Strategic Alliance Manager Role (Identity):
a unique, holistic and empowering perspective

5 April 2017
(go to www.spibr.org/strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf
for the most current version of this whitepaper)

Joe Kittel
SPiBR.org LLC

Who do you think you are?

About SPiBR.org LLC
Founded in 2007 in Loveland, Colorado, SPiBR.org LLC is an international consultancy focused on strategic alliance managers. We are about the practical application of spiritual principles in business relationships. We help strategic alliance managers increase personal and organizational effectiveness and create a more value-enabling climate. Professional services include training, consulting and coaching services for alliance managers, alliance management effectiveness, and transformational practices.

Content: Page

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

1. Introduction

This whitepaper is written *by* and *for* strategic alliance managers, individuals with substantial experience in alliances, as measured in years or results.[1] If this describes you, then you may be interested in understanding the fundamentals. You may be asking:

- What enables an alliance to create value to its fullest potential?

- How can I transform my alliance from being good enough to being truly great?

A strategic alliance is a *long-term* business relationship, focused on value-*creation,* in contrast to value-*exchange* or value-*extraction* relationships. The more value-creating the relationship, the more strategic it is – and the more challenging it is. A true strategic alliance is the *most challenging* form of business relationship.[2] Lessons learned in this proving ground can be used in any business relationship.[3]

What attracts us to this line of work? Why do we love being a strategic alliance manager? For me, it is a strange attraction; I am attracted to the challenge, the complexity and the strategic nature of the work.[4] I am interested in continually refining my understanding of the artful science of alliance management. I seek to understand, develop and share with others the practical use of fundamental principles in strategic alliances.

As observed in calculus and physics, *fundamental principles*: (a) coalesce prior experiences, (b) enthuse the learner to solve problems, (c) illustrate the interconnectedness of events – across time and space, (d) inspire creativity, and (e) possess a certain predictive quality – they allow us to see more clearly how events unfold. Fundamental principles are simple; they lead us toward simplicity.[5] The question is:

- What are the fundamental principles in strategic alliances?

Strategic alliances are about value. They become great when alliance managers are focused on (a) personally *being* of value, (b) *finding* incremental value, and (c) *removing* value-impediments. This whitepaper addresses the first goal of the alliance manager, *being* of value. The latter two topics are dealt with more fully in the whitepaper *Simply Focus on Incremental and Value-Impediments: transforming a strategic alliance through simplicity.*[6] And, given both alliances and spirituality are about relationship, this document uses spiritual ideas.[7]

This whitepaper *is* focused on the individual alliance manager. It is focused on helping alliance managers become more effective and live a more fulfilling and joyful life. And, although the ideas in this document can positively impact an organization, this paper *is not* focused on organizational issues, such as business strategy, processes, tools or systems. This paper is also not about specific skills or knowledge we need to acquire and develop, aside from relationship-deepening skills.[8]

Deepening relationship starts by relating more deeply with one's self. This whitepaper is focused on strategic alliance managers; it deeply explores the role of alliance manager, and it boldly looks at what's happening within one's self. This paper presents a unique and powerful methodology that focuses us on the overlap of personal development and alliance development; this unique approach helps alliance managers achieve clarity within self and alignment with management. The purpose is to maximize the value-creating potential in ourselves and in our alliance. The ideas shared here transform how we think about our jobs, our selves, our companies, others, and the world around us. This paper asks, and then helps us answer the question: "Who do you think you are?"

---

[1] To understand the author's "substantial experience" in strategic alliances, see the Biography at the end of this whitepaper.

[2] Challenges are more fully discussed later in this paper. The biggest challenges are (a) trying to *create* in predominantly *fear*-based climates; and (b) the need to create value, divide value and then create again; each phase requires a climate of abundance (create), scarcity (divide) and back into abundance (create); and, the *scarcity-to-abundance* transition is very hard, arguably it is *impossible*.

[3] Is there anything in the world of business that is *not* about relationship? If the answer is "no" then the lessons learned in strategic alliances have very broad application, throughout business and in the world.

[4] Actually I am attracted to *dealing* with complexity, simplifying it or distilling it down to a useful and helpful form.

[5] Fundamental principles are *not* simplistic, they are simple, they are on the other side of complexity.

[6] Go to www.spibr.org/2-slide_methodology.pdf.

[7] For more discussion on the value of spirituality in alliances go to http://www.spibr.org/WIIFM_for_the_alliance_manager.pdf.

[8] These skills are described in Section 3.2 as *relationship-izing* the people in an alliance and *alliance-izing* what they do.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

1.1. Spiritual Disclaimer

I describe my spirituality as being open and growing; and yet, I acknowledge that I have unseen biases or blind spots that can cause me to be close-minded. I describe the two "spiritual universities" in my life as recovery from drug addiction and dealing with my children's progressive disability.[9] I am a long-standing student of *A Course in Miracles* and an active participant in 12-Step Recovery (Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous).[10] In my writings and in my life I am very clear about the spiritual principles, or "simple truths," which are important to me.[11] Sometimes this bold clarity coupled with my passion for life can be perceived as zealotry or dogmatism, which I am strongly opposed to. Do *not* accept my simple truths as yours. You have the truth within you; *be true to yourself.*

> *"Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking."*
> - Steve Jobs

Please do not blindly accept what I say to be true. Try it out and validate it with your own life experience. Most of the ideas in this document stand on their own without the need to understand or embrace spiritual principles. As I see it, spirituality sheds light on *why* or *how* this stuff works and is useful to help us understand the fundamental principles in strategic alliances.

1.2. Flow and Style

This whitepaper begins with an overview of the challenges facing strategic alliance managers: challenges in the business, in the alliance, and within the alliance manager. Admittedly, the section about challenges is exhaustive and exhausting. If we're going to find solutions, we first need to thoroughly understand the problem. Just as in the process of forgiveness, we must first *look at* the obstacles in a relationship before we can *look past* them and see the truth on the other side. This same approach is used in the *2-Slide Methodology*™ – we must first look at and clear away value-impediments before we can see the full incremental value possibilities.

Armed with a clear understanding of possible challenges, we then explore solutions from a range of perspectives. We look at the root causes that determine success or failure – success or failure as individuals and the success or failure of our alliance. We look at the overlap of three causal areas for personal success and alliance success; as a result, we gain insights and a clear sense of prioritization and focus. We then explore the role of alliance manager from uniquely empowering perspectives. We suggest nontraditional and counterintuitive practices that enable individual and collective transformation. We conclude with five spiritual ideas which deepen relationship – five simple truths which naturally lead to authentic value-enabling behaviors.

The writing style of this whitepaper is succinct and bold. Alliances are too important and challenging for ambiguity or timidity. This whitepaper is deliberately written in the style of first person plural. "We" rather than "I" is used to emphasize the "we-ness" of alliances. Opportunities, challenges and solutions to challenges are between us and amongst; they are in the collective; they are in *our* midst.

This whitepaper breaks through surface-level understandings to explore concepts at great depth. Fasten your seat belt!

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of this whitepaper is to help strategic alliance managers go within and consider the motives for their behaviors. This paper is about changing our attitude & mindset, focusing on the value we bring to our alliance and changing our minds about who we think we are.[12] It is about being of greatest value to ourselves and to others.

---

[9] For more about my life story go to www.spibr.org/joe_kittel_story.pdf.

[10] For a list of books that have most influenced me, and in some way describe or define my spiritual path, go to www.spibr.org/good_books.html.

[11] For more information on my five simple truths, spiritual principles or ideas, go to www.spibr.org/simple_truths.html.

[12] English language experts may object to my use of the "&" symbol in the phrase "attitude & mindset." I do that because of the importance of this topic, justifying the use of two similar words pointing at this *most* critical of our internal issues. We are talking about our perspective of the world and people around us, which is dependent upon our perspective of our self, which is dependent upon self-identity.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

This whitepaper presents a number of unique perspectives that illuminate root cause. From a root cause perspective, we clearly see our challenges and thereby develop practical solutions. These solutions clarify our role and enable alignment with management and the organization.

1.4. Results

With sustained focus, within self and throughout the alliance comes transformation. The more the alliance manager is focused on *value* – its embodiment, finding it and removing obstacles – the more value will be created as a result of transformation.

Bottom line results include: (a) greater value creation and (b) more fun than one person deserves.[13]

2. Challenges

This section discusses the challenges we experience in alliancing work. Some of the ideas in this section will be new, and some are discussed from unique perspectives. Even though this is a problem-oriented section, please read through it. By looking clearly at all the known problems, we establish the necessary context for us to develop and evaluate solutions.

2.1. Challenges in Business

It is astonishing that corporations tolerate the current failure rates in strategic alliances.[14] But it makes sense when we think about it. Because of their predominantly fear- and scarcity-based cultures, most businesses do a poor job in the area of *relationship*; and strategic alliances are about relationship.[15] It is arguable that most businesses are unconscious-incompetent in the area of relationship; as alliance managers we suffer every day from this unacknowledged organizational incompetency. So, despite their growing importance, most strategic alliances fail.[16]

Alliances are about *creating* value. And value-creation requires open trust-filled collaboration, which is itself dependent upon an atmosphere of abundance. The climate in business is increasingly one of *scarcity,* where "your win is my loss." Such an environment causes alliance managers to focus on *dividing up* value*,* rather than on *creating* value. We see evidence of this mindset when others in the organization ask us about "the balance of trade" or "the gives and gets" in our alliance. While it is important to answer these questions, their answers don't tell the most strategically important story. And value-division questions distract us from seeing with a value-creation perspective; such questions actually end up souring the environment.

Increasingly it seems that individuals live in *fear* – fear of making a mistake and fear of losing our jobs. Fear reinforces a scarcity mindset, driving us toward value-stifling behaviors. In such a climate trust is impossible to develop, and the resultant dysfunctional drama distracts us from value-creating work.

In addition to an unhealthy climate, businesses suffer from an endemic *lack of presence*. Given the pervasive use of mobile technologies and the intent to be as productive as possible, ADHD has devolved into a competitive sport, especially in the high-technology industry.[17] This is tied to another common sport – competitive calendaring, where people brag about having double- or triple-booked appointments. The result of all this is a lack of respect for attention and presence; both of which are crucial in any creative process.

---

[13] By "fun" we mean fulfillment and a passionate sense of purpose for the alliance manager.

[14] On average over half of them fail to achieve their full value-creating potential, in high-technology two-thirds of them fail. Perhaps it's time for a fundamental change; maybe there is a better way.

[15] A blunt statement is, "Businesses 'suck' at relationship." Think about it. Everyone has horror stories about how poorly they personally *relate* to specific business, sometimes most painfully their own company. If businesses intrinsically knew how to *relate,* would there be a need for customer *relationship* management (CRM) systems or strategic *relationship* managers (SRM)? The earlier blunt statement seems self-evident; it seems to "rings true."

[16] Since the mid-1980s the number of corporate alliances has increased 25% per year, accounting now for at least one-third of all corporate revenue. Yet, well over half of all alliances (68% in high-tech!) fail to create their expected value. Ref: *Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work* by Hughes and Weiss, HBR, November 2007, and a 2006 study of strategic alliances in 93 companies, *Managing Alliances for Business Results: Lessons Learned from Leading Companies* by Weiss, Keen and Kliman, Vantage Partners, LLC.

[17] Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD or ADHD) – persistent inattention and hyperactivity; one cannot sit still and *be*.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

Complexity is a huge challenge in business and in strategic alliances. The challenges of complexity are discussed further in the next section, but it's worth raising this issue here, too. Our lives are *very complex*!

Effective *communication* is very difficult in situations where relationships are poor, where there is a fear-based scarcity climate, where no one is really present, and where complexity abounds. In such situations people tend to over-communicate, just to be safe. Important messages then get lost as everyone tries to protect themselves with CYA communications, adding further fuel to *complexity*.

2.2.   Challenges in the Business of Strategic Alliances

Businesses can easily make value-limiting assumptions related to the management of strategic alliances. Given sales and procurement relationships also deal with external relationships, alliances are often staffed with these very bottom-line oriented people. Such a simplistic perspective misses the *long*-term and the *intangible* forms of value, which are often more strategic to the long-term success of the business than near-term revenue.[18] Near-term incremental revenue is very important in any alliance. But to *only* focus on that form of value misses the mark and distracts us from other, often greater, forms of value-creation. Consider the forms of alliancing value listed below. Will a sales rep or a procurement specialist be able to see these longer-term or intangible forms of value?

• access to new markets	• knowledge transfer	• new organizational capabilities
• business process innovation	• increased market share	• increased market penetration
• risk mitigation	• development of new markets	• improved time-to-market
• increased brand recognition	• reduction of competitive threat	• competitive neutralization
• improved strategic plans	• risk-sharing	• portfolio diversification
• improved partner loyalty	• brand loyalty	• improved customer satisfaction
• increased customer loyalty	• additional strategic options	• increased employee loyalty

Table 2.2a – Examples of value found in a strategic alliance.

