



Navigating Partnerships in a Post-COVID World

How to Create and Leverage
Better Partnerships in a
Shifting Landscape

a collaborative thought paper
with ideas contributed by members of the Venn community
through a series of interactive, conversational webinars

by Dorothy Air and Henry Pavey



venn
collaborative

September 2022

Preface

As our name indicates Venn Collaborative is centered on the value of partnerships. At our core is a belief that convening, listening, talking, and sharing are key to making an impact. One such convening was a series of webinars that Venn organized in April and May of 2022 on the topic of post-COVID partnerships. To us this was an urgent topic—better partnerships are urgent because today's challenges are urgent, and it's our belief that working together is the way to create the best outcomes. This means partnership is part of everyone's work, whether on a smalltown city council, or part of an international NGO leading research on how to address global challenges.

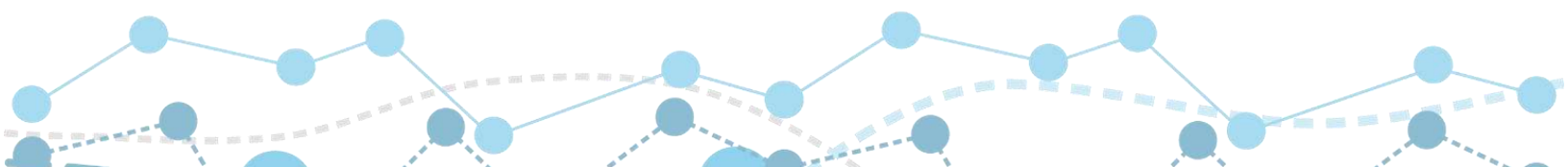
We called on two valued contributors to Venn Collaborative, Dorothy Air and Henry Pavey, partnership professionals who have dedicated a significant portion of their careers to improving collaboration among stakeholders to create better outcomes and increased impact.

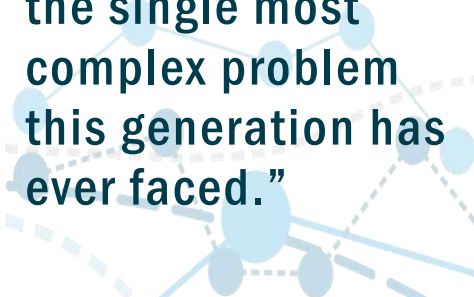
Dorothy and Henry began by hosting a series of interactive, conversational webinars, gathering ideas, perspectives, and experiences from members of the Venn community. Dorothy and Henry brought those views, and their own, to this collaborative thought paper.

We hope you find the ideas here stimulating and helpful to you in your partnership work. Please enjoy the paper and consider this your invitation to join the Venn community. We will continue the conversation about best ways to realize the promise of effective partnerships in this post-pandemic [through this topical discussion](#) in our online community space.

Jim Woodell, Ph.D.

Founder, Principal, and CEO
Venn Collaborative





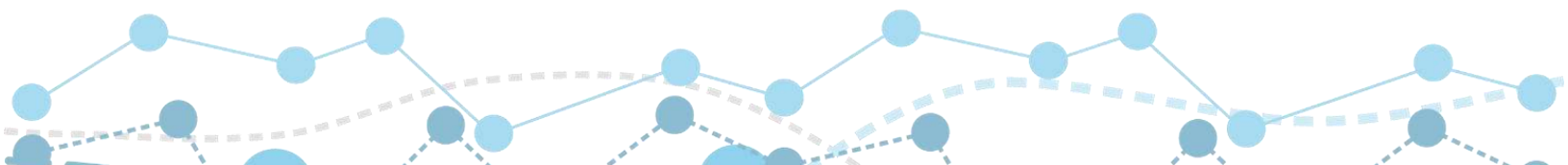
“The pandemic is the single most complex problem this generation has ever faced.”

There is no doubt that the experiences during the last two-and-a-half years of the pandemic have reshaped the world and altered how we work and interact with others. Status quo has been challenged and previously unconsidered realities have begun to set in. We are still asking ourselves what all of this means and how we move forward. Is our goal to go back to “normal?” Did we ever have “normal?” Is “normal” even a good thing?

The pandemic is the single most complex problem this generation has ever faced. All facets of life have been affected, and we now have a deep understanding of what ‘living in a globally interdependent world’ means. Our coping strategies have gone through the phases of: “deer caught in the headlights,” “crisis mode,” “getting through today,” “keeping afloat,” and more recently “proactive thinking.” The ground under our feet is still shifting as we begin to fully appreciate the many instabilities and interdependencies of our lives and the world at large.

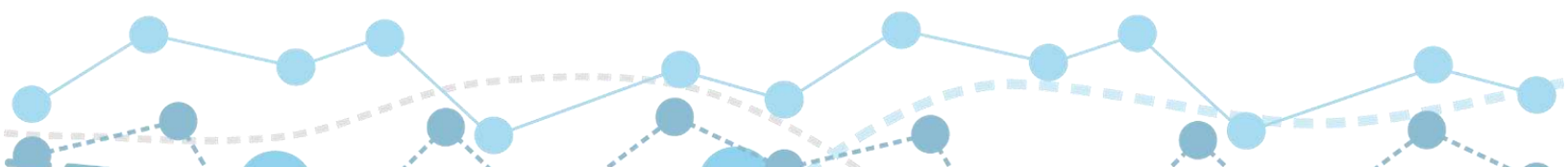
So how do we move forward in this new world reality? It is widely known that solving highly complex problems requires bringing together creative and diverse minds, focused strategic planning, and a pooling of resources across critical entities. What this means is that partnerships have **never been more important than they are today**. Yet, our pandemic experiences have greatly impacted partnership strategies as we work from home, relate to each other virtually, and slip into new and more individualized and linear patterns—sometimes without realizing it.

