

Smarter Innovation: Beyond Netiquette: Discussion Discipline Drives Innovation (*Abstract*)

Editor's note: "Beyond Netiquette" evaluates the impact of discussion microprocesses on the outcomes of collaborative discussions. A team from the Motorola Solutions Columbia University's Information and Knowledge Strategy Master's Program evaluated discussion threads for productive outcomes and problem resolutions. The team found that all discussion microprocesses are necessary for productive conversation and problem solving.

-- Katrina Pugh, Columbia University

Investing in collaboration to improve cycle time

In 2013, believing that improving the flow of information and knowledge across the company would increase the pace and adoption of our operational innovations and reduce time to market for new services and solutions, Motorola Solutions embarked on a collaboration process and tool deployment activity. The company engaged in a project with Columbia University in 2013 to gain a deeper understanding of how their communities and dialogues actually worked – from a person-to-person perspective, especially within the current work culture and with globally distributed teams. The extended team observed the activities within Motorola Solutions' new collaboration tool, evaluating productive (and nonproductive) microprocesses that were behind engagement. They sought to see which had the most impact on collaboration for innovation.

Drawing from the research into the structural dynamics of teams, first introduced in the late 1990s by David Kantor of the Kantor Institute and William Isaacs of the MIT Dialogue Project,ⁱ the students and faculty introduced four discussion "disciplines": Integrity, Courtesy, Inclusion and Translation. The Columbia team pointed out how those disciplines create an ecology of innovation.

Our perception was that these disciplines would help us to detect the rise of a collaborative innovation culture and community, but, more directly, they could help us see how ideas translate into action, thereby achieve improved cycle time for specific solutions,

services and process innovations. Detailed analysis of over 400 collaboration threads within the Motorola Solutions collaboration environment demonstrated a clear impact of the discussion disciplines.

Four Discussion Disciplines

Discussion discipline	Description	Benefits
1. Integrity	Use true voice, research views, Ask \questions that propel	Primarily tonal; builds community and social capital.
2. Courtesy	Respect others and forum.	
3. Inclusion	Broaden the perspective. Explain terms, call others in.	Primarily content-related; drives innovation.
4. Translation	Summarize/use insights generated, and help others with summarizations.	

Source: Smarter Innovation (Ark Group, 2014)

As a result of the analysis, the students were able to develop training for online community leaders around the discussion disciplines (see below).

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ⁱ Isaacs, William. Dialogue and the art of thinking together. New York: Doubleday, 1999. Print.