



# We Are Smarter Than Me

## How to Unleash the Power of Crowds in Your Business

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Five years ago, the notion that a group might be smarter than any of its members was a complete nonstarter. By definition, groupthink was the lowest common denominator; everyone knew that a camel was a horse designed by a committee. Today, thanks to several best-selling books, we know better.

But even now, although *crowdsourcing*, *wikinomics* and *open-source technology* have become buzzwords in the business world, there is no practical guide to translate those concepts into usable tools and techniques.

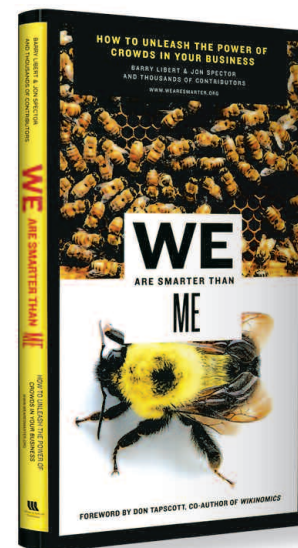
This summary fills that gap.

Many companies have benefited hugely from harnessing collective power, but not all have succeeded. There are many pitfalls to be avoided and obstacles to be overcome in tapping the wisdom of communities.

If you are willing to take on the challenge, you have a good chance of being handsomely rewarded. Communities can help companies invent new products and services, improve customer service, boost sales, turbocharge manufacturing, tap into new sources of financing, and make everyone a leader.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Ways to make your company a more productive, more profitable and better place for the people who work there.
- How businesses of all kinds can make the wisdom of crowds work for them.
- How to tap into the power and talent of the online masses.
- How companies can profitably and cost-effectively make the most of the knowledge and resources held by communities of like-minded people.



by Barry Libert and  
Jon Spector and  
Thousands of Contributors

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: WE ARE SMARTER THAN ME

by Barry Libert and Jon Spector and Thousands of Contributors

**The authors:** Barry Libert is currently the CEO of Mzinga, a provider of business social networks that help companies improve their performance by leveraging the power of “community.” He is also the co-founder of the “We” project with Jon Spector, vice dean of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and current CEO of The Conference Board. Through the use of wikis, more than 4,000 contributors representing the top B-schools and organizations were able to contribute their expertise to the writing of the book.

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## Look What We Can Do

At the ripe old age of 15, the Web has already changed human society so profoundly that historians have begun comparing the Internet Age with the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. The Web has connected nearly a billion people. With that many brains as its motivating force, the transformation forged by the Internet has morphed from quantitative to qualitative: The power of the collective “we” is nearly unfathomable.

Each of those brains has some 10 billion neurons linked to one another through about 10,000 synapses. Now all that individual brainpower is tied together and amplified by the power of technology: The new and potent “we” is far smarter than any singular “me.” For the first time, humans can act in mass collaboration, using the kind of collective intelligence once reserved for ants and bees — but now with human IQ driving the mix. The result is a quantum increase in the world’s ability to conceive, create, compute and connect. We are only beginning to comprehend the consequences.

### Web 2.0

Cyber watchers say the Internet has evolved in two distinct stages: Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. In both of them, the Net has been a hugely fertile market where people turn data into money. But Web 1.0 winners profited (mainly in the dot-com boom) by cornering data for themselves and riding the price up. Web 2.0 innovators do the opposite. They believe that information becomes more valuable as more people use it.

Instead of tightly controlling the code behind a new software program, for example, they let anyone alter or

add to it, confident that the users will contribute their own ideas and improve the program for everyone. The miracle is that, by giving away access, the owners can actually reduce their own costs while winding up with a better product, certified as such by its volunteer creators — a product that can win more customers.

### Crowdsourcing

As a business model, the process is called open sourcing or *crowdsourcing* — it turns over tasks traditionally performed by employees to the Internet multitude. And it has claimed some memorable successes, particularly on the product development front. Mozilla’s Firefox open-source Web browser, for example, has been downloaded more than 300 million times and is used by an estimated 70 million to 80 million people.

