

# Partnering Posts Blog Archives

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A newsy blog about partnering successes and failures around the world.  
Use the blog for insights on how to put partnering initiatives to work for your organization.

May 1, 2008

## Our Song

In what can certainly be described as an “unusual” approach to studying business dynamics, a team of UK academics recently published a study on the human factor in business relationships, tying their findings to English singer Morrissey’s song lyrics about friendship, falling in love, and loss. Do the words “No it’s not like any other love. This one is different, because it’s us” speak to you of business supply chains? The authors of “Business Relationships the Morrissey Way,” refer to such lyrics to illustrate the business trend of companies establishing exclusivity agreements in their supplier relationships. Their report concludes that [human emotions rather than rational thinking](#) often impact business relationships—even to the point of breaking up, despite whether the parties used “the right formula” in [establishing the relationship](#).

Speaking of breaking up, Miramax Films just ended its 14-year alliance with Toronto, Canada-based Alliance Films. The distribution relationship was not renewed because Alliance Films believed the performance of Miramax did not justify its increased fees. Delving deeper into the [failed partnering agreement](#), Alliance Films’ chairman says the relationship changed when new management took over.

Another [cause of partnering failures](#)—having a past orientation/mind-set—sometimes prevents potential partnerships from ever getting out of the starting gate, as was demonstrated this week on a grand scale. Lithuania refused to approve the EU’s plans to start talking with Russia about a key partnership treaty. Apparently Lithuania is holding a grudge about Russia’s actions in disrupting oil supplies to Lithuania in 2006.

How important is the ability to [collaborate in a team environment](#)? For four universities, it was a top selection criterion for their being awarded grants for scientific research centers awarded by the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology’s (KAUST) Global Research Partnership. Cornell University, the University of Oxford, Stanford University, and Texas A&M University were chosen as partners that best fit KAUST’s vision, mission, and needs for a global network of collaborating institutions and partners from industry in generating innovation that will benefit Saudi Arabia and the world.

Change, especially from globalization, brings new opportunities and markets—but also new competitors. Research of the National Microelectronics Institute found that many UK semiconductor companies are [moving away from strategic alliances and switching to the partnering business model](#). The former alliance model focused on sharing costs, gaining market access, and reducing risks. However, the research shows this model does not hold up well when change occurs in the business environment, as it can cause the parties to behave opportunistically toward each other. In contrast, the study found that the partnering model is more flexible in times of change, has a foundation of leveraging each other’s strengths to collaboratively take advantage of new opportunities or deal

with new external threats, and operates on a deep shared commitment to achieve mutually beneficial objectives. In an article, the institute's marketing director says the "successful firms of the future will embrace the concept of partnering . . . and make it a part of their corporate culture."

What better way to enable the ability to [compete against a larger competitor](#) than to partner? That's what Unimicron Technology in China decided to do. It's partnering with Elitegroup Computer systems to build a notebook PCB plant in China to compete against two rivals that have already captured 60 percent of the market share.

Giants partner too. Presenting a clear message that [partnering for collaboration](#) is an attractive business model, IBM has an agreement with Matheson Tri-Gas in Japan and engineers from its parent company, Taiyo Nippon Sanso Corp., to jointly develop new manufacturing materials that will enable the next generation of semiconductor technology. Their partnering strategy and combined resources will enable both companies to accelerate the pace of semiconductor innovation.

[Being able to compete on a global basis](#) impacts even lawyers these days. To facilitate that capability, the University of Detroit Mercy Law School is partnering with a law school in Mexico to provide students with a joint education for practicing law in both the United States and Mexico. Detroit's Mercy also partners with a school in Canada so graduates eventually will be able to practice law in all three countries.

Soon, some people will need to look no further than their own garage to see an example of partnering. Garage Floor Coating.com and California Closets announced this month a [partnership for customized solutions](#) for transforming garages into multi-purpose rooms and greater value for home resale. Both companies are considered product innovators and visionaries with world-class brands. The partnership interests are aligned in that the arrangement will enable both to leverage each other's brand and resources to extend their markets and the solutions they offer to consumers.

May 8, 2008

### **At the Top**

In case you're on the fence about whether to partner to achieve your strategic objectives, this week's headlines definitely promote the advantages of this business model.

Partnering was at the forefront of three companies receiving recognition for leading-edge performance. [KPMG was recognized](#) by Mediacorp Canada Inc. as one of the best employers to promote workplace diversity. One of the reasons cited for KPMG winning the award is its internal partnering activities. The firm developed a course for managers on communication in a diverse workplace.

The second recognition-winner is the [Cincinnati USA Partnership](#), which has been named one of the top 10 US Economic Development Groups of 2007. Its VP stated that the partnership's strong performance over the past several years helped win the recognition.

Time, Inc. was presented with the Publishing Executive's Publishing Innovator of the Year award. Understanding where there is a need and accessing the enabling resources through partnering creates revenue-growth opportunities. As with other U.S. magazines, Time has struggled to adapt to consumer demands as the Internet changes magazine consumers' expectations. In a groundbreaking move, Time is partnering with competitor publishers to provide offers that better fulfill consumer needs.

In another confirmation for the advantages of partnering, companies bidding for work on any Building Schools for the Future projects in the UK will now have to comply with new procurement rules. The chief of Partnerships for Schools says [companies experienced in partnering](#) will have the edge over those without such experience.

Two mining and exploration companies, Paramount Gold and Silver Corp. and Mexoro Mineral Ltd., are also using [partnering to gain a competitive advantage](#). They have established a strategic alliance to combine their management, equipment, personnel and other resources to jointly operate projects in the Sierra Madre gold-silver region in Mexico. Paramount will provide a cash infusion into Mexoro in exchange for management and board of director positions at Mexoro. In addition to other synergies, the alliance combines both companies' assets and territory to be one of the largest in Mexico. Both companies share a common vision of aggressive exploration.

Quint Studer, author of the bestseller "Results That Last: Hardwiring Behaviors That Will Take Your Company to the Top," says the key to surviving in economic downturns is to [create an organizational culture that develops great leaders](#). Self-disclosure, a key communication skill, also comes into play. He advises companies to make sure goals are aligned throughout the company and that managers openly and proactively communicate about the company's future and its plan for surviving tough times so that all employees will be "singing from the same choir book."

A study of state government information technology personnel conducted by the University of Arkansas found that [mentoring arrangements](#) to develop competencies has a major impact on employees' commitment to an organization. Particularly in stressful jobs, the study found that interpersonal relationships in the workplace positively impact retention.

Are texting, Instant Messaging, and social media platforms [causing teens to not develop interpersonal communicative skills](#)? That's the topic of a growing thought-provoking discussion on the Internet (mostly among concerned parents, but it's soon to impact business, too). Some discussion participants believe the technology makes some communications easier because it avoids face-to-face contacts. Others believe it will lead to a generation of passive-aggressive people who are only out for themselves. Just imagine a workplace atmosphere where the next generation of people about to join the workforce have not learned communication skills such as face-to-face tact, sensitivity, empathy, and anger management. And what about leaders and managers who are not adept at communicating directions and objectives through texting, IM, etc?

May 15, 2008

### **What's Wrong with This Picture?**

An Ipsos Reid study of 151 North American executives at companies with more than 1,000 employees revealed that 74 percent of the respondents rated their [overall performance as a leader](#) to be better than that of other executives in their industry and 65 percent consider their commitment to their own leadership development to be better than other executives. That's quite a lot of horn-tooting. Just do the math—they can't all be performing as well as they think they are. Regarding their participation in leadership development activities during the prior 12 months, the study found 19 percent had only read books and magazines; only 14 percent had gone through mentoring or coaching, and only 5 percent participated in a 360-degree assessment (which would have provided a realistic view of their leadership capabilities from employees' perspectives).

Equation Research conducted a survey of 2,556 senior HR and training executives on behalf of consulting firm Novations Group in December 2007. The survey found that the top five most common components of leadership development programs focus on tactical operational activities such as coaching a performance problem and communicating performance standards. [Most leadership development programs were found lacking](#) in focus on strategic activities including handling conflict situations, communicating vision and strategy, gaining commitment to goals, change management, acting on feedback, delegating responsibility, and managing a virtual team.

But at least one company has leaders who are doing better than others. The San Francisco Business Times has recognized Perforce Software as one of the “Best Places to Work in the Bay Area 2008.” The award program ranks companies based on [employee satisfaction regarding their company's team effectiveness, trust with coworkers, trust in senior leaders](#), individual contribution, manager effectiveness, and feeling valued.

This week brought news of another survey report—this one with a double whammy when it comes to organizational effectiveness. More than a quarter of U.S. executives responding to an i4cp and HR.com survey in March 2008 stated their companies undertook more than five major changes in the last year. Alarming, almost 50 percent of them stated the pace of change in their businesses is becoming hard or difficult to predict, and nearly [20 percent indicated they are poor or very poor at handling change initiatives](#).

A survey conducted by Gilleard Market Research, commissioned by technology firm Logicalis, reveals a [huge gap in internal partnering and communication](#) between CIOs and CFOs. The study found that 67 percent of CFOs receive IT budget requests lacking enough information for the CFO to intelligently respond, and one in four CFOs receive such requests on a weekly basis.

There was a spark of innovation in the past few days, resulting from partnering success. Oklahoma-headquartered Weather Decision Technologies and Texas-based Weathertop Consulting [partnered to develop innovation in mobile phone experiences](#). Together they produced an award-winning “follow-me” mobile weather application. The product provides location-based severe weather feeds accessed from mobile phones with real-time Doppler Radar data overlaid onto Google Maps for any US location.

Two mayoral leaders are partnering in an effort to tame their separate challenges. Innovation Exchange Programme, a transatlantic [partnership between London and New York](#), is focusing on how both mayors can work together to explore lessons learned by both to overcome implementation challenges in initiatives. The program will exchange personnel to ensure the cities develop ideas and policy proposals in partnership.

**Notable:**

- A study from 2002 – 2008 by the Center for Women's Business Research and Babson College released at a recent national symposium (Research to Roadmap: Accelerating the [Growth of Businesses Owned by Women of Color](#)) reveals that African-American, Asian, Latina, and women of other ethnicities are starting businesses at rates three to five times faster than all other businesses. However, once in business, their companies grow slower than all other firms. The study found that top operations challenges include access to potential strategic partners, marketing competencies, and access to capital.
- [More than 50 percent of mergers and acquisitions fail](#) because of not understanding the requirements of integrating businesses and information technology, according to a survey conducted by the National Computing Centre in the UK in December 2007.

