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Department of Business and Management

Chair of Economics and Management of Innovation

**CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: THE ROLE OF
CREATIVITY BROKERS TO ELICIT
ORGANISATIONAL CREATIVITY**

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Prencipe", written over a light blue grid background.

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INTRODUCTION

The growing intensity of competition among markets and the increasing turbulence of the external business environment have focused attention upon how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage.

Over the last twenty years researchers like Martensen and Dahlgaard (1999), Mumford et al. (2007), Anderson and Gasteiger (2008) have investigated issues related to the key factors that allow a company to be competitive and what a company can do to improve its market position. A widely accepted belief is that a company should learn from its external environment and react to unexpected changes. In other words, each company should be a learning organization that is able to codify information coming from the external environment, develop and manage knowledge in order to define strategies and achieve competitive advantage. However, a company doesn't only aim to achieve competitive advantage: a company should sustain it being innovative, introducing new products and improving its way of working.

Thus, innovation has become a key factor for every company in order to be always competitive. According Amabile (1996), Mumford et al. (2007) and many other researchers, innovation concerns the "successful implementation of creative ideas": it means that creativity can be considered the starting point for innovation, the necessary condition to implement innovative activities. Hence, for a company it is not enough to learn from the external environment and manage knowledge: each company should be innovative and this implies to be creative.

The increasing interest in creativity and the scholars' debate about the relevance of creativity for innovation and the link between creativity and competitiveness are the antecedents of my choice regarding the topic of the present work. The opportunity of getting in touch with people working in the Centre for Research in Innovation Management (CENTRIM) at the University of Brighton had increased my curiosity about creativity and why it is an invaluable resource for individuals as well as for companies. At CENTRIM, I had the chance to discuss and exchange ideas about the

meaning of creativity and the innovation-creativity connection with researchers involved in projects regarding innovation and creative industries. One is Brighton Fuse, a two-year research and development project, which is run by Wired Sussex, the University of Brighton, the University of Sussex and the Council of Industry & Higher Education and it is funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council: this project analyses the growth of Brighton's successful creative, digital and information technology clusters and defines schemes to promote further innovation, business success and economic development. The other project is Cre8tv.eu (Creativity for Innovation & Growth in Europe). It is a multi-partner research that is funded under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission and it involves the University of Brighton and other ten universities across Europe. It is a multi-disciplinary project that aims to describe the meaning of creativity and the relevance of creative and cultural industries in shaping the European economy. Thanks to these projects and the University of Brighton, I had access to the existing knowledge about creativity and identify a topic for my dissertation. A deep review about creativity literature led my attention not only to the meaning of creativity, but also how it can be measured and which activities can be considered creative. My focus became narrow: I was interested in the reasons why creativity is relevant for any kind of company, what managers should know and how they should behave to create the favourable conditions for organisational creativity. In particular, my curiosity became strong when I analysed the Bilton and Leary study (2002): they identify a new figure, "creativity broker", that knows how to "broker connections between different people, experiences, talents, technologies and emotions: they broker other people's abilities into productive relationships and they also have an eye for the market" (Bilton and Leary, 2002, p. 58). Thus, I decided to investigate the role of creativity brokers, who could help companies be creative because they are able to connect creative ideas of managers, employees and teams and translate them into valuable solutions.

Hence, the purpose of my dissertation is to understand the role, functions and motivations of creativity brokers. In particular, my investigation tries to provide a clear definition of creativity brokers by explaining who they are and which capabilities and competences they need to play their role. In other words, I try to make a substantial step forward in the understanding of the most appropriate managerial practices that value

and exploit creativity and fulfil a knowledge gap about the relevance of creativity brokers.

Given that the role of creativity brokers is an unexplored topic and the existing knowledge about it doesn't allow for a quantitative analysis, for my research I adopt a qualitative approach that makes it possible to break down the role of creativity brokers in its essential features and explain their functionality. The present consists of an exploratory research: for this reason, I base it on case study methodology: it is an in-depth investigation that provides a richly detailed portrait of the topic under investigation looking beyond its simple descriptive features. I select and study multiple cases: in fact, my sample consists of seven companies, whose members are experts in creativity and help big organisations, freelancers and designers behave creatively and improve their performance. The selection of these cases is the result of a process that paid attention to activities that these companies perform and the meaning they give to creativity. In order to conduct the analysis of cases, I collect unbiased evidence from multiple sources such as documents that companies made available, digital content like videos and reports available on the official websites. In particular, I obtain relevant data through semi-structured interviews with people that are supposed to possess relevant data for the topic under investigation. During these in-depth interviews, I lead respondents through questions, but at the same time they have enough freedom to explain and justify answers. In addition, I have the flexibility to approach distinctly respondents, ask for additional questions and get complete and reliable information. In order to ensure the validity of collected data, I gather them from multiple sources in order to corroborate findings; I construct a case studies database, which is a well-organized collection of evidence that consists of documents and interview notes and transcripts and I clearly report findings by making reference to the case studies database through citations of interviews and documents. The purpose of case studies analysis is to organise and analyse collected data in order to provide a clear and complete picture of creativity brokers included in the sample and understand how much the experience with creativity brokers is pivotal for individuals as well as for organisations.

My dissertation is structured as follows. The first chapter I provide a review of creativity literature: I analyse many studies in order to identify the most satisfying definition of creativity (Sarkar and Chakrabarti, 2011). Then, the chapter moves towards

studies that had tried to clarify how creativity works at individual, group and organizational levels (Woodman et al., 1993; Amabile, 1996, Drazin et al., 1999, Audia and Goncalo, 2007; Gino et al. 2010; Miron-Spektor et al., 2011). In addition, the chapter shows the most relevant issues that arise from the published knowledge about creativity: the creativity drivers and how they interplay in an organisational context (Amabile et al. 1996), the role of leadership: it is important to define what managers actually do and to enhance creative activities within organisations (Mumford et al. 2007). Finally, I identify the issue that I want to deal with and the knowledge gap about creativity brokers, their role and functionality. The second chapter regards the methodology I adopt to carry on my investigation. First, I carefully define my research question and the qualitative approach needed due to the nature of my research. Then, I describe the sample, which kind of data are required to construct case studies, the method I adopt to collect them and the analysis technique. In the third chapter, I create case studies on the basis of data collected and I conduct an individual case analysis. I identify the most relevant features that help me provide a detailed description of creativity brokers I selected: I focus the attention on creativity brokers' skills, activities they carry on, the functions they perform, their clients and the collaboration with them. In addition, I consider feedback that each creativity broker collects from its clients after the collaboration to understand the benefits clients have gained from their experience with the creativity broker. In the last chapter, on the basis of the individual case analysis, I conduct a cross-case analysis: I compare the chosen creativity brokers in a systematic way and I figure out similarities and differences. To do this, I base the cross-case analysis on four features related to my research question: definition, functions, role and motivations. This makes it possible to group similar creativity brokers, interpret them and generalise findings. In this way I can provide a reliable and exhaustive explanation of creativity brokers, their role, functions and motivations a general delineation of their importance for organisational management.

Chapter I

CREATIVITY LITERATURE REVIEW

1) Introduction

Creativity is considered the cornerstone of innovation, given the common definition of innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas (Amabile, 1996). This widely accepted argument explains the increasing interest in creativity and why it has become one of the most relevant topics in innovation management research (Woodman et al., 1993). Many studies focus attention upon the link between creativity, innovation and competitiveness (Brennan and Dooley, 2005; Mumford et al., 2007; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009): they try to clarify how creativity works in order to enhance innovation activities within companies and improve competitiveness.

However, the published knowledge about creativity and its determinants is fragmented and scholars found their works on different – and sometimes divergent – definitions of creativity.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of creativity literature: many studies are analysed in order to identify the most satisfying definition of creativity (Sarkar and Chakrabarti, 2011). Then, the chapter moves towards studies that had tried to clarify how creativity works at individual, group and organizational levels (Woodman et al., 1993; Drazin et al., 1999). Most of the literature pointed the attention upon creative behaviours at individual and group level (Amabile, 1996; George and Zhou, 2001; Audia and Goncalo, 2007; Gino et al. 2010; Miron-Spektor et al., 2011). The result of most of the studies was that individual and group creativity are complementary and they are the component of all creative activities carried out by an organisation. For this reason, creativity research couldn't leave out considering the contextual variables that may influence creative behaviours of both individuals and

groups. In fact, organisational characteristics create the contextual influences that have impact on both individual and group creativity (Woodman et al, 1993; Amabile, 1996).

Finally, the chapter shows the most relevant issues that arise from the published knowledge about creativity. The first issue is to identify the creativity drivers and understand how they interplay in an organisational context (Amabile et al. 1996). The second issue is related to the role of leadership: it is important to define what managers actually do and what they should do in order to enhance creative activities within their organisations (Shalley and Gilson, 2004; Amabile et al., 2004; Mumford et al. 2007). In addition, scholars had tried to recognize determinants and inhibitors of creativity and clarify how different kinds of leadership have diverse effects on individual, group and organisational creativity (Jaussi and Dionne, 2003).

2) Creativity definition

Over the years creativity has been the object of study for scholars in the fields of psychology, sociology and organisational science. Thus, there exist many definitions of creativity coming from the adoption of different perspectives.

The first definition was creativity as an outcome because the literature was limited to the psychological aspects of creativity. In fact, in Western culture the dominant view of creativity was based on individual exceptionalism. According to this approach, creativity is person-centred and creative ideas emerge spontaneously because they are the result of individuals' innate qualities. Hence, the emphasis on the irrational, breakthrough thinking has led to associate creativity with a particular type of person, which is called individual creative genius.

In following studies, many researchers tried to go beyond the “myth of genius” and defined creativity as a process. The first was Poincaré, a nineteenth century mathematician. According to his studies, the creativity process consists of many sequences:

1. Preparation: individuals analyse the problem and identify the sources of information and inspiration;

2. Incubation: individuals' sub-conscious mind works upon the problem;
3. Illumination: the creative breakthrough leads to the solution of the problem;
4. Verification: the solution is tested against the problem.

The sequence requires different kinds of thinking: rational analysis during preparation and verification phases, sub-conscious inspiration during the other two. Creative ideas arise during the illumination phases: they are the result of the combination of irrational and rational thought processes.

Also other researchers such as De Bono (1982), Weisberg (1983), Sternberg (1988) described creativity as a process based on the duality of human thinking. They referred to “divergent” and “convergent”, “lateral” and “vertical” thinking: creative ideas are produced by the tension between conscious and sub-conscious thought. The first is the rational and logic thinking, which works within a clear set of boundaries. The second is the “out of the box thinking” which relies upon intuition. In other words the combination of opposites and contrasting types of thinking is a crucial stage in the generation of new ideas and solutions.

The following studies defined creativity by focusing attention on both the process and its components. Woodman et al. (1993) interpreted creativity as “the creation of valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working together in a complex social system”; Amabile (1996) described it as “the production of novel and useful ideas or solutions in any domain”; Sternberg and Lubart (1999) defined creativity as that which “produces work that is novel (i.e. original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e. useful)”.

Another definition of creativity is provided by Drazin et al. (1999): creativity is a sense-making process that takes place at different levels. Creativity is engagement: it is a choice made by an individual to engage in producing novel ideas. In other words an individual behaviourally, cognitively and emotionally attempts to produce creative outcomes. The engagement in creative activities varies over time, from person to person and from situation to situation. Creativity takes place also at group level. It can be defined as a cognitive process of idea generation and idea testing, which requires that

individuals first engage in individual-level creativity and then cooperate to develop ideas. Finally, creativity occurs at the organizational level as a process of negotiating multiple and potentially competing interests between different groups within an organization. Creativity processes at the organizational level don't simply aggregate from individual or group efforts. Drazin et al. (1999) proposed a process model of creativity based on four interrelated concepts:

- a) individual sense-making process (creativity at intra-subjective level);
- b) inter-subjective shared frames at reference (creativity at inter-subjective level);
- c) a collective structure that represents a negotiated belief structure between parties that have different frames of reference (creativity at a collective level);
- d) a shift in the negotiated belief structure that results from crises, which represents the possibility of temporary reframing.

This multilevel sense-making model links individual, group and organizational level variables to creative outcomes. In other words, creativity is described as an individual and group level process, which requires engagement, knowledge, networks and technologies.

Thus, in the creative literature many definitions contain two components: novelty and value. For this reason, Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011) brought together these definitions in a comprehensive manner under a single description: creativity occurs through “a process by which an agent uses its ability to generate ideas, products or solutions that are novel and useful” (Sarkar and Chakrabarti, 2011, p.349). According to this definition, the “core components” of creativity are novelty and usefulness. It means that in order to assess the creativity of products, services or ideas, it is necessary to measure their degree of novelty and usefulness.

The first has to do with the comparison of the new product against those that already exist: a product can be considered novel only if it is different from all other previously existing products designed for similar purposes. The differences among

compared characteristics show the degree of novelty of the new product. In other words in order to assess novelty, the context in which the new idea is introduced should be considered: it is fundamental to make reference to the time line of similar inventions and know the characteristics of similar products. Thus novelty encompasses both new and original. In order to measure the degree of novelty, Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011) suggested the Causality Model¹ proposed by Chakrabarti and Khadilkar (2003). This model uses the following set of constructs:

- a. Phenomenon: interaction between a system and the environment;
- b. State change: change in property of the system;
- c. Effect: principle that control the interaction;
- d. Action: interpretation of the interaction;
- e. Input: physical quantity that comes from the environment and is crucial for the interaction;
- f. Organs: properties and conditions of system and environment that are required for the interaction;
- g. Parts: physical elements and interfaces that constitute system and environment.

Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011) described the relationships between these constructs as following: “parts are necessary for creating organs. Organs and inputs are necessary for activating physical effects. Activation of physical effects is necessary for creating physical phenomena and changes of state, and changes of state are interpreted as actions or inputs, and create or activate parts. Essentially, there are three relationships among these constructs: activation, creation and interpretation. It is found that if a product is different from the other existing products in terms of state of change, physical phenomenon or physical effect (Higher constructs), they are also different in terms of organs and parts (Lower constructs)” (Sarkar and Chakrabarti, 2011, p.355).

¹ This model is also called SAPPhIRE model: the acronym SAPPhIRE stands for State-Action-Part-phenomenon-Input-oRgan-Effect.

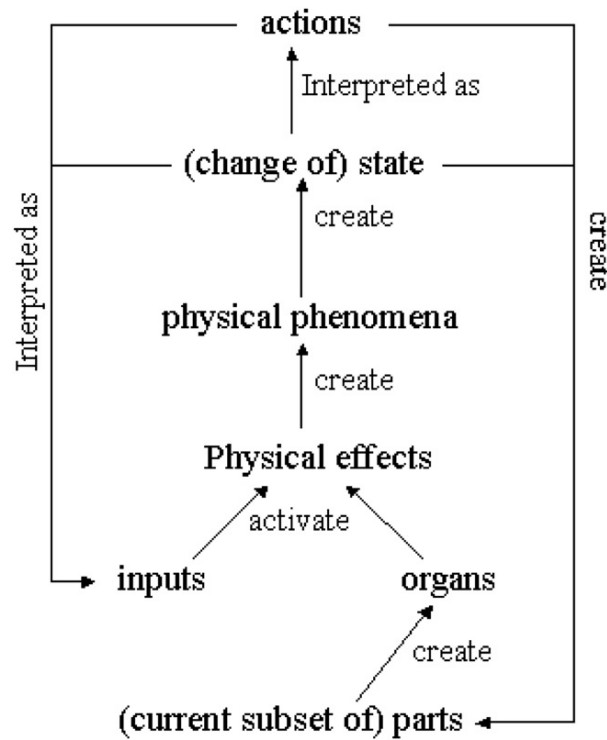


Figure 1.1: SAPPhIRE Model of Causality (Sarkar and Chakrabarti, 2011, p.354)

According to the SAPPhIRE model products, services or solutions are classified and organized into a hierarchy of novelty categories. Ideas that show differences at the level of function are considered “very highly novel ideas”. “Highly novel” products are those that have the same function of other existing products but show differences in terms of the other six constructs. Products with “medium novelty” are those that differ from the existing products with reference to physical effects or physical phenomena. Finally, low novelty can be assessed in products that are different from existing products only in terms of organs or parts.

The second parameter that should be considered for measuring creativity is usefulness. It is associated to appropriateness, effectiveness: a solution is defined as useful if it can be used for a practical purpose, it is able to satisfy a need or it has a beneficial use. In other words, it is possible to measure the usefulness of a product, service or idea by assessing its actual use in society: different levels of importance reflect different degrees of usefulness. In this way a solution is considered useful if it is “socially valuable” according to its utility for the society. It means that the usefulness

should represent the social value. In order to measure the utility of a product, it is required to measure its level of usage. It can be determined by making reference to parameters such as:

- a) importance of use: the product can fulfil needs of the users;
- b) rate of popularity of usage: how many people use the product within a specific period of time;
- c) rate of duration of benefit: how long the benefits of product are;
- d) frequency of usage: how many times the product is used.

All four parameters are equally relevant in assessing the usefulness of a product, as the following equation shows:

$$\text{Usefulness} = \text{Level of importance} \times \text{Rate of popularity of usage} \times \\ \text{Frequency of usage} \times \text{Rate of duration of benefit}$$

Once novelty and usefulness are assessed, creativity should be determined. Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011) expressed creativity as the product of novelty and usefulness:

$$\text{Creativity (C)} = \text{Novelty (N)} \times \text{Usefulness (U)}$$

According to this equation, creativity is a function of these two parameters: the absence of either will lead to a lack of creativity in a product, service or solution. It means that creativity should be measured in terms of both novelty and usefulness. However, it is not enough to assess whether a solution is creative, novel and useful: it is required to establish first the degree of novelty and the degree of usefulness and then determine the degree of creativity. To do this, Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011) proposed the following steps:

- 1) Appreciate the novelty of the product on a qualitative scale by adopting the SAPPhIRE model;

- 2) Turn the qualitative novelty value into a quantitative value;
- 3) Assign relative grading to the product;
- 4) Assess the usefulness of the product as described above;
- 5) Convert the usefulness value into a relative grading;
- 6) Calculate the creativity of each product by multiplying its degree of novelty and usefulness.

Thus, Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011) proposed this model for the assessment of novelty, usefulness and creativity: it is based on the assumption that novelty and usefulness are “the only two direct influences on creativity”. In other words creativity consists of novelty and value. And today this is the most widely accepted definition of creativity.

3) Creativity at the individual level

Much of the creativity literature focused attention upon the different mediators of creativity, by adopting different levels of analysis. Social psychology produced most of the theories of how individual creativity can be affected.

Initially studies described the distinctive characteristics of people thought to be creative. According to Barron and Harrington (1981), these characteristics are high valuation of aesthetic qualities, broad interests, attraction for complexity, high energy, independence of judgement, autonomy, intuition, self-confidence and the ability to resolve antinomies. Amabile (1988) stated that persistence, curiosity, intellectual honesty, energy and determination to succeed are essential for creativity at the individual level. Thus personality factors are regarded as strictly correlated to creativity. In addition, some creativity inhibitors were investigated. For example, a negative attitude was proposed as one of the major obstacles of individual creativity. In fact, pessimists turn their attention to negative aspects of problems and waste their energy worrying about possible unsatisfactory outcomes. Usually pessimists are characterized by fear of failure, stress and over-reliance on logic: these are creativity barriers.

Recently McFadzean (2000) showed the typical features of a creative individual: inquiring mind, intellectual persistence, a need for his/her work to be appreciated, a need for diversity and autonomy, attraction for mastery of problems and tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty. Also George and Zhou (2001) described the profile of individuals who are likely to be creative: they are those with distinct self- confidence, high tolerance of ambiguity, unconventionality and openness to new experiences.

Then, researchers identified many cognitive factors that may be related to creativity such as fluency of expression, originality, word fluency, flexibility and associative fluency. One of the cognitive keys to creativity is the divergent production: an individual is considered creative if he/she produces ideas by “thinking out of the box”. It is called “Emergenative Creativity” (Taylor, 1959): it involves the generation of a completely new principle. However the evidence suggested that the focus on divergent thinking captured only a part of the creativity concept. Torrance (1988) described the “Innovative Creativity”: it consists of the improvement of existing ideas through modifications, the generation of ideas to improve exiting ways of doing things. This is in agreement with the definition of creativity proposed by Sternberg (1988), which is analysed above in paragraph 2: creativity is a process based on the duality of human thinking. Thus, an individual should be considered creative with reference to both divergent and convergent cognitive styles. Within organisations, people are usually required to be creative, to integrate conflicting agendas every day in order to maintain productivity and efficiency: creative solutions to problems come from the ability to combine opposite concepts. In regard to this, Miron-Spektor et al. (2011) investigated the adoption of paradoxical frames and how it can increase creativity within organisations. Paradoxical frames are defined as “mental templates that use to embrace seemingly contradictory statements or dimensions of a task or situation” (Miron-Spektor et al., 2011, p. 229). When an individual adopts paradoxical frames he/she can reach new insights to existing problems, tasks or situations: paradoxical frames, foster paradoxical inquiry in which a problem is identified, its contradictory elements and their links are explored and alternative solutions are found. In other words, Miron-Spektor et al. (2011) demonstrate the positive effect of paradoxical frames on creativity: they provide individuals with a cognitive framework that allows them to discover how contradictory elements characterizing a situation or a problem can coexist. In this way,

individuals are more likely to engage in creative behaviours relying on the integration of contradictory elements. In addition, Miron-Spektor et al. (2011) showed how paradoxical frames elicit sense of conflict which enhances individuals' complex thinking. It helps individuals to explore novel associations and identify original solutions to conflict-related situations. Thus, individuals become more sensitive to complexity and they are more likely to explore and integrate opposing elements: the result is a significant increase in their creativity.

Many other factors such as age, intelligence, emotions and mood are investigated in order to understand their potential influence on creativity at the individual level. However, studies didn't provide a well-defined explanation about their positive effect on creativity.

Instead, there is clear evidence that motivation is one of the driving forces for creativity. Amabile (1983) defined motivation as a set of factors that influence individual's creativity. She made the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The former is regarded as conducive to creativity; instead the latter sometimes is counterproductive. The basic assumption is that monetary rewards interact with individuals' choices. If an individual receives rewards for performing a task for which he/she has no choice, extrinsic motivation affects creativity positively. Instead, monetary rewards offered for consenting to perform a task have a negative effect on creativity. In fact, when an individual can decide how to perform the task, his/her intrinsic interest and motivation increase and he/she is more likely to be creative: self-regulation and autonomy always lead to an increase of intrinsic motivation and creativity. Instead, motivational interventions like reward systems and evaluation positively affect individuals' intrinsic motivation only when they direct the attention to the heuristic aspects of the task and they represent a confirmation of individuals' competences, a mean of enabling individuals to do better. Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of "creativity engagement": he defined it as a process in which an individual cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally attempts to produce creative outcomes. According to the confluence model of creativity (Sternberg and Lubart, 1996), creativity does not arise from innate abilities: individuals decide to be creative and engage in the creativity process. Drazin et al. (1999) stated that creativity at the individual level consists of engagement. They defined creativity as "the choice made by an individual to

engage in producing novel ideas” (Drazin et al., 1999, p.290). They also showed that creativity engagement can vary among people, from situation to situation and over time. Neck and Manz (1996) described that individuals with strong self-leadership show higher creative potential because their self-leadership, which is defined as a self-influencing process, helps develop self-motivation.

Another important factor related to individuals’ creativity is knowledge. Woodman et al. (1993) suggested that researchers should look at the relationship between knowledge² and creativity. They consider creativity as part of the process by which an individual acquires new knowledge. It is typically a trial-and-error learning process, which requires the development of different possible associations of concepts, the elaboration of data and information in alternative ways. Knowledge is a crucial element of creativity because it affects different phases of the creative process. The essence of creativity relies on the ability of individuals to establish and share links between tacit and explicit knowledge³. Amabile (1996) proposed a componential theory according to which creative behaviours do not require only specific personality, cognitive thinking style, working style and intrinsic motivation. Creativity relies also on technical skills, talent, expertise, domain-specific knowledge and mental processes for its utilization: the larger and the more diverse the knowledge base, the greater the number of new ideas and solutions.

