



Collective Intelligence Solutions

Audacious workgroup performance

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“The first big challenge for associations is how to create the processes that cause people continually to reflect and make alive their purpose and principles....Successful businesses start with creating a culture of ownership.”

~Strategies Business Magazine

The Role of Collective Imagination in a Culture of Ownership

By Robert Bystrom

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Ten years ago, I wrote, “The businesses that survive the next ten years will need to be responsive, adaptive, inventive, intelligent and efficient. Ten years from now, these businesses will be lean, strong and ecologically attuned. Either they will be operated by teams which have learned to function very well together or they probably won’t exist. Collaboration and cooperation will be the environment of the successful workplace.”

I still stand by that evaluation, but it seems to be happening more quickly than I anticipated.

Here is the core understanding: when people come together and approach the task at hand with their pooled capacity for innovation, two things happen:

1. not only are the results superior and decisions clearer, but
2. the individuals themselves report a sense of relief and a deeper sense of belonging, trust and understanding of their partners. Feelings of isolation fade and the sense of being part of something greater grows.

Although the benefits of collective intelligence are well documented, until recently, there has not existed a reliable, easy-to-use technology for a working group to access their collective wisdom on demand. Business owners have not imagined that a substantial improvement in teamwork and in their bottom-line variables as well could occur without a large HR budget and many days of training.

The owners of a new luxury spa/hotel were having a nightmare trying to schedule the staff of about 60 in a way that displeased the fewest people. The situation was nearly collapsing the entire business. So the owners turned the problem over to the staff to create a way the managers could approach the task of scheduling everyone so that it worked for everyone. Using a proprietary game that I co-developed, it took them—owners, managers and staff

working on the same level—about 45 minutes to come up with a plan for the managers to follow and which everyone had a voice in developing. The owners were relieved and surprised at the speed and ease of the solution.

The problem-solving game is called a Segue™. By playing a Segue™, a project leader, manager or business owner can transform ordinary meetings into dynamic think tanks and turn the employees into a resilient, responsive, mutually supportive team.

The field of collective intelligence is growing rapidly and an increasing number of people are experiencing it in professional settings. Since 2000, I have been teaching working groups, professional associations, community organizations, student groups, families and others the simple steps to achieving extraordinary results by accessing their collective intelligence.

The main question in developing this work has been **How can we harness the extraordinary resource of our combined capacity for intelligence and imagination for every-day operations of businesses, families and communities?** How can our pooled capacity to solve bigger problems faster and wiser be as simple as connecting with the Internet?

Background: Breaking the Code

Over a period of two years in Bellingham, Washington, a group of seven dedicated professionals explored the role of open questions in facilitating groups to develop visions and create strategies. **The conclusion of the work was that questions elicit intelligence and shared questions elicit collective intelligence.**

Based on our work with government, business and community groups, we developed the groundwork for the process which developed into the Segue™. The Segue™ is a proven process for facilitating meetings and managing projects. A Segue™ draws upon the creative input of every individual involved and creates a strong foundation of communication and relationship as well as a shared sense of ownership of the goals the group has set out to accomplish. **People love it!**

It's about being part of something really exceptional.

“Indeed, rescue crews, sports teams, dance troupes and music ensembles have for years been reporting remarkable experiences of team synergy or group flow that have lifted them to undreamt heights of coordination and effectiveness.”

~Robert Kenny,
Founder of Leaderful™ Teams Organizational Consulting,

“Sure it's fun to score, but it's more fun to win.”

~Kobe Bryant