



Putting the Participatory Culture to Work

How a Changing Corporate Mindset and Advanced Tools are Enabling New Forms of Collaboration and Closure



There is an emerging movement afoot amongst consumers and the media that has been labeled the “participatory culture”. Defined as new ways of life that lead people to create and circulate new self-made content including video, audio, text, and images, the movement is taking shape and being popularized by consumer social networking sites such as facebook, flickr, and wikipedia that encourage mass participation and collaboration. According to its early followers, the participatory culture is changing the way people and the media communicate and actively engage.

Henry Jenkins, Director of the Comparative Media Studies Program at MIT and an advocate of the movement, defines the participatory culture as one:

- With relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement
- With strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations with others
- With some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices
- Where members believe that their contributions matter
- Where members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created)

PC AT WORK

This sense of participation – becoming highly prevalent with consumers, is also extending into the culture of the enterprise. This paper will explore how a concept that has heretofore been reserved for everyday life and the media is now taking shape in the workplace. Namely, that the participatory culture is being enabled and is proliferating among a larger population of workers that need to interact, form on-the-fly communities, and convey self-made content and contributions in entirely new ways. The phenomenon is rapidly making its way into how employees and teams work together in new ways to get things done. As enterprise teams deal with increasing ad-hoc projects, escalating information overload, and pressure to perform, they are starting to embrace this participatory activity by seeking technology and community to enable rapid change.

STRESS, SENSORY OVERLOAD, AND SUCCESS

What are the driving forces behind this need for extended interaction and participation in the workplace? It stems from a variety of factors that are taxing traditional habits and practices; namely, stress, workforce shortages, information overload, and competitive pressures to succeed. These pressures, combined with a grass-roots movement in the environment at large to participate, are giving rise to a new movement at work. Let’s take a closer look at the pressures involved:

STRESS: NOT ENOUGH TIME ENOUGH TIME TO BE PROACTIVE

One of the key challenges in the workplace is stress – from unfinished work piling up to competitive pressures to increased accountability. The average employee today has about 37 hours of unfinished work on his/her desk at any one time, according to Marlene Caroselli in “Empower Yourself”. And the average desk worker spends 3 hours per week sorting piles trying to find the project to work on next, says Richard Swenson in “The Overload Syndrome”. This overload can be costly; the loss of productivity from stressed out workers cost the United States more than \$300 billion dollars per year according to research from The Gallup Organization.



MASSIVE EMPLOYEE SHORTAGE

In 15 years, 30 million workers will have left the workforce. Productivity gains must be identified to address such a massive macro-economic business challenge, as a shrinking workforce is going to have to pick up the slack. And companies will need to find ways to improve the effectiveness of their remaining top talent. 73% of companies rate talent management as a high or very high priority according to a 2007 report by the Business Performance Management Forum.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Information overload is perhaps the most common and debilitating factor driving the need for extended participation in the enterprise. 2 out of 3 employees are overwhelmed by it, according to Nucleus Research. Knowledge workers spend 50% of their time searching for information, leaving only the remaining 50% to actually use what they have found, says a recent Reuters study. These stark facts create the need to turn information into knowledge within people and systems inside and outside of the company in order to avoid action paralysis.

PUTTING PARTICIPATORY CULTURE INTO PLAY

Many companies are considering or adopting new ways to collaborate in order to mitigate the stressors above and be more productive. Gartner defines the various elements of collaboration in terms of communication, coordination, community, and social interaction. The Participatory Culture embraces all of these aspects to a certain extent as workers begin to implement new practices and new communications tools to talk to one another, plan and coordinate projects and activities, team with like-minded individuals, and interact socially with others.

In fact, this collaborative and interactive movement has already started, as workers begin to use the web and collaborative applications in new ways. "The great thing is, the concept of 'participation' is already built into the Enterprise...In Enterprise 2.0, you will be 'participating' in a drastically new way," according to comments from Adam Carson, an Enterprise 2.0 expert at Morgan Stanley.

