Navigating Change
The transformation of the Navy Yard, and other stories of agile leadership from the 2011 Leadership Exchange
ON THE COVER:
PHILADELPHIA SHIPYARD

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This year’s Leadership Exchange took place in the shadow of distrust—cast not by participants, but by the thousands of Americans gathering under the banner of Occupy Wall Street. Even as we rode the elevators to the conference rooms atop Three Logan Square, protesters in cities large and small were preparing to spend another day delivering a message: “We don’t trust our leaders anymore.”

So it was no surprise that an attendee asked Doug Conant what he thought of the Occupy movement. The man who saved the Campbell Soup Company replied that there’s only one way to restore trust: earn it. “The corporate world’s story is probably not as well told as it needs to be. But that’s a cop-out. We have to do better. It has to be unmistakable.”

There’s a lot of stress, and it’s not surprising that there’s a lot of civil unrest,” said Conant, who in the space of three days of speaking visits was confronted by Occupy Washington, Occupy Wall Street, and Occupy Philadelphia. “The corporate world’s story is probably not as well told as it needs to be. But that’s a cop-out. We have to do better. It has to be unmistakable.”

“We want to win in the workplace,” Conant explained. “We want to create a workplace where people are highly engaged in the work. As they lean into their work, we find we’re able to win in the marketplace. As we win in the marketplace, we find we’re able to contribute more to our communities.”

So what’s the lesson for Greater Philadelphia’s leaders? The lesson is to embrace this cycle: world class results depend on collaboration; collaboration depends on trust; trust is built when we commit to, and deliver, results that matter to our partners.

Throughout the Exchange, whether the topic was mergers, policy reform, or organizational leadership, we returned to trust as the essential precondition for successful collaboration. Where it isn’t present, it has to be built.

Take the merger of Philadelphia Futures and White-Williams Scholars. Its logic was obvious: the two scholarship organizations shared much in the way of mission and vision. But the merger was possible only after a long, careful exercise of trust-building that started with frank conversations between leaders and ended with a highly detailed due diligence process.

“You need to understand the liabilities that are coming because once you close, there is no recourse,” said Philadelphia Futures’ head Joan Mazzotti. “There are no shareholders to sue. We had to both be sure of each other.” Even with that, Mazzotti said, the process is far from over. The two organizations have just begun to blend their day-to-day operations and learn how to deliver on the merger’s promise.

David Foster, whose Greater Camden Partnership merged with the Cooper’s Ferry Development Association to create the Cooper’s Ferry Partnership, said that it’s only when those results start rolling in that everyone relaxes. “It probably

A WORLD CLASS FUTURE BUILT ON TRUST
Getting Greater Philadelphia ready for the 21st century — a task that will require more than any one organization can do alone — calls for visionaries, entrepreneurs, and most of all, effective partners. Not all partnerships are created equal, and many in the region are labor and management, visionary and social networks. Organizations must learn to recognize the potential of partnerships that build and strengthen the partners’ bonds, and then strengthen the bonds of trust among partners, build collaborative partnerships and the old guard, company and community, or Partner A and Partner B, an enterprise becomes world class results. Whether those competing elements are labor and management, visionaries and the old guard, company and community, or Partner A and Partner B, an enterprise becomes world class only when it gets them working together toward a common goal that not only benefits them but also meets the highest standards of the wider marketplace.

And just as clearly, no enterprise achieves that alignment with a single step. What’s needed are a series of steps. Even the smallest results are worth pursuing. As they add up, the bonds of trust between partners strengthen, and new goals come within reach. We have to do more, we have to stop whining and start performing. To complain that we’re misunderstood — the dog ate my homework — it’s not enough. And other essentials are as simple, and human, as a good conversation. “It’s not high cell phone bills, and building trust, and going to lunch and dinner together, and being in constant communication,” Bogoni said. “This is the most obvious, and easiest, and also the most difficult part.”