Some 5 million users per month swear by Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia created and updated by Internet volunteers to the tune of 2 million articles and counting. Any visitor can edit *most* of its articles, although some, such as the entry on George W. Bush, are protected by volunteer administrators. That’s because ideologues and mischief-makers occasionally take liberties with the facts, but the process is self-correcting as other users and administrators set them straight.

### ‘Innovation Jam’

By harnessing the power of crowds, more business-people can make — and are making — better decisions and bigger profits. In mid-2006, for example, IBM invited its entire community — employees, their family members and customers — to take part in a brainstorming session to identify potential areas for innovation. In the first session of the “innovation jam,” fully 150,000



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online volunteers were given 72 hours to come up with ideas. They produced 46,000 suggestions, which the company's staffers sifted and evaluated; then, in September, the online conclave assembled again to vote on the ideas with the most potential.

IBM's CEO, Sam Palmisano, has promised to put as much as \$100 million into developing the 10 winning ideas — and he will have a hand in the final choice. Though still in its infancy, crowdsourcing is already rewriting the rules of business, posing major challenges and opening up unprecedented opportunities. ●

### Go From R&D to R&WE

For businesses large and small, it's no inconsequential decision to let customers dictate what is sold. New product development is among the most important activities any enterprise undertakes. A business lives or dies on the strength of what it offers, and it's understandable that leaders often resist losing control over the basic nature of the goods they sell.

But there's much to be said for tapping the collective wisdom of a community — customer or otherwise — for product ideas and improvements. In the case of customers, it gives them a vested interest in the results and all but guarantees that they will like — and buy — what they've created.

Many innovative organizations have pioneered product development by people not on their payroll. These businesses range from food giants to the inventors of a popular virtual world that has confounded skeptics who believed that only nerds would sign on. These organizations' commitment to the collaborative process ranges from cautious to total immersion.

#### Procter & Gamble

For generations, the research and development (R&D) team at Procter & Gamble — 9,000 strong — had been the stuff of business legend, cranking out dozens of high-profile, high-profit new products year after year. But in 2000, A.G. Lafley, the company's newly arrived chairman and CEO, stunned his prideful researchers. They were not, he announced, producing winners big enough or fast enough to significantly boost corporate revenues. His solution was drastic: By the end of the decade, half of all new P&G products and technologies would have to come from outside the company.

The object, Lafley insisted, was not to supplant the mighty in-house R&D effort, but to supplement it. That turned out to be a vastly difficult venture, though, and

### Pitfalls in Crowdsourcing

If collaboration isn't done right, it had best not be done at all. Gartner Research has predicted, with 80 percent certainty, that by 2010 more than 60 percent of Fortune 1,000 companies will have some form of online community that can be used in marketing — but with the same degree of confidence, Gartner says half of those will be so poorly managed that they will do more harm than good.

no wonder, given the company's size and complexity. For one thing, the internal communication systems had to be reinvented to make it possible for all parts of the company to exchange data and brainstorm. Then that information had to be made available to noncompany entities, including suppliers and distributors.

Another stumbling block was the resistance of many of P&G's key researchers. Some complained that the proposed changes in their way of doing things would stifle creativity. Others feared a loss of power and prestige if their information and work had to be shared.

Lafley persevered. His most drastic move was a giant step into crowdsourcing. P&G put together a global community made up of high-tech entrepreneurs and open networks such as NineSigma and included the retired scientists and engineers of YourEncore and the marketplace for intellectual property exchange called Yet2.com. P&G has also gone to InnoCentive, a network of 120,000 self-selected technical people from more than 175 countries who receive cash awards if their ideas prove out.