The proliferation of conferences, news, and buzz around collaboration is escalating as technology vendors and enterprises alike embrace the need to work, interact, and contribute together in new ways. Demand for improved information sharing along business functions is driving solid growth for collaboration technologies. Through 2011, the Web conferencing and team collaboration software markets will grow at a rate of 23% and 15.9%, respectively, according to recent research by Tom Eid at Gartner.

WORKPLACE IMPACT AND REQUIREMENTS

So what does the participatory culture movement mean for the enterprise? What are the new values that organizations must embrace, what are the cultural shifts required, and how can companies make these shifts?

Don Tapscott summarizes the transition well in his best-selling book "Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything":

"The democratic tendency lent to communication by participatory culture allows new models of production that are not based on a hierarchical standard. In the face of increased participation, the traditional hierarchies will not disappear, but "Community, collaboration, and self-organization" can become the foundation of corporations as powerful alternatives."



This sense of community and self organization requires a new set of values to be instilled in organizations in order to fully engage in productive collaboration. These values include:

- **A sense of inclusion and empowerment**
Every key team member – across all relevant functional areas and geographies—needs to feel a part of the strategic, planning, execution, and innovation process.
- **Transparency of information**
Information can no longer be hidden away in silos. Individuals and teams need to have access to all important data, resources and creative ideas in order to move forward.
- **Smarter, more customized work environment**
Tomorrow's workers need to be working smart -- on the right tasks for the right amount of time towards the appropriate goals for that particular project, not in standard, static ways.
- **Simplicity and productivity**
Hand in hand with a smarter environment comes the ability to organize, present, and execute ideas in efficient, easy-to-understand ways.
- **Extended team interaction and participation**
The participatory culture will involve communications and relationships within much larger, more complex teams of dozens or even hundreds of individuals.
- **Accountable individuals, measurable outcomes**
Clear and flexible systems and metrics will need to accompany all projects to make sure that interactions are effective and goals are met against clear expectations
- **Value of balanced work and leisure time**
The new generation of workers is much more cognizant and demanding of a proper work/leisure balance. Collaboration that facilitates personal and professional planning will be at a premium.
- **Belief in the power of ideas and knowledge**
New systems and processes will help teams harness the power of ideas and innovation, with creative content and concepts contributed by larger populations.
- **Enterprise 2.0 ideals and practices**
Organizations need to adopt Enterprise 2.0 practices with the most advanced collaborative, web-based tools available in order to thrive in the participatory culture.
- **Use of situational applications**
Companies need to be equipped with the ability to create dynamic situational applications that are customized for the requirements of each project.

ADAPTING CULTURES, COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

In order to adapt to these new values, companies need to adjust their culture and adopt new methods and tools. According to Keith Miles, Founder, President and Knowledge Work Evangelist at Streamlined Management Group, this cultural shift requires the active alignment of both behaviors and processes to reach the next level:

"In order to better collaborate, organizations must specify the behaviors or actions required to move from a functional (silo-ed) approach to a cellular (node) approach. For example, requests for assistance from those nearby should be treated as external customer requests – where individuals respond positively and within a mutually agreeable response time."



He goes on to say that tools like Mindjet's MindManager software allow organizations to more effectively bring complex ideas into focus and gives unrivaled clarity to the analytical processes required for continued success. Finally, he cautions executives to describe in clear actions how professionals can maximize their contribution to their organizations' success - as this personal approach is expected, especially by generation Y staff - or talented employees will go elsewhere.

Mark Levitt, Vice President for Collaborative Computing and the Enterprise Workplace at IDC, says that most organizations are still in the evaluation phase for next generation enterprise collaboration tools. Figuring out exactly how these tools will improve on and fit into the existing technology infrastructure are the biggest challenges. But he also comments that certain companies have nurtured a work culture of innovation that encourage individuals to contribute to projects that fall outside of their individual job descriptions. One example is Google whose engineers are expected to spend 20% of their time on personal projects and to participate in small teams. A second example is IBM whose workers are encouraged to share ideas in company wide "jam" sessions held nearly every year and through daily interactions with the company's social networking tools, which is helped along by IBM's tying employee compensation to overall company performance rather than to division performance. This active emphasis on shifting cultures toward a more collaborative environment, combined with tools that reduce complexity and make collaboration easy, are keys to successful innovation, Levitt adds.

