The Rhythm of Business®

Collaborative Networks ■ Alliance Management ■ Collaborative Ability

The Partner Portfolio Manager:™ *Shining the Spotlight on Performance and Value*

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Volume 2 in the White Paper Series Alliance Management in the Spotlight

Contents

The Partner Portfolio Manager from The Rhythm of Business™

In partnership with New Information Paradigms, Ltd., we are pleased to announce the introduction of a Web-based app to automate the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology and profiling process in five easy steps.

The Partner Profile Manager makes it simple for alliance managers to analyze individual alliances and the overall portfolio, and then plan actions that create the alliance outcomes required to achieve corporate strategies.

Elevate Alliance and Partner Management Performance

It's no secret. Partnering is central to most companies' strategies today. And senior management is beginning to understand that failing to properly manage risk-causing complexity can prevent a partnership from achieving its intended value and contributing to the realization of strategic objectives. Magnify this by alliance and partner portfolios that can include hundreds of different relationships, as well as an increasing number of multipartner alliances, and it becomes obvious that managing the complexity in the alliance portfolio is essential if the intended value is to be realized and strategic objectives achieved.

Over the past several years, The Rhythm of Business has popularized our philosophy and methodology, epitomized in our Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology and profiling process. We've made our portfolio measurement and management tools freely available through white papers and conference presentations and encouraged people to just try them. And they have, adopting and adapting our methodology and tools within many organizations across industries. The Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology has helped alliance managers to:

- Define organizational issues that are impeding performance across the portfolio
- Focus on specific actions to help individual alliances achieve desired value
- Sensitize alliance teams to signs of misalignment
- Garner more resources for the alliance management group and make a compelling case for why resources should not be spent on certain partners
- Identify where intended value is not being generated and take corrective action
- Use the portfolio map that results from measuring individual alliances as a communications tool for working with the C-Suite and other senior executives

In every case, alliance and partner managers using the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology have improved their performance and demonstrated specific results derived from alliance management. Senior management and alliance teams are noticing.

In partnership with New Information Paradigms, Ltd., The Rhythm of Business is pleased to make available a Web-based app that embodies our methodology and allows data gathering and analysis that are not easily accomplished with existing analog tools. It is a powerful means of enhancing performance and demonstrating value now that alliance managers are in the spotlight.

About the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology

We've written extensively about the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology and how to apply it. For detailed information, see any of the following papers; links can be found on page 17.

- "Measuring and Managing the Alliance Portfolio"
- "Designing the Enterprise Capability for Managing Collaborative Relationships"
- "How Alliance Management Delivers Value: Moving Beyond Best Practices"

The methodology is also described in *The ASAP Handbook of Alliance Management: A Practitioner's Guide*, 3rd edition, Part 3.3.

The following is a quick summary of the process, which is implemented in five easy steps:

- **Step One – Determine Scope:** Decide what is in and what is outside of your portfolio.

- **Step Two – Decide Profile Criteria:** Determine the forms of value the company's strategy seeks to realize through partnering. Also determine what creates risk in these relationships and makes the management of them complicated.

- **Step Three – Score and Map All Relationships:** Apply a simple scale to the value and complexity criteria and map each alliance's score to a matrix.

- **Step Four – Analyze the Results and Develop a Plan:** Use the Return on Collaboration (RoC) that is derived from the profile to identify which alliances are requiring more "give" than the resulting "get." The output provides insight into both internally and externally focused efforts that can improve portfolio value.

- **Step Five – Define and Align Collaborative Capability with the Portfolio:** Use potential value and management complexity to help determine the resource needed to manage alliances and how that resource can be allocated throughout an organization.

Know What to Manage and Why

How does an alliance manager know where to put his or her efforts? Too often these efforts are focused where the noise is loudest and the "brushfires" burn the brightest. But being a firefighter is not the optimal role for alliance managers—and it isn't the kind of value senior management expects them to deliver. The real value of professional alliance management is getting ahead of issues—of being one, two, and three steps ahead of problems and taking action to ensure that they don't become time-wasting and trust-busting issues. The cost of time is the greatest cause of value erosion in an alliance.

For alliance managers, the process of knowing what to manage and why begins with understanding the company's business, its specific strategy, and the role alliances play in accomplishing that strategy. See Figure 1 – Strategic Framework for Alliances.

