



# Organizational Effectiveness and Computer-Based Collaboration

## Case Studies

Eric Wilson  
President, BRANE space LLC  
[www.branespace.com](http://www.branespace.com)



# Case Studies

- ⊗ A mid-sized BioPharma
- ⊗ A small Biotech

# Summary

- ⊗ Improved collaboration using computer-mediated technology improves organizational effectiveness
- ⊗ Fuzzy measurements
- ⊗ Human, cultural, and process issues strongly influence the outcome
- ⊗ IT is both an enabler and a stumbling block

# The technology

- ⊗ A web-based, structured “collaborative space”, supporting collaboration, communication, and coordination in context for teams engaged in complex projects/processes
- ⊗ Why is this technology a good platform for BioPharma?
  - ⊗ Needs improved R&D productivity
  - ⊗ Cross functional teams
  - ⊗ Inter-enterprise collaboration
  - ⊗ Geographical dispersion
  - ⊗ Broad range of (corporate) culture backgrounds

# Case study 1: A mid-sized BioPharma

- Background
  - Privately held family-owned business
  - Worldwide operations
  - New management, new products, new ambitions
  - Pre IPO
- Business uses of collaborative technology
  - Drug development process management
  - Business development deal management
  - Supply chain redesign projects
  - Research collaborations
  - Process redesign projects
  - others

# Results

- ⊗ Substantial growth in number of users and project spaces over time, however,
- ⊗ “Mixed” results – some good, some bad
- ⊗ No enterprise-wide change management program integrating new management principles and technology
- ⊗ Seen as an “IT matter”, not an integral part of the company’s competitive strategy

# One failure to learn from

- ⊗ Effective collaboration *not* achieved
  - ⊗ Very complex project – collecting and standardizing data from many sources for an NDA
  - ⊗ Multiple geographies, internal organizations
  - ⊗ Outside service providers
  - ⊗ Little agreement on process persisting over time
  - ⊗ Strong turf politics
  - ⊗ Fear of transparency, accountability, flattening hierarchy
  - ⊗ Unclear leadership
  - ⊗ Little organizational, behavioral, process support during introduction, none after
  - ⊗ After one year, used principally as a common repository for documents

# Case Study 2: A small Biotech

- ⊗ Background
  - ⊗ Publicly traded
  - ⊗ Localized operations
  - ⊗ Growth from one drug development program to Five
  - ⊗ Many new hires
- ⊗ Business uses of collaborative technology
  - ⊗ Drug development process management
  - ⊗ Other areas starting to adopt it

# Results

- ⊗ Improved teamwork, coordination, accountability achieved through improved collaboration under strong leadership
- ⊗ Process redesigned during introduction to first development program, then embedded in the technology and extended to other programs (by mandate!)

# One success to learn from

- ⊗ This was a “good one”
  - ⊗ Compelling need to standardize the process
  - ⊗ Ratio of new hires drove need to establish a “shared context” – the standard process
  - ⊗ Leadership constantly fostered collaboration in connection with accountability
  - ⊗ The technology was but one of a number of supports for collaboration
  - ⊗ Leadership took responsibility to introduce and support a new way of working supported by technology
  - ⊗ An integral element of the company’s competitive strategy, constantly communicated.

# Lessons learned - technology

- ⊗ Amplifies “good” and “bad”
- ⊗ Neutral element, doesn't care
- ⊗ Can be a distraction from the real issues (Eastern flight 401)
- ⊗ Can be an excuse (too busy chopping down the tree to sharpen the saw)
- ⊗ Leadership - needs to be adopted (Tina Turner provides guidance here)
- ⊗ But one element for improved collaboration
- ⊗ Lack of interoperability is a major hindrance

# Lessons learned – Human/Cultural

- ✦ Corporate culture is determinant
- ✦ A strong majority needs to understand and adopt a collaborative approach
- ✦ Effective leadership is paramount
- ✦ Identification of “collaboration land-mines” and their de-fusing takes courage
- ✦ Process clarity significantly impacts collaboration

# Conclusion

- Collaboration as a tool for driving organizational effectiveness depends upon:
  - Leadership
  - Nurturing
  - Clarity
  - Commitment
  - Coaching
- On-going consulting – whether provided internally or externally, is a major determinant