P&G is closing in on Lafley's goal. As of 2006, the company was deriving 35 percent of its ideas from outsiders. Meanwhile, R&D productivity has soared 60 percent. A whopping 80 percent of its product launches are successful, compared to 30 percent for the consumer-products industry as a whole. And it spends 3.1 percent, or about \$2.1 billion, of its more than \$68 billion in annual worldwide revenue on R&D, much more than others in the industry.

#### Virgin Mobile USA

Virgin Mobile USA, the cell phone company, used 2,000 carefully selected online customers — “Insiders,” as Virgin called them — to keep it abreast of trends and promising opportunities. Virgin described the group as “a team of elite, young and active customers,” and it rewarded them with free calling minutes and phone upgrades.

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A joint venture of Richard Branson's Virgin Group and Sprint Nextel, the company went to its Insider community for help on everything from designing phones to coming up with names for service plans. As one officer of the company put it, "Ultimately, what we want to do is put young consumers backstage."

### R&D Tips

Here are three tips to keep in mind when performing research and development:

- **The medium is not the message.** A company's goal is to convince us, as the necessary "we," to take part; the means of communication, although important, is secondary.
- **Know your neighbors.** Identify and understand them well.
- **Tread firmly but carefully.** Seeking the help of outsiders, even when they're part of some amorphous, unseen community, can be threatening to in-house staff. Make your intentions clear and stick to them. Do everything possible to accommodate the concerns of the resisters. ●

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### How May We Help We?

All sorts of businesses are transferring much of the service function onto the shoulders of the customers themselves. Traditionally, customers who had questions about a product — how to put it together, why it wasn't working properly, how to use it to the best advantage — would call the company's help line and talk with a customer service representative.

That's still possible, but it's not as easy as it used to be. Getting through to a service representative can take 30 minutes or more, and even then, customers are liable to get shifted from one level of expertise to another. Meanwhile, under pressure to reduce costs, many businesses have begun charging substantial fees for telephone support. After the warranty on Dell computers expires, for instance, the company collects \$39 for each tech support call unless the customer has paid \$189 for a one-year service contract. Apple iMac customers get to purchase a three-year version for \$169.

### Online Support

The alternative these companies offer is a visit to their online version of customer service. Typically, there is a FAQ (frequently asked questions) page and probably one or more forums where customers can pose a question and have it answered by others who volunteer their time and wisdom.

For companies that offer it, online support has been a double boon. They save money by freeing customer service personnel for other work, while also building a cohesive, loyal community of repeat customers who can be tapped for other purposes — say, to test new products.

Bill Rose, founder and executive director of the Service and Support Professionals Association, noted not long ago, "Most customers want to be seen as experts and recognized as gurus in their fields." A number of people in customer service communities simply enjoy interacting with other like-minded individuals and helping them solve their problems. ●

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### Customer, Sell Thyself

Procter & Gamble is in the business of turning out consumer products by the barrelful. As its Web site boasts, "Three billion times a day P&G brands touch the lives of people around the world." But the company has another, very different line of business as well. It offers up the services of hundreds of thousands of moms and teenagers as word-of-mouth marketers — for its own product divisions and those of other organizations as well.

Donna Wetherell, of Columbus, Ohio, is one of those "mom connectors," as they're called. She's employed at a customer service call center, where she's known as "the coupon lady." That's because she's always passing out P&G coupons and sharing news of new products with her 300 co-workers.

All of us like to chat about the goods we buy and use. Each week, the average person mentions specific brands 56 times in the course of 100 conversations. And studies have shown that today's customers rely far more on what their friends and colleagues have to say about a product than on the ads they see on television. That's why, whether in person, on the phone or online, the messages carried by Donna Wetherell and her connector colleagues are so often welcome. "We know," says Steve Knox, chief executive officer of Vocalpoint, "that the most powerful form of marketing is an advocacy message from a trusted friend."