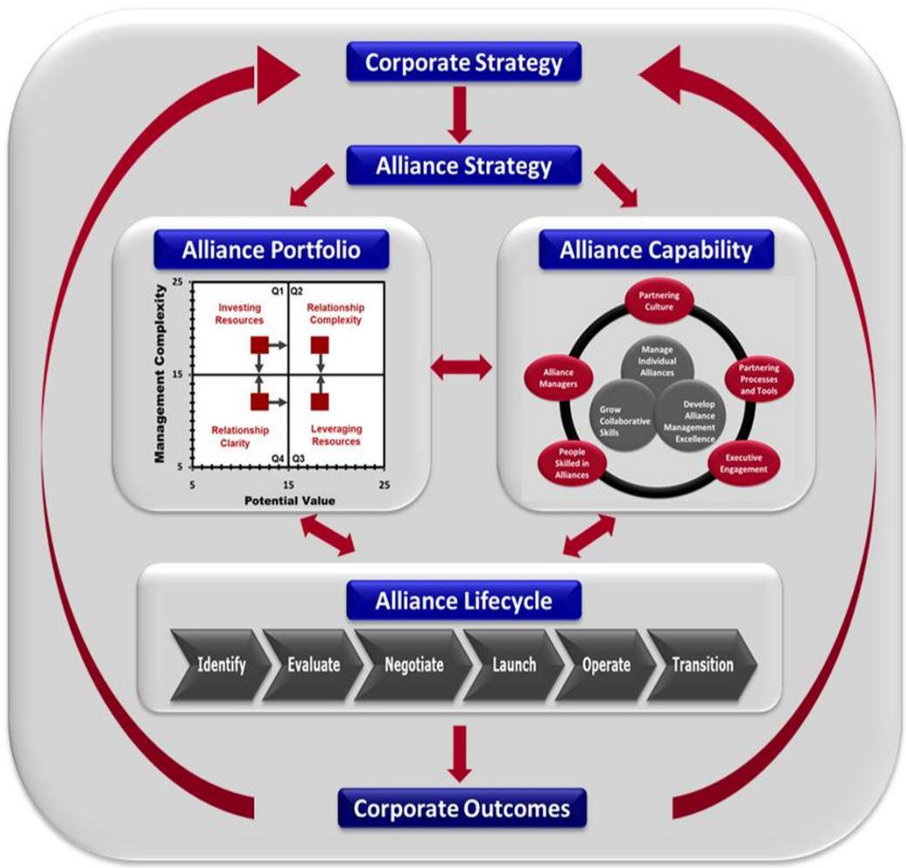

Figure 1 – Strategic Framework for Alliances

The value an organization seeks from its alliances is that which allows it to achieve its strategic objectives. It manages the alliances in order to realize that value by having an alliance capability that is in alignment with the management needs of its portfolio and by guiding each alliance

Focus on Strategic Value to Show the Results that Matter

The Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology that powers The Partner Portfolio Manager makes a direct link between the strategic value companies seek and the actions of alliance managers. The value criteria should be derived directly from a company's strategy. A pharmaceutical services firm that is implementing the methodology used their strategy map and balanced scorecard to develop the criteria. They've done a deep dive into the actions that will provide that value and have developed detailed plans to carry them out.

Senior management appreciates that when the scoring of the criteria changes, it is directly tied to corporate strategy and the actions of the partner managers. The team is now being asked to make the use of the methodology more widespread within the company.

through its life cycle. The Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology clearly identifies what to manage by defining the specific types of value required to achieve strategic objectives.

For example, let's assume the essential components of a company's strategy are to:

- Grow its existing business by providing a superior customer experience
- Enter selected emerging markets with existing products
- Develop and commercialize a more innovative product that addresses a certain unmet customer need

Additionally, it intends to work with partners as one avenue for accomplishing its objectives. The sources of value it seeks from partners—and the criteria through which it evaluates partners—might include those depicted in Figure 2 – Potential Value Criteria. The main criteria should be constant across the portfolio and represent the general reasons for partnering. The bullet points represent the ways in which value might be realized that directly contributes to achieving strategic objectives.