May 22, 2008

**Help Wanted**

What would you list as the top risk factors for your company? BDO Seidman's "2008 BDO Seidman Risk Factor Report for Technology Businesses" examined the risk factors listed in fiscal 2007 10-K SEC filings of the largest 100 publicly-traded US technology companies. The report states that the companies are stressing to shareholders that the 20 risk factors are high-priority issues requiring immediate attention. Five of the [top risks often depend on partnering capabilities](#):

- Management of current and future mergers, acquisitions, or divestitures (86 percent)
- International operations (85 percent)
- Inability to develop or market new products and services (84 percent)
- Inability to attract or retain personnel, including management (72 percent)
- Failure to properly execute corporate growth strategy (52 percent)

In an interview about [Procter & Gamble's innovation strategy](#), CEO Lafley says the company had an external partner for 10-15 percent of the new products it brought to market in 1999-2000. In 2007, the number increased to several external partners for one-half of all the new products it brought to market. The strategy: partnering leads to more times at bat and, therefore, more hits.

The city of Charleston has created an alliance with the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia to provide a training program for entry-level employees. The [goal: reducing turnover and giving employees skills they need to advance](#). The training will focus on such skills as communication, critical thinking, ethics and— notably—leadership and team-building skills.

Thermo Fisher Scientific has won the 2008 North American Frost & Sullivan Award for Market Leadership for its commitment to innovation and growth. Frost & Sullivan determined that thermo Fisher has an unrivaled ability to capture and grow its market share. It's due in large part to its "unparalleled reputation for [incorporating customer feedback in its products and services](#).

No company can effectively go it alone these days, and some are wisely banking heavily on partnering strategies to achieve their objectives. Rio Tinto, the world's second largest producer of iron ore has an objective to demonstrate its growth prospects in order to avoid a hostile takeover bid from rival BHP Billiton. It must also significantly expand its output because of anticipated Chinese demand over the next decade. Rio is seeking a Chinese construction group as its partner in developing a West African mine for which Rio will need to build a railway from scratch to transport the ore to the coast for export. The strategy is that the Chinese [partner would facilitate building the project on schedule and on budget despite rising costs](#).

**Notable:**

- "Being able to cause business alignment is the ultimate leadership competency -- getting people to be able to feel free to take risks and say things openly, to be empowered, have a common purpose, be interdependent and share a sense of ownership and excitement," says Pontish Yeramyian, Founder and CEO, Gap International, Inc. "This competency is definitely acquirable and can be improved. People can be specially trained to make alignment happen and the results can be extraordinary." (Source: PR Newswire press release, July 7, 2003)

May 29, 2008

**The P Word: More than a Word**

Perot Systems and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care have won the "[Best Partnership](#)" award in the [2008 Outsourcing Excellence Awards](#). Both companies demonstrated a remarkable amount of flexibility as both companies' business environments and objectives changed through crises that occurred several times over the years. In addition, Perot Systems and National Life Group won the "Best First Steps" award. This is the [third time in four years](#) that a Perot Systems relationship has won the Best Partnership award.

Over the past few years, I've had the privilege of interviewing more than 650 executives in successful outsourcing relationships of leading companies worldwide, several of which were at Perot Systems and its client companies. Perot relationships truly stand out in partnering aspects and what the companies are able to achieve because of their partnering approach. What is partnering? I can honestly say that it's what Perot Systems does. You can read more about the Perot Systems partnering culture, its four foundational core values, and associates' corresponding behaviors in an article in the special supplement (Best Practices in Outsourcing Relationships) in the upcoming June 2 issue of Forbes.

Is your company considering a strategy of growth through acquisitions? [Beware M&A activity without first conducting thorough due diligence](#)—you could end up like IBM, which acquired Cognos. Thanks to a whistleblower, Big Blue must repay \$13 million to the state of Massachusetts for software that Cognos sold to the state through connections with the Massachusetts House Speaker.

What happens when one of two partners in a small business dips into the company finances without the other partner knowing? And what's at the [root cause of such sneaky behavior](#)? A partnering advice column in a Canadian newspaper says it happened because the relationship soured and there was no trust. Effective communication and feedback could have prevented the situation, says the column advisor.

The senior vice president at [Delta Air Lines](#) also knows the value of communication and feedback. In a blog, she relates a decision shaped by an incident on her flight to Lagos, Nigeria, where she heard feedback regarding Delta's commitment to the Lagos market. She says leaving the C-suite to get feedback and understand employees' concerns and operational realities results in better decisions.

The [chief executive of Coach](#), the leather and accessories company, wisely takes a partnering approach with the company's customers. He refers to customer feedback as a "report card." Recognizing that waiting for bad news is a risk, he observes first-hand day-to-day operations in stores and actively seeks feedback in several ways.

Announcements of two large partnering efforts happened this week. The United Steelworkers (USA), one of the largest unions in the United States, and Unite (one of the largest UK [unions](#)) [are joining forces to form a "super alliance"](#) of three million employees in Britain, Ireland, the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Their objective: greater power when dealing with multinational companies. Both unions are similar in structure and in the industries they cover in their respective countries. The vision is that eventually a single umbrella organization will sit above the two allied unions.

On an even grander scale of partnering, the President of China and his counterpart in the Republic of Korea announced they are upgrading their "comprehensive" cooperative partnership to a "strategic" cooperative partnership. [China and Korea are deepening their partnership](#) to enable free trade and also collaborate in the telecommunications, logistics, energy, and environmental protection segments.

June 5, 2008

### **The Chances of Failing**

"We're always [two years away from failure](#)." So stated Bill Gates of Microsoft years ago. Somewhere out there is a competitor that will render your business model obsolete, he warned ("Thriving in the age of revolution," by Gary Hamel and J. Sampler, Fortune Magazine, December 7, 1998). Hamel and C. K. Prahalad wrote in *Competing for the Future* (Harvard Business School press, 1994) that companies in the same industry tend to benchmark against their competitors to ensure they are doing the same things as well

or better, but the reality is that they can gain no lasting advantage from marching in step. A Thinking Managers article advises a remedy: [look for allies to help you outgrow your rivals](#)—find a partner.

That's exactly what five Washington, D.C. universities are doing to improve their innovation and competitiveness capabilities in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia regional economy. They found they were not doing as well as their counterparts in other regions when it comes to [getting ideas out of the lab and into the marketplace](#). Part of their objective in partnering is to collaborate on locating funding opportunities that could rival Silicon Valley's venture capital arena.

There's also a rumor that [Netflix and Xbox 360](#), both market leaders in their fields, are partnering to gain a competitive advantage by streaming Netflix movies through Xbox 360s into televisions. They'll jointly leverage their technologies to jump ahead of less-user-friendly technologies for streaming online content into TVs.

Turning to external allies to help a business is also sometimes about helping the bottom line. Partners aren't always focused on collaborating for innovative new products and services. Indeed, [tough economic times are ideal for](#) collaborating with supply chain partners, especially those that can help where cost is critical, supply is low, or the company needs to avoid waste. Sharing information about a company's needs is the starting point for deepening collaboration and partnering activities with a supplier. It's uncomfortable for many companies to take the risk to do this, but self-disclosure is one of the attributes of smart partners and is a skill that can be learned.

Germany's shoe company Puma and France's PPR Group are now a year into their partnership and give it rave reviews. [What makes it work?](#) Both companies have the same approach to business; they share a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit as well as the same vision. And they have "skin in the game" as PPR bought a 64.3 percent share in Puma.

But back to the possibility of business failure—as Bill Gates warns, perhaps sooner than two years from now for many companies. Forming and sustaining partnerships also has a high risk of failure—[60 percent of them fail](#). The main cause of failure: not understanding up front how to deal with the relationship and the business the partnership will jointly handle. As in a marriage, differences in decision-making and differences in resolving challenges or acting on opportunities are pitfalls. The good news is, it's not rocket science to learn how to form and sustain a highly effective and profitable partnership.

Flexibility and trust are critical to successful partnering. But [don't make the mistake of](#) thinking that foregoing a formal contractual agreement will increase flexibility and trust. Baird Textile Holdings Ltd and Marks & Spencer Plc did that in their 30-year partnership but ended up in court, where the judge handed them a surprising legal decision..

June 12, 2008

### **From Opportunity to Gotcha**

The global economy is sparking new revenue opportunities, new legislation, and new

challenges to resolve; and it causes many organizations to seek an external partner to help achieve their objectives. But there's an interesting phenomenon in many of these partnerships. Look at the following deals and see if you recognize a potential "gotcha" they each share, which could be a pitfall for successful partnering.

Exchanging ideas and working around barriers is at the core of a partnership on two continents. The [Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific](#), based in Honolulu, Hawaii, and the China Rehabilitation Research Center are partnering to share expertise, research and integrate practice elements. Both organizations will send two physicians or specialists to each other's facilities. The research center in China is doing stem cell research, and the stem cell research at the hospital in Hawaii is constrained because of the Bush Administration's funding restrictions.

Meeting new needs and regulations also trigger establishing new partnerships. Brazil and the EU, for instance have formed a [strategic partnership to deepen their cooperation](#) in areas such as technology, science, climate change, the environment and education.

And Japan and Africa are cooperating via Japan's Cool Earth Partnership. Japan will have policy consultations with African countries so they can [balance their efforts in environmental protection](#).

Making the best use of the planet's resources in a global economy is the goal for the Blue-Green alliance between the United Steel Workers manufacturing trade union and the Sierra Club, in the United States. Together, they want to [pursue a joint public policy agenda](#) to ensure good jobs and a clean environment and jobs that help with developing renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Market entry and market share strategies also trigger organizations to form partnerships. The USA's Office Depot has a new partnership with bigboXX in Hong Kong to help Office Depot [expand its Asia business for multinational customers](#).

Access to financial resources is also at the heart of partnerships. Helping the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, registered as a national historic site, survive is the focus of a partner search in Monterey, California for [a public-private partnership](#). Managing and operating the museum—and its lighthouse—has already become a financial burden on the city, and the museum and lighthouse also need restoration.

More than 900 women professionals and government leaders from 70 economies attended the 18th Global Summit of Women (GSW) recently in Vietnam. Various public-private partnerships in these countries are focused on [advancing women's economic opportunities around the world](#), especially in the dynamic Asia-Pacific region.

So what do all these partnering efforts have in common? The partners in each instance are of very different cultures--from various nations to unions, to public and nonprofit organizations, to large private corporations. Their decision-making approach, conflict resolution approach, proactive or reactive patterns of communication, ability to trust, and other aspects are naturally disparate. In several instances, these partnering entities also have to deal with third-parties that are funding the partnership efforts and have their own expectations. These partnerships are tackling new areas and thus will face an even greater number of decisions and challenges. This scenario can difficulties in ensuring

their interests remain aligned. Cultural fit is not automatic; it requires a significant effort to build a partnering culture. Without making that effort up front and on a continual basis for the term of the agreement, opportunities can turn into failure. Beginning a partnership without building that culture first is a “gotcha.”

