
Virtual Knowledge Teams

Global Flexible Working

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Henley Future Work Forum, 4th March 1999

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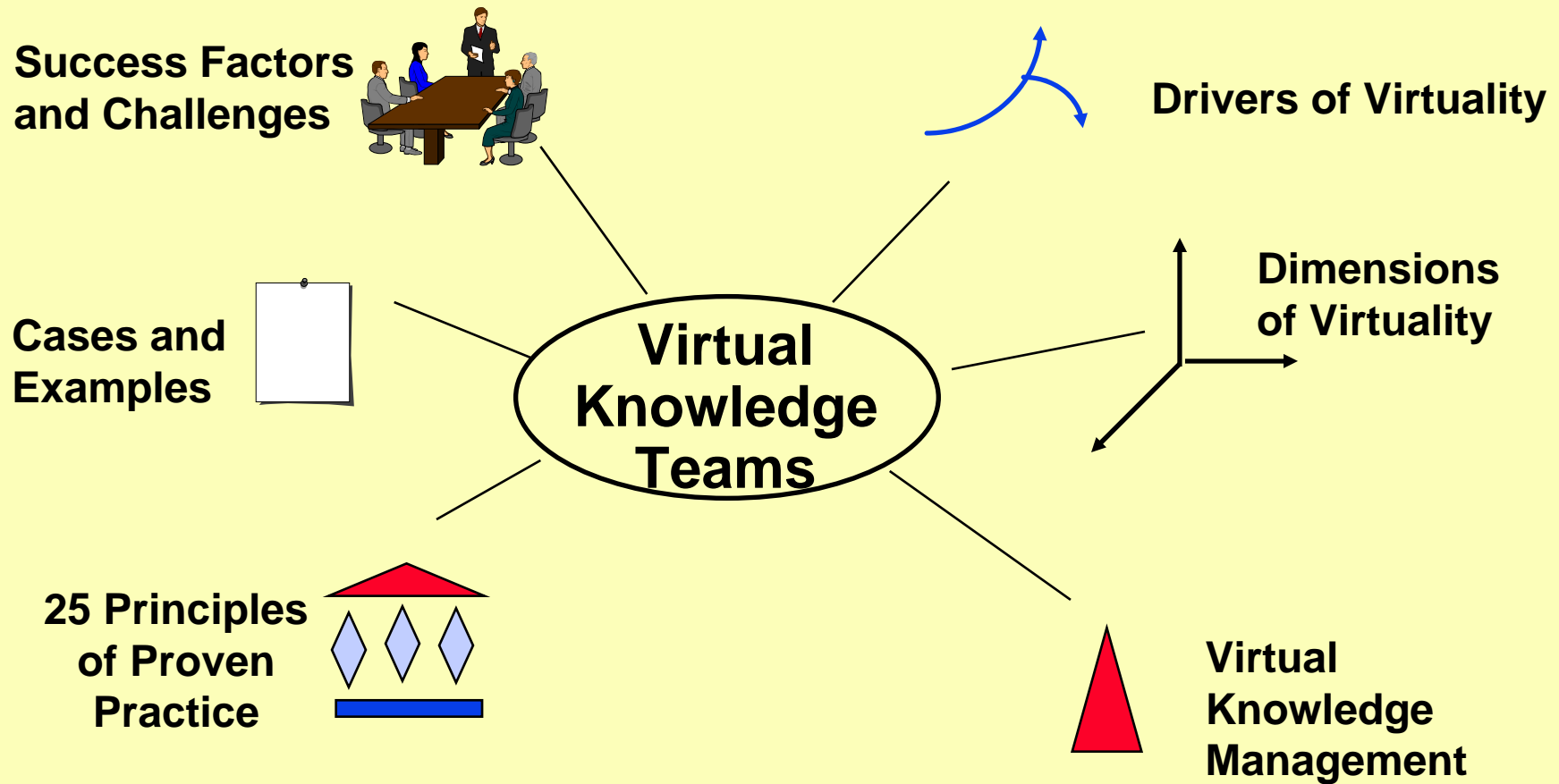
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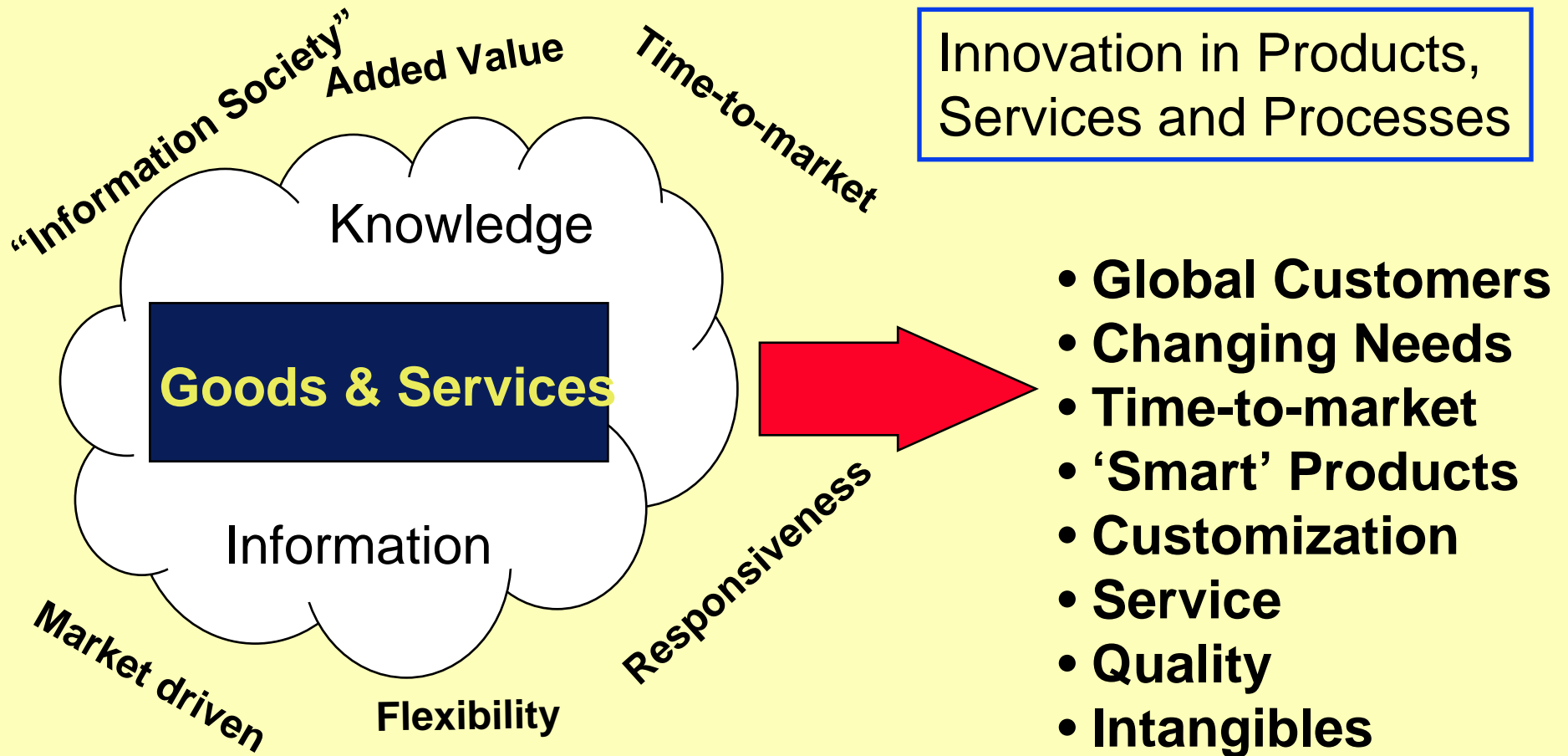
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Session Knowledge Map