Creativity researchers had extended the analysis perspective beyond the focus on individual actors: the basic idea is that individuals interact and their behaviours take place within a social context. Woodman et al. (1993) proposed a theoretical framework to understand how individuals’ creativity is affected by contextual variables. One of these variables is the organisational culture. They suggested that the set of norms, values and rules promoted within an organisation has strong effect on creativity at individual level: the organisational culture can act as an inhibitor or a promoter of

² Knowledge is defined as information combined with experience, context, interpretation and reflection (Davenport, DeLong, Beers, 1998).

³ Polanyi (1966) identified two categories of knowledge: explicit or codified knowledge (that is objective, rational and can be expressed in formal language and written) and tacit knowledge (that is subjective, experiential, embodied and difficult to formalise and communicate).

creativity. For example, intolerance of diversity, excessive bureaucracy, fear of failure and criticism are detrimental to creativity. Instead, creativity is promoted when the organizational culture proposes innovation and creativity as the essential elements of any task within the organisation at any level, promotes risk taking, autonomy and free exchange of ideas. According to Martins and Terblanche (2003), culture influences creativity in two ways. The first is “socialisation” which means that employees are able to understand whether or not management values creativity behaviours. The second consists of leadership: managers should adopt structures and procedures that give support to creativity. In other words, organisational culture can help individuals realise their creative potential.

In summary, creative behaviours of individuals are affected by personality, cognitive style and abilities, motivation and contextual factors. According to the “interactionist” perspective proposed by Woodman et al. (1993), an individual’s creative behaviour is the result of the interaction of person and situation in which an individual performs his/her tasks. This interaction takes place at each level of an organisation. It means that both group and organisational characteristics can enhance or inhibit creative behaviours of individuals. Thus, a full understanding of individuals’ creativity is strictly linked to a deep examination of group creativity and organisational creativity.

4) Group creativity

Companies increasingly adopt teams as a tool to get tasks performed and to maintain and enhance their effectiveness. Thus, teams are required to engage in creative activities. The widely accepted definition of team creativity is “the generation of novel and appropriate ideas, solutions or processes in the context of team objectives” (Amabile, 1996). Many other researchers analysed creativity at the group level and identified different factors that may influence it.

King and Anderson (1990) found that group longevity, cohesiveness, resources availability, group structure and size are antecedents of group creativity. In particular, one of the most important factors is group composition: creativity is enhanced when the

team is composed by individuals coming from different countries, having different backgrounds and experiences in diverse fields. Heterogeneity in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin and work experience influences the ability of teams' members to develop creative ideas. This strict link between diversity and creativity depends on the effect of group composition on the performance of the task. Woodman et al. (1993) demonstrated that members characteristics have strong impact on how the task is approached and determine which kind of problem solving techniques are adopted. Amabile (1988, 1996) defined group creativity as the process involving both cognitive processes of idea generation and idea testing implemented by individuals and groups: individuals develop ideas and present them to the group, which in turn discuss and improve them. It means that different cognitive styles and backgrounds of team members imply different perspectives and approaches to ideas generation and testing processes. Keller (2001) identified a mediating variable between diversity and creative performance: it is external communications, which promotes exchange of knowledge among team's members and across different teams. In fact functional diversity allows a team to have access to sources of external knowledge in order to cross-fertilize ideas and solve problems. Keller (2001) showed that the primary effect of diversity is indirect through external communications. Borghini (2005) developed an analysis about the effect of multiculturalism within organisations on creativity. The result was that the cultural integration is positively related to creativity because it influences the shared mental models and the competences of employees and encourages the codification and transfer of knowledge.

Recently other factors were investigated in order to get a better understanding of creativity at the group level. For example Choi and Thompson (2005) found that membership change enhances group creativity: they stated that open groups with rotating group subset are more creative than closed groups. The open groups produce a larger number of divergent ideas than did the closed groups. The newcomers have positive effect on the total group and increase the productivity of the "old-timers" (Choi and Thompson, 2005). They added that the influence of group change on creativity depends on timing, newcomers' experience, frequency of change, degree of collaboration between newcomers and "old-timers" and group expectations.

Group creativity relies also upon the kind of relationships between members. It was found that informal contacts, cooperation and easy communication patterns are drivers of creativity. They are relevant because individuals' engagement in creative activities is strongly affected by the perception of work place. In other words creativity is very high when the group climate is characterized by friendly relationships, participative safety (the degree to which the participation in decision making processes is unbiased), widely shared vision, clear and motivating goals (Anderson and Gasteiger, 2008), reciprocal feedback (George and Zhou, 2001).

Also knowledge plays an important role in promoting team members' creativity. Woodman et al. (1993) stated that "in addition to identifying appropriate and useful knowledge of group members to apply to the group problem solving, groups provide an arena in which members can use others as resources to augment their own knowledge" (Woodman et al., 1993, p.303). According to Martensen and Dahlgaard (1999), knowledge enhances creativity also if team members are trained to be open to learn new topics and combine different sources of knowledge.

Recently researchers have investigated how group creativity is affected by the team knowledge management (TKM). Due to the presence of two main streams in knowledge management literature, TKM is divided into the following components:

- team knowledge stock, which represents the presence of knowledge within a team (it consists of the combination of task-relevant knowledge and skills possessed by team members);
- team knowledge utilisation, which consists of the process of applying stock knowledge to team tasks.

Tiwana and Mclean (2005) stated that a greater team knowledge stock gives the opportunity to combine existing information and ideas in order to develop novel solutions for problems. Thus, knowledge related to team tasks is a necessary condition to enhance creativity. However, the presence of knowledge within the team is not by itself a source of creative ideas. Only through the utilization of this knowledge team members can access, explore and exploit it in order to implement creative activities.

Efforts put in practise by team members to use knowledge promote learning and the development of new thinking schemas. Sung and Choi (2012) found that only team knowledge utilization is a good predictor of team creativity. This relationship is more evident if team leaders have a high systematic cognitive style: it means that leaders try to clearly organize roles and responsibilities of team members, who are expected to follow well- defined procedures and instructions in performing tasks.

Thus, the literature suggests that group creativity depends on individual creative behaviours, group characteristics, relationships among members, problem solving process and knowledge. Individual and group creativity are strictly connected due to their common denominator, which consists of expertise and learning process. Research findings about these topics are explained in the following paragraph.

5) Experience, learning and creativity

Recently the literature had also examined the role that experience plays in the creativity process. First of all, it is important to provide its definition. Experience is the direct personal participation in an activity: thanks to this participation, an individual can learn and acquire knowledge over time. Experience, learning and knowledge are the basis for what is called expertise: it means that an individual has extensive skill or knowledge in a particular field due to the direct participation to activities and the engagement in leaning processes.

Stein (1989) stated that experience has negative effects on creativity. The reason is that previous experience can lead to a “functional fixedness” that prevents individuals from exploring new fields of knowledge in order to produce new ideas. In other words past experience acts as a trap that constrains creativity: it leads individuals or teams to focus narrowly on solutions and ideas that worked in the past and discourages them from exploring new approaches.

Other researchers didn't agree with this view, because their basic assumption is that creative behaviours cannot be knowledge free. In fact Amabile (1988) defined knowledge as “the raw material of creativity”. She gave an example: “Certainly, it is impossible to be creative in planning financial strategy unless one knows something about stock markets, money markets and economic trends” (Amabile, 1988, p. 131).

This argument is strengthened also by the widely accepted definition of creativity, according to which new ideas or solutions don't grow out of innate qualities of individuals: they are the result of a structured process that requires skills, capabilities and knowledge. Only the combination of these elements leads to the production of novel and useful ideas. As proposed by Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011), creativity consists of novelty and usefulness. In order to create something new, individuals need to know similar existing products or solutions, their characteristics and the context in which the new idea is introduced. Then they should assess the usefulness of the new idea by assessing the possible use in the society and its ability to satisfy users' needs. It cannot be denied that this process requires knowledge and previous experience.

Audia and Goncalo (2007) investigated the relationship between past success and creativity over time. They considered the experience of past success as a crucial but unexplored factor that may lead people to be more creative. In particular they wanted to understand if successful individuals are more likely to be creative and if their new ideas are incremental or divergent. In fact they made reference to the distinction between divergent thinking and incremental thinking. The former means that individuals or team create radically novel things by using their ability to break with the status quo through independence of judgement, autonomy and self-confidence. The latter consists of the modification or improvement of features of exiting products or solutions.

According to Sternberg et al. (2003), the distinction made in the creativity literature between these kinds of creativity corresponds to the distinction between exploration and exploitation⁴. On the basis of these definitions, Sternberg et al. (2003) matched divergent creativity with exploration and incremental creativity with exploitation. The first connection relies on the fact that both divergent creativity and exploration requires to break the usual thinking schema and create completely new solutions. On the other side, incremental creativity and exploitation involve continuity with existing solutions: new ideas are generated within an established framework. In their paper, Audia and Goncalo (2007) adopted this argument and it was the starting point of their study. The

⁴ Exploration is defined as "the pursuit of new knowledge, of things that might come to be known" and exploitation as "the use and development of things already known" (Levinthal and March, 1993, p. 105).

correlation of the two kinds of creativity and the two types of behaviours implies that past experience can inhibit or enhance creativity by affecting the propensity of individuals or teams to explore new fields of knowledge. Audia and Goncalo (2007) found that successful people are more likely to be creative: in other words “individuals’ past success in creative endeavours is positively related to the subsequent likelihood of generating creative ideas” (Audia and Goncalo, 2007, p.4). Thus, the past success positively influences creativity in terms of the number of creative ideas that individuals generate over time. However, their study also showed that ideas and solutions generated by successful people are less divergent from their previous efforts: they develop new ideas by exploiting things that are already known and refining previously used combination of knowledge (incremental creativity). In sum Audia and Goncalo (2007) pointed out that it is important to observe not only individuals’ creativity outputs but also their underlying divergent or incremental qualities. Their research led to the conclusion that successful people are more likely to generate new ideas, but these ideas tend to be more incremental over time.

Given the fact that organisations adopt teams as tools for performing tasks or developing new products, it is relevant also to understand the relationship between experience and group creativity. Gino et al. (2010) examined the effects of different types of experience on teams’ ability to acquire knowledge and generate new ideas. They proposed the distinction between direct and indirect experience of teams. The first means that a team learns by doing: members perform tasks, acquire knowledge directly and build experience. The second implies that a team learns indirectly from the experience of other teams. In other words members absorb experience at a task by observing how another team practices that task. In investigating the effects of these two kinds of experience, Gino et al. (2010) considered the level of creativity (determined on the basis of novelty and usefulness requirements) and the degree of divergence, which makes new solutions different from those that already exist. The results of the study showed that both kinds of experience enhance creativity: the level of creativity of teams with prior experience related to the task is much higher than the creativity level of team with no prior experience relevant for the same task. In addition they pointed out how direct task experience is more beneficial than indirect experience in terms of creativity level and degree of output divergence: it is because when a team tries a task itself,

members become more able to identify the right approach to perform the task. Moreover, the creativity of teams that had learned from direct experience persists over time. Finally, Gino et al. (2010) suggested that creativity in teams with prior task experience can be enhanced through membership change. In fact when a change in membership takes place, the team is renovated and also its ability to approach the task: in this way high levels of team creativity are held up.

Thus, in the recent literature, experience is considered a factor affecting both individual and group creativity. As mentioned before, individuals or teams can acquire experience only if they are open to learn and acquire new knowledge. Kolb and Fry (1975) defined learning as a cyclical process which takes place at the individual, group and organisational levels and involves direct participation, reflection, concept formation and experimentation. Thus, individuals or teams must engage in the cyclical learning process in order to acquire knowledge in new fields: intrinsic motivation is required as well as extrinsic motivation. In addition, the literature has regarded learning as an individualised construction process: it means that it is not possible to define the one best way of knowledge acquisition because each individual or team develops a specific method to implement a learning process and acquire new knowledge. Moreover, learning should be a self-managed process: individuals or teams should have freedom in terms of place, time, speed, method and materials related to the learning process and should be responsible for the development of their learning activities.

Recently, the literature has tried to develop a better understanding of learning process at the individual, group and organisational levels. The main reason is that it is strongly related to the acquisition of experience, knowledge creation, retention and transfer processes which in turn are driving forces of creativity. In particular, researchers have pointed out that organisational learning is the intentional use of learning processes at the individual and group levels to continuously create, retain, share new knowledge and to achieve a very important goal: transform and renew the organisation. For this reason, organisational learning as well as organisational climate and leadership style is considered one of the drivers of organisational creativity, as the next paragraph shows.

6) Organisational creativity

Global competition has made innovation a crucial factor for organisations in order to maintain their effectiveness and boost their performance. A common definition of innovation is the successful implementation of creative ideas at the organisational level. Thus, in literature a new unexplored topic has received attention: organisational creativity. Brown (1989) stated that “an understanding of organisational creativity necessarily involves understanding of the creative process, the creative product, the creative person, the creative situation and the way in which each of these components interacts with the others”. Drawing on his study, Woodman et al. (1993) adopted an “interactionist” perspective to analyse the relationship between individual group and organisational creativity.

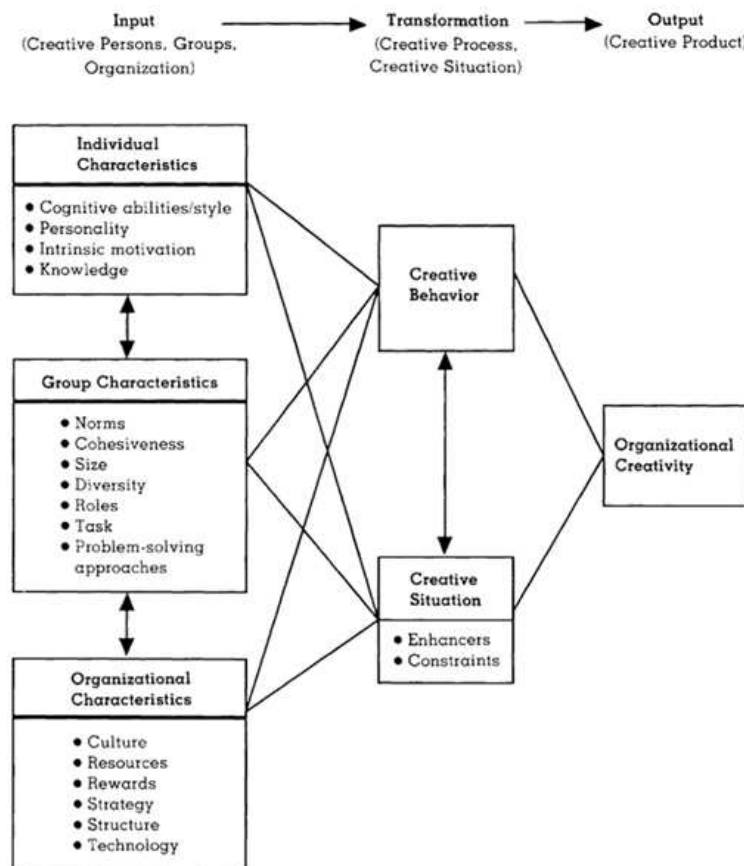


Figure 1.2: Conceptual Links among Creative Persons, Processes, Situations and Products
(Woodman et al., 1993, p.309)

In the previous graph Woodman et al. (1993) pointed out the interactions of persons and situations and the cross-level influences among individual, group and organisational characteristics. “Organisational characteristics create the contextual influences that operate on both individuals and groups to influence their creativity. Organisational creativity (the creative outcomes of a complex social system) is a function of group creativity and contextual influences” (Woodman et al., 1993, p. 308).

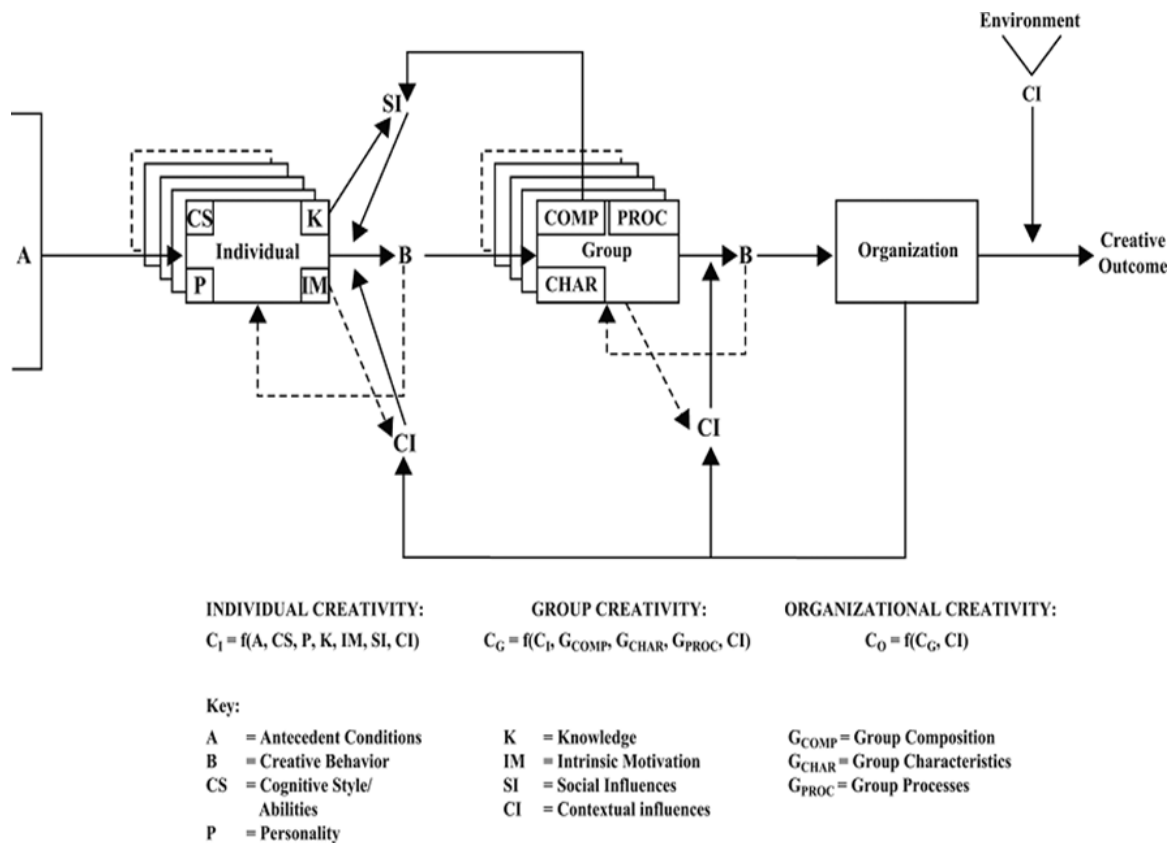


Figure 1.3: An Interactionist Model of Organisational Creativity (Woodman et al., 1993, p. 295)

This is a very comprehensive theoretical model because it links many factors such as organisational culture, reward systems, the organisation’s ability to recognize and exchange information coming from the external environment resource constraints and structure to organisational creativity.

Much has been investigated about organisational creativity. Cummings (1965) focused attention on the variables to take into account for an effective utilization of individual and group creativity, which were defined as input of organizational creativity. The most relevant variables are organisation's systems and structure: they determine the organisational climate that can enhance or inhibit creative behaviours of individuals and teams. The goal of Cummings' (1965) study was to assess whether the traditional organisational model is an appropriate design for organisations that aim at increasing their creativity. The result was that several bureaucratic norms act as inhibitors of creativity. For example, the overspecialization of human resources, the division of labour and the limited span of control do not allow an intra-organisational cross unit contact and the associated exchange of ideas and information. In other words, they do not encourage the self-coordination that is important for creative people. In addition, the hierarchically structured authority chain doesn't let individuals and teams have access to the knowledge retained within the organisation: in this way the power to veto innovative ideas belong only to the top managers. Finally, the reward systems (such as money, promotions and institutionalized status) are hierarchically controlled and they have negative impact on the intrinsic commitment of creative individuals: financial rewards per se do not make employees passionate about their work. Given that the traditional model is absolutely detrimental for organisational creativity, Cummings (1965) tried to identify a new organisational design that can be most conducive to high levels of creativity at the organisational level. The creative organisation should be characterized by:

- Small degree of formalisation of relationships;
- Flexible power-authority-influence structure;
- Autonomy concerning work methods;
- Freedom of work scheduling
- Large discretion for individuals that show high creativity potential;
- Open communication channels;
- Reward systems having positive influence on intrinsic motivation of employees.

In line with the description of the creative organisation proposed by Cummings (1965), other researchers analysed deeply the organisational characteristics that can positively affect creativity within an organisation. Burkhardt and Brass (1990), Tushman and Nilson (1990) pointed out organisational policies and systems that include rewards, recognition and career systems: they should be perceived as “bonus”, a confirmation of employees’ competences. Tekla (1995) suggested that organisations should avoid hierarchy and replace it with a flat structure that facilitates the building of an informal and flexible work environment for employees. Amabile (1996, 1998) proposed that creativity is truly enhanced when the whole organisation supports it. In particular, she showed that employees are more committed to creative activities if they feel motivated by interest, curiosity, but also by challenging tasks, non-routine jobs and supportive environment. This is possible only in organisations that have a flat structure, which is characterized by informal relationships among employees, free flow of ideas and participative management.

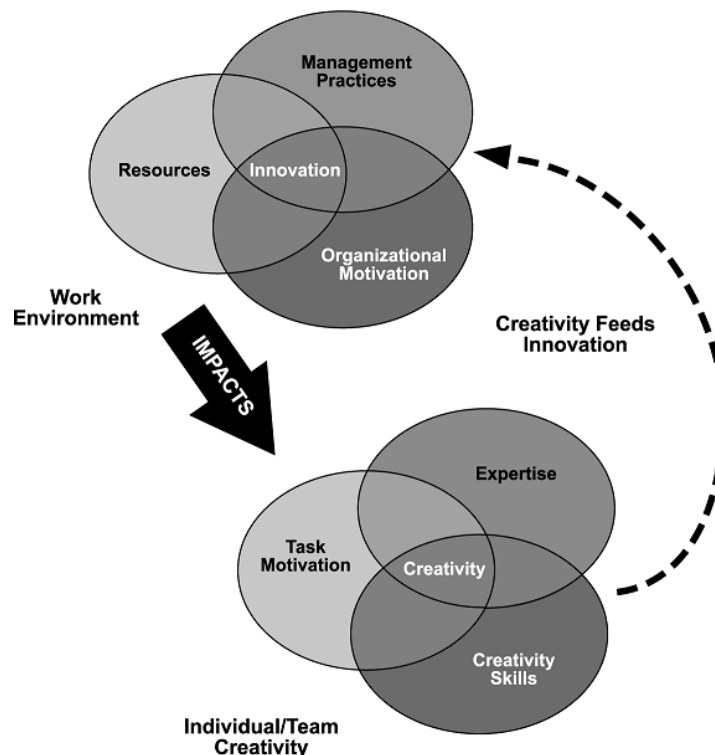


Figure 1.4: Impact of the Organizational Environment on Creativity (Amabile, 1996, p. 9)

Other relevant organisational variables are resources and skills. Brand (1998) and Cook (1998) suggested that organisations should attract and retain creative talents: the Human Resource department should select and hire people who are willing to work, have creative thinking processes and show deep knowledge in many fields.