This collaborative thought paper is intended to begin an important discussion about partnerships and how we leverage them to solve problems in the post-pandemic era. The paper is the result of a series of interactive, conversational webinars with thought leaders from around the globe that addressed the following questions:



1. What have we lost and gained related to partnerships and collaborations over the last 2 years?
2. What are senior leaders' partnership expectations of activities, issues, and outcomes?
3. What does the 'new normal' for partnerships look and feel like, and what parameters/values should guide them?
4. What kind of developers, managers and leaders are needed to make things happen in the new normal?

In the pages that follow we summarize and reflect on the conversations we had about these questions and share our own insights about developing and sustaining partnerships strategies in this new world. Our own biographies as well as names of participants in the webinar discussion can be found at the end of the document.



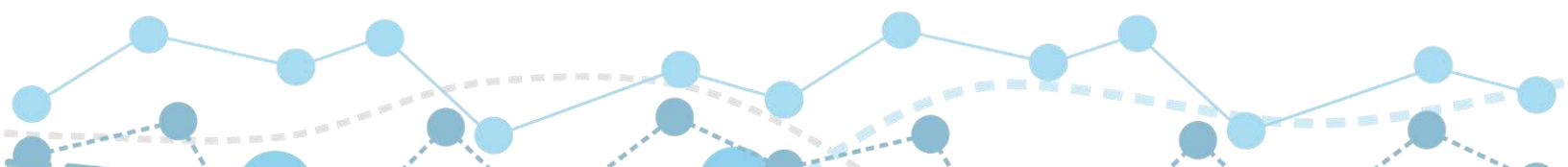
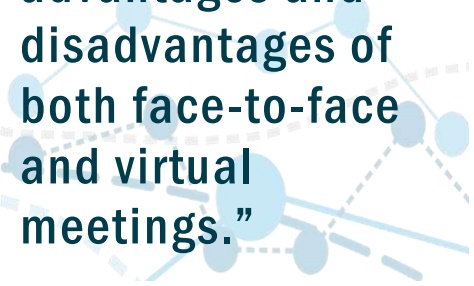
PART ONE: GAINS AND LOSSES RELATED TO PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Crises have significant impact, but they do not always lead to negative outcomes. Understanding both gains and losses resulting from crises provides a foundation for building the future. The pandemic fallout was swift and severe. With our paradigms, beliefs and strategies significantly challenged, we can now critically assess how we responded. Our efforts to adapt and survive have taught us much that can make us—and our partnerships—stronger, but only if we heed what we have learned.

COVID has provided a perspective of both the advantages and disadvantages of technological—in specific, virtual—approaches to conducting business. We have developed insights into the importance of relationships and valuing time together, while figuring out how to use technology advantageously to increase agility and efficiency. The pandemic has forced us to assess old and new practices, to discover the depth of our ability to adapt and respond, to develop new skills, and to solidify our resolve to succeed despite barriers and challenges. Going forward, the extent to which we succeed depends on how well we balance the advantages and disadvantages of both face-to-face and virtual meetings as well as how we leverage our relationships and strengthen our partnerships to embrace uncertainty, innovate, and solve complex problems.

We also observe that in an age where technology is so highly valued and its use so rapidly increasing, it is important to realize that the pandemic has also reminded us of a lesson from the past: namely the importance of personal and partnership relationships, and why these are often best forged in person.

“Going forward, the extent to which we succeed depends on how well we balance the advantages and disadvantages of both face-to-face and virtual meetings.”



Specific Gains and Losses We Heard from Our Informants

GAINS

Although the effects of the pandemic varied according to work environments and types of organizations, our discussions with a diverse set of colleagues have uncovered many commonalities in perceived gains. We have categorized these into the themes below:

Attitudinal Gains

- An increased “can do” spirit and sense of survival as we battled to defeat the common enemy of COVID-19.
- An increased understanding of the importance of urgency in activities and partnership interactions.
- More creativity and agile mindsets in navigating established rules and norms to reduce excuses and barriers to progress.
- A greater appreciation for face-to-face partnership meetings to create a ‘sense of occasion’ and to recognize the tremendous work being done together.
- An increased sense of individual empowerment in making things happen.

Strategy Gains

- Increased flexibility and ability to respond more quickly.
- More intentionality around relationship and partnership building.
- Better planning and preparation for meetings and conferences.
- Greater adaptability and agility.
- Advancements in use of meeting and workflow technologies.
- New skills development among employees.

Relationship Gains

- Recognition that virtual meeting platforms are a viable option and can be useful in maintaining partnership relationships when properly positioned, as they
 - Generate more efficiency for routine decisions;



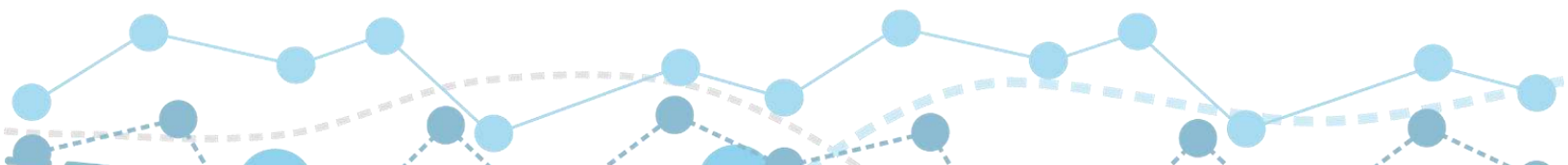
- Make meetings more accessible to a broader range of people; and
 - Add more discipline into meetings for increased productivity.
- Recognition that technology cannot replace in-person meetings, but can play a supporting role in
 - Relationship building and trust;
 - Strategic planning;
 - Creative thinking; and
 - Addressing complex problems and situations.
- Greater understanding of the need to identify and focus on what is important.
- Greater appreciation of the most important partners and key relationships they represent.

LOSSES

Nearly all the topic area discussions that led to this thought paper had an element of loss when it came to the pandemic's substitution of a virtual world for personal connections. Although this substitution was driven by necessity, there were substantial consequences.