LESSONS FOR THE REGION

The lesson from the 2011 Leadership Exchange was clear: any dynamic enterprise contains lots of potentially competing elements. Successful leaders get those elements to trust each other, and nothing creates trust like successful partnerships that deliver world class results.

And yet even in this field, the emerging bright spots of reform are created by partnerships that build and reward trust by clarifying the measures of success and each partners’ responsibilities.

“Let’s be honest — we’ve all been in partnerships, and most of them don’t make much of a difference,” said Jenny Bogoni of the Philadelphia Youth Network, as she described an emerging partnership methodology known as “Collective Impact.” Some of its recommendations are technical — for example, effective partners must agree on a system for assessing performance and measuring success. But other essentials are as simple, and human, as a good conversation. “It’s not high cell phone bills, and building trust, and going to lunch and dinner together, and being in constant communication,” Bogoni said. “This is the most obvious, and easiest, and also the most difficult part.”

And as Doug Conant emphasized, when it comes to trust, results are all that matters. Asked what companies can do to improve their image, Conant’s answer was simple: “We have to do more.”

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LEADING CHANGE FROM IN FRONT OR BEHIND

Here’s a riddle. Picture two organizations. One sees a world in constant flux and wants to change in response. The other feels confident in its practices and sees no need to adjust. What do they have in common?

The answer: they both need to change, whether they want to or not. And they both need leaders to drive those changes.

If past Leadership Exchanges have revealed nothing else, it’s that the core responsibility of the modern leader is to respond effectively to unrelenting change. If an enterprise sells products, its market is changing. If it serves people, their needs are changing. Wherever it is based, that region is changing.

Which brings us to the two kinds of leaders: those who have a mandate to drive change, and those who don’t, but who drive change anyway.

This year’s Exchange was bookended by leaders who exemplified both.

Doug Conant of Campbell Soup is the epitome of the leader with a mandate. Ten years ago, he took the helm of a company on the ropes: Campbell was losing value, losing market share, and losing the faith and commitment of its workers. Conant’s task was to pull the company through a transition. Armed with a comprehensive plan to rebuild its culture, he did.

Carmen Medina is the opposite: a self-described “heretic” who spent years pushing for change in an organization that didn’t want to hear about it. She joined the CIA at the tail end of the typewriter age and watched it cling to its Cold War toolkit even as new technology promised vast new possibilities. Only after the CIA failed to assess Saddam Hussein’s weapons programs accurately did her ideas start to gain traction. She left having successfully helped the CIA embrace collaboration and the tools of the digital age.

The methods that Conant and Medina used could not be more different. Conant’s mandate allowed him to create company-wide systems and openly reevaluate every employee. Medina had to push quietly and stealthily behind the scenes by building networks, bending rules, and waiting for the opportunity to put her ideas into play.

But the goals of both leaders were the same: earn the trust of key partners, establish new practices that demonstrated they could get on the program and grow with it, or make a thoughtful choice to get off.

Conant’s team knew that tinkering with a few product lines wasn’t going to be enough. Campbell needed to rebuild its culture. “Everybody knew what ended to be done,” he said. “They were just waiting to see if leadership had the gumption to do it.”

Armed with his mandate, Conant developed a three-year turnaround plan that started at the top. “We turned over 300 of our top 350 leaders,” he recalled. “This was not easy. But I had 20,000 employees who were dying under the weight of that management team. Pretty much everybody had three years to demonstrate they could get on the program and grow with it, or make a thoughtful choice to get off.”

To recapture lost market share, much of Conant’s focus was on bringing innovation both to products and to marketing. Campbell looked for new ways to present its food in stores, new flavors to freshen up old brands, and new ad campaigns to boost soup sales.

But to make those changes possible, Conant needed to harness and reward his employees’ creativity and effort. His team quickly established a series of company-wide improvements that helped Campbell build a reputation as an exemplary workplace. It won Gallup’s “Great Workplace” award four times. Computerworld ranked it one of the best places for IT workers. The Human Rights Campaign called it one of the best places for gay, lesbian, and transgendered employees. Campbell was recognized for its philanthropy, corporate ethics, and efforts to support employee health.

