

Throughout our working lives-one hundred thousand hours-time is our most precious asset. Once spent, we can never retrieve it and we can never manufacture more. So deciding how to spend it is powerful. When it comes to time, most organizations are very good at measuring its quantity but poor at measuring its value. We need time for quiet, focused work. We also need time to let our minds wander and find the insights and inspirations no amount of focus will ever bring. Synchronizing time for a team, a project, or an entire organization can create a powerful sense of community. But walking away from work can be the greatest contribution we make to it.

4 Smashing Barriers

Tod Bedilion is a curious man. A senior director at Roche Diagnostics in California, he has spent his working life in biotech, first at start-ups and today at Roche, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. A typical corporate scientist, you might think. But you'd be wrong.

"I've always been curious-about everything. What we do, how we do it, why we do it. And that has made me increasingly frustrated with the way that we do research and development. But I'm not alone; we surveyed about 250 R&D leaders; and they shared that frustration. The two biggest obstacles to innovation were rigid hierarchies and not getting enough from the skills that we have in this company."

It isn't just research units that suffer. Every company I've ever worked with complains of rigid thinking, a lack of creative vitality in the workplace, and a failure to collaborate across silos. Just cultures aim to get more from everyone inside them. But doing so requires that however coherent the internal culture, it remains open and receptive to the world outside. So there's a paradox: for the culture inside to be vibrant, it has to let the outside in.

Curiosity Smashes Silos

Bedilion and his colleagues devised an experiment. First, they identified six challenges-current problems from mechanical

engineering to biochemistry- and broadcast those across all 2,400 members of Roche's R&D community. The response disappointed Tod: only 49 employees even looked at the challenge and only forty submitted proposals, some of which were no more than a few lines. But one netted a winner: a way to improve battery life in glucose drip meters. But this proved a bittersweet victory. The problem had been set by the diabetes care team in Germany and the engineer who solved it worked on that team, too-but in Indianapolis. And this was the first time he'd heard about it. It just showed, Bedilion reflected, how intelligence gets trapped and hidden by organizational structures.

By contrast, one of the toughest challenges, which had defeated Roche for twenty years, was also broadcast to 160,000 "solvers" working on an open innovation platform called InnoCentive. This time, the response astonished Bedilion: 13 proposals packed with detail, data, diagrams, experiments, and energy. After sixty days, with a cash reward of just \$25,000, one novel offering cracked it.

Two hard problems had been solved. But some Roche researchers were hostile to the experiment and its results. Bedilion was passionate about new thinking, but many colleagues resented the notion that anyone *outside* had anything to offer. "The hackles came up, the feathers came up," Bedilion recalled. "They were quite defensive about *other people* solving their problem."

The experience showed him how easily talent becomes constrained: hard to find, siloed, disconnected from the outside world and one another. Organizational structures create divisions and we internalize barriers: departmental demarcation

lines, geographical boundaries, corporate pecking orders, and technical prowess. Expertise itself can inhibit innovation because it typescasts people, narrowing what they think about or allow themselves to think about. Everyone gets mentally stuck on their square of the chessboard.

"The InnoCentive system is great," Bedilion explained. "But finally this isn't about technology. Or geography. It's about mindset. Are you mentally rooted to the confines of your job-01 does curiosity send you crashing through barriers? You need to keep that core curiosity-to be open and enabling. Walk around. Talk to people. Turn the other cheek. Build a network. Feed that network. Don't get boxed in."

It's striking that many of InnoCentive's successes come from solvers working outside their specialty. The search for a biomarker for ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) was aided by a plant biologist and a dermatologist. The Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI), still trying to find better ways to clean up the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989, sourced a critical solution from a cement engineer. These solvers had the curiosity and the mental freedom to work wherever they chose.

The Roche experiment wasn't a contest between the company's R&D and InnoCentive's open platform. Both solve high-order problems. But the experience illustrates the bigger challenge: How can our workplaces embrace, connect, and enliven *all* of its talents? How do organizations realize the benefit of assembling a concentration of gifts in a single place? The counterintuitive answer is: Let them roam. Don't nail them down. Mentally and physically set them free.

