



| Course Takeaways

Scenius Drivers: Conditions for Collaboration



COGNITIVE DIVERSITY

Diverse teams generate a larger number of more divergent ideas, and blindspots tend to be less of an issue.





SCENIUS DRIVER | COGNITIVE DIVERSITY

WHAT WE KNOW

- Studies shows teams solve problems faster when they're more cognitively diverse (HBR)
- Most company leaders—primarily 45+ white, heterosexual males—still underestimate the challenges diverse employees face. These leaders control budgets and decide which diversity programs to pursue. (BCG)
- Creativity happens when people from different disciplines come together. (The Medici Effect)
- Cognitive diversity enhances innovation by 20%, reduces risks by 30%, and eases the implementation of decisions. (Forbes)

WHAT TO DO

Explore your own cognitive biases. Consider how you approach projects, and what your priorities tend to be. Acknowledging your preferences allow for you to see where other perspectives could be valuable.

Recruit intentionally. Leaders tend to recruit and promote people like them. Prioritize those with diverse perspectives, and don't be afraid to talk to those that don't have the on-paper background you're looking for.

Bring diverse perspectives to the table, and solicit their opinions through open-ended questions. Share in-progress work with people outside your core team and ask questions like, “What are we missing? What haven't we thought of?”





MUTUAL RESPECT

Valuing the contributions of others involved in the work process
and considering the impact your own actions will have on others





SCENIUS DRIVER | MUTUAL RESPECT

WHAT WE KNOW

- A study amongst healthcare professionals shows that when working together, respecting individual roles increases the quality of patient care. (Orchard, 2010)
- Employees who feel respected are more likely to trust and remain committed to the organization. (Faulkner & Laschinger, 2008)
- Respect impacts communication, coordination, and conflict resolution. Think about it — if you respect someone, you're much more likely to compromise than if you didn't,

WHAT TO DO

Be an active listener. Focus on the listener, and recap what you heard them say. You'll be giving them an opportunity to correct your interpretation, while also showing that you believe what they have to say is important.
Give respect, get respect.

Practice gratitude. A heartfelt “thank you” goes a long way in showing how you value someone's work.

Consider empathy exercises. It's much easier to respect someone's involvement when you understand just how much hard work happened. Have teams or department leads craft exercises designed to mimic part of their work, but for other teams to complete. (One example: The copywriter writes the brief; The strategist writes the tagline.)





SHARED LEARNING CULTURE

A rapid & open exchange of tools and techniques





SCENIUS DRIVER | SHARED LEARNING CULTURE

WHAT WE KNOW

From the Association for Talent Development:

- “The average half-life of a learned skill is five years, and that number will continue to decline over the next several years.
- We can no longer learn in solidarity. Instead, organizations must create a culture of shared learning, where everyone is learning together every single day.
- We have to count on each other to acquire the knowledge and skills required to stay ahead of the curve.”

WHAT TO DO

Share your knowledge and experience. It’s often not enough to send a link or an article; Team members need hands-on coaching so that they can truly learn the skill — and then share their own expertise with others.

Earmark budget for continuing education. Invite individuals to apply for educational stipends and when learning opportunities are provided, require that those in attendance recap learnings for others on your team.

Learn about others’ skills. In big organizations, there can be an overwhelming feeling of “where to start?” Conversations and coffee. Talk to those on your team and in the wider industry and ask about their expertise.





DISTRIBUTED CREDIT



It's not enough for one person to be celebrated – credit should be shared with all involved.





SCENIUS DRIVER | DISTRIBUTED CREDIT

WHAT WE KNOW

- A lack of incentive or reward, especially a lack of monetary reward, is a powerful barrier to collaboration. (Camera & Bigoni 2013)
- Individuals offer less creative advice on an assignment when they know they aren't getting credit (Protecting the turf: The effect of territorial marking on others' creativity, 2015)
- Participants told that they wouldn't be getting credit also reported feeling significantly lower levels of intrinsic motivation—a trait closely tied to creative productivity. (Protecting the turf)

WHAT TO DO

Start a Wall of Praise, where all team members are encouraged to highlight others' efforts & impact. You don't need to break the bank. A sign letting people know the intent, post-it notes, and markers will go a long way.