This week brought news of two other interesting partnering efforts. Two competitors are pairing up in an alliance aiming to enhance collaboration and R&D in their businesses. Left Hand Brewing’s beer focuses on malt, while Terrapin Beer Company’s beer focuses on hops. They’ve decided to combine their efforts and release new products—such as a black rye lager—that will [balance the two approaches and widen the market for both](#).

And we’ll be keeping our eye on [a unique public-private partnership](#) aimed at helping the government scale resources up and down to see how it progresses over the next few months. The Commonwealth of Virginia is expecting a record turnout for the U.S. election in November and estimates it needs at least 10,000 more people to help at the polls. The commonwealth is partnering with several companies throughout the state, who have agreed to give their employees a day off to help at the polls.

June 19, 2008

### **Partnering: The Word that Starts with a W**

Partnering arrangements require a win-win approach and mutually beneficial objectives. As business takes on more of a global perspective and new competitive forces, success requires more innovation and information-sharing solve new problems. It’s difficult for any organization to go it alone.

A good example of a win-win partnership is [IBM and Tokyo Ohka Kogyo](#) (TOK). IBM is contributing its expertise in producing power cells, and TOK is contributing its panel-coating technology in a collaborative alliance aimed at developing more efficient solar power technologies. Leveraging each other’s capabilities, they aim to create a process for producing the cells cheaply enough to be financial competitive with other forms of generating electricity.

Another example: [37 leading UK food, retail and consumer goods companies](#)--who are competitors--have formed a logistics alliance under the Efficient Consumer response program. Participants include Heinz, Kellogg, Kraft, Mars, Nestle, PepsiCo, and Unilever. By sharing vehicles and establishing more efficient warehousing, they each conserve diesel, reduce environmental impacts, and cut costs involved in transporting their products to consumers.

[Two competitor newspapers are partnering](#) to leverage their mutual printing resources. The Idaho Press-Tribune will begin printing the Idaho Statesman, The Idaho Press-Tribune’s printing press needs some upgrades, but the Idaho Statesman’s press needs to be replaced (at a cost of \$30 million). The \$3 million cash from the Statesman to the Press-Tribune for printing the Statesman will accomplish both companies’ needs and enable both to operate more cost-effectively in a weak economy and in the competitive Internet environment.

[Two Chinese companies](#), IBMC China and BBS, that have agreed to partner through a merger involving an equity stake arrangement. The mutual win aspects? IBMC, which is opening international fashion brand franchise stores wins through the merger because organic growth in China is difficult. With the 60 retail brands BBS owns, IBMC will have 88 stores in China in just four months. BBS benefits because IBMC's foreign resources will help BBS grow its revenue faster.

Many organizations are now combining their expertise and resources in partnering to develop alternatives to the production of ethanol from corn or cars that don't use gasoline fuel. [Harvard University's Office of Technology Development and biofuel company SunEthanol](#) are partnering to collaboratively convert high yields of cellulose into ethanol. [Mitsubishi Corp. is partnering with applied Intellectual Capital Ltd's RedOx Biofuels](#) unit to jointly commercialize ethanol produced from non-food feedstocks. [Mitsubishi is also teaming up with Peugeot-Citroen](#) to produce electric cars and will share its expertise on matters such as how to prevent overheating batteries.

Four Chambers of Commerce in the Washington, D.C. region are partnering with the Center for Economic Growth in the Capital Region Global Business Network (GBN). Their objective is to [increase international trade opportunities](#), which they'll do by sharing their knowledge and experience and providing educational workshops and networking opportunities for companies that are members of the four chambers. How is it a win-win? It helps retain member loyalty in the chambers.

[Caterpillar](#) has decided to stop manufacturing heavy-duty on-highway truck engines for the U.S. market but has been struggling to keep up with overseas demand. It has formed a tentative alliance with Navistar International Corp to produce a Caterpillar-branded severe-service truck for the U.S. market, and Caterpillar will help Navistar expand its overseas presence. The alliance will also result in reduced operational costs for both companies.

Gaining global capabilities and resources is at the core of a [public-private partnership between Canada's University of Alberta and India's Tata Consultancy Services](#) (with operations in more than 50 countries). The partnership will enable research collaboration in nanotechnology, high-performance computing, and other areas, provide student internships at Tata, and enhance Canada-India relations.

[Microsoft and 15 other companies](#) (including Unisys and EDS) have formed a new alliance aimed at developing technology architecture to connect disparate state and jurisdictional health and human services systems. The project will leverage solutions from each of the partnering companies.

The [militaries of the United States and Japan](#), which have been allied for years, have decided to strengthen their alliance by engaging at a deeper collaboration and partnering level. They will construct a Japanese air defense command on a U.S. Air Force base in Japan, with the new facility having an operations center designed around enhancing bilateral coordination. The goal of the partnering effort is to increase information sharing and improve the two nations' interoperability.

Forging partnerships is critical for giving organizations a strategic advantage today. ["Partnering: metrics matter"](#) an article in Financial Executive, referred to a 2001

Vantage Partners study (Managing Alliance Relationships: A Cross-Industry Study of How to Build and Manage Successful Alliances). The study found a top reason for partnering failures is the partner companies' inability to work together effectively--which prevents their ability to achieve their goals. Both organizations need to be sure of their strategic fit but not just at the outset of the relationship. The partners also need to re-visit the strategic vision and goals when there are stakeholder changes involving people who were not involved when the partnership was launched and when external market challenges could take either partner in a different direction or could impact either partner's ability to allocate resources for the partnership.

June 26, 2008

### **Doing What Failures Don't Like to Do**

Messy—that's the word some people use to describe mergers of nonprofit agencies. In addition to the usual array of challenges in mergers, nonprofits suffer such problems as the loss of volunteers. In a nonprofit agency such as the Red Cross, the loss of volunteers could have drastic outcomes in capability to provide services to citizens and clients. Another [drastic impact to operational capabilities](#) is that organizations that have previously been funding both agencies often drop their total support for the merged agency. Studies reveal that nonprofit mergers are more successful with advisory services helping them develop a new vision, institutional pride, leadership, etc. for the merged group.

When it comes to partnering, the risk of failure is high. But there are proven strategies for building and sustaining great partnerships—even when nonprofits and government agencies are involved. There are also many good examples to use as models. A successful example of public-private partnering is the city of Hampton, Virginia's [Healthy Families Partnership](#). It proved over time that a community can reduce its social services costs per child by spending funds and efforts on the prevention side, eventually leading to lower spend on the treatment side. A coalition of public and private organizations in the Green Bay area has just launched a five-year initiative to achieve similar goals early in a child's life such as reducing child abuse and neglect, reducing teen pregnancies, and improving readiness for school.

[Nine organizations](#) within Scotland's government are partnering as Sears (Scotland's Environment and Rural Services) to reduce duplication and bureaucracy and speed delivery of services to farmers and rural land managers. In part, they are following successful models of other governments' improvements in services including providing access to information and advice through a 24/7 contact center and a Web portal.

Pharmaceutical giant [Pfizer and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine](#) are building a new model. They have launched a partnership to collaborate on research and clinical care addressing several therapeutic areas, with an initial emphasis on neurosciences and oncology. Part of their collaborative efforts will be building and implementing a new model for interactions between industry and academic medical centers.

As Pliny the Younger, a senator and philosopher in the ancient Roman empire, wrote, example is the surest method of instruction.

July 3, 2008

### **The Partnering Surge**

When speed counts, partnering is definitely an effective strategy for bringing products and services to market faster. That [competitive edge helped influence Michigan's governor's decision regarding competitive proposals](#) for a high-tech proton beam cancer radiation facility in the state of Michigan. Beaumont Hospital, ProCure Treatment Centers, is contributing \$13 million, will attract other investors to fund the project. The governor wanted to avoid delays in bringing the technology to market and decided Beaumont's proposed approach would succeed faster than the approach in a competing proposal from a consortium of six health care institutions.

The global economy is causing a surge in partnering arrangements to accomplish organizations' visions and goals. It's a proven model for quickly and efficiently expanding into new territories, as it breaks through virtual and physical boundaries.

Striking out for success in a new territory—[secure data sharing](#)—data specialist Avox Limited and Xinhua Finance, China's top financial information provider, have formed a strategic alliance. The partnership will enable Chinese financial institutions to enhance the quality and availability of their own data in order to effect timely compliance and risk control at the institutions, which is a requirement of Basel II and other global standards regulations. It's a win/win alliance, as Xinhua will be a "bridge" for Avox to expand its market share into China and Taiwan.

Four US states are partnering with Canada's British Columbia on [energy and climate challenges](#) in the in their Pacific Coast region.

Being the first to come up with solutions for new problems is a highly competitive activity, and many organizations are banking on partnering approaches as the best way to achieve their objectives.

Drilling to do testing on underground sites to prove feasibility for underground storage of carbon dioxide is the joint objective of three energy companies, the Kentucky Geological Survey, and several private partners investing in the project. The [feasibility project is key to the state's future](#), as Kentucky's high production of coal for more than 90 percent of the state's electricity is a major contributor to carbon dioxide and global warming.

25x25 is not a measurement. It's [an alliance of 700 U.S. grassroots](#) agricultural, forestry, conservation and environmental organizations collaborating on renewable energy initiatives. What could enable 700 groups to work jointly? How about a return on their efforts to the tune of four to five million new jobs and \$700 in new economic development annually?

A wind company in Minneapolis is partnering with land owners in two counties on a [community-owned partnering project](#) to generate electricity to power 75,000 homes in the community. The land owners will participate in the development process.

The University of Washington has developed WebAnywhere, a tool that reads Internet text aloud to [blind people](#) without their having to purchase or install any software on their computers. Now it is forming an alliance with technology nonprofit group Benetech to make the group's 30,000 electronic books accessible to blind users over the Internet.

If you think partnering with other people is challenging, check out this [unique partnering approach: collaborating flying robots](#) managed to transport a load without human intervention. Just think what collaborative robots communicating about ways to do various tasks together might do next—maybe your job?

July 10, 2008

### **Wanted: R&D Partners**

In partnering efforts in the news this week, we have a failure, a prizewinner, two involving geography, and one with a heart.

[When are partners not equal in contributing resources](#) but still equally important in achieving the objectives? A 10-mile stretch of a Kansas highway corridor is the focus of a partnership to study how to generate more economic growth along the corridor and also make it safer. The partnership involves the Kansas Department of Transportation, the city of Topeka, the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization, and Shawnee County. Unlike the other partners, the county is not providing funding for the study; however, it has regulatory control of some of the area involved in the study.