As anticipated in the previous paragraphs, organisational culture has a strong role in enhancing creativity. Dessler (1998) defined culture as the set of characteristics, traditions, norms and values that employees share. It represents a synthesis of organisational tradition, company values, employees' values, leadership and managerial practices. In other words, culture is the set of collective norms that influence the behaviour of people at each level of an organisation. Robinson and Stern (1997) showed that organisational culture elicits creativity only if it encourages self-initiated activities through which employees try to improve their creative performance. Audia and Goncalo (2007) demonstrated that culture can act as an inhibitor or a booster of organisational creativity because it influences the extent to which individuals and teams engage in divergent thinking processes. In fact a culture, which is based on norms that allow employees to explore new knowledge fields and support risk taking, strongly affect the willingness of individuals and teams to exhibit their creativity. Audia and Goncalo (2007) added that in the social context within an organisation collaboration is a variable that can encourage creative behaviours. When individuals work with others that have different perspectives, their collaboration stimulates the development of creative solutions for problems at hand. It happens because they have different and unique sets of knowledge and experience that allow them to break their usual cognitive styles. For this reason organisational culture should promote collaboration between individuals and across teams in order to improve the creativity degree of their work outcomes.

Another driver of organisational creativity is the “work atmosphere”. It consists of those elements that influence employees' perceptions about their work environment. The literature focused the attention upon the organisational climate because, according to psychology studies, the commitment of individuals and teams in the creativity process strongly depends on how they feel working in a specific environment. It was widely demonstrated that creativity is enhanced in open climates that are characterized by participation and freedom of expression and experiment, large number of stimuli, easy interaction among people and informality.

The most comprehensive study about the work environment was developed by Amabile et al. (1996). They focused the attention upon the relationship between the work environment perceptions of individuals and the creativity outcomes. Amabile et al. (1996) described five work environment dimensions that have different effects on organisational creativity:

1. Encouragement of creativity

It is the support for the generation and development of new ideas given by the organisation as whole, supervisors and work groups. Employees engage in creative activities if they perceive the encouragement of risk taking, the supportive evaluation of new ideas and the recognition for their competences and capabilities. In addition, creativity is boosted when teams are characterized by a high level of diversity, which implies openness to new ideas, constructive challenging of usual ideas and shared commitment.

2. Autonomy

Individuals and teams exhibit their creative potential if they have freedom in the day-to-day conduct of their work: they have choice in how to perform the tasks and develop a sense of ownership and control over their work.

3. Resources

The adequacy of resources allocation has a psychological effect on people's beliefs about the intrinsic value of their work: the access to sufficient and appropriate resources (i.e. information, time, money) boosts the willingness of people to work hard on tasks.

4. Pressure

It can be positively related to creativity if individuals and teams perceive the pressure as arising from the nature of their work. This kind of pressure is also called challenge because it stimulates people to do the best given the relevance of their work. Instead when the pressure is imposed externally as a mean of control, it has negative impact on creativity.

5. Organisational impediments

Extreme time pressure, excessive workload pressure and unrealistic expectations for productivity shift the attention away from creative activities. An organisational culture that avoids risk taking, harsh criticism and prevents freedom and collaboration discourages creativity at both individual and team level.

Thus, according to Amabile et al. (1996), the psychological perception of organisational climate determines the intrinsic motivation of individuals and teams and influences the degree of creativity of their work.

In summary, structure, systems, resources, culture and work environment are regarded as the drivers of organisational creativity. The recent literature has pointed out that these forces are complementary because they depend on decisions taken by management. For this reason, researchers started investigating the critical and controversial role of leaders within an organisation that tries to boost its creativity: they tried to describe how leaders' decisions mediate the effect of creativity drivers. The next paragraph shows how leadership can affect creativity at each organisational level.

7) Managerial issues

Drazin et al. (1999) emphasized that creativity processes at the organisational level do not simply aggregate from individual or group efforts. From a managerial perspective, organisational creativity consists of a process that maps when creative behaviours occur and who engages in creative behaviours. In this process leaders have a central role because through their personal characteristics, their decisions and their practices they exert a powerful influence on individual and group creativity. For this reason, many researchers tried to investigate deeply the figure of leaders in managing creative people and creative organisations. Most studies about this hot topic show that an effective leadership of creative processes depends on the following factors:

1. Specific capacities (attributes, personality) that managers possess;

2. Knowledge about all contextual variables that affect creativity at each organisational level;
3. Particular capabilities (what leaders are able to do);
4. Influence tactics that allow leaders to exercise effectively their influence and manage creative processes in an efficient way.

According to Mumford et al. (2002, 2007) leaders of creative activities should possess capacities that help them manage creative people and groups. First of all, leaders should have creative thinking skills because they are relevant in the evaluation of creative efforts of others and in the creation of intellectually challenging and collaborative climate within groups. In line with this argument, Jaussi and Dionne (2003) suggested that effective leadership is based on an unconventional behaviour of leaders: it is defined as “leader’s behaviour that is perceived as novel and surprising by followers” (Jaussi and Dionne, 2003, p.477). The basic assumption is that creative thinking is an unconventional act: an unconventional leader takes risks, acts outside conventional norms. Followers (individuals and teams) learn from the observation of and the interaction with their unconventional leader and they are more comfortable with taking risks and engage in creative activities. Thus, Jaussi and Dionne (2003) showed that unconventional leader behaviour has impact on both individual and group creativity. In the first case, unconventional leader behaviour is perceived as a role model for creativity and this boosts individuals’ creativity performance. In the second case, unconventional leader behaviour strengthens the level of group cohesion and the intrinsic motivation of members.

Mumford et al. (2002, 2007) pointed also out the relevance of leaders’ social skills. They allow to interact and communicate with followers, interpret their creativity potential and comprehend how to exploit it. Oldham and Cummings (1996) showed that different kinds of employees require different leadership style. Highly creative employees need a challenging job, a supportive work environment and a medium level of autonomy. Instead, employees with less creative potential do not feel comfortable under the same circumstances and their creative performance is very low. In addition, social skills are useful to understand relationships among people working on the task,

create the right climate in which creative efforts are implemented and ensure their integration at group level.

Finally, leaders should have expertise which consists of technical and creative problem-solving skills: leaders can help individuals and groups in the interpretation of the problem at hand and develop the right approach to find a creative solution. Moreover, leaders with planning skills are able in environmental scanning, forecasting activities and obtaining daily useful ongoing information about the progress of creative projects: in this way leaders can coordinate and integrate creativity efforts of people with different cognitive styles, backgrounds and expertise.

The effectiveness of leadership is also affected by knowledge. In their studies Mumford et al. (2002, 2007) showed that leaders with a good understanding or organisational culture, structure and strategy exert a higher influence on the creativity of individuals and teams. In fact leaders that know the organisation and its objectives, the internal as well as the external environment are more likely to coordinate creativity efforts (not only at group level): these leaders are able to integrate creativity efforts of individual and teams according to the vision and the objectives defined at the organisational level. In addition, leaders that aim to contribute actively to organisational creativity improvement should consider all social and contextual factors that influence creativity at the individual and group levels⁵ such as personality, cognitive style, knowledge, expertise, learning, group composition, group structure, job characteristics, role expectations and goals, perceived support, resources availability, rewards, work environment and climate (Shalley and Gilson, 2004).

Mumford et al. (2007) stressed the importance of what leaders are able to do in order to enhance creativity efforts of followers. They proposed a model of capabilities according to which leaders should be able to:

- a) frame problems and define its fundamental issues, set clear goals and ensure the understanding of followers;
- b) establish an appropriate work context in which people with different backgrounds and expertise can work together and develop successful creative solutions;

⁵ In the present work they are showed in paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6.

- c) manage this context by providing support and promoting cohesion, collaboration and open communication in order to facilitate idea development and fielding.

However, capacities, knowledge and capabilities are not sufficient to ensure leadership effectiveness. The exercise of influence requires tactics that allow leaders to manage creative people taking into account individual and group characteristics, features and goals of creative efforts. Influence tactics allow leaders “to manage three sets of apparently contradictory demands. First, leaders must reduce stress and ambiguity, while simultaneously maximizing challenge and risk taking. Second, leaders must encourage exploration while insuring timely production of a viable product. Third, leaders must encourage individual initiative, while promoting integration of group activities” (Mumford et al. 2002, p. 719).

Leaders should create an intellectually stimulating environment that boosts creative problem-solving skills of individuals. Through interactional tactics, charismatic leadership style and persuasive skills, leaders influence positively the intrinsic motivation of individuals and teams, even more if they actively participate in the creative idea generation. Mumford et al. (2007) suggested that leaders should define challenging goals in order to involve people rather than only increase their motivation. The involvement of individuals and teams is based on two factors: communication and support. Open communication (Amabile, 1996), clear planning and feedback, effective communication of a vision conducive to creativity, informal communication channels (Cook, 1998), mutual trust and respect between leader, individuals and teams (Anderson and Geisteger, 2008) are regarded as good predictor of positive leadership effects on creativity. In addition, how much people are involved in creative processes depends on how leaders support them. It means that if employees feel psychologically safe in the work environment, they feel more comfortable and they are more willing to exhibit their creative potential. People perceive leader support when the work environment is characterized by tolerance for failure (Amabile, 1998), when blame, punishment, conflict and criticism are totally absent in evaluating creative efforts (Nemeth et al. 2004) and leaders show consideration of followers’ feelings and are concerned about

their welfare. Amabile et al. (2004) suggested that leaders should care about whether and how their followers perceive their support because this influences creativity performance. Pressures, leaders' negative behaviours and insufficient regard to followers' capabilities inhibit creativity of individuals and teams are regarded as inhibitor of creativity. Instead a transformational leadership is positively related to involvement and intrinsic motivation of creative people. Gumusloulglu and Ilsev (2009) proposed a model to appreciate the impact of transformational leadership on creativity at the individual, group and organisational levels. The results of their study suggested that leaders positively affect employees' creativity through psychological empowerment and emotional relationships. Leaders' behaviours act as "creativity enhancing forces": leaders strengthen their followers' self-efficacy, self-confidence and intrinsic motivation, recognize employees' competences and allow them a degree of autonomy in the conduct of the work. In this way, employees are more engaged in generating new ideas. Transformational leadership is positively related also to organisational creativity because it strongly enhances creative performance of employees (individuals' creativity is regarded as a component of organisational creativity).

Other important tactics help leaders. Amabile (1998) suggested leaders to balance employees' freedom and responsibility with coordination and monitoring. Leaders should "allow followers freedom when working on creative efforts provided that this freedom does not result in a lack of clarity about goals and goal attainment strategies" (Mumford et al., 2002, p. 724).

The selection of employees has an important role with regard to the leadership effectiveness. Shalley and Gilson (2004) showed that leaders should select people that have higher predisposition to be creative. In addition they should pay attention to the fit between the level of creativity required for a job and the creativity potential of each employee. As regards to the composition of teams, Mumford et al. (2007) suggested leaders assign people to project teams by ensuring not only an appropriate level of diversity of skills, task experience and backgrounds, but also cohesion and communication. In fact choices made at the time of assembling a group strongly affect the team creativity performance.

Finally, leaders can effectively influence creativity of individuals and groups by promoting training programs that could enhance creativity. Woodman et al. (1997)

regarded them as powerful tools to support creative efforts because they have effect on cognitive styles of individuals within an organisation. Recently techniques such as brainstorming, attribute listing, morphological analysis are considered helpful in generating a large number of ideas only if they are based on a clear definition of the problem at hand.

Thus, leaders are not simply required to avoid the practices and the procedures that inhibit creativity. They should actively attend to the management of creative people. The effective exercise of influence by leaders implies professional focus, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, creative thinking, emotional intelligence and tactics that empower and involve followers (both individuals and teams).

Much has been already investigated about the role of leaders and how their behaviours can enhance or inhibit creativity at each organisational level. However, a “hot question” is still open: how is it possible to ensure that managers develop skills, competences and tactics to effectively boost organisational creativity? This issue suggests that maybe specific figures are required within organisations in order to support leaders in managing creativity and improving organisational performance.

8) The Role of Brokers: Functions and Activities

During the 21st century, creativity and innovation have received great attention by the literature, which has investigated the link between them. Given the rapid technological change, increasing competition on markets and globalisation, creativity and innovation have been regarded as the drivers of organisational long-term performance, competitiveness and longevity (Mumford et al. 2007). But before being innovative and creative, an organisation should be a learning organisation: it should be able to look to changes in the environment, identify their impact, plan and implement strategies to cope with the changes. To do this, an organisation should break its routines and identify new patterns in order to maintain and improve its competitiveness on the market. It means that an organisation should monitor its external environment, identify changes and their consequences, understand if the replication of organisational routines can be successful or new knowledge should be acquired and new strategies should be

developed. This implies that an organisation should be creative. Managers are required to act as creativity promoter within the organisation: they should communicate the importance of creativity, encourage people to exhibit their creativity, manage and integrate creative efforts of individuals and teams. However, it is not enough. Managers should exploit creativity efforts and translate them into productivity, effectiveness and competitive advantage. In fact creativity consists of both novelty and value (Sarkar and Chakrabarti, 2011). An organisation can be creative if its management is creative: managers have to engage in creative activities and take personal risks in order to boost organisational creativity together with other people within the organisation.

Hence, a big issue arises. Individuals and teams have to be supported by managers to engage and implement creative efforts. Who supports managers in their functions related to organisational creativity?

A possible answer is provided by Bilton and Leary (2002). They identify a new figure that could help managers: “creativity brokers”. They don’t possess necessarily creative skills, but they know how to “broker connections between different people, experiences, talents, technologies and emotions: they broker other people’s abilities into productive relationships and they also have an eye for the market” (Bilton and Leary, 2002, p. 58). Thus, creativity brokers could have a crucial role within the organisation because they are able to connect creative ideas of managers, employees and teams and translate them into valuable solutions.

In their study about the figure of creativity brokers, Bilton and Leary (2002) make reference to the creative industries, which are defined as the set of those businesses that are based on the production of “symbolic goods” (ideas, experience, images). Creative industries generate symbolic content, whose value is primarily dependent upon the communication of symbolic meanings. It means that the value of symbolic goods depends on the end users: they should perceive and find value within these meanings. This definition of creative industries is in line with that proposed by Banks et al. (2000): creative industries are those industries producing goods and services whose primary value derives from their aesthetic attributes and their cultural value. These definitions highlight the dominance of expressive value of the output of creative industries. Instead the classical definition of creative industries (at the beginning called “cultural industries”) emphasizes their economic value: creative industries are those activities that

“have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (DCMS⁶, 1998, p.10)⁷.

Even if the aim of this work is not the examination of the diverging definitions of creative industries proposed over the last few years, it is important to stress that there isn't an unambiguous definition of creative industries: the term itself is problematic and it is still not clear whether the terms “creative industries” and “cultural industries” are interchangeable.

However, there is some consensus of opinions about the increasing relevance of creative industries in the “knowledge economy” (Cunningham, 2001; Flew, 2002; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007). For this reason, the body of theory on the creative industries is growing and researchers focus the attention on the features of creative businesses and their managerial implications. Creative brokers support managers in exploiting creativity at each level of the organisation: they “emerge as the key figure engineering the relationships within and between different individuals and types of thinking within the creative process” (Bilton and Leary, 2002). Creativity is a critical concern in most companies operating in creative and no creative industries and creative brokers could play a crucial role in enhancing their organisational creativity.

The present work goes in this direction: it aims to provide a description of creativity brokers' role in creative and no-creative industries⁸ and show issues related to it. In particular, this work focuses on who creative brokers are, which capabilities and competences they should possess, what their role is in the creative processes, whether their role is temporary or permanent within organisations. The starting point of my

⁶ It is the UK central government Department of Culture, Media and Sport (now Department of Culture, Olympics, Media and Sports, DCOMS).

⁷ The DCMS introduced the first definition of creative industries and provided a list of industries that should be considered creative: advertising, architecture, art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio. This definition has provoked considerable debate and has led the attention of international organisations, governments and policymakers to the contribution of creative industries to the economic and social life (“creative economy”).

⁸ The present work makes reference to the definition provided by the DCMS.

investigation is the creativity literature review presented in this chapter: Table 1.1 shows the key findings that are regarded as relevant for the analysis of creativity brokers in the present work. The next chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research question that I try to address in order to understand why creativity brokers are relevant for organisational creativity in every kind of business.

Table 1.1: Key Findings in Creativity Literature Review (Source: Self-elaboration)

| Author | Research questions | Key findings |
|--|---|--|
| Woodman et al. (1993) | ➤ Identify components of organisational creativity | ➤ Interactionist framework: organisational creativity is function of the creative outputs of its component groups and contextual influences |
| Amabile (1996) Amabile et al. (1996) | ➤ Assessing the relationship between creativity and innovation ➤ Assessing the work environment for creativity | <p>➤ Creativity by individuals and teams is the starting point of innovation</p> <p>➤ Innovation is the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organisation</p> <p>➤ Components of individual creativity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person factors like expertise, knowledge, creative thinking and task motivation; - work environment variables such as resources availability, organisational motivation and management practices <p>➤ Five work environment dimensions that have effects on organisational creativity: encouragement of creativity, autonomy, resources, pressure and organisational impediments</p> |
| Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2001) | Assessing degree of creativity of products | <p>➤ Creativity definition: a function of novelty and usefulness</p> <p>➤ Novelty and usefulness: the two direct measures of creativity</p> |
| Bilton and Leary (2002) | Management of creative organisations | <p>➤ Creative organisations and businesses require creative managers</p> <p>➤ Creativity brokers: new roles within organisations to help managers cope with organisational creativity</p> |
| Mumford et al. (2002) Mumford et al. (2007) | Development of an effective leadership | ➤ Leaders exert powerful influence through expertise, creative thinking skills, social and persuasive skills, planning skills, knowledge and influence tactics |

Chapter II

RESEARCH METHOD

1) Topic and objectives

The present work deals with one of the most relevant management research topics over the last few years: creativity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, creativity is not just an individual level process. Researchers have investigated its organisational dimensions: today creativity is considered a crucial component of organisational capabilities and competences, the starting point of innovation and a key driver of competitiveness (Mumford et al, 2007). My investigation is based on these findings: creativity is a lever that companies have to consider in defining and adopting strategies that aim to innovate and improve competitiveness. However, creativity is a strategic tool not only for companies' longevity: it plays a central role in shaping the economy of countries⁹. Recently, international organisations, governments and economists have tried to understand the dynamics of cultural and creative industries and their economic potential in terms of growth, wealth and job creation¹⁰.

Thus, creativity has become an academic and public policy concern. The theory body about creativity is very wide and deals with different issues related to it. In particular, the attention is focused on the managerial implications of creativity, what managers should know and how they should behave in order to create the favourable conditions for organisational creativity (Amabile, 1998; Mumford et al., 2007).

⁹ NESTA, Creating growth. How the UK can develop world-class creative businesses. Research Report, April 2006.

¹⁰ NESTA, Creative clusters and innovation. Putting creativity on the map. Research Report, November 2010.

However, it is still not clear how managers can become able to adopt those managerial practices that enhance creativity at each organisational level. Within the broad and challenging topic of creativity, the present work aims to make a substantial step forward in the understanding of the most appropriate managerial practices that value and exploit creativity. In particular, this investigation focuses on new actors that may have a strong role in the implementation of these managerial practices: the creativity brokers (Bilton and Leary, 2002).

My primary purpose is to understand role, functions and motivations of creativity brokers. In particular, my investigation tries to provide a clear definition of creativity brokers by explaining who they are and which capabilities and competences they need to play their role. In general, brokers are defined as interlocutors that manage relationships between different parties: they make coordination possible by opening up new possibilities for learning, information exchange, knowledge transfer and concept development (Kimble et al., 2010). The present work focuses on how creativity brokers can perform their functions within organisation's boundaries, support managers to integrate creative efforts at each organisational level and why organisations would need these new figures in order to enhance and exploit creativity. Sapsed et al. (2007) suggested that the key effect of brokerage is the extension of firm's network. Thus, it would be interesting to understand whether creativity brokers can also help an organisation manage connections with other organisational entities in the external environment in order to produce more ideas and acquire new knowledge.

Traditionally, brokerage roles have been deeply studied from an economic point of view, focusing on the most common function of brokers, which is the transaction of securities on the market. However, the relevance of brokerage roles has been widely recognized also in creative industries (Becker, 1984; Bystry, 1989; Crane, 1987; Ridgeway, 1989) and has recently begun to receive systematic attention. Burt (1992, 2005) regarded brokerage as a structural role connecting otherwise disconnected communities of people, organisations and resources and producing more ideas and new knowledge; Hargadon and Satton (1997) stated that brokerage "involves a value-added element variously described as the storage and manipulation of knowledge"; Bilton and Leary (2002) draw the relevance of creative brokers for the exploitation of the value of symbolic goods produced by the creative industries.

As said in the previous chapter, creativity and the managerial practices required to enhance it represent a critical issue for all companies, for those operating in creative industries as well as for those in non-creative industries (Mumford et al, 2007). For this reason, I try to understand whether creativity brokers work only within creative industries or they are active also in other kinds of industries. In fact, the creative industries do not operate in isolation: they are connected to other industries, add value to them through advertising and design and they are a source of innovation for the economy¹¹. Thus, companies belonging to the creative industries as well as companies operating in different industrial sectors regard creativity as a strategic lever and they may need creativity brokers to exploit it.

Hence, the present work tries to fulfil the knowledge gap about creativity brokers' role in organisational management, moving from the creative industries to other industrial sectors that are strictly connected to them. Once the research question is defined, it should be clear the specific subject I want to examine and the boundaries within the investigation is carried out. In the following paragraphs, I explain the nature of my research and the frame of reference.

2) Method

Before carrying out my research, in the first chapter I have presented a literature review about creativity and its organisational dimensions: it is a preliminary step that helps examine the most important studies about creativity and managerial practices required to enhance it, avoid duplication and identify gaps in knowledge. In this way, I have understood what is important to know and investigate about the creativity brokers. In other words, the literature review has allowed me to identify the research question and explain the primary purpose for the present work.

Now, it is necessary to describe the research approach that I adopted for my investigation. A wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methods are available: the choice depends on the nature of the research problem, the topic of study

¹¹ NESTA, A manifesto for the Creative Economy. Research Report, April 2013.

and the particular circumstances such as the availability and reliability of data, the existing knowledge about the topic and the context in which the investigation is carried out (Tellis, 1997). Quantitative research methods are regarded as the most robust because they rely upon new or existing datasets and they allow to test relationships between variables, establish trends over time, make comparisons and generalize results. However, quantitative methods cannot always provide a really comprehensive picture of the investigated topic: they are supplemented by qualitative methods in order to explore in depth the subject of study. In fact, qualitative research offers richly descriptive reports of an event and studies the connections between components and contextual factors, creating links between apparently unrelated matters: in other words, it allows to capture details that cannot be obtained from quantitative methods (Hakim, 1987). In addition, qualitative research puts emphasis on meanings that aren't necessarily measured in terms of amount, intensity or frequency. Thus, data collected through qualitative methods are less structured and more difficult to analyse, but the results are as valid as those in the quantitative research (Rowely, 2002).

As explained in the previous paragraph, the present work focuses on role, functions and motivations of the creativity brokers. It is a previously unexplored topic, even if the literature about the brokerage activity is wide. In fact, interest about this new kind of brokers has grown over the last few years and the existing knowledge about it doesn't allow for a quantitative analysis. Actually, it is necessary to define the role of creativity brokers and break it down in its essential features: my investigation aims to provide a further understanding of creativity brokers' functionality and to explain why companies need them. For these reasons, the qualitative approach is the most appropriate to adopt here.

Given the subject under investigation, my research is based on case study methodology, which is usually adopted to conduct a contextual analysis of a limited number of events and address a complex research question. Case study is a research method based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, organisations or events: it is a holistic approach that allows to provide a richly detailed portrait of the phenomenon under investigation. Yin (2013) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.

Creativity brokers represent a contemporary singular phenomenon: I need to investigate it in the contextual reality and identify cases rich of information about it. I adopt case study methodology because the present work attempts to examine “how” and “why” questions related to creativity brokers’ functionality. According to the case studies classification proposed by Yin (2013), my method consists of an exploratory investigation: the aim is to get a full understanding of creativity brokers looking beyond their descriptive features, given that a limited previous research about this topic exists. In order to do this, I select and study multiple cases rather than only one: these significant cases are supposed to show similar results and strengthen each other.