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Why Knowledge?



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Why Virtual?

- ❑ Access to scarce/expensive resources (scale)
- ❑ Pooling resources/expertise (scope)
- ❑ New insights, new expertise (reach)
- ❑ Cross-fertilization of knowledge & experience
- ❑ Creating communities of excellence
- ❑ Flexibility - resources with responsiveness

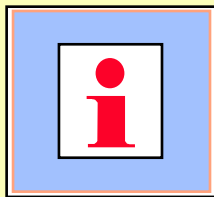
“Collaboration gives the ability to link diverse assets into unique capabilities and leverage in pursuit of new opportunities” (Ghoshal and Bartlett)

Three megatrends



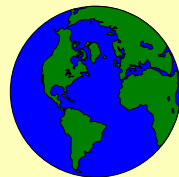
Technology

- Performance; Connectivity; Portability



Information/Knowledge Work

> 70% of work is information intensive

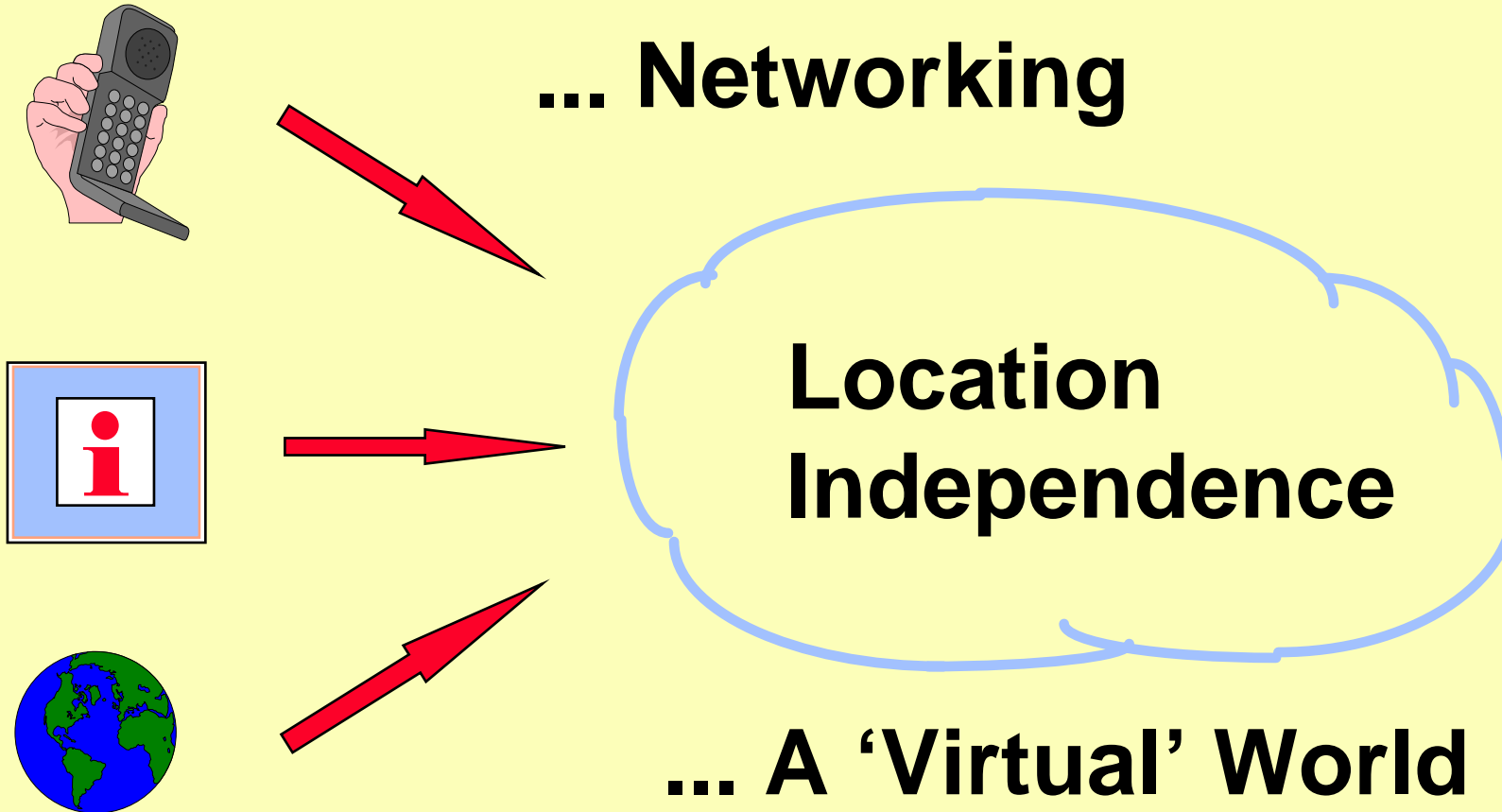


Globalisation

- of markets, products and resources/labour

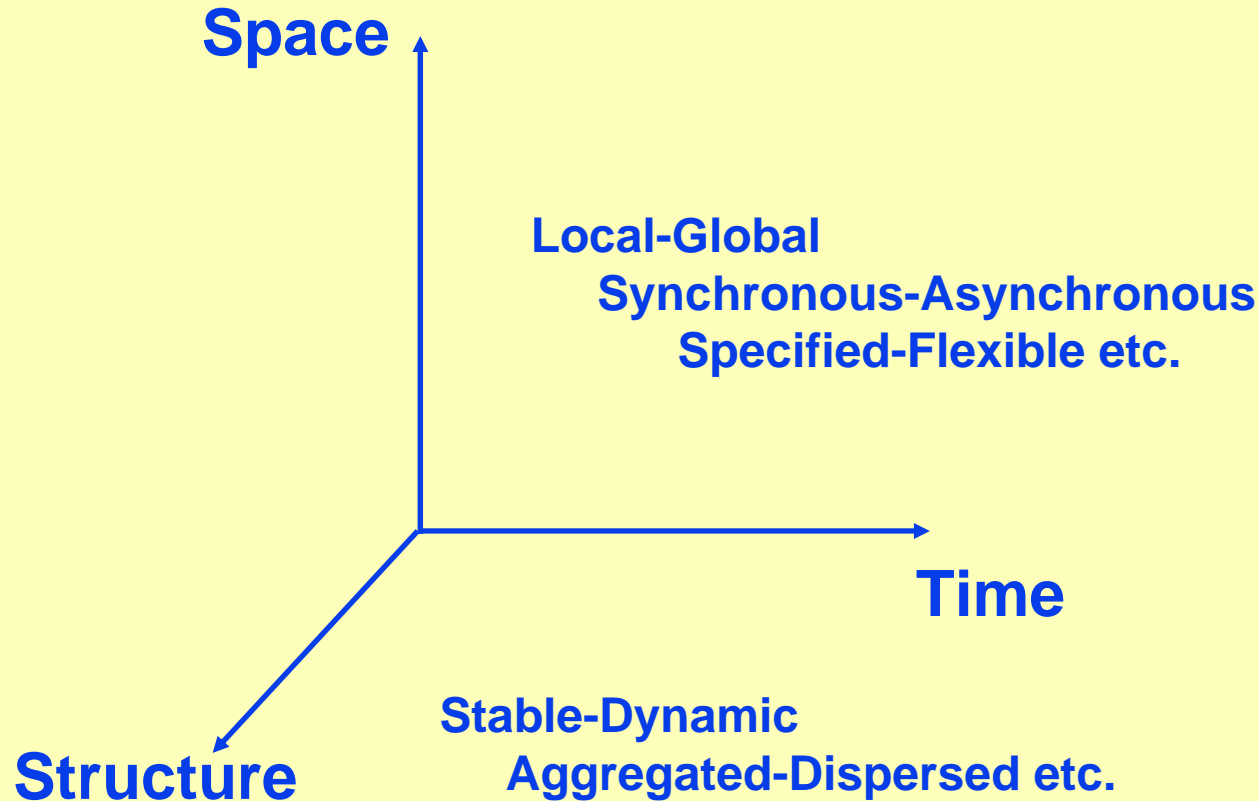
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Networked Knowledge Economy



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Three Dimensions



.... Many Opportunities for Innovation

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Rethinking Space

- Local → Global
 - Global → Local
 - Physical → Virtual
 - Concentrated → Dispersed
 - Dispersed → Concentrated
 - Fixed → Flexible
- etc.

