

What do Straddle and Fosbury Flop have to do with Leadership 4.0 and Collaboration 4.0?



The Straddle and Fosbury Flop are both high-jump techniques that succeeded the scissor and Western roll techniques, helping athletes reach new heights and break new records. In much the same way, we will need new leadership and collaboration 'techniques' to determine HOW we can achieve our intended results in the digital age and against the backdrop of Industry 4.0. We cannot assume that we will be able to achieve different results (WHAT) by the same means (HOW) as experience shows that 'more of the same' generally only leads to precisely that – 'more of the same'.

Collaboration 4.0 and Leadership 4.0 are the new HOW

All of the existing skills, experience and competences of those involved will be crucial when using Collaboration 4.0 to arrive at solutions. Harnessing and tapping into the inherent collective potential in teams and organisations will also be imperative, with Leaders 4.0 being required to act as facilitators to guide the collaborative thought and design processes.

Current collaboration is not fit for Industry 4.0

At present, attempts to master the complexity of problems at companies and in society tend to involve breaking down complex problems into smaller chunks for individuals or teams to work on. The idea behind this is that the sum of these solutions serves to overcome the problem as a whole. To compound this, team discussions often see team members working against one another rather than with one another, with people sharing their viewpoints instead of focussing on the goal. Here, people set greater store on being right rather than helping each other to arrive at feasible solutions. It is bound to come as no surprise that perpetuating such scenarios is extremely unlikely to produce new results (WHAT).

Co-thinking + Co-designing = Co-creativity, the core of Collaboration 4.0

Things are much different if we can provide collaboration with a co-creative dialogue space where the participants' skills, talents, abilities, experience, networks and other resources can be pooled to foster collaborative thinking and design to arrive at solutions. Such a dialogue space gives rise to collective effects greater than the sum of their separate effects. This collective effect can be harnessed to develop solutions no-one could think of on their own, and to achieve things no-one previously thought possible.

However, this collective effect can only be achieved in favourable conditions where everyone is able to speak freely without having to worry about being rejected, even and especially when offering unconventional ideas unlikely to garner consensus. This requires participants to adopt a co-creative mindset, i.e. to move away from their own thoughts and actions so as to be open to inspiration in the form of perspectives put forward by other participants. This also extends to the adoption of new aspects and in terms of branching out to arrive at new common ground.

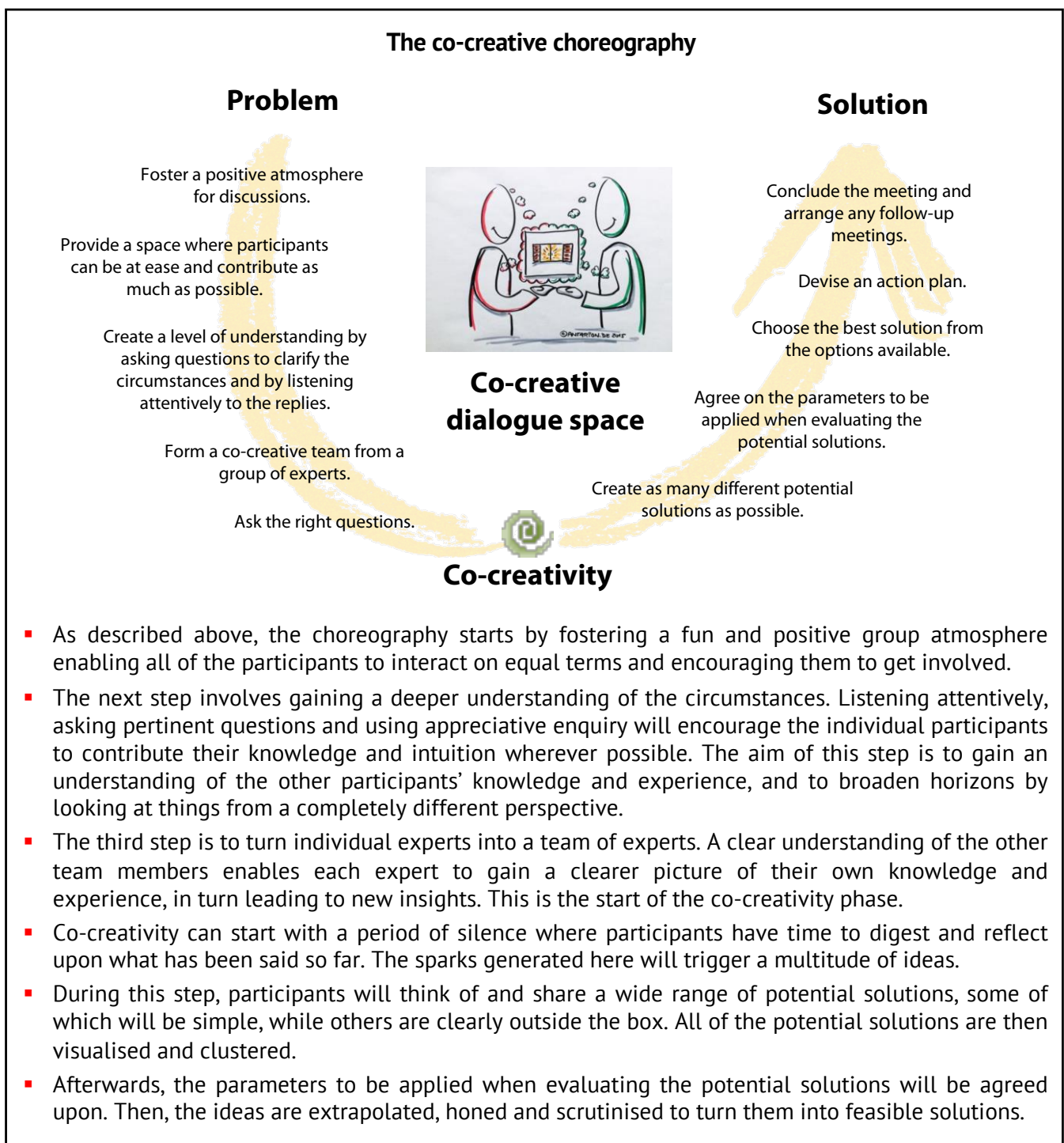
Leadership 4.0 requires co-creative facilitators