### Vocalpoint and Tremor

P&G's word-of-mouth operation has two distinct pieces: Vocalpoint and Tremor. The Vocalpoint unit focuses primarily on P&G products and boasts 500,000 mothers of children under 19. The Tremor unit focuses mainly on products from clients other than P&G and includes 250,000 teenagers. Proprietary research techniques enabled the company to find teens and moms

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who are gregarious and rich in friends. The average teenager has 25 friends on her instant message buddy list, while teen connectors have 150 or so. Mom connectors talk to 25 or so people a day, versus five for the average mother.

When P&G set about introducing its new dishwashing detergent, Dawn Direct Foam, it hired Vocalpoint to organize a crowdsourcing campaign. This is how Steve Knox describes what happened next: “Our connector moms looked at this product and went, ‘Wow! That’s so cool. My kids would want to help.’” That reaction led Knox to establish the talking points for his word-of-mouth army. In discussions with friends and colleagues, they would offer some “helpful hints” on how to get kids to do more chores around the house.

After that, Knox explains, “Dawn became a natural part of the conversation.” The results: “We nearly doubled Dawn’s business in the test market.”

### Consumer as Marketer

What started at P&G as a means to better peddle its own products has now become a profit center with clients ranging from cereal maker Kashi to cable channel Animal Planet to lubricant manufacturer WD-40. P&G CEO A.G. Lafley likes to say, “The consumer has become the marketer.”

Procter & Gamble’s success with word-of-mouth sales is just one example of the role this revolutionary breed of crowdsourcing can play in a marketing program. Merchants have relied on their customers to “spread the word” about their goods at least since the earliest Egyptians bartered their grain for olive oil or honey in the markets of Memphis. It’s just that mobilizing huge numbers of people to take on that risk, and paying them nothing or next to nothing to do so, puts a whole new, directed spin on an old spontaneous practice.

By far the majority of P&G’s connectors are upbeat about its products, but of course, there are no controls on what they actually say. Some comfort can be found in studies that show that when Americans talk about brands, positive mentions outnumber negatives by a ratio of 6 to 1.

### Basic Change

The growth and public popularity of customer reviews and other examples of crowdsource marketing speak directly to a basic change in the nature of the relationship between you and your customer. The old commercial model, in which you presented the products for sale and the customer simply chose among them, is fast eroding. Today the customer is increasingly calling the shots. She’s telling the world whether she likes or hates

particular products she’s tried. If you invite her, she’s also up for making a few suggestions on how you might improve a product. Tomorrow she will insist on your coming up with new products that precisely meet her taste, telling you how they should be marketed and distributed, and proclaiming how well you’ve handled those tasks.

You can try to hold back the tide, maintaining your old way of doing business. You can find out what the customer wants and provide it. Or, best of all, you can determine where she’s headed and get there ahead of her. ●

## If We Build It, We Will Come

With millions of people clicking away on their digital cameras, millions of images were sitting around on computers. Most of the photos weren’t professional quality, but there were an awful lot of good shots just taking up space. So it wasn’t long before microstock houses, as they’re known, began to appear on the Internet to tap that huge supply of digital images. The newcomers charged customers as little as \$1 for a royalty-free license.

The pioneer was Calgary-based iStockphoto, which giant Getty Images bought in 2006 for \$50 million. The iStock library holds more than 1.7 million images from 36,000 members, and it has been blessed with Getty’s advanced search and index technology, which makes it easier for customers around the world to find just what they’re looking for. The photos might not be up to the

### Tips for Encouraging Customers to Sell

Here are three tips that can help you move customers to sell your product:

- **Know your fans.** Do some extra research to spot customers you can inspire to become your new, auxiliary sales staff. Tap your marketing people to find customers who have called or written praising the product and those who have a long track record of purchasing it.
- **Make them happy.** Word-of-mouth volunteers like being able to get across their point of view to other customers and to companies’ management as well. They enjoy being on the inside.
- **Tap the talent.** Any sizeable community has large numbers of talented people — writers, artists, photographers — who are eager to see their work on display.