When advertising positions, the company stresses not only performance bonuses and incentives, but a wide range of work/life balance programs including flex-time, day care, on-site gyms and dry cleaners, personal and professional counseling, tuition reimbursement, and even adoption assistance.

“We have to be incredibly tough on standards, because we have to be competitive,” Conant said. “But at the same time we have to embrace people in a way that keeps them engaged in the work … People need to feel valued. And you have to demonstrate, in a tangible way, that you value their agenda.” His turnaround plan worked. Sales started rising soon after Conant’s arrival and kept going up for eight straight years.

Conant knows what life is like at the bottom of the totem pole. As a student he mopped floors and scrubbed pots in a kitchen, learning quickly to take extra care for the cook who rewarded him with an extra share. “If I took care of her floor,” he said, “she took care of my stomach.”

From that experience he drew three lessons that helped him pull Campbell through hard times. “First, people need to understand what is expected of them in their work. Then, they need the materials and equipment they need to do their job well,” he says. “The third thing you need to do is celebrate their contributions. I can find a busted number in a spreadsheet in a nanosecond. What

Doug Conant

by Bill Hangley, Jr.
Comprehensive assessment systems that Conant’s legacy includes comprehensive assessment systems that went against a deeply ingrained organizational culture. “I spent 32 years at the agency,” said Medina. “For 25 of those years, I was a heretic.” Medina joined the CIA in 1978 and in time became the senior manager of the agency’s analysts. But all along, she became increasingly convinced that the CIA needed to undergo serious change. Slowly and steadily she built a network of several dozen like-minded people she calls the “rebel alliance.”

At the heart of Medina’s concern was technology – specifically, the CIA’s failure to fully embrace powerful new tools with which to access and analyze mountains of new data. The agency seemed locked in a Cold War mentality, convinced that national security meant stealing secrets from powerful people. Medina thought it was failing to engage with the emerging digital networks that offer new information and new ways to make sense of it.

...I believe that increasingly, the motor that runs the world are these social forces that are being made increasingly powerful by the revolution in connectivity and information technology.

Medina’s heresy wasn’t just that she was challenging the CIA’s methods – she was challenging its entire worldview. “The agency has to make a strategic bet,” Medina said. “What is the motor that runs the word? Is the world run by men in backrooms cutting secret deals? Or is the motor the social changes, the things that happen dynamically?

Obviously, I think the answer is both – at different times, in different circumstances,” she said. “But our entire system was built betting on motor number one. That’s still in play but increasingly, the motor that runs the world are these social forces that are being made increasingly powerful by the revolution in connectivity and information technology.”

Medina was not alone, but for years the “rebel alliance” enjoyed little success. “We were really determined,” she said. “And we made all the usual mistakes – we had conferences, and would invite people into the building to talk about change. We would send proposals to the seventh floor – our C-suite floor – and nothing happened.”

But just as Medina began to slide into cynicism, a “guardian angel” she met at a conference helped her refresh her spirit and her tactics. “This person said, ‘I can tell you’re unhappy, and I can tell that you’re a heretic,’” Medina recalled. “She said, ‘You’re going to have to get used to being uncomfortable. That feeling is the sign that you’re being true to your convictions.’”

Thus, Medina realized she was going to have to bend some rules and prove to the agency that change was not only possible, but worthwhile. Her opportunity came during the height of the Iraq war, not long after the agency’s highly visible and costly failure to deliver accurate intelligence about Saddam Hussein’s weapons. As the world chattered about the system’s inability to “connect the dots,” two young analysts came to Medina with an idea: they wanted to create a Wikipedia-style website to pull together intelligence about the war. They called it “Iraqpedia,” and to them it was a logical way to use technology to solve the unconnected-dot problem.

Medina loved the idea, but there was a problem: “It was illegal.” The CIA prohibited that kind of inter-agency data sharing. Fortunately, her years of experience had taught her a valuable lesson about bureaucrats. “They make so many rules that it’s actually impossible to enforce them,” she said. “The bureaucrats forget they exist.