If a business over-simplifies what a strategic alliance is, they will staff the role of alliance manager with individuals who are very effective in traditional business roles, but who will likely underperform as alliance managers. Likewise, if business development or program management people are assigned to be alliance managers, again the full potential of the alliance may not be achieved. These traditional business roles differ from the roles of alliance managers in significant ways; most importantly they can often lack the long-term *time* horizon, critical in strategic alliances.

The chart below (Figure 2.2b) defines traditional business roles and distinguishes them from the role of alliance manager. Some of the verbiage is extreme in order to make differentiations as clear as possible; the words may offend some, which is not my intent. And, to be clear, I have admittedly made broad generalizations in the characterization of traditional business roles. To be clear there are great people from traditional areas of business who do excel as alliance managers. But businesses should be *laser-focused* on what is *most* strategically needed in the role of alliance manager. Strategic alliance managers need to be focused on *creating value*, both near-term and *long-term* value, in both tangible and *intangible* forms. The role distinctions illustrated in Figure 2.2b may be seen as subtle differences of degree. The point is that the more we defocus off of *long*-term or *intangible* forms of value, the more our alliance's value-creating potential gets limited and the more our *strategic* alliance becomes *tactical*. We need to remove all limitations impeding greatness, especially anything limiting value-creation.

---

[18] Looking only at the incremental revenue in an alliance is like determining the health of a marriage by simply counting the number of children.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

Traditional Roles	Similarities to Alliance Managers	Differences Compared to Alliance Managers	Value-Limiting Impact on an Alliance
Account Management (sales or procurement)	• External relationships	• Value-exchange • Near-term results	• Overlooks long-term and value-creation • Becomes a more tactical relationship
Business Development	• Oriented toward value	• Can be weak in collaborative skills • Often focused on near-term and tangible value	• Weakened long-term value-creation • Becomes a more tactical relationship
Program Management	• Can span the entire business	• Scope limited to a program – often time-bound and organizationally-bound • Limited experience in external relationships	• Loss of long-term perspective • Missed value-creation opportunities • Weakened collaboration • Becomes a more tactical relationship

Table 2.2b – Value-limiting impact of traditional business roles on alliances.

2.3. Challenges within a Strategic Alliance

An ever-present challenge in any alliance is *complexity*. A strategic alliance often impacts every functional area and all levels of a business; an alliance manager needs to be comfortable discussing a broad range of topics at any level of the organization. Throughout our work day we experience excessive interruptions: sales escalations, executive briefings, press and industry analyst briefings, marketing meetings, meetings of all sorts and important inquiries from throughout our company and the partner's organization. There are too many things, people, systems and processes for us to deal with effectively.[19]

It is all too easy for us to let complexities and urgencies distract us from dealing with the most important *value-creating impediment* in any alliance, unacknowledged cultural differences.[20] The topic of cultural differences is about how people *relate* with people, it is *the* fundamental challenge in every alliance.

In Figure 2.3 below we see three main areas where alliances fail. Strategy and business planning and legal and financial issues are well understood in *traditional* areas of business. These are *visible* areas of work. In order for the alliance manager to focus on *relationship and people* it is best if that work is done by someone else in the organization. People doing that traditional work on behalf of our alliance need to be sensitized to alliancing work.

In particular it is worth re-emphasizing that the world of business is often a poor environment for relationships. Helping people in business *relate* better with each other actually requires *nontraditional* competencies beyond the skill set of standard business practices. Compared to the traditional areas of work, relationship and people issues are often invisible areas of work.

While Figure 2.3 shows relationship issues causing 40% of alliancing failures it is arguable that relationship and people issues add to the other causes of failure as well. Relationship and people issues present the *most difficult* and the *most important challenges* we face as alliance managers. This is the *artful* aspect of strategic alliance management; the invisible and intangible forms of our work which lead to visible and tangible results.

This is where we *simply* need to *focus* our individual and collective attention, on relationship and people.

---

[19] For a discussion on the valuable use of simplicity in alliancing, read the whitepaper *Simply Focus on Incremental Value and Value-Impediments: transforming a strategic alliance through simplicity* at www.spibr.org/2-slide_methodology.pdf. This whitepaper also presents a simple solution for dealing with the unacknowledged cultural and strategic differences (our greatest value-impediment).
[20] *Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work* by Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss, Harvard Business Review, November 2007.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

Focus …

… where others in the organization cannot / will not focus

Causes of Alliance Failure

Poor Strategy and Business Plans 46%

Poor or Damaged Relationship 40%

Bad Legal and Financial Terms and Conditions 14%

Strategy
Business Planning

Relationship and People

Financial Analysis
Contracts

Focus Here!
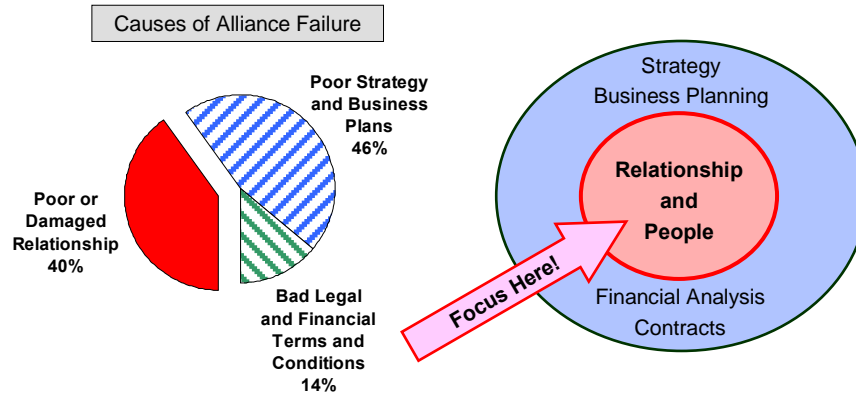
Ref: *Managing Alliances for Business Results: Lessons Learned from Leading Companies* by Jeff Weiss, Sara Keen and Stuart Kliman, Vantage Partners LLC. 2006 report on three years of research of over 100 alliance managers and executives representing 93 companies in a broad range of industries.

30 April 2012   Alliance Management Role Methodology   Slide 11
© 2007-2012 Joe Kittel – SPiBR.org LLC; Loveland, CO

Figure 2.3 – Focus where others cannot and will not focus – on the nontraditional competencies.

As alliance managers we are singularly accountable for the health of interpersonal relationships throughout our alliance. If not us, who? Given the importance of relationship and people, this area should be *the* strategic priority of our work. Relationship and people should be our central focus. Others in the organization can say, "That is a relationship issue," and they can be done with the topic, as if merely saying the words is enough. For us, dealing with the fundamentals of relationship and people is where our most important work begins.

The artful science of alliance management is not just a nontraditional business competency, alliances are actually *unnatural*. Value-creation requires a climate grounded in trust and a sense of abundance, which already starts to make alliancing unnatural in most businesses. Then there comes a time in every alliance when the created value has to get divided up. The process of dividing value brings with it a scarcity mentality; and this mindset is toxic to collaboration. Once the alliance's climate has switched from abundance to scarcity, it is very hard to switch it back to one of trust and abundance.[21] Throughout the lifespan of a long-term strategic alliance, it must repeatedly traverse through the value-creation/value-dividing phase of create, divide, and create again. This repeated traversal from abundance to scarcity and then back into abundance is beyond unnatural, it is *nearly impossible*. But as alliance managers we are comfortable doing the impossible; in fact, we seem to seek it out. "Impossible" seems to be part of our job description.

2.4.   Challenges within Self

Sometimes in life we can be our own worst enemy. This is especially true for strategic alliance managers. When we are unclear about our role and purpose, we can easily slip into unhealthy behavior, often out of a sense of survival. Do you recognize any of the following behaviors in others, or in yourself?

Drama Queen – if we want to make our jobs *appear* challenging and important, we might emphasize its dramatic aspects. We would then say things like, "Wait until you hear what they did today!" We may actually enjoy the drama of our job; it can give us a false sense of importance. Drama is a form of addiction; it can seductively distract us from the core issues we really need to focus on. Being with an addict can be exhausting, especially if *we* are the addict.[22]

---

[21] *The Program on Negotiating* (www.pon.harvard.edu) and *Getting to Yes* by Fisher, Ury and Patton.

[22] Addiction is anything we use to avoid facing the truth; to hide from the truth of *who we are*. In terms of individuals, we think of drugs, sex and gambling. Organizations can also be afflicted with addictions, especially complexity and drama, to hide from simple truths.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

Complexity King – a close relative of the Drama Queen, the Complexity King uses complexity to make their job appear important. We may notice ourselves slipping into this behavior when we say things like, "You won't understand; it's too complex." Alliancing is complex enough; if we really want to be more effective, we actually need to make things *simpler*. If we cannot describe something in a simple manner that is easily understandable to others, then we ourselves are lost in the mire of complexity. Complexity has the same adverse affects on self and the alliance as the addiction to drama does. It distracts us from core issues, and it orients us toward being more self-serving than other-serving. We then embody a counter-productive attitude.

Fear-Monger – a cousin of the Drama Queen, the Fear-Monger uses a more toxic form of drama. In the fear-monger mode, we often focus on a specific partner. For example, by simply mentioning the names of certain companies, like Microsoft or Wal-Mart, we can stir up a sense of reverence and awe for those alliance managers who can effectively deal with such legendarily powerful and fearsome companies.

Clearly we need to be protective of people, intellectual property, revenues and assets; we need to make sure our company is not being taken advantage of. But fear-mongering is self-serving. We have to ask ourselves, "Why am I emphasizing this particular issue?" Is it so that the *issue* can be resolved or so *we* can be revered? Fear, like drama and complexity, distract us from the core issues. Fear sours the climate in an alliance, making collaboration impossible. The use of fear is also addictive, distracting us from core issues.

Information-Hoarder – "Information is power; hold onto it, and don't share it!" This phrase is accepted as truth in business; but it is *false* for alliance managers. Value comes from *shared* ideas. Ideas are currency in an alliance's economic system; its value grows when ideas are shared, used and extended. Just like the flow of currency helps an economy grow, the free flow of ideas helps an alliance grow.

We do need to protect our company's intellectual property; but as alliance managers we need to *freely give* our most precious alliance-improving ideas to others. In a sense we should strive to obsolete ourselves in this area; this runs counter to traditional career-development wisdom. Later in this whitepaper we will explore the informal power available to us via the counterintuitive and transformational practice of Self-Obsolescence.

Unhealthy Behaviors	Impact on the Alliance	Impact on us Personally
Drama Queen	• Focused on problems; distractive • Creates a tiresome, draining climate	• Gives a temporary boost in importance • Distracts us from the core issues
Complexity King	• Focused on complexity; distractive • Opportunities and vision are obscured	• Self-serving rather than other-serving • Distracts us from simple essence
Fear Monger	• Directly inhibits collaboration • Sours the overall climate	• Fear of other is used to promote self • Distracts us from our core truths
Information Hoarder	• Inhibits value-creation • Encourages a "me vs. you" climate	• A loss of personal power • Misuse of informational power, failure

Table 2.4a – Unhealthy behaviors that stifle value-creation.

There are other similar behaviors that may be needed at times, but only briefly. These behaviors come with a cost; they stifle value-creation and should only be used while they are absolutely necessary. They include the following:

Gatekeeper – being a Gatekeeper is a seductive tendency for new alliance managers; they feel the need to be involved in *all* communications and *all* meetings. There may be times (e.g., during major escalations) when this behavior may be needed. However, if we try to sustain this behavior we can burn out as we try to be everywhere. And we will alienate others and restrict the flow of ideas, thus impeding value-creation.

Dictator – this behavior is an extension of Gatekeeper, mainly an extension over time. Dictators demoralize people, sour the overall climate and drive people away from their alliance. We should be attracting people to our alliance, not driving them away. Ultimately, dictators are over-thrown during an insurgency.

Executive Liaison – executive-level relations are important, but the actual value-creative work is done at lower levels in the organization. We cannot assume that executive-level agreement will necessarily lead to value-creation. We need to work throughout the organization on alignment, prioritization and focus. Executive level buy-in is necessary but not sufficient; we have to do more than this.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

Escalation Manager – we *do* need to quickly and effectively resolve problems, but that cannot be our only role; otherwise, our attention is distracted from opportunity and value-creation. Where attention gets focused grows – we don't need to grow more problems. We need to focus on the less glamorous and less visible work of problem prevention.[23] This allows us to stay focused on value.

Schmoozing Drone – the German's have a name for this role, "Frühstücksdirektor" or "Director of breakfast." It is true that without interpersonal relationships there is no alliance. But socializing and entertainment cannot be our primary focus. We cannot just work on meetings, dinners, get-togethers, team-building and social events. We need to be about *value*.

A "drone" bee's primary purpose in life is to wait. Drones wait for the hive to swarm and for the hatching of a new queen bee. Then all the drones race for the single opportunity to mate with the queen and die. A drone has a *once*-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a difference. As alliance managers we should be *continually* making a difference, with value as our objective. Value is both our means *and* our end. The best way to build strong interpersonal relations is to *be* of value – to deliver value, to everyone, everywhere, always. We are worker bees, not drones.

Socializing, or creating a sense of community, is best achieved by working collectively on value.

The behaviors in Table 2.4b can trap us into situations which limit value. We need to recognize them for what they are, so that we are not distracted from our true role; we can do this by being very clear and honest with ourselves about our motives.