Relative Financial Value • Potential market value of codeveloped products, discounted by time to realization • Peak revenue • Resource efficiency *Greater value = Greater potential commitment or receipt of money*
Fills Capability Gaps • Helps develop desired capabilities or expertise that the company intends to put to use beyond this alliance • Sources a capability from a partner that the company does not wish to develop internally • Permits servicing customers in a specific geography • Enhances technological innovation • Provides an innovative route for improving the customer experience *Greater value = Greater capability development or availability*
Criticality of Relationship to the Company • Mitigates an identified business risk • Provides an essential input to current operations • Is essential to meeting strategic objectives *Greater value = greater criticality of relationship*
Expands Strategic Portfolio • Extent to which this alliance further develops an area that is a strategic priority • Likelihood that the partner brings new business opportunities to the company *Greater value = Greater contribution to achieving strategic objectives*
Improves Reputation in the Marketplace • Enhances reputation for innovation • Extent to which this alliance is likely to improve company's reputation among potential partners • Enhances reputation among customers *Greater value = Greater enhancement of reputation*

Figure 2 – Potential Value Criteria

Linking Desired Value to Corporate Strategy

For each partner, the alliance manager can identify the specific ways in which that partner offers any of these sources of value. It might be that a partner with whom the company intends to codevelop the innovative new product brings a new technology (Fills Capability Gaps) that mitigates the identified business risk (Criticality of Relationship to the Company) of a competitor's being first to market. The market projections look promising, and the partner's engineering team will save the company from having to hire additional staff (Relative Financial Value). By identifying the specific resources or sources of value the partner represents and linking back to the criteria bullet points that are derived from the corporate strategy, the alliance manager knows what to manage. Success is defined by ensuring that those strategic inputs are, in fact, received. Of course, the alliance manager must also understand what the partner wants and ensure that it gets the value it seeks.

Knowing the specific strategic value sought from any one partner is only half the battle. The other aspect of realizing value is to manage risk-causing complexity that can erode potential value. Much of the alliance manager's efforts are spent working to reduce that complexity through the use of alliance management techniques—or if it can't be reduced, managing it to prevent it from doing harm. Examples of typical factors that cause complexity in an alliance or partnership are shown in Figure 3 – Management Complexity Criteria.

Signs of Possible Misalignment

Assigned to lead the kickoff of a new alliance, the alliance manager used the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology to evaluate the partnership. When he inquired about Relative Priority as part of his initial profiling of the relationship, team members told him that ever since the deal was signed, the partner had been slow to respond, there was turnover in the team, and an alliance manager had yet to be appointed. Taking this as a sign that the alliance might not be so important to the partner, the alliance manager began to work with the team and executives to build bridges with the partner.

Decision Making • Efficiency of joint decision making • The challenge of achieving aligned decisions within the company *Greater complexity = Greater decision-making sharing or challenges*
Scope of Relationship • Number of geographies the agreement covers • Number of functions and people in our company involved in this relationship • Degree of integration of the work between companies • Number of life cycle stages covered by the agreement *Greater complexity = Broader relationship scope*
Ease of Doing Business with Partner • Partner's experience with partnering • Complexity of the contract • Flexibility and transparency in business operations • Challenge in navigating partner organization • Degree of C-Suite alignment *Greater complexity = Less experience, greater contract complexity, less flexibility and transparency, and greater challenges navigating partner organization*
Alignment of Alliance Management Role • Partner has an assigned alliance manager • Partner alliance manager has a role similar to that of our alliance manager • Partner alliance manager carries out the role effectively *Greater complexity = Lesser degree of alignment of alliance management*
Relative Priority • How aligned the partners are on the importance of the alliance to each of them • Quality and consistency of personnel • Sufficient level of investment *Greater complexity = Greater misalignment of priorities*

Figure 3 – Management Complexity Criteria

For each partner, the alliance manager evaluates and defines the specific complexity-causing factors. For example, the codevelopment partnership described above could involve 100 percent shared decision making, but such that one party is responsible for manufacturing and another is responsible for commercialization (Decision Making). Additionally, there are different commercialization rights in different parts of the world (Scope of Relationship), the partner is new to alliances, and some of the engineering staff the company is depending on are very reluctant to share any information (Ease of Doing Business with Partner). Identifying the specific causes of complexity in an alliance guides the alliance manager in defining where the risks are that could cause problems and developing specific plans for mitigating them. In some instances, alliance management processes and activities can reduce complexity. In other instances, the alliance manager must proactively guard against its possible impact and improve the effectiveness of the alliance through his or her work.