MAPPING MINDJET INTO THE PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

Mindjet, a company that delivers interactive knowledge sharing software in use by over 1 million individuals, believes that the future of work will incorporate this same sense of shared community. Mindjet is using its MindManager solution to create situational communities through improved communications and collaboration - even around short-term projects or engagements. Using software that allows individuals and teams to visually map and dynamically interact with information, Mindjet is driving the agenda for the office of the future. One of the fastest growing and hottest private companies in the U.S., Mindjet is experiencing a new set of values in the workplace as exemplified by its users, including much more empowered, transparent, smart, and productive people and teams.

Mindjet is facilitating the ability to put work activities into context and turn ad hoc processes and projects into highly relevant, situational applications that capture the contributions of the whole team to tackle specific, time-sensitive projects and programs. In addition, MindManager enables more transparency and community to better engage customers and partners on a global basis. As a result, larger, more diverse and dispersed teams can now become part of the Participatory Culture - creating knowledge-driven, web-simple and team-smart applications that give them power to accomplish more - faster and more productively than ever.

"Mindjet is an example of a tool that breaks the standard way of doing things," said Levitt of IDC. "It is a free-form, intuitive, easy-to-use, and real-time tool for capturing ideas and presenting information by individuals and teams."

In fact, Mindjet's MindManager is helping to redirect productive time into more valuable innovation and accomplishment for teams. The cost efficiencies can be enormous. According to a recent study on the Value of an Hour, Mindjet estimates that for a 1,000 person deployment of MindManager, an organization could save nearly \$130,000 per week, or \$6.75 million per year by overcoming information overload, inefficient meetings, ineffective communications, and poor project performance.



MINDJET MOVEMENT ALREADY AFOOT

Mindjet is already facilitating Enterprise 2.0 capabilities in the workplace. By using Mindjet's software to visually map ideas, plans, and projects, teams are able to share and communicate information in entirely new ways, making the participatory culture a reality in the work environment. Here are just a few snapshots:



Amaox: Collaborating to Cure the Bird Flu

The biotech company Amaox Ltd. began pulling together medical investigators from U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Chemical Defense, Harvard Medical School, Meharry Medical College, University of Michigan, East Tennessee State University, Drexel University, Northern Ontario Medical School, AFG Biosolutions, Inc., and Amaox, Ltd. to begin work on a new technology that could dramatically improve the response to biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. Using Mindjet® MindManager® to collaborate and capture and organize the group members' ideas and information, the resulting consortium announced that clinical trials would begin on the first "multi-threat countermeasure" drug therapy.



WebEx - Participating in Stride with the Customer

WebEx uses MindManager to map clients' needs before and after the sale to develop solutions that are on target in helping them solve their key challenges. "MindManager helps us develop a significant level of trust because potential customers can tell that we're listening and that we've correctly captured what they're trying to achieve. They're working with us collaboratively. They don't see us anymore as sales people trying to push a deal—but as partners working closely with them to solve their problems."



FAA - Contributions and Collaboration to Stem Hurricane Damage

The FAA uses MindManager to create maps to gather information from and interact with sources around the country showing the extent of the hurricane damage to the airports it manages and the personnel who are on the scene to fix it. They like the fact that they can quickly communicate a complex situation to highly technical people who are more comfortable with charts and graphs than with long text documents. "The map format gives us visual acuity—the ability to lay things out where people can quickly look at them and say, 'There is what we need to focus on,' and then figure out how to deal with it."



HP - Global Meeting Management with Mindjet

Hewlett-Packard Consulting harvests the collective thinking of its global team through the use of MindManager in a participatory culture. "Mapping naturally taps into the creative genius inside of all of us. Instead of having to force everyone's ideas into neat, tidy boxes, we use MindManager to capture the best thinking of our large, multinational teams. That is an amazing business advantage."



