs, adapt to the member's needs, or provide alternatives when the specific changes they request aren't possible.

Inclusivity isn't about making everyone happy; it's about making everyone feel *comfortable*. Some people may not always be happy about some of the aspects of the organization, but they should never feel uncomfortable in the organization (or uncomfortable expressing their concerns about the organization).

Creating a more inclusive organization will likely involve making many changes, and (at the outset, at least) most of these changes ought to be small. There's no need to invert your organization overnight. You might start with the exercises in the following unit. By taking little steps towards a more inclusive and diverse organization, you'll be automatically inviting new members to join and help you out. Big changes can actually cause instability, which is something you may want to avoid, as there are other members in your community that need to adapt to these changes.

Ultimately, you can never be *completely* inclusive, because that would imply that the world has stopped changing and cultures have stopped evolving. You can, however, create an environment capable of adapting itself to the changes (or existing differences) the world may be going through. That's the essence an inclusive organization: its ability to adapt to our diverse world.

Flavio Percoco is a passionate developer, with interests in languages, cloud computing and distributed architectures. He's currently working for Red Hat where he spends most of his time hacking on OpenStack.

A community-powered approach to diversity and inclusion

DeLisa Alexander

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Red Hat
>
> Employees: 11,000
>
> Industry: Open source enterprise software solutions
>
> Challenge: Involve the entire organization in diversity and inclusion initiatives

When it comes to building more diverse and inclusive companies, one of the biggest challenges CEOs and HR leaders face is how to inspire a passion for taking action across the entire organization.

Lots of potential interventions are available to organizations, but according to the recent Harvard Business Review publication "Why diversity programs fail," many of the typical command-and-control, top-down approaches to improving diversity and inclusion are not only ineffective[25]; they can actually have a negative impact.

So when it comes to diversity and inclusion, what's a company to do?

---

25 https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail

At Red Hat, we decided to approach this challenge in the way that we approach most things: in the open source way. We published our employment statistics, and then engaged our entire organization—thousands of Red Hatters—to develop a global diversity and inclusion strategy.

Everyone's problem to solve

Red Hat's diversity and inclusion strategy grew from a single moment in 2014, when one brave Red Hatter raised their hand during our quarterly company meeting and asked, "When will Red Hat publish our diversity statistics?"

This question had been on my mind for a while. Other technology companies had just started to publish their employment statistics, as a way to highlight an industry-wide gap in diversity. Until that time, these statistics were considered highly confidential and sensitive company information, and were rarely shared.

My background is in law, and as an attorney, I tend to be a risk-averse person. Working in an open organization has often challenged me to balance that perspective with consideration for the enormous benefits of transparency. In that moment, I felt inspired about the opportunity to shift my mindset from defaulting to closed when faced with a problem too large for one team to solve, to defaulting to open, and engaging the entire Red Hat population to help us figure it out. It was our chance to show up as the open source leader on this important topic.

At that time, we were doing many wonderful things around the globe to try and make a difference—not just inside our own company, but also in open source communities and the technology industry as a whole. But our efforts often felt to me like pouring a bucket of water into the ocean, because there were few, if any, quick fixes. I knew from my own research that making a difference requires persistence, long-term investments, and sustained focus. We are a much smaller company than those we compete against, and most of the companies publishing their numbers had far greater resources available.

We started by pulling together a diverse, global, cross-functional advisory group to help us think through the process of publishing our data, as well as to help inform our next steps. Half of the advisory group were people who we asked for feedback and guidance as we prepared to publish our numbers; the other half would be filled later on, when we invited Red Hatters with a passion for diversity and inclusion to volunteer for the remaining open seats.

It's impossible to fully describe the groundswell of interest and passion we saw, both internally and externally, when we published our numbers. Immediately, a community of passion began to form inside our company. I was encouraged by how many Red Hat associates and managers reached out for the first time, whether privately or publicly, to express strong support for our efforts.

The overwhelming sentiment was not "What will Red Hat do to fix this?" but rather, "How can I help?" Red Hatters began sharing about their individual efforts all over the world, how they were already coming together to lead informal events like hackathons and coding classes targeted at underrepresented groups.

A community-powered approach

One of our early commitments to the company was a global strategy and roadmap. As we began to hear the stories of what Red Hatters were already doing, along with areas where they felt it was important for our company to focus our attention and resources, it seemed that the best way to develop our strategy and roadmap was to approach this challenge in a way that was open, inclusive, and grounded in research.

We wanted to build a strategy and roadmap that applied industry best practices as well as harnessed the unique aspects of our company's culture—our open source ethos, our passion for helping others, our strong sense of shared purpose. Most of all, I wanted to create something that every Red Hatter at every level of the company felt a sense of shared ownership in, something that gave everyone ample opportunities to make an impact.

We started by joining the Stanford University's Clayman Institute as partner. This organization is one of the leading think-tanks on diversity and inclusion. Dr. Caroline Simard from the Clayman Institute helped us develop a deck of research and findings that included compelling studies about the business value of diversity when it comes to things like innovation and long-term profitability. In addition, our research deck highlighted the important role that inclusion plays in unlocking those benefits, the challenges that individuals from underrepresented groups face in the workplace, and our own internal data alongside benchmark data from similar companies.

Our research deck offered a compelling case for focusing on diversity and inclusion, along with a reality check about how much work needed to be done within our company and the technology industry. But research alone rarely inspires action. We needed to bring the entire company along the journey, and give everyone space to grapple with their own concerns and uncertainties on this topic, while also creating an environment where everyone felt welcomed to ask questions and contribute ideas.

So we partnered with our Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group to develop a first draft of a strategy and three-year roadmap. We shared our research deck along with the draft strategy and roadmap, which highlighted four proposed focus areas: senior leaders and influencers; diversity and inclusion communities (e.g. employee resource groups); recruit, develop, reward; and other talent and HR processes.

Then we invited everyone's feedback, ideas, and questions, through their choice of open and private channels. We received hundreds of comments, including helpful suggestions for the draft strategy and some debate about the research shared. At times, this open dialog was uncomfortable, and there were moments where we had to work hard to keep the conversation productive and feeling safe for everyone participating and reading. Yet making the deliberate choice to navigate those moments of tension when diverse perspectives come together had the benefit of creating a greater understanding between many of our associates, while also contributing to a more robust strategy and roadmap.

A marathon, not a sprint

It will take time to improve our numbers and drive significant changes across the technology industry, and it's far too soon to declare our approach a success. However, what I can see already is that approaching this challenge in an open source way has yielded a number of benefits that a top-down approach would not.

First, I'm continually amazed at the sheer passion and energy we see from our associates. Engaging our entire company allowed us to identify and focus on areas that they care most about, which in turn, inspired more action and effort from everyone. For example, within two years, we went from having one vibrant diversity and inclusion community (our Women's Leadership Community) to three, with the formation of BUILD (Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity) and Red Hat Pride

(LBGTQA), and one more under development for our U.S. veterans. We provided the toolkit and path for any Red Hatter to create a diversity and inclusion community, and sure enough, a number of passionate associates were quick to raise their hands and lead the formation process.

Second, we've seen remarkable leadership support. We took a similar approach with our senior leaders actively engaging with each, seeking to understand what they would be passionate about supporting and what concerns they had. I also provided them with their organization's data, along with the industry research. From those conversations, we put our heads together and came up with actions that were meaningful to them and tailored to fit their passions and their organization's unique needs. The result was a team of senior leaders who feel a passion for diversity and inclusion, and who actively advocate for it, each in their own authentic way. When I talk to HR leaders in other companies, I'm reminded of how difficult it is to inspire that level of support and engagement.

Third, we've seen an impact that goes far beyond our company walls. By coming together and sharing what we're doing, both inside and outside of Red Hat, we discover new opportunities where we can make a difference, as well as ways to get more value from our existing efforts. For example, this year, we added a new track to the Red Hat Summit called "Culture of Collaboration," with sessions focused on diversity and inclusion, the open source way, and how to make organizations more open and collaborative. Our customers and partners welcomed these topics, and those sessions sparked requests from Red Hatters to bring similar workshops to their customer and partner events.

One big takeaway that I've had from this experience is that diversity and inclusion is a personal topic. Although at times it's messy, I have also been surprised by how simple some solutions can be. Having an open environment where people feel free to share their perspectives gives you the opportunity to make changes that benefit others. For example, we learned from this process that many managers opened conversations with their teams by saying, "Hey guys," or "Hey, guys and ladies," which made some women on those teams feel uncomfortable. Now, we coach our managers to use "Hey team," a simple and more inclusive greeting that welcomes everyone without calling attention to gender.

We're in the second year of our strategy and roadmap, and there's always more to learn and discover. We continue to make adjustments based on research and feedback, and not every initiative is a resounding success. But by being transparent with our associates about our efforts, we are able to keep diversity and inclusion a top priority for our company, and inspire a remarkable number of Red Hatters to volunteer their time and energy to make a difference.

DeLisa Alexander is Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer at Red Hat. Under her leadership, this team focuses on acquiring, developing, and retaining talent and enhancing the Red Hat culture and brand.

Review and discussion questions

- DeLisa cites recent research indicating that "many of the typical command-and-control, top-down approaches to improving diversity and inclusion" have unintended (often negative or counterproductive) consequences. Why do you think this is the case?

- DeLisa writes that "research alone rarely inspires action." What can your organization do to spark new and productive diversity and inclusion initiatives?

- "Diversity and inclusion is a personal topic," DeLisa says. "Although at times it's messy, I have also been surprised by how simple some solutions can be." Can you name one small "simple solution" you could implement immediately to enhance inclusivity with your team?

Balancing agility and consensus

Peter Weis

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Matson Navigation
>
> Employees: 1,000
>
> Industry: Global transportation and logistics
>
> Challenge: Make quick decisions without compromising organizational support

I have always prided myself on being an inclusive leader, driven by a heavy emphasis on early consensus. Building that consensus pays dividends down the road as difficult decisions and strategies face their moments of truth. Major change is ultimately impossible without sustained organizational support, and it feels good and right to gain that support prior to proceeding.

However, after leading a gut-wrenching but successful multi-year technology transformation, I now view leadership in a more nuanced manner. While I still tend towards a democratic leadership style, I now know that no single leadership style is universally appropriate.

During times of great change, the urgency and a sheer number of key decisions to be made demand a faster decision-making process in order to ensure momentum and avoid getting bogged down. In this setting, pure democratic leadership doesn't fit. This is particularly true for traditional operating companies who have been successful and who have entrenched behaviors and attachments to the status quo. Fresh, courageous thinking is required.

A visionary leadership style that projects a confident and compelling view of tomorrow can increase speed without compromising organizational support during the inevitable difficult times. How?

Starting small

Let's start with how to make the right decisions more quickly. For nearly every critical decision, I now rely on a small, enlightened group of people who are unafraid to give me candid feedback and new ideas. Smaller teams are better. By creating the smallest group possible that allows you to get the right answer, you'll go faster without sacrificing quality.

In forming these small teams, you'll need your "Grade A" players, your best thinkers, by your side. After all, you may live with these decisions for years, either creating a new win or explaining a new loss. Speed is achieved by having the right talent and only the right talent involved in deciding on a strategic direction. As your strategy progresses, you'll find that as you work through one difficult decision after another, this speed effect will compound and can accelerate a transformational effort by months or years and save millions of dollars.

When the stakes are high, being right trumps being fully inclusive. Yes, this leadership style is faster, but there are trade-offs. How do you bring along those not directly involved in key decisions? Once you're confident you've made the right decisions, you've got some selling to do, and it will take investments in time you may not feel you can afford.

Critical buy-in

In order to ensure support for broad-reaching decisions, I've learned to lean heavily on change management practices. Early on, this was one of our blind spots that I wish I'd have addressed sooner. Dismissing these best practices as a "soft" skill is both pejorative and risky. Change management is a crucial and artful leadership skill that requires training and practice and can be harder to find than most technology and management skills.

During times of great change, achieving buy-in from those not directly involved requires more than saying "here is the strategy." It's not enough to just explain the vision and changes. Invariably, as you're talking about change and disruption, people naturally sift through your words, trying to figure out how it affects them. "What does this mean for my job? What will my role be? Will I have to learn new skills? Am I at risk?" Only when your staffs get answers that make them feel informed can they get on board.

Evangelizing your decisions, listening, and spending time out in the field are important steps to build the support of those in less strategic roles. Staff will feel reassured by visionary leaders who take the time to communicate meaningfully. If your strategy is right, they'll rest easier knowing that a strong vision and plan to execute is in place. However, trying to communicate strategic shifts remotely, via email or video, is risky and in my view a serious mistake. Yes, it's time-consuming to spend time in person, particularly for a global organization. But it's absolutely crucial, particularly in the early days of change when trust is low and anxiety is running high. There simply isn't enough universally available bandwidth on the internet to communicate emotions or to gauge reactions. Many leaders will feel they don't have the time for face-to-face gatherings. Great leaders must realize they don't have a choice.

Creating evangelists

You've probably heard the expression that "failure is an orphan but success has many parents." Said another way, if you've gotten your strategy correct and you've taken the time to evangelize and listen to your broader audience, those in the organization will follow and ultimately treat your decisions as their own.

By combining faster decision-making via your trusted "A Team" with a focus on evangelizing your message to your broader organization, you'll simultaneously achieve three critical goals:

- You'll build momentum by accelerating delivery
- You'll earn trust with the broader organization through candor and accessibility
- You'll begin to change your organization's culture as it becomes more comfortable with change

Get your decisions right as quickly as possible and tell your story with passion and confidence. Your organization will follow.

Peter Weis is VP and CIO of Matson Navigation, a $2 billion, publicly traded, global transportation and logistics company. He has more than 15 years of global CIO experience.

Review and discussion questions

- Peter argues that "a visionary leadership style that projects a confident and compelling view of tomorrow can increase speed without compromising organizational support during the inevitable difficult times." How does he suggest leaders achieve this style? What are its characteristics, according to Peter? What characteristics would you add to his description?

- Peter suggests that "trying to communicate strategic shifts remotely, via email or video, is risky and in my view a serious mistake." Do you agree? Why or why not? Do you ever have difficulty communicating or evangelizing decisions across long distances?

- Peter stresses the importance of achieving widespread employee buy-in while retaining the ability to make decisions quickly. How do you and your team or organization manage this delicate balance?

A checklist for unbiased decisions

Yev Bronshteyn

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 15 minutes first time (2–5 minutes subsequently)
>
> Materials needed: Editable version of this checklist, or a printed-copy and a writing implement
>
> Activity type: Reflection

Bias is the single greatest threat to the open organization. This is no exaggeration. In traditional organizations, responsibilities for evaluating ideas, strategies, contributions—even people—typically fall on (presumably) trained managers. In open organizations, that responsibility rests with contributors of all sorts.

"In organizations that are fit for the future," writes Jim Whitehurst in *The Open Organization*, "Leaders will be chosen by the led. Contribution will matter more than credentials [...] Compensation will be set by peers, not bosses." According to Whitehurst, an open organization is a meritocracy: "Those people who have earned their peers' respect over time drive decisions." But the way humans allocate their respect is itself prone to bias. And imagine what can happen when biased decision-making results in the wrong leaders being chosen, certain contributions being over- or undervalued, or compensation being allocated on something other than merit.

Use the following checklist to review several documented phenomena that, sometimes unconsciously, skew decision-making practices.

The bias checklist

☐ **Has this person done a favor for you?** If so, you are more likely to impulsively do something that feels like a favor to them. This principle of reciprocity[26] is very powerful. This is why when charities send you solicitations by mail, they will often include address labels, calendars, other cheap goodies. When you feel like you've been given something, you are more likely to find yourself giving something back. Reciprocity is especially dangerous in an open organization, where the odds of two contributors having to evaluate each other's contributions are drastically higher than they may be elsewhere.

☐ **Has this person done something unfavorable to you?** Reciprocity works both ways. Even if you can swear up and down that you're not the type who bears a grudge, if someone has previously rejected contributions from you, be especially alert for the desire to reject a contribution from them.

☐ **Has someone else done something particularly favorable or unfavorable to you?** While we're on the subject, be on the lookout for Generalized Reciprocity—a tendency to "pay it forward," or to "do onto others" what someone else has done to you. There has been evidence[27] of a higher tendency to pass on negative or unfair behaviors than positive ones, so if you feel "wronged" at the moment you're evaluating a contribution, this feeling can influence your evaluation. One study[28]

26 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reciprocity_%28social_psychology%29

27 http://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fa0031047

28 https://www.nature.com/articles/srep22316

found writing a message to the original perpetrator of an unfair or unjust behavior explaining your feelings can reduce your impulse to pass that unfairness onto others.

☐ **Have you already done something nice (however small) for this person?** This one's a bit more subtle than reciprocity, but no less powerful. Subscribe to the mailing list of a major political party, and you will be inundated with requests to fill out a survey or make a small donation (e.g., $1). These are effective solicitation techniques, because once you have done something positive for someone, you become more likely to do something even bigger for that person. This phenomenon is sometimes called the "Foot In The Door" technique[29]. If you have spoken favorably of an idea, a contribution or a contributor, or approved past work of the contributor, you will be likely biased in favor of that contributor.

☐ **Have you previously spoken ill of an idea, a contribution, or a person?** The same need for consistency with oneself that powers the Foot in the Door technique also works in the negative. If you have previously treated an idea, a contribution, or a person with disdain or have otherwise acted unfavorably toward a person, you will be predisposed to continue to act in that way.

☐ **Is the person good looking?** It has long-since been documented that the attractiveness[30] of someone performing a task influences our evaluation of how someone performs that task. This is an example of the Halo Effect[31]—a phenomenon whereby one attribute of a person leads us to assume or overestimate other attributes of that person.

29 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foot-in-the-door_technique

30 http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1974-25236-001

31 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_effect

☐ **Is the person successful or renowned in unrelated areas?** This is another example of the halo effect. For example, Stephen Hawking's anti-AI pronouncements[32] received wide press coverage across the world, even though all of Stephen Hawking's education and accomplishments are in physics and cosmology. Another example comes direct from the original *The Open Organization*. Whitehurst writes about how Gavin King (creator of the Hibernate Framework[33]) was allowed to embark on a new project to create a new language for the Java virtual machine (JVM). Today, that language, Ceylon[34], languishes in relative obscurity, compared to competing JVM languages Scala[35] (which has existed for years prior to Ceylon) and Kotlin[36] (released at about the same time). Data frameworks and programming languages are examples of substantially different areas, so it seems fallacious, in retrospect, to assume resounding success in one area would portend any success in the other.

☐ **Does a person or a contribution have similarities to someone or something you respect or admire, or dislike or oppose?** When making evaluations, we have a tendency to compare what we see to similar things from our own experience[37] and pass judgment based on similarity to those things. This is why, for example, political activists often like to compare the people they oppose to Hitler. None of those being compared have objectively committed wrongs even remotely re-

32 http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-30290540

33 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hibernate_%28framework%29

34 https://ceylon-lang.org/

35 https://www.scala-lang.org/

36 https://kotlinlang.org/

37 https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1030517

sembling Hitler's mass murders, but the comparisons are driven by the intuition that any similarity to Hitler presents the target in a negative light.

☐ **Does this person meet or violate your norms for how a successful person looks?** Whether or not we admit it to ourselves, we all have biases and stereotypes for what a successful person in a field looks like. For example, when asked to picture a successful software engineer, many of us will think of a white or Asian male. While gender and racial biases have been widely discussed, awareness of them alone is not to compensate for their effect. We have to make these unconscious biases conscious and force ourselves to second-guess our judgments in their light.

Avoiding biases

Knowing about a bias may not be enough to prevent its effects. Many of us just aren't that good at correcting ourselves. This is why it's crucial to take steps wherever possible to avoid biases:

☐ **Evaluate contributions anonymously.** Orchestras, for example, will often audition musicians without seeing them. This practice has reduced the gender gap in major orchestras long before it became adopted by televised talent shows.

☐ **Define structured and rigorous evaluation criteria for people and contributions.**

Knowing about, and even anticipating, our biases is the first step in the journey to overcome them. But it is not the end.

Opening up on biases

Working through the checklist above, for instance, one may be attempted to acknowledge the *possibility* of the biases—but ultimately deny experiencing them. Bad news: This may itself be a bias talking. Humans have been found to be overconfident in their abilities in virtually all areas, from driving[38] to investing[39]. So there's every reason to assume we may be overconfident in our own ability to screen ourselves for biases.

Fortunately, the structure of the open organization can help us overcome overconfidence. In *The Open Organization*, Whitehurst writes about the principle of *360-degree of accountability*, meaning "you are accountable to everybody." 360-degree accountability empowers participants to recognize biases not only in themselves (which is difficult to do) but also in others (which is easier). "My job is [. . .] to take questions and feedback and engage associates in a conversation about the decisions we're making as a team," Whiterhurst writes. Thus, in an open organization, it should be appropriate—indeed, encouraged—to ask, for example, "have you thought you might be biased in favor of X due to your prior positive statements about it?" The answer to the question, rather than a "yes" or "no," should be the concrete steps one has taken (or will take) to avoid bias. A reasonable response may be: "No, I haven't thought of it, but now that you mention it, let me ask Y, who has not dealt with X previously, for a neutral perspective."

When bias is acknowledged, discussed, and counteracted proactively and systematically, an organization becomes more deeply empowered to scale trust, responsibility, and accountability across the organization. An open organization relies on the soundness of human judgment across its ranks. Taking every possible step to make this judgment as objective and trustworthy as it can be is therefore absolutely imperative.

38 http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0001691881900056?via%3Dihub

39 https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-overconfidence-hurts-investors/

Yev Bronshteyn is a software engineer (with an open source governance bend) and occasional developer outreacher.

Taking steps toward greater inclusivity

Laura Hilliger

EXERCISE

Estimated time to complete: 45–60 minutes

Materials needed: A large, open space

Activity type: Introduction

This "privilege walk" exercise helps participants develop awareness of themselves, which can improve how they relate to others. In this way, it invites people to think about ways inclusivity can create positive changes in their organizations.

Facilitation steps

STEP 1. Explain to the group that we all have certain privileges others have not had. You might say something like: "*Sometimes we don't notice privileges because they're so ingrained in our culture. We are confronted on a daily basis with cultural and social norms that may be related to a certain groups' privilege. We are also confronted with marginalized communities and perspectives that deserve to have a voice. Understanding and acknowledging privileges is key to understanding why and how we react and perceive our surroundings. In order to objectively reflect on our interactions we need to focus on the intersectionality of privilege. It is an essential framing that can help us understand how every privilege or marginalization exists in a different but related place.*"

Step 2. Ask participants to stand in a line at one end of the space. Explain that you will read a series of statements aloud.

Step 3. Instruct participants to take steps forward or backward according to the statements you're about to make. Tell your participants that if they're uncomfortable admitting that a certain statement applies to them, then they can simply wait for the next statement. No one has to move.

Step 4. Read each of the following statements[40] aloud, and pause between each one to allow participants to take the steps that might pertain to them:

- If you are right-handed, take one step forward.
- If English is your first language, take one step forward.
- If one or both of your parents have a college degree, take one step forward.
- If you can find Band-Aids at mainstream stores designed to blend in with or match your skin tone, take one step forward.
- If you rely, or have relied, primarily on public transportation, take one step back.
- If you have worked with people you felt were like yourself, take one step forward
- If you constantly feel unsafe walking alone at night, take one step back.
- If your household employs help as servants, gardeners, etc., take one step forward.

40 The author would like to thank Rebecca Layne and Ryan Chiu (https://peacelearner.org/) for ideas and statements included in this exercise.

- If you are able to move through the world without fear of sexual assault, take one step forward.
- If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.
- If you were ever made fun of or bullied for something you could not change or was beyond your control, take one step back.
- If your family ever left your homeland or entered another country not of your own free will, take one step back.
- If you would never think twice about calling the police when trouble occurs, take one step forward.
- If you have ever been able to play a significant role in a project or activity because of a talent you gained previously, take one step forward.
- If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence, take one step forward.
- If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food, take one step back.
- If you feel respected for your academic performance, take one step forward.
- If you have a physically visible disability, take one step back.
- If you have an invisible illness or disability, take one step back.
- If you were ever discouraged from an activity because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, take one step back.

- If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to fit in more, take one step back.
- If you have ever been profiled by someone else using stereotypes, take one step back.
- If you feel good about how your identities are portrayed by the media, take one step forward.
- If you were ever accepted for something you applied to because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step forward.
- If you have health insurance take one step forward.
- If you have ever been spoken over because you could not articulate your thoughts fast enough, take one step back.
- If someone has ever spoken for you when you did not want them to do so, take one step back.
- If there was ever substance abuse in your household, take one step back.
- If you come from a single-parent household, take one step back.
- If you live in an area with crime and drug activity, take one step back.
- If someone in your household suffered or suffers from mental illness, take one step back.
- If you have been a victim of sexual harassment, take one step back.
- If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step back.

- If you are never asked to speak on behalf of a group of people who share an identity with you, take one step forward.
- If you can make mistakes and not have people attribute your behavior to flaws in your racial or gender group, take one step forward.
- If you went to college, take one step forward.
- If you have more than fifty books in your household, take one step forward.
- If your parents told you that you can be anything you want to be, take one step forward.

STEP 5. After you've read the statements aloud, ask the participants to look around at where people are in the room.

STEP 6. Transition to the reflection phase of the exercise by explaining that both privilege and marginalization are part of who we are. If the room contains chairs, ask everyone to grab one. Place them into a circle and sit down.

Reflection

During the exercise, participants might feel a number of things—particularly if, at the end of the exercise, they realize they've experienced more or less privilege than other participants. For the reflection round, facilitate a discussion that explores how people are feeling. Ask these questions:

- What did you feel like being in the front of the group? In the back? In the middle?
- What were some factors influencing your privilege that you have never thought of before?
- If you found yourself getting farther and farther away from someone, how did you feel in that moment?

- What statement made you think most?
- If you could add a statement, what would it be?
- What do you wish people knew about one of the identities, situations, or disadvantages that caused you to take a step back?
- How can your understanding of your privileges or marginalizations improve your existing relationships with yourself and others?

Laura Hilliger is a writer, educator, and technologist. She's a co-founder of the We Are Open Co-op, an Open Organization Ambassador at Opensource.com, and is working to help Greenpeace become a more open organization.

Reflecting on levels of listening

Laura Hilliger

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 30 minutes
>
> Materials needed: Chairs and tables assembled into workstations for small groups; three notebooks or a few sheets of paper and pens for each group; a watch, clock, or timer
>
> Activity type: Reflection

In this exercise, participants will learn about three levels of listening and practice using each level. This will deepen the participants' ability to self-reflect, and help your team become more self-aware—an important aspect to emotional intelligence and our ability to be inclusive.

Facilitation steps

Step 1. Gather participants in a standing circle. Explain the following three levels of listening and, and tell the group that humans tend to switch between these levels on a regular basis.

- *Level 1: Internal listening*. Internal listening occurs when we're focused on what we're thinking or feeling instead of focusing on what a speaker is saying. Sentences, phrases, and thoughts run through our mind when we switch to this level of listening. This is the level of listening we're at when we're waiting for our turn to speak and mulling over the thing we really want to say.

- *Level 2: External listening*. External listening occurs when we're completely focused on what the speaker is saying rather than how we might respond. We're not only listening to someone's words but also focusing on their tone of voice and body language. At this level, we begin to feel empathy as we listen for the purpose of understanding how our conversational partner is feeling about the story or situation they're describing.
- *Level 3: Global listening*. At this third level, we're listening to the world around us. This level involves atmospheric cues (both environmental and intangible). Here, intuition comes into play as we focus not on the speaker, but on the bird's eye view of the situation.

Step 2. Tell participants to form groups of four, preferably with people they don't know. Have groups sit in small circles spread out throughout the room. Once people have found their group and taken a seat, further explain the exercise.

Step 3. Instruct groups to have a speaker, an internal listener, an external listener, and a global listener.

Step 4. Tell the speakers that they will tell a story relating to their own privilege or marginalization for five minutes. Advise them to just keep talking—trying to stay with the theme of diversity and inclusion—and not to worry if the story stops making sense or veers off in an unexpected direction.

Step 5. Tell the listeners to try and focus specifically on their level of listening. If they are the Internal Listener, they should focus only on what they're thinking. If they are the External Listener, they should focus on everything the speaker is saying. Finally, if they are the Global Listener, they should focus on what they hear in the world around them.

Step 6. Give everyone except for the speaker paper and a pen and ask them to write what they're "hearing" throughout the exercise. Inform them that no one will read what they write.

Step 7. Once everyone has understood the instructions, set a timer for five minutes and shout "Go!"

Step 8. When the 5 minutes is up, instruct groups to talk about what they experienced with the speaker.

Reflection

For the reflection round, facilitate a discussion that gets people to talk about their experiences. Ask these questions:

- How many internal listeners thought about things that were completely off topic from what the speaker was saying? What kinds of things were they?
- If you were an external listener, what did you feel about the things the speaker was saying? Did you catch yourself listening at level one?
- What kinds of things did the global listeners notice?
- How often did you switch back and forth between levels at the beginning of the exercise? What about at the end?
- What surprised you about this exercise?
- Why do you think this exercise might be interesting if we talk about inclusivity?

Laura Hilliger is a writer, educator, and technologist. She's a co-founder of the We Are Open Co-op, an Open Organization Ambassador at Opensource.com, and is working to help Greenpeace become a more open organization.

Being intentional about inclusivity

Laura Hilliger

EXERCISE

Estimated time to complete: 2.5 hours

Materials needed: Large sheets of paper and markers, post its, stickers, and other drawing supplies

Activity type: Action

This exercise features an interactive discussion tactic to assess people's attitudes toward inclusivity. It then assists with forming small groups for creating a strategy for increasing-inclusivity in your organization or team.

Facilitation steps

Step 1. Create a large space where people can move around. Write the number "1" on a post-it and stick it at one end of the space. On another post-it write the number "10" and stick it at the other end of the space. (After the first part of the exercise, you will move tables and chairs to create small group work stations.)

Step 2. Explain to participants that you will read a statement. Also explain that if they completely agree with that statement, they should stand near the number 10. If they completely disagree, they should stand near the number 1. Those who agree only somewhat would stand at number 5. Tell the participants that they can change their minds based on what other participants say during the exercise.

