

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

Commercial Collaboration.  
Are You Ready?



JANINE GARNER

WILEY

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

FROM

ME TO  
WE

JANINE GARNER

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The Australian Defence Force are...not only required to do, think and act in a collaborative manner, but are well aware of the benefits of collaboration and of moving from a Me space to a We space. Collaborative thinking is...inherently rooted at an organisational level.

— **Lieutenant-General David Morrison**, *AO, Chief of Army*

If you have been programmed or conditioned by society to believe that success means achieving on your own, you need to realise that no one achieves wealth, happiness, success, long-lasting love or anything else without the guidance and support of others. Innovation starts with collaboration. I can confidently say that I would not be where I am today without consciously working with people who share in my vision and desired outcomes. You are as successful as the people you are surrounded by and Janine has dedicated her whole working life to collaborating with and bringing together like-minded people to ensure continued and sustainable success.

— **Layne Beachley**, *seven-time World Champion surfer, speaker and author*

Janine gets the challenge, the challenge of getting smart people working together. In *From Me to We* she offers a plan for creating competitive advantage by collaboration.

— **Matt Church**, *Founder, Thought Leaders Global*

Collaboration is far from a soft skill. It is a bottom-line asset that lifts your team's collective intelligence, increases engagement and drives innovation, providing points of view of risk and opportunities you might otherwise miss.

— **Dan Gregory**, *CEO, The Impossible Institute*

Great leaders know that we can do more together than we ever can alone. In today's accelerated and competitive world, building strong relationships that are not only mutually rewarding, but commercially smart, is the new imperative. Garner's book will help you do just that.

— **Margie Warrell**, *best-selling author of Stop Playing Safe and Find Your Courage*

What I know is this. When people come together, and they find that place where their ideas and their passions and their values meet—that's where the magic happens. We need to be encouraging more individuals and companies to truly collaborate and land in that place where everybody wins.

— **Emma Isaacs**, *CEO, Business Chicks*

Commercial collaboration is not a 'nice to do' but the key imperative of our times, and holds the only means to solving complex global problems as well as daily business challenges. Commercial collaboration is the smartest way for us to future-proof our world together.

— **Yamini Naidu**, *global thought leader in business storytelling*

In a decentralised, digital and collaborative economy and environment, we will see an increase in commercial collaboration as people try to maintain lean operations while providing more business solutions. Collaboration also has the benefit of scaling up talent and value propositions.

— **Renata Cooper**, *CEO, Forming Circles*

You know you are really collaborating when the question evolves from 'I have this to offer so how big is my slice?' to 'We have all the ingredients, so how big do we want this pie to be?' It takes, not only self belief, but courage and unconditional trust in the talent around you to truly experience fearless and generous collaboration.

— **Paul Walton**, *producer and head of production, Princess Pictures*

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# About the author



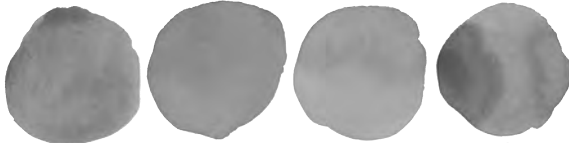
Janine Garner is passionate about commercial collaboration and driving courageous conversations, influential leadership and, above all, future-proofing business.

She is the founder and CEO of the LBDGroup, a community of successful and results-oriented businesswomen and entrepreneurs working collaboratively to drive continued change and success.

Janine is also the founder of Australia's first gift giving circle, First Seeds Fund, which is committed to supporting Australian women and children in education and employment.

She is the winner of an International Stevie Award, has been voted as one of the Top 10 DARE Devil Women of 2013 by *DARE Magazine*, listed in 2013 as one of Australia's 'Most Inspiring Women' by *Madison Magazine* and been nominated for the Telstra Businesswomen Awards.

Janine is a sought-after keynote speaker, mentor and business adviser. She writes every week for her own blog and is a regular commentator in the business print and online media.



## chapter 1

# There's an evolution going on

Every successful organisation has to make the transition from a world defined primarily by repetition to one primarily defined by change. This is the biggest transformation in the structure of how humans work together since the Agricultural Revolution.

— *Bill Drayton, CEO and founder of ASHOKA*

**Anybody who believes that the business landscape is the same as it was in the 'old days' has their head well and truly buried in the 20th-century sand. There is an evolution going on that is affecting the business world and how we lead and manage within it.**

We are all being forced to rethink how we behave and what we do. The changes of greater society—changes in generations, gender dynamics and technology—are leading to a shift in business from large, highly structured corporate entities to agile, innovative entrepreneurial enterprises.

This evolution isn't about to stop any time soon — if anything, the pace of change is only going to increase exponentially — and it is challenging us to rethink what we do, how we communicate with each other and how we will operate as leaders and businesses into the future. It is challenging us to develop new operating systems to future-proof success. It is challenging us,

as managers, to learn to lead movements in a way that makes our teams secure enough to think and act collaboratively.

As leaders, business owners and individuals, we are caught between two worlds: one that thrives on volatility and one that craves stability. There is an ongoing tug of war between the pursuit of growth on one side and a desire for control and constancy on the other. In the pursuit of growth, we actively seek knowledge and experience, looking to others for inspiration and ideas, creating big-picture visions for our future self. On the opposite side of the tug of war is the need for control: our existing work streams and structures prefer predictability, productivity and control.

The evolution is making:

- leadership styles change from 'tell' to 'engage', with leadership now about inspiring and becoming truly authentic
- traditional business structures far more fluid and blended
- innovation and invention essential business tools as consumers want better products and services, delivered more quickly, than ever before
- agility and decisiveness prerequisites in our teams and in our leadership.

In this chapter, we will explore the current business landscape, and how a collaborative approach is integral to surviving and thriving into the future.

