

# Quadrant II Newsletter

Research shows that the difference between leaders who derail in their career and those that soar to great heights is social skills. Social skills appear in the second quadrant of Stephen R. Covey's Importance-Urgency matrix: social skills are important to a career but not urgent (Covey is author of the top-selling business book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*). Quadrant II provides an opportunity for business and technical professionals to learn and try out new social skills based in science.

27Jan2016, author: Valerie Patrick, PhD, Secret to Group Innovation

## Quotable (*Key Message*)

Individuals ideate so groups can innovate.

## Quantify (*The Science*)

Findings from the latest creativity research suggest that the most effective group ideation is about building and refining existing ideas. This means that so-called "group brainstorming" sessions need to make space for individuals to generate ideas. For well-planned group brainstorming, opportunities for individual ideation can be provided both before and during the group brainstorming sessions.

Dr. Keith Sawyer, Morgan Distinguished Professor in Educational Innovations at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, gives an example in his book *Group Genius: the Creative Power of Collaboration* that illustrates the group process for innovation. Dr. Sawyer describes how a group called the Inklings was the key ingredient to each C.S. Lewis (author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*) and J.R. Tolkien (author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) becoming

famous novelists. Before the formation of the Inklings, both C.S. Lewis and J.R. Tolkien were secret writers of poems and stories about mythical fiction. The Inklings provided a collaborative process for all members of the group to test out and then build on and refine individual ideas for mythical fiction. Dr. Sawyer uses this as an example of the five basic stages that psychologists have discovered for the process of innovation: preparation, time off, the spark, selection, and elaboration (see page 81 in *Group Genius: the Creative Power of Collaboration*). The preparation stage involves mostly individual hard work while the elaboration stage involves mostly collaboration.

Dr. Christian Byrge describes a theory for group creativity called the Creative Platform in both his Ph.D. Thesis (Aalborg University, see [http://vbn.aau.dk/en/publications/conceptualisation-of-creativity-practices-through-action-research\(63b456fd-49eb-4d04-a8ca-dc9221fe6d62\).html](http://vbn.aau.dk/en/publications/conceptualisation-of-creativity-practices-through-action-research(63b456fd-49eb-4d04-a8ca-dc9221fe6d62).html)) and in his book *The Creative Platform: a Handbook in Creative Processes for Education and Worklife* that he co-authors with Soren Hansen. The theory, supported by hundreds of applications, is providing a physical space, mental frame-of-mind, thinking discipline, and process to enable participants to have the confidence, concentration, and motivation for “unlimited application of knowledge” to the problem or challenge at hand. Two key findings from his Ph.D. research are that the right level of thought diversity is needed and that respect for the individual is needed for the confidence to maximize creativity.

## Qualify (*Put into Practice*)

The next time you want to do a group brainstorm, try this method of brainstorming from Dr. Christian Byrge’s PhD thesis. This method of brainstorming is a 3-step process that you cycle through at least three times. The first step is for the participants to work individually to come up with ideas. The second step is a random pairing of participants to develop ideas together

in the pairs. The third step is for each pair to present their ideas to the group. This three-step process is repeated at least two more times. Make sure to keep the pairings random so the same two people are not together. Finally, it is important that no individual feels judged during this process.

## Quip (*Fun*)



No innovation here where individuals are not respected – good thing as we would not want the First Order Stormtroopers to find success through innovation!

## Quest (*Resources*)

Dr. Valerie Patrick, Founder and President of Fulcrum Connection LLC, works exclusively with technical business professionals to help them magnify their effectiveness by applying the latest findings from social science. Dr. Patrick is a Certified Professional Facilitator who can collaborate with you to plan, prepare, and execute a group gathering that is a productive and rewarding experience for all. Dr. Patrick also provides training, consulting, and keynotes on facilitation, teamwork, collaboration, creativity, innovation, social intelligence, change management, and thriving on a steep learning curve.

Contact Dr. Patrick (valerie.patrick@fulcrumconnection.com or text 412-742-9675) to set up an exploratory call. Ask about the new Performance Acceleration Package for technical teams.

Check out the new “Science of Success: Social Secrets” podcast on iTunes here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/science-of-success-podcast/id1063826280>. Please click on “ratings” in iTunes to provide your input. All comments are welcome and encouraged!

See Episode 7 of the Science of Success: Social Secrets” podcast called “How to Work with Others to Tackle System Challenges.” Also read about how leaders who are both socially-intelligent and collaboratively-intelligent can transform group gatherings from working well into exciting experiences that are fun, engaging, thought-provoking, rewarding, and productive on the Competent Collaborator Blog here:

<http://fulcrumconnection.com/blog/climate-change-calls-for-capabilities-beyond-social-intelligence/>.

## About Fulcrum Connection LLC

Fulcrum Connection specializes in instructional design, training, speaking, facilitation and consulting to develop skills in leadership, innovation, sustainability, troubleshooting teamwork, and managing technical professionals.