

by Robert Porter Lynch and Stephen C. Rogers

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The Architectures Collaborative Excellence

Alliances 4.0 -- How to Spur & Sustain the Collaborative Shift

Executive Summary



*The Collaborative Shift is,
in its essence,
a Paradigm Shift requiring
“Systems Architecture”
to fuel and sustain it.*

Purpose

Powerful forces in global business are driving the need for far greater collaboration within all types of business, including the emerging “Eco-System.” But there is a massive chasm between the level of collaboration needed to be successful and the corporate capability to deliver what’s required.

- What are the realities? What’s needed to spur the *collaborative shift*?
- Why have the Alliance Best Practices seemed to have stalled out?
- What can be done to deliver higher levels of collaboration?
- What new levels of thinking are needed?
- What is the new paradigm for the future?

Critical Issues

The business world has been poised for a *collaborative shift* for more than two decades. Despite the verbal interest in alliances by many CEOs in surveys, the reality has been far from stellar -- more talk than action, more smoke than fire, more heat than light.

While well positioned, Alliance Managers have largely not been the leaders of the impending *Collaborative Shift*; often being marginalized and isolated; few have gone on to become corporate CEOs. This must change. Opportunity is beckoning.

This White Paper addresses these factors and outlines how to accelerate the *Collaborative Shift* by reframing and elevating the paradigm from *Alliance Best Practices* to *Collaborative Systems Architecture*.

The Paradigm Must Shift

“The Emergence of the Fasttime Networked Enterprise will be the most Revolutionary Shift in the History of Commerce.” -- Robert Porter Lynch, speech to business leaders, 1996

This prediction from 25 years ago has yet to be fulfilled – it is long overdue.

- But why has the shift taken so long to materialize?
- What can be done by leading edge companies to gain the competitive edge?
- Is today’s approach to the business Eco-System is running headstrong with legacy thinking?

What’s been Missing?

As a profession we have missed two fundamental points:

1. Collaborative Shift has been so ephemeral is because there has been *no unifying systems design architecture* for implementation. *Implementation of the Eco-System is a Paradigm Shift* – thus it ***requires more than best practices and new mind-sets*** -- it requires ***new architectures*** to empower massive networks of interaction – something never learned in business school.
2. What’s more, our revered alliance ***best practices have never been systematically adapted to a wider range of collaborative interactions***, which has isolated the alliance profession, depriving it of capturing the high ground of collaboration.

Resulting Confusion, Chaos, and Conflict

Into this vacuum corporate managers default into a series of intermingled conflicting models, counterproductive operational processes and a muddled morass of cultural dynamics, which in turn producing enormous amounts of “friction,” manifesting as silos, sluggish performance, non-value added work, misaligned processes, poor innovation, and frustrating human aggravation. Managers try to change things by plugging holes, using the latest “tool of the month,” when the real problem was hidden, undefined, contradictory architectures. With no real guiding cognizance or practical solution, investors do the simplest thing: demand short-term financial performance.

The alliance profession is perfectly positioned to be the “lead arrow” aiming at a bold new future by harnessing the *Power of Collaborative Excellence*.

The last decades of alliance advocacy has failed to produce the level of enthusiasm, demand, and recognition necessary to shake the foundations of business. While Alliance Best Practices made a revolutionary shift in alliance success rates, the value derived has reached its limit to produce deep systems change. Let’s start with the obstacles that have prevented or retarded the *collaborative shift*.

- ***Misconceptions & Misguidance***: Too many leaders are guided by fallacious *adversarial* myths like “survival of the fittest.” In reality, *collaboration* is by far the most effective means of addressing complexity and connectivity. While *adversarial* interaction makes good drama, it seldom produces innovation, teamwork, and value creation.
- ***Trapped in Three Muddled Cultures***: Fundamentally, there are three types of cultures, strategies, and leadership frameworks: *adversarial*, *transactional*, and *collaborative* – which have become muddled, convoluted, and juxtaposed – obfuscating and diminishing the real value produced by collaboration. Most cultures are tragically muddled, which yields poor performance.
- ***Beyond Management***: The essence of *management* has been to seek the efficient use of resources. This approach can neither catalyze nor sustain change; it needs *Collaborative Excellence* which must first come from leaders, then managers working together as champions seeking a quantum jump in possibility and performance. Alliance professionals must start thinking as “architects” -- designers of the future.



- ***Beyond Best Practices***: While practices are useful component in any business, they can be deceptively alluring, seeming to provide a pathway of improvement, yet giving a very incomplete framework for leadership to understand, communicate and implement real systematic growth.
- ***Beyond Alliances***: While alliances represent a sector of the *Collaborative Systems Shift*, corporate leaders are seeking something more applicable to a broader realm, including internal teamwork, accelerating innovation, and the ability to achieve agility in a fast moving world.

Stronger and More Robust Architecture Required

A rapidly-moving, fast-changing world requires innovation and agility – far more than a smattering admonitions, exhortations, and digital tools coupled with a handful of well-intentioned champions. Swift and adroit transformation in an eco-system requires at least three things be present: 1) Aligned Collaborative Culture, 2) Robust Design Architecture, and 3) Critical Mass of Key Leaders & Senior Managers capable of taking quick and wise action to sustain a multi-dimensional competitive edge.

By their nature, alliance managers cut too narrow an organizational swath, thus failing to multiply and leverage their essential collaborative skills more broadly across functions.

What's needed is a simple but robust collaborative architecture that frames the collaborative excellence to engage and energize people and trigger a quantum jump, combined with an advanced *immersive team learning experience* across the organization to make new ideas stick, while simultaneously converting the new architecture into productive, measurable actions.

The Architecture of the 4.0 Collaborative Shift

How does the Alliance Profession leverage our wisdom for greater impact? We have learned a massive amount in the shift from ad-hoc, helter-skelter alliances (Alliances 1.0), to the introduction of best practices (Alliances 2.0), to raising alliances into a professional domain (Alliances 3.0). We are entering the 4th phase of alliances -- NextGen 4.0 – this is the time for the *Game-Changer Strategy*



Six Core Architectures (Frameworks) that will Power the Collaborative Systems Shift



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

Value Proposition

Each of the Six Frameworks, through the “triumph of small numbers,” produces at least a 3%-5% advantage, which accrues to 25% or more, generating an extraordinary competitive advantage in terms of speed, innovation, productivity, and profitability.



Implementation: Leadership & Immersive Learning

Organizations seeking to embrace the magnitude and power of *Collaborative Excellence* must create a critical mass of leaders and managers to engage in *Immersive Learning Experiences* that begin to *imbed the new architecture deeply into the corporate culture* and beyond into Eco-System Partners.

Road to the C-Suite

After two decades of excellent professionalism, we must deal with the reality that alliance professionals have generally not risen to C-Suite levels. Doing more of the same, expecting a different result is foolhardy. Upward mobility will depend on expanding the value we can produce.