## **The world where you live**

The future is so uncertain that many organisations and consultants have adopted a term originally coined by the US Army to describe the results of the end of the Cold War — the acronym VUCA. VUCA describes a world that is increasingly Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. This world is fast, change-focused and demanding. Agile thinking, decision-making and action are now the norm.

And the result? Individuals and leaders are left feeling alone, exhausted and uncertain about their place in the future. The rapid changes that are taking place are affecting how we operate. We are forced into the space of Me—one where we reassess, consider options, invest and focus on the self. We protect what we know, learn what we don't and then hope that we can fake it till we make it.

## **The collaborative economy**

So what approaches will work in our rapidly changing environment? The collaborative economy is where networks of connected individuals, communities and businesses—as opposed to centralised closed-door thinking and business planning—work together to drive success. The power of this is inestimable as it connects people, businesses, skills, services, products and space to drive new opportunities and strategies for future-proofing. Who could have imagined, for example, that one day—and that day is now—NASA would be using LEGO building blocks to educate astronauts in the International Space Station, and in turn providing LEGO with inspiration for their designs? Or that Coca-Cola would be working with ECO Plastics to develop sustainable and ethical bottles? Their agreement marks a turning point in the processing of industrial waste in the UK.

Collaboration is so much more than the sum of its parts. The nuts and bolts of sending an email, being on social media, placing a paid advertisement or doing a mass mailing are no longer enough in terms of 'engagement'. What consumers and internal clients are asking for is that businesses understand them; that they speak to them as human beings, not numbers. They are demanding a customer-centric approach to decision-making and new product development. They want to know the depth behind the logo, the thinking and the rationale behind the leadership.

The collaborative economy is a space where if we are authentic, play by rules of openness and transparency and follow our

passions, we have the opportunity to build collective intelligence, trust and connection, and surprise and influence many.

## **Future uncertainty**

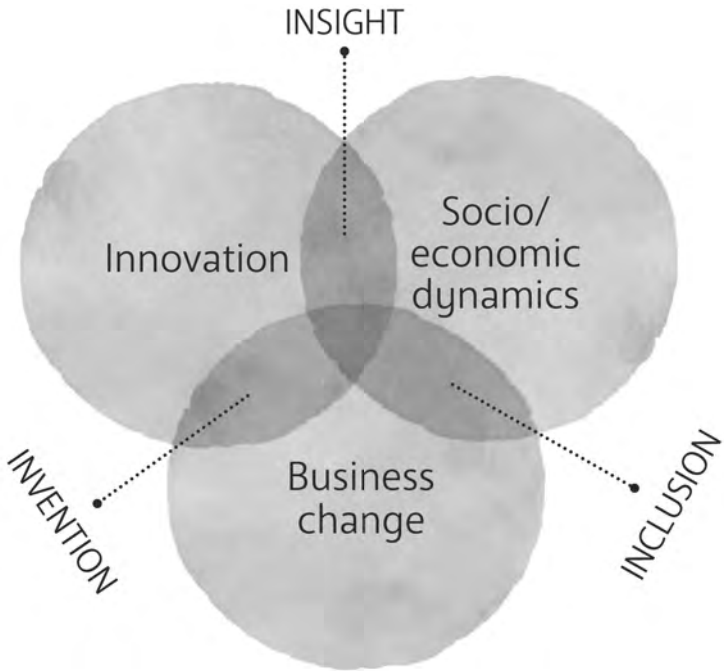
The phenomenal speed of change that got us to the 21st century's technological frenzy is not going to slow down any time soon — and it is creating an uncertain future on a global business level. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman suggests that the changes that we are experiencing now are 'directly or indirectly touching a lot more people on the planet' than ever before. In an increasingly decentralised and digitally connected economy, companies and people need to constantly explore ways to improve — and if they don't, what is the risk? Fall behind. Lose momentum. Flatline. Fail.

The future is uncertain as:

- A worldwide unstable economic environment continues to place increasing pressure on governments, businesses and individuals.
- The changing political structures around the world affect consumer confidence and stability.
- Evolving social trends and behaviours are influencing the individual needs of society and the labour force.
- The growth of entrepreneurialism and more agile, fast-moving disruptive businesses is challenging the traditional corporate structures, growth strategies and decision-making.

Figure 1.1 shows that we are at the juncture of three distinct areas of uncertainty: innovation, socio-economic dynamics and business change. These three critical areas are summarised below and will be covered in more detail in chapter 2.

Figure 1.1: The future is uncertain



## Innovation

We are living in a highly connected world where information and resources are readily available 24/7. This access to information is supporting consumer awareness and self-education, and enabling research and ongoing improvements to products, communication methods and delivery solutions. In the 'old' world, intelligent thinking, high-quality products, services and the breadth of range that is available now simply didn't exist. Consumers would do their research, find what they want and make a purchase. Now everything is everywhere, in mass supply and we want it better, quicker and cheaper.

Increased technology, increased knowledge, and economic instability — all of these are driving a demand for innovation on a continuous basis for large and small businesses alike. The entrepreneur is everywhere, new businesses are born overnight and new products created. Evolution is essential for survival, for economic viability, for customer engagement, and most importantly, to keep staff engaged and secure in the knowledge that our business is where they want to be working.

## Socio-economic dynamics

Economic changes, changing family structures and globalisation have altered society forever. The main changing dynamics are:

- *The role of women in the workforce.* More women are entering higher education, participating in the workforce and becoming increasingly wealthy than ever before.
- *Generational change.* We are experiencing four generations of people at work — Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z. Each generation is bringing to the workplace a pre-determined set of values, work ethic and career expectations.
- *Work-life balance.* The work-life balance debate is evolving as more people are talking about creating balanced lives.