Portfolio Value

When all the alliances in a portfolio have been profiled, not only do alliance managers know what to manage for in an individual alliance, they also have the ability to aggregate the value represented in the portfolio to determine whether it provides all of the value sought in order to achieve strategic objectives. For example, if partners are engaged to provide access to certain industry verticals, does the portfolio indeed represent valid access to each desired vertical?

Additionally, being able to roll up all the forms of value a company expects to realize through its alliance portfolio allows alliance managers to prioritize their efforts. For example, if it is critically important that the alliance hits a milestone deadline so that one of the partners gets to book revenue before its current year end, and that deadline is in jeopardy because the decision-making process is getting bogged down, the alliance managers can take corrective action to address that risk.

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

The Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology is built around the core aspects of an alliance manager's job: creating value and managing complexity. Indeed, the two are inextricably linked. Scoring the criteria used to develop the profile of an individual alliance creates a set of metrics that allows all of the alliances in a portfolio to be graphed on a matrix incorporating both dimensions. When the graph is plotted, an insightful picture emerges which can be analyzed in many ways and can be an important communication tool for helping to marshal support for taking a specific action, either with an individual alliance or more systemically. Additionally, it provides insight into the resources required to properly manage the portfolio. An example of what a portfolio map might look like can be seen in Figure 4 – Alliance Portfolio Map.

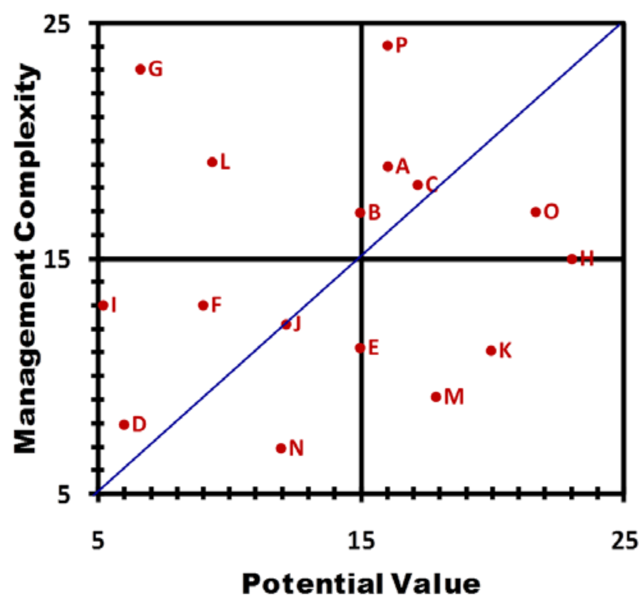

Figure 4 – Alliance Portfolio Map

Imagine that the alliance managers on Alliance G or Alliance L, alliances deemed essential to providing that new technology the company is depending on for its innovative new product, are dealing with a new crisis every day. Decisions aren't being made. Deadlines are being missed. Sales targets aren't being met. Intuitively the alliance manager knows there is a problem but hasn't been able to get engagement with key stakeholders to help develop and implement possible solutions. The Portfolio Map makes clear that relative to other alliances in the portfolio, there is a problem, because not only are Alliances G and L exceedingly complex, they also don't have the potential to produce much value. In addition, an analysis of the scoring and the specific reasons why the alliances were scored that way can help alliance

Moving to a More Advantageous Position

An annual portfolio evaluation showed that decision making in a critical alliance had become more complex, reducing the RoC to less than 100 percent. The change was largely because the partner's corporate executive decision makers were not well informed about certain trends in this long-term relationship, there was little management engagement by operations personnel, and the alliance lacked a single point of contact. Additionally, it was becoming much more challenging to do business with the partner because key decisions weren't being made.

The alliance manager used the portfolio map to communicate the deterioration and engaged his executives in arranging an executive summit to discuss the company's concerns. Together the partners worked through the issues and arrived at a mutually agreeable solution.

managers understand the nature of the problem and devise specific and targeted solutions as part of an alliance management plan to remedy it.