Relationship Losses

- Reduced ability to build trust and value-creating relationships.
- Reduction in high quality face-to-face discussions that Zoom can never replicate.
- Loss of sense of togetherness, complete with important side-line conversations—the 'we are all in this together' analogy.
- Limited social opportunities for relationship building.
- Reduced shared identity.
- Increased time and struggle in creating new and/or better partnerships in a virtual environment.



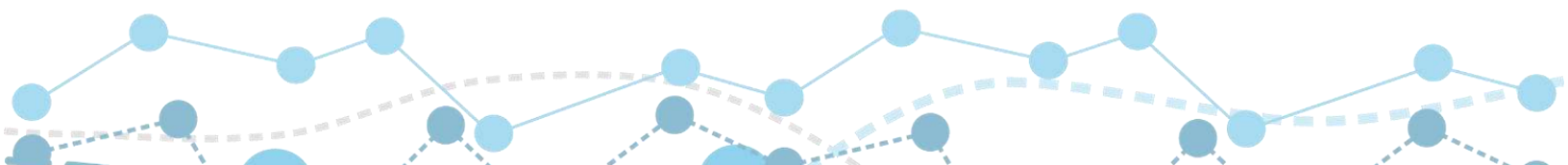
Outcome Losses

- Reduced ability to address complex and/or sensitive issues.
- More attention to short term action rather than long-term visioning, deep thinking, and strategizing.
- Increased emphasis on working as an individual at home rather than as a team member.
- Recognition of the importance of in-person meetings but reluctance to make the time and effort required to return to face-to-face meetings.
- Loss of "collision" opportunities that occur naturally in interpersonal interactions.

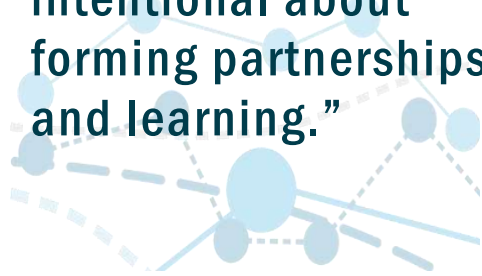
Questions to Consider

What gains and losses have you experienced in your partnership work because of the pandemic? Are there items on each side of the list that provide insights about how to move forward?

[Continue the conversation at Venn Community.](#)



PART TWO: SENIOR LEADER PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES: EXPECTATIONS OF ACTIVITIES, ISSUES, AND OUTCOMES



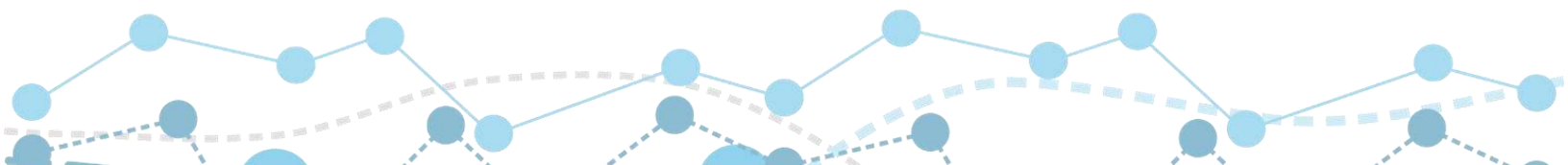
“How can you deal with something if you don’t know it’s there? The answer lies in being more intentional about forming partnerships and learning.”

The role of partnerships in improving outcomes and creating new opportunities is widely valued as a key strategy for success. However, productive partnerships do not automatically occur because a group of individuals are together discussing a joint project. True partnerships are intricate and require ongoing nurturing. They involve sharing knowledge and resources, open and honest communication, and an understanding of the issues from all perspectives. Recognizing that the pandemic altered the way we work together, the questions are ‘How have the ways we navigate through our partnership opportunities and issues changed? and what hasn’t changed?’

To explore this topic, the focus of our second webinar was on three questions related to senior leaders and their partnership expectations.

1. What are the **spoken issues**—the partnership issues that senior leaders talk about?
2. What are the **unspoken but known issues**—the partnership issues that senior leaders have and know they have—but don’t talk about?
3. What are the **unknown issues**—the important partnership issues that senior leaders may not recognize and therefore do not talk about?

Sorting issues into what is spoken, what is known but not spoken, and what is not known provides a very interesting framework for thinking about partnership success. The items listed in each category are not comprehensive but, for anyone



who has been in partnership relationships, they are likely representative of situations they have experienced, and the pandemic has intensified these issues.

The content below is organized on these three questions (although there is a lot of overlap, as all these issues often track back to relationships). Our three main observations:

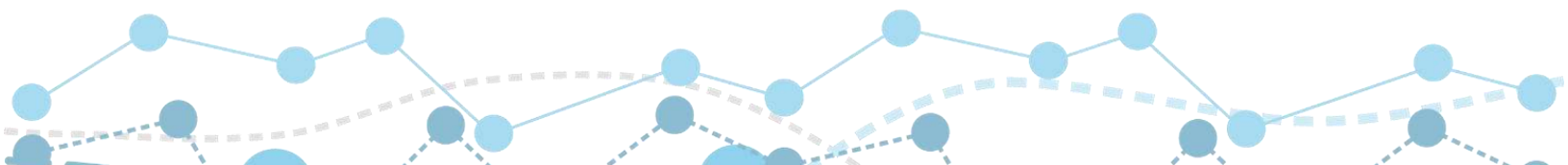
1. **What is readily spoken tends to be superficial.**
2. **What is known, but not spoken, is a conflict avoidance strategy that involves important issues that can prevent the partnership from maximizing its full potential.**
3. **Addressing what is not known is a conundrum.** How can you deal with something if you don't know it's there? The answer lies in being more intentional about forming partnerships and learning about what the elements of productive partnerships include. This is best undertaken by a trusted advisor or honest broker who can take senior leaders and partnerships on a partnership development journey in a non-judgmental or non-confrontational safe space way and, therefore, being better prepared collectively to identify and consider the previously unknown issues.