## **Business change**

While some industries and corporate environments remain more rigid than others, there is no doubting that both business etiquette and the ‘rules of engagement’ have moved on. It may not be as rapidly as some of us would like, but nonetheless, the goalposts—and the goals—of modern leaders are shifting. And only for the better.

Business processes, structures and operations are evolving at a much faster pace than ever before in an effort to keep ahead of change while future-proofing business. Consumers are becoming increasingly vocal about their expectations. The fight is on to find talented and skilled employees. Competition for products, sales, profit and people is now global. Two of the areas business is changing in are as follows:

- *The make-up of our future workforce.* Jobs that are secure today may not even exist in the future as they are replaced by technology or outsourced to other areas in the world. Equally, who knows what jobs may exist in the future given the speed of change that we are witnessing?
- *The ubiquity of entrepreneurship.* Many economists believe that the growing trend across the world towards entrepreneurship will drive economic and financial stability over the coming years. The impact of small business cannot go unnoticed as it continues to be the incubator for innovation and employment.

## **The Me to We shift**

The question being asked by many in this VUCA world is ‘What do I have to do next?’ These rapid changes are demanding a new operating system—one where we can bring our skills, strengths and talents to the table and together amplify and share expertise to create progressive, results-oriented solutions.

As shown in figure 1.1, the sweet spot of opportunity is at the juncture of innovation, socio-economic dynamics and business change. It is a place where things happen differently, creative thinking is accepted and disruption and innovation are the norm. A place where commercial collaboration drives change and shifts results. This juncture requires a shift from Me to We; it asks us to jump with both feet into the space of commercial collaboration.

Commercial collaboration is the key to future-proofing business, leadership, careers and success. The uncertain future is demanding us to work together, engaging intellect and insight from diverse inputs, disrupting the way things have been to thrive in the ever-evolving future space.

Figure 1.2 illustrates the journey from status quo to leveraging and leading, to future-proofing success through commercial collaboration.

## **The status quo is the enemy**

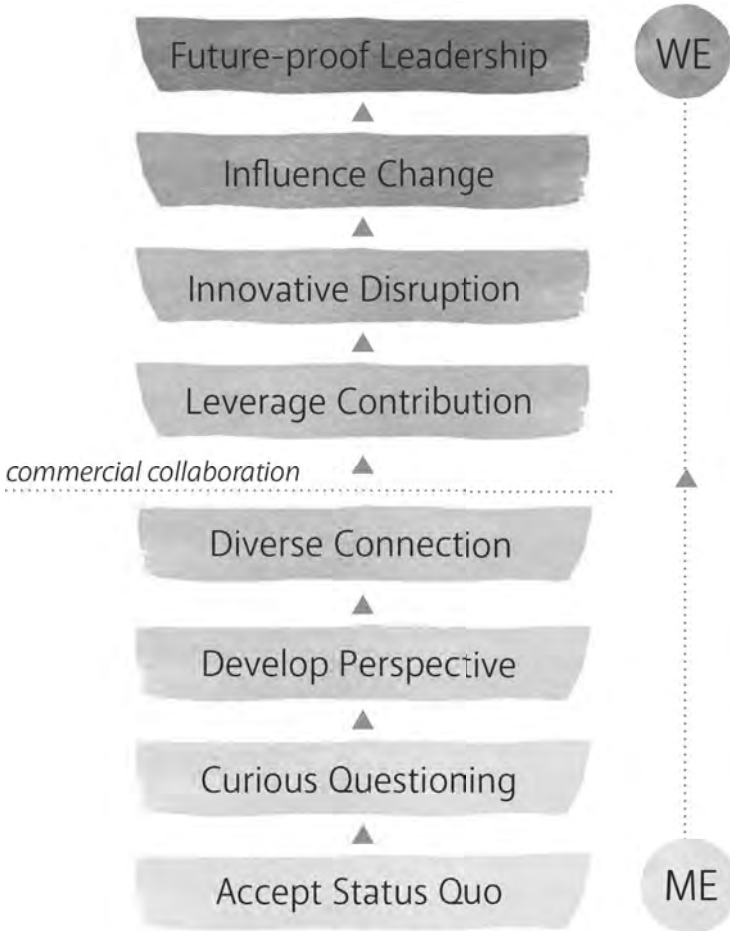
The status quo is the enemy of change, new ideas, innovation and invention. The status quo is not a friend of commercial collaboration, and stepping out of it is the first step of moving from Me to We.

Change resisters risk falling behind the competition. Accepting the status quo, resisting change and refusing to explore alternate thinking and solutions results in complacency and the risk of failure in an uncertain future. In fact, it is my belief that those that are happy with the status quo will see no progress; they will flatline and eventually decline in performance.

The high achievers refuse to accept the status quo; they evolve and align opportunity for themselves and their businesses with the opportunities around them — and they do this all the time; they are restless.

As Thomas Edison said, 'Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks a lot like work.'

Figure 1.2: Commercial collaboration is the key



## **It starts with a question**

Questioning the status quo opens up a world of opportunity. Questioning is the catalyst of change that can alter your outcome and help you become an inventor and explore the possibilities. Always assume there is another way.

If you want anything to change, you have to be the one to make it happen. Changing the status quo requires questioning to understand the current situation and to seek ways to improve the present. Driving change requires ongoing exploration of what could be and active inquiry in to the options available. Without questioning and exploration, doors to the future are slammed firmly shut, the lens of opportunity becomes blurred and thinking becomes contracted.

The power of questioning is illustrated with the following examples:

- McDonald's was born when Ray Kroc asked the question, 'Why can't I get a good hamburger at the side of the road?'
- Instagram was created when Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger questioned how images could be shared on smartphones.
- Jodie Fox questioned why, if men could get customised suits from Asia, women couldn't get their own shoe designs in the same way. With business partners Michael Fox and Mike Knapp she created Shoes Of Prey to provide just that service, and they are now expanding internationally.