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quality you'll find at Getty Images itself, but they have been selected by the company's editors, so they're apt to be just fine if you're putting together an office newsletter or even a magazine spread. And the price will be right.

iStock introduced a payment system that has become the industry standard. The minimum purchase is \$12, which gives you 10 credits; images cost between one and 15 credits per download. The prices rise with the image size and resolution. iStock photos are downloaded at the rate of one every 2.5 seconds.

One reason for the site's success has been its welcoming content from contributors. The images are accompanied by symbols indicating how many of their photos have been sold through iStock and whether the work has been chosen for special attention on the site. Articles on the site offer photographic and design advice, and forums enable contributors to exchange news and speak their minds. The royalties many receive are impressive — exclusive contributors earn, on average, \$1,000 a month. Also, they're happy about having other people see their work.

The advantages over traditional business models are huge. At iStock, contributors not only create the product being sold, but they also deliver it in a market-ready format and list it in the appropriate keyword category. With little or no product inventory expense or traditional overhead, the company can price the product far below that of old-model competitors.

Many communities are willing — indeed, eager — to become involved in creating products. Year after year, there are improvements in the technology that allow the crowd to produce content. Year after year, new online entries take advantage of the power of community, limited only by desire and imagination. ●

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## Welcome to the World Bank of We

Suddenly, there are sites that provide financing for business ventures that might otherwise never get off the ground.

When Buddy, her cuddly Bichon Frise, hurt his paw, Lyn Townshend of Longmont, Colo., refused to accept the so-called Elizabethan collar, the uncomfortable plastic cone that makes a dog look as though its head is stuck in a lampshade. So she sewed an elastic strap onto a sock and put the sock on Buddy's paw and the strap around his body, effectively covering the wound and keeping the dog from licking and chewing the dressing. She called it a Strock, combining strap and sock, and it was much more comfortable for the dog — not to mention much less embarrassing for its owner.

## Best Buddy Pet Products

In fact, it was such a success that Townshend decided she had the makings of a commercial venture. Early in 2006, she formed Best Buddy Pet Products and began turning out designer Stocks on her home sewing machine. The new version was waterproof, came in different sizes to accommodate cats and noncanine pets, and used adjustable Velcro straps. On just her third sales call, Townshend won the endorsement of a veterinary hospital that was part of a 600-strong chain. Suddenly, it looked as though she would have to be ready to produce Stocks by the hundreds — without receiving payment until she delivered the finished goods.

What Townshend needed was a loan. The problem was, she had no income and a record of credit card delinquencies. Not surprisingly, she was turned down by her local bank and by the Small Business Administration.

## Prosper.com

What to do? Wikinomics! Turning to Prosper.com, she joined the community's Business Owners Cooperative, made up of past and would-be borrowers. She posted her loan request on her page at Prosper and would-be lenders bid on it, until finally she was funded by a total of 77 people. On May 21, 2006, she landed a loan of \$9,500 at 12.75 percent interest — considerably less than she would have had to pay on a credit card. She used it to buy office equipment, arrange for mass production at a nearby factory and get her product trademarked.

Prosper.com is a leading example of the power of community as financier, but it is just the latest twist in the ancient practice of people-to-people lending. Seventeen hundred years ago, long before there were banks or an Internet, there were communities in China called *lun-hui* whose members helped each other borrow cash. For centuries in the Caribbean, Africa, Korea and Vietnam, there have been local money pools. Members contribute a set amount each week and take turns picking up the total at the month's end. Known as *susu* in the Caribbean, *kaes* in Korea and *hui* in Vietnam, these lending societies are common in immigrant communities across the United States. As it happens, that's exactly how Prosper.com came into being.