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Heads Out: Get Out of the Office

Seeking to tear down the mental walls that constrain thinking and collaboration has inspired most companies to tear down office walls. Seventy percent of U.S. companies now use open-plan offices and hot desking in the hope that these free-form physical structures will provoke free-form thinking. This architectural determinism isn't entirely convincing—there's plenty of evidence that people find open workspaces noisy, distracting, and impersonal. Walking through several such workspaces recently, I couldn't help but notice how hard everyone was working to simulate privacy. Plugged into headphones, surrounded by stacks of books and temporary dividers, defensiveness was more evident than openness.

Architecture alone won't change mindsets and tearing down physical walls won't demolish the mental silos that trap thinking. For that, you need to escape offices and immerse yourself in life.

"I led a billion-dollar business line and people often think that all you need to know, to understand a business, is found in the numbers. Nothing could be further from the truth—because the real meaning of the business lies elsewhere."

Louise Makin was ambitious and eager to sustain the growth of Baxter International's biggest business: treatments for hemophiliacs. But she soon learned that the numbers couldn't show her what mattered.

"It was only when I started going out to patient associations that I understood. I met a mother with her son who had just been diagnosed with hemophilia. They needed us massively and

would depend on our products for the rest of their lives. Would we keep supplying old products? Would we develop new ones? Were we big and bold enough to keep investing in the business? You couldn't see it just as a business anymore; you were right into a life. It changed my whole perspective."

That experience, Makin told me, shifted her approach to developing and positioning the drugs. Instead of thinking about transacting, she thought about collaborating with patients and families to develop the therapies they needed. Today, Makin is CEO of BTG, a health-care company that focuses on highly defined areas of medicine—liver disease, blood clots, varicose veins. That narrow remit allows deeper relationships with patients and physicians. BTG doesn't see doctors as hapless targets to be bludgeoned into buying; salespeople aren't the only ones who meet doctors. Adopting a sailing term, Makin calls this "heads out" and argues that in any new work, you always have to have at least one person who is nominated to stay heads out: scanning the horizon, staying in constant touch with the wider environment.

Introduce Divergent Thinking

At Roche Diagnostics in Switzerland, Matthias Essenpreis put together what he called "a very weird team" to lead a new development in the company's diabetes diagnostics strategy. All earlier products had worked in hospitals and intensive care units, but now the company wanted something that patients could use themselves. This shift in perspective inspired Essenpreis to reach across Roche and bring in diabetics who worked for

the company. But then he went further, bringing a visual artist, Kelly Heaton, into the team.

"I needed a radical outside view," Essenpreis told me, "a person who has no experience with Roche or diabetes but a holistic thinker, a truly unconstrained thinker. The team was so excited by what she could offer that we brought her in full-time. She had this great skill in asking the right questions with anybody. She maintained a vision. This was a very intense period when no one could leave the room or finish a day without a discussion that excited people and we made a real breakthrough in understanding."

For Essenpreis, this experience proved the most creative time of his career. Today, as chief technology officer of Roche Diagnostics, what he prizes most highly is the opportunity to liberate and connect people.

"Typically with rigid structures you get silo thinking. Instead now what I care about passionately is connecting different people *across* those unnatural boundaries. That's how you make the silos disappear—because the nodal points where those boundaries intersect are the most creative."

Much the same approach was found, almost by accident, at ARM, which now designs the processors powering most of the world's smartphones and tablets. How has it, from small beginnings in Cambridge, England, grown to be a powerhouse of innovation and design? According to Tom Cronk, the general manager of the processor division, it has been by tearing down mental and physical barriers between ARM engineers and the companies they work with.

"The business model evolved through necessity. We were just twelve people and we had a big opportunity to serve an equipment and manufacturing business that had ten thousand employees! The only way that could possibly work was for *us* to become part of *their* team. Being territorial was not an option! And that's how we've worked ever since. Very few people at ARM don't have contact with partners. We have desks—we just don't spend much time there. Most of our people are working inside partner organizations."