One thing is certain. Many successful individuals do not become successful by sitting in the status quo waiting for success to come to them. They make it happen, they are curious — and it all starts with a question.

## **Perspective is a choice**

Questioning leads to a new perspective. This in turn presents a choice. Are you going to choose to have a wide perspective on your future or limit your thinking?

A new perspective opens up new possibilities: opportunities as well as risks. It kick-starts the internal drive to move away from the status quo to a new future. For the individual this could be exploring new skill sets, training opportunities or career choices. For a business it could be new product development, new distribution channels, new services or new solutions to existing problems.

For example, who would have imagined that anyone, anywhere, could monetise a spare room or living space to travellers? Yet in just six years Airbnb has moved to the forefront of the collaborative economy, building a community marketplace featuring over 600 000 listings in 192 countries. It is a collaboration between entrepreneurs, an oversupply of product availability, and consumers matching the supply with an ever-increasing demand.

A 2012 *Harvard Business Review* report, ‘Train Your People to Take Others’ Perspectives’, shares that ‘successful collaboration between stakeholders starts with what social psychologists call perspective taking: the ability to see the world through someone else’s eyes’. Developing a new perspective and choosing to enable change is crucial for development and evolution. It’s about opening yourself to what is happening around you, being curious about solutions and exploring possibilities.

## **Connection: Safe or diverse?**

Perspective brings new connections, and the more diverse the connections the more opportunities can be leveraged.

It’s part of human nature to seek out like-minded people as we seek further growth and development. But if we only connect with people exactly like ourselves, from the same industries, with the same skills and knowledge, this can lead us right back to sitting in the status quo.

In their report 'Managing Yourself: A Smarter Way to Network,' *Harvard Business Review* found that the difference between the top 20 per cent of successful executives and the rest was that they ensure the network they connect with is diverse. They found that these diverse networks consisting of people from different backgrounds, industries and skill bases created new discussion and insight into problems and encouraged open and creative thinking.

Connecting with a diverse network requires confidence in your expertise and value. It requires courage to actively speak up, debate and share and it pulls on vulnerability: the ability to share openly what you don't know.

## **Leveraged contribution**

Building the right connections and contributing to each other's success leverages opportunity for all. Connecting with others is only the start of commercial collaboration — the next step is one of contribution.

Contribution only happens with a willingness to openly share knowledge and insight, being risk tolerant and open to challenge, new ideas and opportunities. Contribution is not simply about sharing a business card, sitting at a networking event or business meeting and saying nothing.

Commercial collaboration happens when courage and bravery kicks in. When you connect, and with honesty and, to some extent, vulnerability, share your own ideas, insights and failures with the aim of adding value to others.

Leverage happens when there is an authentic desire to improve the positions and opportunities for others. It is about openly sharing your expertise — with no expectation of anything in return — combined with honesty about what you don't know and a willingness to listen to possible solutions and advice.

## **Disruption**

Contribution leads to disruption — the next step on the ladder in figure 1.2. Disruption happens because change has to happen. Disruption creates a shift in thinking, it drives innovation and changes behaviour.

When disruption happens, it

- displaces existing methods, markets and technologies
- invents something new and more efficient
- uncovers a previously untapped market or solution to a problem
- drives intrigue, interest and trial by new adopters.

Those that choose to collaborate to drive commercial success are the ones that drive disruption.

## **Influence is magic in action**

Without influence change cannot occur. The opportunity to build trust and influence, one to one and many to many, has never before been so accessible. Social media and the internet have created a platform of influence on a significant scale.

Once connection, contribution and disruption create results, others notice. This is when businesses and individuals become known as change-makers; they have the ability to influence many. They are capable of more than they ever were on their own, operating outside of the safety zone of protecting themselves to contributing to new ideas and solutions as part of a larger community of We thinkers with a high-growth mindset.

## **Future-proof and lead**

Future-proofing ourselves and our businesses requires a new operating system — one of commercial collaboration to actively engage, connect and share with others to drive mutual success.

Commercial collaboration requires people to move from a place of Me to a collaborative place of We. Collaboration:

- creates momentum
- drives new thinking
- builds resilience and determination to succeed
- enables individuals and businesses to explore possibilities and develop strategies to future-proof success.

This is not about a revolution; it's about evolution. If your company makes glass jars, it's not about suddenly stopping making glass jars and starting making shoes. It is about questioning your current position, exploring the best possible way to make glass jars that engages and involves your people, considering what you need to do to disrupt the status quo and move forward. It's about giving your team a voice in your methods, collaborating and being open to conversation and advice, creating the freedom to think, debate, create and invent.

A challenge for big corporates? Absolutely. Unattainable? Absolutely not.

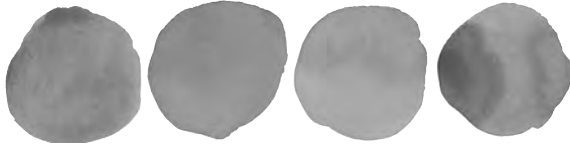
As leaders, we need to be the ones motivating and guiding, the ones disrupting and thinking differently. We are the ones to whom others are looking for inspiration. We must always be on the lookout for potential new ways of doing business — we must be prepared to test different approaches. And any approach must involve every member of our companies.

Are you willing to step in to the We space and be noticed? Are you prepared to contribute more than you think you are capable of? Are you ready to change the rules and step out from the expected masses?

There's an evolution going on. Make yourself a part of it. Be willing to instigate change, to give yourself and your team a common purpose — a say in what they are striving towards. Because it's the way not just of the business future — but of the present.