Who owns the Arctic waterway known as the Northwest Passages? Canada believes it's the owner, but the United States says it's an international waterway (thus it would be a trade route allowing free passage). Though [the two nations disagree on ownership](#), they're partnering on a United Nations collaborative mapping project. Partnering will save both countries money and time in determining the waterway's ownership.

What is the difference between a vision and a mission and strategic plan for partnership goals--and why does it matter? 21CTP, a research and development partnership between 15 US industrial partners and four federal government agencies, focused on fuel economy and emissions from with heavy-duty vehicles found out the hard way. A Department of Energy review found the [partnership has failed to achieve](#) its designated percentage goals and timeline for increased thermal engine efficiency and identifying fuel formulations to replace a percentage of petroleum fuels. The DOE review determined that the engineering or funding perspectives made the goals not plausible and in some cases the partnership didn't utilize necessary technology to meet the goals.

Current methods of measuring drug toxicity to the heart are insufficient. So the University of Rochester Medical Center is partnering with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to collaboratively [develop a national repository of data](#) on electrical activity of the heart. The data should enable development of new tools to detect drugs that are dangerous for the human heart.

What can we learn from elementary-school-age children when it comes to partnering? When they have goals they want to achieve, they [partner with excellence](#). A partnership between a UK school and the University of Glamorgan achieved such outstanding outcomes in their objectives that they were awarded the annual Rolls Royce Science Prize. With help from the university, the kids studied a nearby river and then worked in the chemistry labs at the University to determine water quality. The Rolls Royce Prize will fund development of a “science deck” on the school grounds, where the children will be able to enjoy and study such features as environmentally powered musical instruments, digital weather indicators linked to classroom computers for predicting weather patterns, a wind turbine and solar power as sustainable energy, and a bird-friendly environment for studying life cycles and prey-predator relationships.

July 17, 2008

### **Business Growth Strategy**

How can you meet your business objectives in the face of budget and workforce or expertise constraints? [Two partnering entities in Alaska](#), the Tongass National Forest and Friends of the Tongass Cabins, have teamed up to meet the challenges presented by budget constraints and streamlined workforce. The unique, old cabins in America’s largest national forest have been deemed a national treasure but are in need of repair and maintenance. The two organizations have developed a program for maintaining the cabins and serving as a catalyst to bring together other groups that share an interest in maintaining them.

Another example of a partnering arrangement created to meet the challenge of budget constraints exists between the [Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation of California and nine institutions working together](#) on a project to research the correlation between genetics and brain tumors. The nine institutions will achieve synergy by sharing their research data. The Foundation uses the business strategy of collaboration to create synergy and efficient cooperation and is providing \$3 million in funding, which until this partnering arrangement, has been unavailable for this area of brain tumor research.

Partnering is an ideal business model to gain access to the resources and expertise necessary to develop solutions for evolving business needs. An alliance of [four companies in Hawaii](#) are working together help Hawaii achieve its objective of being energy independent by 2030. The Hawaiian Electric Company, Maui Electric Company, HR BioPetroleum and Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. have partnered to provide clean, renewable energy through the development of a microalgae facility. Hi-tech firm HR BioPetroleum has developed techniques to scale production and achieve at least a 50 percent improvement over the price per barrel of fossil fuel today. Alexander & Baldwin will provide the land, and the Hawaiian electric companies will handle carbon dioxide-containing gases.

The FAA estimates [the US air transportation system will reach gridlock by 2015](#). At least 15 public and private organizations are partnering to accelerate the development and implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) to meet future demands and avoid gridlock in the sky and the nation’s airports. The Alliance for Sustainable Air Transportation (ASAT) includes the FAA, technology

companies, universities and public and private organizations that are combining their resources and expertise to help accelerate time to market.

July 24, 2008

### **Partnering: A Natural Solution**

The heat is on in sunny California where two public agencies are partnering with several private organizations to bring [heat illness prevention](#) information to California's migrant education community. The partnership enables government agencies seeking to comply with California's pioneering heat illness prevention regulations to reach migrant workers through a network of multi-lingual educational tools. Organizations in the agricultural community must ensure the health and safety of their workers; this partnership is working to train supervisors and employees in preventing, recognizing and dealing with heat-related illness.

Another public-private partnership seeking to educate people in the area of nature exists between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Nauticus. The partnership will build and [launch of a weather-wise "smart" buoy in the Chesapeake Bay](#), monitoring and linking river conditions and weather data to an NOAA scientific database while linking some data to Nauticus' educational on-shore kiosk for tourists. The buoy will serve to promote the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the first water trail in the National Historic Trail System.

[Water trails along the shoreline of Lake Michigan](#) and two rivers in Indiana are the backdrop behind a private non-profit organization's partnership with a public agency focused on protecting natural resources. Through a three-year plan and with the aid of private funding from at least two outside organizations, the partners will develop a widespread system to protect the land and improve recreation in the area.

Protecting the land is also the area of interest in a partnership between a private organization, a school district and a municipality in California. Converted Organics, Inc., producer of environmentally-friendly fertilizer, has partnered with the community to launch a recycling program that will enable the company to [use public schools' food waste to create fertilizer](#), which will then be applied to land on school and other municipal property. The partnership creates a win-win situation for all involved as Converted Organics gains natural food waste capital, the city benefits in the areas of landscaping and conservation, and the school district benefits from lower disposal fees while providing a valuable recycling lesson to its students.

In the interest of urban renewal and economic revitalization, a public/private partnership in Philadelphia is working to connect business and government districts for restoration of the [tree-lined Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#). Approximately \$17 million is needed to rehabilitate areas along the parkway. With funding from both government and private agencies, the partnership plans to restore the parkway to a grand boulevard worthy of Philadelphia's historical status.

Have you noticed? Two are naturally better than one when it comes to meeting shared objectives. Both public agencies and private organizations, with their own primary agendas and underlying principles, often envision and create unique goals that simply can't be met without each other's cooperation and collaboration.

**Noted:**

- According to the government in Queensland, Australia, businesses in today's global competitive market must organize their operations in new, more efficient ways to [facilitate innovation and help people learn to work more effectively together](#). Collaboration is the foundation for innovation, notes the Business Council of Australia. It is promoting a voucher program to fund and enable more collaboration and research and development through businesses partnering with universities.
- A report on the effectiveness of collaborative relationships between private organizations and government agencies for responding with humanitarian assistance in disasters (including the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami in Indonesia) found room for improvement in such partnering efforts. The report recommended that the entities involved need to ensure a framework that will enable seamless communication and identification of priorities when responding to the disaster. (Source: Price, E. Owen; West, David F; Mancuso, James D. "The Emerging Role of Preventive Medicine in Health Diplomacy after the 2005 Earthquake in Pakistan." Military Medicine. February 1, 2008.

July 31, 2008

**The Sky's the Limit!**

NASA is certainly no newcomer to the assertion that "the sky's the limit" when it comes to partnering. Some of its partnerships have had unique objectives and situations that no other organizations have dealt with. One of its highly successful partnerships is with the heads of the [International Space Station](#) (ISS), which includes NASA and space agencies from Canada, Europe, Japan, and Russia. Proud of their innovative partnership accomplishments and seeking to do more together, they met in Paris last week to discuss their achievements and goals in on-orbit research and technology development that are critical to future space exploration and improving the quality of life on Earth.

If the going's good, why not reach higher? NASA this week signed a [landmark lunar exploration agreement](#) with the nations of Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Britain, and France. They're going to collaborate on robotic exploratory missions to the moon that will expand NASA's planned four manned missions to eight manned missions. In addition to the increased funding from the partnership, an international effort will help "promote a [new generation of research on and about the moon](#)," including participation of smaller organizations in the lunar science community.

Is your partnership successful? Would you like to capture even greater value from your partnering efforts? Do you know how to communicate with your partner on exploring new frontiers together?

Or perhaps your partnership isn't so successful. Sometimes partners simply realize they no longer share the same objectives. Frequently, this can lead to one partner wanting to sell its interest to the other partner—which can be problematic if the partners no longer trust each other or don't know the market value of their partnership. Here's a suggestion on [how to handle that dilemma](#).

Perhaps you haven't formed a partnership yet but recognize the value in partnering. The first step in getting started is to establish mutual trust. This is critical to success not only because of decisions around resources and opportunities but also because of sharing data and intellectual property. Andy Purdy, former US "Cyber Czar," spoke of the need to form global public-private [partnerships to help decrease cyber crime](#). Addressing international delegates at Govtech 2008, he stressed that such partnerships addressing cyber crime must rely on information sharing between agencies and corporations throughout the world. Without mutual trust, information sharing would not occur.

Whether you're looking to form a partnership or have established a successful partnership, the sky really is the limit when you leverage each other's resources and expertise, and start by establishing a solid base of mutual trust.

August 7, 2008

### **Not Business as Usual**

The idea is there in the back of your mind; it may have even reached the boardroom: A fresh objective, an unusual undertaking. Whether your aim is to meet consumer demand, broaden your target market, reduce R&D costs, or work towards a worthy goal, partnering is a key to help you break out of the box.

PepsiCo is expanding its horizons by reaching out to health-conscious consumers. PepsiCo and its partner, Whole Earth Sweetener Company, will provide consumers with a [healthier alternative to traditional sweeteners](#). PureVia, a wholly natural sweetener made from the stevia plant rather than chemical sweeteners, is a no-calorie sweetening agent set to debut in PepsiCo's "SoBe Life" beverage. The result of years of research and development, the sweetener will eventually be marketed in other foods, beverages and tabletop sweeteners. Senior vice president, Lou Imbrogno, of Pepsi Worldwide Technical Operations calls the product "a potential game-changer among zero-calorie sweeteners."

General Motors Corporation is reaching outside the box – all the way into its competitor's boardroom. [General Motors and the Ford Motor Company](#) are contemplating an alliance to develop new engines and powertrain technologies. The partnership would help GM achieve economies of scale and would make its technology available to Ford. Additionally, an alliance could cut both companies' individual R & D costs by half.

Another company aiming to expand its target market is nautical chart and publications provider, United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO). UKHO, whose chief focus over the last two centuries has been to provide navigational products to international merchant marine and defense markets, has announced its desire to form a partnership for [developing products for leisure customers](#). The organization is seeking to partner with a focused, progressive commercial company in efforts to expand its customer base to leisure mariners.

International charity, WaterAid, also needed a forward-thinking partner to help meet its [objective: providing safe water to Ethiopians](#). Ecover, leading manufacturer of innovative ecological cleaning products, and WaterAid have partnered to provide effective sanitation solutions to residents in Ethiopia. In a region where less than one quarter of the population has access to safe water, 17 percent of its children will die from exposure and ingestion of unsafe water. The partnership's objective is to provide access to safe water and sanitation to more than 14,000 people in the region.