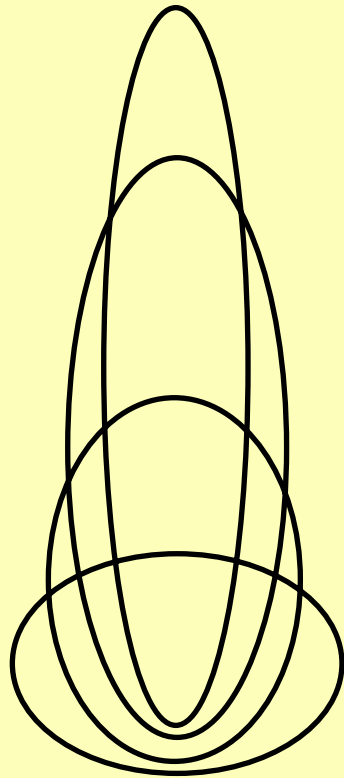
Rethinking time

- ❑ Fixed → Flexible
- ❑ Specified → Any Time
- ❑ Synchronous → Asynchronous
- ❑ Limited Hours → All Hours
- ❑ Local Time → Global Time
- ❑ Large Chunks → Small Chunks
- ❑ Small Chunks → Aggregated
- ❑ Today's Speed → 10x Faster

Rethinking Structure/Process

- Sequential → Parallel
- Centralized → Distributed
- Hierarchical → Networked
- Stable → Dynamic
- Large Teams → Small Teams
- In-house → Outsourced
- By Yourself → Collaborative
- Procedural → Object-oriented

The Virtual Hierarchy



Virtual Organizations

Virtual Products
and Services

Virtual Labs etc.

Virtual Offices

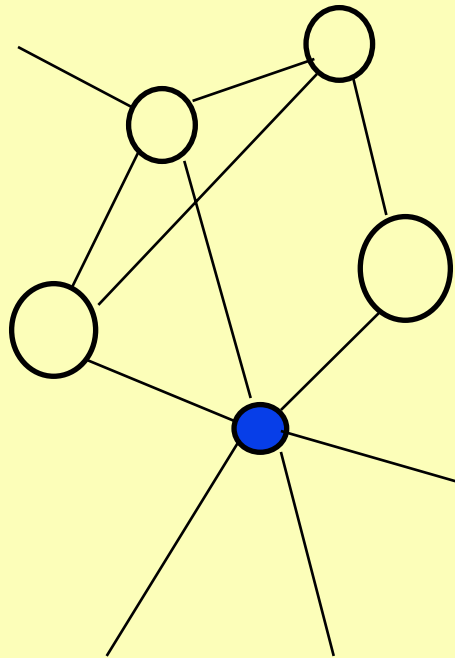
Virtual Teams

Telework

*Adapted from a network holonomy
- a whole yet a part
(Koestler/ Lipnack and Stamps)*

