

JANINE GARNER



Why **commercial collaboration** will future-proof
business, leaders and personal success

WILEY

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 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**, *author and founder of 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**, *author and CEO at 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 also 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*

Collaboration is about opening up to new possibilities in life by listening, learning and growing; by sharing with inspiring people who lift you higher, and help change your perspectives through sharing knowledge without compromising core beliefs.

— **Louise Agnew**, *principal, LYFE Planning Pty Ltd*

Collaboration is the result of understanding that while knowledge is power, sharing knowledge is empowering.

— **Fiona Craig**, *CEO and founder, Fiona Craig Consulting*

The fusion of talents, skills, knowledge and experience expand the opportunity set of all parties involved in the venture. Whether they are individuals, companies, governments, charities, schools or clubs, the partners to a well-structured and precisely purposed commercial collaboration are likely to derive a range of financial and learning benefits as the miracle of mutuality works its magic.

— **Stuart Findlay**, *executive coach*

We really IS better than me. To be reminded that whatever the circumstances you find yourself in, this outward, others-focused frame will provide clarity and direction for you to create a future you want to be part of with people you love to work with.

— **Rohan Dredge**, *CEO, New Level Leaders*

Collaboration means sharing the gift of yourself to inspire and lift others to a better place.

– **Zahrina Robertson**, *photographer*

For true collaboration you must be open to giving as much as receiving; that is when the real magic happens. Realising the power of true collaboration has put my business on another level.

– **Alicia Beachley**, *CEO, April 5*

Collaboration with people you like, doing the work you like, the way you like is both fulfilling and powerful leverage to commercial success.

– **Christina Guidotti**, *speaker and author of How To Have It All*

To me, three main things make up collaboration: openness to share (ideas, experience, points of view), leveraging strengths and a commitment to create value from all parties. Collaboration sparks creativity and possibility beyond belief and when done well, produces outcomes and greatness that alone you'd never think was possible.

– **Blythe Rowe**, *founder, Human Incite*

When you are working within a Me environment, ultimately you are working under the belief that you are the only person with any real ideas of worth. True success comes in the understanding that team ideas drive a business to its peak — when 'We' achieve the dream.

– **Kate Stone**, *CEO, typecast*

Collaboration is when you've genuinely got someone's back and they've got yours.

– **Michelle Sutherland**, *employee engagement manager, Hewlett Packard*

FROM ME TO WE

**Why commercial collaboration will
future-proof
business, leaders and personal
success**

JANINE GARNER

WILEY

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About the author

Janine Garner is passionate about commercial collaboration, 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 has won an International Stevie Award, has been voted one of the Top 10 DARE Devil Women of 2013 by *DARE* magazine, is listed in 2013 as one of Australia's 'Most Inspiring Women' by *Madison* magazine and has 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 business print and online media.

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contributing and collaborating and becoming part of a community that is creating ripples of change. Each of you are shaping the future of business, of generations, of leadership, and proving that together we can become so much more.

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And finally thank you to you the reader for taking the time to read this book and exploring a more collaborative way of working — a way that embraces diversity, values differences and sees the opportunity and increased sum of collective intelligence.

Introduction

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

— *Henry Ford, businessman*

What does collaboration mean to you?

Are you aware that commercial collaboration is the key to endless opportunities to future-proof your business, your career and your own success?

Great potential can be created when you move from being solely focused on Me — *my skills, my job, my business, my leadership challenges* — to working freely in a world of We, where there is active collaboration and sharing of knowledge, insight and intellect. Where you openly talk about failures, and equally share knowledge; where honesty, integrity and a belief in opportunity and possibility can create the freedom to invent, to innovate and to disrupt the status quo and, ultimately, to future-proof yourself.

Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well, if this is the case, why aren't more people doing it? Why hasn't commercial collaboration become the business norm? Why do we continue to feel that that the only way to deliver results, profits and performance is to do it ourselves? We continue to find it challenging to actively open doors for someone else to achieve success and to expect nothing in return. The automatic operating system for many is one of 'I must protect myself', 'I must not share my thoughts or ideas', 'the competition is out to get me' and, finally — 'I know best'.

