

## Smarter Collaboration Insights

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Sharing ideas to accelerate smarter collaboration

April 2024

### FEATURED THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

#### **Smarter Collaboration Podcast: Collaboration in Outer Space and Beyond**

Whether it's an unexpected repair during a space walk (think Apollo 13-type problem solving!) or an evacuation order in the Army, Major Kate Rubins [keeps cool and collaborative](#). Maybe it's being a "fish out of water" that prepared her: the NASA astronaut, microbiologist, and US Army reservist is continually putting herself in new and challenging situations across a wide variety of domains. In this episode of our Smarter Collaboration Podcast, you'll hear:

- what prompted her surprise pivot from MIT researcher to astronaut – and how each of us could learn from that experience
- how cross-discipline collaboration helped her become the first person to sequence DNA in space
- who she names as her personal heroes
- what techniques NASA uses to prepare people for the kinds of teamwork required in the tight confines of the International Space Station

To subscribe to the Smarter Collaboration Podcast, click [here](#).



## TOOLS

### Launching the “Smarter Collaboration 360”

In early May, we will launch the Smarter Collaboration 360 (“SC360” for short) development tool to help boost people’s collaborative competencies. With input from colleagues – and the option to solicit feedback from external parties such as clients – the Personalized Action Report reveals results across nine core collaborative competencies. By understanding their superpowers, undiscovered strengths, watch-outs, and growth opportunities, people get insights to drive higher collaborative performance. A team version of the tool/report will be released soon.



We beta-tested the tool with a cohort of leaders where trust had been low. Rocked by some organizational events, such as departures of key executives, it had been a long time since people gave each other candid feedback (a “really fragile environment” where they felt like they were “walking on eggshells”). They used the SC360, along with individual coaching and group sessions led by our Gardner & Co. facilitators, to open dialogue with each other and significantly improve the culture. Both productivity and retention have skyrocketed.

While that’s an extreme case, most organizations have a more common, major opportunity: equipping high-potential leaders with the capabilities to create a team environment where people contribute to their fullest and perform better

together. We'd bet our bottom dollar that right now you're thinking of someone who could use these skills!

## RESEARCH

### GenAI as a Collaborative Team Member: Fresh Insights

So far we have gathered input from over 400 working professionals on their experience using generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) as a collaborative teammate. When leaders and their colleagues use it as a real-time collaborator and sparring partner, they allow their teams to fill in expertise and perspective gaps and advance their decision-making.

This opens up all kinds of exciting possibilities, especially when they extend smarter collaboration practices to this new contributor – specifically, bringing together the right mix of expertise and viewpoints, at the right time, to tackle issues from many different angles. (See our [Wharton Magazine article](#) for more on this idea.)



Here are a few initial findings from our research:

- Around one in three people already use GenAI for routine tasks such as transcripts or meeting summaries.
- Looking at more advanced forms of usage, more than 90% of respondents see value and urgency in GenAI representing individual corporate functions (e.g., legal) in real-time discussions.
- That said, fewer than 10% are already using GenAI in such an advanced way – as a real-time collaborative team member.

We are continuing to research the how-to points. So far, we see a few major implications for GenAI as a team member:

- It will significantly improve the quality of discussion as well as efficiency of meetings.
- It has the potential to disrupt dysfunctional team norms.

- It requires the organization and its members to develop new skills.

Stay tuned for more research and insights! And take our survey to help us build deeper knowledge (by clicking [here](#)).

## IN THE NEWS

### Financial Times: The Future of Hybrid Working

In an article for Ignites/Financial Times, Dr. Heidi K. Gardner [says that employees](#) with hybrid arrangements are right to be worried about their futures.



### Psychology Today: How Smarter Collaboration Works

We were excited to be featured in Psychology Today. Smarter collaboration [is very much about psychology](#) – it starts with the right mindset.

When confronted with a complex problem, you need to see it holistically, and not just through a single functional lens. You must also be willing to bring in the appropriate set of experts, to jointly tackle the issue from all the identified angles.

Believing the following is also crucial:

- Your collaborators are good at what they do
- Your collaborators are good people
- Collaboration will save you time and bring you better results



### Int'l Legal Technology Association: The ROI of Knowledge Sharing

Sharing knowledge isn't just good for your firm: it's good for you, too. In a new

article for the International Legal Technology Association (ILTA), Dr. Heidi K. Gardner and Csilla Ilkei [back this up with data](#), and dig into the barriers that make smarter collaboration so difficult. The article also contains proven advice for busting these barriers, and preventing them in the first place.

## STAY CONNECTED

### Keep in Touch

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

### Subscribe to our Podcast

Follow our [Smarter Collaboration Podcast](#) to hear how gutsy leaders bring diverse thinkers to the table and create breakthrough outcomes.

### Watch our Videos

Check out our YouTube channel, which [includes 30-plus videos](#) about smarter collaboration - including how to put it into practice.

### Give Feedback

What else can we do together? Please send your thoughts to Christine at [christine@gardnerandco.co](mailto:christine@gardnerandco.co).

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