Attention to what we are saying and how we are saying, as well as identifying trusted figures who can help leaders develop partnerships, become even more urgent post-COVID, where the number of unspoken or unknown issues has increased significantly.

Here is detail on each of these types of issues.

Spoken Issues

These are the 'comfortable conversations' in which senior leaders engage. They are an important part of the dialogue, but they tend to avoid sensitive or controversial issues and focus more on the 'feel good' or platitudinal aspects of partnership.



Statements, such as these, are representative of what leaders often say:

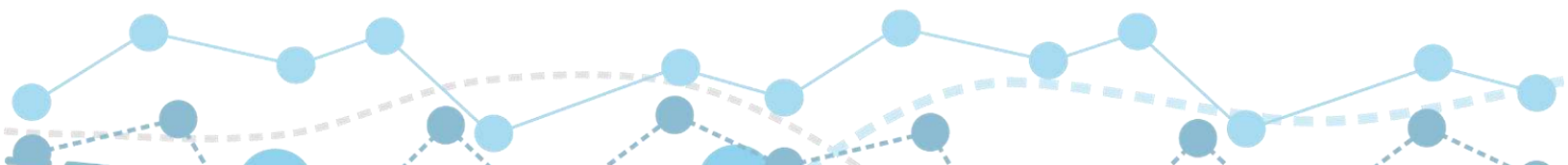
- We all trust each other. (This is more implied than spoken!)
- We must work together to tackle complex and wicked issues.
- We need to collaborate to improve our place and/or our peoples' lives.
- We want to create real shared value—the $1 + 1 = 3$ equation.
- We need to provide value for investments and pooled resources, and/or get more bang from the collective buck.
- The need to coordinate partnership communications and engagement activities is critical to success.
- Partnerships are important in bringing innovation to the table.

Unspoken but Known Issues

In partnerships, there are challenging issues that arise when interacting with partners. These are the 'uncomfortable conversations' that senior leaders know are needed but want to sidestep. It is an avoidance tactic built on the hope that 'the issue will somehow resolve itself' without having to confront and engage in difficult conversations. Although there are many issues that fall into this category, some of the issues that rise to the top in the post-COVID context are the following:

Interpersonal Issues

- Underlying lack of trust between partners.
- Interpersonal conflict and differences of opinion.
- Power relationships being questioned by remote meetings and working.
- Zoom screens creating a flattening of hierarchies.
- Lack of partnership principles as a fundamental strategy for strengthening relationships.



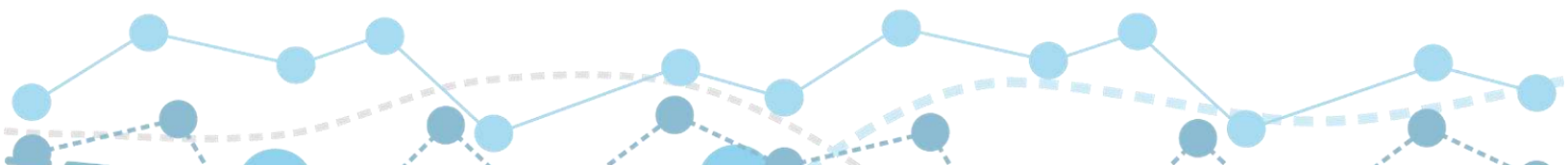
- Worries that sharing control leads to a lack of control or perception of leadership weakness.
- Challenges of building and sustaining long-term value-creating relationships.
- The people/power/politics of it all!

Process

- Slower speed of delivery – want agility, not bureaucratic and formulaic approaches.
- Lack of Accountability Rules for delivering on responsibilities – both individually and collectively.
- Concerns that aspirational common denominators lead to ‘dumbing down’ partnership potential.
- Not being bold or ambitious enough.
- Intellectual Property and ownership/use issues.
- How resources are contributed and/or distributed within the partnership.
- Confidentiality and privacy.
- Worries about ‘Black Swan’ events in the post-pandemic world (Unpredictable events outside of normal situational expectations that have potentially severe consequences).

Unknown Issues

Many talented senior leaders are not well versed or expert in how to make collaborations / partnerships work to their fullest extent. The dominant focus is on delivery, which means that the conversation often shifts quickly from ‘visioning to delivery’. Unfortunately, this approach misses the vital partnership organizational and collaborative culture elements that are critical for success, and risks creating a culture where the unknown issues do not surface and would not be welcome topics if they did. Some of the unrecognized issues identified during this discussion included the following:



Interpersonal/Cultural Aspects

- Limited understanding of the elements that build trust and relationships between diverse partners, including (but not limited to) co-creation, shared delivery, collaborative problem-solving, celebrating success, learning and review, and the importance of doing this work together.
- What real partnership working entails and the sustained commitment required.
- How to make the partnership work efficiently, effectively, and engagingly, coupled with co-created rules for working together.

Process Aspects

- The tricky balance between the short term needs for action and delivery versus the relationship building needed for the longer term.
- The danger of status-quo (“we have always done partnership working like this”) mindsets.
- Not knowing, imagining, or discussing what excellent partnership working should look and feel like and then then building an operating model around it. (Even more difficult in new partnerships that begin virtually.)
- The importance of stakeholder analysis and network mapping – understanding who else is out there (not at the table) who can help.
- The ‘engine room capacity’ needed to drive and progress the partnership’s work program outside of the formal partnership meetings.
- How technology can and cannot help.
- Questions related to knowledge transfer.