Given my interest in interpreting creativity brokers’ role rather than testing hypothesis about their functionality, the study of multiple cases should rely on the collection of unbiased evidence from multiple sources such as documents that are made available for the purpose of my research, interviews, digital content (video files and audio records): this is the best practice to provide complete and reliable accounts about the topic under investigation.

Yin (1993) proposed six steps that should be followed in adopting case study methodology: the definition of the research question, the selection of cases, the determination of the type of data that are needed, the collection of data according to a specific method, the analysis of data on the basis of a predetermined technique, the evaluation and reporting of results. In this paragraph, I have provided a general overview about the method I adopt in the investigation according to my research question. The next two paragraphs describe the sample of my study and determine which kind of data I need and the method I adopt to collect them.

3) Sample

The unit of analysis is a critical factor in the case study methodology (Yin, 2013). Cases should be contemporary, interesting, selective, focusing on few issues that are fundamental to understand the topic being examined. In addition, they should be complete and display sufficient evidence in order to contribute to knowledge about the topic under investigation.

My study is based on a sample, which consists of seven meaningful cases that can provide insight into the topic of interest. They are successful facilitators¹², who started working in the U.K.; over time their reputation has become high and today they collaborate with freelancers and big international companies. Their work consists of helping people think and behave creatively in order to contribute to innovative activities carried out by companies they work for or create and develop new businesses. Here, I provide a very short description of facilitators included in the sample¹³:

- The Werks

It is a creative centre run by Ian Elwick, who is a facilitator working in the creative industry. His job consists of a combination of different activities that aim to give practical support to freelancers and creative talents.

- Design Mediators

It consists of neutral parties that bring together companies and designers and ensure the most for the benefit of both parties. Design Mediators help designers and companies connect and communicate for the development of new design concepts.

- Desall

It is a crowd-sourcing platform that connects design companies and private clients with a global community of creative talents. Through design contests, Desall helps clients have access to a huge amount of new ideas and gives to users the possibility to get noticed at the international level.

¹² In my investigation an issue related to the terminology exists. The term “brokers” is adopted in literature and I use it in explaining my research question and the sample. However, I must point out that in the real-life context the companies I select for my sample are considered intermediaries and prefer to be called “facilitators” rather than “brokers”. The reason is provided in the chapter about findings.

¹³ In chapter III I construct case studies and I provide a complete description and analysis of each facilitator.

- Creative Exchange Group

Its members are facilitators working with leaders and senior managers in organisations from all sectors. They use tailored engaging processes to provide support and creative inspiration to their clients.

- Creative Facilitation

It is a team of facilitators working with individuals, groups and organisations all over the world. They create events to support learning, engage people through creative techniques and promote action.

- ?What If!

It is an innovation company, which helps large fast growing companies and organisations manage innovation projects and train managers and employees by doing creativity.

- RedZebra

This company consists of experts in engagement. They help companies put on events, organise conferences and deliver training activities in order to generate high levels of engagement and creativity of employees and managers.

The selection of these creativity brokers is the result of a long process that paid attention to details related to activities they perform. In fact, many actors support companies in managing their innovation processes, developing new products, improving knowledge transfer and building new opportunities for their businesses. In order to choose the “right” cases for my investigation, I make reference to two projects:

- a) Brighton Fuse

It is a two-year research and development project, which is run by Wired Sussex, the University of Brighton, the University of Sussex and the Council of Industry & Higher Education and it is funded by the Arts &

Humanities Research Council. This project analyses the growth of Brighton's successful creative, digital and information technology clusters and defines schemes to promote further innovation, business success and economic development.

b) Cre8tv.eu (Creativity for Innovation & Growth in Europe)

It is a multi-partner project that is funded under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission and it involves the University of Brighton and other ten universities across Europe. It is a multi-disciplinary project that aims to describe the meaning of creativity and the relevance of creative and cultural industries in shaping the European economy.

With the help of researchers involved in these projects, I select the sample paying attention to the centrality of creativity for activities carried out by creativity brokers. Using this criterion, I ensure consistency between the research question, the nature of my investigation and the unit of analysis. According to Noor (2008), it is very important to choose a sample that allows to collect data I need and gives the possibility to gain deep and detailed knowledge about the topic under investigation. In fact, my sample consists of intermediaries that regard creativity as the main component of everyday life of people, teams and organisations. These creativity brokers collaborate with other companies to help them understand how creativity can be a source of freshness and the starting point of innovation. In order to understand deeply activities they perform, I use different sources of data, as the next paragraph shows.

4) Data collection

Before, I explained that I want to examine creativity brokers' functionality and understand its meaning within their contextual reality. This clear and focused research question determines the kind of data that have to be collected and which method is

required to analyse them. For my study, I need to collect data within a real context: it involves the gathering of evidence from different sources.

First of all, I collect data about the chosen cases from their official websites in order to get a general overview about them. Their websites are rich of digital content: there are reports about the most recent collaborations with international companies or freelancers and documents that provide detailed descriptions about activities and tasks performed by these facilitators. In addition, it is possible to find videos: they consist of recorded images and speech of people performing or explaining facilitation activities¹⁴ or companies evaluate the collaboration with creativity brokers. Through the analysis of digital content it is possible to get general information about creativity brokers and their performance. Then, I collect data by analysing documents that some creativity brokers have made available for my investigation: they are books¹⁵ that explain in detail the skills that facilitators should develop, the process they use for the collaboration with clients, what they should focus on and what they should avoid doing.

In order to conduct a deeper investigation, I need to rely also on interviews, which are one of the most important information sources in the case study methodology: the main goal is to ensure that the same general area of information is collected from each interview. Here, it is important to point out that I define a general set of questions¹⁶, but I need to adapt it to the specific characteristics of each creativity broker according to the information collected from its official website. For this reason, I obtain seven interviews that are slightly different: it means that some questions are equal, while others are specific for the interviewee and the company he/she represents¹⁷.

¹⁴ I called them brokerage activities in the previous paragraphs. The change in the terminology is explained in the chapter about findings.

¹⁵ The books are “Creative Facilitation: Bringing Meetings to Life Connecting People and Ideas” that can be downloaded on the official website of Creative Facilitation and “Sticky Wisdom: How Start a Creative Revolution at Work” made available by ?What If!.

¹⁶ The general questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1.

¹⁷ The seven interviews are provided in Appendixes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

I choose semi-structured face-to-face interview¹⁸: it consists of asking general questions without answer constraints and focusing on impressions and opinions of respondents about the topic of study. I define the questions in advanced, but additional questions can be asked if they are necessary to go in depth and allow respondents to motivate their answers. In fact, this kind of interview is also called in-depth interview: although I guide the discussion to focus on the topic of interest, respondents have enough freedom to provide answers, explain and justify them. In addition, I decide to record interviews, asking each interviewee for his/her approval, in order to ensure an accurate account of the conversations and avoid losing data.

I adopt semi-structured interviews because they allow to collect data directly from people that are supposed to possess them. My interviews involve a limited number of respondents: they are founders, professionals and organisational role-holders that work within the chosen companies and are directly involved in facilitation activities. The following table shows the interviewees, their role within their companies, the interview method and the Appendix where it is possible to find the interview.

¹⁸ Given the availability of interviewees, it has been possible to do face-to-face interviews or interviews on Skype. However, for Design Mediators case it has been not possible to meet the interviewee. Thus, I sent the questionnaire by email and the company provided answers (clearly I had the possibility to ask for more detailed information when we needed).

Table 2.1: Interviewees, their Role within companies and Interview Method
(Source: Self-elaboration)

| Company | Interviewee | Role | Interview Method | Appendix |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--|------------------------|----------|
| The Werks | Ian Elwick | Founder | Face-to-face interview | 2 |
| Design Mediators | - | - | Questionnaire | 3 |
| Desall | Giorgia Callegaro | Sales Manager | Interview on Skype | 4 |
| Creative Exchange Group | Dee Hennessy | Facilitation Expert | Interview on Skype | 5 |
| Creative Facilitation | Johnnie Moore | Facilitation Expert | Interview on Skype | 6 |
| ?What If! | Simon Bray | Capability and Culture Director | Interview on Skype | 7 |
| RedZebra | Oliver MacDonald | Co-founder, Director and Facilitation Expert | Face-to-face interview | 8 |

The reliability of the semi-structured interviews depends on the interviewer's skills and the ability to conduct interviews by asking the right questions. Given the emphasis on detailed information I need, I ask for behavioural, opinion and knowledge questions: my goal is to understand who creativity brokers are, what their background is, what

their experience is, what they do, how they engage in their activities and how much their role is relevant for companies.

An advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they offer flexibility to approach distinct respondents differently, while ensuring the adequate coverage for the research purpose. In addition, they allow to ask follow-up questions: they provide focus, but allow a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information. In fact, in the semi-structured interviews, it is possible to follow an order in asking questions, but at the same time respondents are encouraged to answer freely questions and the order of questions can change. However, semi-structured interviews are not conversational interviews: respondents are guided through the interview, even if they have the possibility to provide answers and express their opinions and experiences. I cannot rely on structured interviews: they consist of asking the same set of open or closed-ended questions to all respondents in order to give the same stimuli and the same context of questioning to all respondents. Instead in the present work, I try to address “how” and “why” questions related to creativity brokers’ role: I need to also consider respondents’ experience and opinions that cannot be captured through questionnaires or structured interviews. In addition, I can manage the length of the interview in order to avoid overtaxing the patience of respondents. Another advantage is that I can provide direct feedback to respondents and give clarifications if the question is not clear to them or probe if respondents’ answers are too brief or unclear.

Thus, the strengths of semi-structured interviews are the flexibility and the validity of collected data because respondents can be interviewed in depth to consider information complete and reliable. For these reasons, I decide to collect data not only through the analysis of documents and digital content, but also through interviews: the combination of these sources of data increases the reliability of our case studies.

Obviously, my research method has also some limitations. First of all, case study methodology is complex because it involves multiple sources of data and these data are subjective, which means that they strictly related to who provide them. In addition, the generalisation and replication of results may be difficult given the small number of interviewees. Then, there are some risks: for instance interviewees may be dishonest in answering, the style of interviewer may influence respondents in terms of willingness to participate in an interview or quality of answers.

In order to ensure the reliability of collected data and the possibility to generalise results, I try to observe three wide-accepted principles in adopting the case study methodology:

- a) I gather data from multiple source in order to corroborate findings and ensure the replication;
- b) I construct a case studies database, which is a well-organized collection of evidence that consists of documents and interview notes and transcripts: in this way, I increase the transparency of my findings and strengthen their repeatability;
- c) I try to report clearly findings by making reference to the case studies database through citations of interviews and documents.

In the next chapters, I construct case studies and analyse data I collected: they are more than numbers and they require interpretative rather than statistical analysis. In fact, case studies and interviews offer an insight that cannot be achieved with other methods and they require an alternative approach to examine highly detailed data. I conduct my analysis keeping in mind the research question that I want to address, the key findings I identified through the literature review and the most relevant aspects of the topic under investigation.

Chapter III

CASE STUDIES

1) Introduction

In this chapter, I create case studies on the basis of data collected through interviews, the analysis of documents made available by creativity brokers and the information published on their official websites. In this way, I identify the most relevant features that help me provide a description of creativity brokers I selected: each description should be aligned with my research question and the aim of the present work.

I describe in detail creativity brokers focusing on their skills, activities they carry on, the functions they perform, their clients and the collaboration with them. In addition, I consider feedback that each creativity broker collects from its clients after the collaboration: I want to understand how clients describe their experience with the creativity broker and the benefits they have gained from it. In other words, my focus is not only on techniques and processes: I also consider the experience and the past success of creativity brokers as well as the perspective and the judgement of people and companies that ask them for help.

Thus, the purpose of case studies is to organise and analyse collected data to provide a clear and complete picture of creativity brokers included in the sample. My aim is to develop an understanding of their role, functions and motivations: I want to figure out the relevance of creativity and how much the experience with creativity brokers is pivotal for freelancers as well as for organisations.

2) The Werks

The interviewee Ian Elwick¹⁹ started his career as graphic in a design agency. Over the years, he realised that for creative people working with companies or in an agency it is difficult to get recognition and visibility for their talent. This belief pushed Elwick to found the Werks²⁰ in Hove (UK) in 1990 in order to give support to people working in the creative industries. The Werks is a work hub, where creative people can find accommodation and staff to carry their activities on. In fact, the Werks offer:

- work space, where creative people can create and exchange ideas;
- space, where meetings and workshops can take place;
- co-working, which helps people escape the isolation they may experience while working at home and allows to exploit synergies that come up from working with talented people in the same environment.

During the interview, Elwick stresses that the Werks' goal is not only to provide accommodation to freelancers. There is more behind it: freelancers receive business support. Elwick defines business support as “practical support, which consists of being helpful, saving time, going quickly to solutions of problems”. In fact, Elwick adopts a solution-based approach in his job: freelancers get in touch with him, become part of the Werks' community and he listens to them, helps them explain their problems, identifies the issues and tries to come up with solutions as soon as possible.

Given this approach, it is obvious that Elwick has different but complementary skills: soft skills to understand and listen to people, analytical skills, creative skills and managerial skills. In addition, Elwick has expertise in the creative sector: this expertise makes him really involved in his job and very helpful for freelancers. Using Elwick's

¹⁹ The interview is available in Appendix 2.

²⁰ To be thorough, the Werks belong to the Werkshop CIC, an umbrella organisation that consists of four work hubs located in the East Sussex (UK): the Werks in Hove, Westwerks and Coachwerks in Brighton, Lewes Werks in Lewes. Elwick owns and cofounded the Werkshop CIC, which today has 180 regular members and a wider network of 1500 people.

words: “At the beginning I interviewed people to understand what they need. Now with my experience and intuition I pick up immediately with what they try to explain”.

Thus, Elwick’s job is a combination of different activities that requires commitment, engagement and expertise. He works with freelancers: they are creative people working with local companies or starting new businesses to follow their interests. In order to develop and implement their ideas, freelancers need help from people, who have specific skills and competences required to manage projects or businesses in terms of strategic planning, marketing, accounting. Elwick doesn’t offer training activities because he has to be pragmatic and fast in providing solutions to freelancers’ problems. In addition, Elwick doesn’t follow a specific set of rules or a standardised process to solve problems: thanks to intuition and expertise he really understands what freelancers need, what is hidden behind what they say and what is critical to enhance their creativity: each freelancer has a specific talent and has particular needs, which require tailored solutions.

During the description of his job, Elwick highlights that freelancers need intangible assets, attention and business links. In fact, for freelancers it is hard to get the same attention and support that companies can receive. Elwick said “Attention is like food: if people don’t have it, they become hungry”. In fact, freelancers need attention and look for skilled people that can practically support them. This is proved by the judgement of freelancers²¹ that have experience with Elwick and still belong to the Werks’ community:

- a) "I recently moved to Brighton, a freelancer with no contacts or idea how I would find work. When I arrived at the Werks everything fell into place. The support here gives me the confidence to excel and the opportunity to work with a great team of people on some of the most interesting projects in my career." Oliver Bettany - Front End Developer
- b) "Since starting 15Gifts, the Werks has not only given me a great space to work but also linked me up with some of the most creative people in Brighton. In short, it's a bit of a life saver." Tom Cox - Founder: 15Gifts

²¹ www.thewerks.org.uk

- c) “I took a desk for a month in May 2008 and I'm still here! Now I share an office with two web designers and a UX consultant. My design skills and contacts have grown and I haven't starved despite the recession. The Werks ethos also promotes a sense of collaboration rather than competition” Guy Anderson - zero G media Ltd.

Thus, the Werks is not only a work hub: it is a creative centre for people, who needs exciting experiences to improve their creative skills and business support to exploit their creative ideas. Elwick is really involved in the creative sector: over the years he has built a community of creative people through work hubs such as the Werks, events, research, consultancy and workshops. He works to support the development of the creative sector in the UK because creativity is not only individual talent. The unique quality of creative education and creative working are a source of growth for individuals as well as for countries.

3) Design Mediators

Design Mediators²² is a group of Italian professionals²³ that provide assistance to companies and designers, working on equal basis for both parties. Design Mediators consist of neutral parties that bring together companies and designers: the goal is to “connect them in an objective equilateral platform that is driven by meritocracy and transparency²⁴”. Due to their job as creativity facilitators, Design Mediators make use of a wide range of skills in terms of public relations, marketing and negotiations and cross-cultural competences. In addition, they need market knowledge and experience to apply intellectual property laws to protect designers’ rights as well as companies’ rights. How Design Mediators perform is explained by a standardised process, which counts the following phases:

1. Designers register with Design Mediators by completing their profile and a database of selected designers is built;
2. Design Mediators collect requests of companies and clients that look for experts in design²⁵ and register information about them (details, contacts, design brief, targets);
3. Design Mediators connect designers and companies ensuring that each designer has the experience required to satisfy companies’ requests (it is called “connection phase”): to do this design mediators organise design events such as conferences and design awards ceremonies;
4. Design Mediators help designers and companies reach an agreement about their collaboration and form a contract, making sure that interests of both

²² The questionnaire and answers are available in Appendix 3.

²³ Design Mediators is backed with OMC Design Studios srl, which is a multi-disciplinary design consultancy company, based on the Lake of Como (Italy).

²⁴ www.designmediators.com

²⁵ These companies are large or medium enterprises that operate in sectors such as industrial design, product design, packaging, furniture design, textile design and graphic design.

parties are satisfied and solving possible conflicts (it is called “communication phase”).

The length of this process depends on the requests of companies. They need design Mediators in order to find experienced designers and involve them in the development of new products. Sometimes companies have fixed products and need designers just to improve them to fit market trends: in this case, the process takes some months. On the other hand, there are companies that develop new products because they want to penetrate new markets. For these companies, the process is very long and can take one year.

The core service provided by Design Mediators is defined as design management, which means helping companies to develop creative culture and design division to sustain innovation over time²⁶. However, Design Mediators build a network of designers, who are experts in their fields and be noticed at the international level by hundreds of companies and be involved in important design projects. It means that companies can have access to a huge amount of design solutions provided by professional designers to develop creative concepts: this is the reason why companies prefer using Design Mediators as opposed to a single designer or a design agency to develop creative design concepts. On the one hand, Design Mediators support companies to define design briefs and requirements, provide consultancy for those companies looking for a diverse portfolio of top design talents, best architects and design engineers or aim to improve their corporate design culture. On the other hand, Design Mediators help designers come up with satisfying design solutions, get connected with design-oriented companies and design press and take part in design award ceremonies.

Judgements of both companies and designers are always positive: companies appreciate how Design Mediators choose the right designers with the right terms, while

²⁶ Usually Design Mediators don't deliver training activities. However, when companies require a formal training, Design Mediators perform specialized workshops, whose content is responsive to specific needs of companies.

designers are satisfied because they can get great opportunities to work with companies and get visibility at the international level.

Finally, creativity has strong relevance for companies-designers collaboration are explained. However, creativity is also an issue because the first draft of designers often is not the best solution and managers aren't able to give constructive feedback to designers. Design Mediators solve this mismatch in two ways. First, Design Mediators engage designers, who will create positive solutions and increase their productivity. Second, Design Mediators help managers to support rather than criticize designers by giving suggestions during constructive discussions with designers. They can perform these tasks because they have experience and skills that make them successful creative facilitators.

4) Desall

Desall is a crowd-sourcing platform where companies or privates looking for new inspiration, creativity or product innovation get connected with a worldwide community of creative talents. Desall was born in 2012²⁷ to help companies find innovative design solutions and give creative people the opportunity to get noticed by companies around the world. Through international design contests, Desall offers a new way of thinking products and provides support to define the best design concept.

The successful performance derives from the heterogeneity of Desall team members, as the interviewee Giorgia Callegaro describes²⁸: “Desall team consists of the founder, who is an expert in Industrial Design and provides assistance to clients to choose the successful design proposal; a project manager, who has know-how in the crowd-sourcing and in the development of online platforms; a community manager, whose job consists of communication with users and networking; a sales manager, who deals with clients portfolio. They make use of a wide range of skills and competences: soft skills for customer relationship building and management and technical skills to interpret clients’ needs and translate them in a brief”.

For Desall the term customer refers to both clients and users. Clients are big companies²⁹ operating in different sectors (like furniture, fashion, appliances) and looking for new product design or concept, but also local artisans and privates that want to create their own brand. Instead, users are expert designers, graphics, design students, creative people and design lovers. They can get in touch with Desall through design blogs and online magazines or the collaboration with universities and start belonging to Desall community through the registration and application for a contest. Given the international exposure and the credibility of design contests, Desall global community counts 21000 users today.

²⁷ Desall is growing in H-Farm, a venture incubator, which is based in Treviso (Italy) and operates internationally in the field of Web, Digital and New Media supporting the development of start-up companies based on innovative business models.

²⁸ The interview is available in Appendix 4.

²⁹ Some clients are: Chicco, Alessi, Franklin&Marshall, FACE Innovative automation, H♦♦ART. Italcementi Group. The complete list of clients is available on www.desall.com.

Desall works with clients and users ensuring satisfaction of both. To do this, Desall has a standardised process that can be summarized by the following phases:

1. Clients that look for a new product concept or need to redefine design, naming or packaging of their existing products signup as client on desall.com and create their account;
2. Desall team translates clients' need in an English brief that is uploaded and a contest is launched³⁰;
3. Creative talents signup on desall.com as users and choose the contest they want to join;
4. Users have three months to develop and upload their proposals³¹ that should meet the detailed requirements described in the contest brief;
5. Clients monitor proposals constantly;
6. Users invite relatives and friend to vote and make comments about their proposals;
7. When the contest is closed, clients match their requirements with market feedback collected through the voting phase and choose the winning proposal that suit the brand;
8. The winning user gets the prize, which consists of money or royalties.

The interviewee Giorgia Callegaro stresses that Desall doesn't provide only sources of new ideas: once the best proposal has been chosen, Desall helps companies for the physical production of the winning proposal. In fact, Desall works with partners operating in the plastic sector³² and belonging to the Venetian entrepreneurial network:

³⁰ According to clients' needs, the contest can be launched in one of the following fields: industrial design (industrial products), craft design (Handmade products) or interior design (furniture).

³¹ They consist of illustrations, technical drawings, CAD 3D files, pictures or videos.

³² Examples of partners are: Effettievolutivi, Fondo Plastico, Re-Craft Design. The complete list of partners is available on www.desall.com.

thanks to their expertise and technological advancement, they can help Desall give support to clients in new product manufacturing, naming and packaging.

The reasons why clients join Desall correspond to the benefits they can get. Compared to the traditional methods of product development, Desall is cost and time effective: clients can obtain an impressive number of customized and creative design proposals developed in few months. During the interview, Giorgia Callegaro stresses this point many times saying: “Creativity has limits. If a company has the support of a design agency, it can have access to a limited number of ideas and these ideas are incremental rather than radical. In a design agency, people create new ideas, but they are always linked to the same knowledge and background of designers”. Then, she adds: “Clients are always satisfied and usually decide to create more than one contest with our support because they have access to an incredible amount of ideas, on average 1000, that are developed in a short period of time, 3 months, by designers coming from all over the world. It means that ideas are really innovative because they are developed according to different cultural backgrounds. In addition, clients use the collaboration with Desall as a tool for market researches and brand promotion”. In fact, clients can use the large community of Desall to get market feedback on future products and understand the chances of their success through the community vote system and comments of users. In addition, clients can use Desall platform as an advertising tool to increase their brand awareness through social media marketing. This is linked to the choice of the name Desall: it stands for “Design + all” and clarifies the basic concept behind Desall, which is offering a service of participatory design, involving designers, companies and potential customers in the concept development process.

Also users can obtain great benefit belonging to Desall community. First of all, they can meet new creative people, expand their design network and keep updated on design. For example, senior designers can exchange ideas with their colleagues, while students have the possibility to meet design professionals. Then, users can launch their projects on the market and receive feedback. Finally, they can get noticed by big companies and obtain job opportunities, have the chance to win prizes, get visibility, rewards and recognition at the international level.

