

Collaborative Problem Solving to  
**Build Successful Partnerships**

A WNS Perspective



While globalization today paves the way for tapping new business opportunities in emerging markets, acquiring new customer segments and drawing up on new innovations, it also raises a pertinent question: Can a company with the objective of harnessing these exciting new opportunities have a narrow and individualistic view of conducting business?

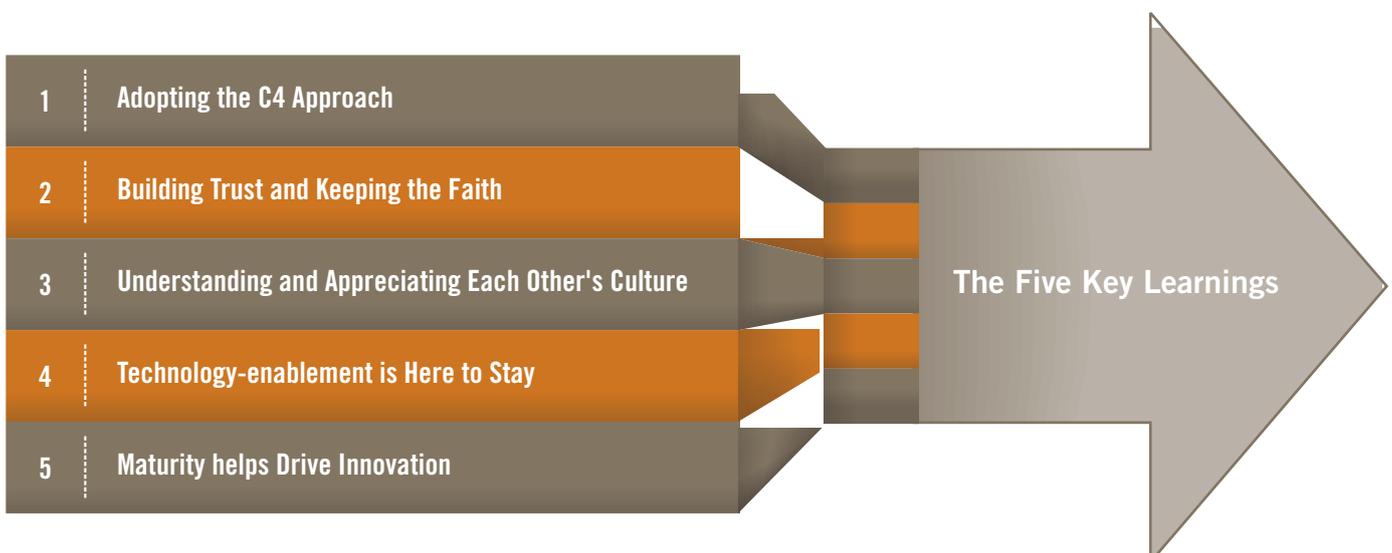
The answer is obviously no. The key to achieving success in today's highly competitive globalized world is to build, nurture and strengthen collaborative business relationships / partnerships. Irrespective of the size, reputation, customer loyalty or business prowess that a business may enjoy today, successful collaborative relationships will shape the future of business. It is perhaps with this reality in mind that Apple allows third-party developers to create applications based on the iPhone OS platform to cater to the burgeoning needs of iPhone users. Apple forged collaborative relationships with developers as it realized that anticipating all applications iPhone users might value, was beyond the scope of the company and that it needed market-facing developers that could help meet customer expectations and build customer loyalty.

The scenario is no different in the Business Process Management industry, where 'stakes' are higher. On the one hand, the buyer takes a leap of faith, trusts the provider with its own customers, business processes and critical data and hopes that the provider will deliver on its promise. On the other hand, the provider channelizes its investments, technology platforms, IP and human capital on creating enhanced business value for its clients. In its experience of working with clients across more than ten industries and countries, WNS finds three business objectives that can be achieved if the client and provider adopt a collaborative problem-solving approach.