Additionally, once the portfolio is mapped, it becomes clear which alliances are requiring more effort to be put into them than others because of the time involved in managing the complexity (or perhaps the time that should be put in, but is not). Any partnership to the left of the 45-degree line has greater complexity than potential value, which is not a desired state for an alliance. Yes, there may be a valid reason for that positioning, such as that the alliance is new and processes to mitigate complexity have yet to be put in place. But the strategy for any alliance that falls to the left of that line should contemplate specific action that gets it to a more advantageous position.

Of course, all alliances are different and two could appear in similar quadrants of the matrix for entirely different reasons, as described by their individual profiles. What mapping them and calculating the underlying metric *Return on Collaboration (RoC)* (see Figure 5 – Return on Collaboration Calculation) does is allow the user to compare unlike alliances where the measures of value and what's consuming alliance management resources are described similarly and measured in a consistent fashion.

$$\text{Return on Collaboration} = \frac{\text{Potential Value}}{\text{Management Complexity}} \times 100\%$$

Figure 5 – Return on Collaboration Calculation

RoC can also be aggregated for the portfolio overall to help assess the contribution of the entire portfolio. Bear in mind that any alliance to the right of the 45-degree line has an RoC of more than 100 percent, so just because an alliance is in the lower left-hand quadrant doesn't mean that it isn't contributing critical value. It may be that it is heavily weighted toward just a few value criteria. However, it also doesn't have the complexity that can require lots of alliance management resources.

Aligning Alliance Capability with the Portfolio

The Portfolio Map and RoC paint another picture: the nature of the alliance capability the portfolio requires. As seen in Figure 1 – Strategic Framework for Alliances, any organization's alliance capability—its ability to successfully operate alliances throughout their life cycle—must be aligned with its portfolio. Measuring and mapping the portfolio makes clear to everyone which alliances require greater alliance management resources and where, in a large portfolio, alliances may be managed by someone other than an alliance professional. It also highlights alliances that require a goodly percentage of an alliance manager's time and provides the reasons why.

Other aspects of the capability become clear in this process as well. The presence of lots of alliances with minimal complexity could mean that a Center of Excellence offering an array of tools and consultative support might be beneficial and sufficient to allow non–alliance professionals to manage these alliances. Having many complex alliances in a portfolio, on the other hand, implies that it is particularly important to have executives who are skilled at alliance governance and to ensure that they don't spread themselves too thin on too many committees.

The resources referenced earlier provide additional ways to analyze the alliance portfolio once each alliance has been profiled and mapped and their metrics calculated. With that insight, alliance managers can ensure that the alliance management team is proactive and strategic in managing the portfolio.

It's Not Our Partners That Are the Problem, It's Us!

Programmatic Change

An evaluation of a portfolio of services partners highlighted that not enough of them had the capacity to take on the additional business the company intended to be generating for them. Additionally, too many partners were requiring too much "hand-holding" and not making use of the company's automated tools. To address the situation, the company revamped its requirements for inclusion in the partner program, revised its relationship with certain partners, augmented its Web site, and developed new partner training. The data from the portfolio analysis was instrumental in getting the resources required and gaining executive support.

Partnering is still foreign enough to some companies that people are quick to blame any problems on the partner. Experience shows, however, that the partner is not always the "guilty party." Profiling the portfolio can more clearly paint this picture, too.

Aggregating the specific sources of value the portfolio represents relative to desired strategic value, and examining the complexity of the alliances in the portfolio, helps put in place actions to guide fulfillment of strategic objectives for alliances. Painting the picture of the portfolio is a valuable communication tool that brings about action. And there is a third major way the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology (embodied in The Partner Portfolio Manager app) can help: in identifying internal and systemic conditions that are interfering with realizing the value in alliances.

It can be a real eye-opener when people realize that the commonality in the partnering challenges they are having is them, not their partners. With clarity comes the ability to take action. Examining individual criteria across multiple alliances can highlight areas in which across-the-board action can be leveraged within multiple alliances. It might reveal something about the portfolio, or highlight a deficiency in the company's alliance capability.

As an example, Figure 6 – Portfolio Complexity Scores shows that on average the most complex area of working with *any* partner is Ease of Doing Business.