During the interview, Giorgia Callegaro explains why it is hard for companies dealing with creativity and why they need Desall: “Most times companies don’t know

how to get fresh ideas for the development of new products. This happens because they still believe in the traditional closed innovation model. For this reason, at the beginning companies are hesitant: they don't understand what Desall offers them. Desall boosts the open innovation model giving the access to a huge amount of radical ideas that are developed by an international community of designers”.

Thus, Desall is a crowd-sourcing platform that facilitates the ideation and development of new products. Its aim is opening the process of new product development to everyone interested in it: designers, companies and customers on the market. The innovative process of product development represents a mean of participatory design as well as an effective digitalization of ideas responsive to the specific demand of clients. This way of thinking products is based on concepts that are strictly related each other: innovation, diversity and creativity.

5) Creative Exchange Group

Creative Exchange members are creative facilitators of organizations, team and personal development. They work across the UK to specifically encourage creativity in companies or teams and help them come up with new ideas or new ways of doing things in order to solve problems. The interviewee Dee Hennessy³³ describes Creative Exchange as a group of professionals, who are able to listen and talk to people, assimilate complicated information and think strategically. Each professional brings a unique blend of talent, experience, style and background: it means that professionals are highly effective on their own as well as in combination.

Creative Exchange professionals have many years of experience facilitating different kinds of organisations. They have facilitated organisational change for companies in all sectors and they have helped universities and research councils develop innovative and interdisciplinary research proposals. Dee Hennessy and her colleagues provide effective consultancy and facilitation that aim to support leaders, managers and workers to grow and enhance their contribution to their organisation. In fact, Creative Exchange facilitators improve team working, creative thinking and decision making of people through many techniques. These are engaging techniques based on creativity and innovation: they change the way in which people think, behave, communicate, interact and perform.

Dee Hennessy explains that creativity is strictly related to engagement: “Getting people involved and building rapport and trust with them is essential to achieve anything ambitious or innovative”. For this reason, creative exchange facilitators don’t have a standardised process: they create tailored processes in which everyone feels involved and self-determination drives engagement. These processes aim to enhance creativity that is defined as a strategic tool to solve problems at any organisational level. Indeed, Creative Exchange Group’s processes are bespoke and directly responsive to what is needed in a specific situation at a particular time. Thus, Dee Hennessy and other facilitators carefully listen to people, ask them lots of questions to understand what they do as well as their objectives, their needs and what they don’t want. Creative Exchange

³³ The interview is available in appendix 5.

facilitators can do it because they are engaging, brave, flexible, able to use improvisation and take risk to come up with great new ideas.

Dee Hennessy explains using these words: “We understand groups and what happens to individuals within them when they are engaged in tasks and exercises and we have skills, techniques and ways of working which we adapt in-situ to address this and to get the most out of each situation. We shake people up when we work with them, but we do it in ways they enjoy”.

In other words, Creative Exchange professionals use processes designed to meet expectations of the participants and their organisations: the aim is to achieve the maximum possible in the optimum time. They don’t deliver training activities or technical education: they don’t believe in the traditional approach to teach skills. They prefer to design engaging processes that focus on results and commitment: in fact, people will be engaged and more able to learn because they do creativity. In addition, Creative Exchange professionals “offer a formal and approved framework of coaching support: it consists of “processes and individual support to analyse, reflect and take action that ultimately enables people to achieve success in one more area of their life or work”³⁴.

Hence, Creative Exchange Group’s goal is to help people and organisations to be more creative and innovative. Dee Hennessy explains that all organisations need creative people because creative skills make problem solving and idea development processes fast and more successful. She says: “Creativity makes things more fun and people can get more out of less. Organisations ask for our help to come up with new ideas, to resolve problems, inspire or bring a cultural change. People face difficulties in dealing with creativity. It’s got something to do with the education they have received or the cultural traditions they have grown up or in that have made them self-conscious”.

Finally, Creative Exchange professionals are very successful and are really appreciated: their approach exceeds expectations and people are really excited taking part in their processes, as the following comments³⁵ show:

³⁴ www.creativeexchange.co.uk

³⁵ All other comments are showed in Appendix 5.

- “It was a great pleasure to work with you last week – the facilitation process you have developed is incredibly effective. As you know, I was somewhat sceptical beforehand when we were discussing it, as it appeared so ‘unplanned’, but now I have seen how you do it, and experienced it I can see why it was so difficult to describe. Its spontaneous, wonderful, exceptionally engaging and most of all it works spectacularly well. Everyone involved in the week went away with a new perspective. I look forward to our next chance to work together”. (Stuart Walker, Professor of Sustainable Design and Co-Director of Imagination Lancaster)
- “I thought you were great at managing the sandpit and developing the right chemistry over the entire week. I’ve worked with many, many, facilitators over the years, but have never worked with any so good as Dee and Matthew from Creative Exchange” (Professor John G Rees, NERC, Natural Hazards Theme Leader, British Geological Survey – Mentor)
- “Dee is such a professional and managed a very difficult situation brilliantly and led us to the outcomes that we had hoped for to produce national guidance” (Liz Allen, National Diabetes Team, Department of Health)
- “I was hugely impressed by Dee and Matthew’s ability to tease out alternative ways of thinking about problems, facilitate the formation of multidisciplinary teams and keep a room full of academics enthused in the process and laughing for a full week. Indeed, I don’t think I have ever been to an event like this where the delegates warmed so much to the facilitators.” (Bill Sloan Professor of Environmental Engineering University of Glasgow and Sandpit Director)

- “The straightforward approach of Dee and Matthew, which did not rely on elaborate props was appreciated all round; so too was their willingness to innovate, to think on their feet and to take risks. The director and mentors were greatly impressed with the quality of facilitation.” (Peter Lansley, Professor of Construction Management, University of Reading)

6) Creative Facilitation

It is a team that counts two members, Viv McWaters and Johnnie Moore. They have 40 years' experience working with individuals and teams, creating events to support engagement, learning and action, exploiting creativity to connect people with ideas. Creative Facilitation experts work with different kinds of organisations all over the world³⁶ and help them to break patterns and develop new approaches to the work that matters for them. In fact, usually people try to manage challenges through rules and structures: Creative Facilitation experts help people crush fear and exploit creativity as a strategic tool to face everyday challenges.

Performing as creative facilitators, they need flexibility and positive mindset in order to collaborate with different clients and deal with different needs. Then, Creative Facilitation experts have to always keep the focus on people and their challenges; however, they don't exercise control on clients through rules and procedures. Instead, they try to behave differently: their work should be "disruptive and unconventional", as defined by the interviewee Johnnie Moore³⁷. Then, he makes a list of skills that creative facilitators need: "Curiosity about what is happening without judging, pay attention to what people say and feel, be present, be able to stay in front of people and express ideas in a way that people can easily understand, be willing to take risks, try new things and do unpredictable things".

Creative Facilitation experts create conferences and workshops and manage team building process in a creative way that engage people genuinely. The basic idea is that people can really be creative if they are engaged in what they do. In turn, engagement depends on the degree of freshness that characterizes work: it means that people are more engaged if their work is not boring or based on routines. Thanks to the experience with Creative Facilitation, people learn how break their habits in order to think and behave creatively. It is the most relevant benefit that clients can gain from the

³⁶ Clients include companies, charities, government agencies and no-government organisations. Some examples are World Vision, BBC, Johnson&Johnson, Virgin Atlantic, Shell, American Express, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Oxford University. A complete list is available on creativefacilitation.com.

³⁷ The interview is available in Appendix 6.

collaboration with Creative Facilitation³⁸. The interviewee Johnnie Moore provides a description of common issues of people with creativity and why they rely on Creative Facilitation: “Any company that wants to survive has to keep creativity to change circumstances. We live in a changing world and it is easy to get stuck if you always do the same things. Any company needs to be creative, look for what is changing and satisfy stakeholders’ needs. Nowadays, the world changes every day: companies need to react quickly to these changes through creativity. Companies ask for our help because they are afraid they are not able to do it on their own. We can think creatively and differently in any kind of situation. We always provide a fresh perspective”.

Creative Facilitation experts listen to clients, help them describe what the problem they face and discuss together to figure out possible solutions. They don’t follow a standardised process for the collaboration with clients. Instead, they tailor the collaboration process on the basis of requests and needs of different clients. Usually Creative Facilitation experts make their work inspiring and attractive following some principles:

- Accept ideas that others offer, build on them and include different perspectives in the problem solving process;
- Pay attention to details and notice emotions of people involved in the process;
- Don’t rely too much on expertise, but also on flexibility and curiosity to know more than familiar things;
- Be really involved, communicate and build good relationships with participants, who will be affected by the facilitation style;
- Keep a clear focus on objectives and desired results;
- Adopt creative techniques that give power and engage people in order to ensure effective learning.

³⁸ Creative Facilitation team members collect feedback in an informal way during confidential conversations. Thus, comments directly provided by clients are not available.

In addition, Creative Facilitation experts are good in engaging people and encouraging them to participate actively during meetings and have experience helping managers chair meetings in an engaging way. In fact, most times managers don't provide enough information and people don't really understand the content, the meaning and the purpose of a meeting. Instead, if participants understand why they should take actions purposed during a meeting, they are more involved and their consensus is really genuine.

In summary, Creative Facilitation experts develop an understanding of human interaction and how to involve people during meetings, workshops or other kinds of events. They encourage listening, dialogue, participation, sharing of ideas and integration of different perspectives. Creative facilitation experts are successful because they are present, become part of the group and have the ability to respond to any request of people always in a creative and engaging manner.

7) ?What if!

It is an innovation company helping organisations change, remove barriers to creativity and develop innovation capabilities. ?What If! consists of passionate innovation practitioners driven by strong commitment to many activities such as unearth deep insights, engage people and unlock their creativity, give stimuli to break routines and boost original thinking.

The interviewee Simon Bray³⁹ defines ?What If! people as “facilitators with 20 years of experience in creativity, innovation activists, original thinkers and passionate practitioners”. Then, he adds: “We help companies shape their culture to recapture their inventive spirit and build innovation through creative behaviours and tools. We help our clients try new things, change the way they act focusing on creative behaviours.”

?What If! works with clients that are large companies⁴⁰ operating in sectors such as food and beverage, healthcare, automotive, fashion, energy, financial services and many others. Clients need ?What If! to construct a culture based on the importance of creativity and the innovation imperative at each organisational level. To do this, leaders need to engage people within organisations because engagement is widely considered the starting point of creative behaviours and changes. In fact, most times company face challenges related to engagement and creativity, as the interviewee explains: “The trick of creativity and innovation is how people at the right time unlock expansionist thinking. Expansionist way of thinking is natural, it is not governed by rules: every body is born with it. Creativity in innovation depends on how people unlock their expansionist creativity. ?What If! engage leaders and employees. It is the starting point to behave creatively, unlock inspiration and change the way they think and act”.

Then, the interviewee Simon Bray stresses that only managers can do something to boost creativity within organisations: “Most times managers just maintain control. Instead they should communicate their vision clearly and enable other people within the company to think expansively and take action. Managers should invest in giving their people the chance to do something new. They should create a climate that encourage

³⁹ The interview is available in Appendix 7.

⁴⁰ Some examples are: Google, Nestlé, Johnson&Johnson, American Express, RedBull, Yahoo!, Kraft. A complete list of clients is available on whatifinnovation.com.

risk and accept failure as part of life, business and innovation. Then, leaders can deal with creativity and integrate creative efforts of individuals and teams if they are engaged in creative activities through their personal behaviours and actions”.

?What If! experts don't use a singular method to enhance creativity. They provide companies opportunities to change, challenge the assumptions of their business and explore new worlds. In fact, due to the collaboration with ?What If! experts, organisations and people successfully unlock their breakthrough thinking and begin their Creative Revolution. This is the name of the process implemented by ?What If! to help clients gather insights around creativity. The Creative Revolution consists of creative behaviours that are necessary to build an innovation culture. These behaviours are:

- Freshness

It consists of unique stimuli that bring people out of their habits in terms of thinking and behaviours and unlock creativity. Freshness helps people challenge rules, move from reductionist to expansionist thinking and develop genuine creative ideas.

- Greenhouse⁴¹

This behaviour means nurturing and growing ideas: people get out of their thinking and support each others' ideas. It is possible if leaders and employees open their minds, suspend judgement, understand deeply the unique value of each idea and build on it.

- Momentum

It is the behaviour of leaders that know when it is the right time to focus on ideas and invest in creativity. Leaders deliberately create crisis to force people to be creative, align engaged people and their goals.

⁴¹ Greenhousing is also the name of a content platform provided by ?What If to allows companies share their experiences, amplify learning and participate actively in the dialogue about innovation.

- Realness

It is about getting as close to real implementation of ideas. It means to bring ideas to life without perfectionism or fear of failure. In other words, realness means to translate ideas in concrete behaviours being courageous and taking risk.

?What If! help companies adopt these behaviours and understand how creativity is the raw material for innovation. The starting point of each creative behaviour consists of signalling and courage. It means that people can behave creatively if they are really engaged, are aware of the power of their ideas, are willing to act and develop creative language.

Then, the interviewee Simon Bray stresses that ?What If! experts don't deliver training activities: "We do creativity. We deliberately introduce freshness and stimuli within organisations to provoke original thinking and help people go through the creative revolution, which consists of adopting creative behaviours and translate creative ideas into successful innovations. We don't deliver training activities because we believe that creativity cannot be learned. It should be lived".

Thus, ?What If! consists of creative facilitators that show the real essence of creativity and make it easy to understand and practise for companies. ?What If! experts provide deep insights and revolutionise the way people think and act. Companies appreciate ?What If! because facilitators bring freshness within organisations, help people be courageous and take risk in the most powerful way, which is not teaching creativity, but doing creativity.

8) RedZebra

It is a group of experts that help people attending an event, a conference, a workshop or a training session to be truly engaged, understand the purpose of what they are asked to do and the outcome they look for.

RedZebra experts have experience in creative and engaging facilitation techniques as well as knowledge of corporate life. The global exposure and the multicultural experience of working with different backgrounds, ages and cultures have provided RedZebra experts with a deep understanding of what inspires and motivate people. The interviewee Oliver MacDonald⁴² explains it: “We use creativity to engage people. Creativity and engagement are related because of the way human beings interact. They are inherently creative. Any information can be more effectively learned when people engage actively. People engage actively when information is not presented in the traditional way. Our work looks to use different ways to engage people and make them actively involved in the experience. RedZebra philosophy is based on a Chinese proverb: Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I will understand”.

According to this philosophy, RedZebra experts adopt an experiential approach and creative techniques to help people understand their goals, challenge paradigms and create new possibilities for actions and changes. Once clients get in touch with the company, RedZebra experts listen to them and ask questions to understand what is the issue: most times clients have an idea of what they need, but they don't know how to explain it. For this reason, RedZebra experts use a lot of skills to truly figure out needs and goals of clients. Then, they work closely with clients (co-creation process) to develop a creative programme that meets clients' needs and goals in an inspiring way. In order to deliver this programme, Redzebra experts use techniques that integrate rhythm, music and creativity⁴³ with facilitation and de-briefing techniques. Music and dance inspire people to have fun and be fully engaged in the experience; at the same time, through reflection and discussion people understand their uniqueness and the

⁴² The interview is available in Appendix 8.

⁴³ Creativity techniques include drumming, percussion and voice work, body percussion, working with words, images and artwork, accelerating connection, dialogue.

effect of what they have as an individual and as a member of a team. The interviewee Oliver MacDonald explains why these techniques are relevant to enhance creativity of people: “Facilitation means to create experiences to generate results. We bring people into experiences to create something that they believe impossible: they understand that they can do it. We work to create possibilities and remove limiting beliefs. We use music because it shocks people: they play music and don’t believe they can do it”.

The experiential approach adopted by RedZebra experts can be summarized by the following steps:

- RedZebra designs effective learning experience that consists of an inspirational journey, a message and a desired outcome;
- Through reflection tools, participants deepen their understanding of the experience and how their state of mind has effect on their level of involvement;
- Any participant shares what he/she has understood with others: they develop ownership of challenges that the experience offers;
- Through the sharing of their understanding, participants develop new ideas and develop insights that can be applied to their work life;
- Insights are translated into actions.

Through this approach, RedZebra experts help companies design events and conferences and deliver training activities (coaching and education) related to themes such as leadership, team building, creativity and innovation, diversity and facilitator training. During the interview, Oliver MacDonald explains difficulties that people have dealing with creativity and the reasons why clients choose RedZebra: “The issue is the ability of managers to understand what and where problems are. Clients bring us in to help them thinking objectively, thinking creatively, come up with solutions and deliver

more performance. What creative process gives is the agility, the speed by which you see possible challenges and turn them into opportunities. The work we do with management is the idea of positive mindset to search actively for solutions and opportunities when challenges come up: we link it to the concept of agility, which is the ability to move quickly and mobilize people to look for a solution. Managers can see challenges and mobilize right people. If people come up with a challenge and take the ownership, they find solutions and involve other people and move together into these solutions. The more you engage with people, the more leaders can boost creativity. What we suggest to leaders is to focus on people because leadership in isolation has not impact. If a leader is coached for creativity, he has a channel to communicate and engage with people or teams”.

Finally, the interviewee stresses that the challenge for creative facilitators is to become part of a group or an organisation: RedZebra experts always try to develop relationships with clients based on trust. In this way, people feel RedZebra experts members of their group or company: it is a successful goal because “The more we know about the company, the more language we share with them. We deliver a programme that is for people. The further down the organisation we go, the less complex language is. We have to send a message and convert it into a language everyone understand” as Oliver MacDonald explains. People, who live an experience with RedZebra, don’t forget it. Usually the collaboration with RedZebra is successful and long because it is based on trust and credibility. Clients feel comfortable with the RedZebra approach and decide to collaborate with its experts more than once, as the following comments show:

- “I would highly recommend RedZebra for the creativity they bring; their affinity to our purpose and their understanding of our business; for their open and listening style and for their complete commitment to meet the outcomes we have agreed together. I know when I engaged RedZebra in work they will always strive to exceed expectations and have fun along the way” (Jade Starrett, Southern European HR Director Diageo)
- “RedZebra provided a truly memorable and effective learning experience. They took my key themes of building relationships and making connections

and ran two musical sessions....my key messages were absolutely hard wired into the music sessions in a most imaginative way” (Raymond Mulvey, Operational Leadership Project Manager for People and Organisational Development, Royal Mail)

- “The experience RedZebra brought to the process was critical in the great success we achieved. People now understand that as a cross functional team, everyone is accountable to deliver and impact....they now see the need to keep each other accountable in order for us to succeed together....RedZebra made a real impact on my business through working with my leaders and managers and helping them activate our staff to new levels of engagement. RedZebra brought a deep commitment with everything that they do” (Greig Jansen, Chief executive Officer Manager Coca-Cola Ethiopia)
- My experience of working with RedZebra has been terrific. From growing and developing the idea to the realisation of the great concept, to action planning, delivering on time; being available to discuss preparation; the quality of the team, the quality of the facilitation. RedZebra operated way beyond the norms” (Alan McFarlane, HR Director)

Thus, RedZebra works globally⁴⁴ to generate unpredictable levels of engagement of managers and employees in exciting and effective ways, which are designed to unite individuals, exploit their similarities, value differences and use creativity to boost performance of everyone working in organisations.

⁴⁴ RedZebra was founded in 1994 and has offices in the UK, the US and South Africa. It works in six continents with companies in over 60 countries. RedZebra’s clients are communities, schools and international companies like Coca Cola, Procter&Gamble, Red Bull, Barclays, KPMG, Microsoft, Novartis, Unilever, Diageo, American Express. A complete list of clients is provided on www.redzebraglobal.com.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

1) Introduction

My analysis of case studies aims to get valid findings to address my specific research question and develop new knowledge about the topic of interest. As mentioned in the second chapter, case study methodology can be complex given the difficulties related to the replication of results. However, the use of multiple cases can help me get generalised findings: it means that if I find similar results for several cases, generalization can be claimed and findings can be considered more valid. In other words, the greater the number of case studies that show replication, the more reliable results I can obtain.

In order to claim the replication, I need to conduct two-steps analysis that is described in Figure 3.1. The previous chapter corresponds to the first step: I conducted the analysis of individual cases making use of the most relevant evidence and I provided a detailed description of each creativity broker included in my sample. The aim was to organise and analyse data according to aspects covered with interviews and develop a deep understanding of each case study.

Here, I move on to the second step, which consists of a cross-case analysis. I compare the chosen creativity brokers in a systematic way and I figure out similarities and differences. To do this, I base the cross-case analysis on four features related to my research question: definition, functions, role and motivations. The goal is to group similar creativity brokers, interpret them and generalise findings. In fact, the purpose of my work is to provide a reliable and exhaustive explanation of creativity brokers, their role and their functions according to the results of cross-case analysis. It means that I try to provide a widespread definition of creativity brokers and a general delineation of their importance for organisational management.

The following graph shows the technique I adopt for the analysis of case studies: I examined individual cases focusing on specific features that correspond to questions asked during the interviews. The individual case analysis is the preliminary step for the cross-case analysis, which consists of a comparison based on the same criteria adopted for the individual case analysis. Then, I group similar cases and organise findings according to criteria such as definition, functions, role and motivations: these are the components of my research question and the ingredients for the generalisation of results.

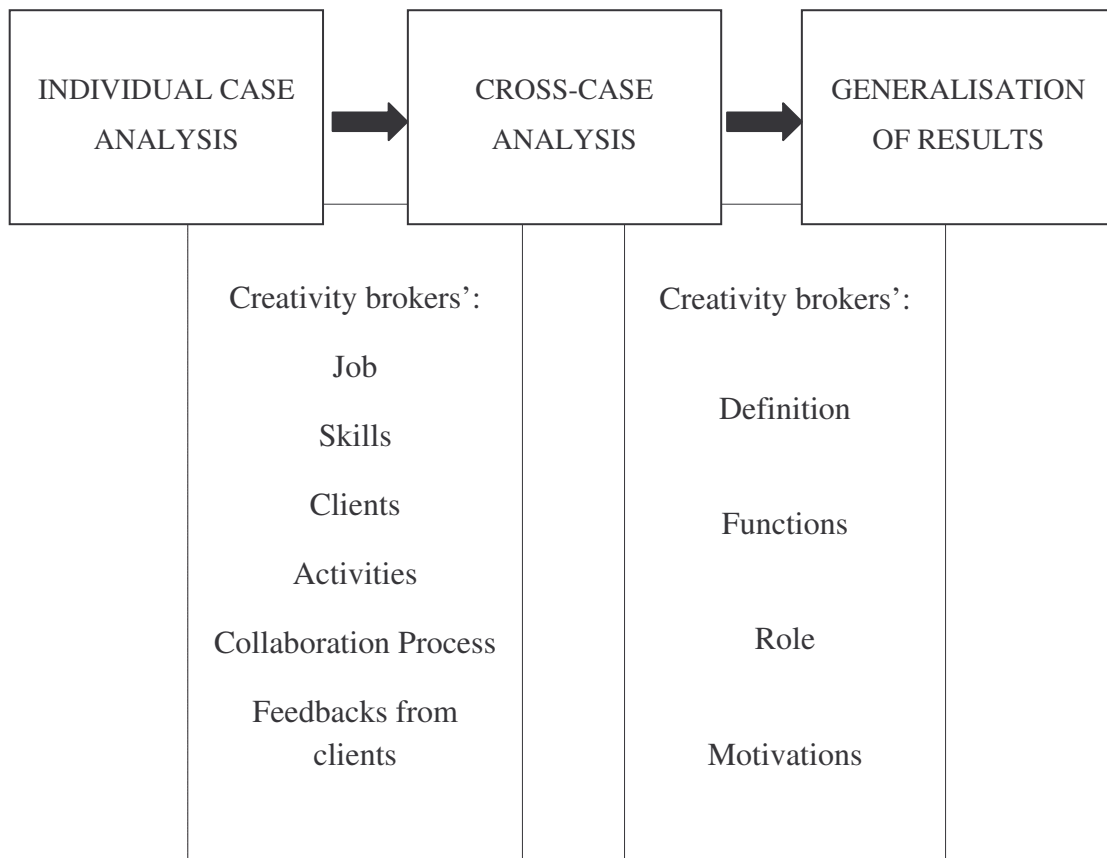


Figure 4.1: Individual Case Analysis, Cross-case Analysis, Generalisation of Results and Inquiry Variables (Source: Self-elaboration)

2) Cross-case Analysis

First of all, I have to solve the issue related to the terminology⁴⁵. It arose during the analysis of data available on the official websites and the interviews. I included the question “Could you be defined as creativity broker?” in the interviews on the basis of the literature review. In particular, I made reference to the work of Bilton and Leary (2002). They identify new actors called “creativity brokers” that know how to “broker connections between different people, experiences, talents, technologies and emotions: they broker other people’s abilities into productive relationships”. All seven companies reject the use of the term “broker” because for them it has a specific and negative meaning, which is strictly linked to the economic domain. “Broker” refers to a person working as an agent: a broker manages relationships between two parties and gains money protecting the interests of one of them. It means that a broker is a non-neutral party, a trader who focuses on businesses, money, market and personal proceeds. The interviewees explain that their focus is on people rather than on numbers or businesses. For this reason, they prefer to be called facilitators: they facilitate the interaction between people within teams and organisation, they intervene to improve any kind of activity or process and get the expected results through creativity. In other words, all companies included in my sample work as described by Bilton and Leary (2002), but they define themselves as creativity facilitators, experts that use creativity to improve relationships and performance of people within teams and organisations.