This is not the mindset for commercial collaboration. To collaborate commercially is *not* about:

- the close-minded, protective, ‘take, take, take’ of ideas and intellectual property from others
- the business card swap-fest associated with traditional networking events
- survival of the self (or even of the fittest).

My corporate journey is not uncommon — I worked like a maniac to get to where I thought I wanted to be, where I thought I *should* be: at the top of a highly coveted corporate sector. I do not discount the journey, or the thrill of making it to the pinnacle. What I found when I got there, however, was that although the spirit for commercial collaboration may have been present ... as the old saying goes, the corporate flesh was weak. There were times when I felt we had some brilliant flashes of team thought and engagement, but unfortunately they weren't sustained.

So, three years ago I came to a realisation. If I wanted to surround myself with the kind of thought leadership, diversity, knowledge and idea sharing that I knew was needed in commercial life, I had to strike out on my own. This was how the LBDGroup was born. There was a niche for a community of like-minded, results-oriented businesswomen who wanted to interact commercially at a level that wasn't currently available — either within their own corporations, or with other entrepreneurs in their own sectors.

LBDGroup is unique. This is not only my opinion. The cross-pollination of ideas, IP, talent, leadership, thought and values is honestly something that I cannot put into words. The interaction and exchange of cutting-edge innovation, both in terms of the intangible and the tangible, is something that the businesspeople involved are actively embracing as they connect, collaborate and contribute to

drive innovative thinking, new solutions and strategies to secure their careers and business futures.

The level of commercial collaboration that has resulted from this community has proven very clearly the essential points of this book: when one turns from the solitary space of Me, as satisfying as it may feel at the time, to the collaborative space of We, the benefits it brings are overwhelmingly positive and lead to that amazing lightness that only comes with future-proofing one's career and success path.

The heartbeat of commercial collaboration is understanding and appreciating the change that is needed to future-proof businesses, careers and leaders. It is a new operating system that requires an equally new set of skills. It needs courage and a willingness to be authentic. It requires us to disrupt current norms, to proactively collaborate to drive change — and it will not occur in a vacuum.

Commercial collaboration is putting into practice Aristotle's philosophy that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'. When in balance, working together serves a greater purpose. Ultimately it will drive you, your business and your potential to heights that you never imagined possible — and probably would not achieve if you continued to go it alone.

Imagine a different world. One where:

- we are inspired and encouraged to openly share thoughts, opinions and knowledge
- working environments respect the needs of the 'whole' employee
- individuals can thrive on the freedom to create, to explore, to be curious about new possibilities

- workers can add value and contribute to the big-picture goals
- leaders are authentic and honest
- we are constantly learning and evolving as a result of embracing diversity of position, thought, gender and age
- we embrace uniqueness
- we respect each other's visions and dreams
- we create actions that drive continued success for each other
- we create space for people to share their amazingness
- we have the courage to lead, to share and equally to ask for help
- we appreciate the human in people as much as the financial return and the big-picture vision
- there is no political game-playing, no saying one thing and doing another, no abuse of power that protects position, self, ego
- collaboration is valued strategically and aligned positively to continued growth, evolution, creative thinking and future-proofing for all.

So what to do? The answer is simple.

Collaborate.

Talk.

Engage.

And, most importantly, find a way to stop being all about 'me, me, me' and looking inward for answers that simply aren't there. Find a way to turn with confidence and openness from Me to We, to working collaboratively.

The barriers between genders, between generations, between cultures, between the inventors and the investors, between the change-makers, the visionaries and those that make it happen — these all have to be broken down. This is all a part of the evolution of Me to We. This is all a part of collaborative business.

To collaborate is to lead. To lead with inspiration, and gusto, and innovation and heart.

This book is essentially about *why* a new operating system is needed, and *how* to move from Me to We and collaborate commercially. It will break down the nine essential steps to enable you to answer ‘What do we need to do?’ and then examine and explain the seven ReConnect Principles leaders and businesses will need to adopt to collaboratively reconnect and do what they do best: survive, thrive and future-proof their success. The ReConnect Principles are:

1. Be brave
2. Build a diverse network
3. Full disclosure
4. Disrupt
5. Exchange value
6. Think bigger
7. Sponsor others.

