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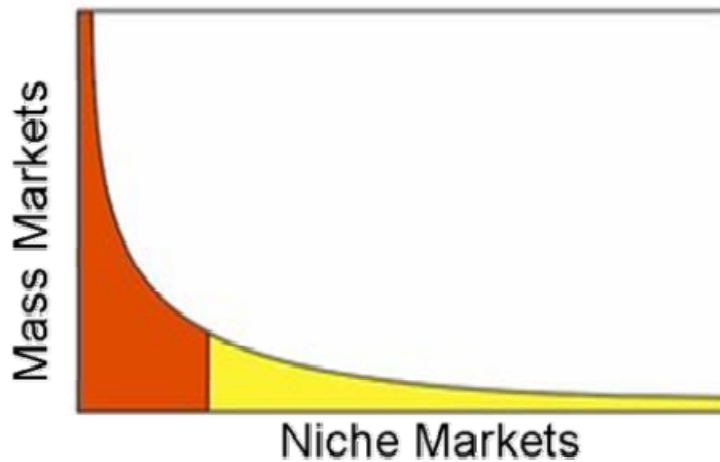
## Topics on Web 2.0

### Blog posts on Web 2.0 and Collaboration

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#### Enterprise 2.0: The Long Tail Within

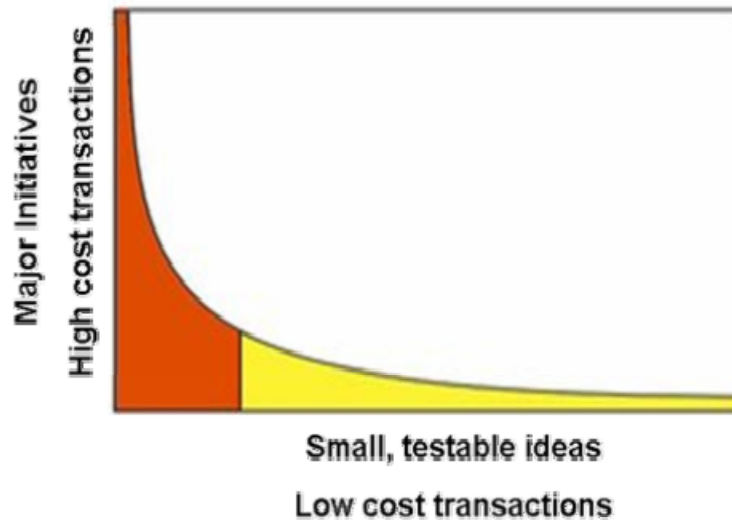
The [Long Tail](#) market concept, ([Chris Anderson](#)), is now familiar to many observers of the Web's impact on markets and commerce. From the point of view of external markets, it often represented like this.



The mass market culture has been fundamentally changed by the Web and the economies of the Long Tail. Companies often focus on bringing products and services to market with mass penetration being required to meet the demands of making a profit over the cost of sales and distribution. The Web has provided a channel that greatly expands exposure and lowers the cost of distribution and delivery. Many small niche markets are now more and more attractive to reach, and in aggregate are attractively profitable.

The Web has also provided for broader social networks, and capacities for individuals to self-identify their interests and preferences and create new, marketable content themselves in what is called an [“architecture of participation.”](#)

However, **within** the enterprise, there exists an untapped Long Tail.



Companies focus on strategic plans and annual business plans – identifying the resources and organizational priorities that need to be devoted and aligned to achieve business results. Those priorities are likely focused on the front, large end of the tail and as such are high cost transactions. While focus and alignment are important, it can also diminish the opportunity for innovation and ideas that might be slightly off-topic to high level priorities, but nonetheless can alone or in aggregate yield productive ideas, streamlined or new economies in business process enhancements, or better customer engagement.