Two universities, each with their individual primary objectives, share one common, unique [goal: preserving the endangered Shughni language](#). The Shughni language is spoken by approximately 60,000 people in the Middle East. Spoken, but not written. So the partnership is stepping in to help preserve the language by creating the first comprehensive written Shughni language. The partners are conducting a workshop to begin research for the project and to discuss funding options.

If your organization is entertaining a particularly unique objective, one way to achieve success is through effective partnering – sharing resources, ideas and costs with another progressive organization.

August 14, 2008

### **Three Steps Forward**

What do high-performance street engines, gene research, food waste, supply chains, and ethnicities have in common?

Jack Roush, of Roush Fenway Racing, known for innovation and improving engine performance, approached Valvoline technicians with a question on how to improve motor oil for high-performance street engines. The result was a collaboration on the research and development of [ROUSH Motor Oil](#), “the ultimate engine elixir for both newer and older engines.” In creating the product, Roush relied on Valvoline's decades of expertise while lending his own knowledge of automotive performance to the partnership.

[Canada and China](#) want higher yielding canola. With that objective in mind, the National Research Council (NRC) of Canada and Oil Crops Research Institute of the Chinese Academy are partnering to collaborate on genomics research to identify genes that affect yield and can adapt better to environmental stresses. Dr. Roman Szumski of the NRC calls the collaboration a historic event: “For the first time, China is investing directly in agricultural research in Canada to advance a crop important to both countries.” The partnership will benefit both countries' reputations in scientific research while creating competitive advantage for agricultural producers.

Alarming statistics indicate that racial, ethnic, and gender disparities still exist in the health care field (for example, studies show that African Americans are 40 percent less likely to receive advanced cardiac testing following chest pain than Caucasians). A partnership between leading health care organizations and academic medical institutions in Jersey City, Washington, D.C., and Boston has an initiative to improve the delivery of services to ethnic populations. The initiative aims to [educate health care providers](#) on preventive and therapeutic attention to minorities. A performance improvement system will be used in the curriculum to allow providers to apply quality measurement to their practices and use the resulting data to take action specific to their practice for improved patient care.

[A large grocery store chain](#) wants to increase its recycling rate by 25-30 percent in 33 stores. Wanting to divert food waste from filling local landfills, Publix Super Markets has formed a partnership with Organic Recovery LLC, a Florida company that processes food waste into a natural, organic plant food product. The product will be available to both homeowners and commercial growers and won't harm the water supply or emit harmful gases. Florida's governor, Charlie Crist, commends the partnership: "What these businesses are doing is a perfect example of how there is gold in green and economic opportunity in sustainable business practices."

Farm-controlled business in the UK want improved efficiencies and reduced costs in the transportation of grains. Through [a partnership with DHL Exel Supply Chain](#), Grainfarmers and Centaur Grain their initial collaboration has reduced transit time from 30 to 18 minutes and reduced costs by 40 percent. DHL's Roly Taplin says, "Given the rising fuel costs it is imperative that those involved in the agricultural supply chain work together to find the most effective way to manage the complete logistical model." The collaboration helps improve efficiency in transportation as well as improving communication and harmonization between farmers and hauliers.

So what do all these partnerships have in common? Clearly, partnering enables organizations to achieve performance improvement. Through leveraging each other's knowledge and resources, these partnerships are developing solutions to business challenges. As the saying goes, partnering is enabling them to take three steps forward without a step backward.

August 21, 2008

### **Out with the Old, In with the New**

Robert F. Kennedy once said, "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

Partnering, in whatever field and capacity is often the key to bringing about the changes necessary to make an impact on people, states and countries, and the world.

A Chicago partnership hopes to [revolutionize therapy for Parkinson's disease](#). Collaborating in this effort are Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Together, they're implementing a pilot program of rhythm and dance for patients with the goal of reducing both physical and emotional symptoms of

Parkinson's disease. "By moving to music the brain will reinforce movement pathways, or simply create new ones," says Dr. Kathleen Shannon, a neurologist at RUMC. If the program is successful, this partnership will have data that may lead to influencing funding for broader instances of the dance treatment and reducing the effects of Parkinson's on both patients and family members.

Another revolutionary goal in the medical world exists between two partners in Canada. The Thermo Fisher Scientific Biomarker Research Initiatives in Mass Spectrometry Center (BRIMS) and the University Health Network in Toronto (UHN) are collaborating to find [new ways of detecting cancer](#) by exploring uncharted areas in cancer biomarker research. The partnership will utilize BRIMS' powerful mass spectrometers to target proteins in cancer cells with the goal of developing reliable blood tests to detect cancer. "The day that doctors can discover the presence of cancer through a drop of patient's blood will mark a revolutionary victory against a disease," says Dr. Diamandis, biochemist-in-chief at UHN.

In Nigeria, efforts are being made to [revive its old transportation system](#). The Nigeria Railway Corporation is partnering with various Nigerian state and city governments to modernize and repair the countrywide intercity railway mass transit system. In the process of forming these partnerships, Nigeria also entered a partnership with General Electric Company Limited and Flourmill of Nigeria Plc. This partnership aims to improve the mass transportation of their goods by improving signals and railway service wagons.

In Kentucky, the Rural Heritage Development Initiative (RHDI), a three-year pilot program has been created to [help preserve the state's historic barns](#). The RHDI is the result of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a partnership between the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and organizations such as Preservation Kentucky and the Kentucky Heritage Council. The partnership aims to provide resources for property owners needing to restore their barns designated as National Historic Places. The partnership will link owners to technical assistance, contractors, and information about tax credits, grants, and reimbursement incentives.

Colorado educational institutions are looking to do [something new in the traditional academic world](#). Through a partnership between Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) and The Classical Academy (TCA), Colorado's largest charter school, TCA will build a school on property owned by PPCC; the two institutions will share students and classroom space. While the proposed achievements will help reduce crowding and lower taxpayer costs, it will provide students with the opportunity to take high school classes that offer college credits, creating a new and innovative way to provide charter schools and homeschooled students with the benefits of dual-credit courses.

Through leveraging ideas, resources and capabilities, partnering organizations can work towards creating new methods out of old, enhancing current operations, or revitalizing remnants of the past – all to the benefit of changing the world around us.

August 28, 2008

### **The Seesaw Effect**

If you've ever sat on a seesaw (or teeter-totter) as a child, you know that it's impossible to ascend without a partner. In the business playing field, organizations can partner to provide the necessary balance needed to rise in any endeavor, leveraging each other's resources such as expertise, facilities, creativity, capital, technologies, intellectual property, and much more. Here are some recent partnerships demonstrating the importance of leveraging each other's resources in order to "go up."

Marvel Entertainment, Inc., as part of its ongoing strategy to retain its competitive edge in the global market, has partnered with one of the top Japanese animation studios, Madhouse, Inc. They will integrate the renowned Marvel Universe of characters with Japanese-based culture and language with a series of brand new Japanese anime characters. The partnership will [enable Marvel to increase its global vision of reaching the Japanese market](#) by utilizing Madhouse's 35+ years of entertainment experience.

Attitude Drinks Inc. a brand development, marketing, and beverage company in Florida, and Nutraceutical Discoveries, Inc. in Tennessee have recently partnered to develop and market a [cutting-edge enhanced metabolic dairy beverage that promises to be a game-changer](#) in their market. For the new health drink, Nutraceutical will bring IP to the table in the form of a revolutionary metabolic health discovery, Innutria(TM), which will be incorporated into the new dairy beverage. Nutraceutical's president says Attitude Drinks brings "a very strong management team with a proven track record in building a brand and successfully penetrating a beverage category."

An energy company, Progress Energy Carolinas, and North America's largest solar energy services provider, SunEdison, are collaborating on building a proposed 1.2-megawatt photovoltaic solar project with the goal of [increasing the production of solar electricity by the end of this year](#). The arrangement allows SunEdison to initially lease approximately 10 acres of land from PGN to build, own, and operate the solar plant, eventually selling the energy to PGN for consumer distribution.

Also in the area of photovoltaic solar energy, a public-private partnership between the [Denver International Airport](#) (DIA), WorldWater & Solar Technologies Corp. and MMA Renewable Ventures are collaborating on building a three million kWh clean electric solar power plant. The plant will be located on DIA property while owned and operated by MMA Renewable Ventures. WorldWater & Solar Technologies Corp. will design and install the photovoltaic system. The partnership allows the organizations to reach higher in the effort to build a greener environment. the partnership's objective also fits with the Greenprint Denver pledge to do all that it can to reduce the airport's carbon footprint.

In Malaysia, Himalaya Herbal Healthcare and University College Sedaya International are collaborating on an [internship program designed to develop and boost students' entrepreneurial skills](#). They have developed the Friends of Himalaya program, giving entrepreneurial students real-life, hands-on experience in marketing, sales, and promotion by setting up booths to sell Himalaya Herbal products. While university students will lend manpower to gain knowledge and experience through the partnership, Himalaya Herbal will aid in preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs.

In the words of the early American poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, "I'll lift you and you lift me, and we'll both ascend together."

Sept. 4, 2008

### **Overcoming Challenges through Partnering**

How can a nonprofit organization, in the face of ongoing budget constraints, overcome the challenges in innovating to make its business process more effective? The book, [\*Nonprofit Organizations: Challenges and Collaboration\*](#), by Alfred Vernis, Maria Iglesias, Beatriz Sanz, and Angel Saz-Carranza, points out that nonprofit organizations face challenges in collaboration, trust, and innovation. The book lists historical antagonism, cultural differences, insufficient resources and competition for resources as common hindrances facing nonprofit organizations.

Some nonprofit organizations have developed the partnering attributes that enable them to effectively overcome similar obstacles through partnering to improve their business processes.

The objective of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation (MRF) is to meet Black Economic Empowerment requirements while promoting scholarship and [leadership in South Africa](#). The organization currently provides scholarships to 27 students but hopes to increase that number and broaden its scope across the African continent. Through a partnership with the UK-based publisher, Oxford University Press Southern Africa (OUP), the foundation will benefit from a 25.1% share transfer from OUP to MRF, making it possible for the Mandela Rhodes Foundation to extend its reach to more scholars in more African countries.

ClearWay Minnesota, a nonprofit organization working to help Minnesotans break nicotine habits, is partnering with a private organization to advance its [statewide tobacco cessation](#) services. The organization's QUITPLAN® program will now be enhanced through a partnership with Free & Clear, Inc. of Seattle, Washington. While ClearWay Minnesota provides onsite and telephone counseling services to Minnesotans, Free & Clear will drive the Web program, providing easy access to online cessation support and counseling.

