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WHITE PAPER

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Collaborative Leadership Excellence

Source Code to Gain a 25% Competitive Advantage

Executive Summary

DRAFT

Not for Public Release

Purpose

For two decades, consistently CEOs have said that their top priorities include attracting & retaining top talent, increasing innovation, building strong cultures, growing the business, creating alliances, lowering costs, and better strategic execution. However, there has been little change in the success rates to achieve these goals.

In addition, powerful forces in global business, particularly *speed and complexity* are driving the need for far greater *collaboration* at every level of the organization, from teams, to cross functional integration, to strategic alliances, and emerging "value networks." But there is a massive chasm between the level of collaboration needed to be successful and the corporate ability to deliver what's required. People talk about the *collaborative shift,* but it's not materialized.

- What are the realities? What's needed to spur the *collaborative shift*?
- Why have the so many initiatives seemed to have stalled out?
- What can be done to deliver higher levels of collaboration?
- What shifts in thinking are needed? What is the new paradigm for the future?

Critical Issues

Achieving CEO priorities has been a grind, churning CEO turnover. The businesses world has been poised for a major *shift* for more than two decades; yet the reality has been far from stellar -- more talk than action, more smoke than fire, more heat than light.

While the introduction of a patchwork of ideas and practices are constantly being advised, all but the best companies are plagued with strife, passive aggressive behavior, internal rivalries and superfluous work that adds no customer value. This must change. But how? This paper proposes concrete solutions.

The Complexity-Speed-Collaboration Shift is a New Paradigm

Business leaders are failing to realize they are caught in the insanity trap: *doing the same thing over again, expecting a different result*. The solutions of the past are no longer enough. The last two decades have not produced a significant change in the level actual people perform. When more strenuous efforts yield less and less return, it's a sign that the current paradigm has confronted the principles of diminishing returns. A new order of thinking is required to shake our foundations and spur sustainable collaborative transformations.

While many authors (including yours truly) have pounded the drum and introduced collaborative best practices in global circles (and have actually made measurable differences), the value derived by pumping more of the same thinking into the heads of leaders has reached its limit. How do we know? Because the ideas of visionary leaders twenty years ago are being rehashed in a new set of clothes. Technological change has enormously outpaced organizational transformation. Our ingenuity is out of balance and misaligned with our humanity -- stress and distrust levels have skyrocketed; CEOs are burning out; Millennials switch jobs like they switch coffee cups; our social gyroscopes are wobbling badly. Why? What's Missing?

Shifts in Thinking are required to engage and energize people and trigger a quantum jump that's in sync with the tune of the times.

- ***Beyond Best Practices***: While practices are useful component in any business, they can be deceptively alluring, seeming to provide a pathway of improvement, yet at the same time giving a very incomplete framework for leadership to understand, communicate and implement real systems change.
- ***Beyond Management***: The essence of *management* is to seek the efficient use of resources. This approach cannot not trigger change; it needs Collaborative *Leadership* Excellence from champions seeking a quantum jump in thinking, possibility, and performance -- those willing to grasp the handlebars, punching the throttle forward.
- ***Misconceptions & Misguidance***: Too many leaders are guided by fallacious myths, like "survival of the fittest" (which was never advocated by Darwin, who attributed human evolution to collaborative culture. What's more, *culture*, not personality, is the *#1 determinant of human behavior*; and leaders are the primary determinant of culture --few grasp the magnitude of this opportunity. While adversarial interaction makes good movie drama, it seldom produces innovation, teamwork, and value creation.
- ***Trapped in Muddled Thinking***: Too often leaders address their role with fundamentally flawed thinking: not embracing their role from a holistic systems perspective, but as a series of fragments, with tools and techniques not designed for the enormity of the task or, worse, designed for a totally different set of functions. This problem is multiplied by too many "muddled models" promoted by subject matter experts that actually confuse, confound, and "complexify" the essence of leadership.
- ***Paradigm Shifts Need "Design Architecture:"*** It's a major mistake to believe a new paradigm can be brought to life using a patch-work of old methods designed for a by-gone era. Birthing a new paradigm requires a new architecture – a series of integrated frameworks designed for a transformational future.

- ***Stronger Critical Mass Required***: Transforming complex organizational systems requires more than a smattering admonitions and exhortations, coupled with a handful of champions who cut a narrow swath in the organization, thus failing to create a robust critical mass of aligned leaders to sustain momentum. What's needed is an advanced immersive team learning experience to make new ideas stick, then converted into productive action.

Fortunately there are ample "outliers" that, when seen as a pattern,
guide the way on reframing future of the Collaborative Paradigm Shift.

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This White Paper addresses how to resolve these factors and outlines how to empower leaders by reframing and elevating the paradigm from fragmented practices to collaborative systems architecture.