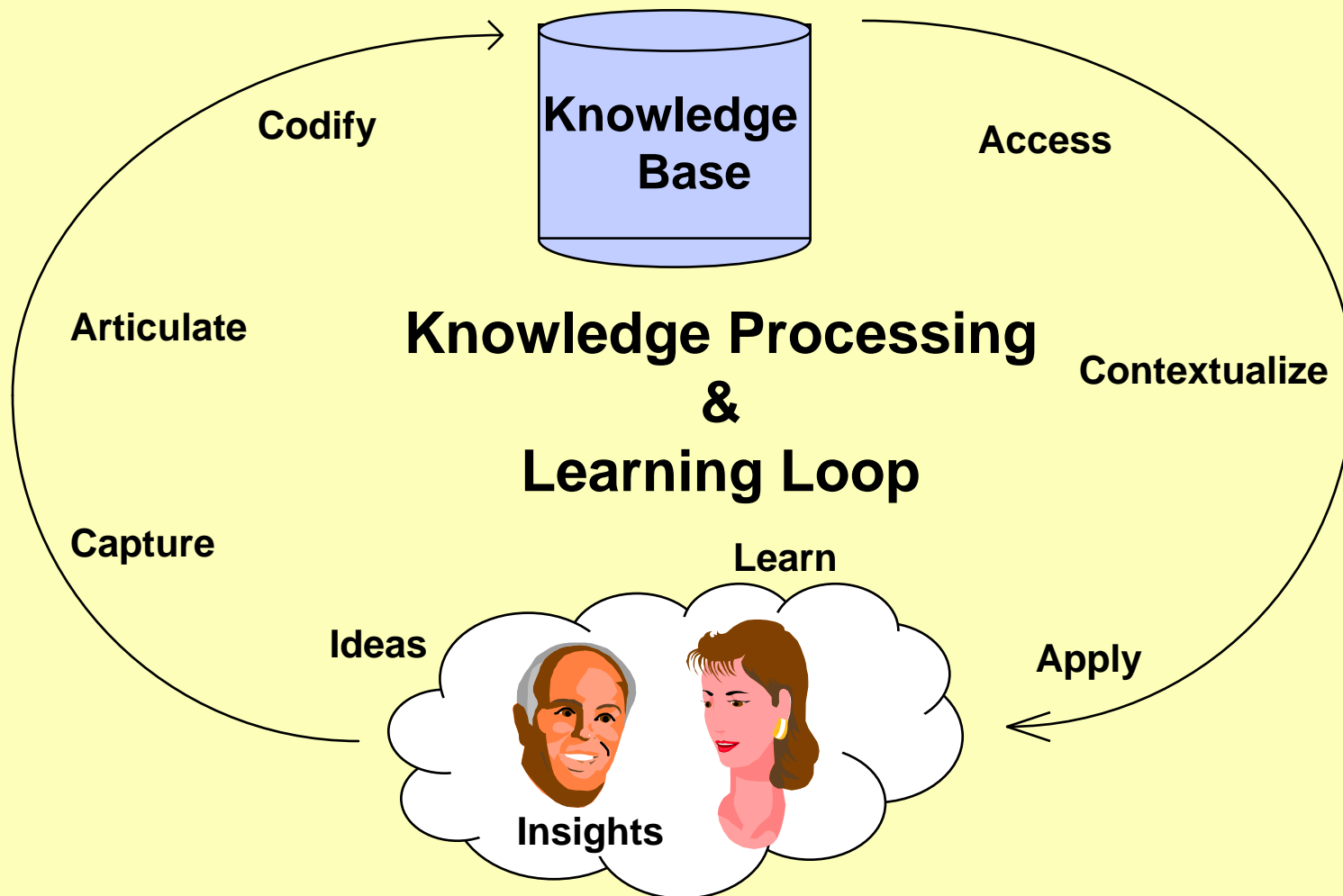
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Virtual Knowledge Teams



- ❑ Many types e.g.
 - distributed people in a team
 - distributed teams around the world
- ❑ One person - many teams/links
- ❑ Used in design, projects, problem-solving
- ❑ Video-conferencing popular
- ❑ Becoming part of daily work
- ❑ Effectiveness varies widely

Explicit and Tacit Knowledge



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Electronic Conversations

Effective

- ❑ Choosing right medium
- ❑ Setting context
- ❑ Cyberskills
- ❑ Structure e.g. headers
- ❑ Use of lists
- ❑ Use of filters
- ❑ Efficient personal filing
- ❑ Informality, humour

Ineffective

- ❑ Wrong medium
- ❑ Thinking aloud (mostly)
- ❑ Recipient action unclear
(c.f. speech acts)
- ❑ The 'copy to all' memo
- ❑ The essay
 - use one topic per email
- ❑ Repeat everything back

Information Management

Effective

- ❑ Vocabulary/thesaurus
- ❑ A Knowledge Inventory
- ❑ Information Owners
- ❑ Incentives for sharing
- ❑ Navigation aids
- ❑ Using 'librarians'
- ❑ Knowledge refining
- ❑ Know-who

Ineffective

- ❑ Search engine does all
- ❑ No structure (free text)
- ❑ No quality checks
- ❑ No feedback on quality
- ❑ No pruning, maintenance
- ❑ Formal/informal not clear
- ❑ Autonomous fiefdoms
- ❑ Everyone a librarian