Step 3. Read the first statement. Once participants have divided themselves along the line, ask someone why they are standing where they are standing. Use the activity to begin a discussion and debate on inclusivity. You might come up with your own statements based on what has happened while you were completing the previous inclusivity expereices in this book. Or you can use these:

- Anyone can say anything to me, and I will listen to their feedback.
- I have the right to say anything I want in any setting.
- Asking a variety of people to provide feedback will take too much time.

Step 4. After the discussion has reached a natural ending point, or once it's taken 45 minutes (whichever comes first), ask participants to form a circle.

Step 5. Explain that inclusivity efforts must be deliberate, because it's too easy to forget to involve certain types of groups. Explain that different perspectives lead to more sustainable projects, programs, and procedures because they help you see around corners you might not have noticed. Reinforce positive perspectives from the discussion.

Step 6. Tell participants that they are going to form small groups to create a proposal that collects diverse perspectives or ideas on a particular issue the organisation is facing.

Reflection

As this exercise is inherently reflective, we've not included specific questions for a reflection round. However, you might wish to take some time to write down how you're feeling after the discussion with your colleagues. Did any specific issues arise? Reflecting on the exercise itself will help you become a better facilitator!

Laura Hilliger is a writer, educator, and technologist. She's a co-founder of the We Are Open Co-op, an Open Organization Ambassador at Opensource.com, and is working to help Greenpeace become a more open organization.

Unit 3: Adaptability

Introduction: What is adaptability?

Matt Takane

"Recalculating route…" is something you hear every time you take a wrong turn or try to avoid that traffic jam up ahead. Sadly, you never know in advance when a detour will be necessary. But when you find yourself facing unexpected conditions, you need to make a decision and adapt so that you can still get where you are going.

When in those situations, you'll need to make calculations based on three questions:

1. What does the path ahead look like?
2. Do I know this area enough to find another route?
3. What does the GPS or my trusty navigator say?

This subconscious framework we use while driving is a prime example of our adaptive approaches when the metaphorical roads we travel every day throw curveballs at you—and it parallels the processes we use to handle project delivery and respond to market direction.

People tend to approach change in two general ways. Some prefer a *prescriptive* approach to change. They impose roadmaps and elaborate contingency plans to minimize the number of issues they'll encounter. Think back to that project plan or gantt chart that spelled out every bit of minutia and task that needed to be done. That, in all likelihood, took a lot of upfront time—and when something unexpected happened, the project scrambled to adjust. This is a preventative approach that works well with projects that are well understood and don't vary between implementations, like installing an operating system onto a new laptop.

Others take a more *adaptive* approach to change, choosing not to specify a comprehensive plan up front and preferring a *decision framework* that helps them respond to situations as they arise. We see this approach reflected in the various Agile methodologies (Scrum, XP, Lean, Kanban) and organizations looking to deliver in increments to create shorter feedback cycles. This reactive approach works well when your project has a lot of unknowns, multiple complexities, new technologies, revolving team members, an increased amount of end user feedback, and/or an evolving market target.

Today, as organizations attempt to deliver solutions to market at faster and faster rates, the former approach just doesn't work as well as it once did. Cultures of ongoing and effective adaptability are necessary.

In other words, where historically you might have spent time looking at a map of your entire trip before you'd leave the house (so that you can see potential roadblocks ahead of time), now you're reacting to traffic on the fly with turn-by-turn directions. Both are valid paths to take, but one will more likely have you reach your destination faster when you find that unknown "bump in the road." This cultural shift is what will give way to those "high performing" teams and increase your ability to handle changes during delivery and those that occur in the market.

Research from Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson[41] and Google's Project Oxygen[42] identified the most important factor in fostering great teamwork and performance:

41 http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/profile.aspx?facId=6451

creating a foundation of psychological safety[43] for the team. This is not a process or a methodology, but rather a *mindset* that encourages adaptability by promoting autonomy and a culture that treats failure and exploration as positive attributes. At Red Hat Open Innovation Labs, we are constantly on different journeys with our customers. What supports our ability to adapt to that ever-changing landscape is our ability to maintain and promote psychological safety of the team (one technique that we use to do this is our "Stop the World" event[44]).

The goal of an adaptive culture is to create an adaptive mindset, so that when things do not go as planned, everybody knows how to handle it and seamlessly continue to drive development forward.

There are many paths that you can take to create an adaptive mindset. Supporting open communication and employing practices that reinforce adaptability is a great start. The following chapters provide you some first-hand experiences and some tactical facilitation pointers to start you down your own path to adaptability.

Matt Takane is an agile coach for Red Hat Open Innovation Labs. He's passionate about adapting working environments for customers to innovate, while ensuring individuals and interactions are never sacrificed. As a part of the Open Innovation Labs team, he leads customer delivery using Labs culture and open principles to cultivate a better way of working.

---

42 https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/identify-dynamics-of-effective-teams/

43 http://www.businessinsider.com/amy-edmondson-on-psychological-safety-2015-11?international=true&r=US&IR=T

44 https://rht-labs.github.io/practice-library/practices/stop-the-world-event/

Crowdsourcing the way to a more flexible strategic plan

Curtis A. Carver

CASE STUDY

Organization: University of Alabama at Birmingham

Members: App. 39,000 (faculty, staff, and students)

Industry: Higher education (university)

Challenge: Allow campus community to help define strategic IT initiatives

When I became Chief Information Office at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in 2015, I confronted the same mandate every new IT leader faces when assuming the role: outlining, developing, and executing a strategic plan. The pressure to do this swiftly and immediately can be immense—and I think many CIOs feel compelled to articulate and hand down fully formed plans on Day 1. After all, that's typically the quickest way to assert your position and vision as a leader.

But I like to take a different approach. I don't dictate my team's initial goals. I open them up.

Working this way felt especially important in my new role at UAB, which I knew was going to be the last gig of my career. I wanted to make the largest contribution I could—not only to the university, but also to higher education in general.

What better way to do this than to let them openly contribute to the goals my team would be tackling during my tenure?

So I let the entire university community help me determine and prioritize our most pressing IT problems. The results were astounding, a perfect example of the benefits of taking an iterative, adaptive approach to this kind of development.

Let me share what happened.

Just a SPARK

My first day as CIO at UAB was June 1, 2015. That was also the day we launched a new, university-wide idea collecting and brainstorming platform. The platform (which we codenamed "SPARK," in honor of UAB's mascot, Blaze the Dragon), was a crowdsource-style tool for collecting and surfacing the best ideas for ways IT could improve the lives of students, administrators, and faculty.

Anyone could use the platform to submit an idea. "Help us understand the issues you're facing and what would make the biggest difference in your life," we told anyone interested in participating. "You can submit an idea that anyone can comment on, and as long as you play nice, everything is in scope."

Our goal was ambitious but clear: Identify 100 potential "wins"—100 things we could do to improve university life—in 100 days, then implement all of them within a year.

Within the initiative's first 55 days, 386 users posted 73 ideas, made 367 comments, and cast 1,747 votes. (Keep in mind, too, that this activity was spurred almost entirely by word of mouth during the summer, when a sizable portion of the faculty and students aren't even on campus.) As a result, we became aware of issues and ideas like:

- Electronic signature of documents as part of moving to a paperless system
- One gigabit bandwidth to the desktop
- Technology training and certification for IT pros and IT consultants
- Unlimited storage for all students, faculty, and staff
- Orientation for new IT employees

And those are just a few. While the ideas were flooding in, my team and I were taking meetings—hundreds of meetings (collectively), including several town hall-style gatherings to solicit feedback from the university community in an open forum.

In the end, we amassed an unbelievable amount of data. How were we going to sort it so the best ideas could rise to the top?

Making sense of it all

We began by arranging our crowdsourced suggestions into four primary categories:

1. Ideas that are great, but not directly applicable to the customer/community
2. Ideas for solutions that were actually already available as part of our current IT infrastructure and resources
3. Ideas that were clearly "quick wins," something we could implement in a day (or less)
4. Ideas that were groundbreaking and needed to be rolled into a broader strategic plan with a longer timeline

Believe it or not, most of the ideas we received fell into the first three categories. So our list of priorities was already becoming clear.

At the same time, our team was working with the insightful feedback we'd gleaned from our in-person meetings. Using mind-mapping software, we charted common responses and pain points, and connected these to our broader strategic goals and imperatives. All senior members of the IT leadership team contributed to this effort.

With that, we'd found our 100 potential wins. And true to our word, we got to work acting on all of them within the year.

The results are in

I'm proud to report that we actually achieved *147 wins* before the following June. I can't possibly recount all of them here. Many, however, were so startlingly simple—and yet so profoundly game-changing—that they seem almost laughably obvious in hindsight.

For example, take our approach to passwords on campus. Our policy really was outdated and ineffective, and we quickly learned that people disliked our approach to password security. So we modified aspects of it—first, our requirements for acceptable passwords (making them much stronger) and, second, our required interval for mandatory password changes (lengthening and aligning it with the operational rhythm of a university, so users needed to switch passwords less frequently). Members of the campus community appreciated these changes so much that they were literally hugging me on the street in gestures of pure joy—the first time in my career, I can honestly say, that's ever happened to me.

In line with another frequently received request, we worked diligently to increase the data storage limits for users on campus. This work seemed especially pressing—and the need so very obvious—when I learned from faculty researching Parkinson's disease that they weren't able to store all the high-resolution brain scans they needed to do their work efficiently and effectively. Once we removed their data caps, they told me they were finally able to spend more time seeking a cure for Parkinson's and less time sorting through data files to make space for new work.

As we were steadily chipping away at our 100-win checklist, people around the campus couldn't help but take notice. My provost threw my team a surprise party (complete with delicious cake) to celebrate our crossing the 100-win milestone. Even the most skeptical members of the faculty senate stood up and applauded my team at a budget meeting (and our fiercest critics began saying things like "Well, while I don't think this is going to last long-term, I'm suspending disbelief because you've demonstrated you can achieve results"). And in another career-first moment for me, I got to serve as an honorary coach during the opening home football game. That's really when I realized that our community now viewed the IT staff as trusted partners in campus innovation. How many other IT organizations get recognized on the football field?

Lessons learned

I learned some valuable lessons during those 100 busy days. Here are a few of the most valuable:

Trust the community. Opening a feedback platform to anyone on campus seems risky, but in hindsight I'd do it again in a heartbeat. The responses we received were very constructive; in fact, I *rarely* received negative and unproductive remarks. When people learned about our honest efforts at improving the community, they responded with kindness and support. By giving the community a voice—by really *democratizing* the effort—we achieved a surprising amount of campus-wide buy-in in a short period of time.

Transparency is best. By keeping as many of our efforts as public as possible, we demonstrated that we were *truly listening* to our customers and understanding the effects of the outdated technology policies and decisions that were keeping them from doing their best work. I've always been a proponent of the idea that everyone is an agent of innovation; we just needed a tool that allowed everyone to make suggestions.

Iterate, iterate, iterate. Crowdsourcing our first-year IT initiatives helped us create the most flexible and customer-centric plan we possibly could. The pressure to move quickly and lay down a comprehensive strategic plan is very real; however, by *delaying* that work and focusing on the evolving set of data flowing from our community, we were actually able to better demonstrate our commitment to our customers. That helped us build critical reputational capital, which paid off when we did eventually present a long-term strategic plan—because people already knew we could achieve results. It also helped us recruit strong allies and learn who we could trust to advance more complicated initiatives.

It's more work. Sure, acting alone to sketch a roadmap for my first 100 days would have been easier. But it wouldn't have generated the results the crowdsourced version did. Without a doubt, collaborative approaches like ours require more work than solitary, draconian ones. You'll need to think strategically and long-term. (Case in point: Launching SPARK on June 1 actually required *three months* of planning and development leading up to that critical day.) But if you really seize this opportunity to engage with your community, you'll realize better results.

Our yearlong lesson in community-focused crowdsourcing revealed the benefits that adaptive approaches to strategic planning can have for our organization. I'm sure they can do the same for yours.

Curtis A. Carver Jr., Ph.D., is the Vice President and Chief Information Officer for the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In this role as servant leader and enabler of others, he leads a team of dedicated professionals focused on providing solution to the UAB through world-class IT with a focus on innovation, agility and cost efficiency.

Review and discussion questions

- Would the kind of "distributed" approach to problem solving Curtis describes work for your team or organization? Why or why not? How might it affect your long-term planning efforts?

- Curtis says the crowdsourcing initiative revealed potential goals that "were so startlingly simple—and yet so profoundly game-changing—that they seem almost laughably obvious in hindsight." Can you identify any such goals for your team or organization? How might you articulate, organize, and collaborate on them?

- Curtis describes several moments in which he was surprised by the community's positive response to his team's change initiatives. If you were to "open up" your strategic plan like he did, what might success look like for you? What kind of response would you expect from your customers and communities?

Building a flexible organization that can adapt rapidly to change

Dereck Vanlandingham

CASE STUDY

Organization: State government agency (partnering with a consultancy)[45]

Employees: 1,001 to 5,000

Industry: Health and Human Services

Challenge: Modernize a 25-year-old benefits processing and administration system

As monolithic mainframe solutions of the 1980s began to fall out of favor, more modular and flexible systems started to take their place. Built from the ground up over multiple years, these new systems required changes not only to underlying technologies but also to organizations' culture and processes.

State governments, backed by federal incentives, were thrust to the forefront of these modernization efforts. As they are governed by slow-moving public policy, these organizations are the least capable of adapting to modern system building and

45 Most consultancies prefer to work behind the scenes, without naming their clients directly. This not only protects the client's proprietary and private information, but also their reputation where they are seen as the experts in their particular field.

therefore need the guidance of external partners and consultancies.

In large scale modernization efforts like this one, consulting teams follow the v-model software development scheme[46] to formalize the project definition, implementation, integration and final validation of the product. That model looks something like this: In the project definition phase, the consulting teams are tasked with analyzing the existing production system to gain a deep understanding of its functionality (how it functions compared with governmental policies, for example). Once this is documented, agency personnel review the team's “current state” analysis. The next step is to gather requirements, both of a business and technical nature, for the desired “future state” of the new system. This is then reviewed against the program timeline and adjustments are made. These exercises ultimately produce the scope of the overall project.

At this point, the scope is divided among the individual consulting teams for detailed design, implementation, integration, and validation.

From start to finish, modernization programs can take up to five years depending on the systems being replaced.

About this case

This case study focuses on an effort to modernize a large state program. At the time of the engagement, the agency in

46 The "v-model" is a software development scheme that provides a series of checks and balances to ensure a high-quality product. Down the left side of the "V" is the project definition, with the creation of the concept, requirements, and detailed designed followed "in order." At the base of the "V," is the implementation process that occurs over time. To finalize the process—and up the right side of the "V"—are the checks and balances, verification and validation of the detailed design, and requirements and concept that lead to the final sign-off and delivery of the product.

question supported hundreds of thousands of constituents and processed more than $16 billion in assistance payments (over a five year period).

Many factors and constraints made this particular engagement volatile and worth studying, specifically:

- The United States was in an economic recession (which naturally increased the pressure on the state programs)
- Tight budget restrictions that forced the teams to do more with less
- An aging workforce that desired to maintain the status quo (as many had been doing the same job for over twenty years)
- A constant intersection with politics due to the economic recession
- As it was a social program, a vigilant eye from the media, who was always looking to report on policy or benefit hardships to citizens

To navigate these constraints and build a successful product, the consulting team established a project culture predicated on adaptability and responsiveness. As with any open organization, this culture was built over time in a series of iterations.

In this case study, we'll look at examples on how to build a foundation for adaptability and effectively organize the team—then dive deeper into how that foundation allowed the team to react when needed to deliver success.

Building a foundation for adaptability

The Pareto Principle

The mathematical Pareto Principle states that 80 percent of results comes from 20 percent of the effort. Applied to software development (or any “build and deliver” organization), the principle acts as guide to minimize the over-complication of designs, processes, and procedures.

For example, a design for a medical claims processing and payment system targets 80% of the claims being processed untouched (that is, without human intervention). These standard use cases (e.g., routine office checkups) account for most of the processing workload. According to the principle, the effort (in this case, time taken to design, build, and test the solution) should be somewhat trivial when looking at the bigger picture of the system. As the remaining 20% of the system relates to use cases that don't occur as often (such as, say, treatment for a rare form of cancer), it is understandable that they can take considerably more effort to flesh out the appropriate solution, therefore they may be handled manually by the staff until they are better understood.

Considering this principle is important when building out the foundation of a new organization, especially one that is undergoing a fundamental change in day-to-day activity. Change itself acts as a distraction, which in turn consumes hours from the day. Focusing the team on the tasks that can have the most impact quickly helps them absorb other distractions that occur in the environment and feel forward momentum at the same time.

The organization studied here was no different. After a year into the modernization effort, a large portion of the functionality remained to be modernized. Progress was stalled. The team was resisting the v-model process used to build the new system. Even though the Agile Manifesto[47] had been released years prior, the agency's preferred development methodology at the time was waterfall—which relied on a combination of heavy review cycles, sequential processing, and phase gates that focused on getting things done “correctly” the first time. Functional leads and subject matter experts (SMEs) struggled to find the balance between upholding policy integrity and over-architecting designs to handle corner cases (e.g., the 20%). This pursuit of perfection was getting in the way of progress.

Drastic measures were necessary to counteract this impulse for perfection. Under new leadership, designs were timeboxed to five days (reduced from 30 or more days per design). The new delivery policy effectively forced teams to focus on the most important design considerations, naturally driving them to solve the 80% problem in order to bring designs to completion. The phrase “good enough” replaced “perfect” and allowed the team to move forward through the design phase.

Ultimately, the Pareto Principle is a time-management concept. It suggests that people should focus on activities that deliver 80% of the results, impact, and value. Being more efficient at what we do allows us to easily adapt to change as we are focused on the things that matter most. This provides a time to reflect on the necessary change in the organization and environment.

47 The Agile Manifesto is a list of guidelines created to help teams build better software. It focuses on people over processes and tools, working software over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiation, and responding to change over following a plan. These guidelines help to establish a team that can adapt quickly.

The cohesive team

Eventually, the approved detailed designs began to flow through the process, and the development team had to quickly swell their ranks to meet this new demand. This lead to a quickly growing group that lacked some necessary cohesion.

Military units are more effective after sharing a combat experience. Fraternal organizations create rites of passage through initiation, generating shared experiences members can discuss many years beyond graduation. In the same way, consultants discuss their travel experiences, ultimate upgrades, and time spent sleeping at the airport. A shared experience brings people together and it also rejects those that cannot handle the situations.

In the workplace, however, we often *marginalize* these experiences or create them *artificially*, which prevents the team from becoming a cohesive unit.

Consultancies have an innate ability to bring on a massive amount of project resources in a short amount of time. These people may have the technical skills on paper, though may not always fit together in the single cohesive unit. Therefore, project leads *on the ground* must determine the most effective organizational structure and team makeup.

To become more efficient, the team recognized that it had to bond socially *outside* of the workplace. This resulted in many long nights and early mornings. Secondly, the leads had to address the team members that were not meeting expectations. Performance improvement plans (known as PIPs in the consulting world) were put into place and people were shifted between teams. Those that did not comply were rolled off and often not replaced.

An individual can do great things when in proximity to great people—even suffer through the most stressful situations, like an organizational change. A unified team acts as a support group during early stages of disruption, minimizing the impact to the organization. Shared experiences bring these teams together.

Adapt the organization

Conway's Law

With the appropriate foundation enabled, an open organization will begin to self-organize—that is, gravitate towards the structure that makes the organization most efficient. Leaders must take the appropriate queues to enable this final stage of adoption.

That's what we did with the case we're studying here. Over time, challenges in achieving the desired business outcomes (e.g., screens, workflows, and business processes that functioned per design) became apparent. There was a problem with the handoff between those that were designing (the functional team) and those that were building (the development team).

We developed a theory about what was happening. Per Conway's Law[48], we surmised that the prior defined, rigid organizational structure *itself* was the key contributing factor in the design mismatch. Each team focused on their own tasks and often did not see the bigger picture.

The teams were in different reporting structures (i.e., “functional” vs. “development”). They were also separated physically, with the development team fulfilling its stereotypical

48 Conway's Law states that “any organization that designs a system (defined broadly) will produce a design whose structure is a copy of the organization's communication structure”, the output of the teams began to reflect their organization.

location in "the basement," an interior room with low ceilings and no windows.

Leadership decided to change the organizational structure to modify the delivery outcome. Teams were formed into work cells by business area, responsible for end to end (design, build, and test) feature development and functionality. They were now one team with a shared set of expectations. The team quickly adapted[49] and with the improved design-to-build handoff process, the desired outcomes were soon being delivered.

As we will see with the following examples, building more adaptable/flexible organizations begins to pay off in disruptive environments.

Anticipate organizational change. To change an outcome, leaders often modify the makeup of an organization (per Conway's Law). This is a common technique to address challenges, perceived or real.

Flexing with disruption

In this age of disruption, Heraclitus's famous quote rings true: "The only constant in life is change."

As the use case continues, the drag on the global economy drove the recession to peak unemployment rates not seen for 25 years. This recession led to federal regulations, which were then passed downstream to state policy makers. As with most governmental policy changes, they were complex and lengthy. Many details had to be interpreted, as their meanings were not always clear.

49 It should be noted that most consultants thrive on change. On average, a consultant changes projects and clients every six months, therefore the impact of new organizational structure is typically minimized. Traditional organizations may find it harder to re-organize on the fly as discussed in this use case.

What was clear was that the project would be impacted; however, what needed to happen was not immediately apparent.

The situation was like changing a car's design—like shifting from gas-powered to electric—after the car had already delivered to the dealership. We had lengthy instructions for the swap, but they didn't indicate how the electric motor would integrate with the chassis, transmission, and fuel systems that were part of the car's original design.

Teams studied the policies deeply, held review sessions, and even debated the interpretation of the functionality. In the end, the technical and functional resources had to work through ideas in a trial and error fashion to determine the downstream impact.

It took time, though this method allowed them to determine the designs needed for the policy changes.

Seek to understand by asking clarifying questions. Change is not always starkly black and white. It often requires our ability to test out ideas via trial and error. By engaging in open discourse, teams can hone the final understanding of the change. An open organization is most accepting of this style of debate and iteration.

Trusting your instincts

The marquee event of any large scale modernization initiative is the “go-live” (the release of the system to end users). Thanks to recent advances in continuous delivery methods, system integrators have started moving toward smaller (and therefore less risky) release cycles, though that was not the case here. Due to a variety of challenges, the team decided on the “big-bang” release (all of the system at one time).

As with preparing for a one-off sporting event (the Super Bowl, for example), the teams practiced and rehearsed. They put cutover and contingency plans into place, which allowed them to go back to the original state if needed. The date was set and the team was ready.

Hotels and comfort rooms were established, allowing a place for the teams to go during downtime, though many of them opted to forego sleep to make sure that their part of the plan went smoothly.

Then—in a moment that seemed reminiscent of a corny movie from the 1950s—the team received a call announcing that its contingency processing was falling behind. This was the project's safety net, the only way that to revert to pre-cutover conditions. Without it, there would be no backup plan and no going back.

Leadership faced a decision: Forego the release (impacting team morale and risk a press uprising) or move forward without any contingency (and the potential to be in an unrecoverable state) and days, if not weeks, of benefit payment delays.

As the team was built on open ideals and battle tested, leadership put faith in their team and move forward with the deployment.

By early morning the following Monday, the modernized system was up and running.

Trust your instincts. Nature has provided us with the instinctual ability to adapt through the fight-or-flight response. In the early stages of a challenge, this instinctual response may be all that you have.

Conclusion

The new system the team put into place more than five years ago quietly hums along today. The recession has passed, which has reduced the overall strain of heavy workloads, and small changes have been made—but for the most part it sits untouched, juxtaposing the years of rapid change and disruption. Team members have moved onto other opportunities, hoping to use the lessons they learned learned from this engagement to help their future clients.

Concepts review

Consultants get thrown into different environments, industries, cultures, and technological situations. No two engagements are the same. Exposure to this constant change means they need to learn to evolve quickly and practice techniques they can study and apply to team members in any organization. These techniques, if applied correctly, can assist non-consultancies in a time of change.

Below are five such techniques we used in the case study above:

Be Pareto efficient (aka the 80/20 rule). The Pareto Principle is a time-management principle. It suggests that people should focus on tasks that deliver 80% of the value. Being more efficient at what we do allows us to easily adapt to change as we are focused on the things that matter most.

Build a cohesive team. An individual can do great things when in proximity to great people—even suffer through the most stressful situations. A unified team acts as a support group during early stages of disruption, minimizing the impact to the organization.

Anticipate organizational change. To change an outcome, leaders often modify the makeup of an organization (per Conway's Law). This is a common technique to address challenges, perceived or real. A typical consultant goes through at least two or more engagements across the same number of clients per year. This constant organizational change allows them to adapt more quickly to an environment. Change is actually the norm, not the exception. Therefore, studying how consultants adapt will provide insight into change management techniques for those not in the field.

Seek to understand by asking clarifying questions. Change is not always black and white. It often requires our ability to test out ideas via trial and error. By engaging in open discourse, teams can hone the final understanding of the change.

Trust your instincts. Nature has provided us with the instinctual ability to adapt through the fight-or-flight response. In the early stages of adaptation, this instinctual response may be all that you have.

Dereck Vanlandingham has made a career of helping customers adopt new technologies, cultures, and processes. He's worked as an application developer with startups, a system integrator at Accenture, and a Territory Manager with Red Hat Consulting. His goal is to help ease the transition and impacts to change.

Review and discussion questions

- Throughout the project Dereck describes, conditions were constantly changing. How can your organization or team best replicate the degree of agility and responsiveness his team displayed? Do you feel your team adequately responds to environmental forces that impact its work?

- Dereck says this project involved explicit legal guidelines. Failure to understand policy may have resulted in a lawsuit or fines. What mechanisms or procedures has your team established to ensure that all members share some sense of common purpose and constraints, even as they're working independently or asynchronously in some cases?

- What do you think are the best tools and principles for helping your team acquire knowledge more quickly? What is your organization's tolerance for trial and error? How do you harness and utilize the feedback that's available to you?

Assessing threats and opportunities

Jim Hall

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 30–60 minutes
>
> Materials needed: Whiteboard and markers, blank sheets of paper, writing instruments
>
> Activity type: Reflection

You may be familiar with the "SWOT" decision-making tool. It's a methodology for helping teams clearly outline a set of conditions, compare options, and make transparent decisions based on an idea's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats ("SWOT"). SWOT is an efficient tool in my strategic planning toolkit.

However, I find engaging in SWOT directly can lead to some confusion. While team members may be able to easily identify "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" (those are fairly straightforward concepts that most teams are probably thinking about already), I find folks tend to struggle with "Opportunities." What is an "Opportunity"? In meetings, people may equate "Opportunity" as a business opportunity, which isn't the point of the SWOT exercise. Or they get stuck on "Threats." The word carries a different meaning in digital technology work, especially if you work in security: "Threat" often means "Hacker." Instead, you really want participants to identify trouble spots down the road.

In my experience, it's easier to not address SWOT directly, but to come at it from a different direction. You may be familiar with a "Plus/Delta" exercise. At the end of a meeting or after an event, you might talk about the things that went well (Plus) and the things to change for next time (Delta). I find that combining this language with a traditional SWOT approach to project planning can lead to more flexible and effective results.

This exercise explains how to do it. It involves two phases of work. The first consists largely of preparation; the second is execution.

Facilitation steps

Phase 1: Preparation

Step 1. Draw a standard Plus/Delta diagram (see Figure 1).

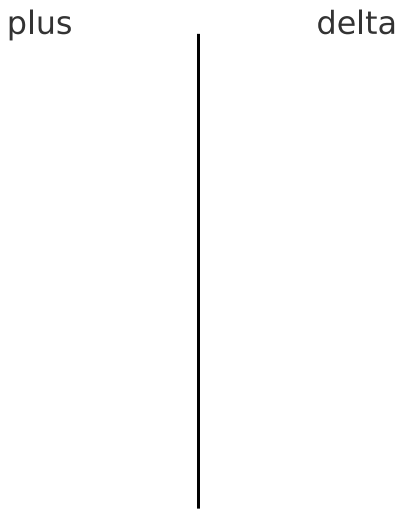


Figure 1

Step 2. Divide the Plus/Delta into two timeframes: "Now" and "Future." You can specify or define these if you need to. For example, you might define "Now" as any time in the next three months, and "Future" as a year or more from now. Use whatever timeframes make sense for what you're after (see Figure 2).

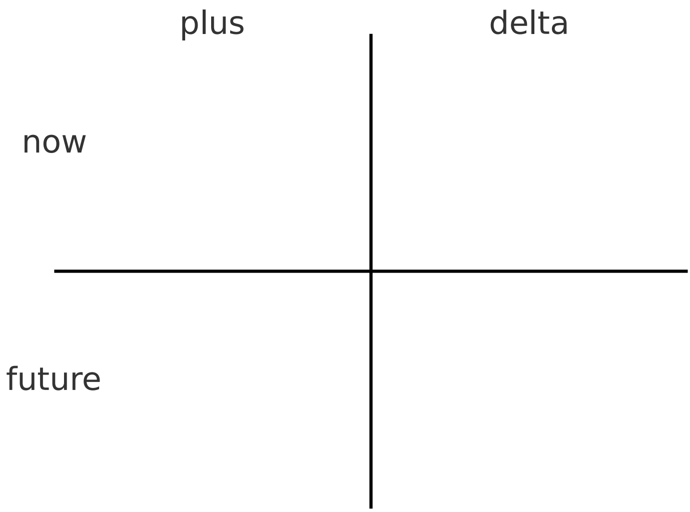


Figure 2

That's a very easy grid to understand. Most people can talk about what's going well now (Plus-Now) and what things we should change over the next quarter (Delta-Now). And team members can envision what things will be strong for the team in a year's time (Plus-Future) and what things we should change within the next year so they won't be obstacles down the road (Delta-Future).