Over time, many organizations develop managerial narcissism: an obsession with the internal workings of a business that takes attention away from the market and their customers that inspired it. At ARM, the relationships with the outside world are so fundamental to the business that that—not corporate headquarters—is where many of their engineers, architects, and designers live and work. Whereas many organizations talk about divisions, what Cronk is talking about, and Makin and Essenpreis experienced, is a porous membrane—between the company and the world. It is their interaction, their frequent collisions that make the businesses creative.

"I couldn't say whether it's that we go out, or we let them in, but either way, there's just no real boundary between us," Cronk observed. "That's the power of the business model. Our engineers here feel, act, and think the same whether they're talking to one another—or to partner engineers halfway across the world. It isn't about control. We trust them a lot."

Driven by curiosity and characterized by a striking absence of defensiveness, these organizations want their people

to be highly comfortable-out of the office and in the world.

Companies such as iRobot and the UK broadcaster Dave build simulations of their customers' homes inside their offices as reminders of where their customers live. Other companies get their executives to take turns playing the customer. But nothing beats getting out of the office and being with the people for whom all the work is designed.

GO: Get Ont!

InnoCentive uses technology to draw in ideas and energy from as far afield as its network can reach. BTG and ARM build rich external collaborative networks to the same end. Essenpreis introduced a completely different mindset by including a visual artist. All these approaches smash through the formal constraints of work to expand insight, talent, language, and energy. Preserving- or reviving-innate human responsiveness reflects their appreciation that great ideas don't come from offices but from life.

"I have an old friend, Jim, who is a glass artist. He makes beautiful pieces that sell for around two thousand dollars. And when I was catching up with him, he told me he'd just missed out on a sale: a woman who only had a credit card and certainly not enough cash."

The glass artist's friend was Jack Dorsey, one of the founders of Twitter. But his success didn't keep him in the office. It gave him to freedom to roam.

"The conversation left me thinking, why couldn't Jim handle the credit card payment? His problem made me think about

all those people- at craft markets and farmers' markets-who probably had exactly the same problem. So how could I solve their problem?"

This is how Dorsey came up with Square: a small plug-in for smartphones that turns them into credit card readers. By 2014, the combined sellers using Square represented the thirteenth-largest retailer in America. Dorsey's new idea hadn't grown out of Twitter, from a focus group, or out of market research. It had grown from life. Without his friend, without the experience of markets, without their collision with Dorsey's technological expertise, his friend might still be losing sales.

In order to build a rapid prototype of his idea, Dorsey turned to TechShop, a workshop open to the public, that's crammed full of machinery-welders, water cutters, 3-D printers, looms, and lasers. Over the last twenty years, technology has made these machines cheaper and easier to operate than ever before. But it *isn't* just the tools that make TechShop such a creative space. When you join, the understanding is you can ask anyone for help-and you must help anyone who asks you. From the outset, founder Jim Newton and CEO Mark Hatch envisaged it as the preferred playground of inventors, artisans, and entrepreneurs, a physical innovation platform where collisions were bound to happen.

When TechShop opened in Detroit, Ford Motor Company provided two thousand free memberships to employees who submitted good ideas. Anybody in Ford could apply and their ideas didn't have to relate to cars. But access to tools, machinery, and expertise from all over Detroit-not just Ford-lured employees from all parts of the business. After one year, the

company credited TechShop with a 50 percent increase in patentable ideas by its workers.

Put down your cell phone and look around. Be where you are. It's from the real world that ideas, provocation, and pattern recognition come. No one ever had a great idea at a desk. Walking is creative but walking outdoors even more so. The breakthrough that led to the polymerase chain reaction technology and kick-started the genetic revolution didn't come from a conference room but from driving down a highway. Many CEOs say their leadership training comes from coaching Little League. Great engineers routinely talk about their best inventions stemming from hobbies. From a business perspective, engaging with the world is your best, fastest way to tune in to the mood of the moment, of the markets that you serve. And from a human perspective, being in a rich and open community is how you build and enrich the neural networks of your mind.