Organizational Concierge – as everyone's gofer, an Organizational Concierge accommodates every request to "do this" or "find out about that." If all we are doing is servicing such requests we will be very busy, but we will also be completely distracted from the strategically important need to *lead*. This lack of leadership will be detrimental to us and our alliance. Alliance leadership is like no other type of leadership in business – it is counterintuitive and nontraditional in its approach and mindset with a unique set of skills and knowledge. We need to be very careful that we don't allow concierge service requests to distract us from our leadership responsibilities.

Alliance management is most definitely about service. It is about the right kind of service that will take the alliance to its highest level of value-creating effectiveness. It is about servant-leadership; service leads to maximal value-creation. Perhaps this title simply needs to be relabeled as "Value-Enabling Concierge."

Value-limiting Traps	Impact on the Alliance	Impact on us Personally
Gatekeeper	• Restricts information flow • Reduces value-creation	• "Burn out" • Strained interpersonal relations
Dictator	• Demoralizes people in alliance • Drives others away	• Frustration as others don't "obey" • Ultimately, loss of job
Executive Liaison	• Suboptimal results if the value-creation levels are ignored	• Frustration when results don't occur • Possible loss of job
Escalation Manager	• Problem-oriented alliance • Value is obscured by problems	• Negative problem-oriented outlook • We become the problem
Schmoozing Drone	• Little real impact – a NOP[24] • A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity[25]	• Watches others create • Stagnation and frustration
Organizational Concierge	• Good (not great) service • Weakens leadership of the alliance	• Seen as the alliance "gofer" • Not being of maximal value

---

[23] In this area there are either fire-preventers or fire-fighters (or those who allow fires to start). Often businesses reward fire-fighters much more than fire-preventers, but we need to focus on doing what's right – preventing fires before they have a chance to start.

[24] A "NOP" is a programming step in assembly language (very basic machine-level computer programming) short for "No OPeration." A NOP is something that does nothing at all by design.

[25] In a hive of bees the drone bees do no real work, they wait to mate with a new queen bee. The fastest drone bee gets to mate, the others are killed. So a drone is literally waiting for a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to make a difference.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

Table 2.4b – Value-limiting traps – behaviors possibly needed at times, but with value-limiting impact on the alliance.

Obviously *we* are the ones who *choose* our own behaviors, although we may not be consciously aware of our motives or their consequences. If we look within and examine our motives, we see why these behaviors are unhealthy. If our behaviors are about promoting ourselves, we obscure value and adversely affect the overall climate in an alliance. So we should continually ask ourselves, "Am I trying to advance *myself* or the *alliance*?" There are other unhealthy behaviors. We will recognize any of them by boldly looking within to examine our real motives. We can also recognize the unhealthiness of our behaviors by the affect they have on our alliance; these behaviors limit value-creation, either near-term or longer-term.

Given these challenges we face in our alliancing work, it's a miracle that we have any success.

• Ambiguity about the role of strategic alliance manager • Overwhelming complexity • Poor communication/over-communication • ADHD – multi-tasking and lack of presence and awareness • Unacknowledged cultural and strategic differences	• Low levels of trust • A climate of fear and scarcity • Dysfunctional and distractive drama • Our need to use nontraditional alliancing competencies • Ambiguity as to what "strategic alliance" really means (long-term, value-creation)	• Businesses' unconscious incompetency in the area of relationship • The unnatural process of leading alliances through create → *divide* → *create* value-creation phases; especially the *scarcity-back-into-abundance* transition (divide value and then create)

Table 2.4c – The challenges confronting strategic alliance managers.

The fact that half of all strategic alliances *do* succeed is a testament to the persistence and tenacity of the people working in these business relationships.

3. Solutions

So far we have exhaustively looked at our challenges: in business, in our alliance and within ourselves. Now we are going to switch gears and focus on solutions. As we begin this work it's helpful to ask, "What would we like to accomplish? What would the ideal solution set look like that redefines our work as strategic alliance managers?" I suggest the following ideal outcomes:

- Greater success for us as individuals – more effectiveness personally, more fulfillment and joy in life.

- Greater success for our alliance – increased value-creation and a more enjoyable place to work.

- Reduced complexity –greater clarity in terms of where and how we should focus our time and energy.

- Clearer understanding of how we can best serve others who are working in or supporting our alliance.

- Understanding of how we need to adapt and change during various phases of alliance development.

- Development of a sense of awe and wonder for our work and the ability to see it from a divine perspective.

- The ability to understand and use some simple principles and transformational practices that will enable fundamental improvements within self and within our alliance.

- To negotiate beyond mere "win/win" outcomes and uncover breakthrough opportunities.

Are you interested in making improvements in the areas listed above? If so, read on…

If we want to reverse the trends in strategic alliances and see more success than failure, we have to focus on root causes. In Figure 2.3 we saw three main causes of alliance failure: (a) poor strategy and business plans, (b) bad legal and financial terms and conditions, and (c) poor or damaged *relationship*. Given that (a) and (b) are *traditional* business practices, we do need to assure that those critically-important activities are accomplished with sensitivity to the nuances of alliances. But we, as strategic alliance managers, must focus our attention on the *nontraditional* competencies required in the area of *relationship* and *people*. To be clear, dealing with interpersonal relationships and people is very hard work, but no one else in our organization can or will do this work. As strategic alliance managers, *we* are responsible for relationship. If not us, who?

In the prior section we discussed a number of value-limitations that we ourselves might inadvertently cause. We can become our own worst enemy when we lack clarity in purpose or role, when we forget who we are. We become part of the problem when we allow ourselves to be distracted from the core issues that enable value-creation. These distractions come mostly in the form of complexity and drama. And we often cannot see ourselves clearly; we need trusted others that help us see our shortcomings (as well as our assets and gifts); this is another example of the "*we*-ness" of our work.

Changes in our alliance start with our selves. By focusing on *our* personal root causes, we can change the overall environment from scarcity and low trust to higher trust and greater abundance. We have discussed the three root causes for alliances. What are our *personal* root causes?

3.1.   Root Causes

Our personal success depends on our development in three areas: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) attitude & mindset. Knowledge is the easiest to assess and change; it is also the least important. Attitude & mindset are most important and the most difficult to assess and change. Skills fall in between the two other areas in terms of our ability to assess and change, as well as in its importance.
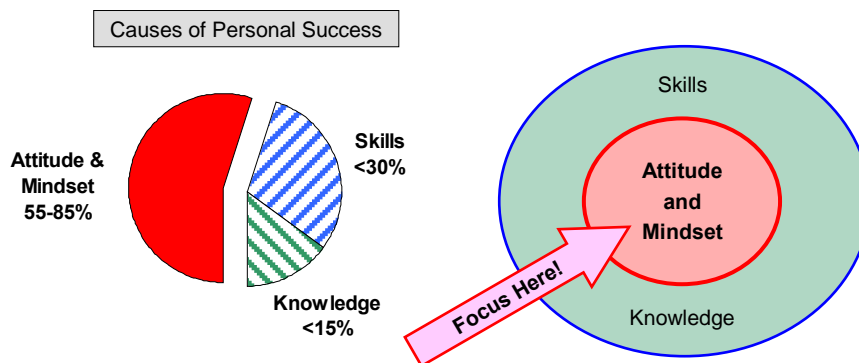
Figure 3.1a – Focus first and foremost on our own attitude & mindset.

If we are going to affect change in ourselves, it is best to focus on the most important and highest-payoff area – *attitude & mindset.* The fact that this is also the area with the greatest challenge should not dissuade us. We are drawn to difficult challenges; otherwise, we wouldn't be strategic alliance managers.

In alliance work, *knowledge* and *skills* are critically important, but we should not let these important areas distract us from the *most* impactful area of personal development. Tables 3.1a, b, and c below list alliance-specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes & mindsets, in that order. This ordering is chosen to illustrate how two causal areas (obtaining knowledge or developing skills) can be *good* distractions that stand in the way of our *greatness* (improving attitude & mindset). These lists are incomplete and do not apply to all alliance managers all the time. There is no prioritization implied within any of the lists.

Knowledge – *facts, information, familiarity, vocabulary, truth* – causes **<15%** of personal success[26]

• Financial terms • Legal contractual terms • Strategic analysis and plans • Customers and markets • Products • Global trends • Alliance maturity lifecycle • Metrics and measures	• Key legal terms and conditions • Use of teaming agreements • Organizational structures • Alliance governance • Competitors • Technical services and support • Corporate strategy • Alliance role-mapping	• Regulatory and anti-trust issues • Business plans • Decision-making processes • Business ecosystems and value networks • Technologies and trends • Corporate cultures • Business systems

Table 3.1a – Alliancing knowledge.

Skills – *use of knowledge, abilities, methodologies, competencies* – causes **<30%** of personal success[27]

• Negotiating skills • Financial analysis skills • Relationship-ize others: teach patience, develop relationship skills and relationship metrics • Tactful due diligence of partner • Time management skills – especially what we will *not* do • Embracing and using differences – confrontation • Relationship health assessment processes • Healthy confrontation skills • Strategic planning • Sales and marketing	• Make intangible forms of value measurable – metrics • Use of informal teaming agreement – living alliance management documents • Ability to link alliance to/from corporate strategy • Use of nontraditional counterintuitive alliancing skills • Key alliance and business management systems • Communications – all types • Conflict resolution processes • IP management and protection • Sales and marketing planning	• Alliance-ize others' work product: value relationship, metrics for long-term and intangible value, patience • Use of formal legal contracts – esp. when *not* to use them • Holistic listening skills – full presence and awareness • Teaching and enabling others • Use of processes, methodologies, metrics and measures • Buy-in and alignment skills • Program management • Business planning

Table 3.1b – Alliancing skills.

Attitude & Mindset – *perspective, beliefs, sense of self and world* – causes **55-85%** of personal success[28]

• Being enthused by challenge, persistent and tenacious • A timeless perspective – sees interconnectedness across time and space; patient • Empathetic and amiable, while being a hard-driver • Visionary – future-looking, sees big long-term picture • Optimistic and positive outlook • Trusting and trustful • Chooses to see the good	• Perceives others respectfully • Creative – seeing and sharing fresh, bold new ideas • Mindful, present and aware • Sees and share others' unique perspectives • Assertive-niceness – both "good cop *and* bad cop" • Sees alliance as strategically & bi-directionally part of the whole • Being open and collaborative with Strategic Planning Dept.	• Perceives strategic business plans as providing vision, purpose and meaning • Perceives Finance Dept. as protecting business's lifeblood • Perceives Legal Dept. as providing necessary protection • Respect individuals doing traditional work: marketing, sales, R&D • Perceives the alliance as one team, all on the same side

---

[26] The percentages of impact on personal success (for knowledge – 15%, skills – 35%, and attitude & mindset – 55-85%) come from personnel training at Hewlett-Packard and the Society for Human Resource Management (www.shrm.org), ref: *The Psychology of Success* by Dobbins, Richard, Pettman, and Barrie O; SHRM says **85%** of our success is dependent upon our attitude & mindset.
[27] See the footnote associated with Table 3.1a for references substantiating the impact that skills have on personal success.
[28] See the footnote associated with Table 3.1a for references substantiating the impact that attitude & mindset have on personal success.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

— in the midst

Table 3.1c – Alliancing attitudes & mindsets.

As we look through the prior three lists it is obvious that if we expect to achieve great success we have to focus on the areas of *greatest* impact. Simplicity can help us focus. We do need to simplify, but as is often the case, we first have to go through a bit more complexity before we can arrive at a clear and effective focus.

A great way to meld personal success with alliance success is to use the three areas of personal development as a framework for developing our alliance (see Figure 3.1b, below). For each area of alliance development (e.g., *strategy and business planning*) we ask ourselves and management the following questions:

- What *attitude & mindset* do I need to *adopt and embrace*? (the most important of these three questions)

- What *skills* do I need to *develop*? (important)

- What *knowledge* do I need to *acquire*? (in general, the least important question)
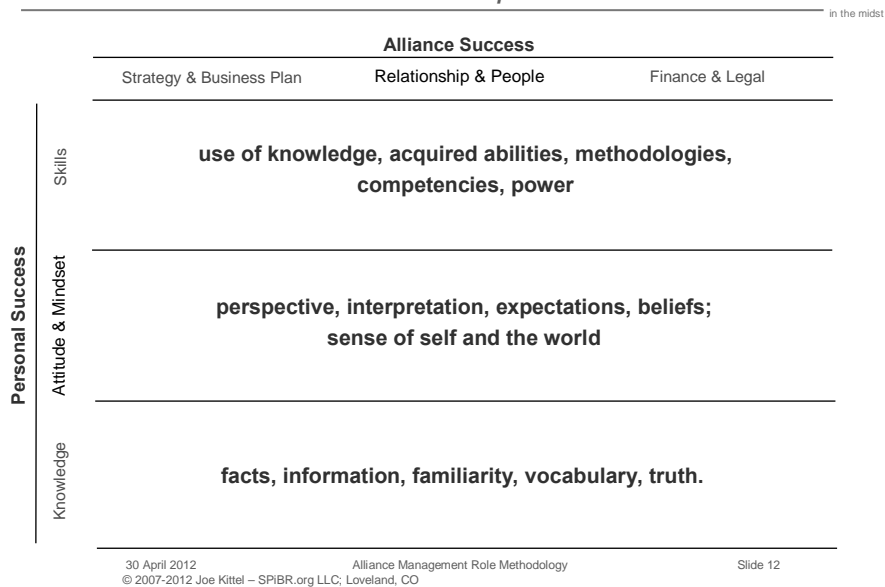
Figure 3.1b – Use your personal development as the framework for developing your alliance.

