Effective Collaboration at Any Scale

A Social Technology for Evolving Agile and Resilient Organizations

flexible  principles based  free
People in organisations are looking for ways to navigate complexity, raise engagement and adapt to rapidly changing contexts, to better deliver value. There is a need for practices and guidelines that facilitate effective collaboration, enhance productivity and help transform challenges into opportunities to innovate and learn.
Is my behavior in this moment the greatest contribution* I can make to the effectiveness of this collaboration?

*may include holding back, interrupting, objecting or even breaking agreements
SOCIO~CRACY
{social group} {power / rule}

August COMTE
Social ideas
Scientific method

Lester Frank WARD
Democracy

Kees BOEKE
Quakers
Meeting practices

Sociocratic Circle Organization Method

Gerard ENDENBURG
1.0
1851

Brian ROBERTSON
2.0
1926

Holacracy
3.0
1881

Sociocracy 3.0
2008

Open source
Sociocracy 3.0
2014

James PRIEST
Bernhard BOCKELBRINK
2008

Liliana DAVID
2015

WARD

COMTE

BOCKELBRINK

David

Cumps

Priest

Endenburg

Priest

Boockelbrink
Seven Principles

**Transparency**
Record all information that is valuable for the organization and make it accessible to everyone, unless there is a reason for confidentiality.

**Accountability**
Respond when something is needed, do what you agreed to and take ownership for the course of the organization.

**Equivalence**
Involve people in making and evolving decisions that affect them.

**Consent**
Raise, seek out and resolve objections to decisions and actions.

**Empiricism**
Test all assumptions you rely on, through experiments and continuous revision.

**Effectiveness**
Devote time only to what brings you closer towards achieving your objectives.

**Continuous Improvement**
Change incrementally to accommodate steady empirical learning.
Delegate Influence

We delegate influence and retain overall accountability for this subdomain.

Delegator

sub Domain

Delegatee

We clarify the domain, and provide support and opportunities for development to delegates.

...takes responsibility for the domain, by keeping a role for a term, after which reselect or serving in a:

Role

Helping Team

Circle

Open Domain

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Clarify Domains

A distinct area of influence, activity and decision making within an organization

Domain Description

Delegator:

Primary Driver

Key responsibilities

Constraints
(dependencies, reporting, etc)

Resources
(budget, time, tools, privileges, etc)

Preferred qualities, skills, experience

Evaluation criteria

Review date(s)
**Types of semi-autonomous, equivalent teams**

**Helping Team**
- Executes on a specific set of requirements (operations)
- Governed by their delegator
  - More or less self-organizing

**Circle**
- Self-governing
- Accountable for their own development
  - More or less self-organizing

**Open Domain**
- Invitation based
- Those invited contribute if & when they can
  - More or less self-organizing
  - May only do operations or governance as well
Organizational Structure

Delegate Circle

Double-linked Hierarchy

Service Organization

Fractal Organization

Peach Organization

Service Circle
Navigate Via Tension

1. Notice Tension

2. Understand Driver

3. Is it an Organizational Driver?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Drop it

4. Is it in my (our) domain?
   - No
   - Yes

5. Pass to the appropriate domain

6. Respond
Driver

The motive for responding to a situation

a.k.a. the WHY

simply described in a brief summary explaining:

what’s happening:
- current situation
- effect on the org

what’s needed:
- need of the org
- impact of attending to that need

Create
State the obvious!
Precedes the ‘how’
Qualify Objections

Does this argument reveal a reason why doing this stands in the way of a (more) effective response to an organizational driver?

Qualify Organizational Drivers

Will it help the organization if we respond to this driver? Will it lead to unintended consequences if we don’t?
We have considerable resources and potential to further utilise our production capacity. We need to develop new opportunities to innovate, to make the best use of what we have.

We’re expanding our operations with increasingly distributed teams and see potential to improve our approach. We need to evolve how we manage the department, to build and maintain coherence and performance as we grow.

We want to better harness our co-creative potential to create and deliver value to the world. We need to develop our business model and how we work together, to get the best out of our collaboration and help customers to do the same.

Information is unstructured, kept in silos and sometimes unrecorded, leading to inability to understand and contribute to the whole picture. We need relevant info to be shared proactively, to provide improved solutions for our customers.
Ways People Respond to Organizational Drivers

- making and evolving governance decisions
  - Governance

- (self)organizing how work will be done
  - Operations

- doing work
Governance
(of an organization or a domain within it)
the act of setting objectives, and
making and evolving decisions that
guide people towards achieving them.

Self-Governance
People governing themselves within
the constraints of a domain.

Self-Organization
Any activity or process through which people
organize their day-to-day work without the
influence of an external agent, and within
constraints defined through governance.

Operations
doing the work and organizing day to
day activities within constraints
defined through governance.
Governance vs Operations

**Driver**

Is this covered by a previous decision?

- NO
  - Will this decision govern future decisions and actions?
    - YES
    - NO
      - Governance Board
  - YES

<table>
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<th>To decide</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
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groups make decisions in Governance Meeting

resulting in Agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To do</th>
<th>Work in Progress</th>
<th>Done</th>
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WIP limit

Operations Board

or
Organizing Work

To Do | Doing | Done
--- | --- | ---

Pull system for work

Limit work in progress

Prioritize Backlogs

Appreciations | Improvements
--- | ---

Daily Stand-up

Visualize work

Planning & Review Meetings

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**Governance Meeting**

**Opening round**

**Administrative matters**
- consent to last minutes
- date for next meeting
- last-minute agenda items
- consent to agenda

**Agenda items**
- short reports
- agreements due review

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<th>Driver</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Selection</td>
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**Meeting Evaluation**

**Closing**
Role Selection

Present Domain

Record Nominations

Hear Reasons

Info Gathering

Nomination Changes

Propose a Nominee

Check for Objections

Address and Resolve

Celebrate!
Proposal Forming

1. Present and consent to Driver
   - "Is it clear enough?"
   - "Is it relevant for us?"

2. Questions about the Driver
   - "Any other info you need to know about the Driver?"
   - ...answer Q's as you go...
   - Do we know enough about the Driver for now?
3 Record considerations as Q’s

“What questions come up for me when I start thinking about possible solutions?”