**1. Tap New Customer Segments & Revenue Channels:** Collaborative business relationships help both the client and provider gain analytical consumer insights, thereby increasing the width and depth of the target segment of

customers. One of our clients, a global travel agency, was using its online portal as the primary sales and service channel. Driven by challenges in the business environment, our client needed to rejuvenate its revenue-generation model. We collaborated closely with the client and the result was that the offline channel – the contact center was effectively transformed into a supplementary sales channel for the client with a 50 percent increase in offline revenue generation.

- 2. Create Impactful Business Outcomes with a Collaborative Solution Architecture:** Creating winning solution architectures that address business challenges can be achieved, provided the buyer and provider share a close collaborative relationship. Many of our outcome-based solutions such as our revenue recovery solution for airlines - Verifare®; our award-winning Analytics framework – WADE<sup>SM</sup> and a host of our Process Enhancement Technologies & Services (such as P2P applications, O2C applications, E-invoicing, OCR) for transforming the F&A organization, have been created after closely evaluating and assessing key areas of improvement in the client's business process; and this has been possible because of the collaborative relationship we share with our clients.
- 3. Transform Business Processes to create Better Business Outcomes:** Mature providers are transforming the buyer's business processes today to create better business outcomes and collaborative relationships are at the core of this emerging trend. We have transformed numerous business processes for our clients to create outcomes that impacted their businesses greatly. For example, our team of experienced analysts conducted an on-site diagnosis to explore the depth of our client's (a global insurance player) challenges in MIS and reporting, and helped build a new operating model to leverage an advanced, offshore middle-office Center of Excellence (CoE).



## The Five Key Learnings

- 1. Adopting the C4 Approach:** In a BPM relationship, the buyer and provider need to follow the Cooperation-Coordination-Collaboration-Commitment (C4) approach to reap mutual benefits in the long run. The nature of the business is such that unless both cooperate and collaborate to find solutions for the buyer's business challenges, success cannot be achieved. BPM relationships are governed by long distances, and therefore, close coordination among the buyer and provider is a must. Finally, commitment of the buyer to engage in a long-term partnership commitment of the provider to constantly keep adding value to the buyer's business, defines the buyer-provider relationship.
- 2. Building Trust and Keeping the Faith:** Trust is the cornerstone of collaborative relationships. Trust enables co-operative behaviour, promotes improved relationships, reduces harmful conflict and allows effective response in a crisis. In a BPM relationship, trust plays a pivotal role driven by the fact that buyers give providers the access to their own customers, critical business processes and confidential data. Providers need to invest in business continuity, risk management and data security measures to protect the client's assets, while buyers need to keep the faith in the provider's efforts and investments.
- 3. Understanding and Appreciating Each Other's Culture:** In a globalized world and specifically in the BPM industry, where business processes span multiple geographies, understanding and appreciating each other's cultures strengthens the buyer-provider relationship and makes collaboration easier.
- 4. Technology-enablement is Here to Stay:** Irrespective of the buyer's business and the business process being outsourced, technology will continue to dominate the business scene as an enabler. Providers need to invest in technology to create innovative solutions aimed at solving client challenges and problems. Buyers, on the other hand need to choose their provider after carefully considering the latter's dexterity in providing the right combination of innovation in process delivery, technology platforms and domain expertise.
- 5. Maturity helps Drive Innovation:** Innovations may seem very risky at the start of a BPM relationship, more so when non-linear models are proposed. What drives innovation in the BPM industry is the engagement maturity and how well accustomed the provider is with the buyer's business. We can equate innovation in a BPM context as viewing the hour-hand of a clock; it does not move if you keep looking at it. It's only after a point of time that you see it has moved.

For the BPM industry, it is no longer about the 'exchange' in the buyer-provider relationship; it is about creating a '**collaborative advantage**' that has the power to drive mutual business success.

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