And when you think about it, that's really what SWOT is about (see Figure 3):

- Strengths (Plus-Now)
- Weaknesses (Delta-Now)
- Opportunities (Plus-Future)
- Threats (Delta-Future)

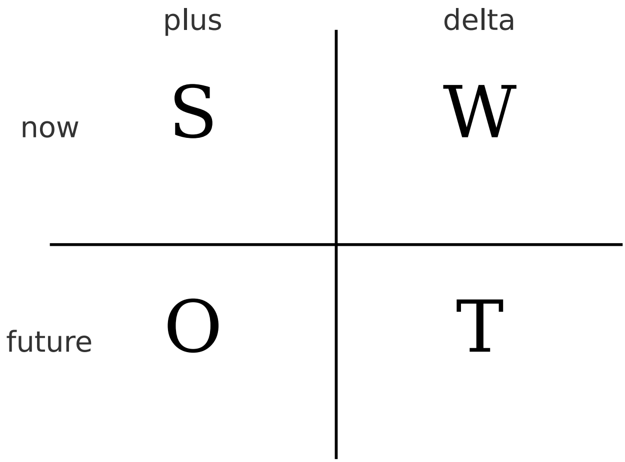


Figure 3

Phase 2: Execution

Step 1. At your next team meeting, frame discussions using this modified SWOT analysis. What decision are you asking people to focus on? Are you reviewing new technology? Are you discussing a possible change to the infrastructure? Are you making some other decision?

Step 2. After framing the discussion, ask everyone in the room to take some thoughtful time to consider the issue and write any ideas on a piece of paper. What is going well now (Plus-Now)? What things should we change now (Delta-Now)? What things do you expect will continue to be strong for us next year (Plus-Future)? What things do we need to change in the next year so we don't run into problems (Delta-Future)?

Step 3. To aid discussion, break up the room into small groups, each with about five people. Have each group discuss each quadrant of the SWOT as a group. Give them fifteen minutes to review everyone's ideas and agree to their group's top three Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Strengths.

Reflection

After the room has discussed the aspects of the decision, bring everyone together to discuss. Go around the room, and ask each group to identify one item from each quadrant: What is going well now (Plus-Now)? What things should we change now (Delta-Now)? What things do you expect will continue to be strong for us next year (Plus-Future)? What things do we need to change in the next year so we don't run into problems (Delta-Future)?

For example, start with Plus-Now, and ask: "*Group #1: Give me one item that is working well now; Group #2: What's something else that is working well today?*"

And so on. Draw the Plus/Delta, Now/Future grid on a whiteboard, and capture each idea in this grid so everyone can follow the discussion. Plan for the group discussion to take about twice the time you give the individual group time. So if you have people break into groups for fifteen minutes, I find it will take about thirty minutes to do the whiteboard discussion at the end.

Jim Hall is an open source software developer and advocate, probably best known as the founder and project coordinator for FreeDOS. Jim is also very active in the usability of open source software, as a mentor for usability testing in GNOME Outreachy, and as an occasional adjunct professor teaching a course on the Usability of Open Source Software. From 2016 to 2017, Jim served as a director on the GNOME Foundation Board of Directors. At work, Jim is Chief Information Officer in local government.

Avoiding project death by hand-off

Catherine Louis

EXERCISE

Estimated time to complete: 120 minutes

Materials needed: "low-fidelity" prototyping tools (paper, modeling tools, role-play props, etc.)

Activity type: Action

There's a notion in DevOps that our work begins when we understand the strategic business goals that we're trying to meet. Only then do we deliver on them. It's typically a two-step process in which one team creates goals then hands them off to another team to implement them.

What would happen if, instead of a thinking of this as two-step process, we thought of strategy and implementation as a single-flow, continuous learning cycle?

The magic of flawless delivery on a perfect business strategy doesn't stem from setting the strategy at the top, divvying it into pieces, then providing performance bonuses as a reward for the folks who delivered on those pieces (and possibly punishing those who did not). This is a common view; however, if you stop to think about your own projects, you'll see that it's quite misguided.

Putting your systems-thinking, non-fragile hats on, you'll see that companies are actually complex networks where strategy absolutely needs to allow emergent activities. The alternative view is that companies are hierarchies where orders from the top are handed off through the silos, leaving far more points where failure is possible.

This activity is designed to help your team capitalize on those valuable, emergent strategic directions.

Don't separate development from delivery

Business strategy and implementation should be an interconnected continuum of feedback loops with the goal of fast learning, rather than separate activities. I see a few reasons why.

The market isn't slowing down. Unless we have constant checks against what competitors are doing and what is delighting our customers, our strategy is doomed—even if we've already delivered on it.

The strategic plan itself. Focusing on delivering to the plan isn't as valuable as learning from the implementation. Instead, focus on learning and iterating on the business goals/strategic plans themselves. Your experience of delivery will improve any business strategy. An imperfect strategy that the organizations can learn from is much better than managing to a set-in-stone strategic plan.

Band-Aid thinking. If delivery is not an essential part of developing your business goals, it becomes the bandage at the end, an afterthought, which is then handed to a delivery team to make good on.

Start iterating on the business strategy

Are you ready to begin integrating business strategy development and implementation? Try the following tactics.

Encourage interaction between those who are creating the business strategy (and its associated goals) and those who are delivering on said goals. These interactions will cause evolution and improvement of the strategy itself.

Co-create the strategy. Involving cross-functional teams to co-create and prototype the business strategy and opportunities generates buy-in, guarantees involvement, and allows the rapid feedback cycle to begin. Co-creation sessions are an excellent way to create this environment (in a moment, we'll explore a procedure for running one).

Make the feedback loops big and visible. To create a rapid-response, agile delivery system, you'll need to know how the strategy and implementation are adjusted to exploit the risks and opportunities your experiments uncover. Take over a wall space and do a block-arrow diagram sharing such an experiment. Make note of how long the whole feedback cycle took—the total time for a learning to happen while implementing on a strategic business goal and perhaps tweaking the original strategy—and see if the feedback cycle could be improved.

Reward experiments. When we're delivering on a business goal, perhaps even implementing on a new business strategy, there will be challenges. Ask your teams what these might be. Discuss them. Invite them to run safe-to-fail experiments. Discuss these challenges openly and support your teams to adjust plans as needed. Hopefully some of these experiments will fail; failures offer huge lessons. Reward these failed experiments as valuable input to a possibly flawed strategic plan.

Look outside your company. Explore open source communities to see what happens outside your company walls, why/how/what other folks are doing to iterate on their business strategies, fail, and learn fast. Who else might be involved in adjusting strategy and its implementation? Customers? Suppliers? Stakeholders?

Are you ready to set up a co-creation session to work on your business strategy and implementation plan?

Facilitation steps

STEP 1. Secure a large room with enough round tables and chairs for the people who will participate.

STEP 2. Divide the entire group into cross-functional teams—comprising the most diverse set of soup-to-nuts perspectives possible—seated at each table.

STEP 3. Ask the marketing and sales people to deliver a 15-minute pitch on the strategic opportunity, including the customer's key pains you need to solve.

STEP 4. Give the cross-functional teams 15 minutes to prototype by answering the questions:

- "How did you interpret this strategy?"
- "What are the opportunities you see?"

If you have five table teams, you will get five different interpretations of the business strategy and more than five different opportunities you may not have considered. Do one more round of iterating on these prototypes, telling each team they will present their strategy-plus-opportunity prototype, including a rough cost-benefit estimate, their top key assumptions, and top risks, to the entire group.

STEP 5. After the teams present their final round of prototyping, allow two minutes for structured feedback per table team (I'm a big fan of design thinking's four-quadrant feedback grid).

STEP 6. Provide two minutes for questions per table team, and end the entire co-creation session with a 15-minute retrospective on how the co-creation session could be improved next time.

The entire session should take less than two hours.

Example timeline and agenda

Because timeboxing is critical, here's an example schedule you can use as a model:

- **5 MINUTES:** Explain the logistics and schedule
- **15 MINUTES:** Sales and marketing pitch on strategy and opportunity
- **15 MINUTES:** Round 1 rapid prototyping. Suggested breakdown of the 15 minutes:
  - **1 MINUTE:** Decide what to build
  - **6 MINUTES:** Build
  - **2 MINUTES:** Get feedback
  - **6 MINUTES:** Build
- **15 MINUTES:** Share prototypes, look for examples (i.e., three minutes per table team, assuming five teams)
- **2 MINUTES:** Explain Round 2 (facilitator sets goals for Round 2 by presenting one example of a prototype including a rough cost-benefit estimate, listing key assumptions and risks)
- **15 MINUTES:** Round 2 rapid prototyping (iterate on the first prototype, adding advantages heard from the previous session, adding rough cost-benefit, assumptions and risk)
- **20 MINUTES:** Structured feedback with Q&A (i.e., four minutes per table team, assuming five teams)
- **15 MINUTES:** Retrospective on the session itself

Reflection

Giving each table team the space to present a rough view of cost-benefits, key assumptions, and risks is important. A real-life example of why this is so important comes from a co-creation strategy session in which the sales and marketing folks pitched a strategy to be the best healthcare supplier for business X, offering distinct goals to win the business from a competitor and making clear the customer's key pain points. When the table teams began rapid prototyping their interpretation of the strategy along with opportunities, one team focused on using open source programs and procedures as the "backbone" for databasing and analyzing the data produced for a key healthcare project. Another team focused on using a big data supplier's (expensive) version of the same type of solution. The initial implementation went to the big data supplier; however, a business decision was made eight months later to switch to the open source option. I'm certain that if the group had done a really rough cost-benefit analysis, they would have uncovered key assumptions and risks during the co-creation session and produced different results.

A co-creation session is an excellent way to get feedback and ideas on your business strategy in a quick and productive way. Earlier in this chapter, I warned about problems that can come from hand-offs, so after you've been through the co-creation process, think about how your feedback loops could expand to avoid other needless hand-offs.

Catherine Louis is a certified Scrum trainer, independent Agile coach, founder of CLL-Group.com and PoDojo.com, and a founding member of Tech Ladies.

Utilizing pausers and pouncers

MaryJo Burchard

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 15–20 minutes (up to 20 people); 25–30 minutes (up to 50 people)
>
> Materials needed: Digital slide deck, yellow "pause" sign, green "pounce" sign, score cards (numbered 1–10, one per person)
>
> Activity type: Reflection

Those who work in and with open organizations are in many ways champions of change; that's what makes their products so agile.

But the adaptability inherent to product development doesn't always translate to the organization's entire culture. After a product has been developed, it often meets resistance (whether internally or from the client) when people realize that proposed changes will cause fundamental shifts in the nature of their work.

Suddenly, despite the fact that they may be able to recognize an idea as a significant improvement, people either actively or passively stymie its implementation.

Why?

What if the biggest drag in change management is not resistance to *change*, but resistance to *being misunderstood, misrepresented, invalidated*, or lost in the process? Adaptability to sustainable change requires disruptive organizations to help their people achieve levels of agility that match the relative speed of their systems and products. I suggest that this begins with understanding how our people are wired.

Adaptability requires two things:

1. Capacity to proactively adjust to changes in the environment, and
2. Capacity to sustain the adjustments that are made

These capacities express themselves in two competing, initial responses to change:

- The capacity to adjust to change requires a tendency to pursue growth, challenge, and expansion (that is, to *pounce*).
- The capacity to sustain change requires a tendency to mitigate risks, optimize stability, and take precautions (that is, to *pause*).

Both responses are necessary, but the *equilibrium* of those responses in balance actually adjusts with the urgency and significance of the change at hand.

Optimizing functions and exploring new capabilities requires understanding of how a product is designed. The same is true for people. Each person is hardwired with a unique initial response to change that expresses as either *pounce* or *pause*. To build adaptable teams and agile people, leaders need to understand how each person is innately designed to respond when they encounter change. Then leaders can leverage people's design strengths to optimize their role and contribution in moments of transition and rapid change.

Facilitation steps

Step 1. Create a slide deck containing statements from Step 7 (see below). Also create a set of the following signs for participants:

- Yellow "pause" sign
- Green "pounce" sign
- A score card, numbered from 1 to 10, each number with a green dot and a yellow dot next to it

Prepare enough yellow and green signs and score cards for each exercise participant.

STEP 2. Distribute a set of each sign, plus a score card, to each person present.

STEP 3. Explain:

"*We are going to engage in an exercise that will begin to help you understand your natural, knee-jerk reaction to change when you initially encounter it. You'll notice that you each have your own green 'pounce' sign, and yellow 'pause' sign. This is what each sign means.*

The Pause sign can mean any one or all of the following:

'*Wait! I need more information. I'm not yet convinced this is a good idea. What are the risks of doing this? Have we considered the consequences? What about what we're losing? We've done a lot to get here. This seems like it could compromise our stability.*'

The Pounce sign can mean any or all of the following:

'*Let's go! We can get the details while we're moving. This might be a great idea—but we'll never know what's out there until we get there. We could be the first! We could be even better! Imagine all the possibilities! Let's shake things up—the adventure is worth the risk.*'

STEP 4. Explain:

"*In a moment, we will see a series of statements flash on the screen. As soon as you read the statement, flash either the green or yellow sign immediately. Don't fool yourself; there are no right or wrong responses, so don't overthink! None of these statements are based on anything happening in reality, so just* *be present in the moment. Read the statement and hold up the color that best represents the way you feel right then—in that very initial moment. Let's try a couple for practice.*

STEP 5. Flash the following sample slides:

- "I'm handing you a surprise new flavor of ice cream!"
- "We're leaving for the weekend – to a city you've never been!"

STEP 6. Ask:

"*Did you notice how quickly you responded? Did you see how people responded around you? Let's try the exercise for real, now. We'll be pausing between slides so you can record your answers on the score card. Are you ready?*"

STEP 7. Each statement below should be on its own slide, so show one slide at a time and flash it for no more than 10 seconds:

1. We're painting your living room a radically different—but wonderful—color tomorrow.
2. A famous hairstylist is coming to cut your hair in a new style after work.
3. You're being transferred to a new team next month.
4. You'll be moving to another country before the end of the year.
5. You are changing primary clients—and your new client has very different focus and priorities from what you're used to.
6. You've been selected for the next season of *The Amazing Race*.
7. Your turn to sing in karaoke—and all the songs are only vaguely familiar.

8. You've been given tickets to a concert for a band/artist you've never heard of.
9. You are in an emergency one-hour meeting to help your team leader make a crucial decision.
10. You just inherited a new high-stakes project with a very short timeline.

Step 8. Ask:

"*If anyone left any blank, you can select* '*pause*' *for that statement—because that is what you did. What did you learn about yourself and the way you initially respond to change while doing this exercise? How many of you ended up with more* '*pause*' *than* '*pounce*' *responses? How many of you ended up with more* '*pounce*' *than* '*pause*' *responses?*"

"*Your initial response does not imply your capacity to be a change agent; what it does indicate is what you need to be on board. Understanding the way you're wired can help you understand the contribution you can have when you're optimizing the way you're naturally designed.*"

Reflection

As you observed from the initial exercise, not everyone responds to change the same way. Some people naturally pursue it; others accept it as a fact of life; still others avoid it as much as possible. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to change management on your team will always yield mixed results. Once you have a feel for the basic knee-jerk responses that your team members have when they encounter change, you can reframe your change management strategy with your team's needs in mind.

As a leader, you can adapt how you engage with the team, to increase their agility as you adapt together and adjust with the fluctuating urgency of decision-making. While reflecting on the results of the exercise, leaders proceed through three steps to help them optimize their team's unique change management chemistry of "Pausers" and "Pouncers."

Step 1. Identify the change. Think of a change that is going to impact your team in one way or another, and write it down. Be as specific as you can—think of the elements that make this change significant.

Step 2. Identify your Pouncers and Pausers. Write down the members of your team who are inherently Pouncers, the people who have demonstrated themselves (in the exercise and in life) to be predisposed to spontaneously and enthusiastically jump at any opportunity to change, explore, experiment, or stretch. Take a look at the elements that make this change significant. If these people are naturally charged up by change, how do you anticipate they will be impacted by each of the listed elements of your identified change? Now write down the members of your team who are inherently Pausers, the people who have demonstrated themselves (in the exercise and in life) to be predisposed to initially taking a step back and asking important questions to make sure any decision is made mindfully and circumspectly. They may also have a keener awareness of what will be lost in the change. Don't mistake their need to pause for an unwillingness to change; they just need time to process in order to get on board. Once on board, they can be some of your strongest change agents. How do you anticipate they will be impacted by each of the listed elements of your identified change?

Step 3. Rank the urgency and significance of the change you're thinking of making. Leadership consultant Rory Vaden describes urgency[50] as "how soon it will matter," and significance as "how long it will matter." Based on these two issues, here are

50 See *Procrastinate on Purpose: 5 Permissions to Multiply Your Time*. New York, NY: Perigree/Penguin Random House.

some guidelines as you begin to adapt your leadership approach to the needs of your unique team of Pausers and Pouncers.

Decisive-Inclusive (a high urgency, high significance change)

In this type of change, timing is critical. You will need to make swift decisions.

- Your initial focus can be to form a core team of Pouncers to brainstorm implementation and logistical decisions, and to build momentum and excitement.
- Your next phase of change management will be to bring in the Pausers and inform them of the decision(s). Provide as much information as you can—and make space for them to process any fear and grief of what they lost, either in the process (due to the necessary speed) or the end result. Honor it without framing it as "negativity." Ensure them that they have a place, an equally important role, once the changes are implemented.
- Once the change has been fully implemented, you can call upon the Pausers to take the lead, to establish stability, clarity, and risk mitigation. Their questions will be able to help fine-tune what couldn't be implemented initially.

Inclusive-Decisive (a moderate urgency, moderate significance change)

In this type of change requires decisions within a reasonable time-frame, but the investment of time for front-end engagement prior to making the decision will help significantly with buy-in and sustainability on the back-end.

- Your initial focus can be to provide a set amount of time for discussion of the change with all members of the team, explaining that the discussion is to get everyone up to speed. Provide everyone with as much information as you can during that set time. Though the decision will be made with people who can move quickly, make time to answer as many questions from the Pausers as you can beforehand. Make clear that the Pausers will spearhead efforts of stabilizing and fine-tuning once the initial implementation has been made.
- Then work with a core team of Pouncers to brainstorm implementation and logistical decisions, and to build momentum and excitement.
- After the implementation plan has been made, re-engage with everyone, and update the Pausers on the decision(s), providing as much information as you can. Make space for the Pausers to process any fear and grief of what they are losing. Honor it without framing it as "negativity."
- Once the change has been fully implemented, focus can shift to the Pausers who naturally establish stability and clarity, and mitigate risks. Their questions will be able to help fine-tune what couldn't be implemented initially. Pouncers make room for Pausers to build legacy and stabilize the system.

Participatory-Inclusive (a low-moderate urgency, moderate-high significance change)

In this type of change, buy-in is at least as important as the change itself. Sustainability of the idea is as important as its brilliance. You need the combined voices of the Pouncers and the Pausers to implement the change with finesse. Take the time necessary to allow everyone to participate in every stage of the process. You are surrounded by people who believe that they matter—because they do! If you have the time, make the space.

- Your initial focus is to bring together both the Pausers and the Pouncers to brainstorm implementation and logistical decisions, to discuss risks and concerns. Once the decisions have been made, make room for both sides to express and process what they're feeling, from grief, fear, and loss, to hope, momentum, and excitement.
- At each phase of implementation, include all members and provide as much information as you can. Set aside space at each stage of the change for members to process anything from hope and excitement to fear and grief. Honor both perspectives as you move through the process, ensuring each member that they have a place, an equally important role, at each stage and once the changes are implemented.
- Once the change has been fully implemented, though everyone will be invited to assist, Pausers will likely be more confident to take the lead in establishing the stability, filling in the details, providing clarity, and mitigating risk. Their questions will be able to help fine-tune what couldn't be implemented initially.

This exercise requires leaders to shift their thinking about change management and adaptability work. It abandons the traditional "formula approach" and instead envisions the work as an investment in human agility that begins with understanding and honoring the way each person is designed. This exercise helps leaders get their teams one step closer to that end.

Dr. MaryJo Burchard, PhD, is co-founder of LDR21 and developer of the Initial Response Index and Open Index. She specializes in research and consulting that empowers people in times of change. She facilitates leadership training and organizational development for the City of Virginia Beach and teaches Organizational Behavior part-time to graduate students at Regent University's School of Business and Leadership.

Building an adaptable work plan

Jim Hall

When I first became a manager many years ago, I didn't have any training that prepared me for how to manage other people's time. So when I needed to assign staff to projects, I did it on an ad hoc basis. I tried my best, but often resorted to asking who was interested in working on a project—then went with whoever volunteered.

The problem with ad hoc planning is that you aren't really planning. There's very little thinking ahead involved.

Later in my career, I worked with someone who was a professional planner. As a former project management consultant, this person really understood how to do project and resource planning. I learned from him that there are many ways to do thoughtful resource planning, and from him I derived a method of resource planning that has served me well these many years later. It's especially useful for managing an open team, and I'd like to share it with you.

This method of resource planning doesn't require fancy equipment or resources, although there are professional tools that can do much of the work for you. A spreadsheet works well enough, especially if you are just getting started in resource planning. So, in this chapter, let's examine how to plan time with a spreadsheet.

Facilitation steps

Step 1. Begin by thinking about a time frame. In your organization, how far into the future can you plan? If you're like me, one month is too short and six months is too long. Things change more quickly than a six month time frame can accommodate, but not fast enough for a one month window. I use a three month time frame. This gives me a quarterly work plan.

Each year has 52 weeks, so 26 weeks in half a year and 13 weeks in a quarter. Start your quarterly work plan by creating 13 columns, one column for each week. I also recommend you include the date of each week as a separate row—although for this example, I'll leave that out. Leave a few columns to the left; we will fill these in later. Your spreadsheet will look like Figure 1.

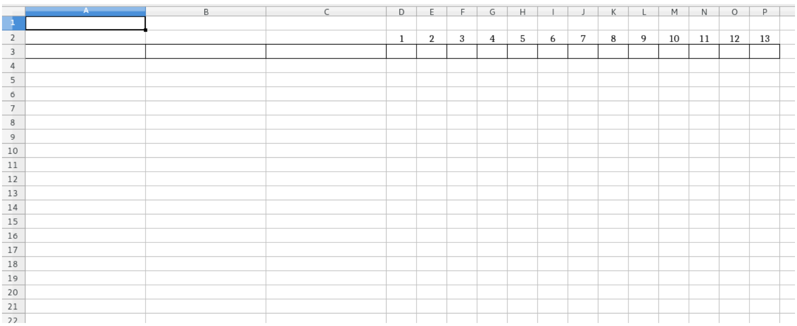


Figure 1

Step 2. Now think about the work that you will need to accomplish over the next quarter. What goals do you need to accomplish? What are the top priorities from your leadership? What are your major projects? Put these on separate rows in the first column.

Don't forget that support activities also count here. For example, your systems administrators need to keep servers running. Include these as work items on your quarterly work plan.

Once you've laid out all the major projects, determine how the projects break down into discrete tasks. A project consists of many steps. What are the components to complete the project? List the steps in the second column.

Also identify the resources you have available. For which projects are they best suited? Where can you best direct their energies? Who would be the best contributor for each project? Don't forget that only very small projects require just one person; most projects will require more than one contributor. List the people for each task in the third column.

For this example, let's assume two infrastructure team members (John and Jane) and two developers (Jill and Jack). As we start the quarter, the developers are starting a new project (Project1) while they prepare to deploy a previous one (Project2). Your spreadsheet should now look something like Figure 2.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1																
2				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
3	Support															
4		Network	John													
5		Server	Jane													
6		Database	Jane													
7	Project1															
8		Analysis	Jill													
9		Design	Jack													
10		Dev	Jill													
11		Dev	Jack													
12	Project2															
13		Test	Jill													
14		Test	Jack													
15		Rollout	Jill													
16		Rollout	Jack													
17																
18																
19																
20																
21																
22																

Figure 2

Step 3. As you identify new projects and tasks, keep the spreadsheet organized. In this example, note how separate projects start on their own row. Match tasks with a resource. I've kept my example somewhat simple by not providing much detail. If you were writing your own resource plan, you would likely need to fill in more information about the project and tasks.

Look ahead by weeks and consider how long each task will take. If this is your first time building a resource plan, you might "block out" some time by filling in each week with a color that you can go back to later. Let's do that for the example. I'll block out some time (see Figure 3). Note that the support tasks should be blocked out for the whole quarter, but other tasks in other projects might require different amounts of time.

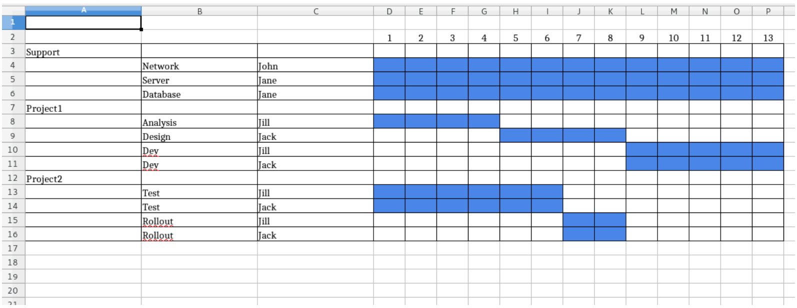


Figure 3

Step 4. From here, you need to assign weekly time or "effort" to every person working on every task in each project. Don't forget to include time spent outside of projects, as well. For example, developers may need to attend meetings for project planning and coordination. Let's assign time to each project in the example work plan with the assumption that John and Jane attend fewer meetings than Jill and Jack (see Figure 4).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1																
2				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
3	Support															
4		Network	John	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5		Server	Jane	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6		Database	Jane	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Project1															
8		Analysis	Jill	2	2	2	2									
9		Design	Jack					2	2	2	2					
10		Dev	Jill									3	3	3	3	3
11		Dev	Jack									3	3	3	3	3
12	Project2															
13		Test	Jill	2	2	2	2	2	2							
14		Test	Jack	2	2	2	2	2	2							
15		Rollout	Jill							1	1					
16		Rollout	Jack							1	1					
17	Meetings															
18			John	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19			Jane	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
20			Jill	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
21			Jack	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
22																
23																
24																

Figure 4

Step 5. Review every column. Make sure the total time for any one person adds up to exactly 5.0 every week. There are only five days in each week; you can't expect your team members to work more than five days. In the above example (Figure 4), Jane is over-committed on "server" and "database." Similarly, Jill and Jack are over-committed across "Project1" and "Project2."

When considering the balance of time, I prefer to set the smallest increment of time to 0.5 days per week. That's four hours of work time, and I find you cannot accurately plan for time less than four hours per week.

As you balance the time committed to each project, consider the time distribution. For example, Jane's dual responsibilities as server administrator and database administrator may not require equal time. Perhaps she spends most of her time maintaining the server.

And don't forget about vacations and holidays. Everyone needs time off, and you need to plan for that too. Build your holidays into your work plan from the beginning. Ask staff to estimate their upcoming vacation time. While folks might take an unplanned day off here and there, you can still plan in advance for extended absences such as vacations (see Figure 5).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1																
2				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
3	Support															
4		Network	John	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5		Server	Jane	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6		Database	Jane	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Project1															
8		Analysis	Jill	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5									
9		Design	Jack					2	2	2	2					
10		Dev	Jill									3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
11		Dev	Jack									3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
12	Project2															
13		Test	Jill	2	2	2	2	3.5	3.5							
14		Test	Jack	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1.5	1.5							
15		Rollout	Jill							3.5	3.5					
16		Rollout	Jack							1.5	1.5					
17	Meetings															
18			John	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19			Jane	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
20			Jill	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
21			Jack	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
22	Vacations & Holidays															
23			John		1											
24			Jane		1											
25			Jill		1											
26			Jack		1											
27	Total Time															
28			John	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
29			Jane	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
30			Jill	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
31			Jack	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
32																

Figure 5

STEP 6. As you can see in the example, Jane divides her time between "server" and "database" tasks. For the first eight weeks of the quarter, Jill and Jack will spend some time on analysis and design for "Project1," and the remainder of this time doing testing for "Project2." Note that on "Project2" Jack "ramps down" on testing at the same time Jill "ramps up," because of his balance of responsibilities.

Also, Jack gets to turn a holiday during week 2 into a four-day weekend in week 3, while Jill takes an extended vacation during weeks 9 and 10. John takes the whole of week 8 as vacation, and Jane takes all of week 11. When each person is out, notice that their time on other projects also needs to be redistributed.

That balances the time assigned to projects. No one gets overloaded, and everyone gets to take vacations. The staff can be productive, while the manager is able to effectively plan their work.

With that, you have the start of a quarterly resource work plan!

Reflection

As you get more practice with this method, begin reflecting on the way you're doing it. You might consider extending it in some of the following ways.

Total time. As you build your work plan, adding up everyone's time each week can become burdensome. To ensure every person is allocated "5.0" days per week, let the spreadsheet do the math for you. The =SUMIF() function is a standard spreadsheet function to add numbers from a column only if a key matches one in a list. In calculating total time, the key is the name of each staff person. I also use automatic formatting in my spreadsheet to highlight the total in a different color if the value is less than, equal to, or greater than "5.0." This helps me to quickly identify where staff are over-committed as we build the work plan.

Status updates. As you progress through the quarter, how do you track the status of projects? I find it is easiest for teams to report their status using a simple color code: highlight each cell with a color to indicate when work occurred. Highlight in green if your project is progressing well, yellow if you encounter issues that might put your project behind schedule, and red if the project is at risk (see Figure 6). The manager should review the spreadsheet every week as part of staff meetings to see how things are going. For any yellow or red reported in the previous week, talk about the issues and decide how to move things forward.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1																
2				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
3	Support															
4		Network	John	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5		Server	Jane	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6		Database	Jane	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Project1															
8		Analysis	Jill	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5									
9		Design	Jack					2	2	2	2					
10		Dev	Jill									3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
11		Dev	Jack									3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
12	Project2															
13		Test	Jill	2	2	2	2	3.5	3.5							
14		Test	Jack	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1.5	1.5							
15		Rollout	Jill							3.5	3.5					
16		Rollout	Jack							1.5	1.5					
17	Meetings															
18			John	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19			Jane	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
20			Jill	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
21			Jack	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
22	Vacations & Holidays															
23			John		1											
24			Jane		1											
25			Jill		1											
26			Jack		1											
27	Total Time															
28			John	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
29			Jane	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
30			Jill	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
31			Jack	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
32	Unplanned Work (log)															
33		Re-run stuck report	Jill				4 hrs									
34		Ran query for Sales	Jack					4 hrs								
35		Respond to prod problem	Jack							5 hrs						
36																

Figure 6

Unplanned work. You can't really plan for unplanned work, but sometimes things just happen and staff need to drop everything to make some work item their number one priority. This is unplanned work, and it certainly has an impact on planned work time.

