



VALUE PROPOSITION

Value I Offer You

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SUMMARY

Here is my value to you:

- **A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR ROLE AND VALUE TO THE ORGANIZATION**
- **INCREASED TRUST THROUGHOUT THE ALLIANCE OR PARTNERSHIP**
- **DEEPENED INDIVIDUAL BUY-IN OF THE TEAM'S VISION AND PURPOSE**
- **GREATER TEAM ALIGNMENT AND CLARITY OF FOCUS**
- **A HEALTHIER AND MORE VALUE-CREATING ATMOSPHERE**
- **SIMPLIFICATION OF OVERWHELMING COMPLEXITY**
- **NEUTRALIZATION OF DYSFUNCTIONAL DRAMA**
- **RELATIONSHIP: A CORE STRATEGIC ASSET TO THE BUSINESS, CRUCIBLES FOR TRANSFORMATION**

DESCRIPTION

What value do I offer you? In the text below I describe challenges and solutions. Evidence of my ability to bring you solutions is found in the references at the end of the document and in our interactions.

ROLE CLARITY

Few people understand the unique nature of our work; for example, they do not understand why or how to bridge the cultural and strategic chasms between the partners; they may not appreciate the importance of building trust. Our role is often equated with traditional business roles like sales, project management or business development; these staffing decisions often fail, without a clear understanding.

As we are clear about our role and our value to the organization we become more empowered and more empowering.

INCREASED TRUST

Trust is *the* foundation of *every* relationship; it is therefore strategically important in value-creating alliances. The questions are: How is it assessed? How can it be improved? What can we do when the level of trust is low, especially when there are huge problems in the partnership?

First of all, trust yourself. What is the level of trust in *that* relationship? Be willing to “be the change” – first within yourself, then within your business relationship. Be willing to confront and embrace your own internal integrity gaps (a.k.a., hypocrisies). It is in that process where you will learn to increasingly trust yourself.

Within our strategic alliance, openness and transparency *welcomes* trust. Deep listening *encourages* trust; it is via deep listening that we can *assess* the *level* of trust. Being lovingly confrontational then *calls* for trust. We can trust that trust will come when it is welcomed, encouraged and called for.

Ultimately we learn that we can most trust spirit – the spirit within ourselves and the spirit that lives in the midst of our business relationship (i.e., the voice of the collective). As we live a life of increasing integrity, by staying true to ourselves, we naturally bring greater trust with us wherever we go, into meetings and throughout our strategic alliance.

DEEPENED INDIVIDUAL BUY-IN

Personal buy-in or support of our alliance is often weaker than necessary, despite such things as executive edicts, powerful presentations, compelling press releases, or great marketing and sales tools. Even when the alliance's performance metrics become part of one's own compensation plan, personal buy-in can still be insufficient for the achievement of the alliance's long-term value-creating success.

As we attempt to increase buy-in and support in our alliance, we will likely get some push back. People might say “Hey, it's just a job!” and “It's not reasonable to expect to find *fulfillment* in what I do. We shouldn't expect to enjoy our work” and “It's absurd, maybe even dangerous, to expect to *love* my job.”

Given the *impossible* nature of long-term value-creating relationships (strategic alliances and partnerships) it is just that type of non-traditional and enthusiastic *love-of-work* that is *needed* to achieve an alliance's full value-creating potential. When we achieve love-of-work we also obtain a healthier work-



life balance; we are no longer striving to *earn* the approval of others. The approval of others is naturally coupled with self-approval, as we live a fulfilling life based on love we attract like-minded people to us. Love is the *attractive* force of the Universe which compels us all to grow. Love is *precisely* what value-creating relationships need more of.

How else can personal buy-in get deepened and strengthened? It is *not* by selling, marketing or arguing. It is also *not* by forcing compliant behavior via executive escalation or personal performance metrics. It is in the process of trusting, being trusted and deep listening that buy-in happens.

When another person knows that they matter to you, what matters to you matters to them.

TEAM ALIGNMENT AND CLARITY OF FOCUS

It is obvious how an alliance suffers from low levels of trust or a lack of personal buy-in; however, the consequence of a lack of team focus is *less* obvious. When alignment and focus is missing the alliance remains stuck in mediocrity; there is untapped value-creating potential. This loss may be unnoticed; however, lack of awareness does not diminish the magnitude of the loss.

There is great power that lives in the collective within teams, organizations, corporations, countries and throughout all of humanity. This power is based on aligned interests and clear focus on a common vision.

As we consider team alignment and focus, we begin dealing with some of the *most* significant causes for failure in partnerships. Otherwise our alliance will suffer from our inability to tap into the power that lives *in* an alliance team – the power *in* the collective.

As strategic alliance managers we are trying to get value-creation to happen between fierce competitors, in a predominantly fear-based and scarcity-oriented climate. This makes the alignment and focus of a strategic alliance team significantly more important than in traditional business teams (e.g., product or service development teams or marketing teams). In a sense we are establishing a third company that lives between the two partner companies. This alliance company requires a unique value-creating culture and a sense of home, a place here people are comfortable being all they can be.

As trust and personal buy-in increases, team focus will naturally clarify. As the leader of the team, you bring clarity into the team as you listen deeply to the voice-of-the-collective and then distill down what you hear to its simplest essence. In a very real sense you are “being the change” as you embody the team’s ever-increasing clarity-of-vision. You keep the alliance focus on incremental value creation via vision; you do this by helping others see *past* value-impediments via practical recommendations. This process of vision and forgiveness (looking past obstacles to the truth on the other side) is actually emerging from the spirit that lives in the midst of the alliance team itself.