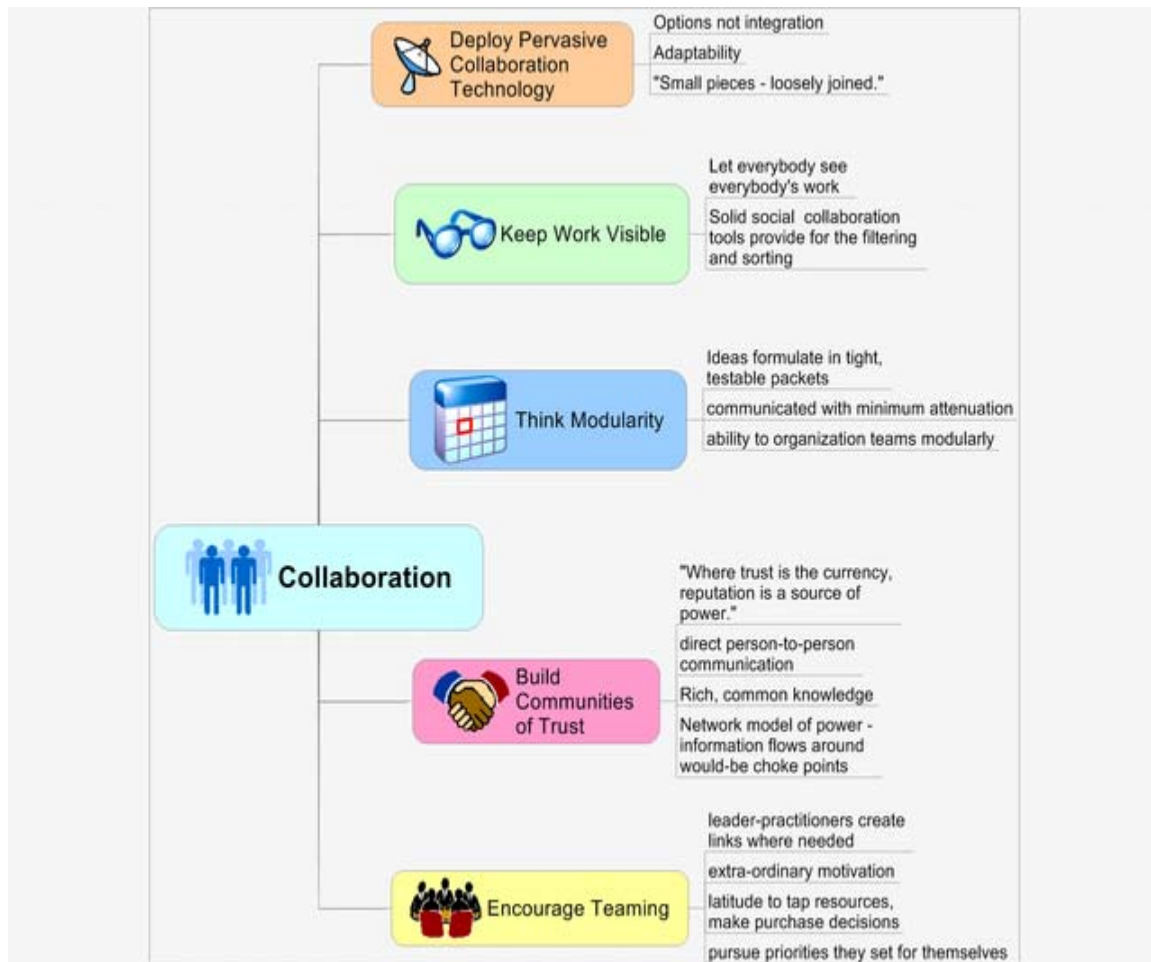
An article from the July-August 2005 [Harvard Business Review](#), focused on [The High Performance Organization](#). In the article entitled [Collaboration Rules](#), Philip Evans and Bob Wolf postulate that extraordinary results from collaborative teams can be more the norm than out-of-the-ordinary, or in the realm of hyper-achievers only.

When collaboration is fostered by both access to simple, adaptable tools and technologies, and a cultural and management approach that supports collaborative work styles, productive ideas and work habits can flourish.

A collaborative environment is one that fosters lots of “cheap, plentiful transactions,” of ideas, innovative ad hoc projects, or simply accelerate every-day project work.