To account for unplanned work, I add a few rows to the bottom of the spreadsheet, one row per staff member, and track unplanned work here. If you worked on an emergency project that wasn't on your list, you record the time worked in your "unplanned work" row, and use a spreadsheet cell comment to indicate the unplanned work item. If this unplanned work impacts another planned work item, the staff member should highlight that other project's status with yellow or red to flag it for the manager. This helps you maintain a good balance of reporting time without over-burdening staff to fill out a weekly status report.

Jim Hall is an open source software developer and advocate, probably best known as the founder and project coordinator for FreeDOS. Jim is also very active in the usability of open source software, as a mentor for usability testing in GNOME Outreachy, and as an occasional adjunct professor teaching a course on the Usability of Open Source Software. From 2016 to 2017, Jim served as a director on the GNOME Foundation Board of Directors. At work, Jim is Chief Information Officer in local government.

Unit 4: Collaboration

Introduction: What is collaboration?

Heidi Hess von Ludewig

Many contemporary definitions of "collaboration" define it simply as "working together"—and, in part, it *is* working together.

But too often, we tend to use the term "collaboration" interchangeably with cognate terms like "cooperation" and "coordination." These terms also refer to some manner of "working together," yet there are subtle but important differences between them all.

How does *collaboration* differ from *coordination* or *cooperation*? What is so important about collaboration specifically? Does it have or do something that coordination and cooperation don't? The short answer is a resounding "*yes*!"

This unit explores collaboration, a problematic term because it has become a simple buzzword for "working together." By the time you've studied the cases and practiced the exercises contained in this section, you will understand that it's so much more than that.

Not like the others

"Coordination" can be defined as the ordering of a variety of people acting in an effective, unified manner toward an end goal or state.

In traditional organizations and businesses, people contributed according to their *role definitions*, such as in manufacturing, where each employee was responsible for adding specific components to the widget on an assembly line until the widget was complete. In contexts like these, employees weren't expected to contribute beyond their pre-defined roles (they were probably discouraged from doing so), and they didn't necessarily have a voice in the work or in what was being created. Often, a manager oversaw the unification of effort (hence the role "project coordinator"). Coordination is meant to connote a sense of harmony and unity, as if elements are *meant* to go together, resulting in efficiency among the ordering of the elements.

One common assumption is that coordinated efforts are aimed at the same, single goal. So some end result is "successful" when people and parts work together seamlessly; when one of the parts breaks down and fails, then the whole goal fails. Many traditional businesses (for instance, those with command-and-control hierarchies) manage work through coordination.

Cooperation is another term whose surface meaning is "working together." Rather than the sense of compliance that is part of "coordination," it carries a sense of agreement and helpfulness on the path toward completing a shared activity or goal.

People tend to use the term "cooperation" when joining two semi-related entities where one or more entity could decide not to cooperate. The people and pieces that are part of a cooperative effort make the shared activity easier to perform or the shared goal easier to reach. "Cooperation" implies a shared goal or activity we agree to pursue jointly. One example is how police and witnesses cooperate to solve crimes.

"Collaboration" also means "working together"—but that simple definition obscures the complex and often difficult process of collaborating.

Sometimes collaboration involves two or more groups that do not normally work together; they are disparate groups or not usually connected. For instance, a traitor collaborates with the enemy, or rival businesses collaborate with each other. The subtlety of collaboration is that the two groups may have *oppositional* initial goals but work together to create a *shared* goal. Collaboration can be *more contentious* than coordination or cooperation, but like cooperation, any one of the entities could choose not to collaborate. Despite the contention and conflict, however, there is discourse, whether in the form of multi-way discussion or one-way feedback, because without discourse there is no way for people to express a point of dissent that is ripe for negotiation.

The success of any collaboration rests on how well the collaborators negotiate their needs to create the shared objective, and then how well they cooperate and coordinate their resources to execute a plan to reach their goals.

For example

One way to think about these things is through a real-life example—like the writing of this book.

The editor, Bryan, *coordinates* the authors' work through the call for proposals, setting dates and deadlines, collecting the writing, and meeting editing dates and deadlines for feedback about our work. He coordinates the authors, the writing, the communications. In this example, I'm not coordinating anything except myself (still a challenge most days!).

I *cooperate* with Bryan's dates and deadlines, and with the ways he has decided to coordinate the work. I propose the introduction on GitHub; I wait for approval. I comply with instructions, write some stuff, and send it to him by the deadlines. He *cooperates* by accepting a variety of document formats. I get his edits, incorporate them, send it back him, and so forth. If I don't cooperate (or something comes up and I can't cooperate), then maybe someone else writes this introduction instead.

Bryan and I *collaborate* when either one of us challenges something, including pieces of the work or process that aren't clear, things that we thought we agreed to, or things on which we have differing opinions. These intersections are ripe for negotiation and therefore indicative of collaboration. They are the opening for us to *negotiate* some creative work.

Once the collaboration is negotiated and settled, writing and editing the book returns to cooperation/coordination; that is why collaboration *relies* on the other two terms of joint work.

One of the most interesting parts of this example (and of work and shared activity in general) is the moment-by-moment pivot from any of these terms to the other. The writing of this book is not completely collaborative, coordinated, or cooperative. It's a messy mix of all three.

Why is collaboration important?

Collaboration is an important facet of contemporary organizations—specifically those oriented toward knowledge work—because it allows for productive disagreement between actors. That kind of disagreement then helps increase the level of engagement and provide meaning to the group's work.

In his book, *The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to our Changing Society*, Peter Drucker discusses the "knowledge worker" and the pivot from work based on experience (e.g. apprenticeships) to work based on knowledge and the application of knowledge. This change in work and workers, he writes:

> [...] will make the management of knowledge workers increasingly crucial to the performance and achievement of the knowledge society. We will have to learn to manage the knowledge worker both for productivity and for satisfaction, both for achievement and for status. We will have to learn to give the knowledge worker a job big enough to challenge him, and to permit performance as a "professional."

In other words, knowledge workers aren't satisfied with being subordinate—told what to do by managers as, if there is one right way to do a task. And, unlike past workers, they expect more from their work lives, including some level of emotional fulfillment or meaning-making from their work. The knowledge worker, according to Drucker, is educated toward continual learning, "paid for applying his knowledge, exercising his judgment, and taking responsible leadership." So it then follows that knowledge workers expect from work the chance to apply and share their knowledge, develop themselves professionally, and continuously augment their knowledge.

Interesting to note is the fact that Peter Drucker wrote about those concepts in 1969, nearly 50 years ago—virtually predicting the societal and organizational changes that would reveal themselves, in part, through the development of knowledge sharing tools such as forums, bulletin boards, online communities, and cloud knowledge sharing like DropBox and GoogleDrive as well as the creation of social media tools such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and countless others. All of these have some basis in the idea that knowledge is something to liberate and share.

In this light, one might view the open organization as one successful manifestation of a system of management for knowledge workers. In other words, open organizations are a way to manage knowledge workers by meeting the needs of the organization and knowledge workers (whether employees, customers, or the public) simultaneously. The foundational values this book explores are the scaffolding for the management of knowledge, and they apply to ways we can:

- make sure there's a lot of varied knowledge around (inclusivity)
- help people come together and participate (community)
- circulate information, knowledge, and decision making (transparency)
- innovate and not become entrenched in old ways of thinking and being (adaptability)
- develop a shared goal and work together to use knowledge (collaboration)

Collaboration is an important process because of the participatory effect it has on knowledge work and how it aids negotiations between people and groups. As we've discovered, collaboration is more than working together with some degree of compliance; in fact, it describes a type of working together that *overcomes* compliance because people can disagree, question, and express their needs in a negotiation and in collaboration. And, collaboration is more than "working toward a shared goal"; collaboration is a process which *defines the shared goals via negotiation* and, when successful, leads to cooperation and coordination to focus activity on the negotiated outcome.

Collaboration works best when the other four open organization values are present. For instance, when people are transparent, there is no guessing about what is needed, why, by whom, or when. Also, because collaboration involves negotiation, it also needs diversity (a product of inclusivity); after all, if we aren't negotiating among differing views, needs, or goals, then what are we negotiating? During a negotiation, the parties are often asked to *give something up* so that *all may gain*, so we have to be adaptable and flexible to the different outcomes that negotiation can provide. Lastly, collaboration is often an ongoing process rather than one which is quickly done and over, so it's best to enter collaboration as if you are part of the same community, desiring everyone to benefit from the negotiation. In this way, acts of authentic and purposeful collaboration directly necessitate the emergence of the other four values—transparency, inclusivity, adaptability, and community—as they assemble part of the organization's collective purpose spontaneously.

Collaboration in open organizations

Traditional organizations advance an agreed-upon set of goals that people are welcome to support or not. In these organizations, there is some amount of discourse and negotiation, but often a higher-ranking or more powerful member of the organization intervenes to make a decision, which the membership must accept (and sometimes ignores). In open organizations, however, the focus is for members to perform their activity and to work out their differences; only if necessary would someone get involved (and even then would try to do it in the most minimal way that support the shared values of community, transparency, adaptability, collaboration and inclusivity.) This make the collaborative processes in open organizations "messier" (or "chaotic," to use Jim Whitehurst's term from *The Open Organization*) but more participatory and, hopefully, innovative.

The case studies in this section remind us of the important role of discourse in opening the potential for the negotiations required for collaboration. In Mark Krake's chapter, for example, discourse is used as a way to more fairly rate an associate's performance. And in her own case study, Angela Robertson describes her role as a "partner" and "facilitator" (someone who fosters discourse in a collaborative way) rather than a manager (who is often more directive). Rebecca Fernandez reminds us that collaboration includes discussing ideas and being open to feedback—even from the Mr. Grumpy in our organizations. Lastly, Gina Linkins's exercise shows us how a change in rules or procedure fosters the discursive collaboration necessary to change behavior and meet objectives that positively influence the group as a whole.

The message from this unit is that there exists a great disconnect between *how we define* collaboration and *what it actually is*. Authentic collaboration is more than "working together," It's a type of working together based upon negotiation: Instead of being something we do all the time ("we collaborated") it is a moment-by-moment settlement of contested ideas expressed in the discussions we have and the feedback we provide. Now that we more fully understand what it is, we can tell when we have it—or don't have it—in our teams and organizations, and we can take action to develop and encourage it.

Heidi Hess von Ludewig researches networked workplace creativity from the systems perspective, which means that she examines the relationships of multiple elements within the workplace that influence how individuals and groups perform innovative and creative work. She earned her PhD from North Carolina State University in 2014, and her research informs her work at Red Hat, interlocking teams across the Customer Experience and Engagement organization.

Collaboration at the core of professional development

Mark Krake

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: metasfresh
>
> Employees: 14
>
> Industry: Open source enterprise resource planning
>
> Challenge: Train leaders to work like open source community members

If you're launching a company, you might believe you shouldn't have to deal with issues like personnel development and company culture. After all, as a startup you're only concerned with the development and rapid evolution of your own product and services, right?

This kind of thinking is *short-term* thinking. Successful startups develop organizations with long-term strategies in mind. Startups really should think about—and prepare the groundwork for—their own company culture from beginning, so they can scale it over time as they grow.

That's what we should have done.

As former IT managers, project managers, and software developers, we founded our company in 2004 and started developing business intelligence solutions and open source ERP software—initially with software called Compiere[51] and later with projects called ADempiere[52] and,now, metasfresh[53].

We had few people and many tasks to perform. If we didn't have the know-how we needed to do a particular job well, then we taught ourselves enough to muddle through. For us, it felt like Kaizen: doing a lot of small steps, but moving and improving continuously.

As with many young companies, we didn't think much about whether this was the right way to do things; we were completely focused on what needed to be done and solved problems as fast as we could. This way of working was obvious to us. It felt natural. In fact, because our product is open source, we were able to transfer knowledge and experience we gained from open source projects directly into our organization and our style of working.

But like all startups, we eventually needed to hire more people to help our organization grow. And that meant scaling our fast-paced, open, and collaborative culture to new colleagues. How were we going to do that?

We did it by developing our own open leadership training program, which has four key dimensions. I'd like to share them.

Everyone is fit for leadership

When we reached the point where we wanted to hire our first employees, we had to ask ourselves: What should these employees be able to do, and who should support them?

Our answer: "Everything, and everybody."

51 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compiere

52 http://adempiere.net/web/guest/welcome

53 http://metasfresh.com/en/

We decided that our new colleagues should not only be employees; they should also be community members. We wanted them to be able to do what we'd been doing at that time—perhaps even better than we had. We knew immediately that finding such perfect fits would be difficult, so we decided to search for people with some needed technical skills and a great team spirit. But we also thought hard about how we could describe our way of working and therefore allow our new colleagues to transform into efficient team members quickly.

I recalled a former employer, Bonndata, an IT service provider for a large insurance company called "Deutscher Herold." That company utilized a personnel development program called "Fit4Leadership." The core focus of the program was preparing the company's *own employees* (almost exclusively COBOL Software Developers and Mainframe specialists) for future challenges in their fast-changing worlds. An essential part of Fit4Leadership was an annual interview, which the heads of various departments held together with employees.

A questionnaire helped everyone prepare for that interview. All parties involved used it to exchange feedback on professional and social developments through a dialogic practice. It was not only about the *supervisor's* perception of the *employee*, but also *the other way around*.

This was what we needed for the foundation of our own training. We extracted a few additional elements, too, but kept the name "Fit4Leadership" because it expressed exactly what we wanted to achieve with our own program: allowing everybody to reach for leadership in their respective areas.

Over time and through our work on the program, we found the following four cornerstones that are currently the foundation of our organizational culture. So we designed our own Fit4Leaderhip program to help us make these values sustainable—in the *long term*.

1. Competence wheels

We use three "competence wheels" to define general targets for personal development within our company. The competence wheels are divided into:

- technical know-how (e.g., Java, SQL, ReactJS, Redux, Jasperreports and more),
- functional know-how (e.g., inventory management, commission, logistics, accounting and more), and,
- soft skills (e.g., self-responsibility, quality consciousness, solution orientation and more).

We then divide each competency into three skill levels: connoisseur, adept, and expert. The know-how we describe in each of the competence wheels includes the knowledge and skills required to carry out our work in our company. In doing so, we do not make a distinction between different roles. Every team member decides on their own how to develop and fill a competence wheel—either very focused on reaching the expert status within one area, or on broader development in all areas.

We adapt the contents of the competence wheels to the current needs of our team and company once a year as part of the personal annual discussions. The acquired skill level is proposed by the individual team member as well as the team. The result is a wonderful balance between self-perception and perception from the team, a fairer classification everyone can accept.

2. Shared responsibility for culture

In our organization, *all team members participate in and are responsible for the development of our internal company culture and people development program*.

This is really a no-brainer for us, because it's exactly what we learn through our daily collaboration in open source environments. When people experience the possibility of engaging in a topic and receive the feedback that their engagement is appreciated, their motivation to collaborate even further increases.

What's more, we invite all team members to try new things and take risks in doing so. Failure is a fundamental part of our professional development. We provide a secure environment[54] that allows such developments—and also possibilities for communicating about the outcomes, so all can learn from them.

This approach is not only valid for technical developments but also explicitly wanted for our organizational workflows. All team members should participate actively in the development of the way we work and have the chance to receive and give feedback frequently.

3. Minimize overhead

All the skills we include in our competence wheels match what the team needs to do its work and collaborate efficiently. So we incorporate all opportunities to improve our competencies in our daily work. People new to our company often need time to fully understand that they're not reporting to a single

54 "Secure" in this context describes an organizational environment in which no one is afraid negative consequences from failing when trying something new. We were working to develop an environment that allows people to have ideas, then talk, write, and discuss them. For this we'd use a variety of tools and techniques, such as GitHub issues and related discussions, private chats, group chats, or larger groups like our daily standup meetings.

boss, but to an entire team. This kind of peer accountability actually speeds up our work by minimizing overhead.

We all maintain a backlog of prioritized Issues. Team members can decide which issues their personal knowledge and skillset best equip them to handle. We invite everybody to not only take issues in their comfort zones but also take issues that are above their current capabilities.

In the process of solving issues, all of us have the responsibility to achieve the knowledge we need for doing the work. When you don't know something, you ask a teammate. And if someone asks *you* for help with an issue, then you can take that as an indication that your own professional development is on the right track.

That's one reason why we see our company culture, including the way we tackle issues as part of our daily work, tightly connected to our people development program. For us, both belong together—two sides of the same coin. This makes our personal development effective because work, control, and feedback rest on the shoulders of all team members.

4. Always share knowledge

In open source communities, there may be situations in which individuals can not distinguish themselves despite their good performance and participation. This can lead to situations where important knowledge exists in the community but only remains with *one* individual and therefore does not add value to *everyone's* work in the long run.

We solve this with mandatory daily standups involving all team members in video conferencing. We use these opportunities to get to know all members quickly and continuously and to offer a platform on which everyone can present themselves in a defined framework. The agenda for the daily meeting is timely and thematic, and all participants (not only the moderator) discuss and agree on it. The daily standup ensures that much information is distributed in the shortest possible time. There are often topics for which members then agree for a follow-up exchange and thus promote an efficient spread of ideas and knowledge.

These routines play an important role in giving the members a secure environment to express their ideas and also taking the risks of failure. In our work environment, failures are part of a natural development and they are experienced without the loss of trust in our team.

Conclusion

Both our basic framework for a personnel management process based on leadership and participation and our defined company culture guide us to this day, even as we are in a process of constant change and improvement. They form the cornerstones of the development in our company as well as our open source community metasfresh. We continue to travel on our Fit4Leadership path, and have learned a lot over the past 13 years. The beautiful and exciting thing for us is that this path will never end.

Mark Krake is a requirements engineer, software developer, and co-founder at metasfresh, an open source enterprise planning software company.

Review and discussion questions

- Mark writes that organizations "really should think about—and prepare the groundwork for—their own company culture from beginning, so they can scale it over time as they grow." Has your organization done an adequate job of this? Why or why not? If not, how could it lay the groundwork for increased collaboration?

- Mark describes a collaborative system for evaluating personal assessments. Could you implement a similar system in your team or organization? How would you manage potentially conflicting opinions if you did?

- "Failure is a fundamental part of our professional development," Mark writes. "We provide a secure environment that allows such developments—and also possibilities for communicating about the outcomes, so all can learn from them." Can you say the same about your organization? Why or why not? How does an organizational culture that embraces failure impact the way members collaborate?

How learning to collaborate led to customer success

Jimmy Sjölund

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Basefarm
>
> Employees:
>
> Industry:
>
> Challenge:

A few years ago, I worked as a service manager at Basefarm, a European managed services provider[55]. I was part of a team supporting customers with infrastructure and managed services.

One of our customers was TV4, the largest commercial TV company in Sweden. As part of our agreement, the four engineers in our team would dedicate 400 hours per month to TV4. The client expressed a simple but irritating problem: They always seemed waiting for us to implement the changes they wanted.

Their development team felt we were the bottleneck of their delivery system. Our team, on the other hand, was feeling stressed. We felt we could never finish anything, but had to jump between customers and projects and constant firefighting. There

55 https://www.basefarm.com/en/

was no growth, as everyone was working on incoming tickets all the time. To say the least, no one was happy.

So we decided to establish a more collaborative relationship with the customer's development team. Let me explain how we did it—and what we learned as a result.

The problem

The customer developed most of its products in house. When TV4 wanted to release something new, the process for them to get the new code into the staging and production environment was slow. The lead times were too long for them (especially in their competitive market). They wanted to get updates out quickly, but after they shipped the code to us and created a ticket requesting we push it into staging or production, nothing happened.

Well, at least in their view.

On our side, the team was stressed and constantly interrupted with new prioritization, requests, or expedites. The engineers were mostly firefighting, which meant they had no time to properly fix or improve things (or learn new things themselves). Also, having several projects and tasks ongoing at the same time, they were doing much task switching—hence, nothing ever got finished.

Creating a true team

It's common for team members to more or less only sit together but not really work together. They each have their own to-do lists and tickets, and they each participate in separate projects. We aimed to create a team on which everyone could jump in on *any task* at *any time*. The team should work as a unit, not just as four people working on their own stuff in the same room.

To do that we needed to pair up on tasks to achieve instant knowledge sharing. We needed to stop separating customers across individuals on the team. It's a typical practice in development—what some will call "pair" or "mob" programming—and it works just as well for Operations teams.

Here's how we did it.

Our process for visualizing work

Write down all tasks. From what we'd learned from books and through recommendations from TV4, we decided to use kanban to help us with this new way of working. The first step was to write down all ongoing and planned work. Everyone transferred their tickets and to-do lists into sticky notes to our physical board. (When you're doing this, it's important not to hide or downplay anything; put everything up there when you begin. You can sort the rest out later.)

Categorize the work. To make differentiating between different kinds of tasks easier, we decided to categorize the cards. We chose the following categories:

- Problems
- Improvements
- Tasks (which would cover Change Requests and Service Requests)

We determined that we wouldn't create cards for "Incidents," as we decided we should be handling those immediately. In those cases, the team worked directly in the ticketing system. We also determined that all work should correspond to a registered ticket in the system, and we started putting ticket numbers on top of each card.

Next, we put the title of the ticket on the card, so we could grasp what it was about. Additional detail was available in the ticketing system.

We started out setting due dates in the bottom left corner of every card; later, though, we changed that *to the date the ticket was created*. As cards begun to flow through the board, it was more important to flag cards that had stalled than it was to monitor due dates.

In the bottom right corner of every kanban card, we placed customer abbreviations that allowed us to quickly differentiate between the customers our team was handling. We marked blocked cards with a red sticker. Every team member also received two colored magnets to indicate the cards they were currently working on.

Create a board. Creating the first iteration of the board was much easier after we'd categorized the work. We didn't plan that far ahead, as we were aware that the board layout will change a lot in the beginning. Our initial setup was:

- *Backlog*, for all identified upcoming work
- *Next*, the prioritized cards to work on
- *WIP* (Work In Progress), what we are actively working on right now
- *Accept*, work that is to be verified, tested, and accepted by the customer
- *Done*, work that is completed

Reality hits

The reality of our new system really hit us once we got all the sticky notes up on the board. There were *way too many cards in the WIP column*. No wonder we and the customers felt we never got anything done!

We decided to stop beginning new items until the WIP had decreased to a more reasonable number. That was easier said than done. Customers and stakeholders wondered what happened with their tickets and their new, incoming (important) tickets. Saying "no" was hard work. We had to explain that everyone would benefit in the end if we could just finish what we'd already started.

Holding daily sync meetings

The scariest part for us (and the management) was the level of transparency we introduced.

We began to run daily sync meetings with the customer, so we could look back at what was done yesterday, what the focus would be for the day, and whether anything was standing in our way. To make this work as we'd hoped, we had to be honest with TV4 on whether something was stuck in another department; whether the team was short on people due to illness, vacation, or something similar; or whether we would be tied up with other customers' work for a while.

These were things you typically *never* tell customers outright, as it's not really their problem if we are short on time or people. But by starting to be open about it, we could discuss alternatives or prioritize differently until we could catch up. Of course, we would not always agree, but mostly we could handle each situation and focus on the most important tasks at hand.

Handling interruptions

A big time thief—and a significant cause of stress—was interruptions. They usually came from several sources: monitoring systems, incidents, customers contacting us directly, account managers rushing in to expedite something, line managers wanting to re-prioritize, or other team members asking for help. We knew we'd need to do something about these interruptions if we were going to be able to focus, minimize task switching, and keep our WIP tickets at a reasonable limit.

To protect the team, we decided to appoint someone to a "gatekeeper" role. The gatekeeper would handle all incoming incidents including people coming by to ask questions, try to expedite tasks, and discuss prioritization. If the gatekeeper could not solve an incident by himself, he would check with someone in the team who could help out. The gatekeeper would not transfer the ticket to the other technician; they would solve the incident together, so the gatekeeper could learn and solve similar incidents on his own the next time. The gatekeeper role was a rolling schedule, four hours at a time.

If a major incident occurred, though, we would "pull the andon cord" and everyone teamed up to solve the ongoing incident together.

Automation

Developers at TV4 wished to be able to push new releases to the production environment as often and as quickly as they wanted, which was several times a day. At the time, the standard process (for all customers) was time consuming and required involvement from several departments. The customer had to create a "Change Request" at our service desk; the desk in turn passed the ticket to the responsible tech team who implemented the change. The ticket went back to the service desk, who then contacted the customer asking to verify the release. If everything seemed good, the customer would then open a new "Change Request" for release in the production environment.

The whole release could, in some cases, take weeks.

We saw many opportunities for improvements. We started by allowing the customer to do releases in the stage environment themselves. This helped us shorten lead time while working on automating as much as possible in the final solution. The result was a mostly automated process with checkpoints, one entirely triggered by the customer. In this way, we managed to go from one release every week or two weeks to several releases per day—just as the customer wanted.

Feedback and retrospectives

To evaluate how we were doing and what to improve, we ran weekly retrospective meetings. These were a good way to discuss what had went well, what could be improved, and what we should stop doing.

We typically ran the meeting only with the team. Sometimes, though, a representative from the customer participated, too. One of our first insights from a retrospective occurred when we discovered we had neglected some customers. As each customer card was both color coded and marked, it was easy to spot trends when looking at all the completed cards after a week or two and see that almost everything was for only one customer. The next week we could then focus on other customers a bit more.

So how did it go?

The entire processes was not "all upwards and onwards," but we did get a great start. Due to outside circumstances, the team frequently had to work with other projects and customers during our first week, so we could only put in 50 hours of work (instead of the agreed 100 hours per week).

But the next week, I received a call from one of the lead developers at TV4. I feared the customer would be unhappy with our results.

I could not have been more wrong.

Instead, he told me how fantastic these new improvements were. In fact, he said, it was the best week ever since they'd become a customer.

That was saying a lot, as they were one of Basefarm's first customers. It showed us that by putting focus on what we were currently doing, prioritizing together with the customer, and not starting new things before we'd finish ongoing tasks, we could work half the time and make the customer much happier!

We also had our fair share of setbacks. The most common was "WIP creep." Several times, when we noticed cards getting stuck on the board, people began feeling stressed. But it looked like we should have a normal amount of work! Then we huddled up by the board, asking each member of the team to be honest and transparent: Are we working on anything that is not up on the board? Usually, we were—small things that were "only" going to take an hour or so, but that eventually grew bigger and bigger. In one of our board resets, we were back to counting *31 cards* as ongoing (way over the agreed WIP limit!).

Eventually, the new way of working showed the whole company that both we and the customers benefited from the better collaboration, and it started to spread to other teams, each one making their own twist to fit their needs and their specific customers.

Jimmy Sjölund is a senior IT service manager and innovation coach at Telia Company, where he's focused on organizational development, exploring agile and lean workflows, and evangelizing visualization methods.

Review and discussion questions

- Jimmy's team experimented with "pair programming" to achieve better collaboration results. Would this method of collaboration work for you and your team? Why or why not?

- Jimmy describes an intricate and straightforward process for visualizing work and making individual workloads transparent. Would a similar process help your team collaborate?

- "A big time thief—and a significant cause of stress—was interruptions," Jimmy says. How can you and your teams work together without letting distractions and interruptions derail your projects? Would having what Jimmy calls a "gatekeeper" on the team help you do this?

Encouraging collaboration when it isn't easy

Angela Robertson

CASE STUDY

Organization: Microsoft technical content team

Employees:

Industry:

Challenge:

I manage a technical content team as a part of the Cloud and Enterprise group at Microsoft. And about fourteen months ago, the team was experiencing some serious communication and collaboration issues.

A lack of openness was at the root of them.

This is the story of how my team rediscovered its purpose, found new success through collaboration, and engaged with external contributors and customers in new and productive ways—all thanks to an open approach.

Collaboration conundrum

At Microsoft, technical content teams work as part of a larger engineering team to document products available for download. Like other software companies and organizations, we market products aimed at delivering certain business value.

Technical content teams, then, must clearly explain *how* to use software to efficiently do what we've told a customer is possible.

We do this primarily through written documentation. Over time, minor updates to that technical content are insufficient. So we, as technical communicators, must continually evaluate what customers need to do, compare that information against what we know the product can do, and explain how to use the product so customers will be successful and will want to return to the product going forward. This kind of work can require major documentation overhauls frequently.

My team knew this. But too often I observed some team members merely *tinkering with* very minor updates—changing one or two words, and simply copying and pasting updates from technical experts. The work reflected a lack of willingness to *frame a point of view* regarding what customers should do with the products we're documenting.

On top of that, everyone was operating as an independent contractor inside a silo of work that they were pretty conscious of protecting. The team had recently moved content from a closed system to GitHub—but was still only paying lip service to the idea that writers would accept contributions from anyone, anywhere. In practice, the team members took great ownership of the content that they'd "authored."

I knew our team culture and behavior had to change. We needed to accept contributions from anyone willing to take the time to contribute. We needed to consider a workflow for evaluating contributions and create a community that encouraged contributions. We also had to start working more collaboratively internally.

To do *any* of this effectively, I knew I needed to help the team rediscover its purpose.

Finding purpose in openness

Our shared purpose became demonstrating a commitment to openness. In our case, "openness" meant that we accepted contributions through an easy-to-learn markdown file format, evangelized for contributions from internal and external contributors, and allowed our internal comments to be visible to an external audience. It also meant that people had to be open to feedback from others.

Transitioning from XML to markdown meant that the workflow changed for everyone on the team. We replaced our proprietary file management system with GitHub, so checking for internal and external pull requests became a new task everyone now undertook. Becoming more expert with git took time; the team was straining to adjust when everything felt so new.

As people were stressed by the content publishing workflow changes, collaborating with stakeholders was also strained. Because people now had less time to do their work, they didn't invest as much in content *quality*. "Isn't the community available to help with contributions?" a few people asked when they spoke up about quality issues. But management changes and other factors caused these voices to get muffled and silenced.

But the the workflow changes required when moving from XML to markdown, and from proprietary file management system to GitHub, were *much easier* to manage than the *cultural* changes required to make the team more open to feedback about the content that we were publishing.

Taking an honest look

For too long, the technical content team hadn't taken an honest look at what was working well and what needed improvement. The pervasive belief was that being critical meant being unkind. But a few long-time team members managed to provide constructive feedback in a way that cracked open the door to a more open team culture.