I clarified the reason why I have to replace the expressions “creativity brokers” and “brokerage” respectively with “creativity facilitators” and “facilitation”. Now, I carry on with the comparison of cases. The following tables map the resource I use for the cross-case analysis: the detailed descriptions provided in the previous chapter and the interviews’ transcription in the Appendixes.

⁴⁵ I mentioned this issue in the description of my sample (chapter II paragraph 3).

Table 4.1(a): References for Cross-case Analysis

| Inquiry Variables | THE WERKS Appendix 2 | DESIGN MEDIATORS Appendix 3 | DESALL Appendix 4 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Job definition | Questions 1- 2 - 3 | Questions 1 - 3 | Questions 1 - 2 - 3 |
| Skills | Question 4 | Question 2 | Question 4 |
| Clients | Questions 13 -14 | Questions 12 - 13 | Questions 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 |
| Activities | Question 8 | Question 7 | Question 9 |
| Collaboration process | Questions 10 -11 | Questions 9 - 10 - 11 | Questions 10 - 11 |
| Feedback from clients | Questions 15 -16 | Question 14 | Question 16 |

Table 4.1(b): References for Cross-case Analysis

| Inquiry Variables | CREATIVE EXCHANGE Appendix 5 | CREATIVE FACILITATION Appendix 6 | ?WHAT IF! Appendix 7 | REDZEBRA Appendix 8 |
|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Job definition | Questions 1 - 2 - 4 | Questions 1 - 2 - 4 | Questions 1 - 2 | Questions 1 - 2 |
| Skills | Question 3 | Question 3 | Question 3 | Question 3 |
| Clients | Questions 16 - 17 | Questions 14 - 15 | Questions 12 - 13 | Questions 9 - 10 |
| Activities | Questions 8 - 13 - 14 - 15 | Questions 11 - 12 - 13 | Questions 8 - 11 | Questions 6 - 7- 12 - 13 |
| Collaboration process | Questions 10 - 11 - 12 | Questions 9 - 10 | Questions 9 - 10 | Questions 8 - 11 |
| Feedback from clients | Questions 18 - 19 | Questions 16 -17 | Questions 14 - 15 | Question 14 |

I begin by considering the short description of creativity facilitator's job. It is possible to argue that the interviewees give similar answers: they define creativity facilitator's job as a combination of different activities that aim to provide specific support to people and companies that need to deal with creativity. Even if all seven companies in my sample should be defined as creative facilitators, I observe a marked difference among them. In the first case study, The Werks, the facilitator provides business support, which consists of attention, business links, experience in the sector of clients. Clients are freelancers looking for people with skills and competences required to manage businesses and keep creativity skills always updated. Design Mediators and Desall act as neutral parties that help companies and creative people to get in touch and work together. Their goal is to provide sources of creativity to companies and help creative people gain attention for their talent. Finally, the other four cases, Creative Exchange Group, Creative Facilitation, 'What If!' and RedZebra, are creative facilitators because they become members of a team or an organisation to engage people and help them discover their creativity skills. Thus, in the cases of the Werks, Design Mediators and Desall the definition of creativity facilitators corresponds to consultants or intermediaries working with freelancers, creative people and companies, whose job is based on creative activities or outcomes. In contrast, Creative Exchange Group, Creative Facilitation, 'What If!' and RedZebra are facilitators in the narrow meaning of this term: they facilitate activities performed by individuals, teams and companies through engaging experiences in order to use creativity in everyday work.

This difference has implications in terms of activities performed by each creative facilitator, collaboration process adopted and clients. The Werks works with freelancers, offers them accommodation staff and business support. The Werks doesn't deliver training activities and doesn't follow standardised rules or processes: intuition, expertise and solution based approach allow The Werks to help freelancers find solutions to their problems in the fastest and pragmatic manner. Also Design Mediators and Desall don't provide any kind of activity to train or coach people; however, they manage the collaboration of big companies and designers through a standardised process with specific phases that protect rights and satisfy requests of companies as well as designers. Design Mediators and Desall support companies for the concept development of new products and at the same time give designers the opportunity to get visibility and

recognition for their creative talent. Instead, the other four creativity facilitators included in my sample work with individuals, teams and organisations helping them think and behave creatively. In particular, they adopt a process, which is tailored to the specific needs of each client, deliver activities and organise events and workshops to engage people genuinely. In addition, they help leaders chair meetings and truly communicate with participants: creativity facilitators support managers to involve people, who can become aware of actions and understand why they should take actions and participate powerfully to any activity of organisations. Thus, creativity facilitators counted in my sample shows strong differences with regard to the collaboration process and activities related to it.

However, I can observe that for all seven creativity facilitators a preliminary step is crucial before the collaboration with clients. They meet individuals, groups or managers to discuss their needs and help people explain their issues related to creative thinking and behaviours. This step is essential not only for the understanding of clients' needs and possible solutions, but also to develop trust and make people comfortable during the whole collaboration.

There are other similarities among the companies included in the sample. In fact, the interviewees identify a similar set of ingredients that are critical for their job. Expertise, technical skills and knowledge of corporate life allow creativity facilitators to interpret clients' needs; curiosity, creative and soft skills, flexibility, positive mindset, energy and commitment help build and manage relationships with people, understand dynamics within teams or organisations and encourage people behave creatively. These ingredients are imperative for all seven companies included in my sample. Also in terms of feedback collected by clients, creativity facilitators show strong similarities. In the third chapter, it is possible to read the transcription of clients' comments. Obviously they are specific for each creativity facilitator and strictly related to the personal experience of clients. However, I can identify a common valuation that clients make: they are positively astounded because creativity facilitators satisfy their requests and needs exceeding their expectations. In other words, clients appreciate the way creativity facilitators work keeping the focus on people and how much creativity matters for their needs.

According to the differences and similarities explained above, it is possible to aggregate cases characterised by analogous aspects⁴⁶. I identify two groups. The first counts The Werks, Design Mediators, Desall: they are facilitators helping clients obtain creative outcomes. These creativity facilitators provide a complete support to freelancers, designers or companies for the development of ideas and their translation in new businesses or products. The second group includes Creative Exchange, Creative Facilitation, ?What If! and RedZebra, facilitators that adopt engaging activities and techniques to help people discover their creativity and make a good use of it for their work at any organisational level.

Once groups of similar case studies have been identified, I can proceed with the generalisation of results. As said before, in the case study methodology, the greater the number of case studies that show similarities, the more reliable results can be obtained. With the identification of two groups of creativity facilitators, I try to provide an exhaustive interpretation of creativity facilitators that can be extended to other cases that are not included in my sample. In other words, I aim to develop a general and valid understanding of these new actors and their increasing relevance for companies and creative people over the last years.

3) Discussion of results

In this paragraph I deal with specific inquiry variables: definition, functions, rules and motivation of creativity facilitators. They make easier the discussion and generalisation of results: I analyse variables one by one in order to give a satisfying and valid answer to my research question and reach the purpose of my work.

In addition, I make reference to the key findings I identified in the literature review⁴⁷. I compare and contrast the results of my research with the theories developed

⁴⁶ I group cases on the basis of similarities related to the aspects considered for both the individual case analysis and the cross-case analysis: job description, skills, clients, activities, collaboration process, feedbacks from clients.

⁴⁷ Key Findings are exhibited in the Table 1.1 in chapter I.

about creativity and creativity facilitators⁴⁸ in order to understand and appreciate the contribution and the alignment of my inquiry's findings with the existing knowledge about them.

3.1) Definition of Creativity Facilitators

Even if during the analysis I observe many differences among the case studies, I can provide a widespread definition of creativity facilitators.

They are experts highly committed to support people that work daily with creativity. Creativity facilitators have experience and knowledge about problems and issues that freelancers, companies and creative people face and know how to identify possible solutions. However, this explanation of the meaning of creativity facilitators may be confused with the definition of consultants: "people who know a lot about a particular subject and is employed to give advice about it to other people⁴⁹". It would be a mistake because facilitators are more than consultants: they don't give expert advice or guidelines written in papers. They work closely with individuals or companies every day and offer them experience, knowledge, competences and tools to deal with creativity and exploit its value. In fact, the meaning of creativity facilitators I provide here is strictly related to the widely accepted definition of creativity as a function of novelty and usefulness proposed by Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2011). Indeed, creativity facilitators help freelancers and companies improve the way they run their businesses recognising and exploiting the usefulness of creativity. In other words, creativity facilitators with their expertise and skills give people opportunities and tools to appreciate and exploit the potential value of creativity.

⁴⁸ I remind the reader that in literature researchers use the expression "Creativity brokers". Given the evidence collected during my research, I have to use the expression "Creativity facilitators" also for the comparison with the key findings in the literature review.

⁴⁹ Definition available in the Oxford Dictionary.

The widespread definition of creativity facilitators is very general and includes all experts⁵⁰ that provide pragmatic support to freelancers and companies that lead creative businesses or develop new products. To be thorough, I have to explain also the narrow definition of creativity facilitators⁵¹: they are practitioners of creativity. Creativity facilitators are professionals having many years of experience helping people discover their creative potential and learn the best approach to realise it in everyday work. Creativity facilitators know how to unlock creativity in people and integrate their creative efforts within teams or organisational contexts. In fact, thanks to their background, expertise and talent, creativity facilitators make people able to think and behave creatively in the most genuine manner. They have deep knowledge about human interactions, are able to understand the thinking and the behavioural style of people as well as their strengths and limitations: this allows them to quickly define the best way that encourages people to synchronize their creative efforts. To make this possible, creativity facilitators shape energising events and workshops, adopt specific techniques to create an exciting environment, where both employees and managers feel comfortable and motivated, and remove all those obstacles that prevent the practice of creativity. This narrow definition of creativity facilitators corresponds to the core of the Bilton and Leary (2002) study: “they are those who know how to broker connections between different people and their abilities into productive relationships” (Bilton and Leary, 2002, p.58). Indeed, creativity facilitators integrate creative efforts of people at each organisational level and translate them into valuable solutions for companies.

Given its completeness, the narrow meaning of creativity facilitators is more satisfying than the widespread definition. If I consider creativity facilitators as practitioners of creativity, I have a strong basis on which I can start the discussion about functions and role of creativity facilitators and provide a clear and valid answer to my research question.

⁵⁰ In the present work, the widespread definition includes all seven cases.

⁵¹ This definition is the result of the analysis of Creative Exchange, Creative Facilitation, ?What If! and RedZebra: for them the replication of results is very strong.

3.2) Functions of Creativity Facilitators

Being creativity practitioners means to play many complementary functions to effectively unlock creativity in any kind of person. Before starting any collaboration, creativity facilitators meet their clients, listen to them, ask questions to understand the real issue, what lies behind their thoughts and words and discuss together to figure out possible solutions. They should understand people because only in this way can they identify the way they prefer to work, develop common language, integrate efforts of all participants and define interventions that fit particular situations. Indeed, creativity facilitators design tailored processes⁵² or participatory activities and put them in practice during events like workshops, conferences or meetings: the purpose is to satisfy clients' needs and meet participants' expectations.

According to clients' requirements, creativity facilitators set stimulating environments and adopt techniques in order to improve leadership, team work, creative thinking and decision-making process within organisations: they help people break patterns and crush fear giving them critical stimuli that boost original thinking. In fact, creativity facilitators bring freshness and challenge behavioural habits of people.

To do this, creativity facilitators develop experiences rather than deliver simply training activities: the basic idea is that if people feel comfortable and engaged, they can really understand the purpose of everything they are asked to do or learn within organisations. Thus, creativity facilitators help managers and employees keep the focus on key factors, take part in discussions and give their contribution removing barriers to the use of personal creativity.

Personal characteristics of a creativity facilitator influence members to develop relational norms, provide intrinsic motivation and commitment to the expected results. Creativity facilitators are participants but also observers during the processes or activities they put in practice during the collaboration with clients. In order to fulfil their functions, creativity facilitators make use of a wide range of skills. I don't want to simply draw up a list. In the following table I identify skills creativity facilitators use for their functions and the goals they can reach.

⁵² To be thorough, creativity facilitators do not adopt a linear process, which consist of predetermined steps: it would be useless because people would be uncomfortable, unmotivated and unsatisfied.

Table 4.2: Creativity Facilitators' Skills and related Goals

| SKILLS | GOALS |
|--|---|
| Soft skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncover the underlying issues people struggle to articulate• Clarify the purpose of activities and explain expected results |
| Intuition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop facilitation style tailored to the purpose of events observed• Understand how to utilize motivation of participants |
| Ability to think out of the box | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disrupt ordinary patterns |
| Charisma and Excellent communication skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build consensus |
| Creativity and Curiosity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get people unstuck |
| Experience and Responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make use of different tools and techniques• Manage interactions between a variety of individuals |
| Be aware of variety of dynamics within groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solve possible conflicts• Keep focus on desired results that fit clients' needs |
| Flexibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehend nature of different challenges• Acquire knowledge from different contexts and• Throw away rules and structures |
| Positive mindset and genuinely optimistic attitude | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify realistic possibilities that people usually don't imagine |
| Ability to show enthusiasm and commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a positive environment |
| Good reputation and personal integrity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build trust and social ties |

All these skills allow a creativity facilitator to become part of a group or organisation: members should feel the facilitator as one of them. Only in this way, a creativity facilitator can create an atmosphere of respect, fun and high energy levels during any kind of event. In addition, creativity facilitators inspire the fulfilment of their functions to some principles that are summarised below:

- There is not right solution for any kind of problem or the right process that can be applied to satisfy every kind of clients' need;
- Do not focus immediately on the perfect solution;
- Be nonpartisan, maintain objectivity and emotional balance;
- Be not afraid of failure because often best solutions come from mistakes;
- See opportunities in challenges,
- Recognize creativity in each individual and the opportunity to make people more creative.

In any kind of activity a creativity facilitator carries out, participants should be genuinely interested in dealing with problems, attending actively to sessions and taking action on the outcomes. In addition, they should be willing to learn and change existing ways of thinking and doing tasks: they should be open to changes and flexible to accept different approaches and ideas of others. In order to make this happen, creativity facilitators spend energy to make people understand some principles and use them to unlock their creativity:

- a. Contribution of each participant is relevant for the final result;
- b. Everyone is responsible for a group's success;
- c. Build relationships and take part in conversations are actions;
- d. Be proud of having ideas and make them happen;
- e. Be an active listener and show respect for others' contributions;
- f. Collaboration has many advantages given that an individual is not the unique source of creativity;
- g. Diversity brings opportunities;

- h. It is necessary to bear failure;
- i. Commitment and success derive from intellectual challenges and difficulties;
- j. It is necessary to take risks;
- k. Fun and work are not mutually exclusive concepts.

As said before, creativity facilitators design tailored processes and activities that aim to fit the particular requirements of a client. They use so many different techniques that would be impossible to list and describe here. However, I try to explain how each kind of event requires specific techniques and activities according to the objectives that managers and companies fix for that event. It is important to stress one aspect: for all events the purpose of creativity facilitators is that the final result has been created, understood and accepted by all participants.

MEETINGS

At the beginning, creativity facilitators explain clearly the agenda and the desired outcome in an energising way. Then, they help participants dynamically engage, understand and keep the focus on expected results. Creativity facilitators use interaction techniques such as dialogue accelerating connection and games working with words to add creativity to discussion rather than simply lead it. Moreover, creativity facilitators make participants use creative thinking exercises to encourage team work and creative problem solving. In addition, they build commitment for a workable action plan. In other words, creativity facilitators creatively guide people to results and accelerate their performance. In particular, they help managers chair meetings involve and motivate participants, who become willing to take action sooner and sustain their performance to achieve results.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING SESSIONS

During these sessions, creativity facilitators support participants to recognize and act on opportunities. To do this, creativity facilitators help people establish goals for problem-solving efforts, examine challenges from different perspectives and see them as opportunities, generate ideas, identify those ideas with interesting potential and formulate a plan of action to solve the problem. These are activities that stimulate the whole-brain thinking and nurture individual creativity. In addition, creativity facilitators bring freshness, which allows participants to find alternative ways of describing issues, look at related areas where similar issues can occur, identify and challenge rules and assumptions, make connections that they have been made before.

BRAINSTORM

The purpose is to develop a solution to a problem by discussing it and making a list of ideas rather than aim immediately to the best idea. During a brainstorm session, creative facilitators help people suspend judgement: it means to form not instant opinions and open the mind, wait and know more before judging. It makes possible to understand and try to stand in the others' shoes to see their ideas. However, understanding is not enough: participants should nurture ideas and build on them, reveal their potential as well as find valid alternative sources of ideas. Indeed, participants note down all ideas coming up and build on them adding extra thoughts and using others' ideas as inspiration. Thus, people initially focus on the generation of a big quantity of ideas; later, through creativity they develop a high quality idea that becomes the final solution for the problem.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

First of all, creativity facilitators make participants laugh, feel comfortable and get to know each other. Then, they work for the development of a common language that allows both employees and managers to understand the key messages underlying the workshop. In addition, creativity helps employees as well as managers concentrate on

the content linking fun and energizing activities to the workshop material and its presentation. The assumption is that participants remember relevant information if it is presented in a lively way. For this reason, creative facilitators use living metaphors, which physically simulate important concepts that are related to the workshop content: the goal is to achieve greater communication and cooperation of participants. In this way, participants can gain a deep understanding about the workshop's content and objectives and achieve memorable sessions.

In summary, I explained the different functions that creativity facilitators fulfil for the collaboration with clients and the required skills. Creativity facilitators select appropriate activities and processes that challenge habitual thinking and behaviours: managers and employees experience new ways of thinking and acting together. The next paragraph deals with the role that creativity facilitators play and its implications: on the basis of the definition and functions described before, I try to clarify the active role creativity facilitators have within organisations and its effect on creativity at each organisational level.

3.3) Creativity Facilitators' Role

It is clear that facilitation is more than bringing people together to discuss and define solutions for problems, chairing a meeting, teaching or mediating. Facilitation is an invaluable tool to disrupt existing habits of thinking, building relationships, behaving and communicating within teams or organisational contexts. Creativity facilitators know how to create the right atmosphere to get people unstuck and able to discover what they need to address their issues. Thus, in general terms the role of creativity facilitators is to skilfully assist a group or organisation to understand its objectives and achieve them without taking sides in any argument.

To deepen the understanding of creativity facilitators, I need to identify more specific roles played by creativity facilitators to assist their clients and I link each role with functions I explained in the previous paragraph.

The first role a creativity facilitator plays is interlocutor. At the beginning of any collaboration, a creativity facilitator talks with clients to understand what they need and what they expect the facilitator to do. As said before, a creativity facilitator listens to and discusses with clients and interprets the real issue that lies behind their words. Only a precise and deep understanding of the clients' needs and problems provides a clear picture of the clients' situation: on this basis a creativity facilitator can define the best intervention that satisfies clients' requirements and meet their expectations. The interlocutor role is crucial and it is required for any kind of collaboration: for this reason it is related to both widespread and narrow definitions I identified in paragraph 3.1 and it is performed by all seven facilitators included in my sample.

However, given the undeniable differences among the chosen cases, I have to distinguish among different roles performed by creativity facilitators. If I make reference to the widespread definition, an important role played by creativity facilitators is gatekeeper. It means that a creativity facilitator works every day to help companies and creative people get in touch, develop a common language to cooperate and develop new products or businesses. In addition, a creativity facilitator is an active listener: he makes efforts to understand the content and the meaning of what they say, codify requirements of both companies and creative people (designers and freelancers); then, a creativity facilitator develops a language that can be understood by all parties and builds bridges to facilitate the collaboration between companies and creative talents and reduce the cognitive distance between them.

Another important role is coordinator. Once clients' requirements have been understood, a creativity facilitator chooses and coordinates a process that allows to obtain a valid solution to clients' problems. The process can be a standardised or tailored procedure, according to the experience that a creativity facilitator has. In any case, a creativity facilitator helps clients go through the process, explains each phase, its objectives and goals. In other words, being coordinator a creative facilitator chooses the best way to meet what clients need and is clear about the purpose of the process in order to maximise results in terms of creative efforts of participants.

The roles of gatekeeper and coordinator are linked to the widespread definition I provided in the previous paragraphs. Instead, if I focus on the narrow definition of creativity facilitators I identify two more specific roles.

A creativity facilitator is a guide: he knows process, tools and activities required to enhance individual creativity and carefully help clients go through them. It means that a creativity facilitator gives practical support in every single activity or phase of the process in order to ensure that each participant is actively involved. In addition, a creativity facilitator helps participants to make the best use of available resource like time, energy and information. In fact, he cuts irrelevant discussions or conflicts among participants, keeps the focus on creative results, ensures that each participant has enough information to understand and feels committed to take part and give valuable contribution: all these behaviours aim to avoid that time, information and energy of participants are wasted and the opportunity to unlock creativity is lost. However, a creativity facilitator doesn't plan everything in advance. On the one hand, the guide role requires planning and organisational skills to make use of different tools and techniques and manage a variety of people taking part in each activity. On the other hand, a creativity facilitator needs also spontaneity and improvisation to make people comfortable and combine available resources and expected results with the unpredictable opportunities and difficulties that can come up in each session.

Moreover, the guide role can be easily played if a creativity facilitator is an excellent motivator. As said before, a creativity facilitator has experience of engaging people, has those skills that allow him to become part of groups or organisations and build trust because other members feel him as one of them and recognise the unique value of what they can do thanks to his help. The motivator role is based on strong belief that people (managers or employees) are willing to participate, give their own contribution and work with others to obtain the best results if they feel motivated and involved. This belief is the basis of creative facilitators' job⁵³ and it is aligned with Amabile (1983), Kahn (1990) and Drazin (1999) studies⁵⁴: individuals engage in creative activities and make efforts to unlock their own creativity if they have a strong intrinsic motivation, they cognitively and behaviourally attempt to unlock and exploit their creativity. Thus, a creativity facilitator performs as guide and motivator to help people discover their creative potential, which is strictly related to creative-thinking

⁵³ According to the narrow meaning of creativity facilitators

⁵⁴ They are included in the literature review in Chapter I paragraph 3.

skills and motivation. Through soft skills and the use of specific and tailored activities a creativity facilitator can boost individual and group creativity that are the antecedents of organisational creativity. In addition, as said before, a creativity facilitator works to ensure the availability and the right use of resources during every activity and set informal and inspiring environments. In this way, a creativity facilitator gives support to managers creating the invaluable opportunities to integrate creative efforts of all members at each organisational level. This is proved by the Amabile (1996) study, according to which individual and team creativity is strongly affected by the work environment and how people perceive it, managers' practices and the use of resources.

