



## **Invitation to Participate**

*International Research Project*  
*on*  
*Collaborative Climate and*  
*Effectiveness of Knowledge Work*

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## The Research Project

In 1999 Drucker postulated that the most urgent management issue for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is to make the knowledge worker more effective. We believe that one of the answers to the challenge could be the collaborative climate in the organisation.

The first step in this research project aimed at developing a theory for identifying the human infrastructure for knowledge sharing and knowledge creation – Collaborative Climate – and a method for measuring it. This step is accomplished. We now have a validated and solid survey instrument, the CCS, and a growing database for benchmarking, currently (Oct 2002) approaching 12,000 respondents. The results from the first study are summarised in the last chapter below. The Paper to be published in Journal of Knowledge Management, (Sveiby & Simons 2002); *Collaborative Climate and Effectiveness of Knowledge Work*, is available at <http://www.sveiby.com/articles/ccs.pdf>.

We are now preparing for the second step; to use the CCS as an instrument to establish how the effectiveness of knowledge work, in particular value creation, is influenced by collaborative climate.

### The main research questions are:

- What is the difference in value creation between a ‘good’ vs. a ‘bad’ collaborative climate?
- Do differences in collaborative climate have an effect on profitability?
- Do differences in collaborative climate explain differences in creativity, innovation, capabilities, team effectiveness, etc?
- What is most effective: collaboration or competition?

Several other research issues, highlighted by the first study, will also be explored if the participating companies so wish:

- How can people become more effectively 'logged into' an organisation's knowledge sharing infrastructure? What induction processes are required? What is the value of investments in helping employees to build up their knowledge infrastructure?
- Can 'bad' collaborative climates be improved? What investments are required to change a bad collaborative climate?
- What does it take for individuals to move on from a 'professional plateau' and enter a new growth phase? What are the management strategies for dealing with professional plateaus?
- Why do public sector organisations seem to have worse collaborative climates than private sector firms? Is it inherent in the structure and the tasks or is it just poor management? What can be done about it?

### ***Project Design***

Each case project will be tailor-made to the needs of the participating organisation. The common denominator will be to analyse results from a CC Survey either in combination with other surveys or with accounting data.

The following organisations and companies have expressed their interest in participating:

- Orange, Bristol, UK
- ABN – AMRO, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Royal Australian Airforce, Canberra ACT
- Golden Casket, Brisbane QLD
- Crane Distribution – Tradelink, Brisbane, QLD
- Wise Employment, Melbourne VIC
- Australian Nuclear Science & Technology Organisation, Lucas Heights, Sydney, NSW
- Water Corporation, Leederville WA
- Queensland Rail, QLD

Among the research projects identified by the participating companies and organisations are:

- Does our cultural change project have an impact on CC?
- Are differences in branch results due to differences in CC?
- How do teams' differences in CC impact team capabilities?
- How do variations in CC impact innovation in research teams?
- What is the \$-value of a 'good' CC compared to a 'bad' CC?



## **Outputs and Reports**

### **Reports to Participating Companies / Organisations**

Each participating company/organisation will receive:

- Tailor-made design of their own research project,
- Tailor-made set-up of internet-based CCS,
- Detailed Case report analysis including comparison against relevant benchmarks,
- Presentation of Case report by one from the research team,
- Summary Report,
- Scientific Papers,
- Analysis of CC against relevant results variables and report

### **Research Reports**

The participating organisations will be given personal presentations and priority access to the results.

Research results will be;

- a) A written Case report presented individually to the participating organisations and,
- b) A written Summary report research report to all participants, summarising all projects and drawing conclusions from the case studies and,
- c) Written up and published as at least one, possibly several, Scientific Papers (results from participating organisations and companies anonymous if requested).
- d) An international research seminar on Collaborative Climate.

### **Research Team**

The research project is a collaboration between Hanken, Swedish School of Business Administration and Economics in Helsinki, Finland; Henley Management College, UK; Sveiby Knowledge Associates and Liquid Surveys.

#### The research team:

Professor Karl-Erik Sveiby, Hanken, Project Leader

Dr. Roland Simons, Liquid Surveys and Queensland University of Technology, Statistics lead advisor

Dr Edward Truch, Henley Management College

Dr Kate Andrews, Sveiby Knowledge Associates

Dr Leanne Whicker

+ research fellows and doctoral students from the collaborating research institutions.



## **Budget – Fee for Participation**

We have designed the project on a very lean budget taking advantage of economy-of-scale. Fees for participating are only A\$10,000 (in Australia) or €5,000 (in Europe) per company/organisation. Travel expenses in conjunction with projects and presentations are extra. Lower fees for small companies and less complex research cases can be agreed on a case per case basis.

## **Collaborative Climate; What Have We Learned so Far? Summary of First Study.**

Practitioners claim that underutilised knowledge is the largest hidden value creating potential in organisations. (c.f. the CEO of HP Lew Platt lamenting: ‘if HP only knew what HP knows’). What is it that makes some knowledge transfer and –creation processes more effective in creating value than others? In the last few years it has been argued that the effectiveness of knowledge work has to with how the creation of new knowledge and transfer of existing knowledge is organised.

Clearly, process design, office design, information sharing software, etc help effectiveness and anecdotes about ‘best practice’ abound in knowledge management circles. But physical design, clever equipment and IT do not help if the willingness to share with each other is not there. Although Buckman Labs has been a heavy user of IT infrastructure since the mid 1980s, earlier president Bob Buckman attributes his company’s more than doubling of introduction of new products from 14% of sales to 34% to an improved climate of trust and increased willingness to collaborate. (Buckman Labs is currently the top scoring company in the CCS database.)

Questions in the first part of research were: Can collaborative climate be measured? Do differences in collaborative climate depend on gender, experience, age, education, size, power position, distance or type of organisation, etc.?

Karl-Erik Sveiby and Roland Simons developed a theory for identifying the human infrastructure for knowledge sharing and knowledge creation – Collaborative Climate – and proposed a method for measuring it. We developed and validated a survey instrument, collected data and made a first analysis. The large database (close to 12,000 respondents in Oct 2002) makes the findings statistically quite robust.

Our research established that collaborative climate tends to improve with age, education level and managerial role. Contrary to ‘common sense’ collaborative climate also seems to improve with



organisational size at least up to mid-size, an inverted U-shape. We have further found that employees tend to experience a U-formed appreciation of the collaborative climate; very positive at recruitment, then deteriorating during the first 5 years and later improving again closely correlated with seniority in the organisation. We have to some degree confirmed theories proposing that people reach a 'professional plateau' after around 15 years in the same profession (an S-formed curve) when they begin to rate lower than in their earlier years what they learn, what they receive from their nearest work environment and their managers. We have also confirmed earlier empirical evidence that distance is bad for collaboration. We have found that gender has no impact on the perceptions of collaborative climate. Finally, we have found collaborative climate in the private sector to be generally better than in the public sector.

A Paper; (Sveiby & Simons 2002) Collaborative Climate and Effectiveness of Knowledge Work has been accepted for publishing in Journal of Knowledge Management November 2002. The Paper is available from: <http://www.sveiby.com/articles/ccs.pdf>

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