

Collaboration

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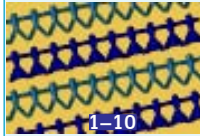
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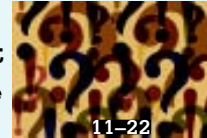
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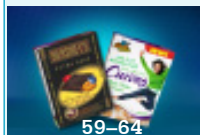
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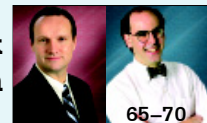


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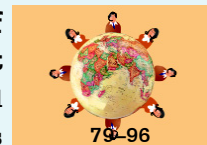
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What can business learn from an operation theatre or a mountaineering expedition? When a team of doctors attends a patient with multiple fractures, it's a sign of collaboration. When a team of gutsy individuals embarks upon a Herculean task like trekking a high-rise

mountain, they collaborate. There are of course, many more such instances where

“Businesses too are witnessing radical changes forcing collaboration as a competitive necessity.”

collaboration plays a crucial role in achieving the desired results. Why shouldn't business imbibe such best practices? One might argue that the doctors are bound by their professional responsibilities and mountaineers collaborate out of sheer desperation. Agreed. Businesses too are witnessing radical changes forcing collaboration as a competitive necessity. One form of collaboration that is gaining huge popularity over the last few years is open source innovation. The case of Firefox illustrates this point.

“As companies reach beyond their boundaries to find and develop ideas, they are exploring new models to manage innovation.”

A number of new and emerging technologies, many aimed at enhancing the way the Internet is used, promise to change how companies innovate, managers make decisions, and businesses lower costs, tap talent, or realise new business opportunities. McKinsey recently argued that over the next decade, eight technology-enabled business trends—distributing co-creation, using consumers as innovators, tapping into a world of talent, extracting more value from interactions, expanding the frontiers of automation, unbundling production from delivery, putting more science into management, and making businesses from information—will really matter.

As companies reach beyond their boundaries to find and develop ideas, they are exploring new models to manage innovation. In

projects that tap external talent, questions quickly arise about process management, intellectual property rights, and the right to make decisions. Some executives have been at this game longer than others. Mitchell Baker, Chairman and former Chief Executive Officer of Mozilla Corporation, has devoted the past ten years to lead an effort that relies extensively on people outside her company – not just for creative ideas, but also to develop products and make decisions. The result: Mozilla's Firefox browser, with 150 million users, has become a rival of Microsoft's market leading Internet Explorer. As Firefox flourished, the process that created it became a model for participatory, open-source collaboration. Today, Mozilla and Firefox are successful on several levels. Having recaptured market share lost to Internet Explorer, Firefox now holds 15% of the browser market in the US and a higher share elsewhere.

“If competition makes companies overcommit their resources with few good results, collaboration enables companies to operate with few resources and many good results.”

The truth is that collaboration shall be the new platform for competition, be it open source innovation, co-creation (as propounded by C K Prahalad and Ramaswamy in *The Future of Competition*) or any other form of it. If competition makes companies overcommit their resources with few good results, collaboration enables companies to operate with few resources and many good results.