Management Complexity Criteria	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 3	Partner 4	Partner 5	Average
Decision Making	5	4	3	5	3	4.0
Scope of Relationship	5	4	4	4	4	4.2
Ease of Doing Business with Partner	4	5	4	5	5	4.6
Alignment of Alliance Management Role	4	2	3	2	4	3.0
Relative Priority	1	1	2	1	4	1.8
TOTAL SCORE	19	16	16	17	20	17.6

Figure 6 – Portfolio Complexity Scores

Looking across the portfolio has highlighted that one of two situations is occurring: either the company was doing a bad job of selecting partners, or there was something about the way it operated that made it especially challenging for partners to be *good* partners even when they wanted to be! In this case, after analyzing the specific rationale behind the criterion, the alliance management team understood that their lack of alignment around alliance decisions was causing their partners to continually "decision shop," making them think that it was challenging to do business with their partners. Knowing that the alliance team and the governance committees were not aligned and could be made to see other perspectives, the partner's executives would follow up every instance when they didn't get what they wanted by trying to get other executives to say something they did like. As a result, the company felt their partners were going behind their backs and not respecting governance committee decisions. True as that might be, the problem originated in the company's own lack of discipline and alignment. Bad alliance behavior often results in more bad behavior, so the sooner the root cause is identified, the better.

On the potential value side of the equation, looking across the portfolio can highlight areas where additional partners are needed or the company needs to take action to access potential value. While this may be seen by looking at the specific value partners represent, as described earlier, it may also be quickly discerned by a scan across each value criterion.

Taking an introspective look at the entire portfolio can provide great insights that can lead to concrete action and demonstrable results.

In the Spotlight: The Value of Alliance Management

Never before has the modern world depended so heavily on the success of collaboration as a strategy and a way of working to achieve desired outcomes. Alliances and collaboration have also been embraced as a core strategy for growth in an era when businesses are fighting against many forces that stymie that growth. Whether in the context of developing new products, expanding into new markets, finding breakthrough cures for disease, or taking action to stem global warming, it rarely happens without collaboration, partnership, and alliances among different entities.

Collaborations by their nature create a third entity. It is most often not a legal entity; rather, it is an agreement and way of working that allows two or more organizations to bridge boundaries and find that third way that can exist within the structures, cultures, and ways of working of each of the partners. Guiding that journey is a challenge that requires understanding and embracing complexity, but also mitigating it where possible in pursuit of the potential value that is the reason for the collaboration.

CEOs and other senior executives increasingly espouse the importance of alliances, but that doesn't always translate into explicit actions and financial support—often because they don't recognize the role alliance professionals can and should play to address the strategic issues that can erode potential value and to capitalize on opportunities to accelerate growth.

The inherent nature of partnering is that each party must be free to pursue other interests and other collaborations, so by definition, each must look out for its own interests. That's the job of alliance management—to facilitate the realization of value needed to achieve one's objectives through collaboration while ensuring that one's interests are protected. There are three primary ways that alliance management creates value:

- Financial Value – Making money for the company and gaining access to sources of value that help it make money
- Risk Mitigation – Saving the company from unnecessarily incurring strategic, reputational, or financial damage
- Alliance Effectiveness – Reducing the cost of time

The spotlight is shining on alliance management, and companies are depending upon it to provide the leadership and performance required to deliver the value companies need to achieve their strategic objectives.

The Partner Portfolio Manager

The Partner Portfolio Manager is a Web-based app that automates the Value/Complexity Portfolio Methodology, highlighting the path an alliance manager can take to lead alliances to success and demonstrating ways to realize potential value, manage risk-causing complexity, and improve the effective operations of an alliance portfolio.

Developed in partnership with New Information Paradigms, Ltd., of Crowthorne, Berkshire, UK, the app has many features that make it easy to use:

Architecture

- Easy-to-use Web-based tool
- Anytime/anywhere Web access
- Secure—password protected
- Linked video instruction/help
- Cursor rollover function proves detailed supporting information

Functionality

- Crowdsources assessments of individual alliances
- Fully customizable by user to define value and complexity criteria
- Library of value and complexity criteria to draw upon
- Able to weight specific criteria to reflect relative importance
- Produces a scorecard for each alliance assessed
- Automatically plots each alliance based on assessed value and complexity score
- Able to categorize alliances by specific information such as type of alliance, financial investment, expected revenue, and life cycle stage
- Able to manage an unlimited number of alliances and partnerships
- Tracks assessment completion, issues reminders, manages query responses, etc.