A nonprofit medical research institute is partnering with a private biotechnology company in order to accelerate its research capabilities. The Burnham Institute for Medical Research, specializing in [stem cell research and drug discoveries](#) in the areas of cancer, diabetes, and other illnesses, is partnering with Cyntellect, Inc. to incorporate Burnham's research capabilities with Cyntellect's trademarked live cell imaging and laser processing product to purify rare cell types in an efficient, automated, and sterile manner.

Although public-private partnerships often prove to be successful business strategies, one [nonprofit organization is reaping the benefits of partnering with another nonprofit](#). NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, a local housing organization that provides homebuyers with education, loans, repairs, and other services, is collaborating with the Tinmouth Land Trust to provide affordable housing to Vermont citizens. The partnership is utilizing Tinmouth's land donation along with state and federal grants to build single-family homes available for purchase through low-cost mortgage packages.

Sept. 11, 2008

### **Teamwork**

A couple of weeks ago I talked about teeter-totters as an analogy for support and cooperation in partnering. This week, tug-of-war seems to be the name of the game in at least one partnership. Three Washington state jurisdictions, in partnership since 1983 to oversee operation and management of a regional jail facility, are struggling over ownership issues. In fact, the members are [considering disbanding the partnership but are also considering mediation as an option](#). The original contract named one of the partners as sole owner/operator and now at least one other partner wants state law changed to allow co-ownership. Naturally, co-ownership would mean more authority over operational aspects such as spending and upgrading or relocating the facility. Some of the partners feel they are not treated equitably. The fact that a tug-of-war over these aspects is present in their relationship indicates a lack of trust among the partners.

Without trust, it is impossible to maintain a successful partnership. But trust, whether in a business partnership, marriage, or any relationship, simply doesn't come naturally. As with other partnering competencies, trust within a partnership is a learned skill, one that can be taught and developed, then honed.

The World Bank Institute (WBI) understands this principle, having incorporated the subject of partnership into its new executive development program. [The WBI has found that it is a mistake to assume that partners are naturally equipped with the necessary skills to maintain a successful partnership](#). The program will help develop these skills and competencies in corporate leaders, administrators, technical specialists, and other executives faced with trying to maintain success through partnerships despite differences in organizational operations and corporate cultures.

The [United States and Russia](#), two countries admittedly not especially noted for maintaining absolute trust, are collaborating on a worthwhile effort: saving Arctic polar bears facing shrinking ice from global warming. Representatives from both countries will come together in a joint commission to establish methods to protect the threatened polar bears. The collaborative effort will involve government entities, scientific groups, and Alaska-Chukotka natives, all working together in bilateral cooperation to provide habitat conservation and determine hunting quotas for natives.

[Florida gopher tortoises](#) are safer today, thanks to a partnership between the U.S. Humane Society, The Richman Group of Florida and Nokuse Plantation. The tortoises were rescued from a housing development site and transplanted to a nature preserve. Until 2007, Florida allowed gopher tortoises to be buried alive. The operation was assisted through a grant from the Folke H. Peterson Foundation.

A [groundbreaking partnership now exists between NASA](#) and Ocean Tomo Federal Services to commercialize 40 NASA technologies. Commercial companies will be able to license NASA technologies through a unique IP transaction platform and develop products that benefit taxpayers as well as federal research and development.

Another interesting partnership this week focuses on manufacturing unique products. In a partnership involving [Lexus Hybrid Living](#) and the Rodarte fashion line, scraps of leather from Lexus vehicles scheduled for disposal were rescued and crafted into luxury

items. The products include luxury leather friendship bracelets and gift/shoe bags made of leather and recycled sailcloth from sailboats, helping both companies demonstrate their mission for combining luxury with environmentally friendly efforts.

**Noted:**

- In the area of education, a partnership between the American Academy of Family Physicians and MetLife Foundation is creating and distributing educational DVDs and children's books on the [problem of childhood obesity](#), and CyberPatrol and LOOKBOTHWAYS are partnering to produce video podcasts [advising families on Internet safety](#).

Sept. 18, 2008

**Partnering for Unique Solutions**

Did you know that, in 1928, when Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, the first antibiotic, he actually abandoned it for treating infection because cultivating it was difficult and he saw no way of producing it in quantity? In fact, it wasn't until 1940, when a team of Oxford scientists collaborated on purifying the antibiotic, that penicillin could be brought to market.\* Through this historical collaboration, a unique solution was created to save the lives of millions for generations to come.

Like Alexander Fleming, your organization may be facing unique problems that require unique solutions. Partnering, as we'll see in the following examples, can accomplish this.

Partnering can lead to a brighter future for a state's workforce and economy. The State of Michigan, Chrysler, and the UAW have partnered to create a unique solution to [life after employment at Chrysler](#). Michigan's "No Worker Left Behind" and "Michigan Works!" initiatives, Chrysler grants and incentive programs, and the UAW's commitment to ensuring successful transition will provide extended financial support, job training, and placement assistance to former Chrysler employees. The partnership recognizes that it must work together to build a successful workforce of retainable employees to meet the needs of the state's existing and emerging economy.

Partnering can also provide a unique solution in helping to increase trust in apprehensive people. That's the objective behind a partnership between the African Union and the European Commission. The partnership has formed its first action plan to promote implementation of EU's electrification improvement programs in Africa. The goal is to effectively communicate EU's promise of increased transparency in establishing secure energy to the African people, an objective that, if met, will [help a leery nation overcome a history of distrust](#) in Europe.

Sept. 25, 2008

**The Perfect Blend**

The next time you take a drink of water, try to think about its make-up. Two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, both crucial elements on their own, combine to form the most beneficial liquid on earth.

What do partnerships and water have in common? Partnerships, like water, are made up of separate entities with distinct purposes. Combined, the entities work together in the perfect blend for a new purpose. This week's partnership examples demonstrate the importance of combining complementary strengths to create improvements and bring about change.

[GE and Google](#) formed a partnership to develop technology that will focus on improving utility-scale renewable energy. The partnership will utilize each partner's technological strengths and energy interests to create software enabling a nationwide electricity "smart grid" with lower emissions and increased efficiency. Part of their partnering efforts will focus on federal policy advocacy to modify regulations with the goal of improving the environment for future investments. The partnership will also engage in alliance building and information programs to involve other companies in their efforts.

A partnership between a [Florida county jail and US Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) (ICE) is working towards improving efficiency in the deportation of felony-convicted illegal aliens. The partnership allows Duval County jail officers access to federal immigration databases and the authority to immediately deport illegal aliens with a felony conviction, a process that to date has sometimes been so lengthy that felons have served their time before they could be located and deported by ICE.

An Oklahoma partnership has been formed to improve operations at a Tulsa [municipal animal shelter](#). Tulsa's animal shelter has been harshly critiqued by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and is working to modernize the shelter in accordance with HSUS recommendations. The city is partnering with Oklahoma State University's Center for Veterinarian Health Sciences, including having OSU veterinarian students participate in the animal shelter and Tulsa's vet being an adjunct assistant professor at OSU.

Rush University Medical Center in Chicago has joined 10 other US cardiac centers in partnering with The Larry King Cardiac Foundation to [increase availability in cardiac care to underserved patients](#). Rush's cardiologists and heart surgeons will provide cardiac care and surgery to patients at no cost, an action made possible through funding and compensation from the Foundation. Other health centers, including Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles and St. Jude Medical Inc., are also working with the Foundation to provide patients with free critical cardiac devices.

Other partnerships aimed at improving health care include a partnership between Transgenomic global biotechnology company and Key Genomics to [combine one partner's predictive algorithm and the other's technologies](#) to develop a molecular diagnostic test, a potential medical breakthrough in the improvement of diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer. Another partnership combining medical technologies to improve treatments exists between Caliber Therapeutics, Inc. and DSM Biomedical, two companies working together to develop a new drug delivery system in the [treatment of vascular disease](#).

Oct. 2, 2008

### **Take Flight Together**

While your organization may be capable of designing and developing new products on its own, partnering enables you to create innovative products in a more advanced, collaborative, cost-efficient, far-reaching and timesaving manner. By combining resources and technologies, partnerships are able to produce results that might never have been possible otherwise.

Sometimes it takes two sets of eyes to create a successful product. When distinguished chef, Craig Shelton, envisioned creating a line of ingredient-specific [epicurean chocolates](#), he sought a highly skilled chocolatier who shared his interest and attention to detail. Chef Shelton found Diane Pinder, a chocolatier who brought more than commonality to the partnership. Pinder recognized the challenges faced in incorporating some of the specific ingredients the chef wanted. Through collaboration, shared knowledge, discussions and trial and error, the two developed the innovative Gastronomie Chocolat.

As part of a strategic plan to strengthen its global presence, Israel-based Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Ltd., is partnering with Japanese Kowa Company, Ltd. to [establish a generic pharmaceutical company, Teva-Kowa Pharma Co., Ltd., in Japan](#). The partners will leverage each other's marketing, R&D, manufacturing, and distribution capabilities to supply the Japanese market with high quality generic pharmaceutical products. They're combining Kowa's knowledge of and established reputation within the Japanese market with Teva's global leadership and expertise in generics.

Oct. 9, 2008

### **Finding Gold through Partnering**

In tough economic times, finding adequate funding for your initiatives can often be a challenge. By building partnering relationships, organizations can work together to overcome capital constraints. This week's partnering relationship each have a spin on meeting funding needs despite today's economic crisis.

Two philanthropic organizations have created a partnering relationship to help other partnering efforts throughout the United States. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Benton Foundation have teamed up to create a program to focus on the health concerns of immigrants. [Eight community collaborations in cities ranging from Chicago to San Francisco will each receive \\$225,000](#) through the New Routes to Community Health program. The program benefits local immigrant groups, media makers and community institutions in their efforts to reach immigrants through a wide range of multilingual media outlets.

FXB USA, an international humanitarian organization and a large retail travel company have developed a partnering relationship to bring health, education, and economic opportunity to impoverished families in Rwanda. [Through a grassroots funding initiative](#).

[Protravel International will donate almost \\$200,000](#) to help create a “Village” of opportunity and self-sufficiency in Rwanda. Because previous FXB Villages have proven successful, Protravel was inspired and motivated to contribute the full cost of a Village and will even act as ambassador to the Village.

When a company needs funding that extends the reach of a single investor, a group of investors partnering together is another option. [A collaboration of Kansas angel investors of both private and public-private groups is working to raise \\$1.5 million](#) to benefit Matrix, inventor of innovative technology for the auto collision repair industry. The partnering relationship is an excellent example of a group of investors recognizing a promising technology and then backing it up with funding.