The Web site came online in February 2006. It works very much like eBay, except that what is being auctioned is a loan. Registration is free. Borrowers get a page on the site to list the size of the loan they want — the upper limit is \$25,000 — and the interest rate they're willing to pay. They also present their reason for the loan and as much information about themselves as

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they think will help attract lenders. Prosper.com runs credit checks on potential borrowers, assigning them one of eight scores. It also provides the borrower's debt-to-income ratio. The auction can last from three to seven days, at the borrower's discretion.

Successful borrowers pay Prosper.com a 1 to 2 percent fee when a loan comes through, while registered lenders pay a 0.5 to 1 percent annual servicing fee on their outstanding loans. Just over a year after its founding, the company had marked up 11,100 loans totaling more than \$65 million. Approximately 2 percent of funded loans in dollar terms, or 3 percent (339 loans) of funded loans in unit terms, have defaulted.

Other examples of social lending communities include Zopa and CommonAngels. Approaches might vary, but in all cases, the focus is on finding ways to minimize the lender's risk by providing the maximum amount of relevant information. ●

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### Make Everyone a C-We-O

Can a community successfully determine the direction of a company, making strategic decisions about what products or services to pursue and how to create, market and distribute them?

The answer, to date, has been no — and not for lack of trying. Perhaps the most thorough and intensive effort so far was undertaken in June 2005 by Rob May, an engineer, entrepreneur and founder of Businesspundit.com. He established a project called TheBusinessExperiment.com (TBE), which quickly attracted more than 800 members, all of them eager to participate in what promised to be a historic, ground-breaking venture. Together members selected a product — another Web site — and it was eventually designed and launched. Sad to say, in March 2006, just nine months after its birth, TBE was voted out of existence.

#### Cambrian House

Cambrian House relies on a community of 30,000 individuals to come up with new ideas, try them out, suggest improvements and then connect with other interested members to build and commercialize them. Points toward a share of any eventual profit and cash up front are awarded to idea inventors and those who spend time adding or improving features.

As of spring 2007, all four of the company's underwritten crowdsourced products were proceeding on course, with more than 200 other ideas under development by the Cambrian House community without any interference from the company itself.

So here we have a successful example of a community

taking on some managerial duties, although there needs to be an asterisk beside that sentence. In the TBE project, the attempt was made to enlist the community in actually developing a chosen product — an attempt that eventually failed. At Cambrian House, employees perform and manage some tasks (designing, manufacturing and the like) if the company invests in or works directly with a community member's project.

These two examples leave the door open to the possibility that communities will eventually be able to handle substantial management tasks. ●

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### Lead From the Rear

All through history, leaders have sought to persuade or compel communities to change their ways. The more drastic the change desired, the less likely the success.

Wikinomic communities can often perform real-world tasks faster, better and cheaper than individuals can. But building a successful community is no simple matter. Here, as in all aspects of business, from hiring to marketing, the price of great rewards is great risk. And that has never been so true as in the era of Web 2.0, when a seemingly minor mistake can snowball into a fatal disaster with lightning speed.

#### Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to help companies avoid some of the pitfalls along the Web 2.0 road:

**1. Lead from the rear.** The whole point of crowdsourcing is to access the fresh, powerful ideas and instincts of the community. The company's role is to provide direction and then stand back: Interference with communal processes defeats the purpose. When overzealous managers interrupt and derail the conversation, valuable ideas are lost.

**2. Know when to step in.** Communities have built-in self-correcting capacities. Troublemakers get squelched or ignored; bad information gets corrected. When intruders hinder a community's operations and remain unchecked, the company should not hesitate to step in. If the misinformation being bandied about might cause someone to make a potentially harmful or costly mistake, managers owe it to the community — and to the company — to clarify ASAP. In all cases, such intrusions should be brief and hedged with explanations.

**3. Form a club, a real community of like-minded people.** Creating a vibrant community is all about creating a critical mass of good minds and spurring them to spark off each other. But the odds of success improve when the members share the same general outlook — it simply makes it easier for them to communicate and cooperate.