At the core of the reframing problem is muddled thinking how people, organizations, and leaders interact in the world, and this has a major impact on economic results. For the sake of simplification, there are basically three ways people interact: *adversarially, transactionally,* and *collaboratively.*

The mistake leaders too often make is to muddle and entangle transactional and adversarial dynamics into a jumbled mass, mixing them helter-skelter into organizations, thus countermanding the essential requirements that complex organizations need to function collaboratively to produce the best results and create the greatest value.

To be successful, leaders must have both the mind-sets, insights, and skill-sets to navigate the unique waters of complex systems – something seldom learned in business school.

Six Master Levers to Empower Collaborative Leadership Excellence

How should business leaders and entrepreneurs get their arms wrapped around the *Complexity-Speed-Collaboration Shift?*

Based on years of experience, studies of successes and failures, and the needs of complex organizations, we have identified six fundamental "levers" a collaborative leader must use regularly. Think of these "levers" as "core architectures" that enable effective functioning of collaborative systems:

1. **Human Behavior & Trust Architecture**
2. **Collaborative Culture & Teamwork Architecture**
3. **Collaborative Innovation & Diversity Architecture**
4. **Value Creation (economics) & Collaborative Advantage Architecture**
5. **Collaborative Leadership & Alignment Architecture**
6. **Complexity, Integration & Value Networks Architecture**

Gaining a mastery over these critical elements of the design architecture enables a leader to work both inside and outside their own organization to harness human energies, align functions, balance forces, integrate across boundaries, and manage complexity.

The good news is that all six architectures are actually build into the DNA of normal humans – it's already in our "source code" – it's the job of Collaborative Leadership Excellence to unlock it.

Learning and Embracing the Collaborative Systems Architecture

It's one thing to understand something intellectually, and completely another to be able to act wisely implementing ideas. To enable the *Collaborative Paradigm Shift*, leaders must *learn to think* and *act* to align essentials of the systems architecture.

While some elements can be taught using books, videos, and webinars, grasping the magnitude and power of the *Shift* requires a *critical mass* of organizational leaders to engage in *immersive team learning and action-planning* to embody the right attitudes, insights, mind sets and skill sets.

Additionally, because organizations live in an inherently unstable environment filled with rapid change and the dynamics of competition, it's vital to have a diagnostic assessment mechanism built in to determine which levers need readjustment.

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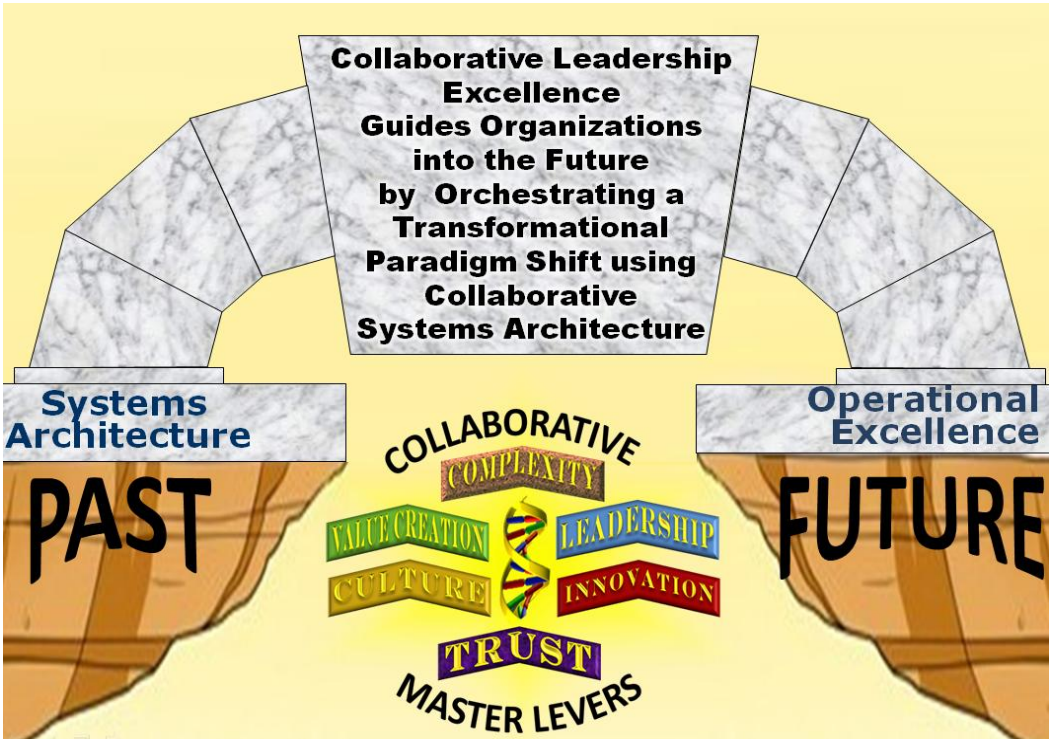
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