We need to develop and disseminate an entirely new paradigm and practice of collaboration that supersedes the traditional silos that have divided governments, philanthropists and private enterprises for decades and replace it with networks of partnerships working together to create a globally prosperous society.

—Simon Mainwaring, CEO, We First Inc.

Part I

When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser I discovered the world would not change so I shortened my sights and decided to change only my country. But it too seemed immovable. As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing my family — those closest to me — but alas they would have none of it. And now as I lie on my deathbed I suddenly realise if I had only changed myself first then by example I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement I would have been able to better my country and who knows I may have even changed the world.

— Words found written on the tomb of an Anglican Bishop in Westminster Abbey

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 to surprise and influence many.

Future uncertainty

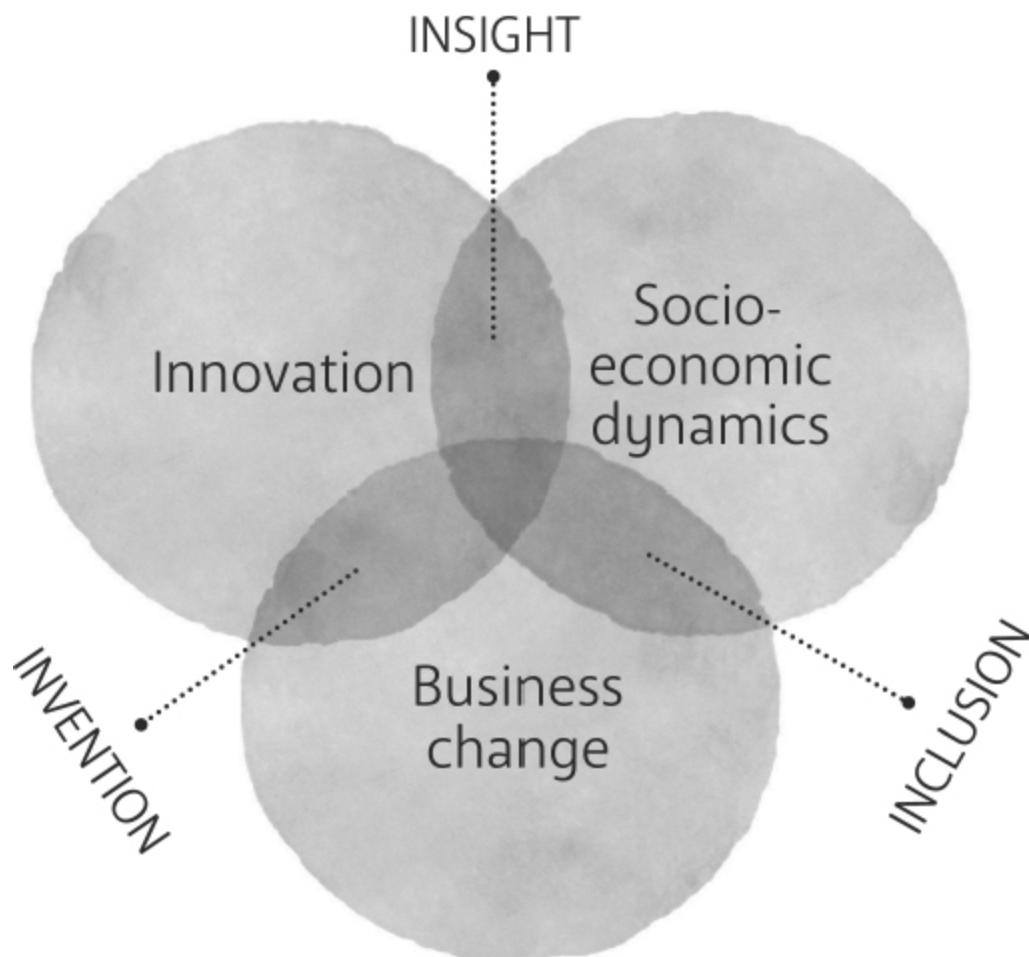
The phenomenal speed of change that got us to the 21st century's technological frenzy is not going to slow down any time soon — and it is creating an uncertain future on a global business level. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman suggests that the changes that we are experiencing now are 'directly 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 for the following reasons:

- 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 on pages 8 and 9 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 and new products created overnight. 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