Seeing the opportunity, I began providing more feedback too: I started to use different words to describe our work. Content developers were no longer authors; they were *maintainers*. Responsibilities expanded to include *reviewing contributions*, and *contributions* came via GitHub. Experience with git was expected to grow over time. We all laughed about our experiences in *git hell*.

As a manager, I didn't send email with requested changes. I posted comments and pushed commits. I tagged others to take a look at contributions. I shared positive feedback with people who took risks, regardless of the outcome. I changed teammates' assignments until I saw that the person's work aligned with their potential for growth. I worked in the community as much as possible to encourage contributions.

What happened led to an organizational change that continues to surprise and instruct.

A new approach to refactoring

In a period of only ten months, five people left a team that originally consisted of 10. Employee turnover at a tech company based in Seattle is not unusual. That said, when half the team departs, you, as a manager and leader, have an opportunity to reshape the organization in a way that is impactful for customers and the employees who remain with the team. You also think about who stays with the team and how to retain the talent you want to keep. I knew we could do this by doubling down on our commitment to openness.

Finding employees to join a team takes time. The smaller team that remained after each departure banded together to do what we needed to do for our customers. Yes, we made mistakes as we worked to bridge any gaps while also learning how to demonstrate an external commitment to openness. But to make contribution and collaboration easier, we changed the structure of the documentation set stored in GitHub. These changes took months to implement, as we made the changes alongside ongoing updates and the refactoring of content.

When a team decides to refactor content—that is, revise and rewrite it to improve clarity without negatively impacting technical accuracy—it has no guarantee that the refactoring is going to be as successful the team predicts. For example, years ago I worked on a team that spent 18 months refactoring content based on significant customer research. When the changes went live, despite the careful research and planning, customers were unhappy and my team had to undo changes based on clear indications that the changes were leading to large, sustained dissatisfaction with the product.

So as my current team refactored content, instead of making big, bold changes behind the scenes, we pushed smaller, *iterative* changes when we had smaller batches of new content ready to deliver. If you were to look at the daily updates we made, you'd see only changes that seem minor and small. But over a six-month period, the sum of those "small" changes added up to a substantial amount of quality improvement. One potential downside of taking this kind of iterative, daily approach is the possibility that you'll learn something later on in the process that forces you to rethink an earlier change. Yet this type of "why didn't we wait?" moment did not occur. By making updates in bite-sized chunks, we found it easier to recover when things did not go as planned.

For instance, in our first update, when we pushed the changes live, all of our content went offline. Our service level agreement (SLA) says we'll be online 100% of the time unless we pre-announce a maintenance window. Going offline is a *big deal*. We quickly realized a configuration setting was the root cause of the outage. Forty-five minutes later, we were back online. That said, for 45 minutes our content was offline—and customers noticed. Instead of posting an excuse, my team owned up to the fact that, in the process of making an improvement, we had encountered an unforeseen problem and worked to fix it as soon as possible. The team survived.

About a month later, when a long-time, trusted contributor recommended a change, I merged the commit without completing due diligence regarding verification. Within a day I realized the usually trustworthy contributor submitted bad information, and I pushed a correction. The readers noticed the changes and felt we had not done an adequate job of explaining the changes. A Reddit thread about the issue soon appeared, and there was a lot of interesting internal and external discussion for about 48 hours. I was OK.

These types of situations continue to teach us things about making updates to the technical content.

Staying the (open) course

However, one of the more interesting discussions that occurred wasn't related to content at all, but rather to the updates customers could read on GitHub. Specifically, commit messages from internal contributors started to display in Bing search results. The team felt like their private messages were becoming public. We talked about whether we should find a way to suppress certain information from being shared externally.

At the end of the discussion, we opted to remain open.

These now-public snippets illustrate things we experienced as a team. As I managed the team, I made more mistakes. But through it all, I learned the following lessons:

1. I remained committed to providing constructive feedback to people unaccustomed to anything that might be perceived as negative. Some people responded positively and appreciated my input. Others felt like I was off-base. Some people were quiet, but I could see a change in their actions that led me to understand they had heard me.
2. I asked *for* feedback—and listened when I received it. Someone told me I care too much about people, that keeping a little distance might help me have more regular work hours. During the day I tend to spend most of the time talking with people. I find that in email and online chats, people can miscommunicate. Talking to people, in person or using audio- or video-conference, reduces miscommunications and leads to an increase in productivity and employee engagement. People on my team had relied on email for so long that the idea that I would spend time *talking* with people regularly was unexpected. I worried that I was taking too much time away from "productive work," so I initially hesitated to talk with people in person. But I then remembered that the best teams I have worked with spent more time communicating verbally and in person—not just online.
3. In terms of management style and approach, I learned to be a *partner* and *facilitator*. When

> teams are under a lot of pressure, there is a tendency (as a manager) to micro-manage. I do not like to be micromanaged, so I resist the urge to employ that management style. The team members who stayed with me—and those team members who joined as others departed—started to become a team that trusted each other.

The commitment to open meant that we (internally and externally) listened to others, but it was not our responsibility for everyone to be happy with the final outcome. I remembered that an open organization is not an organization that relies too heavily on consensus. The emphasis in an open organization is on *collaboration*.

After more than 14 months, the team is changing. Yes, half of the original team has departed. But the new team members are not the only change. Original members who remain with the team are now more likely to express themselves freely and laugh at mistakes. I can ask questions that at the beginning of this experience would have resulted in silence. Today those questions more often lead to vibrant discussions. People are willing to take risks because they trust that we learn when we make mistakes. We work through problems in small groups and share what we believe our customers need. There are fewer silos as people are leaning into the notion of *sharing their work* and not being afraid of being torn apart. We build each other up and open ourselves to a community of contributors, who care about the content we publish.

Angela Robertson works as a senior content manager at Microsoft.

Review and discussion questions

- Angela notes that her team needed to take "an honest look" at itself before it was able to change its operating culture. Is your team honest about its culture, function, and capabilities? How can you help your team see itself clearly and honestly? And how would this enhance collaboration among members?

- Angela notes that collaboration isn't always comfortable. "The pervasive belief" on her team, she writes, "was that being critical meant being unkind. But a few long-time team members managed to provide constructive feedback in a way that cracked open the door to a more open team culture." Why might collaboration be uncomfortable for your team? How can your team practice more constructive collaboration?

- Angela says she finds "that in email and online chats, people can miscommunicate." What kinds of technologies *do* or *don't* help your team collaborate?

Better collaboration through inner source

Tom Benninger

CASE STUDY

Organization: Red Hat IT

Employees: 500

Industry: Enterprise IT support and solutions

Challenge: Mimic open source development communities in order to to accelerate solution delivery speeds and enhance enhance customer relations

Red Hat is a company with roughly 11,000 employees, with the IT department having around 500 members. Making up just a fraction of the organization, the IT department is still sufficiently staffed to have many application service, infrastructure, and operational teams within it. Our purpose is "to enable Red Hatters in all functions to be effective, productive, innovative, and collaborative, so that they feel they can make a difference,"—and, more specifically, to do that by providing technologies and related services in a fashion that is as open as possible.

Being open like this takes time, attention, and effort. While we always strive to be as open as possible, it can be difficult. For a variety of reasons, we don't always succeed.

With this story, I'll explain at a time when, in the rush to innovate, the Red Hat IT organization lost sight of its open ideals. But I'll also explore how returning to those ideals—and using the collaborative tactics of "inner source"—helped us to recover and greatly improve the way we deliver services.

About inner source

Before I explain how it helped our team, let me offer some background on the "inner source" concept.

Inner source is the adoption of open source development practices between teams *within* an organization to promote better and faster delivery without requiring project resources be exposed to the world or openly licensed. It allows an organization to receive many of the benefits of open source development methods within its own walls.

In this way, inner source aligns well with open organization strategies and principles; it provides a path for open, collaborative development. While the open organization defines its principles of openness broadly as transparency, inclusivity, adaptability, collaboration, and community—and covers how to use these open principles for communication, decisions making, and many other topics—inner source is about the adoption of *specific and tactical practices, processes, and patterns* from open source communities to improve delivery.

For instance, the Open Organization Maturity Model[56] suggests that in order to be transparent, teams should, at minimum, share all project resources with the project team (though it suggests that it's generally better to share these resources with the entire organization). The common pattern in both inner source and open source development is to host all resources in a publicly available version control system, for source control

56 https://opensource.com/open-organization/resources/open-org-maturity-model

management, which achieves the open organization goal of high transparency.

Another example of value alignment appears in the way open source communities accept contributions. With the source code transparently available, community contributions in the form of patches or merge requests are commonly accepted (and even expected,) practices, providing an answer of how to meet the open organization's goal of promoting inclusivity and collaboration.

The challenge

Early in 2014, Red Hat IT began its first steps toward making Amazon Web Services (AWS) a standard hosting offering for business critical systems. While teams within Red Hat IT had built several systems and services in AWS by this time, these were bespoke creations, and we desired to make deploying services to IT standards in AWS both simple and standardized.

In order to make AWS cloud hosting meet our operational standards (while being scalable), the Cloud Enablement team within Red Hat IT decided that all infrastructure in AWS would be configured through code, rather than manually, and that everyone would use a standard set of tools. The Cloud Enablement team designed and built these standard tools, while a separate group, the Platform Operations team, was given the responsibility of provisioning and hosting systems and services in AWS, using the tools.

The Cloud Enablement team built a toolset, obtusely named "Template Util," based on AWS Cloud Formations configurations wrapped in a management layer to enforce certain configuration requirements and make stamping out multiple copies of services across environments easier. While the Template Util toolset technically met all our initial requirements, and we eventually provisioned the infrastructure for more than a dozen services with it, engineers in every team working with the tool found using it to be painful. Michael Johnson, one of the engineer using the tool, said "It made doing something relatively straightforward really complicated."

Among the issues Template Util exhibited were:

- Underlying cloud formations technologies implied constraints on application stack management at odds with how we managed our application systems.
- The tooling was needlessly complex and brittle in places, using multiple layered templating technologies and languages making syntax issues hard to debug.
- The code for the tool—and some of the data users needed to manipulate the tool—were kept in a repository that was difficult for most users to access.
- There was no standard process to contributing or accepting changes.
- The documentation was poor.

As more engineers attempted to use the Template Util toolset, they found even more issues and limitations with the tools. Unhappiness continued to grow. To make matters worse, the Cloud Enablement team then shifted priorities to other deliverables without relinquishing ownership of the tool, so bug fixes and improvements to the tools were further delayed.

The real, core issues here were our inability to build an inclusive community to collaboratively build shared tooling that met everyone's needs. Fear of losing "ownership," fear of changing requirements, and fear of seeing hard work abandoned all contributed to chronic conflict, which in turn led to poorer outcomes.

Crisis point

By September 2015, more than a year after launching our first major service in AWS with the Template Util tool, we hit a crisis point.

Many engineers refused to use the tools. That forced all of the related service provisioning work on to a small set of engineers, further fracturing the community, and disrupting service delivery roadmaps as these engineers struggled to deal with unexpected work. We called an emergency meeting and invited all the teams involved to find a solution.

During the emergency meeting we found that generally people thought that we needed immediate change and should start the tooling effort over, but even the decision to start over wasn't unanimous. Many solutions emerged—sometimes multiple solutions from within a single team—all of which would require significant work to implement. While we couldn't reach a consensus on which solution to use during this meeting, we did reach an agreement to give proponents of different technologies two weeks to work together, across teams, to build their case with a prototype, which the community could then review.

While we didn't reach a final and definitive decision, this agreement was the first point where we started to return to the open source ideals that guide our mission. By inviting all involved parties, we were able to be transparent and inclusive, and we could begin rebuilding our internal community. By making clear that we wanted to improve things and were open to new options, we showed our commitment to adaptability and meritocracy. Most importantly, the plan for building prototypes gave people a clear, return path to collaboration.

When the community reviewed the prototypes, it determined that the clear leader was an Ansible-based toolset that would eventually become known, internally, as Ansicloud[57].

This prototyping and testing phase didn't fix things overnight, though. While we had consensus on the general direction we needed to head, we still needed to improve the new prototype to the point at which engineers could use it reliably for production services.

So over the next several months, a handful of engineers worked to further build and extend the Ansicloud toolset. We built three new production services. While we were sharing code, that sharing activity occurred at a low level of maturity. Some engineers had trouble getting access due to older processes. Other engineers headed in slightly different directions, with each engineer having to rediscover some of the core design issues themselves.

Returning to openness

This led to a turning point: Building on top of the previous agreement, we focused on developing a unified vision and and providing easier access. To do this, we:

1. created a list of specific goals for the project (both "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves")
2. created an open issue log for the project to avoid solving the same problem repeatedly
3. opened our code base so anyone in Red Hat could read or clone it

57 No one involved with this work had any idea, at the time, that Red Hat would acquire Ansible the following month. It should also be noted that other teams within Red Hat have found Cloud Formation based tools extremely useful, even when our specific Template Util tool did not find success.

4. made it easy for engineers to get trusted committer access

Our agreement to collaborate, our finally unified vision, and our improved tool development methods spurred the growth of our community. Ansicloud adoption spread throughout the involved organizations, but this led to a new problem: The tool started changing more quickly than users could adapt to it, and improvements that different groups submitted were beginning to affect other groups in unanticipated ways.

These issues resulted in our recent turn to inner source practices. While every open source project operates differently, we focused on adopting some best practices that seemed common to many of them. In particular:

- We identified the business owner of the project and the core-contributor group of developers who would govern the development of the tools and decide what contributions to accept. While we want to keep things open, we can't have people working against each other or breaking each other's functionality.
- We developed a project README clarifying the purpose of the tool and specifying how to use it. We also created a CONTRIBUTING document explaining how to contribute, what sort of contributions would be useful, and what sort of tests a contribution would need to pass to be accepted.
- We began building continuous integration and testing services for the Ansicloud tool itself. This helped us ensure we could quickly and efficiently validate contributions technically, before the project accepted and merged them.

With these basic agreements, documents, and tools available, we were back onto the path of open collaboration and successful inner sourcing.

So what?

Why does inner source matter?

From a developer community point of view, shifting from a traditional siloed development model to the inner source model has produced significant, quantifiable improvements:

- Contributions to our tooling have grown 72% per week (by number of commits).
- The percentage of contributions from non-core committers has grown from 27% to 78%; the users of the toolset are driving its development.
- The contributor list has grown by 15%, primarily from new users of the tool set, rather than core committers, increasing our internal community.

And the tools we've delivered through this project have allowed us to see dramatic improvements in our business outcomes. Using the Ansicloud tools, 54 new multi-environment application service deployments were created in 385 days (compared to 20 services in 1,013 days with the Template Util tools). We've gone from one new service deployment in a 50-day period to one *every week*—a seven-fold increase in the velocity of our delivery.

What really matters here is that the improvements we saw were not aberrations. Inner source provides common, easily understood patterns that organizations can adopt to effectively promote collaboration (not to mention other open organization principles). By mirroring open source *production practices*, inner source can also mirror the benefits of open source *code*, which have been seen time and time again: higher quality code, faster development, and more engaged communities.

Tom Benninger is a Solutions Architect, Systems Engineer, and continual tinkerer at Red Hat. Having worked with startups, small businesses, and larger enterprises, he has experience within a broad set of IT disciplines. His current area of focus is improving Application Lifecycle Management in the enterprise.

Review and discussion questions

- Tim's team changed its approach to project documentation as part of its commitment to working more collaboratively. Does your team document its work in a way that helps it collaborate? Are your collective documentation techniques effective? How might they improve?

- Adopting new tools and new organizational principles helped Tom's team increase its delivery cadence "from one new service deployment in a 50-day period to one every week—a sevenfold increase in the velocity of our delivery." What new methods of collaboration could help your team realize similar benefits?

- Has your team or organization explored "inner source" as a way to enhance collaboration? What are your impressions of it? Would it produce results for you?

Engaging Mr. Grumpy

Rebecca Fernandez

EXERCISE

Estimated time to complete: 30–60 minutes (or whatever the length of your typical project conversations)

Materials needed: None

Activity type: Action

When you practice open communication and invite feedback, you get a lot valuable input that can improve your ideas, projects, and decisions. Yet one of the most common questions I hear is this: "That's all well and good, and I agree, it's best to open yourself up to that kind of feedback. But what about that one person . . . ?"

You know the one they're talking about. It's Mr. Grumpy, who inevitably shows up and says things like, "Oh, that won't work here" or "We already tried something like that," yet never seems to offer any helpful or productive alternatives.

Don't be fooled by Mr. Grumpy's name. Mr. Grumpy can be a man or a woman, and sometimes her demeanor is more skeptical than argumentative. But whatever form your Mr. Grumpy takes, you know who I'm talking about, and I've pulled together seven steps to help you engage Mr. Grumpy in a productive dialog.

Facilitation steps

STEP 1. Assume positive intentions (it always helps). Mr. Grumpy doesn't make this easy, because the kinds of comments and feedback you'll hear from him sure don't *sound* like they're being delivered with good intentions.

Yet once you get to know Mr. Grumpy, you will find that because of his behavior, he is well accustomed to being treated as if he's bringing everyone down. You can surprise him by making a deliberate choice to assume that he's trying to be helpful.

Use your imagination during this step. Challenge yourself to think of a positive reason why someone might say what Mr. Grumpy is saying in that moment. After all, each and every one of us has the potential to become Mr. Grumpy, if the conditions are ripe for it. Some common positive intentions that you can attribute to Mr. Grumpy include:

- Wants to prevent someone (or everyone) from wasting time on something that won't pan out
- Wants to prevent a problem
- Wants to limit how much risk the team takes on
- Wants to point out a flaw in the plan and has difficulty finding the right words to explain it to others

Speak that intention out loud. Say something like, "*It sounds like you are worried that we will break something that's working well today, and not get enough value from these changes to justify that. Is that about right?*"

Even if you guess wrong, Mr. Grumpy will correct you, saying something like, "*No, it's not that. It's that we've tried things like this before, and it seems like we're headed down the same path again.*"

In the process, even if Mr. Grumpy didn't enter the conversation with positive intentions, he will latch onto that positive intention to explain his own poor behavior. This, in turn, will lead him to be more productive in the conversation.

Step 2. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. After you've helped Mr. Grumpy find her positive intention in the conversation, it's time to start asking questions about her perspective. Often, we make the mistake of assuming that we know what Mr. Grumpy is going to say, along with her reasons behind it. Pay attention to the moment when you're inclined to explain your own perspective or reasoning, and tell yourself to hold off. Ask more questions first.

When you've asked enough questions that you can rephrase Mr. Grumpy's concerns in your own words, and she confirms that you understand, that's the best time to offer your own perspective and reasoning.

Step 3. Openly acknowledge limitations and risks. Often, Mr. Grumpy will hone in on a limitation or risk that you've already accounted for. When that happens, it's easy to be dismissive of Mr. Grumpy's concerns. Instead, try openly acknowledging that limitation or risk. Go ahead and share other ones that Mr. Grumpy hasn't brought up, as well. Write them down, on a whiteboard or in your notes, so that Mr. Grumpy sees you are listening to him. Explain what you're doing to account for that issue, and also be transparent about the fact that you don't have all the answers. Invite Mr. Grumpy's perspective on the issue.

Step 4. Voice your fears. Conversations with Mr. Grumpy are uncomfortable in part because she often brings our own fears to the surface. Be willing to make yourself vulnerable, and share what's on your mind. You might say, "*You know, when you bring up that risk, it scares me a bit because I know it's something we can't fully account for . . .*" or "*I'll admit, I'm worried* *that I won't be able to get the support I need to make this successful.*"

Mr. Grumpy will be taken aback, because she is so used to playing a different role in these conversations. When you voice your fears to Mr. Grumpy, and she sees that you don't have all the answers, you will often find that she shifts her behavior, as well, and responds by wanting to make the project more successful.

STEP 5. Offer a productive role. By now, you may have some ideas for a productive role that Mr. Grumpy can play in your project. Mr. Grumpy's default role tends to be overusing his strengths and turning them into weaknesses. Yet those same capabilities can make him an asset, if applied in a more productive manner.

For example, if Mr. Grumpy is one who pokes holes in every idea, he's a detail-oriented thinker who might be an excellent helper when you need quality or user testing later in the project. Compliment his attention to detail, and ask if he'd be interested in contributing in this way when the opportunity is available.

If Mr. Grumpy is the guy who speaks up on behalf of the Watercooler Complaint Association, he has the potential to be a trusted liaison between the project team and other stakeholder groups, helping all sides understand each other's concerns and serving as a fact checker for both.

A good way to close the conversation is to say something like, "*Say, I could really use someone who . . . I know it's a lot to ask, but is that something you might be willing to take on? Don't feel rushed to give me an answer.*"

STEP 6. Let Mr. Grumpy have the last word. Sometimes, despite applying all of the previous steps, Mr. Grumpy just won't be ready to let go of something in a conversation. And that's okay. Be willing to let Mr. Grumpy have the last word, and to leave things at, "*Well, I can't say that you've changed my mind, but you have given me a lot to think about. Thank you for that.*"

Step 7. Stay in touch. It's important to keep Mr. Grumpy informed about the project, and to continue to have conversations. In the future, you might be able to bring Mr. Grumpy's requirements back into the project, or her requirements might evolve to better fit the direction of your efforts. But the only way that can happen is if you make an effort to check in, every so often, and let Mr. Grumpy know how things are going.

As you prepare to leave the conversation with Mr. Grumpy, find an authentic way to express your desire to stay in touch. You might say something like, "*I've really learned a lot from our discussion today, and I hope that we can continue to stay in touch. Would it be alright if I reached out from time to time, to give you an update on where things are headed, and get your thoughts?*"

Reflection

Something surprising often happens in these conversations. By the end, you come to appreciate Mr. Grumpy's divergent viewpoint, and Mr. Grumpy values working with someone who listens to her perspective, even if you don't change every detail to her liking. When I've applied these steps in my own conversations, I've find that they don't just change Mr. Grumpy for the better. They also change my attitude toward Mr. Grumpy, which in turn, helps us build a valuable partnership that leads to better outcomes for everyone.

Rebecca Fernandez is a Principal Program Manager at Red Hat, leading projects to help the company scale its open culture. She's an Open Organization Ambassador, contributed to The Open Organization book, and maintains the Open Decision Framework.

Performing the collaborative dilemma

Gina Likins

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 30–60 minutes
>
> Materials needed: Two varieties of prizes, a set of "choice cards" for every participant, a whiteboard and markers, signs that read "30 seconds" and "20 seconds"
>
> Activity type: Action

I wanted groups to experience open source values in a very concrete, hands-on way—so I created a game called "Candy or Swag,"[58] which is based on The Prisoner's Dilemma.[59] Unlike The Prisoner's Dilemma, however, Candy or Swag tests a negotiation scenario based on reward (rather than punishment) and uses real, tangible prizes of varying value to demonstrate how

58 Adapted from "Teaching the Prisoner's Dilemma More Effectively: Engaging the participants," by Michael A. McPherson and Michael L. Nieswiadomy (http://www.cas.unt.edu/~mcpherson/papers/mcpherson_nieswiadomy_jee.pdf)

59 The Prisoner's Dilemma (http://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/prisoners-dilemma.asp) is a classic exercise in game theory that explores the "competing" desires of cooperation and self-preservation. I've always been fascinated by game theory and the Prisoner's Dilemma, but when I tried to explain it to others, I found it was hard to explain – and to understand—because it was abstract: set in the realm of "thought experiment."

collaboration and transparency can form the basis of a sound business strategy.

In this chapter, I'll explain how I run "Candy or Swag," including game setup, instructions for play, and hints for facilitation.

Facilitation steps

Phase 1: Preparation

STEP 1. Gather materials. For this exercise, you will need four things:

- *Prizes of two different varieties: "candy" and "swag."* Candy (or "low value" prizes) can be anything with trivial value, like individually wrapped pieces of candy (my typical choice), pennies, or stickers. To estimate quantity, assume that every participant can win a piece of swag every "round" and that you will run at least eight rounds. Swag (or "high value" prizes) don't have to be physical objects; it could be "two hours off," for example—but there should be a physical representation of the prize, like a coupon (I've used company-branded items that we usually give away at conferences). To estimate quantity, figure that every participant every participant can have one piece of "swag" and have a few to spare.
- *A "choice card" for each participant*. On each card, write the name of the "low value" prize on one side, and on the reverse write the "high value" prize. I tend to use candy for the former and swag for the latter (hence the name of the exercise), but you should use whatever works best for you.

Throughout this chapter, I'll use the terms "candy" and "swag" as placeholders for these two types of prizes.

- *A whiteboard and whiteboard markers or printed sheets to distribute with the payoff matrix* (see Figure 1).
- Signs (handwritten is fine) reading "30 seconds" and "20 seconds."

STEP 2. Place a choice card at each participant's desk.

Phase 2: Game Play

STEP 1. Explain the rules to participants. Here they are:

1. *No talking from this point forward. Anyone who talks gets neither candy nor swag.*
2. *You have a choice card in front of you. When I say so, pick up the card and hold it so that your choice (of candy or swag) is facing up and the other side is hidden by your hand.*
3. *I'll come around and tally your choices, so make sure to hold your card so I can see it but no one else can. If you want "candy," for example, hold the card so I can see "candy" when I come around.*
4. *Here's the twist: Whether you receive candy, swag —or nothing at all!—is based on what choices the whole group makes, based on a payoff matrix.*
5. *Here's how the payout works. Pay close attention.*

STEP 2. Explain the "Payout Matrix." I find that constructing the payoff matrix in real-time on the whiteboard (while talking it through) works best. This seems to help participants better understand the choices.

If using a whiteboard is not feasible, you can distribute printed copies of the payoff matrix. The payoff matrix is based on a "target number" of participants, which is the maximum number that can choose "swag" and ensure a scenario where everyone gets something. I usually set the number at roughly 1/10 the size of the group. For example: In a group of 20, the target number is 2, while for a group of 8, the target is 1 (as it's hard to have less than a whole person). For a group of 15, I'd use 2 as the target.

If...	Who gets CANDY	Who gets SWAG
... **everyone** chooses **candy**	**Everyone**	**No one**
... ≤ target# of participants choose **swag**	**Everyone except** the participants who chose **swag**	The participants who chose **swag**
... > target# of participants choose **swag**	**No one**	**No one**

Figure 1: The "payout matrix"

After explaining the payout matrix and taking questions, you're ready to play! (Important: Do not tell the participants how many rounds you're playing.)

STEP 3. Ask the participants to choose candy or swag by holding their choice card so that you can see their choice (but no one else can).

STEP 4. Count the number of participants who chose swag.

STEP 5. Tell the group how many people chose swag (but not who chose swag). Explain what everyone won (if anything) using the payout matrix above, and hand out prizes.

STEP 6. Run a few rounds (at least three) like this, then ask for some reflection about what the participants are noticing.

STEP 7. By now the participants are usually getting a little frustrated (which is fine), so explain: "*We are going to try playing the game a little differently—in a way that's more 'open.*'"

Step 8. Review the Open Organization Definition (see Appendix) and ask the group if they think it might help if they were allowed to collaborate a little before making their decision for candy or swag. Assuming they jump on this opportunity (and I've never seen a group that hasn't), you can explain some new rules.

Step 8. Explain these new rules:

1. *You will have one minute from when I say "go" to collaborate as a group before each of you again chooses candy or swag.*
2. *I'll hold up signs telling you when you have 30 seconds left, then 20 seconds left, then count down the last ten.*
3. *All the rest of the rules are the same. Remember to choose the card for the prize you want, then hold it so that I am the only person who can see your choice.*

Step 9. Say "*Go.*"

Step 10. At 30 seconds, hold up the "30 second" card. Then, at 20 seconds, hold up the "20 second" card. At 10 seconds, begin a silent countdown using your hands held high above your head. (Note: I'm not incredibly strict with the timing. If there was clear progress, I let the time run long, for example. This step is primarily a way to ensure participants know there's not room for endless debate.)

Step 11. As above, tally the votes for swag and explain the "payout." If at any time a participant asks how many more rounds there will be, tell them that you don't know. Run at least three rounds this way. Run more rounds if it takes them a while to get collaborating.

Step 12. After a couple of rounds of playing the game this way, ask the group if—based on your discussions about "openness"—anyone can think of a change that would make the process even more open.

Step 13. If the group has had people who said they'd choose candy but really chose swag in the collaboration period (what we might call "cheaters"), they'll usually come up with "transparency" on their own. Even if you haven't seen cheaters so far, though, consider proposing a hypothetical situation asking what would have happened if the group still ended up with too many swag choices and how that would have affected the outcome. (I will often use this opportunity to talk about the open source idea of "trust then verify"—or collaborating with people to find the best solution, rather than competing, but having the code be open and transparent to everyone so it's "checkable.")

Step 14. Change the rules one more time. Now have the participants make their choices in an "open" or transparent way (for example, by placing their choice card face up on the table). This variant is especially helpful if you have groups that are unable to figure out how to effectively manage the collaboration variant of the rules.

Reflection

If your exercise runs anything like mine have, then during the first few rounds of the game more than the target number of participants will choose swag and no one will receive anything. In groups I've facilitated (which typically had about 20 participants with a target number of 2), the number of participants who chose swag each round ranged from four to eight, but it was never fewer than two (so no one won anything). When asked to reflect on what they're seeing, the participants typically identify a few issues:

- "A lot of people are greedy (i.e., want swag)."
- "There's no way to tell who is asking for what."

- "There were a lot of people who were trying to do the right thing so everyone could get candy at least."

After I've changed the rules to allow for more collaboration, however, the participants immediately figure out that if they work together they can *all* get candy every round, and they can *take turns* getting swag. Watching the discussions between the participants evolve is fascinating: even though I've just met these participants, I can tell who the leaders are. I've seen groups came up with their own variants of a "sharing protocol." For example, one group chose one person from each table in the first round, then the next person from each table during the next round, while in another group they just moved around the room clockwise. When we enter the reflection phase of the exercise, almost every group I've worked with has observed that they have fared better when everyone was collaborating.

One group was particularly illustrative. Apparently, there'd been some interpersonal drama earlier in the week and tensions in the group were high. When they first played the collaboration round, they came up with a plan—but someone "cheated"[60] (i.e., didn't stick to the agreed upon plan) and ended up causing the swag count to be "3."