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**4. You can't hide, so don't even try.** It's an inescapable truth of this transparent age that sooner or later — and mostly sooner — the errors a company commits will be exposed for everyone to see. When a mistake is made in working with a community, the best course is to admit it without delay, apologize and make sure it's not repeated.

**5. Forget about perfection.** Anything that gets members of a community talking is good. Anything that slows that conversation is bad. When a company communication is too flashy or too finely tuned, it can rapidly shut down discussion and make it impossible to get the valuable feedback the company seeks.

**6. Stir things up.** There's nothing quite so blah and unproductive as a homogeneous, complacent community Web site. Companies need to make sure that contrary opinions are encouraged, that members start challenging the revealed wisdoms of the group. It's in the play of argument and counterargument that fresh ideas rise to the surface.

**7. Say thank you.** Companies that sponsor communities need to remember that a transaction is taking place. The members of the communities are sharing themselves and their talents in ways that have value for the companies, and their contributions deserve to be acknowledged and rewarded.

**8. This is not a one-night stand.** Communities take time to develop. Attracting a cast of valuable characters who share common interests cannot be accomplished overnight, and establishing and strengthening the personal relationships so necessary to a productive environment is a long-term proposition. This should not be rushed. ●

### Join the Crowd

The world as we've known it is changing all around us, and a big part of that change is in the nature of the connections among people and between people and their employers. Computers, cell phones, iPods and the Internet are making us more distinctly individual and independent. We spend more time away from the office, working and traveling, and a great deal more time online, accessing information for our work and communicating with colleagues, suppliers and customers.

Although the Internet has made workers more independent, it has also led them to create communities built upon collaboration. In other words, our degree of separation from our customary work life has increased, while, at the same time, we have never been so widely connected.

### Altering the Nature of Work

Experts such as Gartner Inc., a Connecticut-based technology research and advisory company, expect that these developments will drastically alter the nature of work over the next decade. Freed from dependence upon the company for infrastructure and resources, employees will provide intangible services from their own personally customized workspaces. They will rely on networks of people, many of them unaffiliated with their employer, for advice, information and best practices.

Inevitably, their relationship to the company will be transformed. The expertise they have chosen and developed will allow them to move easily from one employer to another, erasing whatever vestiges of company loyalty remain. They will insist that collaboration, much of it remote, replace the traditional authoritarian interactions of manager and employee.

As Gartner put it in a recent report, the new relationship will be one of symbiosis. Indeed, the corporation as it now exists, with its armies of salaried workers in identical cubicles, will gradually disappear. Instead, there will be virtual communities that will be able to mobilize teams of specialists to take on necessary tasks for customers.

### Collaboration

Companies still have plenty of time to prepare and meet these work changes. Leaders need to examine their management and support policies and adjust them to fit the more collaborative model their newly independent employees seek. A policy carved in stone simply doesn't suffice for the new-breed workers who thrive on challenge and are constantly seeking out-of-the-box assignments that will boost their expertise. At the same time, companies should become knowledgeable about the care and feeding of virtual networks and communities, which play such an important role in the work life of the newly independent worker. ●

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *We Are Smarter Than Me*, you'll also like:

- 1. *Wikinomics* by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams.** Using the collaborative-software "wiki" concept as their theme, the authors address how the Internet's social network offers new, decentralized ways to produce content, goods, services and profit.
- 2. *Outside Innovation* by Patricia B. Seybold.** Innovation is what keeps companies at the top of their fields, and Seybold shows that the best way for companies to do this is to involve passionate customers in every aspect of their product and service design.
- 3. *Citizen Marketers* by Ben McConnell and Jackie Huba.** In homes, dorm rooms and planes around the world, millions of people are exercising their influence on what we buy, even though they have no official connection to those products and services. "Citizen marketers" are forming growing communities of enthusiasts and evangelists, getting the word out about what products they love or hate.