## Summary

- › The world today is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, with ever-increasing amounts of information creating the need for commercial collaboration.
- › We are at the juncture of three distinct areas of uncertainty: innovation, socio-economic dynamics and business. A shift from Me to We is critical to future-proof business, careers and success.
- › Opportunity will come from questioning the status quo, developing new perspectives, connecting with and contributing to others, exploring ways to disrupt the norm and influence others.
- › Commercial collaboration drives influence, innovation and invention.



## chapter 2

# ReConnect Principle 2— Build a diverse network

Sometimes, idealistic people are put off the whole business of networking as something tainted by flattery and the pursuit of selfish advantage. But virtue in obscurity is rewarded only in Heaven. To succeed in this world you have to be known to people.

— *Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice of  
the US Supreme Court*

**A powerful network can become your lifeline and is an absolute must-have for successful collaboration.**

‘Networking’ is a term that fills some with the excitement of possibility, some with a sense of absolute dread and others — probably the majority of us — with a combination of feelings: the ‘I really don’t want to but I know I must’ crowd.

Networking, connecting, meeting, doing coffee, lunch dates and even speed connecting — all these terms are synonymous with meeting others to drive skill sets, contacts and ongoing business and personal growth. And however much you might want to hide under the white tablecloths of a corporate breakfast, powerful and effective networking has evolved and is now a business must for all who want to forge ahead. It’s not simply about building up a Rolodex of business cards (or, more accurately, a smart phone full of virtual ones), a mass

of LinkedIn contacts or a significant number of social media followers. It's about a true meeting of minds and skill sets, and skilfully parlaying said meetings into long-range successful relationships.

Networking is a must-have for successful collaboration, and diversity of that network is the tipping point between average connections and those that collaborate to create magic. The cross-fertilisation of connections, skills and brainpower, and the ideas that are openly discussed and shared through network creation, in their turn create new opportunities, innovation and new solutions to existing problems. It's a domino effect — the way your initial networks interact provides a guideline for the subsequent or flow-on networks that spring up from these collaborations. They will only benefit from your experience and way of working together.

## **Building a powerful network**

In this incredibly fast-paced business and economic landscape we can no longer do it alone — realistically, we never could, we just thought we could. How many times have you heard 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'? Evidence from [careercoaching.com.au](http://careercoaching.com.au) suggests that in Australia and the US, 70 per cent of executive-level jobs are obtained without formal advertising.

Effective networking is a fundamental part of collaboration. The most innovative businesses and organisations are finding that collaboration and effective and powerful networking are giving them an edge. Do the maths: 'I know one hundred people, they each know one hundred people ...' suddenly, the pyramid is built within an hour of someone mentioning they needed somewhere flash to store some sarcophagi. With technology, six degrees of separation become more like 0.002 degrees.

So how do you find, build and manage a diverse network? How do you gain entry to a true circle of excellence that will work with you and not against you? Because, let's face it, there are still ladder-kickers out there.

## **Avoid the underminers**

Remember when you were at school, and there was always that one friend who seemed absolutely wonderful, but was actually constantly undermining you behind your back? You probably defended them to the death, until one day it hit home that they really were bad news. And so you sought other friends: people of worth who would catch you when you fell, rather than secretly saw through the rungs of your ladder.

This same schoolyard mindset of ladder kickers and the not-so-secret whisperers is still prevalent in the corporate community. In this day and age — when collaborative thinking should be the key not only to success, but to personal growth — this is not the path forward.

## **Make it diverse**

The critical element of a powerful network that can become your lifeline, and is an absolute must-have for successful collaboration, is diversity.

Building an effective and powerful network is so much more than finding a safe like-minded tribe. It requires:

- diversity
- a width and breadth of contacts
- a willingness to embrace the opportunity that exists in differences
- an understanding that you may not always agree with or understand certain points of view, but that through the connection you build awareness and knowledge.

An effective network is a diverse network that consists of people with differing levels of:

- expertise
- age
- gender
- experience.

Powerful networks are those that are cross functional and cross industry. Think about it. A like-minded network limits the breadth of conversation. Lawyers sit in a room with lawyers sharing their legal experience from the industry of law. CEOs play golf with CEOs, fashion industry PR experts mingle with other fashion industry PR experts. Imagine the colour of the conversation if instead you had lawyers, accountants, creatives, athletes, marketers and business owners discussing the various solutions to a problem. Imagine the different perspectives shared, the varying insights, the depth of conversation that would stretch thinking and push perspective wider.

Diverse connections:

- challenge thinking
- drive further questions
- push boundaries
- increase awareness
- open our eyes to another way
- bring to the forefront opportunities that were previously not in the direct line of vision
- present solutions that were not previously on the radar
- create innovations that were once not thought possible.

## **Get out of the comfort zone**

To build a powerful and diverse network involves a willingness to step out of the comfort zone, because comfort zones are anti-growth, breed laziness and limit potential. Dig deep and step out of the place of familiarity and safety to connect with people outside your traditional circle of excellence. It's about making a conscious decision to explore other networks, other people and businesses. Consciously consider who else you could learn from, add value to, engage and collaborate with. It's about:

- attending events that have different groups of people
- talking to someone from a different industry

- debating with people of differing seniority and from differing departments
- engaging with anyone and everyone knowing that we can always learn something.

This absolutely is easier said than done — it takes courage, self-belief and confidence.

## **Know your goal**

An essential part of building a powerful network is understanding what you are seeking to achieve your goal. Now this is not about entering a networking event with single-minded view of take, take, take, as shown in chapter 4, figure 4.2. Equally, it's not about risking the empathic position in figure 4.2, when you risk energy depletion from continuously giving to others. It is about understanding what skills, contacts, information, knowledge and insight will push you further in the achievement of your goals.