“I only knew the rules because I was trying to build collaborative networks, so I said, as long as we don’t tell anybody, let’s move forward.”

Iraqpedia helped pave the way for Intellipedia, an inter-agency, collaborative website that now receives an average of 5,000 contributions a day and hosts the kind of robust debate that the WMD episode proved necessary. Director of National Intelligence John McConnell called it “Wikipedia on a classified network, with very important difference: it’s not anonymous. We want people to establish a reputation. If you’re really good, we want people to know you’re good … If you’re an idiot, we want that known, too.”

Medina, who helped green-light Intellipedia, said that breaking rules is hardly ideal – but for the heretic trying to push unwanted change from within, sometimes it’s essential. “Sometimes the only way to make an impact is to do something really outrageous,” she said.

But managing heresy is an art. The organizational instinct, of course, is to reject it. Galileo used the telescope to unlock the secrets of the solar system and was branded a heretic for his trouble. Centuries later in the wake of World War I, General Billy Mitchell tried to convince the US Army that air power would soon be the deciding factor in warfare. He ended up demoted and court-martialed for criticizing his superiors.

So, for “heretics and the managers that love them,” Medina has words of advice. She counsels those with heretical ideas to start small, build networks, and avoid alienating their colleagues. The leadership challenge for the working heretic is to keep pushing the idea without getting banished to the organizational wilderness.

Managers who want to foster useful heresies need to keep communication lines open in order to spot important ideas as they emerge. Medina made a practice of arranging what she calls “random collisions” among her staff in order to see who was thinking what. She routinely hosted no-holds-barred bull sessions. She blogged and tweeted (and still does). She kept track of everyone’s birthday, sending greetings that sparked conversations.

Some apparent heretics turn out to be garden variety, ego-driven complainers. But other times, Medina said, oddball employee who keeps swimming against the tide starts attracting followers. That’s often a sign that they’ve latched onto an idea that’s truly worth pushing.

“One of the reasons that businesses and organizations and economies are failing to keep up with the world right now is that they’re attached to old ways of seeing,” Medina said. “Making better use of heretics is key for businesses that actually want to implement real organizational change. If there are heretics in the CIA, I guarantee you that there are heretics in your organizations and they are trying to help you. They are not part of the problem. They are the start of your solution.”
Not long ago, the 1,100-acre site at the south end of Broad Street was the home of Naval officers, shipbuilders, sailors, and soldiers. Visiting the site today, you are far more likely to bump into fashion designers, technology engineers, and corporate executives. How did the Philadelphia Navy Yard transition into the diverse, high-tech, and modern site it is today?

The story of the site begins in 1871, when the Philadelphia Navy Yard moved from the central waterfront of Philadelphia to its current location. There it expanded into the vital military facility that anchored the area for over a century. At its height, the yard employed more than 45,000 people and generated business for suppliers and manufacturers across the region. Yet by the 1980s, the Yard was becoming increasingly irrelevant for the modern Navy, and in 1991 a Congressional commission used the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process to begin shuttering it down. That the closure was deeply unpopular in Philadelphia was an understatement: US Senator Arlen Specter fought (unsuccessfully) to reverse the decision before the Supreme Court, and a Pennsylvania Economy League report predicted catastrophic economic loss. Despite all efforts, the Navy Yard officially closed on September 27, 1996.

While the closure marked the end of an era, a new one was about to begin. In just the past decade, the Navy Yard has experienced a renaissance of activity. Shipbuilding still remains, but the site is now home to more than 100 private businesses. A visionary master plan guides the development of the site and emphasizes sustainable and mixed-use growth. Cutting-edge research firms, headquarters for major corporations, and innovative start-ups share the historic grounds.

And, the Yard recently became the location for a major green research initiative – the Greater Philadelphia Innovation Cluster for Energy Efficient Buildings or GPIC – with the help of a $129 million Department of Energy grant. The Navy Yard even runs on its own power grid, helping to serve as a “living laboratory” for energy research.