Results Aspects

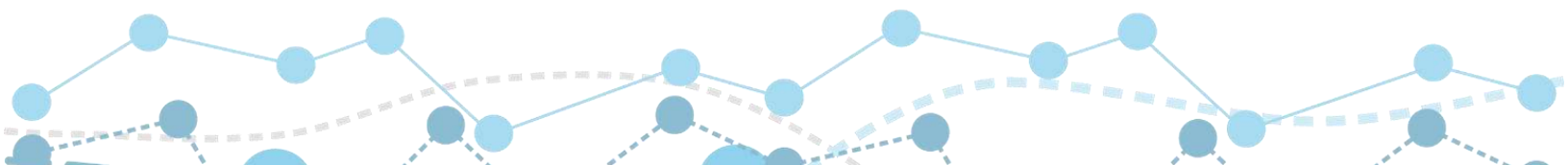
- The ‘you never know what you don’t know – until you must face it’ dynamic.
- Securing real emotional attachment to the partnership itself and not just the outcomes it is seeking to deliver.
- Lack of investment (time, money, capacity, etc.) in partnership development activities that strengthen long-term value-creating relationships.

As the conversation on this topic evolved, an additional question was raised: “Is there a difference in partnership focus, perceptions, and expectations by senior leaders related to the nature, size, and/or influence of the partnership organizations?” For instance, are there differences in large corporations vs. universities vs. small businesses vs. government agencies? This is a question that may be overlooked when contemplating and first establishing partnerships, yet the answer can have important consequences related to how different partners are valued, their ability to influence interactions, level of engagement, trust, and outcomes. Some of the implications of this question presented are:

- Uncovering unspoken, but key, aspects of developing sustainable relationships and longer-term collaborative ethos.
- Recognizing that effective partnerships work in networks that balance flexibility with discipline vs. hierarchical top-down models.
- Embracing the new thinking and emphasis on the world of networks to solve complex problems.

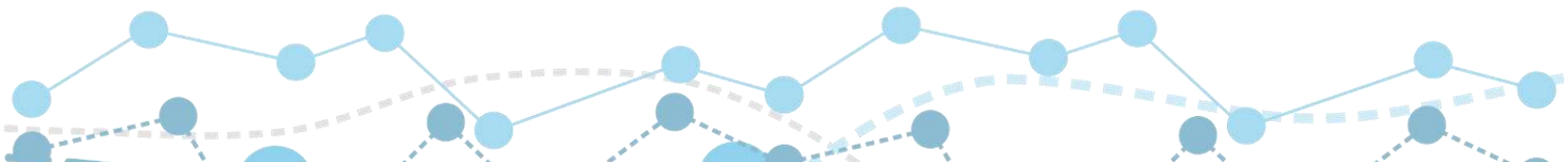
Questions to Consider

The spoken, known, but unspoken, and unknown categories are useful in considering leadership (for the leaders themselves and those who work with them).



If you think about these elements in your context, what are the implications, and what needs to be addressed to improve partnerships?

[Continue the conversation at Venn Community.](#)



PART THREE: CREATING NORMAL

In this conversation we explored a broad question around “What will the ‘new normal’ for partnerships look and feel like—what kinds of things should define this ‘new normal’?” Any discussion of a ‘new normal’ has a built-in assumption that there was an ‘prior normal’. Whether that was the case is, itself, an interesting concept to explore. Here are the questions that guided the discussion of what we want ‘normal’ to look like going forward:

1. What do we want the ‘new normal’ for partnerships to **look like**?
2. What do we want the ‘new normal’ for partnerships to **feel like**?
3. **What kinds of values** should guide this partnership ‘new normal’?

“The burning question is whether the ‘new normal’ we yearn for is any different than what we strived for in the past?”

The burning question for this topic is whether the ‘new normal’ we yearn for is any different than what we strived for in the past? Many of the characteristics of partnerships that people seek now have been well documented in the partnership literature of the past and represent ideas that are frequently part of our conversations. There are some nuances related to the pandemic, however, such as dealing with physical barriers to in-person interactions. Considering these nuances has perhaps given us a better appreciation for what we have always wanted in partnerships in the first place. To achieve these, we have also brought intentionality in strategy into sharper focus.

A challenge to our thinking is that, perhaps, the ‘new normal’ is **aspirational and an on-going evolution rather than an end point**. Perhaps the concept of “normalcy” is itself a limiting paradigm with its implications that “we have arrived.”

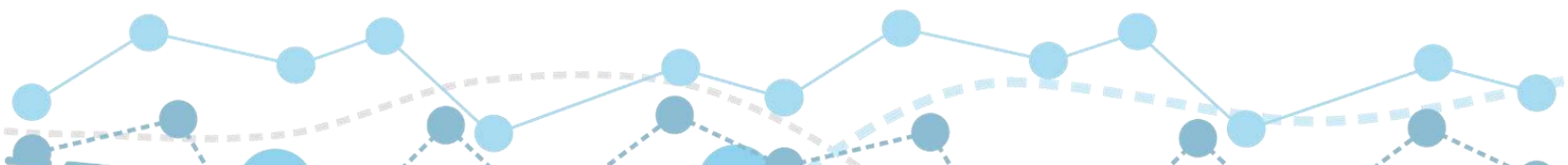
Much interesting conversation on this topic took place, with the following key points:

The Look of the 'New Normal' for Partnerships

- Strong brand and reputation; known for getting things done.
- Explicit commitment to co-created partnership principles and practices.
- Capturing 'intentionality' within a living document—but noted that such a document can be hard to implement, maintain and modify.
- Embracing online collaboration and document sharing tools where they add value.
- The attitude and enthusiasm of all partners shines through.
- Getting the right people around the right tables to look at the right issues at the right time.
- All meetings clearly aligned to the shared vision or purpose of the partnership.

The Feel of the 'New Normal' for Partnerships

- Well-oiled machine; working for the greater good.
- Feeling of interdependency; functioning as a collective team rather than as a group of individuals.
- Strong sense of belonging.
- Placing high value on partnership 'together time.'
- Safe, respectful, and trusting relationships.
- Open communication that encourages everyone to bring up issues and share ideas.
- Very creative, highly agile, positive can-do attitude with a strong sense of urgency.
- Compelling shared vision (call to action)—we are doing something amazing together.