## **Surround yourself with inspiring people**

Who do you need to surround yourself with to inspire you and your business to achieve more? As Jim Rohn said, 'You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.'

A powerful network is one that consists of people who:

- have similar mindsets but diverse experience
- will stretch thinking and push boundaries
- realise the power of sharing ideas and of coming together
- value-add to each other's businesses through the power of plural perspectives.

Julie Battilana and Tiziana Casciaro share the power of networking and the important role this skill plays in future-proofing business, careers and success in their report 'Network Secrets of Great Change Agents'. What matters most, they conclude, isn't where someone ranks within a company's formal

hierarchy but how well that person understands and mobilises the informal networks needed to effect change.

Magic comes when you create the opportunity to share, collaborate and learn. Diverse groups within your network can bring new thinking and new ideas, a new perspective that could shape your business, your vision, your goal to be stronger, more successful, more scalable than you even thought possible.

## **The give, give, give of networking**

Building an effective network quite simply requires a conscious mind shift and attitude change. A shift from thinking about Me, what I will say, how interesting I am and what I can get from this conversation to thinking about We. It's about:

- a change in attitude
- approaching the meeting of each new person with openness to listen and learn
- a willingness to help and to contribute to their business thinking
- making a personal commitment to deliver on any promises and, ultimately, to stay in touch.

*Networking is not about just connecting people. It's about connecting people with people, people with ideas, and people with opportunities.*

— Michele Jennae, author of *The Connectworker*

Networking is about:

- constantly exploring how you can:
  - contribute to another's success
  - weave connections, knowledge and insight to benefit them
- having no expectation of anything in return
- a balanced approach to give and take and keeping in touch because you want to, not just when you want something

- togetherness
- emotional collaboration
- commercial collaboration.

Shoes of Prey founders Michael, Jodie and Mike (their story is discussed in chapter 1) understood the strength of networking and sharing advice in the early days of their business. As Jodie Fox says:

all of the entrepreneurs that we approached, whether they were running \$50 million, \$100 million or \$2 million businesses, found time for us, to answer our emails or to have a coffee or whatever it was, and that was genuinely a huge surprise to me, and something that we try to give back to the community as well.

Jodie advises people to network. ‘Don’t be afraid to reach out to people and introduce yourself. And now, with access available to most people via social media, there’s no reason to be shy.’

Reciprocal networking drives incremental success as individuals constantly look for ways to give and add value to their network. The give, give, give of networking specifically requires:

- willingly offering new information or expertise
- openly sharing best practice
- inspiring innovation
- asking questions
- giving feedback
- actively making connections and introductions
- promoting others’ businesses, skills and expertise — opening up doors for others commercial advantage
- supporting dreams and big-picture visions, sharing insights to add value to those visions.

Be an example to those in your network. Model the behaviour that you seek in return. Give knowledge unconditionally, open

doors willingly, share insight to drive continued growth and success for others, attract them and engage because of who you are, your dreams and your actions.

As Richard Branson said, ‘Nobody can be successful alone.’

## **Managing your network**

Regular communication—and not just when you need something—is key. It’s fundamentally about having an awareness of what your network is looking for, what opportunities you come across, so that sharing will support the achievement of someone else’s vision or plan. It’s about:

- actively promoting others
- engaging and making connection within and across networks
- driving support and sales opportunities for others
- not expecting anything in return.

Successful management of your network requires 100 per cent delivery on what you say you are going to do and any promises made. Equally it requires you to take on board other people’s suggestions. If someone provides a lead, it is important to follow through with that lead. Equally thank the introducer, provide feedback on the introduction. Now, I am not saying you must do what others say—ultimately you own your decisions and directions—but for a network to work effectively over time it is imperative that you act on the back of recommendations.

Communication is integral—regularly and continuously adding value through communication. Listen to others’ dreams and willingly share what you know and who you know to support their dreams.

Be known for you, your value system, integrity and value add; don’t be known as someone who continuously takes but doesn’t give back.

## **A word of warning: Beware the dream stealers**

Dream stealers are the antithesis of being brave, of networking to mutual benefit, of commercially collaborating — and they are everywhere, so beware.

They are the sappers of positivity. The drainers. The ones that don't add constructive thoughts to your business dreams or the collective conversation, but instead actually steal them and snuff them out — or worse, steal them for themselves.

Unfortunately they are often closer than you think: friends, colleagues — even family members — who tell you 'you can't', 'it won't work', 'it isn't safe'. People who encourage you to play it safe because safety is, well, reassuring to them.

But what does it mean for you?

No dreams achieved. Just a nagging feeling of, 'What just happened here?' and knowing that in the name of love, people have just stamped on your ambition and killed it cold.

I do believe that some of these dream stealers genuinely want to protect you and really do think they have your best intentions at heart. But what about those jealous or purely negative dream stealers — the ones that quite simply don't want to see you achieve? What about those who are actively hanging on to revel in your failure?

Dream stealers tend to comment without solicitation, and most of the time negatively. They will subtly put doubt in your mind. They will attempt to erode your confidence in yourself — sometimes because they recognise the brilliance of what you have to share with the world and see an opportunity for themselves.

Are these the type of people to include in your circle of excellence?

Have the courage to open your eyes — open them wide — and walk away from the dream stealers. Instead, dream big and

find a diverse network that adds value to your thinking, your business, your dreams.

Become aware of the negative comments that are being shared around you, and instead of listening, choose to block them out and not engage. Instead, find those people that will not only dream with you but will offer constructive advice, input, thought and insight to ensure you are moving forward in the right direction — in your direction.

