Technology Collaboration Techniques

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Having diverse networks can bring opportunities to partners through combining knowledge, escaping myopic thinking and competency traps, while being used as an innovation enabler. Here are a few techniques that can help facilitate the partnership:

1. Problem Collaborating While Protecting Firm Context: Let's say for example your company is discussing attractive user-interface designs but can't risk leaking the company's business model, as Xerox did with Steve Jobs and an emerging Apple back in the day. Concentrate focus on the user interface improvements, not on what one participant considers to be a strategic design.

Distancing Over Time – look at the value of the shared information within your network over the long term and not thinking about it through an "in-company" role. You can look at the communications, payment, and interface structures required for digital business and visualize what benefits will come ahead for the company, therefore, this could encourage the company's contribution (or sacrifice) for building this infrastructure. For a network to work efficiently, there needs to be a certain level of heterogeneity and unfamiliarity to mask the knowledge, as well, partnerships should be steady not fragmented, in order to accumulate the knowledge.

2. Solution Collaborating While Protecting Firm Intent: Maybe your company is into cloud technologies for example, and wish to persuade others to join in application development. You want to protect the company's strategic intent for differentiating your future prospects to avoid a diminished bargaining power over competitive positioning and partnering.

Activity Alignment Over Time – Work with your partners quickly over short spans, performing narrowly defined iterative tasks that are clearly stated and aligned with your goals. Then hold meetings regularly to discuss the results, which gives an expectation of regularity for the joint work. Participant attention will be on task completion instead of on strategic intent, which lets partners familiarize themselves with each other and builds up competence in the tasks they do together without discussing any possible competitive outcomes.

3. Context Collaborating With Protection of Problems and/or Solutions: It could be that your company is involved with supporting digital services and wants to develop quicker response capabilities that do not disclose the underlying methods or planned development paths.

Developing Neutral Joint Platforms and Tools – Developing a joint platform such as a poster template or a collaboration map external to the company's environment, helps identify and experiment on capabilities for designing and developing digital services while also bringing a shared telecommunications infrastructure, e.g., idea generation workshops, start-up environments, hackathons, and discussing peripheral business cases. University start-up environments bring neutral ground for engaging in idea generation toward emerging technologies and discussion of business cases, i.e., gaming. Hackathons can be used for joint developments allowing participants to assess future perspectives and not reveal future commitments, keeping the company's abilities and strategy secret such as American Express did a few years ago with great success.

To assist with the integration of new knowledge and to generate better innovative ideas through collaborations, it is necessary for partners to engage in interactive knowledge revealing. This is just one of the many methods available for opening up new opportunity areas and idea generation.