

Book: The Innovation SuperHighway: Harnessing Intellectual Capital for Collaborative Advantage

Author: Debra M. Amidon

Overview

Several experts from throughout the European community have been featured in the new release - The Innovation SuperHighway: Harnessing Intellectual Capital for Collaborative Advantage (ISBN: 0750675926). Reviewers agree that this new publication picks up where other books in the knowledge profession leave off. While providing the sound rationale for knowledge strategy, Debra M. Amidon, Founder and CEO of ENTOVATION International Ltd. defines the global vision on all levels - the individual, the enterprise, the nation and society. With well-researched management trends, this book provides insights and practices leading to sustainable collaboration.

The book was launched with a unique form of knowledge entertainment – a Knowledge Concert - performed for The Bentley College Model United Nations in a ‘Tour of the Knowledge World’ with international recording artist, Dr. Silvard Kool, - a Dutchman - who is also the resident pianist of the Marriott Hotel Copley Place, and a professor of marine biology at Boston College. The event featured several knowledge practitioners – who are represented on the Global Knowledge Leadership Map. Early reviews cite this new release as: a 'milestone in the profession', 'a landmark book', a 'seminal work', a 'must-read', and 'the breakthrough innovation book of the decade'. This is considered a powerful and empowering new book for knowledge managers and workers – destined to establish a new innovation playing field for enterprises around the world.

The book has several unique aspects, not the least of which is a Collaborative Foreword co-written by three icons in the knowledge profession – all with senior executive industry experience and coming from different countries – Sweden, Germany and Canada. Leif Edvinsson, former VP of Skandia AFS and now CEO of Universal Networking for Intellectual Capital – UNIC (Stockholm, Sweden) and recipient of the award for the World Brain, suggests, “Ideas are, perhaps, the most ethereal resources at an organization’s disposal. They fall through the cracks of intellectual property law with worrying ease. They defy classification. No one knows this better than those who work in the great ideas sectors of our age: business schools and consulting firms. Where better to look for clues of where the knowledge economy is headed?” Joachim Doering, Senior Vice President, Siemens ICN (Munich, GERMANY) adds, “Very soon the world will be driven by (the innovations out of) knowing communities. Self-regulated global communities of practice will cover every essential topic of our life and transform this world bottom up. Now we do discover the power of knowledge and the fission to ‘unleash’ our global potential.”

In addition to Edvinsson and Doering, several people from Europe who are featured on the Map are also profiled as Ken Practitioners in a chapter featuring 21 people from 14 countries.

Dr. Marcus Speh Birkenkrahe, currently serving on the faculty for the University of Auckland, New Zealand and on sabbatical from Royal Dutch Shell is featured for his seminal work with corporate strategy and European Union KnowledgeBoard – one of most comprehensive portals to-date. “It is becoming clear that we are not in an ‘old’ versus ‘new’ situation. The old economy will not go away because we make space for a new economy. In fact, they are not as different as they pretend to be – the clue here is integration across boundaries.”

Yvonne Buma, graduate of the Tilburg University graduate program for Knowledge Management and CEO of Gideya is featured with her progressive work in enterprise communication systems. She spent 6 months in the United States and the ENTOVATION Corporate Headquarters where she was instrumental

in facilitating Global Learn Day and editing the Architectural Primer for Knowledge Innovation. : “Develop a systems communications model that is better suited for the knowledge economy than traditional linear models. Think about what we can learn from different cultures...Look for and respect the differences and develop your methods accordingly. Keep our eyes wide open and do not fall for the trap of copying from one dominant culture.”

Dr. Piero Formica, Dean of the International University of Entrepreneurship and Professor of economics of innovation at the University of Bologna, is featured for his cutting edge research and practice in international economics with work with the OECD, the European Union and the International Association of Science and Technology Parks. “How do we fill the gap between individual and organizational knowledge? There has been a shift toward a more advanced culture of co-opetition among all parties in the supply chain. The invisible hand of the market must be accompanied by an invisible handshake (i.e., connectivity and trust-led businesses).”

The work of Dr. Michael Kelleher, CEO, Learning Futures Ltd., is featured for his pivotal role in European-funded research on learning infrastructures, intervention and knowledge stewardship. Of particular note has been his recent work with a project called KALiF – sponsored by the European Union – which is also featured in another chapter of the book. “If the 21st century is to be characterized by a profound shift towards a knowledge-based economic infrastructure then we cannot simply expect knowledge, innovation and learning to emerge serendipitously. Debra Amidon brings clarity of thought and a timely contribution to this important debate and demonstrates that we must develop strategies that connect hitherto compartmentalized components of our innovation pipelines.”

