



The Negotiation Academy - Europe The Power to Win More

Negotiating Win-Win Collaborations to Create a Sustainable Innovation Strategy

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A certain amount of creativity has always been a key aspect to negotiating strong win-win partnerships and other collaborations. This is especially true for corporate innovators seeking to create a scalable new business model for a new product or service. Often, the market is untested for such products or business strategies, and finding a highly strategic and synergistic partner can make or break the success of the new innovation.

Innovation has become a top priority and a primary focus for companies around the world. Global markets highly reward innovation, and stock prices reflect a company's ability to create game-changing new products with strong barriers to entry. However, especially large global companies are typically not designed to be innovative; they are built to be efficient.

Innovation is not usually perceived as a systemic business process, and there are volumes of stories for how new innovations which later became valuable revenue generators were simply a result of an accidental and unexpected invention. Uncertainty spooks many companies who choose to take the path of absorbing new innovation purely through acquisition, but this can quickly become a very complicated and expensive proposition.

Generative Collaboration

As a result, enlightened companies seek to find new ways to innovate "organically," training their people to become more entrepreneurial in how they think and interact with one another. For a company to build a sustainable innovation process internally, it is important to understand the value of "generative collaboration" in order to achieve that goal. At the core of any successful collaborative exchange is a win-win negotiation.

Corporate innovators must learn to "think like a start-up" when considering how to generate scalable growth for a new product or service. By definition, game-changing innovations are often outside the scope of a company's core business model. Therefore, corporate innovators have much in common with entrepreneurs in the open market in that they are constantly refining their pitches in an attempt to enroll and leverage resources in order to accomplish more with less.

A key success factor in enrolling others is to understand their needs and desires and negotiate an often highly creative win-win strategy. Unlike "basic collaboration" where there is a simple and direct exchange of needs and resources negotiated by both parties, generative collaboration arises where the two parties brainstorm around the idea of how the prospective partnership can create scalable growth. This can involve creating a totally new offering which attracts the interests of other partners or customers which could not have been achieved by either party alone.

Get Creative

This process of considering how collaboration can become more generative can require a great deal of creativity and free-thinking - activities not typically considered to be part of most corporate negotiations where a specifically defined result is desired. Nevertheless, this approach can be much more valuable to a company over the long term than simply negotiating acceptable terms for a close-in result with another party.

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The discipline of generative collaboration can exponentially increase the possibilities for developing new product lines and service offerings as well as totally new markets altogether. The global marketplace is dynamically morphing every day where completely new business models can create whole industries practically over night. In this new and changing economy, innovators must view a generative collaboration strategy as the foundation for successfully launching new products and businesses.

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Corporate innovators must commit to understanding the goals, attributes, needs and resources and, ultimately, the aspirations of their prospective partner to maximize the possibilities for creating a generative collaboration. The more these aspects are incorporated into the negotiation process, the more likely the parties are to create a valuable result benefiting both sides.

Companies seeking to successfully and consistently innovate and compete in an ever-changing global marketplace must embrace the uncertainties of this collaborative process and become more comfortable with the concept of “What if” instead of just “What’s in it for me” when negotiating with others.

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