So we tried it again, and the same thing happened. And again. By this point, the group had figured out who the rogue was (and he'd accumulated three pieces of swag while others had none) and were beginning to be quite upset with him. To my utter surprise, on the next round the cheater didn't cheat. I had to laugh, though, when someone pointed out that one of the other participants had taken away his swag card!

60 I have "cheated" in quotes because in one sense he was following the best possible plan, if you were to discount altruism as a means to obtain future good.

The cheater was understandably frustrated, but I used this as an opportunity to talk about what happens in open source communities when people show they are not trustworthy or that they don't have the community's best interests at heart. As I explained to the group, in open communities, if someone is consistently causing problems, the community will attempt to work it out with that person. But if that doesn't work, the community will often have no choice but to remove that person from the community.

The open organization values of collaboration and transparency seem like they should be easy enough to understand. But giving people the opportunity to discover how well they work through experimentation has proven far more effective than all the explaining I could do. This exercise is one way to provide that opportunity.

Gina Likins is a member of the University Outreach group, which is part of the Open Source & Standards Team at Red Hat. She's been working in internet strategy for more than 20 years, participating in online communities for nearly 25, and working in open source for more than four. She's passionate about finding ways to help our open source communities thrive and be more welcoming for everyone.

Optimizing for collaboration

Jono Bacon

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 60 minutes
>
> Materials needed: Scratch paper and writing utensils
>
> Activity type: Action

One of the trickiest challenges to constructing an open organization that scales is having to build workflow and methodologies that can grow without specific mentoring. If we always depend on people to hand-hold organizational growth and collaboration, they'll will always remain bottlenecked.

Moreover, a key lesson I've learned in my career is that when you're building a product, community, workflow, or service, much of the insight that can guide your decision-making is wrapped up inside the minds of your audience. The tricky bit is pulling that insight out.

As such, to build a strong open organization we need to

1. build group collaboration workflows that can scale, and
2. pull out the insight from the participants in that workflow

I've previously worked at XPRIZE, an organization that hosts huge competitions to solve large problems in the world. For example, the first XPRIZE on which I worked on was the Global Learning XPRIZE, largely funded by Elon Musk to the tune of $15 million, which challenged teams to build an Android app capable of teaching kids how to read, write, and do arithmetic—all without the aid of a teacher.

Each year we ran an invitation-only conference in which attendees were asked to design a new XPRIZE. Now, if we merely asked them to *write down ideas*, we wouldn't get much actionable content. Instead we had a workflow that would scale across all attendees tease out the ideas in a form we could use.

That workflow looked something like this—and I think it's useful for anyone trying to foster innovative collaboration in their open organizations.

Facilitation steps

The process consists of three core components:

STEP 1. Define the problem/goal. We need to ensure everyone is on the same page with the scope of the exercise and the goals.

STEP 2. Group collaboration. People love to work together in smaller groups. It gets the blood pumping, brings people's personalities out, and keeps people mentally engaged.

STEP 3. Group brainstorming and feedback. At the end of the exercise, everyone comes together to share their outcomes for the benefit of everyone to hear.

Example 1

In the case of the XPRIZE events, we adapted this general framework to produce the following process.

STEP 1. Break people into small groups. Ask them for

- a prize challenge statement,
- a prize amount, and
- how the prize will be assessed.

STEP 2. Hold a vote to pick the leading prizes.

Step 3. Ask people from the teams receiving the fewest votes to join the teams with the leading prize ideas and bring their insights.

Step 4. Ask these newly-formed groups for additional, specific detail to provide a more comprehensive prize design.

Step 5. Present the ideas to the full audience and ask judges to vote on the pitches.

Following this procedure, we consistently found great, actionable ideas.

Example 2

In a similar way, when I am consulting with organizations[61] to help them build communities, I will often design workshops to help bring ideas to the service. In one such workshop recently, I worked to help a team develop best practices for dealing with difficult people. I used the same process.

Step 1. Present four common types of difficult person (e.g. aggressively opinionated, unwilling to commit etc).

Step 2. Divide participants into four groups, where each has an actor who would represent one of these difficult personalities.

Step 3. Tell each group to try and accomplish a stated outcome and navigate that personality.

Step 4. At the end of the session, ask everyone to collectively brainstorm methods and approaches they used to deal with the various personalities in their groups. We collected and shared all this in a document.

61 http://www.jonobacon.com/consulting

Some notes

As you design your group activity, begin with the ultimate goal you want to accomplish. Ask yourself some guiding questions like:

- What is the output?
- Is it a document with best practice from everyone who participates?
- Is it a set of ideas (e.g. with the XPRIZE example)? Is it five key outcomes from the overall session?

Structure the group collaboration piece next. Design this to be simple and clear enough that every group can perform it without much oversight. Give people enough time to derive some good results, but not so long that people get distracted (bear in mind that people like to chit-chat and potentially screw around, so consider identifying facilitators to keep things on track). Make sure your vision for outputs is clear (e.g., content in a document, sticky notes on a board, a central idea, etc.), and produce any necessary handouts for group members and facilitators.

Finally, design your method for pulling the insight from each group and sharing it with the wider audience. For brainstorming, I'm a fan of having this be free-form—something in which people can share their ideas/feedback in front of the wider group and one person notes it all in a Google Doc. This document then becomes the tangible output of the session. Other approaches might be for people to produce something. Be wary of people being on computers there; it increases their chances of getting distracted with email and other communication.

Reflection

While you might consider the output of one of these exercises as the primary product of a session, think of the workflow itself as a product too. Like all products, we evolve them. As such, when you reflect on your experience, ask:

- How can you improve and refine your workflow?
- How can you get feedback from participants for what worked well and what worked less well?
- How can you optimize the time and produce better results?

I always recommend that you:

- gather simple feedback from participants for how to make improvements,
- design adjustments and changes, and then
- implement those changes and see if the results are better.

If you do this repeatedly, you'll build razor sharp group collaboration methodologies that will efficiently get great results. These methodologies, when well documented, will then form a bedrock of best practice in your organization. Consider these workflows an integral part of how you build value. Think of them like a open source software library: There's a required set of inputs, some internal processing, and then a set of predictable outputs.

When you design these inputs, processing, and outputs, and operate this design itself as a collaborative project, you build phenomenal organizational value.

Jono Bacon is a leading community strategy, open source, and developer relations consultant. He works across technology, security, consumer products, developer platforms, services, and other industries. He wrote the leading book on community strategy, runs the Open Community Conference and Community Leadership Summit annual events, and writes for Forbes.

Unit 5: Community

Introduction: What is community?

Heidi Hess von Ludewig

The term "community" refers to a sense of shared ownership and purpose that generates relationships of goodwill and fellowship between the members of a social network.

"A community" is a *specific* social network united according to shared values, beliefs, and goals. In recent years (and especially since the widespread adoption of internet technologies and applications), the term "community" has taken on renewed importance. Communities exist wherever people can connect—face-to-face, in shared space, or even virtually, through analog or digital media (like as ham or CB radio) or social networking applications (like Facebook). Social communities often center around religion, politics, culture, geographical location, or interests. In professional and business realms, communities can be comprised of members who have similar knowledge, professions, or work roles (for instance, software coding, lawyers, or project managers). Research on communities has found that they provide support, enlarge networks by enabling weak and strong network ties, disseminate information, and provide education and mentorship.

But they do something else, too: Communities define modes of behavior, beliefs, and roles, and in this way foster relationships between people. "Community" refers to the relationships; it is the connective medium between members and their shared value and activity systems. In other words, it's the way that people, tools, and other elements relate and engage with one another. This point is important. Communities are not just amorphous globs of people stuck together with some beliefs; they consist of relationships that develop between and among community members and elements. Those relationships are what *constitute* the community; the relationships make possible the feeling of fellowship and positive association between members, the activities they perform, and the way they perform them.

Communities—how they're constructed, the tools they use, how they operate—influence the ways members connect (how they develop relationships between each other and establish relationships to the community at large), and the community purpose and value system is the reason those members connect. In this sense, then, the reason a community exists, how it decides to design and structure itself, the tools it decides to use, the information it displays to instruct and guide members, and the people who join and participate in the community *are all important considerations in building an open community*, because each of these factors influences the others.

What are open communities?

So-called "open communities" are an offshoot of open source software communities. The term "open" in "open source community" has dual meanings. First, in open source communities, community participation is "open," meaning that anyone can join the community and participate in its activities. Second, the source code these communities produce is "open," meaning that both the community *and* the general public can use and modify it.

At the time open source communities were created, "open" was a very new concept—one in direct opposition to prevailing wisdom in the software industry, where proprietary software (creation, use, and access controlled by the owners of the intellectual property) was predominant. Open source communities, therefore, were among the first enactment of open communities and were focused on creating software. Today, however, *open* communities are a broader implementation of *open source* communities.

While all communities function in ways that align with the beliefs and values of the group, some are more explicit and deliberately reflexive about the values that guide their operation. Open communities are one example of this approach to community; they concern themselves with how a community should operate. In this way, open communities foster a particular kind of relationship and bond between its members, and—in the truest sense—encourage the development of specialized activities that are supportive of its values and beliefs. More simply, the shared values and beliefs around which an open community develops has to do not only with *what* it does but *how it does what it does*.

For example, at the heart of many open communities is the value of "meritocracy," which members invoke to stress evaluation of ideas and work based on the intrinsic value of the work to the community and *not* on the value of the people performing the activity. Other key attributes of an open community are transparency, inclusivity, adaptability, and collaboration. These shared qualities help spur the self-organizing nature of an open community. The relative level of a community's degree of inclusivity, adaptability, collaboration and transparency determines that community's degree of "openness."

Open communities are managed predominantly through members' participation, rather than by a designated community moderator (though there may be a community moderator whose role is intended to mediate disputes or moderate discussions based on the meritocracy and other values of the community). All members participate in order to socialize the goals and behaviors of the community; for instance, in open communities are formed around values like "collaboration," "diversity," "adaptability," "transparency," or "meritocracy," all members are responsible for preventing and reporting harassment or any behavior that might negate these values.

Since open communities are especially concerned with how they operate, they are often able to use their shared values to inform decision making and evaluate contributions. Members therefore possess a common language for working together, are able to use that language and standard of behavior to participate in collaborative work, consistently model the behaviors that align with the shared values, and—perhaps most importantly—are accountable for their actions (and trust other community members to also be accountable).

Influence and influencers

Communities are complex, dynamic social organizations. They bring similar people together, which is an important function when we consider the cliche "the sum is greater than the parts." Communities both influence and are influenced by outside forces, which only adds to their complexity.

No community is completely able to follow or support every value and belief that created them. Open communities, like all communities, exist on a continuum. In other words, open communities aren't entirely open; they may strive for complete transparency but in the end they can exist anywhere on a *trans-*

parency continuum. Where they land on that continuum is a factor of many elements, direct and indirect, that create the context (the interconnectedness) for the the shared activity by the members. This means that the degree by which the community enacts all the other values defined by the open organization framework will determine the degree of "openness" of the community.

Many factors influence a community's relative degree of "openness," including:

- contextual elements
- the tools the community uses to participate
- the level of access to information and sharing they allow
- the level of access they afford each other (e.g., for building interpersonal relationships and trust)
- the rules that govern whether and how participants can interact with community moderators and administrators
- the process by which comments and topics are created, reviewed and published
- the members and the varying backgrounds and experiences they cumulatively enact within the community

And so on! Any or all of these influences can be intentional or unintentional, but each one still affects a considerable impact on the community. Likewise, the dynamic nature of communities becomes apparent when communities influence and are influenced by their members and administrators: communities not only evolve but they evolve the sense of identity, the shared activities, and the outcome of those activities that their members develop by being a part of the community.

At times, communities' advantages can also become disadvantages—for instance, by propagating entrenched knowledge, creating knowledge that is too prescriptive, creating patterns of behavior and sets of values that don't adapt to external contexts or cultures, or limiting access to community decisions. Put another way: Communities can frame our ways of thinking and being and become "The Box" we are later encouraged to think outside!

The qualities of *open* communities provide a counterweight to this tendency. Their preference for operating according to the values of adaptability, inclusivity, collaboration, and transparency helps members *directly impact* how a community functions and how its members participate. At any time, members are expected to share and be accountable to continually contribute, evaluate and use the best ideas—including how the community operates and organizes its activities.

Since all communities have the power to positively and negatively influence those they serve, we need to ask: What would make *open* communities thrive where *others* have failed?

Once again, the open qualities of transparency, inclusivity, adaptability, and collaboration give open communities the potential to self-regulate and self-heal. Other types of communities are founded on the hierarchical paradigms or focused on a goal using shared values (rather than on shared values creating the community itself and then a shared goal). Other communities frequently struggle with change because they are limited in their ability to deal with changes caused by archaic formats, and are limited when their surrounding culture and contextual changes (including technologies). But self-healing and self-regulation is potential of open communities is just that: a potential. As always it is up to the people to enact this potential.

The values and solutions of open communities

Other resources have covered some of the values gained by having an open community, and they include increased agility and coordination, augmented participation, and improved innovation cycles (see Appendix).

In the case studies that follow, Jen Kelchner discusses how community is the product of values, ideas, and processes, and that it is a dynamic presence that creates the culture "and people who perpetuate it." Slalom has created a program that prioritizes hiring an employee based on the ability to become part of the community rather than basing employment on skills or talents.

Heidi Hess von Ludewig researches networked workplace creativity from the systems perspective, which means that she examines the relationships of multiple elements within the workplace that influence how individuals and groups perform innovative and creative work. She earned her PhD from North Carolina State University in 2014, and her research informs her work at Red Hat, interlocking teams across the Customer Experience and Engagement organization.

Curating community through collaborative spaces

Jen Kelchner

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Roam Innovative Workplace
>
> Employees: 40
>
> Industry: Co-working and meeting space
>
> Challenge: Create a collaborative, dynamic, shared workplace that fosters community

We all want a productive environment in which to do our work. Agile workplaces—*and agile people*—thrive in a community-driven environment. Yet for most, the challenge remains: *How do we effectively create that community?*

When I was preparing to launch LDR21, I was looking for a place to work that was a quieter alternative to a coffee shop. I needed to be around the energy of productive people, required a quiet space to take calls, and didn't want to every ounce of me to smell like coffee at the end of a day. I knew about co-working spaces, but none of the known leaders in metropolitan areas suited me. Those spaces offer great services, but I wanted more than mail delivery and free coffee.

By nature, I enjoy people and conversation. I want to find new and interesting people to talk to and learn from. It's one of the reasons the open way is so appealing to me: *it's community* *driven*. So when I found Roam[62] and took my first tour, I was hooked immediately. The staff welcomed me with smiles, open arms, laughter, and an immediate sense of belonging. I didn't even sleep on it; I signed us up and immediately felt at home (we even joke that I'm part of their team because I talk them up so much). But honestly, isn't that what the support of a community is about?

Roam Innovative Workplace is based in the Atlanta, GA, market and has been scaling rather nicely over the last couple of years. Their approach to coworking is different than most other companies in their industry. Their name stands for Reimagining Offices And Meetings ("ROAM"), but this is not where their reimagining ends. They don't simply offer private offices and open coworking space; they also provide meeting space for the business community. And, frankly it's how they "do community" that's their biggest difference.

In this case study, I want to explain Roam's approach to truly communal, collaborative space. Then I'll address how you can translate that approach into strategies for reimagining your own workplace so it's more community-oriented.

Partnering through community

I sat down with Corey Wardell, General Manager, and Chad Kimberlin, Director of Operations, both of whom I've come to know quite well[63]. I wanted to know how they were carving out a niche within a niche market—and in an exploding industry.

Roam's, tagline is "partners in the stories of accomplished dreams." Their mission is to champion connections in a way that allows their community to grow together in knowledge and abil-

62 http://meetatroam.com/

63 http://ldr21.com/ep4-curating-community-with-coworking-roam/

ity for the good of all. This is particularly evident in how they care for their members: Taking the time to listen to who they are and what they're doing is only one of the many steps in caring for those in community. Chad simply stated, "We care about the success of our members. We want you to win."

Several community-oriented principles guide Roam's approach to building workplaces:

- Be engaged
- Create value
- Be intentional
- Be purposeful and impactful
- Initiate creativity
- Be generous and empower those in your community

As Corey told me: "I think community can just get thrown out and becomes a buzzword. But, I think when you put the meat behind it—it's actually incredibly valuable."

Yes, community is incredibly valuable—but many of us don't know how to incorporate that into our workplace. Let's take a look at four ways we can curate community in the workplace: through *access*, through *support*, through *collaboration*, and through *sharing*.

Why community?

We all have an innate need to be part of something bigger than ourselves; it's how we're hardwired. Community allows us to find that place we can *belong* and to which we can really *contribute*, and this leads to our feeling valued and purposeful. Understanding the value of our contributions—and the ways those contributions affect the ecosystems of which we're all a part—creates a freedom and sense of ownership in all areas of our work.

As long as humans have been recording our history, we've had examples of community to learn about and emulate. We all have heard the maxim "It takes a village to raise a child"—and so it did. Everyone in community has a job, a *responsibility*, in caring for each other. That's always been the case. It may have looked like hunting for food, caring for children, harvesting fields together, or another task that helped everyone and everything work together towards a greater good.

Over time, our communities transitioned. Today, even though we're banding together for more than just our survival needs, we are in great need of curating communities.

We need human connection, purpose, and value in our day to day interactions. And with digital transformation, we have the opportunity to create places of connection and valuable contribution, and to build societies together for successful futures.

INSIGHT FROM ROAM: "People just want to be connected and passionate about what they're doing," Corey told me. "We would really love to love to go to work and love to do what we do." Roam's job, he explained, is to create an environment for people to do their best work. It's about an environment where you can be productive, you can focus, you can collaborate as you need to on your own terms. Roam recognizes that different people have different needs, so designing a workplace with a flexible framework is important. That framework has to include the right technology, seating arrangements, and even the right types of furniture. It's all part of setting people up for success. Allowing people to work from home, *while beneficial*, can inadvertently create another issue: people not being productive. They need the environment, too, which is where coworking can come in to solve the real estate footprint and flexibility challenges.

Curate through access

In open organizations, we leverage open principles to create collaborative and inclusive environments. We seek to break down the barriers that would otherwise prevent knowledge sharing, communication, and the ability to collaborate. Removing barriers is part of providing access and support in the workplace.

The best place to start removing barriers is *with access to information and ability to have open communication*. By creating knowledge commons, best practice repositories, and open feedback practices, you can begin to remove silos and see an immediate increase in productivity and efficiency. If we want to build agile people, we must remove existing barriers for them to become agile. The barriers in the actual workspace can be the space itself, the tools and feedback mechanisms you use (or don't use!), and the way you structure access to various resources.

Insight from Roam: Leaders in agile workplaces must help remove barriers that prevent people from being innovative and creative, and from building new business. Roam understands that people need access to the right space, supplies, technology, support, and communication. In order for people to succeed, as employees or entrepreneurs, they must have access to resources and services to allow them to effectively do their jobs and succeed.

Curate through support

Asking people to show up on time, sit in a cubicle, and accomplish assigned tasks is not the way to go. It may have been the way for decades—but it isn't conducive to how we work today. We have changed as a society; generational needs vary, and we operate in a global marketplace that demands constant evolution and improvement.

Without your people, you couldn't run your organization, deliver services, or build products. As a leader, your people's needs must be at the forefront of your mind. It isn't about knocking out a wish list (ping pong tables or hammocks for rest or play). It isn't always about the best benefit packages. It *is* about understanding the needs—the levels of access and support required—and getting into the trenches to walk it out with

So instead, let's start with these questions: What do they need to actually do their job? What information can I get them? What type support system do we have in place? How do I retain great talent? How do we build bridges to close gaps? What do they need to hear from me as a leader?

Insight from Roam: "The idea of community comes into place when we engage the members in our space, put ourselves in their shoes, understand their struggles, and walk it out with them" Corey explained to me. "Our question is always: *How do we help them succeed?*" For Roam, part of the answer is providing access to others who will help them with their work. That means connecting people to others across teams, or helping them collaborate to solve a problem. You can provide access and support by connecting others in the community. Get to know what your people need and what they are great at. Then you can create bridges across the community to get things done—come alongside people and help them succeed. We are all acting on common interests with common goals; leverage that to foster community authentically.

Curate through collaboration

As an extrovert, I need conversation to sustain me. I need to be around people to keep my energy up. But community is more than an energizing group of people; it's the combined effect of collaboration, inclusion, and support from others that makes it what it is. (I can personally say that I've previously failed in my efforts simply because I didn't have community or collaborative people around me.)

In other words, it's the product of an *entire ecosystem* of relationships. Recently I defined an ecosystem as: a living, breathing network of people and organizational frameworks[64]. It's a network of various actors that interconnect to form the system in which your organization operates. The actors in any ecosystem—employees, partners, external stakeholders, customers, vendors, etc.—are mutually dependent on each other for our business health, growth, and success. No matter your industry or current workplace style, perhaps our takeaway here is that—in order to foster community—people come first.

Creating places for collaboration at inclusive tables will become the engine behind the community. And knowing how we contribute to the ecosystem as a whole will strengthen our engagement in the community. People, no matter their role in the ecosystem, need to know and understand their place and the value of their contribution to the system. Our ecosystems are micro-communities connected to other micro-communities that all merge into the larger community. Our interdependence must be an understood value in order to foster community.

In order to have a healthy workplace, we need community. We need to feel comfortable, to feel supported, and to have a sense of adventure and connection to our work. We become extensions of each other who leverage positive intent in our interactions towards common goals[65].

64 https://opensource.com/open-organization/17/7/digital-transformation-people-1

Insight from Roam: One of the greatest things about the Roam community is the ability to connect others. As Corey said to me:

> Since we invest in knowing our people—who they are, what they do, what their needs are—we are able to play the "Have you met _______?" game. We love engaging with the members because we are picking each others brains. Not only do we enjoy collaborating with our community, and making collaborative connections, the diversity of thought that comes with inclusion is invaluable. It gives us a way to ask "What is working and what is not?" so we can provide great service to our members. But, it also lets us hear about new ways of doing things that allows us to build and create right alongside of our members in our community. We believe that our members become an extension of our brand and vice versa. When meetings our hosted here we become an extension of our clients brand. We support them and solve their immediate challenges as their business partner. It is the culture we promote—to foster collaborative community that is a true partnership.

The way you do work, the workplace itself, has a massive impact on culture in an organization. Every day, the spaces Roam provides create creates entry points for people to engage and become a part of a larger community. So create a workplace model that allows for bringing all types of people together to do better work—together.

65 https://opensource.com/open-organization/17/2/what-happens-when-we-just-assume-positive-intent

Curate through sharing

Transparency in leadership, and the workplace, can be about sharing our failures as much as our wins—communicating with others about what *is* or *isn't* working. This level of transparency allows collaborative teams to come together to positively contribute, and to either celebrate with you or offer help during a challenge. Collaborative communities connect deeply over time over common sets of ideas, values, or goals. It becomes about *all* of us rather than *some* of us (or ourselves).

With that sense of belonging we create in community, we are able to create places of trust that allow for us to connect at the human level and do life—and work—together.

Insight from Roam: "We talk about partnering in accomplishing dreams," Chad said to me. "We all celebrate your wins with you. So that's the idea of community, right? We become your coworker. We become your colleague. We become the extension of your team. We are your team. And it's my favorite part for sure—this positive contribution." One of the most important aspects of community is being there for each other. If someone in your community—a member, staff, or external client —needs something, you'll need to come together to support them and, if you can, provide a solution. Serving your community extends beyond the workplace and workweek. We become extensions of each other's teams in this kind of environment. "Frequently, we will have someone come straight up to the front desk after a call to share about a new client they just won or another exciting piece of news," Corey said.

It takes five

For me, the aspect community is vital to an open organization. But you can't curate community without inclusivity. And great communities also don't happen without transparency and collaboration. That's why the presence of *all five open principles* (see Appendix) are necessary for creating and sustaining a successful environment.

Jen Kelchner is a founding member of the Forbes Coaches Council and is a leadership and management consultant who solves problems and develops people. Her company, LDR21, focuses on change management, open principles, and cultural and operational change due to digital transformation.

Mapping community

Heather Leson and Kate Chapman

CASE STUDY

Organization: OpenStreetMap Project

Contributors: 1 million

Industry: Geo-spatial

Challenge: Foster a truly global community of mapping enthusiasts

Maps are critically important. They connect us to each other, our neighborhoods, our cities, our countries, and the world. They allow us to find our way in unfamiliar places, view statistics in a different way, and even improve the delivery of aid. So whenever possible, they should be open and available to everyone.

OpenStreetMap is an open, collaborative project with the aim of creating a free map of the entire world. Often described as "a map version of Wikipedia," OpenStreetMap (OSM) emerged as a response to the lack of free map data in the UK in 2004. Since that time, nearly 1 million people[66] have edited the map, adding points, lines, and areas that represent entities in our world (such as buildings, roads, parks, and waterways). The free data added in this open way supports individual navigation, humanitarian response, and business development.

66 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Stats#Contributor_statistics_reports

The OSM project employs various technologies to facilitate open mapping, ranging from GPS to satellite imagery to hand drawing, machine learning is also emerging as a possibility. But the project is more than a collection of technologies. It's a *community*.

That community is the heart of the OSM project, and in this chapter we'll describe the way it functions to keep the vision of an open and accessible world map flourishing around the globe.

Community, dispersed

The OSM community tends to gather around the OSM Wiki, mailing lists, IRC, social media, and the actual map itself the "OpenStreetMap." People contribute to the project from all different situations—sitting at home in front of a computer, for example, or hiking a new trail, or gathering with friends specifically to map a neighborhood.

As technology has changed, so too have the tools people use to work with the project. But one thing hasn't really changed: OpenStreetMap continues to be a project consisting of *humans contributing to a worldwide map*.

Though the project grew from humble beginnings in the UK, people around the world now contribute to it, developing a community of communities. As different languages and cultures join the effort, they all add to the map in their own unique ways. And the expanding diversity and goals of those participating have only made the project stronger (and the map more detailed and accurate).

The legal structure that supports the OpenStreetMap Project is the OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF). OSMF was incorporated in 2006 to provide organizational support to the OpenStreetMap Project, such as holding the license, trademark and owning the core infrastructure to support the project in order to in turn support the community.

Community connections in OSM are as varied as the countries and individuals that create them. Like many open source communities, many contributors participate in their areas of the world—but they may not connect with others beyond *digital* connections. Initial contributors were largely GIS or map enthusiasts, but the project soon expanded to data experts. Supporters and consumers of OSM are often not regarded as part of the OSM "official" community (e.g. OSMers).

The OSMF holds the annual State of the Map Conference, an international yearly meeting of the OpenStreetMap community. There are also regional or topical meetups around the world. The OSMF consists of four primary structures:

- the board of directors[67]
- the Foundation's membership[68]
- working groups that accomplish most of the OSMF's tasks (e.g. data, operations, and communications working groups)[69]
- and, most recently, the OSMF has added an advisory board comprised of representatives from their corporate membership and local OSM chapters[70]

67 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Foundation

68 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Foundation

69 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Working_groups

70 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Foundation/Local_Chapters#Advisory_Board

Community challenges

OpenStreetMap's original community tended to meet in spaces such as mailing lists and IRC, and they communicated typically in English. The wiki is now translated into 55 languages—and that number is growing. On the wiki, people add technical notes, event logs, and various other coordination activities like mapping for humanitarian response. Due to the original, geeky nature of the community, this worked quite well for those used to these forms of communication. Some users add OSM Diary posts, and there is an Weekly OSM newsletter compiling content only from the mailing lists. Weekly OSM is translated into 10 languages. The Weekly OSM team of volunteers tend to review the mailing lists for content in a largely manual process. There are a multitude of research papers about OSM, countless news articles, and even multiple books.

Only a few members of humanitarian groups were able to participate in some of these spaces. The Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) and others began to work to bridge these gaps by building tools that make using OSM data easier, and they started engaging the extended community via areas humanitarians already using such as email, Slack, Whatsapp, and Skype. The growth of social media and other communication channels also extend across the world. Many videos, guides, and toolkits (like TeachOSM and LearnOSM) now exist to support the growth of OSM.

There has been a tenuous effort to encourage women and other types of skills/contributors in the community. This gap provides a challenge for new contributors and those with diverse skills. As a growing global community, the project will need to reconcile this dilemma. An informal survey of OSMF Foundation members found that between 12% and 15% of members are women. At State of the Map Brussels 2016 (the annual international OSM Conference), participants presented a new report demonstrating that the map project and the tagging system needs to evolve to incorporate more women mappers to properly create a holistic map of the world. Women leaders exist in both the OMSF and the HOT boards; however, the working groups see less participation. There is a tendency to give more community weight to those who contribute map edits in the OSM community. The opportunity to be more welcoming for all types of skills could result in growing the network as has been done in other open source communities.

Community activities

The first State of the Map (SotM) occurred in 2007[71]. Since that time, there there have been several regular global meetups for OSM. Regional State of the Map meetings are also growing. In 2017, the community saw its first ever State of the Map Africa and the third SotM Asia.

Many countries and language groups also how their own SotMs. The SotM country events are often organized by the local chapters. Many countries/local chapters have dedicated mailing lists like OSM US, OSM Italy, or the OSM Japan, which are used to coordinate activities[72]. Each group organizes the localized SotM events via various channels. For example, the recent SoTM Asia organizing team used Slack for planning as well as all other channels for outreach. The goals of each of these SoTM events vary, but mirror the larger SotM events; they feature map presentations (topical or country), host workshops, inspire networking, and engage a wider audience to OSM.

71 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/State_Of_The_Map

72 http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Foundation/Local_Chapters

Around the world, there are map meetups and mapathons on a weekly basis. The growth of these communities is not necessary reflected in the main OSM messaging and in the governance, however, often because of language barriers and different methods of communicating online.

OSM members in Asia predominantly use Facebook to collaborate. At the recent State of the Map Asia 2017 (Kathmandu, Nepal), we studied each of the country reports finding that mailing lists tend to be used by some community members, but that Facebook and other social media tools are the means by which the community communicates and grows. Currently, there is still an assumption that the "voice of OSM" circulates via the mailing lists. The full picture on the OSM global community activities and conversations are not aggregated from the other community channels.