DFS Group - Division of Louis Vuitton Pioneers Participation

DFS Group, a leading luxury goods retailer with hundreds of stores in major cities and international airports, initiated a project to completely restructure its IT services. Using MindManager software, DFS was able to dramatically accelerate the project, finishing fully 12 months ahead of its original 16-month schedule. DFS's IT department had set a new standard for collaboration and cut its average meeting time in half. "The biggest benefit we get from mapping is the way it creates a very participatory meeting environment, enabling our teams to quickly capture best thinking and make those ideas immediately actionable. And it does it in a way that drives commitment and buy-in. It represents a whole new way of thinking about collaboration."



Volvo AB – Pushing Project Participation and Productivity

Emeric Nectoux, Projects Coordinator in Lyon, France, uses MindManager to coordinate more than 120 process & IT projects across the world in the Volvo AB Group. With MindManager, he is able to structure, store and retrieve information, open his mind and his ideas to innovate and manage a huge amount of information and activities by participating with teams in new and productive ways.



For Balance, LLC –Brings out the Best in Group Think

Susi Watson, founder of For Balance, a consulting company specializing in graphic facilitation and experiential design, uses MindManager to foster innovation, collective thinking, and collaboration with her clients, which include companies such as Disney, Ford, babystyle, Bacardi, Bain, Cisco, and many others. “MindManager helps me visually assist strategic conversations for better understanding, alignment and commitment to continued collaboration.”



Digital Media Works – Delivers Web 2.0 and Widgets

Digital Media Works, which specializes in helping companies to conduct social media marketing, uses MindManager maps as a way to facilitate discussions and drive participatory practices into the organization. Through the use of advanced mapping, founder Stephanie Diamond helps clients better use blogs, social networks, videos and widgets to make their disparate group of customers morph into an online workforce.

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS OF THE NEW PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

So why does it all matter? Why is harnessing enhanced participation so important?

John Chambers, the highly successful CEO of Cisco and a big proponent of collaboration, states in a video presentation:

“When you think about why collaboration is so important to the future of the entire global economy, you can break it down into several pieces. Collaboration has huge implications for productivity and therefore a standard of living. It will affect every industry, not just in the way people work, but in the nature of work itself. It is the next frontier in terms of productivity and technology.”

Shifting the corporate culture towards advanced collaboration fosters a more interactive, creative workforce that is engaged and motivated. Projects of any size can be handled more efficiently and effectively. For example, the potential time savings using MindManager to capture, organize, and share information is nearly 40%. Organizations benefit from gaining holistic views of information contributed from global team members with quick and easy access that enables faster and better decision making.

Employees can now take advantage of new tools and techniques to get more done, which in turn makes for a better work/life balance and higher achievement for individuals and teams. And they can work in more rewarding environments in which a new set of values around inclusion, self-empowerment, transparency, and participation are the norm.

As John Chambers comments suggest, organizations must adapt and advance, finding new ways to engage, interact, contribute, and communicate like never before. The early adopters are already enjoying the benefits of the Participatory Culture. Those that have embraced the applications, practices, and mindset required to thrive in this new era are reaping the rewards.



Individuals and teams that have joined over a million others in utilizing Mindjet's MindManager are tapping into an environment of participation that will continue to facilitate innovation and productive participation as teams get more dispersed and information overload continues to overwhelm the unprepared.

As the saying goes, "You can't win if you don't participate."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Mindjet Map Gallery](#)
- [Mindjet White Papers](#)
- [Mindjet Customer Successes: Case Studies](#)
- [Mindjet Customer Successes: Customer Vignettes](#)
- [Mindjet Webinars](#)
- [Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century](#)
By Henry Jenkins, Director of the Comparative Media Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- [Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything](#) By Don Tapscott, Anthony D. Williams
- [Organizational Culture, by Streamlined Management Group](#)

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