

INFLUENCE

TOWARDS COLLECTIVE MACRO INTELLIGENCE

A SIMPLE WAY TO MANAGE THE COMPLEXITY OF
KNOWLEDGE, COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION TO
UNLEASH VALUE



Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration initiatives can have an expected return in the ranges of 10 to 40 times the investment. However, they are often overly technology focused and miss the mark. Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration take many forms and encompass everything from your search engine, taxonomies, metadata, repositories, security policies and idea management tools to your team spaces, communities, knowledge management teams, gamification, governance and processes as well as culture adaptation. This Point of View will show how to strategically and operationally create Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration in an ever more complex and globalized world by harnessing a simple yet powerful framework consisting of three areas across three dimensions.

Organizations today need to cope with an unprecedented level of complexity in order to reach their goals. This complexity has many sources but can be traced back to both our move from localized tribes to worldwide establishments and to the level of sophistication our daily operations have reached. For example, today's financial markets are international adaptive systems in many layers incorporating both human and machine based intelligence. Furthermore, in order to drive the machine based intelligence that increasingly fuel these markets we end up with an ever increasing complexity. A complexity involving thousands of people around the globe dealing with challenges of how to make billions of transistors function together at an ever increasing speed at the borders of quantum physics. The result, a processor that takes no more space than the size of a thumbnail and consumes less power than a low energy lightbulb. As the complexity and urge for globalization intensifies, the pressure on team performance and seamless collaboration naturally also increases. Due to this rising focus on how teams function we now know that many teams, sadly, do not function very well at all. According to research, most teams spend less than half their time on the actual task and almost no time trying to understand if they are solving the right challenge in the first place. We believe this situation gets magnified on the organizational level as individuals, teams and systems need to exchange knowledge and collaborate across both the physical and virtual space while the next sale or innovation literary can mean the difference between profit or loss. It is within this complex area we in the Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration team at Influence have a clear opinion on how to create value.

The Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration team at Influence consists of people with both a passion for how to create collective intelligence within teams and on an organization wide level, as well as with years of experience researching and working on these challenges in reality. It is this experience that has lead us to the obvious starting point that it seems many organizations lack. Just as you cannot run an all-star sports team effectively without a game plan nor financial steering without the tools of accounting and KPIs, you simply cannot manage the massive complexity of Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration without and equally powerful framework.

Looking at existing frameworks we can quickly state that many are either too simple or way too complex to be practically useful. What was called for was a framework that could be described in less than five minutes, yet powerful enough to be scaled into a maturity model as well as detailed value driven action planning.

We now believe we have managed to create that framework, which has served us well in several client situations, and this Point of View will introduce you to it.

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Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration in organizations take many forms and encompass everything from your search engine, taxonomies, metadata, repositories, security policies and idea management tools to your team spaces, communities, knowledge management teams, gamification, governance and processes as well as culture adaptation. Any framework would need to compress all of these areas (and many more) into something concrete and simple. To do so we divided the tool into two layers.

The first layer consists of three different *areas* that are essential for Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration. The second layer consists of three key *dimensions* that are critical to get business value out of each area. The three areas are *Share & Find*, *Connect & Collaborate* and *Ideate & Innovate*. The three dimensions are *Culture*, *Structure* and *Strategy*.

Share & Find comes from the simple insight that a key benefit we want from Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration is the ability to find and integrate the knowledge of people inside (and preferably outside) the organization. To make us all know what we all know, find any expert when we need to and never again have to re-invent the wheel. However, you cannot find what does not exist and hence find needs to be coupled with sharing. In fact, our experience indicates that in contrast to what some may think, find related challenges may have more to do with the sharing side not functioning correctly. Once these two sub-areas are combined they form a critical piece of what needs to be managed for your organization to be collectively intelligent.

Connect & Collaborate relates to effective and efficient team work, to remove borders between globalized talent and change one’s mindset from the restricted domain to that of the entire organization. Being able to connect from anywhere and collaborate synchronously and asynchronously is hence critical. Challenges here often exist in two key areas: having teams that operate well both in the “real world” and digital world as well as effective and efficient collaboration, borderless, with people outside your own organization.

Ideate & Innovate involves turning the output of your talent into successful innovation. The reason for not simply calling this area “innovation” is that many challenges actually lie before you can start innovating. The ability to actually capture, enhance and select ideas in a collectively intelligent way. Once you have this capability the next challenge is how to act on potential innovations that likely are critical for your future success, but that don’t fit the mold of your current strategy, internal structures and client ecosystem.

Having covered the different areas, we will now proceed with the dimensions that add additional definition, direction and depth.

Strategy includes having a well-founded and attractive vision providing direction which is translated into goals and activities. It also includes the ability to track and measure as well as analyze and share these measurements. This aligns the three areas *Share & Find*, *Connect & Collaborate* and *Ideate & Innovate* with the bottom line and ensure the correct activities are being done and that they form one value enhancing ecosystem.

Structure includes both IT structures such as tools and information lifecycle management, but also business structures such as governance, process support, policies and taxonomy as well as people structures

such as communities and teams. Challenges within this dimension are more often found in the business area than in the IT area. For example, IT may have a technical interest but is for various reasons unable to be a strong business partner resulting in e.g. shadow IT. A second major challenge is the conflict between IT and business security as well as privacy concerns and the need for spreading information rapidly and openly in the organizational landscape.

Culture involves the understanding, belief and ability of your leadership and employees. Many challenges actually resort from this dimension. A classic example is how an organization may have a perfectly suitable Digital Collaboration and Knowledge Integration IT setup, yet lack the ability to create a return on these investments. This is often due to inadequate change management connected to implementations but also the absence of clear incentives for why to use existing collaboration tools.

The framework presented here (see figure 1) can now help you determine where you are today, help you define where you need to be tomorrow as well as help you create actions to reach and follow up on your strategic agenda. In fact, the framework functions very well as a powerful foundation for a comprehensive maturity model. We have already developed such a maturity model, in depth break downs as well as associated offerings across the framework and hence “pressure tested” the framework which we now hope also will serve you well.



Figure 1. The final framework consisting of three areas and three dimensions

We would love to explore this topic more with you and hope you have found this Point of View inspiring.

Sincerely, the authors:

- **Pierre Jarméus** (pierre.jarmeus@influence.se), Management Consultant and Digital Collaboration & Knowledge Integration Subject Matter Expert
- **Fredrik Swahn** (fredrik.swahn@influence.se), Management Consultant and Digital Collaboration & Knowledge Integration Subject Matter Expert
- Co-authors: Per Appelgren and Martin Hedengren

Influence is an innovative Swedish management consulting company. We are genuinely interested in people, problem solving and boosting performance in organizations through Collective Intelligence.

Hamngatan 2, 5 tr
111 47 Stockholm
Phone, main: +46 (0)8-678 21 53
E-mail: info@influence.se
www.influence.se