The role accorded to managers in this synergistic collaboration is one of a facilitator or leader who meets everyone present with unbiased respect and who ensures that participants are acknowledged as autonomous individuals while also acting as members of a group who work together on equal terms by showing mutual respect and not competing with one another.

The facilitator or leader also has to be confident in guiding participants through the

co-creative choreography, an approach based on Theory U developed by Dr. Otto C. Scharmer (Presencing Institute, Boston), while also being able to offer the structure required for everyone involved to play an active part in the co-design process.

An external facilitator can also take on this role if the manager is expected to provide their own viewpoint and perspective as well during the co-creative process.



Requirements of a co-creative facilitator

Encouraging people to volunteer for cooperation and co-creation requires the co-creative facilitator to adopt a corresponding inner mindset defined by empathy, appreciation, congruence and attentiveness. The co-creative facilitator should also have a good set of tools and methods, and be able to provide a setting and approach that fosters co-thinking and co-design.

This trio of 'inner mindset', 'tools and methods', and 'setting/approach' will enable the facilitator to cope with the uncertainty surrounding the co-creative solution process and idea-generating stage, and to strike out into the unknown with full confidence in the process and the team's abilities.

Achieving a solid base for co-creativity through coaching

A lot of managers have trouble engaging in this kind of open-ended process because they are generally expected to know the answers and offer readymade solutions. This 'know-it-all' expectation is counter-productive to a co-creative process involving spaces that focus on innovation and a future brimming with interesting information we do not currently know. To this end, it may make sense for a coach to provide guided self-reflection to create a firm footing even when faced with 'not-knowing'.

Developing a co-creative Team 4.0

When it comes to Collaboration 4.0, it has proven conducive for a team to embark on a joint journey to a Team 4.0 as this will enable the team to identify the knowledge, skills and experience present within the group, and to use them effectively when working together on tasks, developing solutions, and presenting results. A suitable form of Collaboration 4.0 is agreed on as a group so as to foster a trusting and effective collaboration as well as a high degree of self-organisation.

This shared learning journey prevents individuals from becoming 'lone wolves', while also ensuring that newly acquired skills can be easily transferred to everyday business within the team.

Creating new co-creative team training concepts

At present, there are only a few training courses available that are suitable for an entire team to attend and which are specifically aimed at items the team considers to be urgent. Co-creating such new concepts with proven providers is also the key to success here.

Conclusion

If managers promote and facilitate collaboration as described above, and if teams live this kind of collaboration, the participants' existing skills, abilities and collective potential can be harnessed and turned into new results for the digital age and Industry 4.0.

That's right managers and teams: It's time to straddle and Fosbury Flop for Collaboration 4.0 and Leadership 4.0!

The authors:

Karin Wiesenthal & Katrin Weißenborn



Together with a number of other colleagues, Karin and Katrin created **TEAM CoCREATIVE FACILITATION**. As well as facilitating co-creative team processes and coaching co-creative leadership, the team provides a training programme for people to become a CoCreative Facilitator 4.0, CoCreative Leader 4.0 and CoCreative Team 4.0 (for details see also www.cocreative.de).

Thank you Marion Quaas-Reinhard for your input and ideas.