The OSM Community Working Group has few resources to coordinate a true global picture of activities, discussions and lessons. While there is a slow movement to engage on other channels, there is a power imbalance by regions and tools used. This may stem from the ad hoc nature of OSM community development. While many other open source communities invest in community building, this is been an uneven process in OSM. There are pockets of community management in various chapters, in local meetups, and within communities like Missing Maps, HOT, and YouthMappers. And yet core community planning still occurs via mailing lists, which are often rife with niche discussions and, unfortunately, have a negative or confrontational tone. The atmosphere could improve with an updated code of conduct process—as well as a concerted effort for community building.

The impact of having no official community managers, no community working group, and no budget invested into global community development has left the community to develop in silos. In comparison to other open source communities, this gap in OSM is causing missed opportunities to collaborate, miscommunications, or even exclusions—and, more importantly, geographic disparity. The Weekly OSM newsletter attempts to provide a high level summary by reading various mailing lists. Valiant as this volunteer effort to read and curate headlines is, the time has come to use technology *in addition* to community management techniques to aggregate and to connect the global audiences.

Over the years, the toolset the OSM community uses to make contributions has become easier and easier to learn. As the barrier to contributing to the project lowers—thanks to developments like the iD tool or Maps.me[73] a mobile application that allows easy editing of points of interest—a fundamental change to OSM is occurring. Since 2014, from the 35 million buildings added to OSM via HOT activities, more than 18 million were added via the Missing Maps community. Mapathons and directed activities such as Stop the Stop (Measles and Rubella vaccination), Malaria, Ebola response, Nepal and Bangladesh floods, and the multiple hurricanes in 2017 (Harvey, Irma, and Maria). This is a quiet shift of how organized remote mapping in partnership with local communities is altering the state of OSM.

A community of humanitarians

Humanitarian use of OpenStreetMap began with a simple premise: Having a more accurate map would lead to better decision making, which would improve humanitarian interventions. The first use of OpenStreetMap in the response to a disaster was in 2009, when the project was already five years old. In

73 http://maps.me/

2009, during Tropical Storm Ondoy, a MapAction team used OpenStreetMap data in a situation map. It wasn't until 2010, however, that OpenStreetMap really came into the spotlight for its role in the response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. This also lead to the official creation of the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT), a nonprofit aimed at the use of OpenStreetMap for humanitarian response and economic empowerment.

During the onset of an emergency, multiple imagery providers now donate updated satellite imagery so remote mappers can update the map content with the most current changes. For example, roads and bridges may be damaged. Humanitarians need the most updated map data to be able to plan logistics, population density, and various response activities like shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene. Programs, partnerships, communities, and organizations that use OSM like HOT, YouthMappers, and Missing Maps provide unique community networks which have a noticeably different OSM participation and, potentially, results in a slight increase of women mappers.

Using OSM for international development and humanitarian response provided an impetus for growing the existing OSM communities areas of the world like Asia and Africa. There are projects via local communities, HOT, Missing Maps, governments, businesses, and other stakeholders from Senegal to Bangladesh to Peru. OSM is now integrated into the response structures for organizations including the British Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, International Committee of Red Cross, and American Red Cross. In addition, the OSM default map layer is available via the UN OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)[74]. Humanitarians can download this dataset and add it into their various workflows.

The largest HOT activation was in April 2015, following a 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal, close to the capital city of Kathmandu. The earthquake killed thousands, injured many, and devastated the local infrastructure. More than 7,500 mappers worked day and night to improve the existing map for responders. HOT and Kathmandu Living Labs (KLL) a Nepalese OpenstreetMap NGO, worked with partners to obtain and process free imagery (pre- and post-disaster imagery), train and validate map efforts, and manage the steady stream of new contributors. KLL coordinated mapathon events on five continents: Europe, Africa, North America, South America and Asia, advising mappers on areas to prioritize. This surge effort built on the existing work that KLL has been performing for years prior to the earthquake.

Emergency aid groups including those from Nepal Civil Defense, Canadian Forces, American and Nepal Red Cross used the up-to-date maps the worldwide OSM community had produced to help plan their response on the ground. Participating organizations, for example MapGive and Digital Globe, that provide more technical mapping support made it possible to obtain various map products (print or digital). The Japanese OSM community also translated the Nepal OSM Building guide into Japanese.

Contributing to OSM

The OpenStreetMap community has been vital for the continued growth of the project. Members of the community have changed over the years, as have the online and in-person spaces

74 https://data.humdata.org/

where the community gathers. For continued success, the OpenStreetMap community will need to continue to morph and grow to be more geographically, gender, and culturally inclusive.

This movement is already in motion, though is not yet seen in leadership within the project. Other emerging communities can learn from OpenStreetMap by looking for both digital and physical spaces their participants can come together and not being prescriptive in the tools that people gather around. They may also considering fostering leaders from underrepresented communities.

This response to a major disaster is one example of how OpenStreetMap's influence and power have grown to where they are today. Only through open collaboration can that many people contribute to a map. As people from different cultures, backgrounds, and communities join OSM, there will continue to be pushing and pulling of changes within the community. This tension can be difficult at times, but out of it comes innovation—and the map only gets better.

OpenStreetMap and the OpenStreetMap Foundation provide many pathways to get involved in the project. Here are some ways that you can join:

1. Edit OSM with apps like the mobile Maps.me or the desktop apps like iD or JOSM.
2. Participate in one of the many OSM community events around the world.
3. Host a OSM mapathon at your workplace. This builds teamwork while contributing to a large open source project. Plus some of the map tasks can support humanitarian response. As one map-

per said, "mapping made the data come alive and I learned about my community and my country[75]."

4. Donate to OSM to help support the technical infrastructure.
5. Contribute code to the OSM toolset.

(The authors would like to thank OSM community members Joseph Reeves and Mikel Maron for their contributions to this chapter.)

Heather Leson leads open communities by strengthening collaboration via humanitarian technologies and social entrepreneurship. She was the Director of Community Engagement at both Ushahidi and Open Knowledge, Program Manager at Qatar Computing Research Institute and is the current Data Literacy Lead at the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies. In addition, she was on the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team Board for four years.

Kate Chapman served as first Executive Director of the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team and Chief Technology Officer of the Cadasta Foundation. Prior to her nonprofit work, Kate held a variety of technical positions at startups and corporations including the geospatial sharing portals iMapdata and GeoCommons.

75 http://civicus.org/thedatashift/learning-zone/community-essay/citizen-generated-data-maps/

Review and discussion questions

- Heather and Kate mention how growing global communities like OSM encounters some hurdles. What are some of the ways you can address challenges such as digital divides and gender parity in your teams, organizations, and communities? Why would addressing these be important for your organization's sense of community?

- Kate and Heather discuss various digital communications paths suited for people with different backgrounds and levels of experience. What communication tools, channels, and methods does your organization use? Are some groups less likely to participate in organizational communication because they're not familiar with (or comfortable with) the tools you've chosen? Do you think this affects the sense of community in your organization?

- OpenStreetMap is changing as it grows. How does your team handle change? How does your organization handle it? More specifically, do you believe your organization focuses on community and communal values when it grows or changes?

Writing a community's principles and values, together

Jennifer Pahlka

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Code for America
>
> Employees: 60
>
> Industry:
>
> Challenge: Engage community to collectively articulate shared vision, mission, values, and operating principles

In August of 2017, we initiated the process of collecting, questioning, and revising Code for America's vision, mission, values, and operating principles[76]. Did we have a previous version? Different people will answer this question differently.

The reality is that various groups inside Code for America (CfA) had constructed different versions of any number of these statements over the years. And various affiliated Code for America groups (including Brigades) and fellow travelers (like Smart Chicago Collaborative, Laurenellen McCann[77], USDS, Government Digital Services (GDS), and others) had expressed these same sentiments in various ways over time as well. We're deeply

76 http://codeforamerica.org/how/values

77 http://www.buildwith.org/

grateful to learn from their work and do our part to help push it forward.

But we needed unifying statements.

As a non-profit, we did have a vision statement, which is partially written in big letters on our wall: "Government can work for the people by the people in the 21st century." But there's a lot more to how we plan to achieve this vision, and it needed saying. Or at least, having been said in many different ways, it needed wrangling.

This is the story of how we went about wrangling it. First, we needed to decide who we should include in the process, then set the right context in order for them to participate. We try to always put users at the center of a process, so naturally we started by interviewing people to gather feedback in order to socialize the first draft. We knew this process was going to be lengthy and messy, but the ultimate goal was to get something we are all proud of and stand behind to accomplish the mission.

Commence wrangling

The statements we decided to wrangle were four-fold:

- *Our vision*: the world as we'd like to see it
- *Our mission*: how we intend to make our vision real
- *Our values*: what we are like as an organization and a community
- *Our operating principles*: the ideas that guide the decisions we make

Right away, questions arose: Who is included in "our"? Who is the "we" in all of those statements above? And depending on your answer, who gets to shape these statements?

The answer is obvious to me, but the process by which one honors that answer has not been obvious or easy. The answer is that "we" includes those who want to help achieve the vision and the mission and who agreed to operate in ways consistent with the values and principles.

Certainly, Code for America employees are part of that group, and part of the point of the document is to set clear expectations for those who come to work here about what we're doing and how we're going to operate together. But Code for America has 60 employees. Look at the vision. We didn't set out to end pet homelessness in a small community (a worthy goal, to be sure, but smaller); we set out to make government (its $3.5 trillion spending, its 22 million employees, the whole thing) work in the service of the American public, all its people.

The problems we are trying to solve have accumulated over decades (some might say centuries) and are embedded in the most change-resistant objects we know: culture, law, policy, and the structures of power. The Code for America team does work I'm incredibly proud of, creating a laboratory for non-obvious levers for getting bureaucracy to recenter around users. But anyone who thinks 60 people are going to fundamentally transform government at scale alone is not being realistic.

For that, you need America-sized scale.

You'll notice that above I created a circular argument. I said the people who should shape the mission, vision, values and operating principles should include anyone who wants to help achieve the mission and vision and agrees to operate according to the values and principles. That speaks a bit to the challenges of running an inclusive process, but it hasn't been the only challenging aspect. We don't know who all those people are, or how to reach them. The degree to which this document is up for debate— because there's a better word to express what's more or less the same idea, or because there's an actually difference of opinion behind the words that needs resolving—is unclear. We decided the way to find out was to invite debate and comment, and see where it led.

Start with users

The process started not with the mess of documents that have been written over the years, but with a dozen or so interviews. Paul Worthington[78], a brand consultant who heard me talk about the impact of poor government services on vulnerable people, and who has since become a personal friend and a friend to the movement, offered to do some interviews with stakeholders with fresh eyes and fresh ears, so to speak. He talked with Brigade leaders, staff, government partners, past and present, and board members about what the Code for America brand meant to them, why they engaged, and more. The results were not entirely surprising, but they focused us on areas we might have otherwise neglected. Paul's work meant that our starting place for this document had legs around the country from a variety of perspectives.

The next step involved socializing a first draft of these statements with a subset of the staff. This was not fun or easy, and in retrospect I wish we'd done it differently. Some were a bit indifferent to both the artifact and the process; some offered criticism but it was hard to know how to integrate the criticism. I still don't know if framing these asks constructively is something one gets better at over time or is simply a thankless task.

But it also wasn't a disaster. Underneath most of the reaction was a basic agreement on the top level goals and framing, and a sense of safety and empowerment in pushing for the words to reflect each staff member's personal values and priorities. In retrospect, I see this as the part of the process where

78 http://invencion.com/about-3/

you realize that the process itself is going to be messy, and not always feel great, but when you commit to pushing through because it's going to make the work better.

Feedback is a gift

Returning to the process, we reworded areas where there were conflicting opinions and continued to socialize the document for feedback. From there, we opened it up to first the National Advisory Council of the Brigades, and then anyone in the Brigade network, knowing our email lists only include the Brigade leadership, so we were counting on them forwarding it to their membership at their discretion.

Around the same time, we devoted part of a staff offsite to getting feedback from everyone in attendance, which went about as well (or a bit less well) as sharing it with the subset of the staff earlier, but again, we did get some actionable feedback. Here, the feedback from the Brigade community and from the staff started to dovetail, and that was very encouraging. The most recent step involved some discussion, mostly asynchronously through the Google document, leading up to and at Brigade Congress in Philadelphia held in October 2017.

There have been many dozen changes to the document (some just a word, some restructuring whole sections) during this process, but I'll call out a few. Lots of folks hated the words "21st century" in the vision statement. "What does that even mean? Of course it's the 21st century!" This is a bit of a bummer because the vision statement is on our wall at the office, but thankfully in paint, not stone, because we've replaced those words with "in the digital age." Many staff and Brigade members objected to the notion that we aspire to a government that serves everyone equally, citing the difference between equity and equality. Sabrah N'ha Raven of Code for Asheville, who offered several helpful comments, correctly pointed out that when we say "we don't ask for permission," we mean that in relation to government and others in power, but we must always ask permission when acting on behalf of disenfranchised people. We clarified that point.

Is this still about government?

One of the comments we discussed as a group at Brigade Congress touched on our relationship to government. The topic had come up verbally in other contexts, including at the National Advisory Council meeting in May, where some felt that a shift in mission away from government was necessary in the era of Trump. The second reservation was broader, expressed by people sharing that they were primarily interested in serving their communities, not government.

It was Sabrah from Code for Asheville again who said, in comments on the proposed values:

> Personally, I love dealing with our local government, but formal government agencies are part of the civic ecology, not the whole thing. The mindset that separates them out is what leads too often to government that doesn't truly serve the community.

My answer to Sabrah's incredibly astute observation was this: *exactly*.

Let's reframe what Sabrah is saying in the positive, and see how we feel about government. We want:

- Government that does truly serve the community
- A mindset that sees the whole ecology, and that sees the people as part of government
- Government as a platform, whose success enables others, both inside and outside government.

Isn't that definition of government part of what we're fighting for? Conversely, if we abandon the government frame, don't we let others get to define it?

The issue is that many of us in the community, including many fellowship and other project teams at Code for America, do projects that benefit our community but don't directly go through government. Our most mature digital service, GetCalFresh, started out rogue[79], in the sense that we were letting people apply for food stamps and just faxing the applications to offices without any formal relationship with the government offices. (It's also probably important to point out that we did have informal, positive relationships with people in those offices from previous partnerships, and those people valued our work and trusted us. Otherwise we would probably have been shut down!) Others, though, are not touching government at all, but doing work that a government either could do if it used its resources more effectively or could coordinate better using volunteer resources (which have always been a way that local governments and communities get stuff done!).

So how do we think about government's central role in our vision statement in that context? Below are two stories, one old and one new, help answer that question.

The role of government in our vision statement

The first came out of a great session at Brigade Congress where some of the Brigades that had responded so beautifully to the recent spate of hurricanes that hit Texas and Florida, and a few others who had worked on disaster response in other areas. It's impossible to discuss how informal networks of regular citizens got the job done without touching on the ways in which the

79 https://medium.com/code-for-america/bottom-up-and-outside-in-bd791daecb22

systems we assume are going to work for us, the ones paid for by our tax dollars and our charitable contributions, are deficient. Official data on shelter availability was inaccurate and inaccessible; Brigade people power made it accurate and accessible. Offers of help couldn't match with needs; Brigade people power matched them.

The Brigade organizers at Congress expressed both a pride in their work, and a worry that what they were doing is also propping up a failed system. What works isn't what we've paid for with our taxes; what we've paid for with our taxes doesn't entirely work. Long term, don't we need to use what we've learned about what does work to make the system we continue to pay for work better?

This brought me back to an obscure headline from 2010, one that my husband Tim O'Reilly used a few times in talks describing his ideas about government as a platform. The story was about a road in Kauai, HI[80] that had been damaged and deemed impassable. The state government estimated the cost of repairing the road at $4M, and gave a timeframe for repair that would keep the road closed—and the community at the end of the road isolated—for at least two summers, possibly indefinitely. Summers are the tourist season, and tourism was the main livelihood of this community, so that response was simply untenable for the community. Business owners and residents got together, rented the heavy equipment needed, and fixed the road themselves in just eight days.

"We shouldn't have to do this, but when it gets to a state level, it just gets so bureaucratic, something that took us eight days would have taken them years," said Troy Martin of Martin

80 http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/04/09/hawaii.volunteers.repair/index.html

Steel, who donated machinery and steel for the repairs. "So we got together—the community—and we got it done."

This is amazing. And it's exactly the spirit of America that we should celebrate. But there are a few different conclusions we can draw from this.

The obvious one is that people should do this more often. But if you play that out over time, you're paying taxes *and* fixing your own roads. Not sustainable.

The other conclusion is that we should use the case study of the eight-day road fix to question why it would have taken $4 million and several years through government channels, and help government reduce both the time and the cost. That work is *much* harder—harder even than fixing a road. But it's worth it, because government is huge, and if we make it better, we create enormous value at scale.

How huge? And why does this matter?

Well, take government services that support vulnerable people: food stamps, job retraining, etc. As a country, we have a few ways to help people in tough situations, and the two biggest are philanthropy and government. But government spends at least 11 times what all of philanthropy spends on these services and societal issues. If you could magically double all philanthropic spending, you would still have less impact that making government spending just 10% more effective. And it can be more than 10% more effective, if we the people devote ourselves to making it so over the long haul.

This is a very long way of responding to a few comments in a Google document from members of the Code for America community. This is an important comment to address, to be sure, given the central role of government in the vision and mission of Code for America, but there are big, philosophical, meaty debates behind a dozen other comments in that document, which brings me back to the process of engaging with the community around a document meant to define the goals of that community. I said up front that the process by which one honors the contributions of a large and not always defined community has not been obvious, or easy. But what it has been (and will continue to be) is enriching, thought-provoking, affirming, and hugely worthwhile. Because you. Because community. Because people who care.

In the end, we know we will not succeed in our mission without a vibrant, thriving community, and cultivating community is in many ways harder than managing employees. But the mandate to do that cultivating is built into the mission itself, as government is a mechanism for doing things together that we can't do alone. It's more than just worth the effort; it's the work itself. And it's never done[81].

Jennifer Pahlka is Founder and Executive Director of Code for America. From 2013 to 2014, she served as the U.S. Deputy Chief Technology Officer in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, where she architected and helped found the United States Digital Service.

81 An earlier version of this chapter originally appeared at https://medium.com/code-for-america/writing-our-principles-and-values-together-part-1-7369db3dc0e0

Review and discussion questions

- Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

- Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

- Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

Building community to stay on the cutting edge

Jonas Rosland

CASE STUDY

Organization: Dell Technologies

Employees: 140,000

Industry: Technology Solutions and Services

Challenge: Build a community of passionate open source developers to better understand industry trends

No one working in cloud and data centers should be surprised that organizations have changed how they run their IT departments. Applications are written and deployed differently, moving away from monoliths to microservices. Organizations operate their data centers by applying development principles to operations through open source software and community collaboration. Open source software is used heavily in development, testing, and production. In a survey done in 2016, 90% of respondents say open source improves their efficiency, interoperability, and innovation, and 65% of companies are contributing to open source projects[82].

This type of "innovation-through-openness" has proven that global collaboration on code and inclusivity of diverse intel-

82 https://www.blackducksoftware.com/2016-future-of-open-source

lectual contributions advance the technological state of the art and solve problems faster.

Recognizing this shift, Dell Technologies (whose family of brands include Dell EMC) knew that—in order to stay relevant in the data center and software infrastructure of the future—it needed to invest in its own open source initiative. When reaching out to users to understand why they were adopting open source software, it wasn't necessarily about cost or that they wanted to contribute back to the project. The main reasons users wanted open source was that it provides them with freedom, innovation, flexibility, and integration:

- Users want the freedom to run software anywhere, for any purpose
- Users want the opportunity to innovate, develop and participate in open source projects
- Users want the flexibility to choose the software and hardware that fits their needs
- Users want to be able to integrate software with existing infrastructure

On August 29, 2014 {code} launched as a strategic initiative with support from executive management. Three main principles drive {code}'s approach to open source:

- Open source efforts are developed in the best interests of the community
- Projects are executed with complete transparency and openness
- Open source technologies are made to be consumable by the widest range of users and organizations

The {code} Team contributes to and creates open source projects, acts in the interest of building a community, and drives awareness of emerging technology trends. It consists of three programs, each operating with these core tenets in mind: the {code} Community, the DevHigh5 program, and the {code} Catalyst program:

- The {code} Community[83] started in June 2015, and has grown to more than 4,800 members who have open dialogues across company boundaries on topics ranging from contributions to cloud native projects, persistent storage in containers, virtual reality, and hardware hacking. Members include developers, project managers, users, recruiters, and tinkerers.
- Through the DevHigh5 program[84], {code} has created and shepherded more than 100 open source projects which solve community challenges. Through guidance, promotion, and community support, these projects are able to thrive and get the recognition they deserve.
- The {code} Catalyst program[85] brings together passionate open source aficionados from across the globe. The program is focused on promoting their work and establishing an ecosystem of creative individuals who improve and move open source forward.

This chapter explains how {code}'s community-oriented approach has helped Dell Technologies and Dell EMC achieve new innovations through its participation in community-focused

83 http://community.codedellemc.com/

84 https://github.com/codedellemc/codedellemc.github.io/wiki/DevHigh5-Program-Overview-and-FAQ

85 https://thecodeteam.com/code-catalysts/

efforts that focuses on transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration.

Introducing the {code} Community

"*We need a way to communicate with other developers who are interested in open source.*"

That statement drives the {code} Community and its activities. In 2015, the {code} Team identified the need for a place where internal and external developers could communicate, collaborate on projects, and promote their work. With this in mind, the team crafted a plan to build a community of and for open source developers. When {code} looked at different methods of communicating across teams and company borders, the team noticed that there were several modern approaches available—something other than distribution lists and forums—eventually leading to the decision to adopt Slack as the community's primary platform for communication and collaboration.

At the time, there were no indications that the {code} Community would ever grow as large as it has, encompass as many people and projects as it currently does, or have as big an impact on the wider organization as it currently does.

On June 18, 2015, the doors to the {code} Community on Slack opened, and invitations were sent to internal employees who were already involved in or wanted to know more about open source. Shortly after that, {code} established a public community website[86] to make sure people could join without needing a personal invitation. The {code} Community quickly grew to 30 members, then 50, then 100, and, within just nine months, reached 1,000 members. The most amazing aspect of this growth was that internal employees weren't the only people

86 http://thecodeteam.com/community

participating; users, partners, and customers of open source projects from {code} all wanted to interact and collaborate. Even direct competitors are part of the {code} Community, which says a lot about the nature of the open source community itself.

Since the {code} Community is open to everyone, everyone needs to follow the rules of the community. Community members must all agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct[87] before they are able to join, and guidelines for contributing to different parts of the {code} Community are communicated to every new member with an automated message as soon as they join. Based on these ground rules, the {code} Community members engage each other in collaboration at both strategic and engineering levels. The members continuously discuss new ideas and challenges around cloud native projects, persistent storage in containers, virtual reality, hardware hacking, drone racing, and much more. They help each other get inspired, suggest reading and learning material, and debug and fix issues, regardless of organizational affiliation.

By the time the {code} Community celebrated its second anniversary in June 2017, it had more than 3,600 members. It's still growing at an exponential rate, leading up to more than 4,800 members in November of 2017.

By having an open mindset and using modern communication and collaboration tools, the {code} Community has worked to institute best practices for how Dell Technologies integrates into the open source community. There are large and small open source projects run in the open by Dell Technologies' employees and business units, shared between and collaborated on with thousands of community members. This direct feedback-loop en-

87 https://github.com/codedellemc/community/blob/master/docs/code-of-conduct.md

hances innovation, speeds up development and shows that Dell Technologies is focused and invested in the future of open source software, driving the future of IT.

The DevHigh5 program

"*How can we make it easier for users, partners, and employees to open source and promote their projects?*"

That question drives the DevHigh5 program. After starting the {code} Team, it was quickly realized that many individuals within the organization shared the belief that software should be open source and shared with the world. Employees had been working on tools, scripts, and applications to augment existing products and solutions, and the {code} Team was delighted to see that this was not just a one-time occurrence but rather that ongoing projects lived and thrived in the open source community. The fact that there was a group of individuals who were interested in contributing and giving back to the open source community made the creation of the DevHigh5 program easier than anticipated.

The DevHigh5 program was launched in November 2014 to recognize and promote open source contributions from users, partners, and employees. This promotion is done through social media, prominent placement on the {code} Team's project site, guest blog posts, newsletter, visibility at open source tradeshows, and featured conference sessions. DevHigh5 projects range from those developed by individuals to those developed by business units.

The DevHigh5 program helps projects go from unpublished to fully open sourced. The program gives guidance on how to structure the project code; helps with naming, documentation, licenses and logos; and gives the project a place in the {code} Community to continue working on the project in the open.

Throughout the lifespan of the DevHigh5 program, many project owners have approached the {code} Team with questions about how to run projects in the open, build communities around their projects, and work as good open source citizens. They ask for guidance on how to best approach the open source community, how to share information without sharing confidential IP, and how get feedback and contributions on projects by utilizing the {code} Community. The {code} Team has been very fortunate to see many of these interactions end up in successful open source projects such as REX-Ray[88] and RackHD[89], with internal staff, external partners, and users working and collaborating side by side in the open to create and innovate.

By being inclusive and acting in the interest of building a community focused on promoting the work of others, the DevHigh5 program has shepherded and promoted more than 100 open source projects. This has helped to support an open culture between Dell Technologies and its users, partners, and employees—leading to more customer deployments, faster feedback loops, and greater innovation that enrich both the community and the business value it provides.

The {code} Catalyst program

"*How can we help promote the work of great open source minds across the world, and create an ecosystem of those who lead and advance emerging technologies?*"

That question guides the third and final component of {code}'s community strategy.

88 https://github.com/thecodeteam/rexray

89 https://github.com/RackHD

As the {code} Community and its projects continued to grow in popularity, there was a need to expand the community to involve open source leaders who are passionate about new technologies and sharing knowledge.

Launched in December 2016, the {code} Catalyst program brings together prominent members of the open source community across the globe. The members are passionate open source aficionados, bloggers, professional speakers, book authors, community leaders, and developers. The program is designed to promote the work and advocacy of the {code} Catalyst members, and establish an ecosystem of creative individuals who improve and advance the open source space.

With the focus of the {code} Catalyst program being on global collaboration and promotion, individuals who may seem like competitors based on their respective organization affiliation are now part of the same community, all pushing for the same goal: bringing the best out of the open source community.

As a way of giving back to the open source community, the {code} Catalyst program covers several ways of supporting and promoting each member. This includes promoting their work on social media, producing public video interviews, supporting them in the CFP process, co-presenting to a global audience at virtual and physical events, participating in engineering roundtables, providing early access to project information, attending exclusive {code} Assemblies that bring together open source leaders at events worldwide, interacting with the {code} Community, and networking with industry luminaries.

{code} Catalyst members are seen as open source leaders and provide advancements in many areas of the open source community. They are teaching others by sharing knowledge in the {code} Community, presenting at monthly {code} Webinars or at global events, and blogging and writing on interesting open source topics. They are also a part of larger conversations around current and possible future {code} related projects, giving valuable feedback that helps inform project roadmaps. The members are also asked to give feedback on how to improve the program to ensure that the {code} Catalyst program is constantly growing and changing to become a better and more engaging place for everyone involved.

Final thoughts and conclusion

By focusing on transparency, inclusivity, adaptability, collaboration, and the {code} Community, a space has been created within Dell Technologies for open source to thrive. Several factors have led to the success of the {code} Team and the {code} Community:

- Executive support was critical for getting the open source initiative started and for its continued growth. This helped the {code} Team greatly when getting started as we needed to encourage other internal teams to fully understand open source and its consequences and benefits.
- The fact that there were already many individuals within the organization who shared our open source mindset helped make the transition from closed-source-only to open source-friendly an easier (but still daunting) task. This was the basis of the {code} Community and also drove the DevHigh5 program from the start. The support from the DevHigh5 contributors has been extremely important for the team's mission and the community.
- The corporate support we received from legal for licensing and marketing for public relations en-

sured that projects were vetted and promoted properly. This led to having a simplified process that lowers the burden on the creators and on the {code} Team, while still ensuring accountability and responsibility when publishing open source code. This was crucial to the success of several open source projects.

Supporting the organization as it continues to shift toward becoming a large contributor has furthered Dell Technologies' trajectory in this area. By being involved in open source projects, taking leadership roles, and embracing the community, we are now involved in many large open source projects that transform the way users all over the globe manage their IT. This provides high strategic value for the organization's products and its relationships with its customers. This also strengthens our credibility with customers: Visible contribution to projects they are leveraging builds trust by demonstrating a commitment to a shared vision of future IT management.

By ensuring that the {code} Community, the DevHigh5 program, and the {code} Catalyst program are completely open to everyone, foster creativity, and value member contributions, {code} now has the ability to reach and collaborate with more people than ever before and be involved in new trends that are impacting the global IT market.

Jonas Rosland is a community builder, open source advocate, blogger and speaker at many open source focused events. As Open Source Community Manager at {code}, he is responsible for the growth and prosperity of the {code} Community.

Review and discussion questions

- Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

- Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

- Praesent euismod lacus at lorem scelerisque, scelerisque lacinia quam efficitur. Cras efficitur ex sed nibh dictum, in porttitor elit lobortis. Sed in felis vitae risus gravida dictum.

Maintaining community while growing

Jen Kelchner

> CASE STUDY
>
> Organization: Slalom
>
> Employees: 4,500
>
> Industry: Management Consulting
>
> Challenge: Scaling a culture of openness as the organization grows

Slalom[90] "does open" in a fascinating way. Aaron Atkins and Shannon Heydt, who both work in talent acquisition for Slalom, sat down with me to share challenges related to scalability—and explain how recruiting and talent management play a strong part in shaping company growth.

Slalom's case is rich and illustrative. But to understand it, we must first understand scalability. Scalability is the ability of something to adapt to increasing demands. Meeting your business demands starts with your people and frameworks far before you fulfill a service or product. Scaling is also quite challenging. It can involve (literally) years of doing the hard work with a slower growth pattern and seemingly overnight an explosion of growth occurs to meet your business demands.

When this explosion occurs, workflows suddenly become inefficient. Talent management struggles to keep up with onboarding, retention, coaching, development, staffing

90 https://www.slalom.com/

appropriately, and so on. What worked *last* quarter will no longer support the ecosystem you're facing *today*.

Scaling in the open

In open organizations, scaling requires a strong identity; successful scaling relies on who you are to carry you and your people through times of intense growth. I'm talking about your core ideas and values. And I don't mean the wall art in the break room with the really cool font that reiterates your value statement.