Knowledge Communities

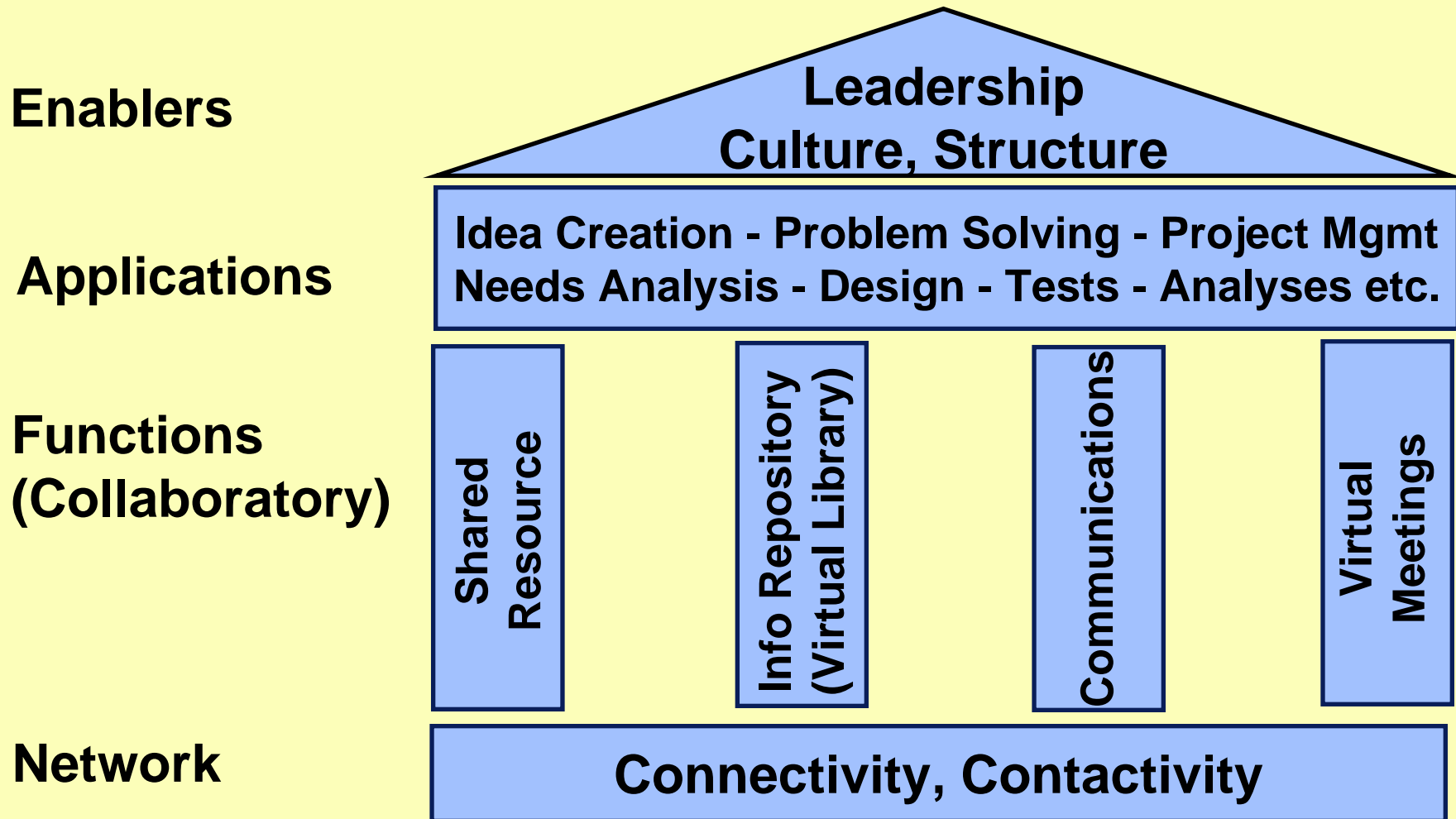
Effective

- ❑ Clear shared purpose
- ❑ People profiles
- ❑ FAQs
- ❑ Threaded conversations
- ❑ Good moderation
- ❑ Knowledge editing
- ❑ Attention to process/FTF