Reporting and Usage

- Incorporates responses into interim and final reports in real time
- Calculates an ROI metric—Return on Collaboration (RoC)—a measure of the net benefit from an alliance calculated by comparing its potential value relative to the time and effort required to manage the alliance's risk-causing complexity

About New Information Paradigms, Ltd.

New Information Paradigms (NIP) delivers Web-based application solutions for professional teams in the area of relationship development.

NIP's goals and objectives are to empower individuals and teams, retaining flexibility and pragmatism alongside rigor and professionalism. To this end, NIP looks for projects and technologies that not only serve an immediate purpose, but also provide a future growth path, scope for integration, and protection from proprietary lock-in.

Specifically, NIP's Relationship Development solutions are designed to:

- **Identify and make visible the important factors driving the day-to-day functioning of a relationship**
- **Focus attention on areas where problems can arise and facilitate their resolution**
- **Provide access to context-sensitive advice**

- Suggests generalized management strategies by quadrant positioning on the value/complexity grid
- Provides a suite of management reports, also available as printable PDFs
- Allows analysis of alliance portfolios by criterion to uncover systemic issues
- Facilitates plan development to increase the strategic value accruing to the company
- Helps to determine the most effective allocation of alliance management resources

Recent White Papers on Alliance and Collaboration Management by The Rhythm of Business

"Alliance Networks" and "Portfolio Management," *in The ASAP Handbook of Alliance Management: A Practitioner's Guide,* 3rd edition, Part 3.3. The Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals, 2013

Designing and Managing Alliance Networks, March 2012
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/storage/designing%20and%20managing%20alliance%20networks.pdf

Measuring and Managing the Alliance Portfolio, March 2012
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/storage/articles/Measuring-and-Managing-the-Alliance-Portfolio.pdf

"Congratulations! You've Been Appointed to a Governance Committee. Now What?," Strategic Alliance Magazine, *Quarter 4, 2011, pp. 18–21.*

Designing the Enterprise Capability for Managing Collaborative Relationships, August 2011
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/storage/articles/Designing-Enterprise-Capability-for-Managing-Collaborative-Relationships.pdf

How Alliance Management Delivers Value: Moving Beyond Best Practices, January 2011
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/uploaddir/4402f603HowAMDeliversValue.pdf

The Practice of Alliance Management in the Biopharmaceutical Industry, November 2010
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/uploaddir/02aedc27AllianceManagementinBiopharma.pdf

Collaborating to Win: Measuring Collaborative Ability, June 2010
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/uploaddir/53c4de5cCollaboratingtoWin.pdf

An Introduction to Strategic Alliance Management, May 2010
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/uploaddir/53c4de5cCollaboratingtoWin.pdf

The Real Power of Collaboration, October 2009
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/uploaddir/9e433b71TheRealPowerofCollaboration.pdf

Collaborative Networks Are the Organization: An Innovation in Organization Design and Management, July 2009
http://www.rhythmofbusiness.com/uploaddir/83610c25CollaborativeNetworksAreTheOrganization.pdf

About The Rhythm of Business

The Rhythm of Business partners with global companies to advance their alliance and collaboration management capability. We provide expert alliance and collaboration management consulting and education services to businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and government agencies. We guide organizations through the earliest stages of developing their alliance capability, and work with the leaders and pioneers of alliance management to reach higher performance levels and extend their alliance capability enterprise-wide.

Informed by our groundbreaking research and more than a decade of hands-on work with clients across diverse industries, The Rhythm of Business supports our clients through all the steps required to design, implement, govern, expand, optimize, measure, and assess strategic alliances and other collaborative networks.

Our customized learning programs and other educational offerings blend theory and practice, providing you with a blueprint for alliance success. Think of The Rhythm of Business as your own Center of Alliance Excellence.

Cofounders Jeffrey Shuman, PhD, and Janice Twombly have coauthored numerous books, articles, and white papers and speak at a variety of venues around the world on the ongoing transformation of organization structures into collaborative networks. They hold the Certified Strategic Alliance Professional (CSAP) designation conferred by the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals (ASAP). Twombly is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Association. Their methodologies inform Shuman's popular MBA courses on Managing Collaborative Relationships and Entrepreneurial Thinking at Bentley University, where he is professor of management.

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