The University of Central Florida (UCF), together with Orange County, will receive funding to participate in an initiative to determine what environmental and genetic roles play on children’s health. [A \\$15 million grant](#) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will go to UCF’s participation in the National Children’s Study. Thanks to the funding, the partnering relationship between UCF and the NIH enables the university to collaborate with local health departments and medical providers to study the environmental and genetic effects on 100,000 children from birth to 21.

[In the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Ike](#), two organizations have developed a partnering relationship to build playgrounds for children in Houston. The national nonprofit organization, KaBOOM!, will receive funding from 24 Hour Fitness to build the playgrounds. 24 Hour Fitness will donate \$1 from every monthly membership fee to the project. The fitness chain will also solicit donations through an in-club fundraising campaign.

The partnering relationships above are excellent examples of how organizations can find funding for worthwhile projects despite a global economic downturn.

Oct. 16, 2008

### **Strength in Numbers**

In a recent speech at BioPartnering Europe, David Brennan, CEO of AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, addressed the benefits of partnering during a challenging economic climate. Brennan described [reasons why partnering makes sense](#): combining resources and ideas to create value, enabling innovation, balancing shifting risk-reward benefits, overcoming budget constraints, and allowing companies to focus on their core business.

Clearly, partnering is a path to creating something new—even during tough economic times. And partnering often involves more than two entities.

Independent wireless operators in the United States are finding strength in numbers. [Twenty-eight mobile operators and commercial mobile license owners have partnered](#) to create NextGen Mobile, LLC. The company pools together each member’s expertise, reducing routine operational expenses and nurturing the development and survivability of small and rural mobile networks within the group. The partnership developed as

members realized they were all facing the same market pressures and that working together would allow mobile operators to remain competitive yet independent.

Another multi-member partnership will bring the first authorized version of [Britain's Academy of Contemporary Music to the United States](#). The University of Central Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the City of Oklahoma City, and others are creating the ACM@UCO in Oklahoma City's popular Bricktown area. The academy will offer hands-on training in performance, production, and music-industry business. Through this prestigious program, members of the partnership will see Oklahoma City become more internationally renowned.

A [three-way, public-private partnership between Clinical Research Information eXchange International \(CRIX\), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\), and the National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#) has been formed to develop, implement, and establish governance over FIREBIRD, a clinical information management software application. The pilot application will provide a common registry and enable movement toward a fully electronic process in clinical investigation. The software, for use by clinical trial sponsors including the FDA and NCI, will reduce cycle time, errors, and costs. CRIX will manage and continue development of the application for use in both regulatory and private clinical research.

Through a [partnership between the United States Navy and the Air Force](#), members of both branches will benefit from a \$45 million training facility in Pensacola, Florida. The USAF Navigator Training Hangar and Combat Systems Officer Instruction Facility will provide training for both Navy and Air Force officers and includes a 52,000 square foot flight simulation classroom. The training facility will be designed and built by NTF, LLC.

[Three Canadian universities and a Norway university](#) are collaborating with technology-based international energy company, StatoilHydro, to develop environmentally-friendly methods for recovering heavy oil and oil sands. This multi-member partnership, supported by StatoilHydro, will utilize recovery methods, emulsion stabilization technology, and environmental monitoring from the respective universities.

Oct. 23, 2008

### **Partnering to Address the Future**

As the world faces new types of challenges, organizations are forming partnerships to shape the way we'll be able to address challenges in the future.

In the event of a [pandemic flu outbreak](#), 3M Drug Delivery Systems is partnering with biotechnology company, VaxInnate Corporation, to develop a convenient flu vaccine patch. The partnership allows VaxInnate to use 3M's patented microneedle technology to deliver its universal flu vaccine, creating a product that eliminates the need for sharps disposal and allows self-administration of the vaccine. Through this partnership, the new vaccine delivery system could rapidly vaccinate people during seasonal or pandemic flu outbreaks.

As countries around the world increase concern and enact new regulations to deal with environmental sustainability, cheese manufacturer, Willapa Hills Farmstead Cheese, has

partnered with Seattle University's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering to combat potential sustainability problems in the future disposal of processing waste. The partnership will help the company in its proactive approach to meeting the US Environmental Protection Agency's sustainability guidelines. In addition, the cheese company is committed to effectively [managing its chemical, biological, and food waste](#) and is relying on Seattle University team members to review operations and waste management practices.

Fierce rivals are working together for a common cause to address a future health problem. One current medical practice is to use medical devices ([drug-coated stents](#)) to [prevent scar tissue from reclogging arteries](#) after angioplasty-balloon procedures. However, such stents have never been formally studied in people having had heart attacks. An alternative procedure currently used for stent patients uses an antiplatelet drug and aspirin. Abbott Laboratories, Johnson & Johnson, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and other companies are partnering with the Harvard Clinical Research Institute to conduct a four-year study to clear up questions about which of the two approaches is most effective for patients.

A large public-private partnership in Ohio is launching a \$20 million program to clean up after the mortgage crisis in six Cleveland neighborhoods. The [Opportunity Homes program](#), funded by Ohio state agencies, Fannie Mae, the non-profit Neighborhood Progress, and other public and private organizations, will create model blocks through renovating and reselling some of the foreclosed homes and razing others while also assisting homeowners facing foreclosure. It is estimated that it will cost \$125,000 to buy and rehabilitate each home, \$40,000 of which will be subsidized by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency. Cleveland's mayor says the Opportunity Homes program will also be leveraged for additional investments to renovate other neighborhoods in the future.

In an effort to address the challenge of a [shortage of pharmacists in the near future](#), the School of Pharmacy of the College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana, Legon is partnering with the Legon, Ghana business community and the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Ghana (PMAG) to invest in and influence the training of pharmacists. The Development Partners Project will enable pharmaceutical companies to influence the direction of training (including internships) to ensure relevancy to the needs of the pharmaceutical industry. Companies will provide training equipment, books, and facilities to enable applicable instruction. The PMAG president has stated his hope that the partnership's project will also influence a future "revolution" in businesses of all kinds investing to meet the needs of the overall health care industry.

Oct. 30, 2008

### **Solving Mutual Problems through Cooperation**

While cooperation is an essential element in every partnership, some partnerships are based specifically on cooperative efforts. This week's news evidences several examples of partners who are working together to jointly solve mutual problems.

Microsoft and Yahoo are well aware that their brands are being used in advance fee [fraud e-mail scams](#) throughout the world. Yet so far, most scams continue to fly under the radar due to limited local police expertise and resources. Therefore, the tech

companies, along with Western Union and the African Development Bank—whose brands have also been abused—are cooperating with law enforcement officials to help put a lid on the scams. The partnering organizations are asking victims to forward police reports to them so internal investigators can check for patterns and send the information to international law enforcement agencies.

Getting information to voters is the focus of cooperative efforts between state election officials, foundations and technology companies. Many citizens neglect to vote because they are either uninformed about where to register or cast their votes, or they are simply unaware of or don't understand the issues at hand. The Voting Information Project, in an effort to inform voters through an open data format, has been created to collect, publish and engage citizens in information about voter registration and ballot issues. The cooperative partnering effort to solve these issues provides the media, constituents, Internet search engines, and civic organizations with easy [access to relevant voter information](#), thus creating a more well-informed electorate.

The Silicon Valley construction industry and the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District are working together to develop a solution to the growing problem of [filling retiring Baby Boomers' shoes with highly trained, white collar construction workers](#). The cooperative partners are creating the California Construction College (CCC), which will combine classroom and work experience to award BS degrees. Along with providing the industry with highly skilled workers, the CCC will play an important role in retaining local employment while meeting the governor's job creation and infrastructure rebuilding priorities.

A partnering relationship between the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity and LRN, global leader in business ethics solutions, are cooperating in efforts to challenge college students to increase consideration of society's pressing ethics issues. The two organizations, in a cooperative effort to extend and expand the Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics Essay, are working together to engage students in developing ethical habits in a time when civic-minded organizations and corporations—and indeed, the whole world—is focused on the role of [ethics in politics, education, business and global relationships](#).

In Buckeye, Arizona, police, fire and city officials developed the Public Safety Executive Partnership, a model cooperative effort between departments to reduce crime and improve public safety. Recognized by the American Public Works Association, the [partnering effort between police, fire and public works offices](#) benefits the city and taxpayers through enhanced safety measures and cost-effective, time-saving information sharing. The cooperative partnering effort is also getting national attention for its success in handling a recent hostage situation.

Nov. 6, 2008

### **Advancing Your Career**

Are your manager and coworkers' opinions of you important? You bet! It's not only a factor in creating your happiness at work but also in the chances of advancing your career. Thus, [the need to master interpersonal skills cannot be understated](#). You have to be able to connect with and effectively communicate with people at work. If you have a leadership role, this is even more important. Interpersonal skills are the enablers of

effective communication. Several interpersonal skills are the focus of the Six Partnering Attributes that are necessary for successful partnering.

Are you attuned to what your coworkers are thinking, feeling, or reacting to stressors so you can avoid problems or resolve any conflicts that arise? The next time you're [facing an internal or external partner who is behaving in a hostile manner toward you](#), the best thing to do is demonstrate that you are open to considering the person's needs. By listening to the other person — which involves accepting feedback — you demonstrate willingness to hear that person's concerns. If your partner realizes you respect your partner's needs, the individual will less compelled to act aggressively to get a point across to you.

What will set you apart on the job, making a favorable impression on your manager or on a potential employer? Soft skills, or what are often referred to as interpersonal skills, are becoming keys to success. In fact, 67 percent of 700 HR managers and administrative professionals polled by the International Association of Administrative Professionals and others said they would hire someone with strong soft skills if the person lacks the desired level of technical skills. [Ranking among the top three soft skills most in demand](#) are verbal communication and teamwork/collaboration.

A Hays study found that [technical knowledge experience is not enough to break into management](#); what's required is good interpersonal skills, especially the ability to give clear direction to coworkers.

An Accountemps staffing service firm conducted a study among chief financial officers, asking which [communication skill they rank as most important for financial professionals](#). Nearly half (45 percent) ranked interpersonal skills at the top of the list. Respondents stated these skills are necessary in building rapport with colleagues and developing consensus among team members.

At Partnership Continuum, we've been monitoring job ads since May and find that almost all employers want to hire people who have "superb interpersonal and communication skills," regardless of the job description. Today's workplace is a much more collaborative environment, so using interpersonal skills is necessary. In addition, people with good interpersonal skills have the ability to build strong relationships and resolve conflicts positively. A win-win orientation and negotiating skills are invaluable interpersonal skills.

Nov. 13, 2008

### **Partnering for the Community**

Caring for the community is an important objective for many organizations and companies. Partnering with public and private sectors of the community enables companies and organizations to initiate and implement programs to ensure that both land and people receive the high quality care and service.