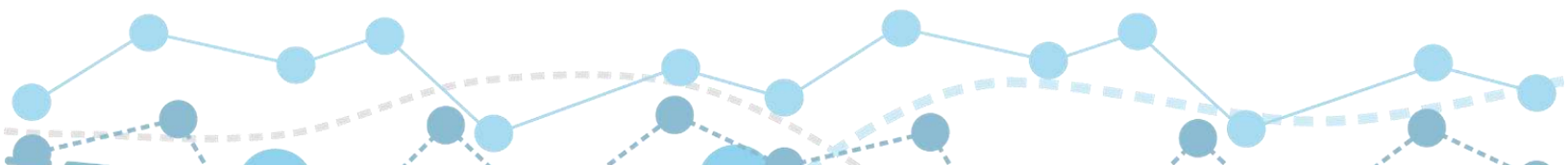
Guiding Partnership Values for Achieving 'New Normal'

- Emotional attachment from senior leaders.
- Egalitarianism.
- Checking egos at the door.
- Co-created and agreed-upon house rules setting out the required behaviors and expectations of all partners.

Questions to Consider

Has the pandemic brought to the surface partnership goals that you have always aimed for? If so, has this affected your strategic focus? Has your lens on the ideal characteristics of partnerships changed in any other ways?

[Continue the conversation at Venn Community.](#)



PART FOUR: PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In this conversation we explored a broad question around ‘What have we learned from pre- and post-covid experiences to create high impact ‘new normal’ partnerships?’ The discussion considered two aspects of this question:

1. How partnerships should be structured for attaining high impact outcomes
2. What are the kinds of people, roles, and responsibilities needed to make things happen in the ‘new normal’

“It is important to recognize that partnerships provide a brain trust that opens the door to bigger thinking and brand-new opportunities.”

Regardless of whether we are talking about pre- or post-pandemic times, this is a long overdue topic of conversation.

Partnerships do not thrive on their own - they require a great deal of intentionality and planning related to structure and types of roles needed to maximize the potential of the partnership.

Past approaches have often relied on doing business as usual. The ideas that resulted from this segment offer much to consider in forming new partnerships and re-positioning existing partnerships. Highlights from this conversation include the following:

Partnership Structure to Attain High Impact Outcomes

- There is a need to move towards a more relational, dynamic ecosystem approach.
- Relational models need ‘network weavers’ and high levels of trust.
- Relational models need strategic oversight, and they need a high-level board.



- Adaptive challenges need networks; technical challenges need hierarchies.

Types of People Needed and Roles and Responsibilities in 'New Normal' Partnerships

Reflection on new models also necessitates consideration of the types of people and roles needed within new operational models. While many familiar roles will remain in place, there are three types of people who will play new and more targeted roles in 'new normal' partnerships.

Developers, managers, and leaders are familiar to us and, again, these roles are not new concepts. In the past, Developers, Managers, and Leaders were recognized roles. However, the responsibilities associated with these roles have not always been well defined and held as primary obligations. In the past, roles have been assigned to those sitting at the table, regardless of their existing work responsibilities, and whether or not they were experts. These new responsibilities represented add-on work to their primary job and had to be fit into already demanding workloads. In this way, although partnership roles and responsibilities were recognized, this recognition did not extend to the point of making the necessary investment to hire for the roles or develop staff. Instead, there was an assumption that someone on the team could perform the responsibilities.

Likewise, operational structures evolved as the work of the partnership progressed, rather than resulting from assessment of need up front and development of a specific structure intended to support the partnership. These are issues that track back to the assumption that the project leadership and partnership status can be status quo and will work out in existing staffing plans and organizational structures. Yet, worryingly, many strategic partnerships across the world struggle to deliver on their promise and never unleash their full potential due to three key reasons:

1. Lack of investment (time and money) in systematic **partnership development** activities focused on building



partnership excellence, commitment, strengthening trust and building value-creating relationships.

2. Lack of investment (consideration, time, and money) into the **partnership management** role and skills needed (the engine room!) to make the partnership work.
3. Lack of **emotional attachment** by partners to the partnership itself and its shared vision

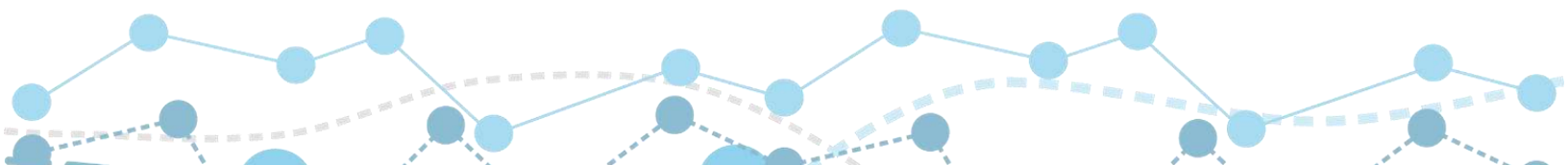
What do the people filling these roles need in a post-pandemic world?

Developers—Those who provide professional advice and guidance in *designing* partnerships - usually consultants.

- They need updated toolboxes and key learnings from what has and hasn't worked during Covid-19 to design partnerships for 2022 and beyond.
- They need to be able to confidently challenge the 'status quo'; showing senior leaders and partnerships why new approaches will produce better and faster outcomes.
- They need to be able to guide Managers and Leaders (see below) in the operation of the 'new normal' partnership – from concept, to implementation, to mainstream.

Managers—Those who *convene* partnerships—usually salaried employees but on occasion independent consultants.

- They need delegated strategic oversight and greater empowerment to keep 'the health of the total partnership system' under constant review.
- They need to have the confidence and experience to make recommendations to instigate partnership development interventions to address under-performance.



- They need to be a ‘trusted advisor/partnership working expert’ in the eyes of the Leaders—even though they are subordinate to them in hierarchical terms.