The story of the Navy Yard speaks to the conversion of liabilities into assets, the virtue of foresight and determination, and the ability to turn unwanted change into a bright spot of urban development. Below, we hear from key officials in the Navy Yard’s transformation.

**INTERVIEWEES**

*John Claypool* is the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. At the time of the Navy Yard closure, he served as the Executive Director of Greater Philadelphia First, an economic development and marketing agency.

*John Gattuso* is Liberty Property Trust’s Senior Vice President and Regional Director, Urban and National Development. In his role at Liberty, Gattuso has directed the development of office buildings at the Navy Yard. He previously worked as Director of Waterfront Development for the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC).

*Terry Gillen* is the Director of Federal Affairs at the Office of the Mayor, City of Philadelphia. Gillen worked as Deputy Commerce Director and then as a Senior Vice President at PIDC, where she headed the team that managed the closure of the yard and planned for the future of the site.

*John Grady* is President of PIDC. Grady played a major role in the acquisition of 1,000 acres of land at the Navy Yard from the federal government and has been involved in the transition at the Navy Yard continuously since 1998. He assisted in the creation and implementation of the 2004 master plan and has helped to attract millions in public infrastructure and private investment.

*William Hankowsky* is Chair, President, and CEO of Liberty Property Trust. Prior to joining Liberty, he was President of PIDC. Developmental operations at the Navy Yard were transferred to PIDC during his tenure.

*RoseAnn Rosenthal* is President and CEO of Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Rosenthal was Senior Vice President at PIDC when the base closure was announced and was instrumental in the early planning process. In 2008, Ben Franklin moved its headquarters to the Navy Yard.

*So what’s the big picture? The Navy Yard closure was announced in 1991. Where do we stand today?* HANKOWSKY: We’re now at the 20th anniversary of the announcement of the closure. And we’re at the tipping point where it’s really gaining some serious momentum. Now people call up and say, ‘I want to be there.’ Tastykake is there, Aker (shipyard) is there. Urban Outfitters is there. Glaxo SmithKline will soon be there, and when those 1,300 jobs show up, and Urban Outfitters finishes its expansion, we’ll be about 10,000 jobs.

Twenty years ago on the date of the closure, there were 11,000 jobs. And now we’re back. That’s pretty impressive. But it’s taken three mayors and 20 years.

GRADY: It’s like you annexed a small, suburban city. It’s 1,100 acres which is the size of downtown Philadelphia. We’ve gone through a process of integrating it back into the social and economic life of the city – as well as into the regulatory life of the city, with taxes and zoning.
and public infrastructure. And we’ve implemented a mixed use plan with industrial and research and office space and open space. In cities, it’s very rare that you have the ability to consolidate and control a parcel like that.

ROSENTHAL: Right after the GPC was announced, phone calls came in left and right – companies want to be here. They know they need to be here if they’re in energy manufacturing. It was the Navy Yard as a viable location.

GATTUSO: People now see an opportunity. It was that people didn’t want to lose all of its icons, banks were closing, the Navy was leaving, all these long-term stabilizing elements of our economy were being destabilized. So there was a certain amount of gloom and doom.

I remember people convening a group of economists to discuss what should be done with the Navy Yard, and one of them said, “Hey, you should not just take the property [from the government] – forget it, the economy thinks, and we have enough other problems.”

CLAYPOOL: From the City’s point of view, keeping the Navy Yard was the best option. There was recognition that it had deficiencies. But you could also make a fairly strong case for it as it has a valuable labor force and it’s well-located. And one of the assets we had – and still do – is six senators. There are very few bases or cities that can command the attention of six senators simultaneously. There was a lot of belief that we had power. But the BRAC process was set up to be isolated from politics – which made it harder.

It was all acronyms! And then we had a tour – such a huge space, how do you even begin to think about this? Are there hot sites, pollution? What about utilities? There was a lot of effort trying to understand what this thing was that we were given to deal with – compounded by conflicting federal regulations. There wasn’t a playbook to look at that said, ‘this is the way you do it.’