## **Your network needs you**

ReConnect Principle 2 is essential to support commercial collaboration, as it is all about expanding your thinking and network to attract other experts to your circle of influence, other specialists that can add a level of insight and thought leadership that you quite simply don't have on your own. It's simple — a powerful and diverse network is an essential part of business and personal development. It will ensure that the best opportunities, ideas and talent come your way.

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### **Case study—The standard you walk past**

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Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO, joined the Army in 1979, after completing a Bachelor of Arts at the Australian National University. He rose steadily through the ranks of the military, serving in Papua New Guinea in 1994, and was made a member of the Order of Australia in 1999 for his services as Brigade Major, Director of Preparedness and Mobilisation and as Commanding Officer.

He was promoted to colonel in October 1999 and served as Colonel of Operations in East Timor. His services culminated, after many subsequent promotions, in his 2011 appointment as Chief of Army.

Lieutenant General Morrison has been involved at a frontline level in the reforms of the Australian Defence Force after several high-level incidents involving the unacceptable treatment of

women. He is known for his lack of tolerance for those who see themselves as above the law and for his active promotion of women on their merits in the ADF. He is a firm believer in the benefits of collaborative business practices, both in Defence and in the private sector. Here is what he has to say about diversity of collaboration:

Army and the Australian Defence Force are, by their very nature, not only required to do, think and act in a collaborative manner, but are well aware of the *benefits* of collaboration and of moving from a Me space to a We space. On operations, for example, you are not just collaborating within your team and with your allies from other nations, but with the members of the societies you are there to protect. Collaborative thinking is therefore inherently rooted at an organisational level.

There are very big changes currently occurring at the ADF. We are now harnessing the talent of those individuals who have been largely underrepresented in the past; not just women, but also socio-economic and ethnic groups in Australia who don't see military service as a tradition, and perhaps hadn't been widely encouraged by recruitment campaigns either.

As the current leadership team came into its position of authority in 2011, and as a consequence of serious investigations into the ADF (13 of which were major), there was a recognition for me personally that we as a defence force had not properly addressed the above matters. I call it one of my 'Saul on the road to Damascus' moments, and it came after a conversation with Liz Broderick (Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Head of the Review into Sexual Discrimination at the Australian Defence Force Academy). We were a part of a systemic problem within society.

It's something I come back to so many occasions—and it's the first step on turning Me into We within Army and the wider world. Army, the ADF, corporate entities—we

all have our identities. Army has 113 years of an incredibly strong culture. It's our idea of service to the nation, that core matter, that helps us do what we are asked to do. Coming to the conclusion that there were things that were deeply wrong within that culture was very hard. Being deeply committed as a leader, having to say that there's something deeply wrong, and saying that to that body as a whole was incredibly difficult and challenging—but it was something I had to do.

This was particularly clear when, in early 2011, the ADF was subject to intense scrutiny after the ADFA 'Skype' scandal. It was my view initially that the actions of cadets after less than ten weeks within the confines of the Academy was a reflection on their upbringing, rather than on the military, but after a lot of hard thought, I changed my view 180 degrees.

Why? Because our culture has habitually excluded rather than included. I refer to what I call the 'ANZAC myth'. The ANZACS have become almost a caricature; we have begun to see ourselves as the best soldiers in the First World War—male Anglo-Saxons who didn't have to do much to win, who didn't salute, didn't respect their superiors, who fought best with a hangover. As a result, some members of today's army and ADF see themselves as so-called 'natural warriors'—and those outside these parameters will struggle for recognition if they are not the embodiment of this. They are never going to realise their natural talents if a culture of exclusion persists.

Today's ADF works in very challenging environments and ethnically diverse ones, with threatened and frightened men and women. If we haven't built a force to be inclusive and value diversity, it is clearly not going to be as effective, because those in a position of weakness and vulnerability won't respond to those who represent the 'ANZAC myth'.

This moment of clarity brought a realisation that we weren't as capable as we needed to be, and reinforced

for the ADF the value of going from Me to We and being inclusive. Through harnessing talent we will achieve truly groundbreaking development. And this is the great journey that Army has been on for the last three years.

This is the initiative that I am the most proud of, not personally, but as Chief of Army.

In 2011, women made up less than 10 per cent of our numbers. How much talent and potential was going to waste? These were matters that had to be dealt with. Thankfully there was a unilateral senior-level buy-in from Chief of Defence Force (General David Hurley, AC, DSC), and the other chiefs. Some tremendous initiatives started to be put in place. Unfortunately some abhorrent behaviour came to the fore at this time, and it came from senior officers and non-commissioned men. What it *did* do was put into very sharp focus the leaders' response—that this is simply not good enough—and that those responsible were being held very appropriately to account. It also showed that we knew we had to do better. Men were sacked. Education campaigns were put in place. International attention was attracted—for the right reasons in the end, and deservedly so—but we are not complacent.

We have increased the number of women in Army to 11.7 per cent, but there is still so far to go. We have the best diversity policy in the military world—the best maternity leave, and no loss of seniority after maternity leave. I am involved as a Male Champion of Change, helping to show corporate what we are doing in Army.

This is essential best practice. It's not about a 'fair go', it's not about politically correct objectives. It's about making a 113-year-old body as robust as possible in the 21st century. It's about capability.

An increase of 400 women in three years is a step in the right direction, when these are women who have joined because of merit and capability. We are seeing a dramatic

increase in numbers of women coming to Duntroon and soldier training, with numbers now at 16 to 20 per cent.

Having greater diversity at all levels has to be driven from the top, and to recognise talent in a less traditional way—that's the biggest challenge that any organisation has.

For me, if Army isn't a We, how do you lay claim to being an army? How do you lay claim to defending a nation? We are the protectors of that nation—not an organisation or a culture of Me.