Instead, your organization's values, ideas, and frameworks should be heard and felt through all interactions modeled from top leadership to the new hire. They should be a living, breathing presence in the room because they are such an integral part of your organizational culture and the people that perpetuate it.

One common misconception about open organizations is that they lack structure. To the contrary: in open organizations strong, obvious structures and frameworks set the flow for the ecosystem participants desire. In open organizations, however, structures don't just allow you to run an effective and efficient organization, but also allow for the emergence self-leadership and autonomy while still meeting strategic goals.

How you address your processes, workflows, and frameworks can make or break you. But, most importantly, your communication strategy and execution will be paramount to your organizational success.

Let's take a look at how Slalom is intentionally handling the challenges of scalability within their value-driven ecosystem.

Tipping point challenges

Founded in 2001, Slalom aims to do consulting differently. It has now landed on Fortune's 100 Best Places to Work (2016).

Founders wanted to do purposeful work—and to do it in a way that allowed them to maintain the ability to do great work for their clients.

This meant they had to break typical organizational frameworks and build an open culture. They've been experiencing rapid growth, and like all organizations amid waves of change, continue to experience both wins and challenges.

Slalom noted several challenges to tackle when they hit their tipping points: consistency across markets, people development, and communication. Their approach to scalability is to intentionally build a strong, sustainable ecosystem through recruiting, people development, and feedback. They quickly learned that what worked for 80 consultants doesn't apply to the more than 4,500 they now employ.

One thing that has propelled them forward is their cultural ecosystem. Slalom is intentional about who and how they hire.

What does that mean for them? For starters, it means:

- experienced hires with different perspectives and a strong competency for feedback
- talent acquisition based on relationship first (investing in getting to know a person as more than a resume)
- looking for innovation tendencies, communication skills, coachability, knowledge and self-governance competencies

Leveraging people

Talent managers at Slalom have found that some people struggle with the responsibility of guiding their own career pathways. So they placed "Learning Leaders" in every market to support continuing education and to provide guidance and empowerment for career ownership.

Slalom encourages innovation and problem solving, which leads to a merit-based promotion system. Without the confines of a "set track to follow," employees are free to fill gaps they see when they bring solutions to the table.

"We strive to create diversity for our culture," Atkins said.. "We can then use different mindsets to come together as a team and deliver the best solutions for our clients."

Feedback loops and honest conversations

When an annual culture survey revealed that communication was not keeping up with growth, Slalom took the findings seriously. Leaders took to each market to discuss and ask for shared dialog.

As a result, an incredible number of 9,000 ideas emerged from all over the country. After filtering down the ideas to trends, passions, and strategic directions, Slalom had a strong base for their organizational direction based on feedback from their employees. They asked, listened, and put feedback into action.

Slalom also upped its communication game in a world demanding digital and real-time feedback, launching a series of videos from each core leader to explain strategic objectives. By taking such a personal approach, they've closed gaps that can occur in both distributed workforces and those that have grown to a significant size. The practice uses transparency and human connection to engage employees.

Slalom has also integrated real-time feedback loops into weekly time submissions. Asking their people (in the moment) how things are going keeps the feedback fresh and real. Closing these gaps can increase retention and improve work efforts.

Growing without sacrifices

I met again with Atkins several months after hearing about these plans. We were recording episodes of my podcast, *Generation Open*[91], on growing community[92] and building culture[93]. And again, we hit on what Slalom feels is their single, largest challenge they face: Continuing to scale up and grow without sacrificing quality.

With goals to grow their organization at 25% annually, the reality is they hire only 4% of the people they speak to during acquisition conversations.

Why?

They don't hire for "culture fit." It's about building their community, not buying talent.

"We tend to not hire people for jobs," Atkins said. "We want to hire you for a career. Our retention is incredibly high, our turnover is very low. So it really does come back to building a trusted relationship [. . .] not only with our folks internally, but also externally to make sure that it all comes together in a collaborative environment."

Here are some key ways that Slalom's talent acquisition process is different:

- They coach potential talent through the acquisition process to grow and retain quality.
- They may choose to not hire an "A-Player" but might *build* one instead, if they feel they are the right long-term fit.

91 http://bit.ly/2o0zlUE

92 http://ldr21.com/6-scaling-without-sacrificing-quality-with-aaron-atkins/

93 http://ldr21.com/ep7-build-dont-buy-talent-trends/

- They don't hire for culture fit. Instead they focus on capabilities and skill sets.

Coaching everyone—employee or not

Interestingly enough, Slalom coaches those they *don't* hire. Slalom's leaders feel all candidates deserve to learn how they can improve on something specific (so that, in the future, they might eventually become part of their firm). So closing the interview loop with a candidate means asking the right questions:

- What kind of questions are we asking?
- What kind of coaching are we subsequently giving back to the candidate to identify that skill gap?
- How can they improve upon it, so that in the future they can eventually become part of Slalom?

Slalom believes strongly in always doing the right thing. And in that spirit, leaders at Slalom may introduce candidates to a leader, coach them, or identify various opportunities for them to improve (because you never know when the goodwill will come back to you). Growing those they don't hire is an essentially community-building gesture—whether the candidate returns at a later date to become part of their team or not.

Forget sameness

Slalom's leaders seek to build an organization that's dynamic, inclusive, and diverse—as opposed to homogenized.

"We don't want to have a team of 10 people all from the same consulting firm. We want to have people from different walks of life, different backgrounds, different ideations," Atkins told me. We don't want to be a homogenized place where everyone is the same because we can't create unique thoughts, unique structures, and unique client deliverables without unique people. We want different people because they're going to push each other to create something unique."

Atkins went on to say: "Paradigm shifts in our thought diversity and culture can be extraordinarily difficult. And it requires [...] some people raising their hand, stepping up, and taking that risk. Culture change is a fair amount of work requiring some pretty honest, difficult discussions. It takes creating space for your community to have open discourse. It's the only way to make sure everyone is moving in the right direction."

It isn't easy

Scaling isn't easy. Even with a strong ecosystem in place, one powered by clear values and vision, growth comes with a fair share of challenges.

However, investing in your ecosystem from the beginning will help lessen the growing pains. Create strong structures for your people to operate. Leverage the wealth of talent within your people. Communicate with transparency and open real-time feedback loops to smooth transitions. Remain agile, and you'll find the right sustainable business models that work for you.

Slalom offers a great example of how an open culture works to achieve the sustainability of scale. Growing our communities based on the right kinds of relationships with people and choosing to do the right thing, whether it benefits us immediately or not, creates a more inclusive and collaborative world.

Jen Kelchner is a founding member of the Forbes Coaches Council and is a leadership and management consultant who solves problems and develops people. Her company, LDR21, focuses on change management, open principles, and cultural and operational change due to digital transformation.

Review and discussion questions

- What is "scalability," and what challenges does it present your organization? How do issues of scalability and community relate to one another? What do you think is a rapidly growing community's most significant challenge? Why?

- Slalom takes a unique approach to hiring and coaching talent. Reflect on your organization's approach to these issues. How might you rethink hiring and coaching processes to better stress the principle of community?

- Slalom uses video technologies to shorten feedback loops and collapse the distance between organizational members. Do you consider this an effective technique for building community? Could your organization do something similar? Why or why not?

Imagining an open community

Heidi Ellis

EXERCISE

Estimated time to complete: 90 minutes

Materials needed:Score cards, writing utensils, notepads and paper

Activity type: Introduction

Those who are new to the idea of open organizations (and open source in general) may have a difficult time envisioning how the open organization principles (see Appendix) are incorporated as part of an existing culture. Many of these folks may not be participating in—or even have had extensive exposure to—an open organization, and therefore may not have ready access to a live community from which to observe and from which to learn.

This exercise allows participants to create their own communities and then evaluate them with respect to the Open Organization Maturity Model. It is intended to allow participants to gain an understanding of how open organization principles could be implemented within a culture. The process of creating a community allows the participants to clearly understand how the community works, providing a solid foundation for the process of evaluating the community with respect to the Open Organization Maturity Model. The application of the model provides participants the opportunity to test their understanding of open organization principles by evaluating their inclusion in a known environment.

Facilitation steps

Phase 1: Imagine a new society

In this phase of the exercise, participants will collaborate in teams to imagine a new society.

Step 1. Explain the exercise's hypothetical premise to participants. Say something like: "*You are part of a team of 50 people that is going on an expedition to Mars. The team will be responsible for creating a new community on Mars including terraforming, exploring, and establishing a government. You are responsible for defining the culture and government for the new community. In this assignment, you must define a society built on open source principles. How do people act? How do people govern themselves? What kind of institutions/organizations do you build?*"

Step 2. Ask participants to imagine a system of government for their new society. Say something like: "*Describe how your community will be run. Will your society be a democracy? A monarchy? A dictatorship? A mixed government that combines elements of several systems? What kind of a constitution will you have? How will your government make decisions? Define a motto for your government. Explain your choices.*" Allow at least 10 minutes for this step.

Step 3. Ask participants to imagine a legal system for their new society. Say something like: "*Your community must have rules. Define a list of at least 10 rules all community members must follow. Provide an explanation for each rule. You will also need a legal system in order to handle those who break the rules or harm others. What sort of a system will you use? How* *will you address conflict resolution? How will you enforce the rules of your society?*" Allow at least 10 minutes for the step.

Step 4. Ask participants to imagine an economic system for their new society. Say something like: "*Your society*'s *economy determines how resources (goods and services) are allocated. What systems will be in place for the production and distribution of resources? What form of currency will you use? What structure will you use for distributing resources? Does the government own all resources and means of production? Are the resources owned by private individuals? Is it a blend? How do people earn a living? What industries and careers are available?*" Allow at least 10 minutes for this step.

Step 5. Ask participants to image various social programs their society will offer. Say something like: "*Social programs exist to ensure that all members of a community are provided for. How will your government care for the poor? How will your community be housed? What rights to community members have? What are the obligations of all community members?*" Allow at least 10 minutes for this step.

Phase 2: Evaluate the new society

In this phase of the exercise, teams of participants will evaluate each others imagined societies, specifically their relative degrees of openness.

Step 1. Explain the Open Organization Maturity Model[94] to participants. Also explain that everyone will be evaluating the values that underpin the imagined societies with respect to each of the following aspects of a culture:

- Transparency
- Inclusivity

94 https://opensource.com/open-organization/resources/open-org-maturity-model

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Community

STEP 2. Invite a representative from one of the teams to share the details of the society they generated in the first phase of the exercise. That representative should "read out" on the team's collective work and describe all facets of the society in as much detail as the team was able to generate.

STEP 3. Other teams around the room will use scorecards (see Figure 1) to "rate" the society's position on the Open Organization Maturity Model. They should place an "X" in the space that corresponds with their estimation of the society's degree of openness.

	Transparency	Inclusivity	Adaptability	Collaboration	Community
Level 1					
Level 2					
Level 3					

Figure 1: Scorecard

STEP 4. Ask participants from around the room to share the scores they allocated to the society just described. Be sure to ask participants to justify their scores by describing their perceptions of the society.

STEP 5. Repeat the steps in Phase 2 until all teams have had an opportunity to report on their imagined societies.

Reflection

Levels of open organizational maturity will vary, both across the aspects of a single team's culture and across the cultures of *all* the teams. The evaluation process may engender lively discussions as participants debate how the parts of the culture map to various levels in the Open Organization Maturity Model. This discussion affords the facilitator the opportunity to highlight some of the differences between the levels in the model, as well as to bring in real-world examples from existing organizations to illustrate the aspects and levels.

An interesting add-on exercise (if time permits) is to have the teams then discuss how their community could be "moved up" the Open Organization Maturity Model. Questions to structure that discussion might include:

- Which aspects of your community are most mature? Why did you design them in the manner that you did?
- Which aspects of your community are least mature? Why did you design them in the manner that you did?
- What underlying assumptions did you make when you designed the culture?
- What changes might you suggest to move the least mature aspects of the community to be more mature? What sort of changes would that require in the community?
- Given the current state of your community, what sort of a process would you envision to help the community become more mature with respect to being an open organization?

Dr. Heidi Ellis is a professor at Western New England University and has more than 20 years of experience in software engineering education. Heidi has been supporting student involvement in humanitarian free and open source software (HFOSS) since 2006 and she has been co-PI on four different NSF grants to support this effort. She is part of a group of academics who are working with Red Hat to support Professor's Open Source Software Experience (POSSE) workshops that bring professors up to speed on student involvement in HFOSS projects.

Tapping the power of community

Jason Hibbets

> EXERCISE
>
> Estimated time to complete: 90 minutes
>
> Materials needed: Room for 15–20 people; tables and chairs for the group; space for breaking into two or three groups; markers and pens; "dot" stickers (optional); sheets of blank paper or larger sticky notes; a timer (alarm optional); mobile whiteboard (optional); predefined topic for participants
>
> Activity type: Action

In this chapter, I want to share with you of the power of an unconference—because I believe it's a technique anyone can use to generate innovative ideas, harness the power of participation, and strengthen community ties. I've developed a 90-minute session that mimics the effects of an unconference, and you can use it to generate engagement with a small group of people and tap into their ideas surrounding a topic of your choice.

An "unconference" is a loosely organized event format designed specifically to maximize the exchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge in a group driven by a common purpose. While the structure of an unconference is planned, the content and exchange of ideas for breakout sessions is not. Participants plan and execute unconference sessions by voting on the content they'd like to experience.

For larger events, some organizers allow the submission of session topics in advance of the event. This is helpful for people new to the unconference format who may not understand what they could expect to experience at the event. However, most organizers have a rule that a participant must be present to pitch and lead a session.

One of the more popular unconferences is BarCamp. The unconference brings together people interested in a wide range of topics and technologies. As with any unconference, everyone that attends has the opportunity to share, teach, and participate. Other popular unconferences include EduCamp (with a focus on education) and CityCamp (with a focus on government and civic technology).

As you'll discover when you do this exercise, the success of the unconference format is based on the participants that are involved and the ideas they want to share. Let's take a look at the steps needed to facilitate an unconference exercise.

Facilitation steps

Step 1. Before leading the exercise, the facilitator should pre-select a topic on which the participants should generate and pitch ideas to the group. It could be a business challenge, a customer problem, a way to increase productivity, or a problem you'd like to solve for your organization.

Step 2. Distribute paper or sticky notes and markers/pens to each participant.

Step 3. Introduce the topic that will be the focus of the unconference exercise and ask participants to begin thinking their pitch. Explain the process, the desired outcome, and the following timeline for the exercise:

- 10 minutes: Explain process and pitch prep
- 20 minutes: 1-minute pitches from each participant
- 10 minutes: Voting

- 10 minutes: Break / count votes
- 5 minutes: Present top selections and breakout sessions
- 25 minutes: Breakout collaboration
- 10 minutes: Readouts

Step 4. Ask participants to first prepare a 30–60 second pitch based on the topic. This is an idea they want to share with the group to potentially explore in a breakout session. Participants should compose a title, brief description, and add their name to the paper you handed out. Pro-tip: Leave room for voting at the bottom. A pitch sheet might look like Figure 1.

Title:
Description:
Name:
Voting:

Figure 1: Sample pitch sheet

Step 5. Begin the pitch process and time each participant for 60 seconds. Instruct each participant to share their name, title, and to briefly describe their idea (this is “the pitch.”) If a participant begins to go over time, kindly stop them by starting to clap, others will follow suit. Alternatively, you can use an alarm on the timer. As each participant finishes a pitch, the group should clap to encourage others and boost confidence for the other pitches.

Step 6. At the conclusion of each pitch the facilitator should lay out the pitch papers on a table, tape them to the wall, or post them to a moveable whiteboard so participants can vote on them before heading out for the break (second pro-tip: Don’t use sharpies to vote if you tape pitch papers to the wall. You’ve been warned). Allow at least 20 minutes for this step.

Step 7. After the pitches, give all participants three votes to select the topic(s) they are most interested in discussing or exploring further. Have them vote on the pitch paper, using tick marks, with the markers or pens. Alternatively, you can "dot" vote with circular stickers. Votes can spread out or stacked for preferred topics. Allow up to 10 minutes for this step.

Step 8. While participants take a break, facilitators should count the votes on each pitch paper and determine the top two or three ideas. I prefer to count the votes on each pitch paper and write the number in a circle on the paper. This helps me visually see what pitches are the most popular. This will take about 10 minutes.

Step 9. After the break, present these top ideas and ask the presenters of these ideas to lead a breakout session based on their pitches. For larger unconference events, there is a lot more organizing of the sessions with multiple rooms and multiple timeslots occurring. This exercise is drastically simplifying this step.

Step 10. Divide participants into two or three breakout sessions. Ask participants to self-select the breakout session that is most interesting to them. Having balanced groups is preferable.

Step 11. Ask pitch presenters to lead their breakout sessions with the goal of arriving at a prototype of a solution for the idea they pitched. In my experience, things will start off slow, then it will be hard to stop the collaboration. Allow up to 20 minutes for this step.

Step 12. As you approach the end of the breakout sessions, ask participants to prepare their top takeaways for a group readout. Give groups a five-minute and then a two-minute warning to prepare their key takeaways.

Step 13. Ask each breakout group to designate a spokesperson.

Step 14. The spokesperson from each breakout group shall present their key takeaways and a summary of their prototype to the entire group. Divide the time equally between groups. A few questions from other groups are fine. This should last about 10 minutes.

Step 15. Facilitators should summarize the session, encourage further action, and conclude the exercise.

Reflection

I’ve previously run this exercise with a group of approximately twenty middle school and high school students with the sole purpose of introducing the concept of an unconference to them. For the last three years, in fact, I’ve had the privilege of hosting a group of bright, young students participating in the Raleigh Digital Connector Program[95]. I host them at Red Hat, give them a quick tour of our office space, then lead them through this unconference exercise to help them prepare for an annual civic tech event called CityCamp NC, which brings citizens, government change agents, and businesses together to openly innovate and improve the North Carolina community.

To recap on the general exercise, the facilitator's job is to keep things on time and moving through the process. The participants’ job is to be present, share ideas, and build on other ideas. In this smaller setting, having everyone give a pitch is important, because you want everyone to share an idea. In my experience, you never know what you’re going to get and I’m alway pleasantly surprised by the ones the get voted up.

95 https://www.raleighnc.gov/safety/content/ParksRec/Articles/Programs/TechnologyEducation/DigitalInclusionPrograms.html

In larger events, facilitator's should to drive participants to have some type of outcome or next step by the end of their session. Getting people together to discuss an idea or share knowledge is great, but the most valuable sessions allow participants to leave with something to look forward to after the event.

I will often refer to unconferences as organized chaos. Once first-timers go through the process, I've had many participants express sheer joy that they've never experienced this level of collaboration and knowledge sharing. On the other end of the spectrum, I often get participants who wish they would have made a pitch or shared a topic near and dear to them—after it was all over. Don't be that person. If you ever find yourself at an unconference, I encourage you to do a pitch. Be prepared to participate, jump right in, and enjoy the experience.

As you get more experience, you can convert this unconference exercise into a full-blown unconference event for your organization. And the results should be astonishing.

Additional resources

These resources can help both facilitators and participants maximize their unconference experience, whether is planning or attending.

- Ultimate unconference survival guide[96]
- Unconferences: How to Tap into the Power Of Your People[97]
- CityCamp: Organizing an unconference for a transparent city government[98]

---

96 https://opensource.com/life/16/3/unconference-survival-guide

97 https://blog.hootsuite.com/unconferences-how-to-tap-into-the-power-of-your-people/

98 https://opensource.com/government/11/6/citycamp-organizing-unconference-transparent-city-government

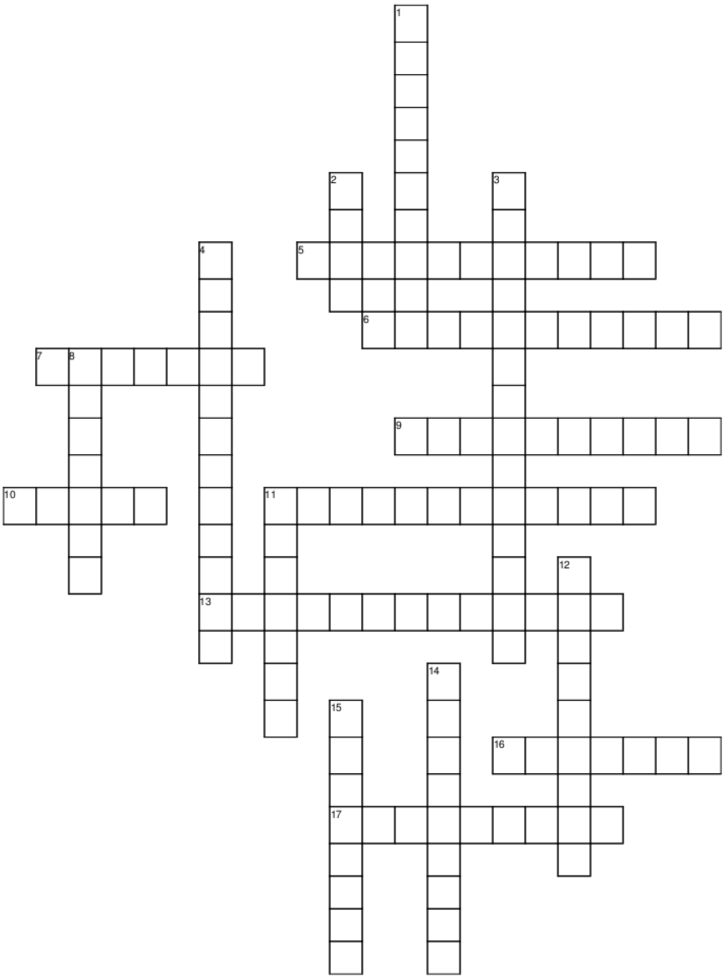
- Five essential elements of an open government unconference[99]

Jason Hibbets is a senior community architect at Red Hat, which means he's a mashup of a community manager and project manager for Opensource.com. He's been helping build the Open Organization community since 2015. Jason is the author of The Foundation for an Open Source City, *a book for cities and citizens interested in improving their government through civic hacking.*

99 https://opensource.com/government/12/1/five-essential-elements-open-government-unconference

Appendix

An open organization crossword puzzle



Crossword clues

Across

5. A system for organizational governance designed to help the best ideas win
6. Organization's ability to incorporate multiple voices
7. Growing an open culture as an organization adds members
9. Passionate participation
10. Mutual assurance and dependence
11. Organization's ability to remain resilient and flexible
13. An approach to joint work that produces better results
16. A sense of history, purpose, and meaning that enables deeper and better work
17. Related to, but not synonymous with, inclusivity

Down

1. Production of something new and potentially path-breaking
2. A better way to work, manage, and lead
3. One consequence of increased transparency
4. Organization's approach to making important materials accessible
8. A shared set of values and beliefs, guides behaviors
11. Capacity for remaining nimble and responsive
12. A shared sense of identity forged through common purpose
14. Difficult to achieve with open decisions, but valuable to have when possible
15. Loops of data that produce beneficial iterations

The Open Organization Definition

Preamble

Openness is becoming increasingly central to the ways groups and teams of all sizes are working together to achieve shared goals. And today, the most forward-thinking organizations—whatever their missions—are embracing openness as a necessary orientation toward success. They've seen that openness can lead to:

- **Greater agility**, as members are more capable of working toward goals in unison and with shared vision;
- **Faster innovation**, as ideas from both inside and outside the organization receive more equitable consideration and rapid experimentation, and;
- **Increased engagement**, as members clearly see connections between their particular activities and an organization's overarching values, mission, and spirit.

But openness is fluid. Openness is multifaceted. Openness is contested.

While every organization is different—and therefore every example of an open organization is unique—we believe these five characteristics serve as the basic conditions for openness in most contexts:

- Transparency
- Inclusivity
- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Community

Characteristics of an open organization

Open organizations take many shapes. Their sizes, compositions, and missions vary. But the following five characteristics are the hallmarks of any open organization.

In practice, every open organization likely exemplifies each one of these characteristics differently, and to a greater or lesser extent. Moreover, some organizations that don't consider themselves open organizations might nevertheless embrace a few of them. But truly open organizations embody them all—and they connect them in powerful and productive ways.

That fact makes explaining any one of the characteristics difficult without reference to the others.

Transparency

In open organizations, transparency reigns. As much as possible (and advisable) under applicable laws, open organizations work to make their data and other materials easily accessible to both internal and external participants; they are open for any member to review them when necessary (see also *inclusivity*). Decisions are transparent to the extent that everyone affected by them understands the processes and arguments that led to them; they are open to assessment (see also *collaboration*). Work is transparent to the extent that anyone can monitor and assess a project's progress throughout its development; it is open to observation and potential revision if necessary (see also *adaptability*). In open organizations, transparency looks like:

- Everyone working on a project or initiative has access to all pertinent materials by default.
- People willingly disclose their work, invite participation on projects before those projects are complete and/or

"final," and respond positively to request for additional details.

- People affected by decisions can access and review the processes and arguments that lead to those decisions, and they can comment on and respond to them.
- Leaders encourage others to tell stories about both their failures and their successes without fear of repercussion; associates are forthcoming about both.
- People value both success and failures for the lessons they provide.
- Goals are public and explicit, and people working on projects clearly indicate roles and responsibilities to enhance accountability.

Inclusivity

Open organizations are inclusive. They not only welcome diverse points of view but also implement specific mechanisms for inviting multiple perspectives into dialog wherever and whenever possible. Interested parties and newcomers can begin assisting the organization without seeking express permission from each of its stakeholders (see also *collaboration*). Rules and protocols for participation are clear (see also *transparency*) and operate according to vetted and common standards. In open organizations, inclusivity looks like:

- Technical channels and social norms for encouraging diverse points of view are well-established and obvious.
- Protocols and procedures for participation are clear, widely available, and acknowledged, allowing for constructive inclusion of diverse perspectives.
- The organization features multiple channels and/or methods for receiving feedback in order to accommodate people's preferences.

- Leaders regularly assess and respond to feedback they receive, and cultivate a culture that encourages frequent dialog regarding this feedback.
- Leaders are conscious of voices not present in dialog and actively seek to include or incorporate them.
- People feel a duty to voice opinions on issues relevant to their work or about which they are passionate.
- People work transparently and share materials via common standards and/or agreed-upon platforms that do not prevent others from accessing or modifying them.

Adaptability

Open organizations are flexible and resilient organizations. Organizational policies and technical apparatuses ensure that both positive and negative feedback loops have a genuine and material effect on organizational operation; participants can control and potentially alter the conditions under which they work. They report frequently and thoroughly on the outcomes of their endeavors (see also *transparency*) and suggest adjustments to collective action based on assessments of these outcomes. In this way, open organizations are fundamentally oriented toward continuous engagement and learning.

In open organizations, adaptability looks like:

- Feedback mechanisms are accessible both to members of the organization and to outside members, who can offer suggestions.
- Feedback mechanisms allow and encourage peers to assist one another without managerial oversight, if necessary.
- Leaders work to ensure that feedback loops genuinely and materially impact the ways people in the organization operate.

- Processes for collective problem solving, collaborative decision making, and continuous learning are in place, and the organization rewards both personal and team learning to reinforce a growth mindset.
- People tend to understand the context for the changes they're making or experiencing.
- People are not afraid to make mistakes, yet projects and teams are comfortable adapting their pre-existing work to project-specific contexts in order to avoid repeated failures.

Collaboration

Work in an open organization involves multiple parties by default. Participants believe that joint work produces better (more effective, more sustainable) outcomes, and specifically seek to involve others in their efforts (see also *inclusivity*). Products of work in open organizations afford additional enhancement and revision, even by those not affiliated with the organization (see also *adaptability*).

- People tend to believe that working together produces better results.
- People tend to begin work collaboratively, rather than "add collaboration" after they've each completed individual components of work.
- People tend to engage partners outside their immediate teams when undertaking new projects.
- Work produced collaboratively is easily available internally for others to build upon.
- Work produced collaboratively is available externally for creators outside the organization to use in potentially unforeseen ways.

- People can discover, provide feedback on, and join work in progress easily—and are welcomed to do so.

Community

Open organizations are communal. Shared values and purpose guide participation in open organizations, and these values—more so than arbitrary geographical locations or hierarchical positions—help determine the organization's boundaries and conditions of participation. Core values are clear, but also subject to continual revision and critique, and are instrumental in defining conditions for an organization's success or failure (see also *adaptability*). In open organizations, community looks like:

- Shared values and principles that inform decision-making and assessment processes are clear and obvious to members.
- People feel equipped and empowered to make meaningful contributions to collaborative work.
- Leaders mentor others and demonstrate strong accountability to the group by modeling shared values and principles.
- People have a common language and work together to ensure that ideas do not get "lost in translation," and they are comfortable sharing their knowledge and stories to further the group's work.

Version 2.0
April 2017
The Open Organization Ambassadors at Opensource.com
github.com/open-organization-ambassadors/open-org-definition

Learn More

Additional resources

The *Open Organization* mailing list

Our community of writers, practitioners, and ambassadors regularly exchange resources and discuss the future of work, management, and leadership. Chime in at www.redhat.com/mailman/listinfo/openorg-list.

The "Open Organization Highlights" newsletter

Get open organization stories sent directly to your inbox. Visit opensource.com/open-organization to sign up.

Discussion guides

Want to start your own *Open Organization* book club? Download free discussion guides for help getting started. Just visit opensource.com/open-organization/resources/.

#OpenOrgChat

Our community enjoys gathering on Twitter to discuss open organizations. Find the hashtag #OpenOrgChat, check the schedule at opensource.com/open-organization/resources/twitter-chats, and make your voice heard.

Get involved

Share this book

We've licensed this book with a Creative Commons license, so you're free to share a copy with anyone who might benefit from learning more about the ways open source values are changing organizations today. See the copyright statement for more detail.

Tell your story

Every week, Opensource.com publishes stories about the ways open principles are changing the way we work, manage, and lead. You can read them at opensource.com/open-organization. Do you have a story to tell? Please consider submitting it to us at opensource.com/story.

Join the community

Are you passionate about using open source ideas to enhance organizational life? You might be eligible for the Open Organization Ambassadors program (read more at opensource.com/resources/open-organization-ambassadors-program). Share your knowledge and your experience—and join us at github.com/open-organization-ambassadors.