Info gathering Q’s
(understanding constraints)

“Do we have a budget?”

“How many people are affected by this?”

Generative Q’s
(exploring possibilities)

“What’s the simplest thing we could do?”

“How can we gather feedback?”

* Avoid solutions disguised as questions!

4 Answer information gathering Q’s
...to increase knowledge of constraints

5 Prioritize generative questions
6 Collect ideas

...that offer a complete solution to the driver or address specific, important considerations.

defer dialogue and sharing opinions

7 Choose tuners

Who should be there?
Who wants to be there?
Other significant contributors?

No objections!

8 Design proposal

Proposal title

Driver
Proposal text
Who’s accountable for what?
Evaluation date
Evaluation criteria
Consent
Raise, seek out and resolve objections to decisions and actions.

Objection
A reason why doing something stands in the way of (more) effective response to an organisational driver.

Objections reveal...
worthwhile ways to improve
unintended consequences

I have a possible Objection
No Objection
I have a Concern

GREAT
GOOD

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It's not "either, or", it's "both and more"!
Good enough for now & safe enough to try
**Consent Decision Making**

1. **Present and Consent to Driver**
   
   "Relevant for us to respond to?"
   
   "Described clearly enough?"

2. **Present Proposal**

3. **Clarifying Questions?**
   
   "Do you understand the proposal as it's written?"

   Avoid "why" questions. Focus on "what do you mean?"

4. **Brief Response**
   
   "What are your thoughts and feelings about the proposal?"

Use rounds!
5) Any Objections?

You can use hand signs to show your response simultaneously.

I have a concern
No objection
I think I have an objection

6) Resolve Objections

...one at a time.

Integrate information and wisdom to improve the proposal, until there are no more objections.

7) CELEBRATE!

You just made an agreement!

8) Consider Concerns

If there is time, listen to concerns.

They may inform ways to improve the agreement, or at least record them as evaluation criteria.
Qualifying Objections

Start here

Listen to and understand the initial argument

Invite reflection: do you think this argument qualifies as an objection?

Does anyone disagree, entirely or partly, that this argument qualifies as an objection?

Argument qualifies as an objection

Is there anything left of the preceding argument?

Argument does not qualify as an objection

Qualify objections to the initial argument
(process one argument at a time)

Listen to and understand the argument

Invite reflection: Do you think this argument qualifies as an objection to the initial argument?

Does anyone disagree with this argument, entirely or partly?

Are there any more arguments to listen to?

Seek the ‘both/and argument’

Qualify objections to the preceding argument

Listen to the argument

etc

etc

any more arguments?

Note: If at any stage, 2 individuals oppose each other’s arguments, invite them to have a timeboxed dialogue to identify and synergize valid information from both sides

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Does this argument reveal how proceeding in this way will, or could, lead to consequences we want to avoid?

Or

Does this argument reveal a worthwhile way to improve things?
Resolve Objections

1. Understand the argument

If someone (partly) disagrees that the initial argument reveals an objection, treat this new argument as a possible objection to the first.

*invite people with opposing arguments to a timeboxed dialogue to synergize valid information from both sides

2. Qualify Objection

Consider if this argument qualifies as an objection. Does anyone (partly) disagree? Please raise your hand.

3. Propose amendment

Ask the person objecting:

Do you see a way to amend this proposal to resolve this objection?

If not, ask others present.

4. Any to this amendment?

go to step 5 Yes No go to step 6
5. **Resolve to amendment**

Find an amendment to which there are no objections

Think both / and.

Invite the people objecting to have a time-boxed conversation.

start from the beginning:

1. Listen to the argument
2. Qualify objection
3. Propose an amendment
4. Objections to amendment?

There's always an iterative next step!

6. **Zoom out to the whole proposal again**

More to amended proposal?

Yes / No

start again from step 1

go to step 7

7. **Celebrate!**

You have made an agreement!

8. **Consider Concerns**

Considering concerns can reveal ways to further improve an agreement, if there is time.

Record concerns and monitor them.
Peer Review
- for teams or individuals -

Invite participants

present...

Domain description & strategy

Collect appreciations...

and then

Improvement suggestions...

Co-create development plan

Pass to delegator to...

Consent to plan
Driver Mapping

Inspired by Gojko Adzic's Impact Mapping

1. Why are we here?
2. Who will be impacted?
3. What is needed?
4. How can we respond?

- consent to primary driver
- benefit help obstruct
- "They/We need..."
- who has expertise?
- add names to driver cards
- + impact

"...will be impacted? (actors)"
"...is needed? (drivers)"
"...can we respond?"
"What (drivers)"

organize start-ups
kick off projects
evolve orgs
progress quickly from concept to action
in self-organizing teams

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"They/We need..."
5. Identify domains
Cluster actors and/or drivers into coherent domains

6. Populate & define domains
(NAME>
(Primary Driver>

7. Sort, prioritize, (pass), drivers & identify any others missing

8. Connect domains
Account for dependencies and link domains when helpful to flow info between them

9. What else do we need to consider to respond to the primary driver?

10. Celebrate!
Bringing in S3

How do I invite change?

Be the change

Experiment & learn

Tell the story

Invite others

Meet people where they are!

Collect & prioritize important drivers

How and where do I start?

Pull in patterns that might help

Let people choose their own pace!