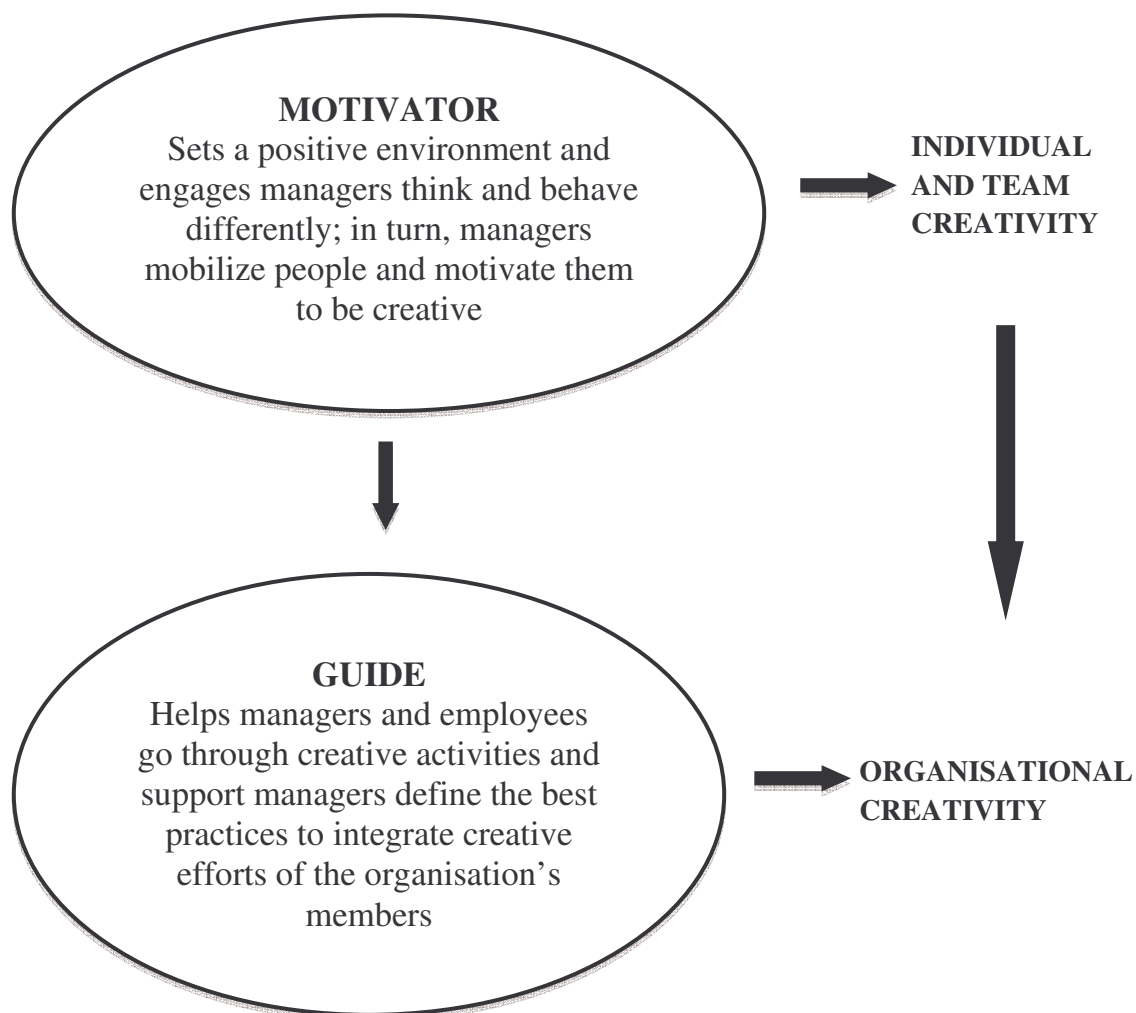


Figure 4.2: Guide and Motivator role of Creativity Facilitators and the Impact on Individual, Team and Organisational Creativity (Source: Self-elaboration)

As the graph shows, a creativity facilitator works with managers and other members of organisation to improve the conditions required to recognise, value and exploit creativity at each organisational level. A creativity facilitator knows how to help people release their creativity: it is necessary to give stimuli to each individual to improve creative thinking skills and strengthen motivation, but also create the external conditions that have strong influence on them. For this reason, a creativity facilitator provides pragmatic support and develops unforgettable experiences that help managers to break routines and adopt different perspectives to recognise their own creative potential and that of others within the organisations. Through creative and stimulating activities and events, a creativity facilitator makes managers as well as employees live creativity and understand what should be done to keep it alive within companies.

Finally, I described the different roles creativity facilitators play according to the related functions and required skills. The order I followed has a specific meaning, as the following graph shows:

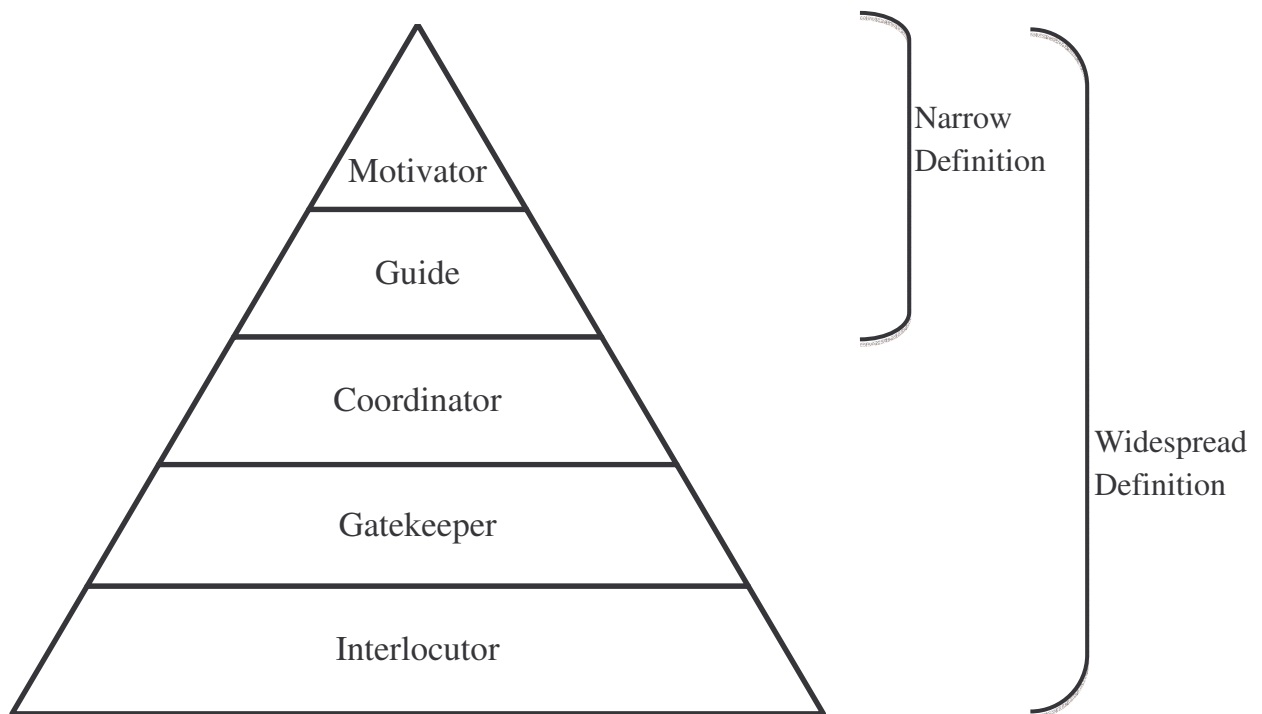


Figure 4.3: Creativity Facilitators' Definition and Roles (Source: Self-elaboration)

I started from the most general role, the gatekeeper, played by all those creativity facilitators that can be classified under the widespread definition; then, I moved toward the most relevant roles, the guide and motivator that are the essence of creativity facilitation. In the next paragraph I deal with the last component of my research question: why companies need creativity facilitators and cannot give up their support.

3.4) Motivations

The description of roles guide and motivator has to be related to the explanation of creativity facilitators' relevance. As already said in previous chapters, creativity and the managerial practices required to enhance it represent a critical issue for companies. Here, I aim to provide satisfying interpretation of this issue and I try to clarify the reasons why managers need the pragmatic support of creativity facilitators to deal with this issue.

First of all, I want to figure out possible situations in which the need for creativity facilitators can arise. Sometimes managers understand that there is something wrong that doesn't allow organisation members to reach predetermined goals, but they cannot figure out what it is. Then, often organisations' members get stuck in routines and need to explore new ways of working or need to improve their learning from past experiences, understand what worked well and what should be changed. It is also possible that the company needs to get prepared for a deep culture change before exploring a new business opportunity like the launch of a new product or the expansion in new markets. In other cases, the company may need flexibility and agility to react quickly and respond to external changes. In all these cases, the figure of creativity facilitators is crucial because most times managers don't know what to do and aren't ready to take action to discover creative potential within their companies.

However, managers don't need creativity facilitators because they have solutions to all problems or replace them to solve issues. Managers require creativity facilitators' support because it helps managers discover what should be done adopting a new perspective. In fact, creativity facilitators bring freshness, a meaningful element that

allows managers to break usual patterns, challenge behavioural habits and give employees the opportunity to do the same. It means that employees would make efforts to unlock their creativity if company's managers give the example and their behaviours become a model for employees.

As facilitators said during many interviews I did, most times managers just keep control and don't encourage people to think expansively and take action. For this reason, creativity facilitators deliberately bring creative stimuli within organisations: they provoke original thinking of managers, who become able to behave creatively, take risk, give people the chance to do and motivate them to engage in creative activities. Thanks to creativity facilitators, managers crush fear of failure and find courage to break routines that usually represent a trap for companies: in this way, managers invest in cultural change within organisational boundaries and create favourable conditions for the integration of creative efforts of all members.

Someone can argue that training programs can obtain results similar to those obtained through the support of creativity facilitators: it would not be true because it is not enough to teach or explain what is creativity and how to enhance it. In fact, creativity facilitators provide unforgettable experiences rather than only training sessions: only living creativity people become able to behave and think creatively. What creativity gives to managers is the positive mindset, the agility to recognise opportunities in challenges, communicate, mobilize people and create synergies among their behaviours to find solutions.

Thus, creativity facilitators' support is useful for all organisational members to unlock individual creativity, which is the basis for group and organisational creativity. However, only managers and team leaders can actively integrate creativity efforts and translate them in valuable ideas: creativity facilitators are not substitutes of managers. This is proved by Mumford et al. (2007) studies: only leaders exert powerful influence on individual and group creativity (the antecedents of organisational creativity) through their communication skills, behaviours and influence tactics. Creativity facilitators give leaders the right tools to attend the management and integration of creative efforts within organisations and motivate people. Hence, creativity facilitators' support is responsive to those difficulties that managers face in achieving anything creatively

ambitious: most times, the issue is to identify the source of problems, their essence and the fast way to solve them.

Finally, creativity facilitators don't replace managers. Creativity facilitators are external actors that become part of the company through trust and fair behaviours. They work closely with managers and help them carry on their managerial functions. Creativity facilitators create the right atmosphere within organisational context, shape the organisational culture and make managers develop an effective leadership that can translate individual and team creativity into organisational creativity.

CONCLUSION

The increasing levels of complexity and competitiveness of markets lead every company to deal with creativity and innovation. First of all, a company should learn from the external environment, develop and manage knowledge gained from it, define strategies and strength competitiveness. Once the competitive advantage is achieved, a company should sustain it introducing new valuable products or services. Thus, competitiveness can be sustained through innovation. In turn, innovation relies on creativity, which is commonly defined as the process for the creation of novel and valuable products or services. Hence, creativity and innovation are considered as sources of competitive advantage. Moreover, the increasing competition has led companies to develop new products and services to keep and improve their position in the market and retain their customers. This results in a simultaneous introduction of many similar products and services by different companies: it means that every company makes efforts to always be innovative and constantly improve its offer. However, success is determined by the degree of creativity embedded in products or services, which reflects how much creativity is relevant in everyday work of organisational members. Thus, it is crucial to assess not only whether a product is creative, but also how creative it is and how much organisational members are encouraged to behave and think creatively.

To be thorough, it is important to stress the difference between creativity and innovation because commonly they are considered interchangeable. They have impact on the organization's ability to meet customers' demand and improve its competitiveness, but they aren't the same thing. While creativity is a behaviour, innovation is a trial and error process that may result in competitive advantage. Creativity becomes innovation when a company exploits the value of new ideas. Creativity and innovation operate at different levels of product development process and they are linked to different individual and organizational factors. At the same time, they

are strictly related because creativity is the starting point for any innovation, which is the commercial exploitation of creative products or services.

Thus, creativity and innovation are imperative for every company. Today, in every sector and at every level, companies are desperate for employees to be more innovative, flexible, motivated and open to change: they need to reinvent their jobs, processes, organisations, working practices. All know that creativity is important at everyday work and managers usually agree with the belief that creativity and innovation are vital for their growth.

However, a big issue arises: do managers know how to practice and inspire creativity in day-to-day life at work within their organisations? Most times the answer to this question is no. Creativity and innovation are considered important but they are rarely classified as urgent: the reason is that benefits of creativity cannot be felt before some years. In other words creativity and innovation are seen as easy to talk but hard to do. In fact, managers face many difficulties dealing with creativity and changing the way they and other organisational members work.

The present work explains that most times managers get stuck in routine, don't know how to develop fresh ideas and develop new products because they still believe in the traditional closed innovation model and it is hard for them to change behavioural and thinking habits of organisational members. The absence of freshness and creative stimuli undermines company's growth, but also job satisfaction of other organisational members that lose commitment. This is the reason why managers need an external support to discover new exciting ways of leading companies and improving their competitiveness.

In my research I try to explain the relevance of creativity facilitators (called creativity brokers in literature), who provide this support. Creativity facilitators transform the way managers hold meetings, lead conferences, reach better decisions, manage teams and do businesses. In fact, creativity facilitators are external actors that become members of an organisation and help managers and employees go through engaging activities that unlock their creativity.

Creativity facilitators play different roles performing many functions. First of all, they give people opportunities and tools to appreciate and exploit the potential value of creativity. It is possible because they are interlocutors: they listen to people and make

efforts to understand what lies behind their words, identify the way they prefer to work, know how to build and manage relationships with a wide variety of individuals and define interventions that fit particular issues or problems faced by companies or freelancers. During meetings, they help participants dynamically engage: they use creative thinking exercises to encourage team work and creative problem solving. In addition, they build commitment and creatively guide managers and other participants to results. In addition, creativity facilitators create workshops and conferences where participants laugh, feel comfortable and get to know each other and concentrate on the content. Finally, creative facilitators use living metaphors, which physically simulate important concepts that are related to the workshop content: the goal is to achieve greater communication and cooperation of participants, who can gain a deep understanding about the workshop's content and objectives and achieve memorable sessions. Then, creativity facilitators are coordinators: they help clients go through engaging processes and activities, explain each phase, objectives and goals: they define the best way to meet what clients need and maximise results in terms of creative efforts of participants. Creativity facilitators are also a guide: they know process, tools and activities required to enhance individual creativity and carefully help people go through them. It means that a creativity facilitator gives practical support in every single activity or phase of the process in order to ensure the engagement of people and the best use of available resource like time, energy and information. Finally, creativity facilitators help managers obtain great results in terms of engagement and commitment through practical support and interactive approach. This is possible because creativity facilitators are motivators. Indeed, they support managers to create a favourable environment to unlock creativity at each organisational level, from individuals to the whole organisation. Thanks to the creative facilitation, managers become courageous, take risks, change and behave creatively and they become an example for other organisational members. In this way, for managers it becomes easier to engage and mobilize people to enhance organisational creativity and make innovation happen.

My research suggests that creativity is a strategic tool, an underdeveloped key factor for competitiveness that needs to be reconsidered. Creativity facilitators know that managers need creativity to take action, reach the best decisions and make their company innovative and competitive. Companies need to be creative, look for what

changes every day outside their boundaries and get ready to react quickly. Indeed, creativity gives companies the agility to adapt to these changes, try new things and shape their culture to embed innovation in their businesses. The present work identifies the role and functions of creativity facilitators and explains why managers and the whole organisations need them. I constructed seven cases on the basis of data collected through semi-structured interviews and documents. I analysed these cases individually and making a comparison among them. Finally, I considered the key findings I identified through the literature review: I matched them with results of my research to appreciate in which measure they can make a contribution to the existing knowledge about creativity facilitators. I tried to conduct interview by asking right questions, I used rigour to analyse literature and interpret information held in documents and records, read through interviewee responses, adopt a critical perspective to test the reliability of what each interviewee said and provide an interpretation. Finally, I provided a valid answer to my research question and I hope I gave a good contribution for a deeper understanding of creativity facilitators and their relevance for people and companies. In fact, my dissertation helps to understand why creativity is crucial for companies and how it is strictly related to innovation from a practical point of view. Creativity facilitators are creativity practitioners, who develop unforgettable experiences that lead people to discover their creative potential and realise it in everyday work because if creativity is not nurtured and practiced, it will be lost. For this reason, organisations need creative facilitators: to cultivate and develop creativity, value human beings operating at the fullness of their potential through creative behaviours: they create value and uniqueness that are the keys to innovation and sustainable competitive advantage.

Appendix 1

GENERAL INTERVIEW

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?
2. What does your job consist of?
3. Which skills are relevant for your job?
4. Could you be defined as creativity broker?
5. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?
6. On the basis of your experience, is engagement related to creativity? Why?
7. Which difficulties do managers face in dealing with creativity and engagement of employees?
8. What are the tools to enhance creativity within companies?
9. Why do companies ask for your help?
10. How long is the collaboration with your clients?
11. What are the main steps of the collaboration?
12. Do you deliver training activities? What do they consist of?

13. Do you deliver different training activities for managers and employees?
14. Who are your clients? Which sector they belong to?
15. How do your clients get in touch with you?
16. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration?
17. What is the most relevant aspect that your clients appreciate of your role? How do your clients appreciate your job?

Appendix 2

THE WERKS: INTERVIEW WITH IAN ELWICK

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?

I'm involved in the business support. Usually I'm involved with people coming from the creative sector, because I think it is better to get involved with people coming from your same sector.

2. What does your job consist of?
3. Could you be defined as creativity broker?

The term "Brokers" is quite a specific meaning. Brokers have lots of contacts and have a specific program to make sure that parties get the expected results. Brokers make money on their activity to cover costs. I used to get lot of work for freelancers. I started in a design agency. My work is a combination of different activities that requires commitment and engagement. For this reason, I'm really involved in my job.

4. Which skills are relevant for your job?

Skills that nobody has. Experience in the sector, good listening, managerial skills, organisational skills, analytical skills, creative skills and knowledge process. And I need to update my skills every day. In other words, in my work I need soft skills to understand people.

5. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?
6. Which difficulties do people face in dealing with creativity?

Some freelancers are very creative but they need other people with specific skills to implement their ideas. Then, there are people that are not creative and work in the creative sector because they have technical skills. It is important to discriminate between different kinds of people and their skills.

7. On the basis of your experience, is engagement related to creativity? Why?

When freelancers become part of our community and come to our building they are relaxed and don't need to play different roles (account manager, marketing manager...). Thus, they can specialize in their activity.

8. What are the tools to enhance creativity?

I think that there are not rules or tools that can be applied always to enhance creativity of people. It depends on specific situations and people.

9. Why do people ask for your help?

Freelancers ask for my help because they need business support. It is practical support, which consists of being helpful, providing accommodation, saving time, going quickly to solutions and sometimes raising funds.

I don't like the term business support, but I have to use it because it is understandable and generic. I try to help freelancers in a specific area, listen to their problems and come up with solutions quickly. I have a solution-based approach.

10. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

My collaboration with freelancers is indefinite. It could be short or many years long.

11. What are the main steps of the collaboration?

I used to have a step-by-step process, but now I don't have it anymore because I became more experienced and now I rely on my intuition. What I try to do is to waste not time. At the beginning, I interviewed people to understand what they need. Now, with my experience and intuition I pick up immediately what they try to explain and I go to solutions as soon as possible. Usually I try to identify the key

problems and things that are hidden to really help freelancers. I have a creative sector approach that many people cannot have because they don't have business links.

12. Do you deliver creativity training activities? What do they consist of?

I have done them in the past through workshops. Now I work to provide immediately possible solutions and I don't offer training activities, because I have to be pragmatic and fast.

13. Who are your clients?

My clients are freelancers that usually work with local companies. They are more stretched than people working for companies because they work on their own following their interests, run small businesses and do all by them selves. So they need someone with skills, who help them.

14. How do your clients get in touch with you?

I don't use social media, because they can find me quickly through WoM.

15. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration?

I don't collect feedback. I know I should, but actually I don't.

16. What is the most relevant aspect that your clients appreciate of your role? How do your clients appreciate your job?

I think that they appreciate the attention that I give them. They need attention. Attention is like food: if people don't have it they become hungry. They need not only accommodation or space to work, but also support, attention and intangible assets.

For freelancers is hard to have access to training activities or support that usually companies have access to, because it is more difficult to work and engage with freelancers.

Appendix 3

DESIGN MEDIATORS: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?

Design Mediators are natural parties that could help designers to connect and communicate with companies. The connection phase is where the mediator, acting more like a broker, finds a client for the designer, or the mediator could find a designer for the design buyer agent such as a company who would wish to develop new products. The communication phase is where the mediators brings together the designer and the company to form a contract. During this phase, the mediator acts as a natural third party to ensure that rights of the both designer and the design buyer are protected. In case of conflict, mediators could also help resolve issues by providing a natural view-point on the discussion.

2. Which skills are relevant for your job?

Design mediators must employ a wide-range of skills including public relations, marketing etc, however more important than the skills, comes to factor of experience. The market experience is needed and is essential to the mediator to help come up with relevant and just decisions, especially during conflicts. Furthermore, a design mediator must have a knowledge and good understanding of both local and international laws, especially intellectual property laws in order to help designers to protect their ideas and design buyers to protect their companies from issues related to the purchased designs.

3. What does your job consist of?

It consists of helping designers form contracts by supervising them, providing templates, suggestions for fees through market rate insights and our experience, and of course on occasions, pushing designers to come up with better designs by providing them constructive feedbacks, acting as a buffer between the client and designer. Design Mediators also helps companies define the design briefs, moodboards, restrictions and requirements to pass to designers. Connecting clients and designers, resolving conflicts, and helping companies choose the right designers is also a part of our job.

4. Why do companies ask for your help?

Companies who work with design mediators are interested in getting connected to the very best designers, top architects or design engineers who are guaranteed to deliver high-quality works. Furthermore, by working with design mediators, companies provide a guarantee to designers meanwhile they also protect their interests. Companies do ask for design mediators' help when they are unable to form niche connections required, for example when they plan to launch a new product to a new market, or when they need local solutions; i.e. for example if they are going to introduce some products for Japan, they might wish to work with a Japanese designer who could provide solutions based on Japanese culture.

5. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?

For all companies, all that matters is a positive balance sheet. Creativity is important as it promises a solid opportunity to increase the profits. The profits are increased through creativity by having more beautiful and aesthetically appealing products. Visually appealing products increase sales by forming an emotional bond with the customer. On the other hand, there is design; for us, design is creativity +

engineering; i.e. it is both analytical and emotional thinking together. Having good design can help companies furthermore decrease their production costs. Costs are decreased by optimizing (i.e. designing) the product in such a way that, it costs less to produce but still responds to the requirements and needs of the consumers, and the visual appearance is improved or kept intact.

6. Which are the difficulties for managers in dealing with creativity and engagement of employees?

There are issues in working with designers. Most successful designers are ego-driven; they want to show that they could do the best, and therefore are less likely to accept others' ideas. Furthermore, the fuzzy design process is highly affected by the emotions. Managers have to keep the designers' happy. For designers, hearing the fact that have come up with the great design is indeed the happiest thing. However, in most cases, the first draft is not so good, yet saying it is terrible simply would destroy the designers' mood, breaking her will and soul. Thus a good manager must be able to make subtle suggestions and constructive feedbacks to push designers for better products.