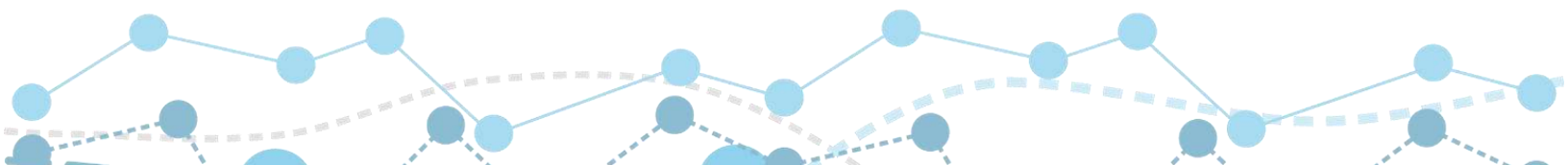
Leaders—Those who *sit on* partnership boards—usually senior leaders and decision makers from key partner organizations.

- They need to have a willingness to experiment and embrace new agile ways of working together; and not resort to going back to pre-pandemic default settings!
- They need to acknowledge that they are on a long journey together and, as such, the ‘health of the partnership’ needs to be kept under regular review.
- They need to be vocal champions for their partnership(s) by ‘selling a compelling story / narrative’ to influence others such as regional and national governments for additional resources and capacity
- They need Trusted Advisors / Honest Brokers who can explain and take senior leaders on a developmental journey in a non-judgmental / non-confrontational safe space way.

Questions to Consider

Developers, Managers, and Leaders exist in all partnership contexts, even if they are not formally recognized or called by those terms. Who plays these roles in your partnerships? What is their expertise for this role? And is this role compatible with their other duties? Do any of the bulleted items listed above have implications for their work?

[Continue the conversation at Venn Community.](#)



Conclusion

Much is still the same in the post pandemic world, but we have learned a great deal to carry us forward. If new learning is appropriately leveraged, we can come out of the pandemic era stronger. Partnerships will not go away because, in today's society, problems are too large and too complex to solve by single entities. Resource attraction and the array of resources needed are often beyond the means of any single organization, meaning that partnerships can succeed where single entities cannot. Finally, it is important to recognize that partnerships provide a brain trust that opens the door to bigger thinking and brand-new opportunities.

“The pandemic brought great challenges, but it also opened a path to stronger partnerships; this is an opportunity we should not let slip by.”

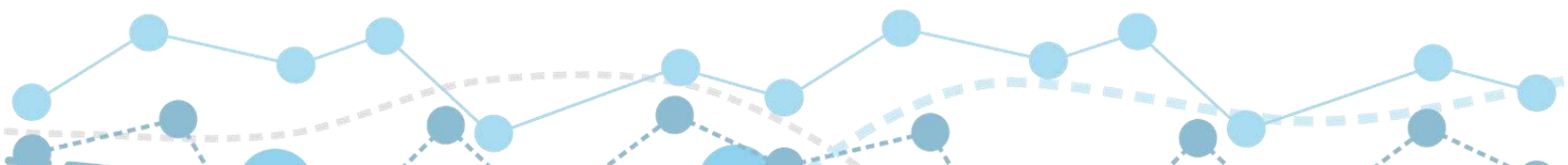
As we consider the ways in which our world has been forever changed, our ultimate success will require attention to having contingency plans for dealing with unpredicted challenges. New technologies and new skills for maximizing their use have opened the door for more people to participate, but roles are not always clear in a flattened hierarchy. New models will no doubt evolve. Circumstances are – at long last – forcing senior leaders and partnerships to pay more attention to what works and what does not work rather than conducting partnership business as we have always done it. This webinar series is only the beginning of a much-needed dialogue, and we close with five general recommendations. The pandemic brought great challenges, but it also opened a path to stronger partnerships, and is an opportunity we should not let slip by.

Venn Collaborative's Top 5 Recommendations

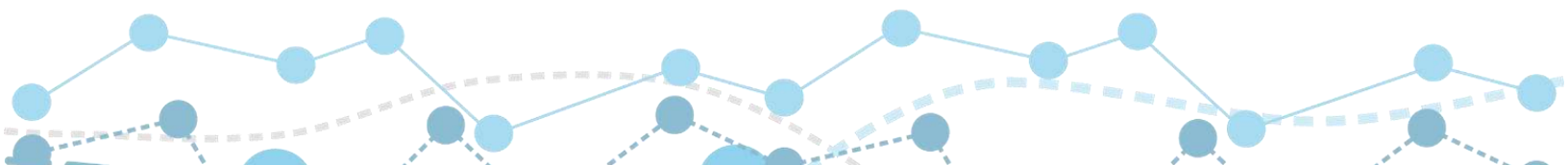
1. Partnerships are operating in an increasingly complex and uncertain world. As such, they need to be as agile as possible—working in a way that seeks to deliver shared value outcomes with maximum partnership flexibility and minimum partnership constraints.

2. Partnerships in the post-COVID world need an on-going commitment to systematic partnership development approaches and best practices to help them reach their full potential; otherwise, the magic will never happen.
3. All partnership members should be responsible and fully involved in the design, execution, and monitoring of their partnership; it should not be left to the backbone organization in isolation to determine what does and does not work. Skin-in-the-game is critical for securing partnership emotional attachment.
4. Partnerships need to focus not only on what they are seeking to deliver but, just as importantly, the *partnership culture* they wish to create that will facilitate accelerated delivery and better shared-value outcomes.
5. Partnership members collectively need to determine the level of partnership management (both program management and partnership development) capacity and expertise they need to help them get the very best out of working together and to accelerate delivery.

The snapshot of a changed world that we've offered here is also a call to action for better partnerships. If there is one overarching message we'd like to convey, it is that the world's challenges are best tackled—perhaps *only* tackled—together, and we hope that the ideas above have prompted ways to build that togetherness, and importantly, to act. Ideas are only as useful as what you do with them. We encourage you to share this information broadly and to use it to inspire discussion with stakeholders, community members, and throughout the networks you work in. And please stay connected. We invite you to continue the conversation at [Navigating Partnerships in a Post-COVID World](#) on Venn Community and look forward to hearing about your experiences, achievements, and aspirations in partnership work. You may also reach out to the authors of the thought paper directly—Dorothy Air (dorothyair@gmail.com), Henry Pavey (henry@collaoborative-impact.uk).



