

Smarter Collaboration Insights

Sharing ideas to accelerate smarter collaboration

August 2023

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Dr. Heidi K. Gardner Shortlisted for Thinkers50 Leadership Award

August kicked off with some great news: Dr. Heidi K. Gardner [was selected as a Thinkers50 top management thinker](#), shortlisted for the prestigious 2023 Leadership Award. This distinguished achievement award acknowledges thinkers who “shed powerful and original new light onto the perennial and yet classic subject of the role of the leader in any team, corporation, or organisation.” In November, one (or potentially two) of the nine candidates will take home the award.

Dr. Gardner extends a heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who has supported her and her research over the past decade-plus, especially those who have sought out, applied, and spread the smarter collaboration ideas. The whole team at Gardner & Co. hopes that smarter collaboration will become an even more accessible and widespread concept, with the power to transform companies and organizations of all kinds.



NPR Podcast: How Smarter Collaboration Helps Companies and People
 Recently, Dr. Heidi K. Gardner [joined Beverly Jones, host of NPR's *Jazzed About Work* podcast](#), to unravel how smarter collaboration helps organizations and their employees. They cover topics like:

- The health and wellbeing benefits of smarter collaboration
- How Dr. Gardner became so passionate about collaboration
- How diversity means very little without inclusion
- The gap between senior leaders' perception of collaboration in their company and reality
- How to uncover top collaboration barriers in one's organization
- Fostering better collaboration in hybrid environments



The Workplace Communication Podcast: Cultivating Task Conflict
 Did you know there is a difference between simply “getting along” and

undertaking a journey of intelligent collaboration? In a new episode of *The Workplace Communication Podcast*, Dr. Heidi K. Gardner [shares her smarter collaboration research](#) and strategies in the areas of trust, psychological safety, and task and relationship conflict.



The American Lawyer: How GCs Can Become More Strategic Partners

In the July issue of *The American Lawyer's* "The Month" publication, Dr. Heidi K. Gardner explores how GCs can optimize their performance as a strategic thought partner across their entity. She looks at:

- What should be on the GC's radar for 2023 and beyond
- The key collaborative actions the GC should take as the leader
- The biggest pitfalls in-house and outside counsel make when trying to create a collaborative relationship

The [article is on page seven](#).



Smarter Collaboration

A NEW APPROACH TO BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AND TRANSFORMING WORK.

Dr. Heidi Gardner, author of Smarter Collaboration and Independent Filles, Harvard Law School, explains how GCs can optimize their performance as a strategic thought partner across their entire firm. You can read the full interview on the G.L.I. website.

What should be on the GC's radar for 2023 and beyond? GCs must quickly determine how to build and activate their collaborative networks so that they can stay ahead of hot-button issues, anticipate the effects on their business, and develop a proactive strategy that's contextualized to their particular industry and entity. The specific issues may shift rapidly, think about how quickly ChatGPT is creating both risks and opportunities in every field, but what persists is the value of people coming together from diverse backgrounds to tackle those complex challenges—a novel and powerful way. Who are the experts across the wider ecosystem to help you develop critical insights that get you a regular seat with your CEO, board, and other corporate leaders?

What are the key collaborative actions that the GC should take as the leader? Leaders need to think about how to create those conditions where collaboration doesn't feel risky. A two-year study at Google showed that the most important factor for high-performing teams was "psychological safety"—the belief that you won't be punished when you make a mistake. Especially for risk-averse lawyers, collaboration can feel chancy, particularly when asked to work with business partners who demand instant answers rather than perfect ones. So a GC needs to assure their team members that they can take appropriate risks without negative repercussions through both words and actions. A GC should also allow people to build interpersonal trust by investing in face-to-face events such as annual off-site if people aren't located together the leader needs to make the

most of technology and conduct business in a web-supported video environment. When people communicate in a rich environment where they can see each other's expressions, have that familiarity and increase the level of interpersonal trust, it is much more likely than that they will engage in the type of collaboration that the leader really needs them to undertake.

For an even deeper impact, a GC can create job rotation programmes that allow in-house lawyers to work temporarily in other departments or locations. These individuals become "cultural brokers" who can act as bridges to connect disparate parts of the organization, making colleagues not only aware of other experts but also more trusting of them. In one study, we saw that interactions between two different offices increased more than 15-fold in the year following just a single individual's secondment between them. These relationships allowed the corporate to complete a transaction in the one jurisdiction in record time, a breakthrough they all attributed to those closer relationships.

What are the biggest pitfalls in-house counsel and outside counsel make when trying to create a collaborative relationship? My research with hundreds of GCs has revealed these top three pitfalls.

- 1. A lack of transparency in terms of what each party is trying to achieve with the collaboration.
- 2. An unwillingness to admit the psychological barriers that are present such as a lack of trust, or structural barriers such as different levels of investment. The unwillingness to recognize and admit that those barriers exist results in people being unable to address and resolve them directly.
- 3. Lack of patience. Collaboration requires an investment. The start-up costs (such as figuring out who has the right expertise and persuading them to join, then aligning objectives) are borne right away. But the pay-outs in terms of innovation, problem-solving, and employee engagement all take time to emerge. So there is a necessary time lag when the ROI isn't positive, and a leader who demands quick payoff will kill collaboration.

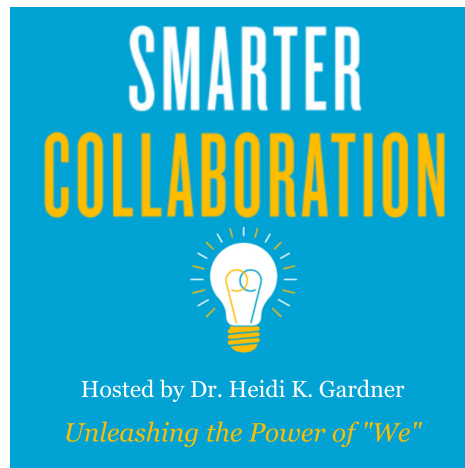
BOOK NEWS

New Smarter Collaboration Podcast

Smarter collaboration means bringing ideas together across disciplines and across boundaries. We are pushing that to the next level with our **new smarter collaboration podcast series**.

Produced in partnership with Rick Tocquigny (and his team) and hosted by Dr. Heidi K. Gardner, each episode will feature guests who unpack collaboration in an unexpected, non-business domain (for example, music, art, science, advertising, nonprofits) paired with a prominent business executive who applies those principles in business.

Stay tuned for details on our first episode! With two Hall of Fame songwriters and a senior executive from Pandora, smarter collaboration really comes alive. And, if you have a suggestion for a noteworthy team or executive to feature, please email christine@gardnerandco.co.



EVENTS

UPenn Webinar September 12

Want to catch Dr. Heidi K. Gardner in action? She and *Smarter Collaboration* co-author Ivan Matviak (both University of Pennsylvania alums) are teaming up September 12 to deliver a smarter collaboration-themed webinar for the university's "Career Tools Webinar Series." Registration is required (and open to the public): [sign up today!](#)



STAY CONNECTED

Keep in Touch

Follow Gardner & Co. on [LinkedIn](#) and visit our [website](#) for extra news and insights on smarter collaboration.

Watch our Videos

Check out our YouTube channel, which [features several videos](#) about the fundamentals of smarter collaboration and top strategies to apply it.

Give Feedback

What else can we do together? Please send your thoughts to Christine at christine@gardnerandco.co.

Gardner & Co.

marie@gardnerandco.co

508-463-5848



This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Gardner & Co. · 1563 Massachusetts Avenue · Cambridge, MA 02138 · USA