Praise the work to senior team members. When celebrating someone's contributions, consider emailing their boss or the department head to highlight their contributions. Or better yet, bring up the hard work at the next company meeting. Managers want credit; Leaders want to credit their teams.

Give people an opportunity to share their involvement. If there's opportunity to highlight the work to the public, ask individuals if they'd like to write-up their experience for the company blog.





TOLERANCE FOR WEIRDNESS

If we limit ourselves to what we're comfortable with, we miss out on the bigger possibilities.





SCENIUS DRIVER | TOLERANCE FOR WEIRDNESS

WHAT WE KNOW

- Creativity is rooted in being non-obvious in nature. We can unlock seeds of innovation through tolerating less-obvious or even non-obvious ideas.
- With more diverse teams, consensus can be harder than a team that shares overwhelmingly similar individuals. That means that longer timelines may be required when exploring the weird and wacky.
- “Weird” experiences cause a dopamine release in the parts of our brain responsible for discovering, processing and storing sensory impressions — giving us motivation to explore, and creating lasting memories.

WHAT TO DO

Do what you can to minimize hierarchy. You might consider asking a senior member to sit out of the first brainstorm, or have them play a specific role where their job is to simply say “Yes and” a la improv.

Differentiate between idea generation and idea evaluation. Try different sessions to ideate vs evaluate — Our tolerance for weirdness diminishes when it’s crunch time.

Work on creating a culture that celebrates differences. A culture that celebrates weirdness and differences gives employees permission to share ideas that are weird and wonderful themselves. For example, SF-based cleaning product company Method, asks “How would you keep method weird?” to prospective candidates.





EXPLORATION OF THE EDGES

The edges of culture are where the interesting stuff happens





SCENIUS DRIVER | EXPLORATION OF THE EDGES

WHAT WE KNOW

- In nature, the edge effect kicks in at the intersection of ecosystems. Where the overlap occurs, that's where we have the most biodiversity.
- Aldo Leopold, an American environmentalist, suggested that “the desirability of simultaneous access to more than one habitat” and “the greater richness of edge vegetation” supported a greater diversity and abundance of species.
- “The adjacent possible is a kind of shadow future, hovering on the edges of the present state of things, a map of all the ways in which the present can reinvent itself... [the adjacent possible] captures both the limits and the creative potential of change and innovation.”
— Steven Johnson (Smith, 2010)

WHAT TO DO

Rethink your definition of edges. Edges aren't always sharp; In fact they can be quite blurry. Look for opportunities that exist between just beyond your core offering.

Cultivate an attitude that looks outward rather than inward. Exploration of the edges means looking beyond what is often in your typical view.

Give people more opportunities to interact. Pixar famously kept bathrooms in the middle atrium rather than off to the side — leading employees and teams to bump into each other, talking about what they were working on, and allowing for serendipitous collaboration.





COMMON GOALS; ALIGNED INCENTIVES

A shared purpose fuels collaboration





SCENIUS DRIVER | COMMON GOALS; ALIGNED INCENTIVES

WHAT WE KNOW

- “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work but rather, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea,” said Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the French writer and aviator, who wrote *The Little Prince*
- People are motivated by a clearly defined goal. In fact, collaboration is close to impossible when goals aren’t evident to those involved. A shared purpose is required.

WHAT TO DO

Clearly articulate your goal. It’s one of those things that sounds easier than it is. If you’re wondering whether or not your goal is clearly articulated, don’t be afraid to seek input: share it with someone both within your team and outside of your team, and see what comes up.

Share the bigger picture goal with the team. Instead of just doling out the tasks required, bring people into the bigger picture. Get them excited about the possibilities of what could be, rather than their individual roles.



THANKS!

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WE DARE YOU.**

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