We then repeat those same three questions, for *relationship and people*, and finally for *finance and legal*.

3.2. Simplify, Prioritize and Focus (3x3 Development Methodology™)

We populate the framework in Figure 3.1b with prioritized success-causing attributes, unique to us, unique to our industry, *and* unique our alliance. We consider the unique objectives of the business, the maturity and needs of our alliance, and our personal abilities and development objectives. Figure 3.2a is such a populated framework; its content is based on the author's experience (it is just an example).[29]

Each cell describes focused areas of development for our selves *and* for our alliance. With nine cells this table can easily become too complex. To aid in simplification we suggest allowing a maximum of 5 things listed in the top-priority center cell. The second-tier cells (in the *attitude & mindset* row, and the *relationship & people* column) tend to need fewer things listed (3-5). The outermost cells (traditional business skills and knowledge)

---

[29] Figures 3.1b and 3.2a summarize the *3x3 Development Methodology*™ a process for an alliance manager to clearly define his/her role with their direct manager and align with the rest of the organization. The 3x3 table of Figure 3.2a can be defined for an enterprise, customized for specific layers in their business ecosystem and then fine-tuned for the individual alliance managers. This is a powerful simplifying and alignment process. This methodology is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 4 of the book *Spiritual Principles in Strategic Alliances: be the metaphor for metamorphosis; transform status quo mediocrity into greatness* by Joe Kittel; available at www.spibr.org.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

tend to have the fewest things list (around 3). With this framework and this approach, things start simplifying for us.

Focus …
… on the core in self … on the nontraditional in alliance

in the midst

		Alliance Success		
		Strategy & Business Plan	**Relationship & People**	**Finance & Legal**
Personal Success	**Skills**	□ **tactful due diligence** □ **link alliance to corp.** □ **implement alliance plan** □ **relationship metrics** □ **alliancize planners**	□ **holistic listening** □ **embrace differences** □ **nontraditional skills** □ **empathetic rapport** □ **helping others "get it"**	□ **Δ intangible → tangible** □ **alliancize others to value alliance & relationship** □ **use of informal teaming documents & formal legal contracts**
	Attitude & Mindset	□ **collaborate w/planners** □ **sees plans providing "vision" & meaning** □ **"part of" but with unique perspectives**	□ **enthused by challenge** □ **perceive others as self** □ **a timeless presence** □ **creatively mindful** □ **focused on goodness**	□ **respect for financial analysts & lawyers** □ **sees legal protection & financial "lifeblood"** □ **be patient & persistent**
	Knowledge	□ **good business plans** □ **both sides' strategies, customers, ecosystem, technology …trends …** □ **linkages between alliance & corporation**	□ **know & be true to self** □ **know both companies' organizational & cultural differences** □ **sources of power**	□ **financial terms** □ **legal terms & issues** □ **regulatory issues** □ **use of formal vs. informal agreements**

30 April 2012
© 2007-2012 Joe Kittel – SPiBR.org LLC; Loveland, CO
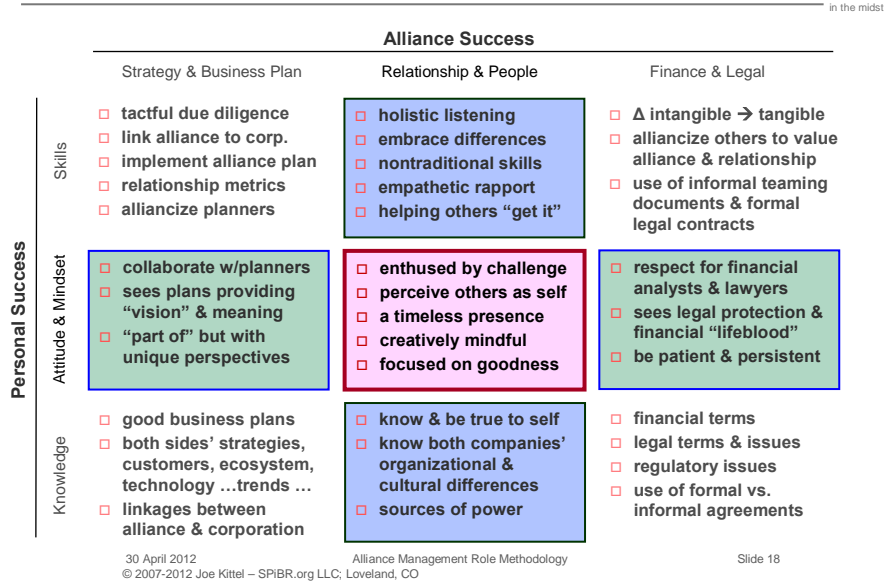
Alliance Management Role Methodology

Slide 18

Figure 3.2a – Focus on (a) the *core* in self (attitude & mindset),
(b) the *nontraditional* in the alliance (relationship & people), especially
(c) the *intersection* (changing attitude & mindset to deepen relationship).

We place our greatest emphasis on *relationship and people*. We focus on *the most important*, *most challenging*, and *most rewarding* question of all. We focus our attention on the *heart* of our alliance:

> What *attitude & mindset* do we need to embody in order to *deepen relationships*?

As I see it, spirituality is synonymous with relationship deepening. Through spiritual principles (ideas) and practices (authentic behaviors), we deepen relationship; this is the practical benefit we derive from spirituality. As strategic alliance managers we need to use all of our value-creating tools. "Your daily life is your temple and your religion. Whenever you enter into it take with you your all" (*The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran); this is especially true as we work on the *heart* of our alliance (the center cell in Figure 3.2a).

As the leaders of our alliances, we are the ones to answer this question about what attitude & mindset we need to embody in order to deepen relationships. Is there anything more important to the value-creating health of our alliance? This work needs to be **our primary focus**, because *if we don't do it, it won't get done*. At times there will be more urgent things, but nothing more important. Realize that when we are doing those urgent less-important things, we are being distracted from the most important thing.

We have two secondary foci:

<u>Relationship-ize the People</u> – *Teach knowledge and develop skills in the area of relationship.*

We provide to those who work in our alliance just enough and just-in-time training.[30] We help them improve their knowledge and skills in the areas of business relationships and interpersonal relationships. We help them see the world from the other company's perspective, bridging the cultural and strategic chasm that *always* exists between partners and is our *greatest* barrier to value-creation. We also bring with us our own attitude & mindset; we embody and exhibit the changes needed in our alliance. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change."

---

[30] We provide "just enough and just-in-time" training because, quite often, no one else needs or wants to know these competencies as well as we do, and they typically only need them during a specific task; e.g., in the middle of intense negotiations.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

We develop metrics around relationship, for which we will then be personally accountable. We help our executives and people in finance *value* relationship. We make sure that legal processes and contracts support relationship and do not damage it. Ultimately, we help the corporation realize that relationship should be treated as a strategic corporate asset; it can become a sustainable differentiator by attracting partners to *want* to work collaboratively with our company.
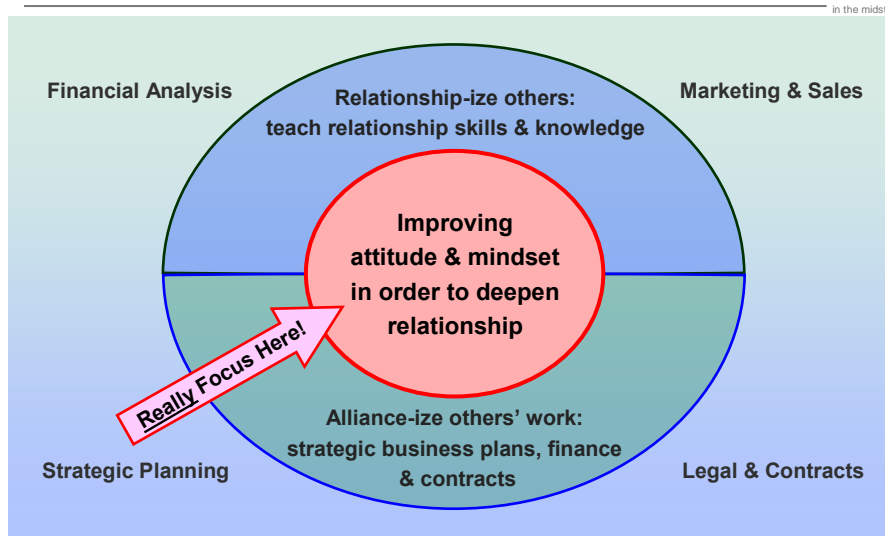
<u>Alliancize-ize their Work Product</u> – *Bring an alliancing mindset into the traditional areas of business.*

To "be the change" is especially critical here. We personify our collaborative mindset everywhere we go; this is what we are constantly teaching through our living. By our active presence we make the alliance's climate healthier. We positively affect strategic planning, business planning, financial analysis and legal processes. Given that most of these individuals do not work directly in our alliance, they may not need to improve their alliancing skills, but their work product (plans and documents) do need to be alliance-ized.

Plans, contracts and teaming agreements need to incorporate alliancing ideas.[31] They need to embrace the ambiguities inherent in alliances, such as risk, change, uncertainty, relationship metrics, intangible value and long-term returns. The critical issues here are (a) helping others value *relationship* as a business asset, (b) developing acceptable metrics to make *intangible* forms of value more measureable, and (c) bringing patience into the organization so that an alliance's *long-term* value-creating potential can be more fully realized.

Figure 3.2b – #1 Improve attitude & mindset to deepen relationship; #2 relationship-ize and alliance-ize.

There is no clean demarcation between our work in relationship-izing people and alliance-izing their work product. This overlap and interconnectedness makes sense given the holistic nature of alliancing and relationship work. Our single primary and two secondary foci impact all areas of our alliance's development. Still, it is helpful for us to prioritize our attention, time and energy into three levels of personal foci:

1. **Improve *attitude & mindset* in order to *deepen relationship*.**

2. ***Relationship-izing people*** and ***alliancing-izing their work***.

---

[31] Teaming documents complement legal contracts. Teaming documents are living documents which enable the on-going value-creation and the iterative management needed for the long-term success of an alliance. Only issues which *have* to go into a contract go into a contract (e.g., IP, legal, investments, ownership, etc.)

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

3. Assure that the work done by others is done in a manner that is sensitive to the subtle and significant nuances of alliance development and relationship deepening. (Even if that work seems fun or is career-enhancing, as much as possible it should be done by others so that you can focus, focus, focus.)

Alliances are all about value. We need to embody value everywhere, with everyone, all the time. But how do we do that? To start, we can be clear about who we think we are, what our role is and what our personal value is to the alliance.

3.3. Who Do You Think You Are?

So far we have been talking about *how* to develop and focus ourselves and our alliance, as well as *where* we should focus our individual and collective time, energy and attention.[32] Now we are going to consider *the role* itself, our job description. How we think about and describe our extraordinarily unique job.

Given that (a) we get fierce competitors to collaborate in a fear-based climate of scarcity, (b) with insufficient resources, people and power, (c) while dealing with overwhelming complexity, dysfunctional drama and numerous priority interruptions – we might describe the role of strategic alliance manager as:

Doing the impossible with nothing – in the eye of a hurricane.[33]

With this job description we are now ready to consider some unique, bold and empowering ideas. Let's start by considering how some relatively traditional business roles – The Negotiator, CEO, Change Agent, and Creator – may help us define the role of alliance manager.

The Negotiator – *We are* always *negotiating.*

Given the pervasiveness with which we negotiate, it is worth considering our role as *The Negotiator.*[34] Effective, open, high-trust and value-enabling negotiating is a critical skill-set for us to continually develop and hone.

The Best Negotiators
(Ref: *Change the World* by Robert Quinn and PON @ www.pon.harvard.edu)
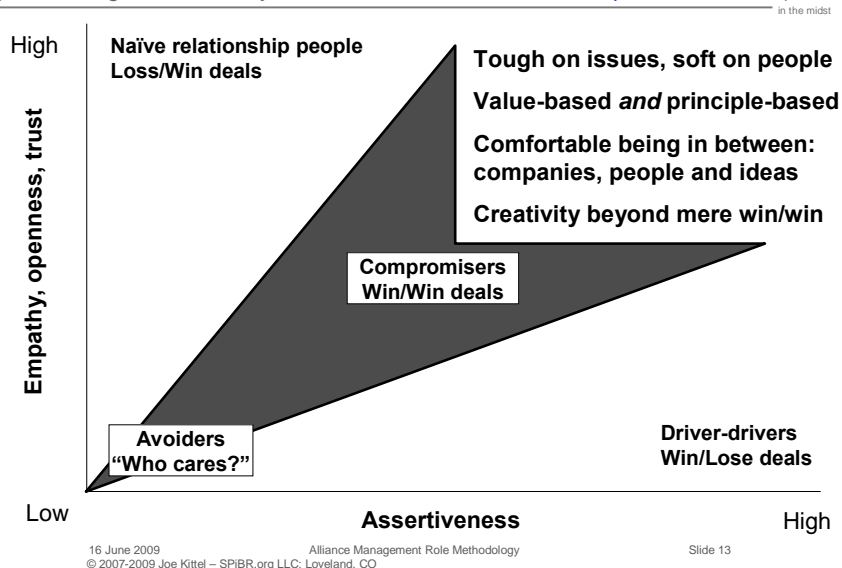
Figure 3.3 – The Best Negotiators are tough on issues, soft on people, and comfortable in between (*in the midst*).