School friends Eric Ryan and Adam Lowry used to get together regularly to compare notes about trends they observed, hoping to identify a business to build together. Early in 2000, they noticed that people were spending more time and money than ever on their homes-but cleaned them with products that were toxic, smelled awful, and were so ugly they had to be hidden. What about creating cleaning products that honored the planet, were fragrant, and were so beautiful that they'd be kept out on display? That positioning led to Method Home Care products, a business that would never have been possible without Eric and Adam being out in the world, alert to its moods and passions.

Even after the company's success, Ryan and Lowry have remained obsessed by keeping the company open and responsive to the outside world. Because Method won't use toxic chemicals, it can locate the entire business (including R&D) not in a business park but in the center of downtown San Francisco. Everyone takes turns manning the reception desk, being the face-and interface-of the company. Eric sits right next to Meghan who answers the company's 1-800 customer service line. He wants to hear what people call about, what worries them, what questions and ideas they might have. Meghan attends product design meetings so that her conversations spread, so that the outside permeates the company's thinking.

Around a hundred employees-people against dirty-are spread across a number of sparkingly clean, expansive rooms crammed full of desks, prototypes, and whiteboarded walls. Cocreation here is everyone's job. There are walls covered in whiteboards where anyone can add ideas and insights. But the spirit of collaboration on which the company depends isn't just about architecture. It derives from a sense that everyone counts and everyone contributes. The founders work hard to ensure that everyone feels connected to everyone else, not trapped in hierarchies they can't breach. As a consequence, on entering any of these rooms, you can't tell who's a founder and who's an intern.

The people against dirty talk easily and openly about mistakes they've made; there's no defensiveness here. Eric and Adam seem keenly aware of how much they don't know, how much they will always need to keep learning from the world around them.

A 1 to desk offers opportunities for employees to swap lives—exchanging jobs, desks, even homes with colleagues in other towns and countries. Arup encourages employees to work on projects around the world, building technical expertise and social capital across the forty-two countries in which the engineering firm operates. Most companies, sooner or later, insist that executives visit the clubs, pubs, stores, or malls where their customers spend time. Many companies encourage volunteering and some specifically reward people for the breadth of their involvement with groups outside of work. All of these initiatives have the same goal: to make the mind travel well beyond the desk, beyond the conference room, to build new neural networks that refresh thinking and make new connections.

Making Offsites Work

In building what became Boston Scientific, John Abele became mildly obsessed with collaboration. What made it work, why did it so often not work—and what were the conditions that might make it easier? For most companies, offsite meetings are the occasions when this becomes critical, when people inside and outside the organization come together to tackle hard problems. But too often, these attempts at creative collisions reinforce mindsets instead of resetting them. Hotels look a lot like offices; rooms and suites have hierarchies, too. Seating reflects pecking orders and it's easier to talk to the people you already know. Those dismal experiences inspired Abele to try to create a setting for offsites that would be different.

"I liked Kingbridge because it was a pink elephant architecturally," Abele told me. "It is easy to get confused about where you are. There's a lot of space (different types of hallways) from transitioning from one state of mind to another. There's a lot of wall space for art and contrasts from one microenvironment to another. I think of walking through the mirror or closet, Namia style. There are many spaces that enable creative theater that involve music, light, and more. That makes it possible to surprise guests while also giving them a sense of comfort and personal, friendly attention."

"John wanted, when he bought the place, to create a different kind of space," Lisa Gilbert told me. She now manages the center after a disillusioning career in a hospitality industry she no longer found hospitable.

"In traditional hotels, you get different sizes of room. He wanted none of the rooms to be different: no premier spaces, no presidential suite. It's about leveling the playing field. He also wanted to create a space that is more social. The dining room isn't like a restaurant, it's like eating at home. You see barriers coming down and people stay talking for hours. John never wanted this place to be designed by a decorator—each area is imperfect, with furniture that looks like home. You can just wander around; people don't hide out."