And most of all, we wish you every success in creating effective partnerships during this challenging time. As activist Helen Keller put it, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

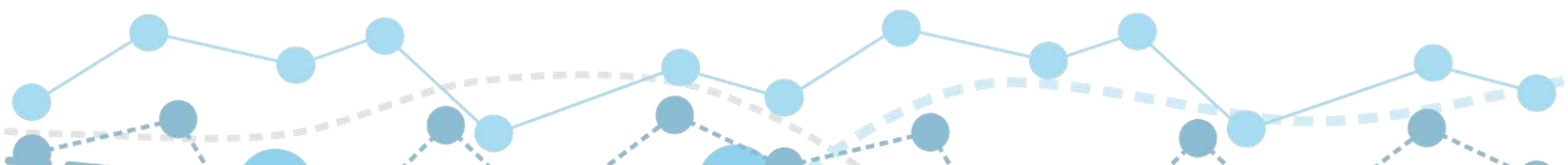


Authors

Dorothy H. Air, PhD



Dorothy Air served as Associate Vice President for Entrepreneurial Affairs and Technology Commercialization at the University of Cincinnati, a position in which she developed a high-level Office of Entrepreneurial Affairs, established strategic university partnerships, launched new models for commercialization, and established the Technology Accelerator for Commercialization which attracted more than \$6.5 million in grant funding to support faculty commercialization initiatives. She served as a loaned executive to CincyTech and was a member of the team that brought in more than \$37 million in regional grant funding for regional commercialization initiatives. She is highly experienced in facilitating corporate and university partnerships and led the establishment of the Ohio Valley Affiliates for Life Sciences—a three-state, six university alliance, university- corporate master agreements and initiatives, and a consortium pre-seed fund. She has served on many regional and State Boards related to economic engagement as well as in leadership roles for APLU's Commission of Innovation, Competitiveness and Economic Prosperity. Her recognitions include 2007 Leading Woman of Greater Cincinnati in Entrepreneurship, 2006 One of Cincinnati's Top 10 Women in Technology by *Cincinnati Women's Business*, and Top 20 people in Technology in *Cincinnati* and Featured in *BizWoman Annual Regional Program*, 2015.



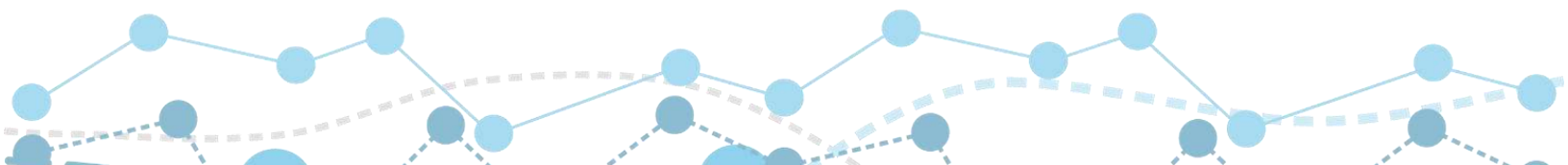
Henry Pavey MBA, CTArcf, FICW



Following a varied career in the British Army and Local Government; Henry Pavey launched Collaborative Impact Ltd (www.collaborative-impact.uk) in 2012 where he works side-by-side with senior leaders and backbone organizations delivering real-world solutions that enables them and their partners to ‘transform their partnership working and accelerate their collaborative impact’ in order to improve their place and / or the lives of their communities. His considerable experience and expertise have been called upon to support a wide variety of collaborations—from complex high-stakes place-making programmes through to business-to-business collaborations.

Prior to launching Collaborative Impact Ltd, Henry had spent 10 years within the Chief Executive’s office at Southampton City Council with a citywide strategic relationship management remit tasked with ensuring that the City truly maximized the huge potential of effective partnership working to improve the place and quality of life outcomes. During this period, Southampton achieved a ‘green rating’ from the Government for the strength of its partnership working placing it in the Top 25% nationally.

As an acknowledged thought leader, Henry is a member of the Institute for Collaborative Working’s Advisory Council and its Thought Leadership Special Interest Group. He also has an MBA from Solent University; is an accredited Collaborative Transformation Architect Fellow from Canterbury Christ Church University; and is a Fellow of the Institute for Collaborative Working.



Contributing Webinar Participants

The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the participants in the Post-COVID Partnerships interactive conversational webinars:

- [Scott Broughton](#), Director of Manufacturing Engagement, University of Louisville (USA)
- [Leah Burton](#), Director Partnership Office, North Carolina State University (USA)
- [Sébastien Charles](#), Co-Founder & CEO, PosterLab, (Germany)
- [Janita Ferentinos](#), Partnership consultant (Tanzania)
- [Monica Healy Hegewisch](#), Marketing Management Specialist, Universidad de la Américas Puebla (Mexico)
- [Azam Khodadadi](#), Co-Founder & CEO at Findaso (Turkey)
- [Allison Madden](#), Director of Research Foundation Operations and Corporate Secretary, University of South Florida (USA)
- [Scott Reed](#), Principal at Longview Engagement Associates- Professor, Vice Provost, and Director of Extension (Emeritus), Oregon State University (USA)
- [Arthur R. Smith](#), Head of Content, Venn Collaborative (USA)
- [Lou Swanson](#), Principal, Longview Engagement Associates, Professor of Sociology and Vice President for Engagement (Emeritus), Colorado State University
- [Cynthia Sweet](#), Associate Vice Chancellor, Economic Partnerships, University of Pittsburgh
- [Jim Woodell](#), Founder, Principal, and CEO, Venn Collaborative (USA)