Dr. Eunika Mercier-Laurent, founder and CEO of EML Conseil and professor at IAE Lyon 3 University, is featured for her global research in artificial intelligence research, workstation collaboration systems and global knowledge strategy. In fact, she was responsible for the French translation of Amidon’s previous best-seller: Innovation Strategy for the Knowledge Economy: The Ken Awakening (1997). “The Innovation SuperHighway tends to connect all the multi-disciplinary talents – technology, economic, behavioral points of view – and uses collective intelligence in the common process of building our future. As many other words in the global context, definitions are also changing from invention to multifaceted of innovation: structural, comportemental, organizational, attitude, educational It is impossible to stop imagination.”

Dr. Edna Pasher, founder and CEO of Edna Pasher Associates, is featured for her major contributions in EU-funded innovation projects providing holistic views of new product development, the Intellectual Capital Report for Israel that has served as a template for other nations and Status – the leading Israeli monthly magazine for management. “Amidon combines vision and practice in this pioneering book. Her vision aims very high and her examples are very concrete. She herself has been practicing what she preaches and the book is full of live and powerful examples, many taken from her own experience. You will find out why we all need to move from knowledge management to innovation through collaboration and how it has already been done by an international network of experts led by the author”.

Dr. Ante Pulic and Karmen Jelcic, executives of the Intellectual Capital Center Croatia, are featured as members who have led the movement throughout Austria, Croatia and recently the IC conference in Slovenia. Their seminal work on the nation’s intellectual capital report and the value creation efficiency analysis that is being adopted by enterprises around the world. “Each company has unique knowledge, skills, values and solutions that can be transformed into value at the market. If managing the intangible resources (IC) can help to achieve competitive advantage, increase efficiency and market value then it is not a choice, but a necessity. Therefore the key question is: Do we create or destroy value?”

Dr. Joerg Staeheli, Global Technology Officer at Novartis Pharma AG in Basel, is featured as one of the worldwide Ken practitioners who have led the movement with his implementation of knowledge networking, web-based collaboration, cultural and technological change. “We consider KM as a product that can be used internally, and you have to advertise, you have to promote like you would to sell a

product on the market...We learned you have to continuously feed oil into the furnace, challenging people to come back."

The book also featured the work of Dr. David J. Skyrme (UK), editor of "I3 Update/ENTOVATION News" and co-author with Amidon of *Creating the Knowledge-Based Business* (1997) – the research for which provides substantive analysis and architectural considerations for the chapters on Knowledge Economics, Knowledge Structures, Knowledge Workers, Knowledge Process and Knowledge Processing Technology. Jan Wyllie (UK), CEO of TrendMonitor International Ltd performed – with some grant funding from Siemens AG – the trend analysis that is the foundation for the chapters on the Innovation Trends and the Knowledge Millennium Generation, the papers for which were provided by the student congress on "Rethinking Knowledge" at the University of Cologne, Germany.

Dr. Charles Savage, CEO of Knowledge Era Enterprises, and Elisabeth Sundrum, CEO of e-Culture – both from Munich, Germany and serving as ENTOVATION Fellows, summed up their assessment of the new text. "Debra Amidon is our Sherpa guide who moves us beyond 'knowledge as a thing to be slice and diced' to 'knowledge as a process of discovery in community.' The Innovation SuperHighway is an invitation to us all to roll up our sleeves and co-build a new foundation for a world economy. Now, the twin towers of the World Trade Center may be replaced by a new foundation of understanding so that we can enhance the 'world trade of ideas' on a global scale. We have learned to value, appreciate, and be inspired by the uniqueness in one another and one another's cultures."