---

[32] Reminder: our focus needs to be about changing attitude & mindset in order to deepen relationship.

[33] Whether or not you are in the actual eye of a hurricane it is an intensely chaotic place, just like a lot of alliances. If we have to be in a hurricane, it is best to be in the eye, a relatively peaceful place; in fact it is the only place where we can actually do our work, otherwise we become victims-of-circumstance. Staying in the eye, amidst all the chaos and churn, requires attentiveness, presence and discipline.

[34] The best negotiating course I know of is *The Program on Negotiation* (PON) at Harvard Law School with participation from Harvard, MIT and Tufts Universities and attendees from a broad range of industries – www.pon.harvard.edu.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

Here are critical personal attributes of the best negotiators:[35]

- Powerful interpersonal relationship builders/empathetic rapport builders – great "people-people" who create open, high-trust relationships.

- Driver-drivers – very task-oriented with high assertiveness – competitors, but not maniacally-competitive.

- Able to separate people from issues – hard on issues, soft on people.

- Great listeners and great communicators – in that order – because listening *is* deep communication.

- Comfortable being in between, *in the midst* – between companies, between people and even between ideas; between the ideas of empathy and assertiveness; comfortable in that space between two ideas or negotiating "positions," where creativity and inspiration resides — these types of negotiators find solutions that are beyond mere win/win outcomes: they can easily argue either/both sides of a debate; they can represent either company equally well (causing people to wonder, "Just who does he/she work for?")

> *"If you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a thousand battles without a single loss."*
> – Sun Tzu in *The Art of War*

The ideas of "enemy" and "war" are not helpful in an alliance; but the concept of knowing yourself and knowing the other is important. Perhaps the enemy is suboptimal outcome, and the war is against goodness (the enemy of greatness).[36] If we know ourselves and know our partner, we can then lead our alliance toward greatness.[37] Such greatness is achieved through the establishment of deep relationships – with our selves and with others.[38]

Mini-CEO – *Close, but this role is actually too limiting.*

In many ways it is helpful to think of our job as being like a CEO. We are the CEO of our alliance, responsible for its overall health and value creation. There are, however, subtle but significant differences. Perhaps the differences below are described too starkly, especially as they relate to a CEO's perspective on long-term and intangible forms of value; but the stark contrast helps to emphasize the importance of time and the intangibles in an alliance. The differences regarding an alliance manager's limitations in budget, resource, decision-making and power are true in most alliances.

---

[35] The four other sub-optimal negotiator types represented in Figure 3.3 are consciously *not* discussed here; our focus is on greatness, on being the best. The four sub-optimal negotiator types are Pure (Naïve) Relationship people, Compromisers, Avoiders and Driver-drivers; I highly recommend attending *The Program on Negotiation* to learn more (www.pon.harvard.edu).

[36] *Good to Great* by Jim Collins.

[37] In negotiating, we just need to prepare a little further ahead of and a bit more deeply than the other side in order to "lead it."

[38] Negotiating beyond mere win/win is discussed in the section "Nontraditional, Counterintuitive Transformation Practices."

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

Comparing the CEO and Alliance Manager Roles		
Similarities	**Differences**	
• Both span the entire lifecycle – from R&D-to-Sales – plus legal and finance • Both are oriented toward creating incremental value for the business	• CEO has control over significant budget and resources • CEO tends to be more focused on near-term tangible value • CEO has direct decision-making authority • CEO has more formal power	• Alliance Manager has insufficient budget and resources • Alliance Manager considers near- and long-term, as well as tangible and intangible forms of value • Alliance Manager mostly influences decisions • Alliance Manager has informal power – subtle persuasion
Conclusions		

• We may feel limited by comparison to a CEO in terms of formal power, authority and resource.
• By comparing ourselves to a CEO, we may end up *limiting* our own *thinking* by focusing on our lack.
   o We miss the opportunity to focus on *only* the *core* and *nontraditional* aspects of our job.
   o We obscure the necessity to focus on *attitude & mindset* to deepen *relationship.*
   o We miss the *expansion* of our *informal power* via the vast *nontraditional means* at our disposal; our informal power can often exceed formal power.		

Table 3.3a – Comparing ourselves to a CEO can be self-limiting thinking.

There are powerful points one can draw from the conclusions in Table 3.3a. It is all too easy for us to get frustrated by what the CEO *has* and we *do not* have. We may feel like we lack sufficient power, authority and resource. This line of thinking leads to statements like, "If only I was at the right level in the organization. If only management realized the real importance of strategic alliances, they would give me a bigger budget, a bigger team, and more authority." Such lamenting does no good; ultimately it limits us and stands in the way of our greatness.

We can view the lacks in our job as problems or *opportunities* (this sounds trite but it does hold merit). An opportunity-based perspective focuses on using what we *do* have. Our lacks force us to use what we do have, at the core of ourselves, *attitude & mindset,* to improve *relationship* in our alliance. We are forced to focus on the cause of most alliance failures – relationship and people. Our job is nontraditional for business, so we often have to use counterintuitive skills in order to "do the impossible with nothing." Highlighting our unique skills is the purpose of this whitepaper. We can use our unique skills to develop our informal power in ways that actually exceed formal organizational power.

One such counterintuitive skill is Self-Obsolescence. When we freely give to others our most precise value-creating ideas, those ideas come back to us with gain, our influence is extended, and we attract greatness into our alliance. With our informal power we begin to truly lead our alliance. Then, at times, it can be quite humbling when an executive comes and asks our permission to do certain things in our alliance.[39] At such times it is important to stay humble and know where our power comes from, to realize it is *both* "*all* about me" and "*nothing* about me" – alliancing is "a *we* thing" – our power comes from *within* the alliance.[40]

When dealing with apparent lacks in life, there is a two-phase growth process we can choose or not choose to grow through. First is *acceptance*, and with full acceptance comes *transcendence*. When we can fully accept "the *is*-ness" of a challenge, as Eckhart Tolle says in *The Power of Now*, that challenge loses its ability to constrain us – we transcend or rise above the challenge. After acceptance we can choose to *embrace* or lovingly accept it. With loving embracement, curses are *transformed* into blessings.

---

[39] I have experienced this. An HP Senior VP asked my permission to do something with our alliance partner. I told him "no," not until he accomplished an assigned task. The next day he reported back that he had accomplished the task and I then granted permission.

[40] Consider how great people, who happen to be disabled, perceive their disability. Do they lament at what they do *not* have or focus on what they *do* have? Consider blind people who have developed extraordinary hearing abilities. Consider Stephen Hawking who has focused his attention on his mind and not on his disability, on what he *can* do, not what he *cannot* do (www.hawking.org.uk).

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

A powerful example of this two-phase growth process is recovering from drug addiction. With full acceptance comes freedom from addiction. Later on, with loving service in a 12-step fellowship, addicts grow to actually embrace their disease and they transform it into a blessing. Addicts often describe this spiritual awakening simply as "finding a new way to live." They can then experience a life beyond their wildest dreams. So, is drug addiction a curse or a blessing? The answer is "yes," depending upon the perspective one chooses.

Is our lack of sufficient power and resource a problem or an opportunity? The answer is "yes." It is a problem if we fight it; it is an opportunity if we accept and embrace it. It is our choice.

Agents of Change – *Alliances are about change; therefore, alliance managers are agents of change.*

Table 3.3b is derived from the book *Change the World* by Robert Quinn, modified for application in strategic alliance management.[41] In his book Quinn studies *traditional* change agents (fact-based, authority-based and relationship-based) and compares them to *transformational* changes agents (Quinn studied the lives of Christ, Gandhi and Martin Luther King as examples of transformational agents of change).

Read Table 3.3b in a clockwise manner, starting in the upper-left corner. There is a progression from fact-based to authority-based to relationship-based and finally to transformational. The outer ring suggests how a certain type or combination of change agent types can be most effectively used during various phases in the development of an alliance. The industry within which an alliance resides also determines the most appropriate type of change agent (e.g., the pharmaceutical industry often needs more structure and control than high-tech, so fact- and authority-based behaviors may be more appropriate in that industry).

These various change agent types can describe an alliance manager's career development path; such was my experience. Early on I focused on acquiring and using facts in order to affect change in the alliance. Later, I sought out authority (directly and indirectly) and afterwards focused on developing relationship competencies. Much later in my career I realize that I had experienced transformational change all along my career path; and while this change occurred within me, I could not have done it without others.

Assessment	Structured Control	Escalation
Fact-based Behaviors we embody: • Arguments of **rational persuasion** • Be an expert with all the necessary facts and knowledge • Lead sufficiently detailed analysis in preparation for discussion and negotiation • Instruct, inform and teach	**Authority-based** Behaviors we embody: • **Leverage behavior** to force compliance • Use authority, and if necessary, fear to legitimize directives • Assure compliance via performance-based reward and punishment • Information flow and context is controlled	
Transformational Our embodiment: • **Transform self** – embrace hypocrisy, spiritual boldness, lead by "being" • Productive community, transcends external sanctions, disrupts systems (as needed) • Collective awareness of and surrender to emergent reality – "something going on"	**Relationship-based** Behaviors we embody: • **Open** all-inclusive and clear **dialogue** fostered in a supportive environment • Healthy nonjudgmental confrontation to resolve important and difficult issues • Interpersonal cohesion – feeling "part of" • Strong emphasis on win/win relationship	
Trailblaze	Transform & Renew	Negotiation

Due Diligence (left side) / *Preservation* (right side)

Table 3.3b – Alliance managers are agents of change.

No one type of change agent is necessarily better than another. An alliance manager should be comfortable moving in and out of all of these roles as situations dictate. Below is a summary of these agents of change:

---

[41] *Change the World: How Ordinary People Can Achieve Extraordinary Results* by Robert E. Quinn. This book explicitly straddles spirituality and business (see Appendix A: A Summary of Advanced Change Theory – www.spibr.org/Transformational_Change_Agents_and_Organizations.pdf). Quinn is a distinguished professor of organizational behavior and human resource management at the University of Michigan School of Business and author of *Deep Change*.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

<u>Fact-based</u> – *"If I give you enough information, you will change."*

We focus on educating self and informing others, even dictating at times, in order to make change happen. We present the facts so others will cooperate and change. We focus on becoming the knowledgeable expert. Detailed analysis is important in order to counter-argue against critics.

Being fact-based is helpful in assessment work, where collective attention needs to focus on technical, legal or regulatory matters. Fact-based, combined with transformational, is helpful when assessing new opportunities. When combined with the authority-based mode, being fact-based helps when structured control is necessary (e.g., in pharmaceutical alliances).

<u>Authority-based</u> – *"If I am your manager, or if I escalate to your manager, I can make you change."*

We focus on gaining authority and strive to work at the most important level of an organizational. With authority comes access to a larger team, more budget and increased leverage. Title and position are important. We use concise directives backed up with the unambiguous award and punishment; we do this to achieve alignment and compliance. Control of information is important; so some information-hoarding may be necessary.

Being authoritative is helpful during major escalations when controlled action is paramount. Coupled with being fact-based, positional authority provides structure to alliance activity. Combined with the relationship-based type, authority helps during threatening times, such as when a partner is being acquired, during a major lawsuit or during regulatory audits. During such times we need open, trustful and yet controlled communication.

<u>Relationship-based</u> – *"As we work together, we will both change."*

It's all about relationship. Participatory dialogue, human processes, open dialogue, supportive communication, and the assurance that everyone is heard are all very important. We strive for win/win outcomes, equality in the "gives and gets," and a balance-of-trade. Both conflict and confrontation are suppressed for the sake of the relationship, with a tendency toward 100% consensus decision-making processes.

The relationship type is helpful during negotiations or in a new alliance. Combined with the authority-based mode, it is helpful when an alliance feels threatened. Combined with the transformation mode, a relationship focus is helpful during alliance renewal.

<u>Transformational</u> – *"In order to allow you to change I must first change myself; I must be the change."*

We see ourselves as an integral part of the collective, playing both a very large *and* a very small part. It is both all about us and nothing about us – it is "all about *we*." Others produce the tangible value; we help enable greater value-creation. We continuously strive to be of value, to be about value. We personify growth for the common good. We are empowered as we empower; as we give we receive. We lead in transcending and transforming obstacles and value-impediments. The alliance's disruption of the rest of the business may be necessary, again, for the greater good. We are comfortable being "the metaphor for metamorphosis."