For a defence force in particular, the tone of the culture has to be embraced by everyone in the organisation—but if there is change, you have to make them aware of the reasons for the need for change. And yes, there are always recalcitrants—but in today's army, and today's culture, those who are not prepared to embrace thoughtful change and diversity are out.

For me, it's as simple as this: the standard you walk past is the standard you are prepared to accept.

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## **Case study—Collaborating the old with the new**

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The Australian Museum faced two firsts in 2014. The nation's oldest museum has appointed the first non-scientist as its director to lead the institution—and the first female.

Their choice was, at first glance, highly unconventional. Kim McKay, AO, was new not only to a scientific environment but also to the Australian public service, a challenge in itself for someone unused to bureaucracy in its most rarefied form. But this is a woman who understands not only how to work her way through the machinations of institutions with little fuss and bother, but also how people work. She embodies the power of networking at its finest in terms of making it work for oneself, and in turn, benefiting others in the same circles. They gain

from her incredible intelligence, charisma, humour and blunt up-front approach to problem solving.

In 1989, Kim McKay co-founded the Clean Up Australia organisation with solo yachtsman Ian Kiernan, which today is one of the largest community environmental projects in the world, annually attracting over half a million volunteers. This was expanded in 1992 to Clean Up the World, for which she secured partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and international corporate support. She has worked for the Discovery Channel and National Geographic Channels International in the US, and was the director of Momentum2, a social marketing and communications consultancy, prior to being named the director of the Australian Museum. She managed the media and publicity for Oprah's tour of Australia as well as ongoing work for Oprah's production company, Harpo Productions.

She is an author, media commentator and award winner as well as holder of the Order of Australia.

But many people are authors, media commentators, TV personalities, directors of companies—what is it about Kim McKay that makes her the embodiment of ReConnect Principle 2?

It's simple. She has an innate ability to:

- promote
- engage
- promulgate interest
- communicate.

She listens to what those around her want to achieve, and she makes it happen through matching their needs with those of their audiences. She did it for Oprah Winfrey and Jessica Watson, and she did it for the Discovery Channel and the National Geographic Channel through cable TV. She has raised millions for philanthropic causes, again through matching the right people with the right backing. She is open and frank about

the need for the Australian Museum to gain new funding, and that this is part of her role as director—and part of the role of all senior staff, whether they have experience in this arena or not. As she says:

I think it's a reality that all cultural institutions are run in a slightly different way than they were run previously. There's no doubt that the director role is now the CEO role of the organisation.

I would never pretend to be a scientist and sit down in a lab here, but nor should I, because I've got so many other things to do. You are like a producer, in a way. You are looking for where the money is coming from. You are looking for the best talent to bring on board to manage things. You are looking for how you communicate effectively to your audience.

It is this bluntness that has seen her be castigated by some. And this is true of most powerful networkers. You can, to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, never please all of the people all of the time. It is doubtful whether it bothers her, considering the success she has achieved, not just for herself but for the institutions and individuals she has been involved with and worked for. Again, this is the key to successful networking—being more engaged in the success of others than your own.

When interviewed by *The Australian* on the announcement of her appointment to the museum—and it was a controversial appointment—outgoing director Frank Howarth summed up why she will be a success:

It's a very good appointment at this point in the museum's history. The museum is about to embark on major changes... and it's a time when museums everywhere need to be more outwardly focused, to communicate better.

He also praised McKay's 'incredible background in philanthropy', saying her lack of formal science qualifications doesn't matter, as it's more important that his successor has

‘capital-L leadership skills and ability to look outside the museum, build its influence and build the museum’s profile’.

Networking brought the Australian Museum its new director. In many ways, the museum needs a new approach: revenue has been down, funding has been cut and visitor numbers have thinned dramatically. Can a woman, a non-scientist, someone from a collaborative, 21st-century business methodology, bring an almost extinct beast back to viability?

In her role, Kim McKay connects thought and opportunity, travelling the world forging partnerships with others the Natural History Museum, the State Hermitage Museum and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. If Kim McKay’s network supports her as she has supported them then the answer has to be yes.

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### **Checklist — ReConnect Principle 2: Build a diverse network**

The power of a diverse network is absolutely undeniable in future-proofing your success and your career. Judicious, collaborative networking can mean the difference between a business expanding successfully or going backwards. Learning how to network well is a skill that takes you from a closed mindset to an open business model that leads to long-term benefits for both yourself and your networking partners — commercial collaboration at play.

Make sure you look closely at the following:

- Who are you currently networking with and can this circle be expanded to include more diversity?
- What value can you share with your network?
- What value are they adding to you?
- Do you openly ask for help and support?

*(continued)*

## **Checklist — ReConnect Principle 2: Build a diverse network (*cont'd*)**

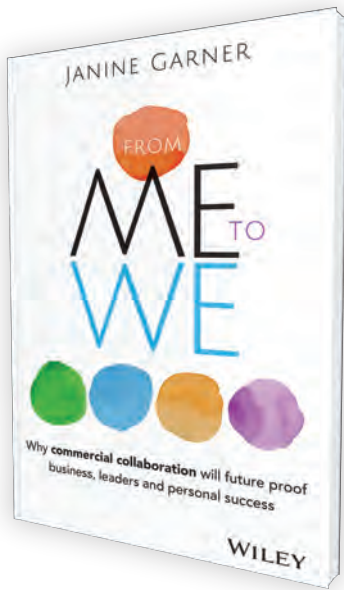
- Would you be likely to engage with these people outside of a networking event?
- Is there a level of trust?
- Would you be willing and happy to cross-promote your network's businesses through your own platforms without hesitation?
- Do you feel they are open to collaborative thinking?
- Do you have similar ethical standards?
- Is there a conflict of interest with your businesses?
- Who is not adding value to you within your current network?
- Do you regularly check in with your network, and not just when you want something?

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