The book that already has impressive rankings in Amazon and Barnes and Noble, has captured the imagination of industrial managers, academic leaders and government officials. Her previous best seller - *Innovation Strategy for the Knowledge Economy* – is now in six languages and was selected for Business Literacy 2000. Now with the new release, she has set the standard for enterprises competing in the 21st century:

Part One: The Innovation Frontier

Chapter 1 - A Global Imperative - Sustainability (Why)

Chapter 2 - The Knowledge Value Proposition (What)

Chapter 3 - Migration from Planning to Innovation Strategy (How)

Part Two: Architecting a Future

Chapter 4 - Knowledge Economics

Chapter 5 - Knowledge Structure

Chapter 6 - Knowledge Workers

Chapter 7 - Knowledge Processes

Chapter 8 - Knowledge Processing Technology

Part Three: The Globe as a Network

Chapter 9 - ENTOVATION - A Case Story

Chapter 10 - The E100 Global Momentum of Knowledge Strategy

Chapter 11 - Trends of Innovation Strategy

Part Four: Innovation Leadership in Practice

Chapter 12 - Modern Knowledge Leadership: 7C's

Chapter 13 - Exemplar Ken Practitioners

Chapter 14 - Evolving Innovation Infrastructures

Part Five The Millennium Vision

Chapter 15 - The Knowledge Millennium Generation

Chapter 16 - Blueprint for 21st Century Innovation

Chapter 17 - Creating the World Trade of Ideas

For the past ten years, Amidon has linked experts in 90 countries from around the world – industrialized and developing nations - in a virtual ENTOVATION Network that recently convened in New York City for a 'Roundtable on Collaborative Advantage.' Interviews and trend analysis reveal that: "A new economic world order is emerging – one that is based upon knowledge (not technology), innovation systems (not value chains) stakeholder success (not satisfaction) and international collaboration (not competition)."

Finally, we have a book to crystallize the concepts into practical frameworks with international vision that moves aspirations into actionable strategies. The Innovation SuperHighway is about people – the social and technical networks that shape our future. The opportunity is now ours.

Review by [Boris Pluskowski](#):

Debra Amidon has long been recognized as a visionary in the Knowledge Strategy world and was one of the first to recognize the role that KM would play in enabling Innovation as a fundamental part of any business.

She has since been a stalwart on the conference circuit, educating major corporations and major governments around the world on the necessity of Innovation (or "knowledge in action" as she sometimes likes to put it) and how to do it right. With her latest book, she not only traces back through the history of KM & Innovation, she also puts out her latest thoughts on the process of Innovation - "...the creation, evolution, and commercialization of new ideas into products and services."

Unlike other authors, Debra looks at the Innovation process not just from a corporate standpoint, but also from a government standpoint giving us case studies, stories, and insights into the importance of Knowledge and Innovation at the Macro level. With this kind of change in viewpoint levels, it's obvious that this won't be of relevance to everyone from cover to cover - however, selective reading of the chapters that relate to your level and to your interests will not disappoint, and for anyone approaching the Innovation process from a KM standpoint, this book should be considered a must-read reference to understand the process intimately. Highly recommended.

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Reading List

Global Perspectives

by [Madanmohan Rao](#)

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The Innovation Superhighway: Harnessing Intellectual Capital for Sustainable Collaborative Advantage by Debra M. Amidon. Butterworth Heinemann (2003).

The knowledge movement is picking up momentum in terms of focus on objectives (such as innovation) and global scope (via international organisations and fora). *The Innovation Superhighway* captures useful insights along both dimensions. It also brings together in one compact volume a wide array of perspectives ranging from organisational communication for corporate innovation to national knowledge initiatives for poverty alleviation in developing countries.

Debra Amidon is CEO and founder of Entovation International (www.entovation.com), a research and consulting network spanning 80 countries, and the author of numerous publications including *Managing the Knowledge Assets into the 21st Century*, *Innovation Strategy for the Knowledge Economy*, *Creating the Knowledge-based Business*, *Collaborative Innovation and the Knowledge Economy*, *The Architectural Primer for Knowledge Innovation*, and *The Global Knowledge Primer*.

The material is presented in 17 chapters (with a surprising number of typos, unfortunately) and thoroughly referenced. Useful online resources are included.

The momentum of the knowledge movement and the explosion of the Internet globally can now help ideas move from the point of origin to the point of opportunity (eg. global business) or the point of need (eg. to eradicate world poverty), Amidon begins.

"Positioning for the knowledge economy requires explicit management of the process of innovation for enterprise success, national vitality and societal advancement," according to Amidon. Knowledge is the source of new economic wealth, and innovation is the process by which that wealth is converted into action. We now live in an era of "kaleidoscopic change" marked by the speed of change of multiple variables as well as their compounding, inter-related effects.