The transformational mode is helpful when "trail blazing" and looking for fundamental breakthroughs. Coupled with the relationship-based mode it helps during renewal and reinvention. Combined with the fact-based mode it helps during due diligence assessments.

It's arguable that we should always be *thinking* like a transformational change agent, while *using* the traditional types as needed.[42] Perhaps this line of thinking embodies many of the nontraditional and at times counterintuitive competencies discussed later in this whitepaper.

---

[42] If you are interested in *being* a transformational strategic alliance manager read the whitepaper *Transform Your Alliance: accomplish extraordinary results* at www.spibr.org/Change_Your_Alliance.pdf.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

Creator – *Alliances create value; so we can learn about enabling creativity from our creator.*

This section might sound egotistical and grandiose to some; if so, we have not adequately conveyed a crucial point. What we are actually about is our *grandeur*. Remember our extreme job description from Section 3.3?

Doing the impossible with nothing – in the eye of a hurricane.

In impossible situations it takes all of our innate personal greatness that we can bring to bear in order to achieve success.[43] From the most value-creating job in the universe, the attributes of deity describe a being that is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient – all-powerful, ever-present and all-knowing. It is both insightful and helpful for us to consider how *power*, *presence* and *knowledge* relate to our job as value-creating strategic alliance managers.

Omnipotence – *Power and Resources*

In business, power takes on two forms: (a) the ability to commit organizational resources – *formal* power, and (b) the ability to influence of others – *informal* power. As alliance managers our formal power is finite, with limited formal power in our own company and no formal power in the other company. Our informal power is derived from the impact our ideas have on others. Our attitude & mindset determine what we do with our ideas. Do we give them away or do we hoard our ideas?

The power derived from giving our ideas away ends up determining what we can accomplish with our ideas. Our informal idea-based power grows when our ideas are freely shared with others; with the resultant positive feedback virtuous cycle, power begets power (all of it being informal power).

Omnipresence – *Presence and Influence*

New alliance managers try to be present in all meetings and in all conference calls. They want all communication to flow through them. While this behavior is understandable, the alliance manager becomes an information bottleneck stifling the flow of information, and the alliance suffers as a result. Alliance managers can, and should, achieve ever-present influence, but in an entirely different manner.

As we freely share with others our knowledge, wisdom and ideas, our *influence* pervades throughout the alliance. People grow to understand and support our vision and our perspective. When we cannot be present in meetings, people ask, "What would she think about this situation?" Or they say, "Let's check-in with her before we make our final decision." Given that we have freely shared with others, they are actually compelled to share back, to share new information, and keep us informed of progress or issues in their area of the alliance. These are all signs of success in the art of *virtual* presence and indirect influence.

Omniscience – *Knowledge, Ideas and Wisdom*

Alliance managers are expected to be as all-knowing as possible about their alliance. At any time and with anyone, we need to be able to answer such questions as:

- What is the *value* of this alliance? What are our major *opportunities*? What is its *vision*?

- What are the *impediments* standing in the way of the value? How can we overcome major challenges and obstacles? How can I help?

- What is working? What is not working? What should we do differently?

Management expects us to enable others to be more effective. We enable others when we share insights and recommendations for how to work together. We need to help others span the cultural and strategic chasms which exist between any two companies. Management expects us to be as all-sharing as possible with our knowledge while still protecting intellectual property and confidential information.

---

[43] *"The impossible often has a kind of integrity which the merely improbable lacks."* – Douglas Adams

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

As alliance managers we have the unique opportunity to grow informal power and indirect presence via proactive idea-sharing. It has been said that "the best teachers strive to obsolete themselves" – they want their students to surpass them. This sentiment is true in alliancing as well. Ultimately, we want those who work in our alliance to not *need* us; they will then *want* us. There is a powerful and natural tendency to share back when someone openly shares with us. And, as ideas are shared, they grow. Individuals and organizations benefit, and our influence expands and deepens. Shared ideas enable greater value-creation in an alliance. In a virtuous cycle, we grow and the alliance grows in value, power and influence – all based on shared ideas and reciprocal appreciation.

I experimented with "self-obsolescence" during my last few years at Hewlett Packard (HP). This type of personal development is counterintuitive, seemingly career suicide. It flies in the face of traditional business logic that says "information is power – so hoard it." But the result for me was an *increase* in personal power and influence on both sides of the alliance.

Our informal power can easily end up being *greater* than formal power. Others may come to us for guidance and direction, and even permission. We need to use our new found power in humility but, paradoxically, with great boldness, too. With this particular source of informal power comes lonesome responsibility. We may be the only ones who see certain situations and opportunities. We may be the only ones with a holistic and objective perspective. Our insight may require us to take unpopular stances. We may have to help others see what we see, so that the organization can make its most informed decisions. We must be focused on doing the greatest good for all concerned – to help all grow.

> Being all-knowing (and all-sharing) should be our primary focus.

As our best value-creating ideas are freely shared, we gain informal power, broaden our presence and deepen our influence throughout the alliance. Knowledge is power, and it's grown by sharing it.

Okay, now for the grand punch line: would it be helpful for us to think about our role as like being the god of our alliance? Think about it. We want our alliance to be about *creating* value. It needs to create value for a very long time; with business's near-term horizons, a few years can feel like *forever*. A sense of timelessness can bring a richer more persistent perspective. As alliance managers we are concerned about the overall *climate* in our alliance, a climate grounded in abundance and even a sense of love (in the grandest sense of that word). The ability to change the climate and be forever creative sounds god-like to me.

Negotiating with our Greatest Spiritual Teacher – *Preparation and presence when negotiating with deity.*

Let's further expand on the ideas in the prior section. Let's consider the grandeur of our job by applying a bold twist on real-world experiences. What would it be like if tomorrow you had a formal negotiating meeting with your greatest spiritual teacher? What if you had a face-to-face meeting with Buddha, Christ, Gandhi, Abraham, Martin Luther or the Dalai Lama? What if you were going to negotiate with deity? This scenario might be called our "day of reckoning," bringing with it an intense focus and calling for our absolute presence.

Imagine yourself in such a situation and consider:

- How would you prepare? And around which topics or issues would you prepare?

- What would be the nature of your presence? Would you be fully present during the meeting? Or would you be checking e-mail, texting or talking on your mobile phone? Where would you be focusing your attention? Would they be paying attention to you? Would we be giving each other our full undivided attention? Would everyone in the room be fully present?

- What would the discussions to be like? Would the discussions be intense and focused, but also loving? Would core issues get surfaced and addressed? If so, how would these tough issues get resolved?

- Can you imagine that, as the Spiritual Teacher eloquently explores and argues both sides of an issue, you might ask, "Whose side is he/she on?" So, whose side *is* he/she on?

- What would the results be like? Would they be balanced? Would ideas surface that were more creative than anyone could have previously imagined? Would these results stand the test of time?

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

- Would we be enthused and inspired after the meeting? Would we be uplifted and motivated to passionately accomplish the agreed-upon action items?

- Would it be a good meeting or a great meeting? And what are the fundamental causes of its greatness?

Perhaps there *is* a place for divine principles in our job. A great teacher, whom many revere as personifying the divine, once said, "Ye are gods."[44] I have found the Hindu greeting of "namasté" to profoundly affect the nature of meetings when I mentally repeat its common translation, "The god in me sees and rejoices in the god I see in you." This fundamentally changes my thinking and authentically changes my behavior. In that instant, merely by a change in attitude & mindset, by a change in thought, that relationship deepens.

In Summary – Who do you think you are?

Strategic Alliance Manager	
Is	**Is not**
- about value-**creation** in all forms - both **long-term** and near-term oriented - a **negotiator** – **always** leading open, high-trust, value-discovering discussions **like a mini-CEO** – but uses nontraditional competencies to develop all forms of value - an **agent of change** and **growth**, beginning with self - a **creator** – a loving, divinely inspired and inspiring, value-creating being - the **embodiment of value** – always giving and serving; with everyone, everywhere and always - a **relationship** manager	**just** about the **exchange** of **tangible** value - focused **just** on **near-term** results **primarily** an account manager, business development manager or program manager **addicted to** being a **drama** queen, **complexity** king, **fear**-monger or information-**hoarder** – there is *never* a rational reason for behaving like this; there is a better way to live **always** a **gatekeeper**, **dictator**, executive liaison, **escalation manager** or **schmoozing drone** – *sometimes* we may need to play some of these roles, but only sometimes **just** about managing the relationship

Table 3.3c – A Strategic Alliance Manager: *is* and *is not*.

If we need a label or a tag-line to describe our role, we could say that we are a *long-term value-enabler*, a *perpetual negotiator*, a *mini-CEO*, an *agent of change* or a *transformational change agent*. We may have to keep *god-like creator* to ourselves, or to share with our manager and other creative beings – other strategic alliance managers.

3.4.   Nontraditional, Counterintuitive and Transformational Practices

To set the context for this section, here is a quick review of what we have discussed so far:

- Strategic alliances are about *value*: the *long*-term *creation* of incremental value in both tangible and, most importantly, *intangible* forms.

- If we are unclear about what our role *is* and *is not*, we ourselves can become our own worst enemy and a problem in our alliance. We need to help management see how the role of strategic alliance manager is *fundamentally unique* as compared to traditional jobs in business (e.g., thinking of ourselves as being a mini-CEO is good, but it is actually limiting). And we need to be vigilant against our own value-limiting behaviors and value-traps.

- Given that (a) we are trying to get highly-*competitive* companies to *collaborate* in a predominantly *fear*-based climate, (b) our alliance has to *grow through diametrically opposed phases* of *create* value (requiring an abundance mindset) and then *divide-up* value (bringing with it a scarcity mindset), and (c) alliances need to *continually repeat this process* of create → divide → create → divide … it is arguable that alliances are both *unnatural* as well as *impossible* things in the world of business. No wonder most of them fail!

---

[44] *The Bible* – John 10:34.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

- Part of our job description could be "*doing the impossible with nothing – in the eye of hurricane.*" We are asked to do unnatural and impossible work with insufficient resource in the midst of chaos and churn.

- To transform strategic alliances and turn around today's abysmal success rates (30-50% succeed), we have to *focus* on *root cause* issues; we have to focus on (a) the *core in self* (improving attitude & mindset), and (b) the *nontraditional in business* (deepening relationship and serving others).

- We can all too easily get distracted by complexity, drama, chaos and churn. So, we need *laser-focus* with crystal *clear prioritization*:

  1. Improve **attitude & mindset** in order to **deepen relationship**.

  2a. **Relationship-ize others** who work in our alliance.

  2b. **Alliance-ize the work product** of those who support our alliance.

  3. With any remaining time, do other things, traditional work (if no one else will do it).

- Improving attitude & mindset in order to deepen relationship implies the practical use of *spiritual principles* (thoughts) and *practices* (authentic behaviors). Spirituality is about deepening relationships with The Infinite, ourselves and others.[45] As we continue exploring the nature of our value-creating job, we see other hints as to its *divine* nature.

- We should focus on proactive *idea-sharing* and *giving away* our best alliance-effectiveness ideas; through this process, our informal power and virtual presence increases throughout the alliance. Our informal power can end up exceeding that of the formal power found in traditional business roles. We need to use our informal power with great humility and with great boldness.

- The divine nature of our job is reinforced in a thought exercise about negotiating with the divine; and, given that we all have a divine nature, this exercise rings true.

The conclusion of this whitepaper focuses on a few spiritually-grounded principles (thoughts) and practices (authentic behaviors) which will serve the alliance, our selves and others. These principles and practices can take us toward transformation and greatness. Some of these ideas are counterintuitive, making them ideal for consideration in our impossible and nontraditional job.

Presence and Awareness – *Prerequisites for the practices described later in this section.*

The greatest value-creating impediment in the world of business today is a pervasive lack of presence; and without presence nothing happens. For example, people feel compelled to multi-task: e-mailing, texting and using their mobile phones. Multi-tasking is a lie! Be honest – humans cannot multi-task; they can only time-slice. So when we think we are multi-tasking, we are actually *not there*; we are not present. This should be the first area where we choose to "be the change." We should consciously choose to be fully present in meetings and phone calls, especially when the discussions directly affect our alliance. As we are more honest with ourselves about not being present while multi-tasking, we bring honesty into our alliance.

> *"All of man's miseries derive from not being able to sit quietly in a room alone."*
> - Blaise Pascal – French scientist, mathematician and philosopher

Presence is linked to mindfulness (being aware of what's going on within our own minds), and mindfulness improves with meditation or by simply enjoying a few minutes of quiet time, alone. As awareness improves within, so it improves without. As presence and awareness increase, so does creativity; this is how we get "in the flow" or "in the zone" during periods of great creativity. And we want more creativity in our alliance; so, again, as within, so without. Greater collective presence brings greater collective creativity.