A Kansas City school district has partnered with local health officials to [create a community health clinic](#) at one of its elementary schools. The partnership between North Kansas City Schools, Northland Health Care Access and the Clay County Public Health

Center, with support from the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City and a local health tax levy, has enabled the one-room Crestview Family Medical Clinic to provide non-emergency family medical services without high overhead costs. The health clinic is just one example of the school district's goal of leveraging community partnerships to better serve students and their families.

In the state of Washington, a community effort between governments, tribes, scientists and businesses, known as the Puget Sound Partnership, is working to [protect, restore, and clean up Puget Sound](#) where nearly 150,000 pounds of daily toxic waste runoff is contaminating the area. The partnership is recommending an integrated approach to managing urban and rural water runoff, thus cost-effectively preventing problems before they occur. The partnership aims to implement and maintain priority ecosystem restoration projects while working towards revitalizing waterfront communities.

Treating American [military veterans returning home from service](#) is the focus of a partnership between the HealthPartners Institute for Medical Education, the American Hospital Association and more than a dozen additional organizations. Known as the Joining Forces program, the partnership is launching a series of online programs aimed at educating medical professionals on the unique issues facing returning veterans. Members of the partnership will spread the word about the program, with the goal of ensuring returning troops receive adequate and relevant care.

A partnership between GreenMan Technologies and The Great Plains ADA Center of Columbia, Missouri, has been created for the advancement and development of [solutions for recreational and playground compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA). The partners will jointly develop a Best Practices model of new ADA technology, education, and training solutions to better serve end-users. Facilitated by Greenman's Welch Products subsidiary, the National Safe Surfacing Initiative, LLC, the partnership will integrate green technology with playground compliance, child wellness and playground accessibility.

In Ghana, a new [sanitation and disease prevention program](#) has been launched through a collaboration between government and private organizations. The Ghana Health Service, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, the National Youth Employment Program, and Zoomlion Ghana Limited will initiate improved sanitation measures to be taken in hospitals, homes, and in the community to prevent the spread of diseases such as malaria and dysentery. By taking a more preventative approach to sanitation and disease prevention the program will help reduce the government's curative health care burden.

Nov. 20, 2008

### **Unite and Expand**

Businesses and organizations looking to expand their services or product offerings can accomplish this objective by partnering with like-minded entities. By tapping into each other's resources and expertise, partners can think outside of the box and reach beyond their usual offerings.

While consumers of NutriSystem's weight-management programs continue to shrink waistlines, the company itself is expanding. In partnership with Schwan's Home Service, Inc., NutriSystem will develop and distribute its first new line of frozen food. The [new program, NutriSystem Select, will be delivered through Schwan's home delivery infrastructure](#) and will allow clients of both companies access to premium frozen foods compatible with NutriSystem's weight-loss programs and nutritional guidelines. The partnership allows NutriSystem access to Schwan's product development practices, supply chain, test kitchens, and extensive consumer base, helping NutriSystem to solidify its position as a major player in weight loss management.

Expanding their services to [deliver food to disaster victims](#) with efficiency and timeliness is the focus of a new partnership between Meals on Wheels for WNY Inc., the Food Bank of WNY, and the Greater Buffalo Chapter of the American Red Cross. Resulting from a surprise snowstorm in October 2006, the new program, Food Partnership, will utilize each organization's services to provide more efficient emergency relief to disaster victims. The partnership will see the Food Bank purchasing and controlling inventory while Meals On Wheels will prepare the food and the Red Cross will continue providing emergency assistance. By combining their services, the organizations will ensure disaster and crisis victims receive adequate and timely access to food.

The nonprofit CTIA – The Wireless Association and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) are expanding their dedication to child safety with a new focus on [keeping child pornography off wireless networks](#). Both organizations have previously worked together to help relocate missing children. Through the Wireless Child Safety Task Force, the partnership also will leverage the NCMEC's wireless member companies to identify, review, and support actions to further deter the spread of child pornography through wireless networks and services.

And two technology companies are partnering to expand their offerings to biopharmaceutical customers in the bioprocessing market. Millipore Corporation and Applikon Biotechnology B.V. will jointly develop and distribute disposable bioreactor systems, facilitating their [entry into the disposable bioreactor market](#) segment. The partnership will combine Applikon's experience with Millipore's global scale and expertise with new technologies to meet the needs of customers looking to improve efficiencies by replacing stainless steel with disposable technologies. The partnership's new offering will enable bioprocessing companies to expand their capability to reduce risk and capital requirements by eliminating the need for cleaning validation, minimizing water usage, reducing energy and labor costs, shortening cycle times, and improving flexibility.

Dec. 4, 2008

### **Partnering for Potential**

What do dark energy, dark beer, espresso, the human brain, and diabetes management tools all have in common? Each is the focus of this week's examples of leveraging a partner's resources and jointly exploring opportunities that have unique potential.

NASA, ever a pioneer in exploring new territories, is partnering with the U.S. Department of Energy to study the properties of [dark energy with the potential outcome of](#)

fundamentally advancing both physics and astronomy. The two agencies have signed a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the Joint Dark Energy Mission, a program that will utilize each other's complementary research and capabilities to set the standard in determining the distribution of dark energy and its role in shaping the universe.

IBM Research is partnering with five leading universities in an unprecedented mission to emulate the human brain to create cognitive computing systems. The partners will conduct groundbreaking research to simulate the brain's function and abilities to integrate and analyze complex data. Awarded \$4.9 million in funding from DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), the collaborators aim to break the conventional programmable computer paradigm, providing users with [a cognitive computing system that potentially promises the ability to](#) compute vast amounts of varying data in a split second.

Recognizing the value in producing and selling locally during challenging economic times, two Idaho business owners have partnered to create a buzzing new beverage. The Stimulator Stout, a unique combination of dark beer and espresso, is the result of a meeting between the owners of Boise microcoffee roasting company, Dawson Taylor Coffee, and microbrewery, Tablerock Brew Pub. The partners set out to emulate similar collaborations between major brewers, but with a specific appreciation for the [potentially economy-stimulating value](#) in selling locally developed products.

With a novel approach to diabetes management, diabetes multimedia network, dLife, and healthcare company, WellDoc Communications, Inc., are partnering to create new and [potentially life-changing management tools](#) for diabetes patients. With a shared belief in managing diabetes as a lifestyle rather than solely a disease, the two companies are integrating WellDoc's web- and mobile-based diabetes management solution with dLife's consumer resources and support tools. The consumer-oriented approach to combining diabetes management programs includes interactive and comprehensive nutritional information, thousands of recipes, and real-time online patient support tools.

Dec. 11, 2008

### **Collaboration for Job Creation**

By now you know that [more than half a million jobs were lost in the United States just in the month of November](#). With unemployment rates skyrocketing and the economy worsening, the creation of new jobs continues to increase in relevance to economic revitalization. Partnerships can play a vital role in increasing the workforce, as seen in the following recent examples.

[Bringing clean energy and jobs to Texas](#) is the focus of a major public-private partnership between the city of Austin and nine corporations including Dell, Microsoft, GE Energy, Oracle, Cisco, Intel, IBM, Freescale, and Gridpoint. Each member of the partnership will dip into its human resources and contribute a handful of employees to the Pecan Street Project, a program aimed at developing innovative clean energy ideas. The partnership will focus on planning, investigating funding, and researching and

developing ways to achieve a clean energy future for Texas while creating jobs and stimulating the economy.

In partnership with nuclear technology company, General Atomics, Eastern Kentucky University has established the ECU Center for Renewable and Alternative Fuel Technologies, a program designed to examine the potential for creation of an alternative fuel production industry in Kentucky. Supported by Governor Steve Beshear's commitment to biodiesels and Congressman Ben Chandler's efforts to secure \$4 million in federal funding for alternative fuel production, the development of such an industry will [create jobs and revitalize the state's economy](#).

While Kentucky aims to create jobs in the biodiesel industry, Springfield, Massachusetts, is working towards becoming a center for green industries by partnering with the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Funded through a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Greater Springfield-UMass Amherst Partnership's objectives include establishing an effective framework for cooperative activities to revitalize Springfield's economy. As part of the agreement, the partnership will utilize the university's research capacities to be dedicated to [creating jobs in green technology](#).

A public-private partnership between Hawaiian Electric and mobility operator, Better Place, plans to bring an electric car network to Hawaii, a state committed to leading the way in reducing dependence on foreign oil. Building an [electric car network will create jobs locally](#) and is an example of the importance Hawaii places on finding innovative ways to attract investments, a major component of the state's Five-Point Action Plan to help stimulate the economy.

While Hawaii seeks to attract investments, Dole Food Company, Inc., looks to carry out its own investments in communities in which it operates. In partnership with the U.S. State Department on the English Access Microscholarship Program, the food giant will contribute \$40,000 in scholarships to students in the Philippines. The partnership will aid Filipino students in developing English language skills, a [key in leading to better jobs and stimulating economic growth](#).

The Philippines is only one example of a country receiving an economic boost from partnerships. Vietnam will also benefit from a public-private partnering effort between its Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs and Manpower Inc., a global leader in employment services. The two entities will jointly [create employment opportunities and stimulate economic growth development in Vietnam](#) through a Memorandum of Understanding that formalizes cooperative efforts to develop employment services and labor information systems, forecast labor market needs, and identify labor requirements.

Dec. 18, 2008

What a year this has been! Despite the floundering economy, and perhaps often because of it, partnerships continue to develop and reap the benefits of sharing resources. As we wrap up another year, let's take a look at what people are saying about partnering.

"The whole idea is to collaborate. To work together in a mutually beneficial way, [to accomplish things neither institution would be able to accomplish alone.](#)" (Deborah Snow, University of Michigan-Flint liaison for the university's partnership with a Flint, Michigan, school district)

"It makes sense ... to adopt a partnership approach [for the optimal delivery of all projects and the best result](#) for the community." (Stephen Cairns, Chairman, Otago Regional Councils, New Zealand)

Partnering [enables bringing revolutionary new products to market](#), thus satisfying consumer demand. (Paul Block, CEO, Merisant and Whole Earth Sweetener Company)

"... helps [create economic opportunity, supports entrepreneurial activity...](#)" (Michael Dupee, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc.)

A partnership with the EPA will motivate students to pursue careers that help to "[make this a better world.](#)" (Alan J. Steinberg, Regional Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

Perhaps Canada's Honorable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said it best when he addressed a special session of the Assembly of First Nations. "[Partnerships are the engine that will move us forward](#)...Successful partnerships...don't just happen by themselves. They are the product of energy, imagination, and a concerted will to get results."

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