Creating a climate of comfort and safety is a deliberate attempt to make Kingbridge offsites feel as different from work as possible. "We take people out and get them to be playful and have them see new things in a fun, gamelike way. If they can be different outside the meeting, they can be

different inside the meeting. It's about building the courage to explore."

Kingbridge deliberately sets out to unsettle established routines and behaviors. Changing the rules of working life can have the same effect. One of the best conferences I attended took a unique approach to team building. Over the four days, every attendee (including EEOs and presidents) had to do a kitchen shift and a serving shift. You could find yourself being served by a former prime minister or cooking alongside the head of an NGO. The message was clear: everyone here has a contribution to make and everybody counts.

Global Home

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, work that once had been done at home became centralized in offices and factories. These developed unique architecture, furniture, jargon, styles, and behaviors. This made them very efficient. It also turned them into islands. The financial journalist Gillian Tett points out that in London, the financial district in Canary Wharf is an island. Its geographical and mental isolation from the rest of the world was one reason financiers were so blind to the risks they ran. Likewise, lavish campuses that serve every human need are efficient but risk becoming narcissistic bubbles—cut off, self-referential, and defensive.

Many organizations are jealous of time spent away from them, regarding work as serious and home as trivial. This is a profound error. Home enriches work because it demands a shift in perspective. Its difference is its value. One Procter & Gamble

product manager once described his first experience of having a part-time worker on his team. He'd been hostile at first but the experience changed his mind. "What I found," he told me, "was that it was incredibly valuable having someone who wasn't *here* all the time—who was out, in stores, in homes, talking to families, in all the places and in all the relationships we should speak to."

But home offers more than market research. It can be a place where hierarchy falls away, where challenge can (and should) come from anywhere. Arguments at home, with people you can't easily fire, prove a fantastic training ground for listening to and mediating competing interests. Home is where our values are most present, most active, remind us of who we are and who we want to be. As such, it offers time for reflection and a rich testing ground for our ideas and beliefs.

The anesthetist Stephen Bolsin struggled for years because he worked alongside a dangerous pediatric cardiologist. Operations took too long, recovery was compromised, children died. Bolsin found little support from his colleagues; hospital leaders didn't want to know. The temptation to give up and shut up was immense. But one night, as he described his difficulties to his wife, their conversation was overheard by his five-year-old daughter. She walked over to him and said, "You can't let the babies die, Daddy." Seeing his predicament through the eyes of the powerless gave **him** the energy he needed to persevere until standards were changed.

If you have children, home can also be a vantage point on the future. If the business community is routinely criticized for its

short-termism, then seeing the impact of decisions on the next generations can be an eye-opening antidote. Never mind what you're delivering to your shareholders: What are you creating for the future that sits across from you at dinner?

J. Iway uncertain of the future and ignorant of its demands, our greatest resilience lies in well-stocked minds, undeterred by barriers, constantly replenished by new people, experiences, and the ideas that they spark in us. Engagement with life isn't a rival but a partner to the work. Enriched by experiences broad and deep, with minds free to focus or to roam, we find what we need to say and the courage to say it.

5 Leaders Everywhere

In a classic piece of psychology research, a primary school teacher and a professor teamed up to study how far expectation & drive influence outcomes. To do so, they administered IQ tests to California pupils in grades one through six. Teachers were told that certain pupils—around 20 percent—showed great promise and could be expected to make exceptional progress. At the end of the year, that forecast proved true: the IQ of the nominated pupils showed superior improvement. But, like all great social psychology experiments, this one had a catch. The "high-potential student" had been chosen at random. What came to be known as the Pygmalion effect argued that it is expectations, more than innate ability, that influence outcomes. Never mind who's gifted, who's talented. Expect great things and you are more likely to get them.

The talent, energy, insight, and opportunity of any organization lies with its people. They are where all ideas come from; they are its best early-warning system. All of the risk and all of the opportunities lie in the workforce. In just culture, no one needs permission to be creative or courageous. But they do need support, encouragement, and belief.

The Elevating Impact of High Expectations

After the Pygmalion experiments were published, subsequent researchers couldn't help but wonder whether the same