Ineffective

- ❑ When time constraints
- ❑ Wrong participants
- ❑ No clarity/coherence
- ❑ Wandering 'off topic'
- ❑ Off vs. on record clarity
- ❑ No summarizing/FAQs
- ❑ Technology gimmicks

Knowledge Infrastructure



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25 Principles of Proven Practice

5 groups of 5:

- ❑ Teams and Teaming
- ❑ Team Commitment
- ❑ Team Communications and Processes
- ❑ Team Technology
- ❑ Team Knowledge

Teams and Teaming

1. Teams are the organization powerhouse
2. Best knowledge teams: 5-8, multi-disciplined
3. Larger groups for cohesion or networking
... but not real work!
4. Each individual in 2 or more teams
5. Distinguish person and role.

Team Commitment

6. Clarity of purpose - mission, vision, goals
7. Norms and values
8. Map out networks - core and extended teams
e.g. Netmap often shows teams are wrong!
9. Determine interdependencies/ flows
10. Individuals maintain personal networks

Team Processes

11. Communicate, communicate, communicate
 12. Active listening - play back - understand
 13. Recognize fuzziness of decision making
 14. Learn together - all the time
 15. Build trust in depth
-don't get too task focused!! Think process

Team Technology

16. Not just email - a broad mix
17. Agree standards and product set
18. Make team documents web-centric
19. Content/usages standards e.g. email
20. Experiment - but don't use a technology just for the sake of it

Team Knowledge

- 21. A vital resource - who is responsible?
 - 22. Emails are embryonic knowledge
 - 23. A knowledge editor for each domain
 - 24. Capture lessons all the time
 - 25. Know your team mates!
-Conversations and Collections

The ETD Experience

- ❑ 7 partners/40+ collaborators (global)
 - ❑ Extensive use of email/lists (not forums)
 - ❑ Basic communications standards/'rules'
 - ❑ Project intranet (via the Internet - layers)
 - ❑ Web-centric knowledge - database driven
 - ❑ Periodic face-to-face meetings
- focus on communications - not technology

Bottom line: World's premier telework web site

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Allergan

- Geographic to pan-Europe therapeutic areas
- “Knowledge-based, flexible, project driven”
- Project teams cover all functions
 - multinational, cross functional, own budgeting etc.
- IT - common platform. Documentum, intranet
- But it’s “all to do with people”
 - motivation, flexibility, productivity, **recognition**

Bottom line: 3x projects/trials; 6x study sites

Buckman Laboratories

- ❑ “Solutions lie in minds, not databases”
- ❑ Corporate network (V1 - CIS) - up in 30 days
- ❑ CEO monitors and uses the network
- ❑ Ethics - the “glue that holds us together”
- ❑ Instant global teams - disband when done
- ❑ FAQs, virtual conferences, forums
- ❑ K’Netix (sm) - knowledge sharing Intranet

Bottom line - teams develop customer solutions

Critical Success Factors

- ❑ Strong link to business imperative
- ❑ Knowledge leadership
- ❑ Knowledge creating and sharing culture
- ❑ Continuous learning and experimentation
- ❑ Well developed ICT infrastructure
- ❑ Systematic knowledge processes
- ❑ Attention to human factors!!

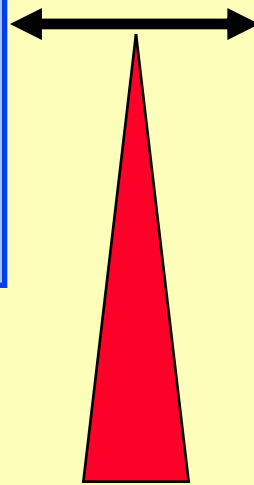
Virtualization - a balancing act

Same Place-Time

- Close relationships
- High interaction
- Contextual awareness
- Physical resources
- 'Casual encounters'
- Creative stimulation

Different Place-Time

- Access 'world-class'
- Richness-Diversity
- Global perspective
- Quality- local validation
- Timeliness
- Cost avoidance



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