The team is actually aligning and focusing itself, while you who deem yourself its leader are merely enabling the voice-of-the-collective to be heard. You are the carrier of the team’s vision. You are their reminder when they forget the path to its long-term value-creating vision.

You and the vision you carry change the atmosphere in the alliance, simply by your presence.

VALUE-CREATING ATMOSPHERE

The topic of atmosphere is not discussed much in our profession. How can we make an alliance’s atmosphere more conducive to the creation of value? This is both a challenging as well as a strategically important question. There may not be a more important question for us to ask!

The atmosphere in an alliance is grounded in trust; it is *the* foundation of *every* relationship and is fundamentally important in a team (a network of relationships). A healthy climate is built upon individual buy-in and commitment; it is also built on each person’s comfort level. Do people feel at home in the alliance?

With strong team alignment, individuals are reminded of the need to stay focused on creating incremental value, which is enabled by seeing *through* value-impediments. As the team clarifies its vision, solutions surface (to create value and remove impediments) and that process itself positively impacts the atmosphere in the alliance; a value-creating team lives in a virtuous cycle.

We have to be *aware* of the climate and awareness starts with *presence* – we have to be present enough in order to *sense* the climate’s health. When we notice a lack, then what? Gandhi starts pointing us in the right direction with his phrase “Be the change.” For example, if we see that our alliance is lacking in openness and trust, we need to ask ourselves “How is *my* openness and trust? How do I *embody* openness and trust in my life?” Embodiment starts within – as within so without. This type of



internal work calls us to live a life of integrity and authenticity; both are huge contributors to a healthy value-creating atmosphere.

How are we being *of value* throughout our day? Our alliance benefits as we strive to bring greater value into every meeting, every e-mail message, and into every interaction, with everyone, all the time. As we give away our most valuable ideas (e.g., wisdom and insights) they always come back with gain (see the link to *Self-Obsolescence* in References below).

Openness is a basic attribute of a creative climate. Obviously our level of openness needs to be tempered by intellectual property concerns, such as company confidential information and trade secrets. Despite these concerns the prevailing climate in business is more *closed* than *open*. Given this overarching climate we need to encourage a level of openness that might make some people uncomfortable. There is strategic benefit in dealing with difficult issues head-on and sooner is always better than later.

How we lead our alliance directly affects its atmosphere. Creative leadership is not about control. It is about achieving a state of controlled chaos or bounded instability. In order to deal with the shadows and issues in the alliance we must first be willing to face our personal shadows, we need to be willing to face our internal integrity gaps. When we are comfortable embracing our hypocrisies the climate around us clears – as within so without. Finally, as leaders we need to keep ourselves and others focused on our core vision in order to maintain a productive value-creating community.

So what are the results of a more value-creative climate? Our alliance actually starts taking on a feeling of *home* and our team attracts positive people, creative ideas and the support of management. Issues are proactively dealt with by our self-adjusting team. Leadership is both spontaneous (wherever it needs to go) and fixed (the buck stops with us). Long-term and invisible forms of value like trust, openness and love begin to surface – leading to the creation of near-term and tangible forms of value (e.g., products, technologies and ultimately sales).

SIMPLIFICATION OF COMPLEXITY

Complexity and drama are the two most common forms of organizational addiction. (Addiction is anything we use to avoid facing the truth.) As we continually listen to the voice-of-the-collective we distill down what we hear to its simplest essence; simplicity cures the complexity addiction. This simplicity is used to focus an alliance team on a clear, compelling and practical long-term value-creating vision. This methodology is an on-going iterative process where the value-creating vision becoming clearer and clearer over time. (Refer to the *2-Slide Methodology*TM below.)

NEUTRALIZATION OF DYSFUNCTIONAL DRAMA

Besides complexity, dysfunctional drama is the other organizational addiction, also used to obscure the truth. When another's behavior appears to us as evidence of deviousness, incompetency or lunacy, we can be sure that there are unacknowledged cultural differences that are clouding our vision. As we listen to the voice-of-the-collective, we uncover value-impediments of cultural and strategic differences, along with practical recommendations for bridging that chasm. As we grow to understand the other side's perspective, their behavior makes more sense to us. Armed with practical recommendations we can then look past these differences, enabling both sides to more clearly discover new value-creating opportunities. (Again, refer to the *2-Slide Methodology*TM below.)

RELATIONSHIP: CORE STRATEGIC ASSET AND CRUCIBLE FOR TRANSFORMATION

Refer to the link below *Why Alliances Are Strategic*. In one page this document explains why *relationship* is a core strategic asset for businesses and why strategic alliances are crucibles for the transformation of capitalism; strategic alliances are the eye of that transformational hurricane.

References:

- Top 5 Personal Challenges of Strategic Alliance/Partner Managers* (1 pg) – www.spibr.org/top_5_challenges.pdf
- Transform Your Alliance: accomplish extraordinary results* (18 pgs) – www.spibr.org/Change_Your_Alliance.pdf
- Strategic Alliance Manager Role* (34 pgs) – www.spibr.org/strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf
- Building Trust in Strategic Alliances* (12 pgs) – www.spibr.org/Building_trust_and_value_in_alliances.pdf
- Self-Obsolescence; the most impactful practice of alliance management* (8 pgs) – www.spibr.org/self-obsolescence
- 2-Slide Methodology*TM; *simply focus collective attention* (27 pgs) – www.spibr.org/2-slide_methodology.pdf
- Why Alliances Are Strategic – relationship* (1 pg) – www.spibr.org/why_alliances_are_strategic.pdf