



DRAFT

EXPLORING A LEARNING CONSORTIUM FOR THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Scrum Alliance is exploring the formation of a Learning Consortium of up to 30 organizations that will examine, in alliance with cosponsors, the management implications of the emerging Creative Economy.

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?

“We have arrived at a turning point,” says the launch abstract of the Global Peter Drucker Forum 2014. “Either the world will embark on a route towards long-term growth and prosperity, or we will manage our way to economic decline.” In response to this challenge, many organizations are already making a shift:

- From the goal of maximizing shareholder value as reflected in the stock price to a focus on adding value to those for whom the work is being done;
- From the practices of hierarchical bureaucracy to the collaborative leadership and management practices of the Creative Economy;
- From metrics limited to financial goals to metrics that reflect contributions to the prosperity of individuals, organizations, and society.

Exemplars of firms implementing some or all of these shifts include large firms in the digital economy as well as firms in more traditional sectors such as groceries and manufacturing. Many smaller organizations have also made the shift. Parts of some large, traditionally managed organizations are making similar shifts.

Emerging leadership and management practices include working in self-directed teams and networks, coordinating work in new ways such as Agile frameworks, using new values and new ways of communicating, and developing new metrics to reflect the shifts. In these organizations, hierarchy is not abandoned but is based on competence rather than pure authority. The collective effect of these practices is empowering the people doing the work and giving them the ability to use their full talents and passion to do so.

While there is a broad consensus emerging on the direction of change, there is less reliable information on the “how” of making these shifts. What are the opportunities? What are the constraints? How much change is actually happening on the ground? What are the benefits? What are the costs? What are the risks? The Learning Consortium is designed to shed light on these questions.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM

The Learning Consortium is inviting up to 30 organizations that are already implementing at least some of the leadership and management practices of the Creative Economy to join a collective of exemplars.

Organizations wishing to join the Learning Consortium are invited to submit a short summary of what they are doing or planning to do to implement the leadership and management practices of the Creative Economy. In a large organization, the activities might relate to only a part of the organization.

The members of the Learning Consortium will select five organizations (based on agreed-upon criteria to be determined) from among these submissions and organize one-day site visits at their locations. Each host organization will make presentations and hold discussions about what it is doing, how it is doing it, and what it is learning.

Each of the 30 organizations will be invited to send participants on the site visits. Once the site visits are complete, Scrum Alliance will organize a conference at which the Learning Consortium will make presentations and hold discussions about what has been learned. The Learning Consortium will produce a report of the conclusions of the visits and its review. The report will be made available to the 30 organizations.

WHAT IS THE METHODOLOGY OF THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM?

The Learning Consortium will draw on the extensive research already done, develop an approach that is likely to bring results, provide a clear definition of outcomes, suggest a specific and logical road map for reaching them, and offer defined post-site-visit activities. Further details will be provided in coming weeks.

The Learning Consortium is thus neither an unplanned fishing expedition of site visits with no particular outcome in mind nor a rigid plan to prove a preconceived conclusion to be implemented without consultation with the members. It is a consortium aimed at targeted learning.

WHAT IS THE TIME LINE?

Provisional dates are:

- Closing date for members to join the Learning Consortium: end February 2015
- Site visits: May-September 2015
- Conference: to be determined

WHAT IS SCRUM ALLIANCE?

Scrum Alliance is the largest, most established and influential professional membership organization in the Agile community. Scrum Alliance is a nonprofit association with more than 350,000 members worldwide. Its mission is to transform the world of work by guiding organizations to become prosperous and sustainable, to inspire people, and to create value for society. Scrum is at the heart of its products, services, and solutions.

WHAT EXACTLY IS “THE CREATIVE ECONOMY”?

The term “the Creative Economy” denotes a family of leadership and management practices that have emerged in a range of organizations in the 21st century. The Creative Economy is more than a class of creative workers or a set of creative industries. It reflects an ongoing transformation of the entire modern economy and society, eventually affecting every person and every organization. Various labels, including “the Creative Economy” and “Scalable Learning,” refer to this transformation.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND PRACTICES OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY?

The goals and practices of the Creative Economy are continuously evolving. The starting hypothesis is that they include shifts in organizational goals; organizational structures; and coordination of work, values, communications, and metrics.¹

The hypothesis is that these goals and practices constitute not just a grab bag of unconnected innovations but rather a coherent constellation of leadership and management practices that embody a different way of thinking, speaking, and acting in the world.

WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS OF THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM?

Scrum Alliance is a global organization, hosting and sponsoring several gatherings around the world each year. The Learning Consortium will draw from this network of global experience and expertise.

WHAT IS THE BASIC GOAL OF THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM?

Broadly stated, the central hypothesis is that there are certain successful leadership and management practices that characterize organizations in the Creative Economy. It is not an attempt to prove that “one size fits all.” At the same time, it does not accept, at least as a starting point, that every organization is unique in every way.

WHAT ROLES WILL MEMBERS OF THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM PLAY?

Learning Consortium members can play active roles including:

- Refining the initial hypotheses of the Learning Consortium.
- Selecting organizations for site visits.
- Evaluating the goals and management practices of the selected organizations.
- Adding additional perspectives and experience to the work of the Learning Consortium.
- Evaluating and refining the conclusions of the site visits.

WHO WILL BE THE LEAD COMPANIES IN THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM?

Scrum Alliance is in the process of identifying and contacting possible “lead members.” These companies are expected to commit earlier and play a stronger role in the Learning Consortium.

The intent is to have a mix of young companies wholly immersed in the emerging leadership and management practices as well as large, traditionally managed companies that have important Creative Economy activities going on in parts of their organizations. The mix of companies involved will help bring out similarities and differences in management practices in these different contexts.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS?

Past experience shows that when such learning consortia are well managed, when there is strong interest in learning about the issues, when there is strong interest in sharing experience and getting recognition as lead practitioners, and when there is real experience to be tapped, an initiative of this kind can be illuminating. Scrum Alliance believes that all of those criteria can be met.

WHAT BENEFITS WILL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE?

In return for participation in the Learning Consortium, each organization will receive:

- Membership in a learning community focused on central questions of leadership and management.
- Active participation in shaping the work of the Learning Consortium, including selecting site visits.
- Participation of up to two staff members in the site visits.
- Participation of up to four staff members in the conference following the site visits.
- Prominence for organizations that are recognized for the excellence of their activities.

HOW DOES AN ORGANIZATION JOIN THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM?

Interested organizations should send a short email expressing their interest in participating to: learningconsortium@scrumalliance.org. The email should include a short description (preferably no more than two pages) of the goals and management practices of the Creative Economy that the organization is pursuing, along with a statement of willingness to, if selected as one of the five, host a site visit from organizations participating in the Learning Consortium.

HOW MUCH WILL MEMBERSHIP COST?

The membership fee will cover the administrative costs of the Learning Consortium. Scrum Alliance, a nonprofit organization, is developing cost projections and will provide more information in the near future.

WHEN DO POTENTIAL MEMBERS NEED TO COMMIT?

The final date for participation is February 28, 2015. The Learning Consortium will be limited to 30 organizations chosen on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no need to make an immediate decision to join, although delaying a decision runs the risk that all places will be taken.

CORE TEAM FOR THE LEARNING CONSORTIUM

The Scrum Alliance team will provide substantive leadership as well as the necessary support. Individual leadership members under consideration include board members of Scrum Alliance and educators in leadership and management. A dedicated team is being formed. Expected members include the following:

- Steve Denning is a board member of Scrum Alliance and combines several decades of management experience at the World Bank with many years of consulting and research on leadership and management issues. From 1996 to 2000, he was director of Knowledge Management at the World Bank, where he spearheaded the knowledge-sharing program. In November 2000, he was selected as one of the world's ten Most Admired Knowledge Leaders (Teleos).
- Jay Goldstein is Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurship at McCormick School of Engineering at Northwestern University, where he teaches Entrepreneurial Selling and Scaling with the application of advanced Agile mind-sets and methods; he is a serial entrepreneur and was a founding partner in Jabbok River Group, which invests in early-stage companies to accelerate innovation and growth.
- Michael Pacanowsky is currently the Gore-Giovale Chair in Business Innovation at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah. He worked for several decades with W. L. Gore and Associates. He is championing the Center for High Performing Organizational Cultures at the Bill and Vieve Gore School of Business.

¹ For more information on the many books that have described these shifts, see for example: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2013/05/07/the-best-new-books-on-the-creative-economy/>.