---

[45] My experience has been that these three relationships (with The Infinite, with others and with self) deepen in parallel; as I deepen any one of these relationships, the others two deepen as well. I have also found five simple truths which can form the basis for spiritual principles (consciously chosen thoughts) that are helpful in alliancing. The simple truths are both helpful as well as discussable in business, they are *oneness, now, we are divine, we create,* and *love.* For more about these simple truths, how we can tell if we are using them or not, and some thought-provoking questions, go to www.spibr.org/simple_truths.html.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

With greater awareness we begin to notice things in the alliance that others might miss, we see what others cannot see. We become more sensitive to its climate. We see an interconnectedness or wholeness of events across both time and space. Some might call this, *vision*.

Being Confrontational – *Shine our light with love and with precision.*

> *"The hidden is kept apart, but value always lies in joint appreciation. What is concealed cannot be loved, and so it must be feared."*
> *- A Course in Miracles*

When problems occur in any relationship, it is because there are hidden, unacknowledged issues in that relationship.[46] The best way to uncover or surface such hidden issues is through confrontation.[47] Confrontation is about jointly facing issues *in* a relationship, it's about *co-fronting* common problems. Confrontation differs from conflict, which is about attacking the other. Confrontation is about focusing our collective attention, our light, on the problem. It is about fearlessly and thoroughly examining that problem so we can deal with it and move on; but first it needs to be seen in its totality.

The metaphor of light as representing our attention is powerfully effective in this area. Light has no emotion; it only wants to *see* things more clearly. Light carries with it no shame, blame or judgment. But, like using headlamps (e.g., as when camping or caving), we need to avoid shining our light into another's eyes. Shining our light into someone's eyes causes that person to become angry and disoriented; such an act can be interpreted by the other as attack or conflict. Conflict raises counterproductive walls of defensiveness, and so communication ceases.

We need to be careful about *where* we focus our attention (our light), as well as *why* and *how*. What is our intention during this practice? It is best if we are about solving the problem, not about placing blame. We should be about love and growth, not attack. We should be about building up, not tearing down.

No one person or one side of an alliance alone can see the entirety of an issue in the relationship; we need each other to do that. Both sides need to shine their lights with love and precision and then openly share their perspective with the other.[48] By fearlessly shining our lights into our alliance and sharing perspectives with each other, we resolve its problems. With full acceptance, we transcend our problems. Next, with embracement comes transformation; when we couple acceptance with love, problems become transformed into opportunity.[49] These are not trite ideas; these ideas actually save and transform lives. The best example of such transcendence and transformation can be seen in any 12-step meeting of AA or NA.[50] In these fellowships people talk of freedom from active addiction (problems are transcended) and finding a new and miraculous way to live (curses become transformed into blessings). This is accomplished via the acceptance process of the 12-steps of recovery and the embracement that is embodied in our loving service to others (carrying the message of recovery to still-suffering addicts).

Focusing Collective Attention – *Opportunities, problems, and answers to problems all live in the midst.*

This practice is an exercise in continually and proactively listening to the voice of the collective. Using the light metaphor again, this practice is about the transformational power of shared light. It is more fully described in the whitepaper *Simply Focus on Incremental Value and Value-Impediments: transforming a strategic alliance through simplicity.*[51] The general idea is to continually seek out the *one* voice of an alliance by hearing what

---

[46] For example, when there are unacknowledged cultural differences in an alliance, we often misinterpret the behavior of another; we see it as being a sign of deviousness, incompetence, or both. We do not understand their behavior, so we label it. This is always resolved via shared perspective; when we see the world from another's point-of-view, we understand the rationale behind their behavior.

[47] Confrontation calls for trust, and so trust will come.

[48] For more discussion about confrontation and how it counterintuitively builds trust and enables greater value-creation, read *Building Trust in Strategic Alliances: creating greater value* available at www.spibr.org/Building_trust_and_value_in_alliances.pdf (this whitepaper was selected as a Best Practice by the *Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals* – www.strategic-alliances.org).

[49] Love is the universal force compelling all to grow. It is a desire to bring growth into a situation or to help another grow spiritually. See www.spibr.org/love_is.html for more thoughts on the oneness of love.

[50] AA is Alcoholics Anonymous; NA is Narcotics Anonymous. These spiritual fellowships are about saving lives and transforming the curse of alcoholism and drug addiction into blessings and miraculous new lives.

[51] Also known as the *2-Slide Methodology*™, this whitepaper can be found at www.spibr.org/2-slide_methodology.pdf.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

others have to say, from all functional areas and from all levels of management, and then distilling that voice to its core creative essence. This does not preclude nor override the strategic imperatives an alliance needs to address, as defined in strategic business plans or as given to the alliance by executives; such directives are naturally incorporated during this process. The point is, unless an alliance resides in a dictatorial regime, there is always value in hearing the voice of the collective. There are unseen opportunities and hidden challenges that only those working *in* the alliance can see. As alliance managers we benefit from hearing that voice, from seeing that collective perspective. From this we gain a unique and powerful vision.

The *2-Slide Methodology*[TM] provides a simple framework for gathering ideas out of an alliance. The framework is focused on the core essence of any alliance: (1) *incremental value* and (2) *value-impediments*. As a result of this process, not only are new ideas surfaced and captured, but more importantly, individual buy-in and organizational alignment is established and continuously maintained. The content of these 2-Slides are the alliance's greatest effectiveness – improving ideas – which an alliance manager can proactively share in an attempt to obsolete himself/herself, as discussed later. And, as these ideas are shared with others, others share back, and the ideas grow in power and influence.

> *"The* [spirit's] *temple is not a body, but a relationship."*
> *- A Course in Miracles*

This practice keeps us and our alliance focused where its greatest inspiration, enthusiasm and insight lives – *in* the alliance, in the between, *in the midst*. It is right there, hidden in plain sight, in the alliance interface.

> *In the heart of every alliance is spirit, light, inspiration, enthusiasm, growth, power, abundance and love.*

Negotiating Beyond Mere Win/Win Outcomes – *Embracing the tension within difference, in the between.*

The basics of negotiating must be learned.[52] The basics include preparation, knowing your side and the other side very well, and most importantly, establishing and maintaining a positive atmosphere grounded in trust and a sense of abundance.

This practice is a deepening of the idea that spirit lives in a relationship, *between* people and between organizations. In this practice we use the spirit that lives *between* ideas. This makes sense if one accepts the notion expressed in some spiritual writings that we ourselves are but an idea in the mind of The Infinite. So if spirit lives between people, spirit must also live between ideas.

We may have experienced the creativity-of-spirit-between-ideas during brainstorming or negotiation meetings. The group is debating between Option A and Option B. Both options are deeply explored, often with heated debate. Like a tennis match, we see the group's attention go back and forth, and back and forth: A → B → A → B, ad nauseam. At about this point someone says, "That's enough! We've beaten this issue into the ground." Their reaction is due to the intensity of creative tension; some people can't stand the intensity. If someone in the room is practicing *presence* and *awareness*, she might say, "Hey! There is an Option C that we have not considered. It's not a compromise between A and B. It's a more *valuable* option." Option C was found in the midst, in between Options A and B (beyond a simple compromise), in between ideas. *In the between* lies creativity, inspiration, insight and enthusiasm. We can see this enthusiasm expressed when someone else yells out, "Wow, what a great idea! Where did that come from?"

Win/win results, while good, simply assure that both parties gain *some* value. Mere win/win outcomes can miss more creative "greater good" options. By greater good we might mean an option that benefits more than just the two parties involved. To expand our thinking, we might consider whether our *competitors* will benefit from a particular option. And why shouldn't our competitors benefit, too? Especially if either of the parties involved in the discussion are leaders in their respective business ecosystems. True leaders look for the most creative, "pie-expanding," abundance-oriented option. Then the entire ecosystem gains value, maybe especially their competitors. Why not?

---

[52] Attend a great negotiating course, like those offered by *The Program on Negotiation* www.pon.harvard.edu.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

self-Obsolescence – *Giving and receiving are one; always be of value, enable value and be valued.*

> *"Complete possession is proved only by giving. All you are unable to give possesses you."*
> - André Gide – French author and winner of 1947 Nobel Prize in literature

For years I have said that "being an alliance manager is an egoless job." In general, the more we step back and let others take credit for its success, the better off we are. The more we try to take personal credit, as in, "Look at how great *my* alliance is!" the more suboptimal the alliance's performance. This practice of self-obsolescence takes this idea of egolessness to its logical and simple conclusion.

The practice of self-obsolescence is about obsolescing our lesser egoic self, the self focused on competition, "your win is my loss," scarcity and fear.[53] The egoic self is all about the separate "me"; it is the source of selfishness. This practice, on the other hands, is about consciously striving to obsolete our lesser self so that our greater Self can emerge. This great Self is focused on inspiration, collaboration, "your win is *our* win," abundance and love. The love-based Self is all about "we."[54] Being selfless is a step toward the self-*fullness* and the grandeur found in the "we-ness" of life (but being selfless is not the end-point). "*Together* we can do anything" should be an alliance's mantra.

As alliance managers we have a unique, holistic perspective on our alliance. Through the *2-Slide Methodology*™ process, we gain simple and powerful insights in terms of the alliance's value-creating potential, its vision, its value-impediments and practical recommendations for overcoming obstacles; this is the essence of any alliance. We should also know and share freely with others our personal insights into organizational details (org charts), decision-making processes, strategies, technologies, regulatory issues and business ecosystem trends. We should give whatever knowledge is needed and teach whatever skills will be helpful. As mentioned earlier in this whitepaper, our primary focus should be around attitude & mindset, followed by relationship-izing others and alliance-izing their work. It seems counterintuitive, but the more we make it so others do not *need* us, the more they will *want* us.

> *"Yet there is another interpretation of relationships that transcends the concept of loss of power completely. … What you find difficult to accept is the fact that, like your Father, you are an idea. And like Him, you can give yourself completely, wholly without loss and only gain."*
> - A Course in Miracles

Such is how we attract greatness into our alliance, by giving completely of our self.

Being an Illuminating Mirror – *Embodying gratitude by seeing and reflecting greatness.*

Arguably the most powerful means by which we attract greatness into our life is via the expression of gratitude. Sincere gratitude is one of the most potent forms of communication, whether with others, with our selves or with The Infinite (a.k.a., God, The Universe, etc.). To be sincere, gratitude needs to be immediate, explicit and specific. To be authentically impactful it needs to come from the heart, and it needs to be spoken heart-to-heart.

It is common in business to hear that "the best way to fix things is to point out problems," and "if needed, use fear of job loss to motivate." Proponents of such ideas often also assert that the expression of gratitude will soften people and make them less motivated; nothing could be farther from the truth. Focusing our attention on our strengths, not our weaknesses, is the basis of such transformational movements as Strengths Based Leadership (www.strengthsfinder.com). A dear friend of mine says, "What's right with you is the starting point; what's wrong with you is beside the point." My last manager at Hewlett-Packard expressed sincere and authentic gratitude like no one I have ever worked with, and I became motivated toward greatness. Having been inspired to accept my grandeur, I intrinsically believed that the impossible was possible. I accomplished what many at HP were convinced was impossible; and for that I am most grateful for the powerful effect of gratitude.

---

[53] To read more about the practice of self-obsolescence go to www.spibr.org/self-obsolescence.

[54] For more discussion on the ego-based and spirit-based thought systems, read Appendix 10.5 from the book *Spiritual Principles in Strategic Alliance* available at www.spibr.org/book_Sub-Sect_10.5_thoughts_on_two_thought-systems.pdf.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

> *Gratitude is the paddle we use in the river of life to draw us closer to one another and align our will with God's.*

A powerful metaphor for making expressions of gratitude deeply authentic is to think of ourselves as being illuminating mirrors (like the lit-up vanity mirrors in hotel bathrooms). We then remind ourselves that our attention, our thought, *is* light. We focus our light into another, into their life, seeking out their greatness. We do this because they often cannot see their own greatness themselves; this is one reason why life is "a we thing." We see the greatness in another and we reflect it back to them by being specific and heart-felt in our expressions of appreciation to them. We see the greatness in our own lives (with the help of others) and we reflect that back to The Infinite, and to ourselves (this is self love). In business relationships we can see the true greatness in our own company or in the other company and reflect that back, too.

As we help others see their own greatness, as we help others see the truth within them, we end up drawing closer to the great truth within ourselves. Reflections can only occur in light; so, as we become an illuminating mirror in which grandeur gets reflected all around us, everyone grows. Ultimately we realize, with others, that our greatness is not just a reflection, but the actual condition of what was reflected back to us from others. We do not merely reflect truth; we realize we all *are* truth. We all embody Truth, with emphasis on "*we.*"

Making an Alliance a Home – *A productive community of bounded instability that, at times, disrupts the status quo.*

Perhaps you might have noticed that the practices discussed in this section are progressively deepening and expanding. Building a creative and productive home is an extension of the idea of our collective *we*-ness.

First of all, let's consider the world of business, the environment in which we do our work. This place seems to be less and less like a home or community that supplies us with spiritual or emotional nourishment. Some people might consider business to be a spiritual desert, a place devoid of love or any healthy human value. Such a place seems grounded in excessive competitiveness, heading toward greed-filled self-destruction. In such a wasteland, we can profoundly benefit ourselves and others by using the unique, nontraditional nature of alliancing.