7. What are the tools to enhance creativity within companies?

There are several tools, methods and processes. Among these tools, internal design competitions, open sessions, inviting external designers for conferences, the ability to have prototypes realized within the company, financial support for designers (such as sponsoring designers to join external design events, including awards, symposiums) are relevant. Likewise companies should involve designers to multiple processes including marketing and production, even for limited time periods; such as taking designers to design fairs for the product, or the new technologies etc.

8. On the basis of your experience, why is engagement related to creativity?
Since design is a fuzzy process, all interactions matter. From this sense having the ability to engage with others does create positive results and improves the productivity of designers. Considering that a design idea is like a seed, simple suggestions and discussions during the design process results in mutations where new fruits could be born. Thus the engagement is important to help the idea form and grow.

9. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

It is quite long, if not lifetime and it depends on the client. Some clients have very fixed products that they sell for decades but each year would require slight changes to fit trends, others wish to produce a single product in the best way possible. Some needs to update packaging annually, while others are expanding to new markets. Given this, we keep our connections open, and usually sign a life-time contract based on hours of work, to be paid monthly, but without the fixed fees.

10. What are the main steps of the collaboration between companies and designers?

The most important step is the introduction. Companies would like to work with like-minded designers that share their vision, and thus many industrial design buyers would prefer to communicate with designers to see if they got the right person for the job. The importance of networking; bringing together designers and companies is significant. We do partake and help organize design events to make this happen.

11. What are your creativity training activities?

We deliver different training activities for design managers and designers. We do not perform formal trainings usually, however when we interact with design managers i.e. people who are responsible to manage the product development,

including CEOs in occasion, we always remind them of their roles as mentors to push designers in a kind, constructive way, to help the designers concentrate by highlighting the paths and sharing the visions. When a formal training is requested, we do perform specialized workshops that have different contents based on the company.

12. Who are your clients? Which sector they belong to?

From public sector to companies in almost all the markets, our clients are diffused and varied. They are however, medium to large enterprises, which have already developed an understanding of design value. We have two types of clients; those who wish to develop a new product or penetrate a new market, and those who wish to improve their existing position by advancing their designs. Of course, companies who are in trend oriented sectors involve more, but since design is relevant for all, we have all types of clients.

13. How do your clients get in touch with you?

Clients who wish to hire designers contact us through our webpage at designmediators.com but more importantly we get connected to them during design events such as design award ceremonies, exhibitions, and conferences, we are also present in many tradeshow to get in touch with a clientele which is less connected to design.

14. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration?

Testimonials and comments are almost always positive, the companies are happy since they get good designs with the right terms, and of course likewise for the designers they sell their designs for the right price with the good terms. Furthermore, the conflict resolution and contract help services, in addition to the

networking and designer matchmaking seasons are widely approved and appreciated.

Appendix 4

DESALL: INTERVIEW WITH GIORGIA CALLEGARO

1. How do you define your job?
2. What does your job consist of?
3. Could you be defined as creativity broker?

Desall was born in 2012. It is a crowd-sourcing platform, which launches international creative competition among creative people. In fact, Desall has a community that today consists of 21000 users (designers, engineers, architect, copyrighter, students or creative people) at international level. Desall team translates clients' needs (such new ideas or new inspiration) in a brief that is launched online. Everyone can take part in the competition: he/she has to register in the community of Desall. Desall works as ideas catalyst; it represents a source of creativity clients need for the development of new products. Desall collects proposals (that are uploaded on the platform) of designers and creative people at international level. In this way the client can have access to a huge amount of ideas that are developed according to the different cultures of community members. Usually a designer office can provide 10 proposals. Instead, Desall can offer more than 1000 proposals. Then clients with the support of Desall choose the winning proposal. Desall has a final goal that is not only to provide access to a huge amount of new ideas but also to help clients to produce the winning proposal.

4. Which skills are relevant for your job?

Desall team consists of the founder, who is an expert in Industrial Design and provide assistance to clients to choose the successful design proposal; a project manager, who has know-how in the crowd-sourcing and in the development of

online platforms; a community manager, whose job consists of communication with users and networking; a sales manager, who deals with clients portfolio. They make use of a wide range of skills and competences: soft skills for customer relationship building and management and technical skills to interpret clients' needs and translate them in a brief

5. Who are your clients?

They are big companies in sectors like appliances, furniture (Alessi), fashion (Franklin&Marshall), Chicco, Ita cementi (new product line using their existing technology) and local artisans (creation of their own brand) and privates.

6. Who are your users?

They are international designers (senior designers or students) and creative people.

7. How do you get in touch with your clients?

Clients get in touch with Desall or sale manager contacts them. For this reason, at the beginning companies are hesitant: they don't understand what Desall offers them. Desall boosts the open innovation model giving the access to a huge amount of radical ideas that are developed by an international community of designers.

8. How do you get in touch with users?

Users are identified through contests that are launched online: they take part to the Desall community and apply for a contest. In addition we identify them on blogs and online magazines about creative design. It is important also the collaboration with universities because Desall gives the opportunity to students to get in touch with companies and show their talent.

9. What is the role your partners play?

Desall cooperates with partners operating in the plastic sector in order to help clients in the production of new products. In fact Desall provides not only a source of new ideas but also support for the physical production of new products.

10. What are the main steps of the collaboration?

A client is looking for a new idea for a product (concept) or needs to redefine the design, naming or packaging of an existing product. The client gets in touch with Desall and our team translate its needs in a brief in English: it consists of a detailed description of clients' needs that the community of designers has to satisfy. The brief and a graphical representation are uploaded on the platform: in this way Desall creates a contest, which is three months long. During these three months creative people and designers belonging to Desall international community upload their proposals for the contest (upload phase). Then they invite friends and relatives to vote their proposals on the platform (community vote phase). This phase is extremely important because it represents a market research for the client, who can understand which proposals are more appreciated by the market, which target (customers) the product can reach and how the product can be successful. In addition this phase is also a marketing phase because client's brand is promoted on the Web and social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Finally the client that knows its needs and its technology identifies the winning idea with the support of Desall team. The winning designer receives a prize, which consists of an amount of money or royalties (a percentage of new product's sales).

11. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

On average it is few months long. However, given the high satisfaction, clients usually decide to keep in touch with Desall to create new contests to develop new products.

12. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?

Because creativity has limits. If a company has the support of a design agency, it can have access to a limited number of ideas and these ideas are incremental rather than radical, In a design agency, people create new ideas, but they are always linked to the same knowledge and background of designers.

13. Which difficulties do companies face in dealing with creativity?

Most times companies don't know how to get fresh ideas for the development of new products. This happens because they still believe in the traditional closed innovation model.

14. Why do clients ask for your help?

Desall is an outsourcing for creative ideas. Clients they need freshness and creativity source and the access to a huge amount of radical ideas that are developed by an international community of young designers that have different backgrounds and mindsets.

15. Why do users need Desall?

Because they can get visibility, reward and recognition due to their talent, capabilities and ideas. In addition, they have the opportunity to get job opportunities with international companies. In fact one of Desall's goals is to promote individual creativity.

16. Which feedback do you get from clients and users after the collaboration?

Feedbacks are always positive. Users thank us for the possibility to get visibility and reward for their creative ideas and the possibility to work with international companies. Clients are always satisfied and usually decide to create more than one contest with our support because they have access to an incredible amount of ideas, on average 1000, that are developed in a short period of time, 3 months, by designers coming from all over the world. It means that ideas are really innovative because they are developed according to different cultural backgrounds. In addition, clients use the collaboration with Desall as a tool for market researches and brand.

Appendix 5

CREATIVE EXCHANGE GROUP: INTERVIEW WITH DEE HENNESSY

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?

We are creative facilitators. A creativity facilitator can be defined as someone who specifically encourages creativity in groups and teams. I do this, but only as part of the overall objective to solve problems. Some people just train people with these skills.

2. What does your job consist of?

Facilitating groups and teams to come up with new ideas or new ways of doing things.

3. Which skills are relevant for your job?

Bravery, being able to talk to people, listening, improvisation, strategic thinking, being able to assimilate complicated information.

4. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?

Because it makes things more fun and you get more out of less.

5. On the basis of your experience, is engagement related to creativity? Why?

Yes, absolutely. Getting people involved and building rapport and trust with them is essential to achieving anything ambitious or innovative.

6. Which difficulties do managers face in dealing with creativity and engagement of employees?

Maybe it's got something to do with the education they have received or the cultural traditions they have grown up in that have made them self-conscious.

7. What are the techniques or tools to enhance creativity within companies?

There are so many techniques that I cannot describe them. I think whatever is done has to be responsive to the particular company, team or individual.

8. Why do companies ask for your help?

To come up with new ideas or to resolve problems or inspire or improve morale or to bring about culture change.

9. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

Sometimes only a day. Very rarely a period of individual days spread over years.

10. What are the main steps of the collaboration?

We don't have specific steps to follow because the facilitation is a tailored process.

11. How do you tailor the facilitation process for each client?

By listening. By asking lots of questions. By pinning down what they do and don't want and then by meeting the group I'm going to work with and coming up with some ideas on-the-fly.

12. How does your facilitation process improve learning for people or organisations?

Maybe they think they can have a go themselves.

13. Do you deliver creativity training activities? What do they consist of?

No, I am not a trainer.

14. What does coaching consist of?

Following a formal and approved framework of coaching support.

15. Who are your clients? Which sector do they belong to?

Mostly public sector. A lot of universities and research councils.

16. How do your clients get in touch with you?

Word of mouth, recommendations. I don't market or advertise in any way and have the worst website ever.

17. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration?

Often emails the following morning. They say nice things thankfully.

18. What is the most relevant aspect that your clients appreciate of your role? How do your clients evaluate your job?

Often they say that my improvised approach to facilitation exceeded their expectations or enabled a more flexible/inclusive/animated approach to their problem or group or opportunity.

Appendix 6

CREATIVE FACILITATION: INTERVIEW WITH JOHNNIE MOORE

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?

We are creative facilitators: we help companies organise and manage meetings in a more engaging and creative way than they can manage on their own. Often companies get stuck and they need someone acting from the outside. We help people work more actively.

2. What does your job consist of?

Our job is to help companies by breaking their thinking habits. We perform as creative facilitators in a more unexpected way than most people. Our work is disruptive and unconventional. We encourage people to break out their habits to think differently and more creatively.

3. Which skills are relevant for your job?

Curiosity about what is happening without judging, pay attention to what people say and feel, be present, be able to stay in front of people and express ideas in a way that people can easily understand it, be willing to take risks, try new things and do unpredictable things.

4. Could you be defined as creativity broker?

No. We are definitely creativity facilitators.

5. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?
6. Which difficulties do managers face in dealing with creativity and engagement of employees?

Any company that wants to survive has to keep creativity to change circumstances. We live in a changing world and it is easy to get stuck if you always do the same things. Any company need to be creative, look for what is changing and satisfy stakeholders' needs. Nowadays the world changes every day: companies need to react quickly to these changes through creativity.

7. On the basis of your experience, is engagement related to creativity? Why?

People are more engaged in their work if it is not completely routinised. During their work, people need a degree of freshness, otherwise they would get boring. Thus, engagement and creativity are mates and they always go together.

8. Why do companies ask for your help?

Because they are afraid they are not able to do it on their own.

9. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

It varies. Sometimes it is very long, sometimes we work with a client just once.

10. What are the main steps of the collaboration?

We have not a standard process. It varies from one client to the other one. At the beginning clients describe the problem they want to address, we discuss it and try to understand how we can solve it together. We make a proposal and clients analyse it. Finally, we get a plan to implement in a flexible way.

However, we tailor the collaboration process by focusing on the explanation of specific needs and problems of each client. We make our work inspiring and attractive: thus, companies can explain their needs. Organisations tend to default in doing it. For instance, leaders don't give enough information to people during their meetings. They bring people together, show them content. However they don't really make them understand the proposal the meeting and the message behind the content. Instead, they should involve people. We help organisations in making

meetings more informal and conversational. In addition, we help them choose the right setting where meetings should take place. In fact, most times companies choose hotel conference rooms, where there is not natural light and there are big tables that do not allow people to speak each other. Instead, it is preferable to have meetings where people are closer and there is natural light.

11. Do you deliver creativity training activities? What do they consist of? Are they different for managers and employees?

12. What are the tools to enhance creativity within companies?

We train people to work more creatively. Training activities are based on improvisation theatre techniques and they are the same for managers and employees. These techniques help people generate more ideas through body movements.

13. Can you explain one of your facilitation activities that is called wise action?

During meetings it is easy to agree with all actions that are proposed. But usually people do nothing about them because during the meetings people think “we must act” but they don’t understand really why it is important to take those actions. Thus, people should understand why they must act: it is possible only if genuine agreement comes up during meetings. In fact, people say “Yes” just to comply with management.

Wise action is the moment in which people understand what the action is and why it is relevant and they really want to take it. We aim to create commitment and consensus.

14. Who are your clients? Which sector they belong to?

They belong to different sectors. They are government organisations, no-profit organisations, companies.

15. How do your clients get in touch with you?

They apply on the website or through word of mouth.

16. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration?

We collect feedback in an informal way, through confidential conversations during events. We don't like formal evaluation through surveys.

17. What is the most relevant aspect that your clients appreciate of your role? How do your clients appreciate your job?

We can think creatively and differently in any kind of situation. We always provide a fresh perspective. In addition we are good in engaging people and encouraging them to participate actively during meetings.

Appendix 7

?WHAT IF!: INTERVIEW WITH SIMON BRAY

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?

We are creative facilitators. We help leaders gather first-hand insights around creativity and the culture of innovation.

2. What does your job consist of?

We help companies shape their culture to recapture their inventive spirit and built innovation through creative behaviours and tools. We help our clients try new things, change the way they act focusing on creative behaviours.

3. Which skills are relevant for your job?

First of all, we have 20 years of experience dealing with creativity and innovation. Then, we are engaged in what we do with people. We are innovation activists, original thinkers and passionate practitioners. We inspire our work to some values that are: audacity, passion, love, adventure and impact.

4. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?

Usually people move from expansionist way of thinking to the reductionist one. The trick of creativity and innovation is how people at the right time unlock expansionist thinking. Expansionist way of thinking is natural, it is not governed by rules: every body has born with it. Creativity in innovation depends on how people unlock their expansionist creativity.

5. Why do companies ask for your help?

Because they need help construct a culture in which creative ideas are valued and exploited to get results. Today innovation, creativity and engagement are strictly related and companies need to improve skills in these fields every day. The issue is to find right people with right attitude and right behaviours.

6. On the basis of your experience, is engagement related to creativity? Why?

Yes, of course. We engage leaders and employees. It is the starting point to behave creatively, unlock inspiration and change the way they think and act.

7. Which difficulties do managers face in dealing with creativity and engagement of employees?

Most times managers just maintain control. Instead they should communicate their vision clearly and enable other people within the company to think expansively and take action. Managers should invest in giving their people the chance to do something new. They should create a climate that encourage risk and accept failure as part of life, business and innovation. Then, leaders can deal with creativity and integrate creative efforts of individuals and teams if they are engaged in creative activities through their personal behaviours and actions.

8. What are the tools to enhance creativity within companies?

There is not a singular method to enhance creativity and then create a culture of innovation. We suggest that companies challenge the assumptions they base their business, deliberately provide opportunities to change and explore new worlds, hire people who are first creative and intuitive, then technically skilled. In addition, we offer a content platform, called Greenhouse, which gives our clients a flexible and high-impact place to share their stories, amplify their learning and participate actively in the dialogue about innovation.

9. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

It is impossible to predict in advance how long it is. It depends on the client and its needs.

10. What are the main steps of the collaboration?

We call it Creative Revolution. It consists of adopting creative behaviours that help people feel creative and act creatively. The first is freshness. It is the behaviour of deliberately exposing the organisation, teams, people to new and different stimulus to jump from one thinking river, the reductionist, to the other one, the expansionist, that helps think differently. The second behaviour is called greenhousing. It consists of taking new ideas, exploring where they go, suspending judgement. Another behaviour is signalling. It means to debate and understand which ideas should be chosen and how link creative world with business analysis world. Then, there is another behaviour that we call realness. People stop talking and make the idea real without perfectionism or fear of failure.

11. Do you deliver training activities? What do they consist of?

We don't deliver training activities. We do creativity. We deliberately introduce freshness and stimuli within organisations to provoke original thinking and help people go through the creative revolution, which consists of adopting creative behaviours and translate creative ideas into successful innovations. We don't deliver training activities because we believe that creativity cannot be learned. It should be lived.

12. Who are your clients? Which sector they belong to?

They are large global corporations working in different sectors like food and beverage, healthcare, automotive, energy, finance, fashion and luxury and many others.

13. How do your clients get in touch with you?

Through word of mouth or recommendations.

14. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration?

They are always satisfied and collaborate with us more than once.

15. What is the most relevant aspect that your clients appreciate of your role? How do your clients appreciate your job?

They appreciate how we bring freshness and inspire dialogue and change within organisations. We help managers and people be braver and courageous, take risk, act creatively and change. They appreciate the fact that we don't only teach creativity. We really do creativity.

Appendix 8

REDZEBRA: INTERVIEW WITH OLIVER MACDONALD

1. How do you define your job? Which is the most appropriate definition?

It is not a totally easy job to define. We are facilitators, experts in using creativity to engage people in their work. We do a lot of work in leadership thinking, change, teams. We work with companies putting on meetings, conferences, events. What RedZebra brings is unique: we use creativity to engage people.

2. On the basis of your experience, why is engagement related to creativity?

Because of the way human beings interact and their nature. They are inherently creative. Any piece of information can be more effectively learned when people engage actively. People engage actively when information is not presented in the traditional way, but when they are involved. RedZebra philosophy is based on a Chinese proverb: “Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I will understand”. Our work looks to use different ways to engage people and make them actively involved in the experience.

3. Which skills are relevant for a your job?

A lot of skills. First of all personal skills: listening to understand what is the issue for our client. Many times clients do not know what the issue is: they have an idea, they want something to be different, but they cannot define what it is. Another skill consists of asking great questions in order to clarify the issue (in terms of creativity problem solving), to search before driving into a possible solution, to understand the problem statement first: you must understand the issue, then you can come up with the solution.

4. Why do companies ask for your help?

Lots of activities in business happen habitually like meetings, discussions or the process by which people take decisions: they do it just by default and they need to do it again. When people start working with us, they realize that more can be gained understanding what is the purpose they are doing something for, what is the outcome they are looking for, how to communicate and achieve it with a group of people. Clients bring us in to help them thinking objectively, thinking creatively, come up with solutions and deliver more performance.

5. Why is creativity a critical issue for your clients?

Every day people face challenges: in both personal and work life challenges come up. What creative process gives is the agility, the speed by which you see possible challenges and turn them into opportunities. The work we do with management is the idea of positive mindset to search actively for solutions and opportunities when challenges come up: we link it to the concept of agility, which is the ability to move quickly and mobilize people to look for a solution. A manager doesn't know or hasn't skills basically to understand a possible solution. They can see challenges and mobilize right people. It is also something about ownership. If people come up with a challenge rather than thinking that it is someone else's problem, they will take the ownership. If they find solutions they will involve other people and move together into these solutions. When you look to a process, you look to continuous improvements. The more you engage with people, the more leaders can boost creativity. What we suggest to leaders is to focus on people because leadership in isolation has not impact. If a leader is coached for creativity, he has a channel to communicate and engage with people/team.

6. What are the tools to enhance creativity within companies?

We have been trained through a process called Creative Problem Solving Process (CPS), which was developed at the CPS institute. Over the years we picked up lots of different tools. There are many tools to get people think creatively. Usually people think that they are not creative and creativity is just something that only

artists and musicians can do. Facilitation means to create experiences to generate results. Creativity is one of the processes like dialogue, communication that aim to get an outcome. We put together processes that will generate ideas and work adopting many criteria such as the combination of divergent and convergent thinking.

7. Why do you adopt music as tool to boost engagement and creativity?

When RedZebra started working, its work consisted of building teams up. Over the years we understood that we should start working when the team is built because people feel connected. Teams are the best ground to generate ideas, discussing problems or searching for new solutions or strategies. Team building is a tool we use as an integral part of a program. One attitude or believe of most people is that they are not able to play music. It is a limiting believes. When we bring people into experiences to create something that they believe impossible using it as metaphor, they understand that they can do it. We work to create possibilities, remove limiting believes. We use music because it shocks people: they play music and don't believe that they can do it. There is not a measure for creative expression.

8. How long is the collaboration with your clients?

Usually it is a very long relationship. It takes many years. When trust is developed, we are able to stretch clients' skills, the way they feel comfortable. If the relationship has been successful, they will pick us in other businesses.

9. Who are your clients? Which sector they belong to?

Clients tend to be a mixture. We started as a value-based organisation: values are really important for our work. We started working with communities developing workshops and we still do this. The basic principle is that the creative expression comes first, the technical abilities come second. Because of our approach we can work with a mixture of people with specific needs. We work with communities, schools, teachers and big international companies investing in leadership development and team development. Most clients come from no creative industries.

10. How do you get in touch with your clients?

Clients get in touch with us through networking people. Most of requests come through someone directly or through recommendations. A key thing when you work with people is that people need recommendations from someone. Then, client have good memory about our creativity approach. We create unforgettable memories: people don't forget what we do and remember their experience with us after many years and they have the opportunity to use us again. The credibility, the reputation and testimonials help us. Our weakness is marketing and communication through our website: they will generate more work.

11. What are the main steps of the collaboration?

We have a process called design incubator. People have a project they want to do and we help them by keeping stakeholders all together and understanding their purpose. We start understanding what they want and then we provide support through design program. We implement a co-creation process: we create something with them and coach them through this design process. We help them design leadership approach and teams. We coach leaders to stand, present the content and they can develop ownership of company. Then, we bring them into the creativity process through experiential tools. Finally, we help them develop a road map a plan of interventions: we make them understand that any intervention is part of the journey. They need this road map to understand what to do, the meaning of each intervention.

12. What are your creativity training activities? Which are the difficulties for managers in dealing with creativity and engagement of employees?

Within leadership programs there are training activities. The issue that comes up is the ability of managers to understand what and where problems are. We help to find solutions rather than stop in front of problems. We found that each company has specific culture and needs: we use lots of tools and create something specific. Sometimes they have tools but they don't use them in the best way. Managers coming from different companies have different difficulties in managing creativity. A successful goal for us is to become part of company. As external facilitator, the

challenge is to connect with people immediately, they feel you one of the company or team. In fact, the more you know about the company, the more language you share with them the more specific the business context you bring into. For instance, we teach tools for creative problem solving. We first explain the relevance of creative problem solving and then bring people into the experience. In the information age, there is so much information available that many times you don't know which valuable things are. It is not a problem of availability of tools. The point is how you engage with tools and how you make relevant to them.

13. Do you deliver different training activities for managers and employees?

What is similar is the final goal. We want to cause impact. We never look to a group of leaders, but we deliver a programme that is for people. We look to how it will cascade to the next level. Training activities consists of coaching and education. Leaders need to know how communicate what they have learned. We look to what people need to hear, how the message will go to the next. We try to understand if managers understand and communicate with people within the company. Relationships, positive mindsets are relevant for both managers and employees because they are human beings. If we work with leadership their experience of this work with us is higher. The further down the organisation you go, the less complex language is, the less people have experience and use models. We have to send simpler message, convert it into the language they understand using metaphors. We try to understand what is important to people and talk about that. We understand motivation and speak about what people are motivated by.

14. Which feedback do you get from your clients after the collaboration? What is the most relevant aspect that your clients appreciate of your role?

We always get positive feedbacks. People love what we do. To collect feedback we use Survey Monkey (a system for evaluation online to get information from clients). Thanks to clients' feedbacks we understand what we should improve or change. Clients feel that we want to generate relationships and we learn to change the culture of groups.

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