Evans and Wolf explore this notion in two case study examples as disparate as the Linux open source community, and Toyota. They recommend the following [collaboration guidelines](#) to advance productive collaboration, rules that I've posted in a mind map format. Like many powerful notions, these helpful "rules" are simple and direct, but perhaps not common enough.

## Collaboration Guidelines



Where collaborative Enterprise 2.0 tools and practices are used, both team members and managers can and must evolve to functioning in an increasingly networked and participative model, where some key people become hubs in a team, while others, especially managers, become links to wider networks of people and expertise.

## Collaboration -So What?

It's a big deal when the balance of economic value of American public companies shift from tangible to intangible assets.

A recent [Economist](#) profile, entitled "The Battle for Brainpower," quotes that intangible assets are now more than half the market capitalization of U.S. public companies, and, according to their citing of an [Accenture](#) study, the shift is up to 70% in 2006, from 20% in 1980. Those intangible assets reside predominantly in the domain of what is described as "tacit" interactions.

Dan Pink, in his book, "[A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future](#)," refers to this as the transition to the conceptual age, where the ability to form relationships, synthesize concepts, and engage in complex, problem solving, is more to the fore as a key set of skills for the modern company or organization.

The [Economist](#) article focuses on the issues of the dearth of talent as an emerging business issue, and as a primary resource issue of nations. Yet they note that high talent individuals often decline in productivity for up to a year when they move from one company to the next and don't bring elements of their work teams with them (their productivity context).



Companies often continue to organize and relate to their workforce as if it was still predominantly "transformational" \* or "transactional.\*\*" The [Economist](#) defines talent simply and powerfully as "the ability to solve complex problems or invent new solutions." [Lawrence M. Miller](#) calls this talent **broad-slicing** in his book, [The New Capitalism](#) (in contrast to [Malcolm Gladwell's](#) thin-slicing concept), and articulates how broad-slicing functions at a leadership, capability and operational levels in organizations.

Talented individuals don't exercise their talent in a vacuum, but often in the context of conducting their work in a team or collaborative process, whose members often represent diverse disciplines and cultures, and are often part of a global team or supply chain.

Collaboration practice enables talented knowledge workers to effectively connect with their team, creates a context for and fosters an ability to synthesize to analyze complex problems to allow individuals able to "see" all the elements of a problem. A high functioning team of talented individuals can then build on their collective experience and wisdom to be even more productive on the next set of problems or innovations. Collaboration tools support those business and organizational needs

\*Transformational: extracting raw materials or converting them into finished goods.

\*\*Transactional: transactions that can be easily scripted or automated

## The High Performance Workplace is the Virtual Workplace

The [Economist](#) published a special survey in January 2006 on *Collaboration and the High Performance WorkPlace*. Two quotes from that survey seem especially compelling.

- "The speed and efficiency with which effective teams can be brought together to resolve problems is crucial to the success of the modern organization,"

and

- "The more workers interact with each other often, the more likely they are to solve the problems of complexity of the modern organization."

Advancing technologies in knowledge management, Web 2.0 collaboration and social software, web-based meeting services, workspace and portal software are all evolving to address the potential needs of the modern knowledge worker who must, to be effective, work in a collaborative and team-based manner. That work puts a premium on efficient methods of assembling a team, getting quick access to proper resources and accelerating results through enhanced interactivity.

The workplace software of the 90s focused on making the individual productive, and giving them simple to use, yet robust presentation, word processing, presentation and calculation and e-mail communications software.

We're in an era now evolving to advance team productivity and it's rapidly becoming a key construct.

Knowledge workers today:

- often participate in teams with members that are external to a core organization: customers, partners, alliances, members of out-sourced business function, suppliers.
- members of multiple, dynamic, shifting teams, with shifting reporting structures as well
- cope with teams whose members are often cross-time zones, cross-cultural, and operate from disparate IT infrastructures.

Web 2.0/Office 2.0 whatever the nomenclature, the tools needs to address these business needs.

Blog Post 9 October 2006