If we bring into our alliance things like a service-oriented attitude and authentic gratitude, we end up attracting others who want to be part of something different. To belong is a basic human need. And people hunger to be part of something that is making a difference in the world. Our alliance can be such a place.

> *"Such a place, such a home, can exist in various settings, but its ultimate foundation rests jointly within self and within some group of trusted others. Some places are more conducive to this experience than others. But wherever and whenever we do attain that sense of 'being-at-home,' we experience a falling away of tensions, a degree of balance between the pushing and pulling forces of our lives."*
> - *The Spirituality of Imperfection: storytelling and the search for meaning* by Kutz & Ketchem

What would a strategic alliance, living and growing as a productive community, look and feel like?[55] The following paragraphs start to paint such a picture.

Great strategic alliance managers have a *core vision* for their alliance. This vision goes beyond and is supportive of the business objectives and business vision for the alliance. To have such a core vision, the alliance manager is inner-directed and other-focused. These alliance managers are willing to go within self, while focusing on serving the community. Just like the alliance manager, the alliance's vision comes from within the alliance itself; in this sense, it too, is self-authoring. People accept the new reality emerging from within the alliance and accept their personal need to change.

As this community's alliance manager, we are focused on both task *and* people. Given high trust, there is healthy and open confrontation. Problems, challenges, issues and opportunities are proactively brought to the surface, not suppressed. Everyone knows it is possible to challenge anyone, even the highest authority.

---

[55] See Appendix A in *Change the World* by Robert E. Quinn. Much of this content is leveraged from Quinn's book and modified for use in strategic alliancing.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

With personal buy-in and organizational alignment, the alliance's collective good and individual good are achieved together, as one. As each person pursues their individual goals, others throughout the alliance are enriched. There is a continuous clarification of purpose as vision dynamically evolves.

The desired state of such a productive alliance is bounded instability or controlled chaos. While individual roles are derived from the traditional hierarchy of business, roles within the alliance are continually evolving and clarifying. There is flexibility as individual functions adapt to changing situations. Leadership is not fixed; it evolves and moves from person to person as situations dictate. Formal authority figures are there as servants to the alliance; their focus is to enable the alliance and remove obstacles.

Within and throughout the alliance is the courage to disrupt the frozen bureaucracy in the surrounding traditional areas of the business. People are willing to transcend traditional sanctions or constraints imposed by the surrounding business, if it is clearly for the greater good of the business. This alliance is changing the world of business from within. Many of its individuals embody a willingness to "walk naked into the land of uncertainty," knowing they are about change for the greater good.

A bold transformational mindset pervades the alliance. Everyone is focused on achieving the alliance's continually refined and clarified vision, for the common good. Collective good is chosen over individual good, even if it means someone (including the alliance manager) may need to leave the alliance.

Being the Metaphor for Metamorphosis – *First go within, and then "be the change."*

With presence and awareness we more clearly see the needs within our alliance. Real change starts within our selves. Arguably, that is the *only* place real change occurs. When we see our alliance lacking in certain areas, we should first ask our selves, "How am *I* doing in that area?" This can apply to a number of critically important issues. If there is a lack in trust, we ask, "Do I really trust myself and others?" If there is a lack in open communications, we ask, "Am I open? Am I living a life of wholeness and integrity?" If there is a lack of presence, if everyone seems to be multi-tasking, we ask, "Am I fully present?"

Given the oneness of us all, the healthiness of our personal relationships is a reflection of our own internal state. We can also ask trusted others to help us see more clearly what is going on within us, and to thereby help us grow. We can examine our relationship with The Universe, too. We can ask The Universe to tell us about our relationship with The Universe. We can do this via prayer, meditation or purposeful quiet time.

Be the change. Be.

4. Relationship

In Figures 3.2a and 3.2b we see the need to focus on core, nontraditional issues in order to reverse today's failure rates. We need to consciously focus individual and collective attention on issues previously ignored by others. These root cause issues have been ignored or avoided because they are tough, nebulous or too "warm and fuzzy." But if we want to transform our alliance and ourselves from good to great, our top-most priority should be this:

Improve attitude & mindset in order to deepen relationship.

Improving attitude & mindset in order to deepen relationship can be accomplished through the practical use of spiritual principles (thoughts) and practices (authentic behaviors). Many of these practices are counterintuitive, but experientially, we know that they work and they ring true.

Still you might ask "*Why* focus on relationship? This document has talked about *how*. Tell me why."[56]

4.1. Value Happens in Relationship

All we have in life and in the world of business is "relationship." Where in life is there *not* a relationship? And what in business happens *outside* of a relationship?

---

[56] To read about the value of bringing spiritual principles and practices into strategic alliance work refer to http://spibr.org/roi-for-spirituality/.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

Value in any form requires a relationship. Whether we're talking about the creation, exchange or extraction of value, if there is no relationship there is no value.

4.2. Alliances are Strategic Because of Relationship

Transformation happens in relationships.

What does transformation have to do with strategic alliances? If a strategic alliance is not about *changing* a business then it is not strategic.

What is true in our personal lives is also true in business; we need each other in order to create value and in order to change. We need each other; life and alliances are both "we things."

The more *intense* and *challenging* the relationship the *better*. In our personal lives our greatest growth and transformation happens in our most intense and most difficult relationships. After we have worked through a challenge we realize how much they have blessed our lives. Our most intense and challenging relationships always bear gifts, if you do the work.

4.3. Crucibles for Transformation

Strategic alliances are the most intense and challenging form of business relationship. Strategic alliances are about the long-term creation of value; to accomplish this requires healthy collaboration. However, if the partners are successful in business they must be fierce competitors, too. They often complete against each other in areas outside of the alliance. Add to this the fact that the default mindset in business is a scarcity-orientation, i.e., "Your win is my loss."

A fear-based and scarcity-oriented climate is counter to the atmosphere required for healthy collaboration, thus making alliances the most difficult form of inter-company business relationship. Paradoxically it is their difficulty that makes alliances strategically important, the source of their gifts. [57]

4.4. Alliances' Gifts to Business

Alliances offer strategically important gifts to businesses. Because alliances are businesses' most intense and challenging form of relationship they end up being the best crucibles for the development of transformational competencies that help companies grow.

Here are some of the strategic gifts alliances offer businesses:

• understand how to build trust via healthy confrontation	• ability to assess and change the climate in a business	• healthy insurgency to improve strategy, being catalysts for transformation
• collaborative creation of value in the midst of fear, scarcity and uncertainty	• transformational agents of change, thriving on "controlled chaos"	• expanded "value" that embraces *intangible* & *long*-term forms (driving revenue)
• teams with clearly aligned focus on a compelling vision	• empowered and empowering leaders who are inner-directed and other-focused	• adaptive, flexible and responsive leadership
• creation of productive communities, attracting greatness to them	• strategic relationship building competencies	• crucibles for bringing practical consciousness into business

Table 4.4 – Strategic gifts offered to business from strategic alliances.

4.5. Value Beyond Sales Revenue

Assessing the value of an alliance based solely on its sales revenue is like assessing the health of a marriage based on counting the number of children; both are important, obvious and incomplete metrics. It is all-too-easy to dismiss relationship issues as being the soft, warm and fuzzy things that don't matter; the opposite is true.

---

[57] For a one-page summary of these ideas go to http://spibr.org/why_alliances_are_strategic.pdf.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

Relationship issues are hard and relationship is the foundation of business. Alliances offer businesses strategic gifts that will lead to greatness via on-going transformation … and sales, too.

Maybe we should call ourselves "Strategic Relationship Managers" in order to more accurately reflect the strategic importance of *relationship*.

5. The Spirit of Strategic Alliancing

There is a spirit *in* a strategic alliance; it lives in the interface *between* two companies and amongst the people. What this whitepaper suggests is to *use* spiritual principles in order to accomplish the greatest good.[58] We can bring into our work-life, spiritual ideas from various sources, from religion, psychotherapy, self-help, 12-step recovery or other spiritually-based teachings and experiences. Given the impossibility of alliancing work, we need all the help we can get.

> *"Your daily life is your temple and your religion. Whenever you enter into it take with you your all."*
> - *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran

And,

> *"We have learned that if a solution isn't practical, it isn't spiritual."*
> - *NA Basic Text*

To be practical, spiritual ideas need to have real-world benefit, here and now. If we are to discuss spiritual principles in business, they need to be discussed with non-threatening terms and in a non-threatening manner. Such is our challenge if we are to develop and use core nontraditional competencies for transformation.

6. Spiritual Principles Deepen Relationship

Below are five simple truths.[59] When these ideas are held in consciousness, they seem to deepen relationships and are the foundation for the transformational practices described in Section 3.4:[60]

- **Oneness** – See no separation between people; see no duality of thought; live in integrity.

- **Now** – Be fully present in each instant; there is only one eternal now and it *is* eternity.

- **We Create** – Given our divine nature, our thoughts are causal; thoughts lead to creation, be mindful.

- **Love** – The universal force that compels us to grow is love, with all of its nuances and counterparts: enthusiasm, inspiration, joy, peace, forgiveness.

- **Trust** - The foundation of every relationship is trust.

---

[58] Some have objected about the use of the word "use" as in "using spiritual principles." In truth, in experience, as we try to use spiritual principoles we will end up getting used or changed. More appropriate words revolve around the idea of service. As we serve each other we add to the spirit. As we serve the collective spirit in an alliance we are served. There is reciprocity in life.

[59] These simple ideas seem to transcend religions and philosophies.

[60] Ref: *Spiritual Principles in Strategic Alliances: be the metaphor for metamorphosis; transform status quo mediocrity into greatness* by the author of this whitepaper.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst

7. Conclusion

So, how did we do? This has been quite a journey.

In *Section 3 – Solutions,* we made a list of outcomes we expect to accomplish as we redefined the role of strategic alliance manager, and that list is repeated here:

- Greater success for us as individuals – more effectiveness personally, more fulfillment and joy in life.
- Greater success for our alliance – increased value-creation and a more enjoyable place to work.
- Reduced complexity – greater clarity in terms of where and how we should focus our time and energy.
- Clearer understanding of how we can best serve others who are working in or supporting our alliance.
- Understanding of how we need to adapt and change during various phases of alliance development.
- Development of a sense of awe and wonder for our work and the ability to see it from a divine perspective.
- The ability to understand and use some simple principles and transformational practices that will enable fundamental improvements within self and within our alliance.
- The capacity to negotiate beyond mere "win/win" outcomes and uncover breakthrough opportunities.

Are there any objectives listed above that we did *not* accomplish? You may not have fully actualized them in the mere reading of this whitepaper, for these are just words, but you can envision how these outcomes can be accomplished through the application of these ideas.

These concepts enable your alliances to create value to its fullest potential and transform your alliances from being good enough to being truly great.

8. Biography

Joe Kittel has worked in the field of strategic alliances for 25 years. For over 16 years he did strategic alliance development at Hewlett-Packard. For the past 10 years Joe has been focused on the practical application of spiritual principles to help strategic alliance manager's transform their alliances to increase their value-creating effectiveness.[61]

In 1989 Joe established his first strategic alliance – a multi-year, co-resident and collaborative-R&D relationship that provided advanced object-oriented technology into HP C++ SoftBench (software development tool) and allowed US West (now Qwest) Communications to successfully migrate their massive Billing and Customer Care Systems from Cobol to C++ with a 10x improvement in software quality.

In 1997 he helped establish Hewlett-Packard's corporate level strategic alliance with Microsoft, leading corporate-wide initiatives and negotiations in some of the most strategically contentious areas (UNIX/NT interoperability, object technologies and encryption).[62] In that same year Joe was a pre-founding member of the Board of the *Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals* (ASAP), assisting in its early definition.

At the conclusion of his career at HP in 2005, Joe established the first strategic alliance between HP's printing business and SAP with a deal valued in excess of $200M and an alliance that annually leverages over $1B in HP products and services.[63]

In 2007 Joe established the first and only consultancy in the world focused solely on the fundamental transformation of strategic alliance managers and their alliances, SPiBR.org LLC.[64]

He recently published the book *Spiritual Principles in Strategic Alliances: transform status quo mediocrity into greatness*.[65] Endorsed by world-leaders in strategic alliancing and conscious capitalism. Excerpts from this book have been published as an ASAP *Best Practice*.[66]

In college Joe graduated *magna cum laude* in Electrical Engineering from the University of Utah, focused on quantum electronics (semiconductor physics and VLSI design). He applies a methodical engineer's approach to both strategic alliances and spirituality. Joe seeks to understand and use fundamental principles.

---

[61] See http://www.spibr.org/Joe_Kittel_resume.pdf for (obviously) a resume.
[62] Go to http://www.spibr.org/970319_HP_Microsoft_corp_alliance_simplified_enterprise_computing.pdf for more details.
[63] Go to http://www.spibr.org/HP-SAP_NetWeaver-HPDS_incremental_value_slide_award_PR_invite.pdf for more details.
[64] Check out http://spibr.org/spibr-org-llc/.
[65] Go to http://spibr.org/books/ for more information on this book.
[66] See http://www.spibr.org/ASAP_Best_Practices_Bulletin_July_2009.pdf.

strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf

in the midst