The knowledge movement includes initiatives at numerous levels: corporate, industry, thinktank (eg. Brookings Institute, National Research Council) national policy (eg. in Singapore, China, Sweden), regional policy (eg. EU Knowledge Conference), multilateral organisations (eg. Global Knowledge Partnership), and independent networks (eg. Entovation).

Its formal manifestation includes professional societies, fora (eg. European KM Forum), accreditation programs, corporate accounting mechanisms (eg. Skandia Navigator, balanced scorecard) and even an intellectual capital index for an entire country (eg. World Bank's Knowledge for Development indicators).

"Of course, knowledge has always been an essential element in the advancement of civilisation, but today's emerging economy proposes that knowledge be managed explicitly," according to Amidon. The high value that is being placed on knowledge and the practices to explicitly manage it are new features of our era.

At the enterprise level, the challenge for companies is to manage their "innovation infrastructure" to create and commercialise ideas continually; this calls for addressing obsolescence of knowledge assets, overcoming corporate memory loss, creation of standards and policies, and promoting a culture of knowledge absorption. Organisations must migrate from knowledge management to knowledge innovation, from value chains to value systems, from competitive to collaborative relationships, from best practices to new practices. Such analysis and measurement may be least understood, but are the most critical for future success. Exposure and research via visiting scientists, research fellows, intrapreneurs and technology scouts play an important role here.

For knowledge workers, this means focusing on systems thinking, personal skills, mental models, shared vision and team learning. Numerous managerial positions are now being created for chief knowledge officer, chief learning officer, chief leadership officer, and chief innovation officer; other emerging roles include knowledge engineer, knowledge editor, knowledge cataloguer, knowledge analyst, knowledge broker, knowledge handyman, knowledge steward, knowledge facilitator and competitive intelligence professional.

Key knowledge processes to focus on for innovation include systematisation of information flows, striking a balance with creative chaos, storytelling, and sparking imagination and inspiration. The future belongs to those who have the willingness, imagination, and innovation tools to venture into the unknown, according to Amidon. Roadmaps and checklists are provided by the author for putting knowledge strategies in place.

In terms of vision and direction, knowledge leadership must fulfill the "Seven Cs" -- context, competence, culture, communities, conversations, communications and coaching. This applies not just to top management but all employees in an organisation.

Two sections of the book provide informative results from a survey on knowledge and innovation conducted among 100 knowledge experts (members of the Entovation network), and profiles of some of the activities of 20 knowledge practitioners.

The survey results cover challenges faced on the knowledge frontier (eg. too much hype, need for change within society, supporting mechanisms for knowledge practitioners, new tools to manage knowledge) and desirable goals in the knowledge movement (eg. make the knowledge opportunity more public, create an innovation culture, capture stories of success and failures).

The profiles of the 20 knowledge practitioners from around the world make for very interesting reading, and reflect the flavours of the international knowledge movement such as regional fora, KM portals, youth initiatives, leadership programs, networks of e-lancers, technology transfer partnerships, technopolis frameworks, standards boards, and indigenous knowledge.

One chapter focuses on the knowledge movement in developing countries and emerging economies (for goals like capacity building, better healthcare, improved governance), such as Global Knowledge Partnership (hosted in Malaysia), Development Gateway, and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). "The knowledge agenda has actually created a level playing field and inspired developing countries to innovate their own future," claims Amidon.

The book touches on numerous interesting concepts, such as collaboratories, the holonomy, an atlas for innovation, bionomics, connection opportunities, sensing systems, presencing, knowledge cells, ideas banks, knowledge visualisation and futurising.

Looking further down the road, Amidon draws on the results of a youth forum called "Rethinking Knowledge" to identify emerging shifts from sharing knowledge to sharing meaning, from mere novelty in consumerism to sustainable experiences.

Amidon echoes Peter Drucker's claims that innovation, along with the ability to measure its performance, is the one competence needed for the future. Society is moving to the "sixth wave" of management where the future is viewed as the asset; the preceding waves focused on technology, projects, enterprise, customer and knowledge as the asset.

The collective learning yet to be fully realised on a global scale is enormous. "The intellectual capital of the world is being unleashed -- one person at a time," says Amidon. The knowledge economy (as opposed to the information or digital economy) provides a human and humane agenda; the ultimate goal is to build not only an informed or knowledgeable society but a wise one.

"I wonder, now, how the story of the evolution of a knowledge economy will be written in the next thousand years," Amidon concludes.

[destinationKM editor-at-large Madanmohan Rao is the author of The Asia-Pacific Internet Handbook].

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