GILLEN: The Navy wanted the City to take control of the property. The Navy had said, ‘We have too many facilities, the base itself.’ Now the only reason we did the plan was because the Department of Defense (DOD) required that we do a plan, and they funded it. You can’t just go and say ‘transfer the deed’; there is a whole planning process that has to go along with it.

ROSENTHAL: To me, the Navy Yard transition is a microcosm of the city’s transition. It’s transitioned from heavy manufacturing that depended on a single employer – in this case, the federal government – to something much more diverse. We still have almost 2,000 Navy employees doing some really important things, but they’re joined by 7,000 to 8,000 private sector employees. There are 115 companies across a variety of sectors, including research and education and commercial activity.

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So we knew it was on life support – but the City fought hard to save it, right?

CLAYPOOL: From the City’s point of view, keeping the Navy Yard was the best option. There was recognition that it had deficiencies. But you could also make a fairly strong case for it as it has a valuable labor force and it’s well-located. And one of the assets we had – and still do – is six senators. There are very few bases or cities that can command the attention of six senators simultaneously. There was a lot of belief that we had power. But the BRAC process was set up to be isolated from politics – which made it harder.

HANKOWSKY: Arlen Specter brought a lawsuit [to stop the closure] that was ultimately unsuccessful. They announced that it would take about five years to close it. It doesn’t happen overnight, and they weren’t leaving in their entirety – which I think was important. About 2,000 Navy employees remained. Although it came close, it never became a ghost town.

That must’ve been a tough loss – the city was not far removed from the economic difficulties of the 70s and 80s.

ROSENTHAL: One of the focus points was transitioning this workforce. Trying to get that population into new employment at the Navy Yard or getting them trained for other jobs was a big focus for the City.

HANKOWSKY: There was a lot of controversy and a lot of public investment in [the shipyard deal] got done. And its success has been, to my mind, massively underreported. You have the most sophisticated shipbuilding operation in America in Philadelphia. They’ve built 16 ocean-going ships, more than all other shipyards in America combined over the last seven or eight years.

What about the rest of the space? How clear was the vision for that?

ROSENTHAL: My input into the strategic plan from the very beginning was – let’s take a look at research, let’s look at a look at technology, let’s think about innovation. You need to have a tech park/research environment, in addition to established companies.

GILLEN: If we could put the infrastructure and environmental cleanup in place, we really felt that we could get a whole range of types of businesses down there, large and small.
of an island. So when people talked the track, casinos, and incinerators. for all things no one knew where to saw the Navy Yard as the repository professional and skilled work oppor-

ity -- unless we were just going to

The more we explored it, the to do it right.

Tell us about the master plan that new guides it and how it came to be.

GATTUSO: In 2002, PIDC is-

GATTUSO: To think about the

60 acres and not the rest, at the very least, you’re exposing yourself – what uses would locate next door? But more than that, our feeling was to think about the Navy Yard as a new section of the city. The RFP re-

quired the winning bidder to build at least 50,000 square feet speculative-

ly. The success of such a building in

an unproven sub-market was not as-

ured. I remember Rouse said to me, ‘If no one else will lease the space, we’ll move our offices there.’

When we were selected in 2002, PIDC and Liberty together funded a comprehensive master plan. That plan has been faithfully followed to this day.

ROSENTHAL: Early on, there were two camps of thought – do you develop the Navy Yard your-

self, or do you bring in developers? I thought we should bring in develop-

ers because there is a need for resources beyond what we could secure from public sources. This ulti-

mately happened once PIDC secured title to the site. LIBERTY: We brought in. The original master plan carved

out the basic template – commercial, industrial, research. This basic tem-

plate didn’t change when the master plan was updated, but it was greatly improved and refined.

It sounds like the master plan was less about finding major industries to come in and replace those lost Navy jobs and more about laying the groundwork for smaller develop-

ment projects.

CLAYPOOL: If you’re looking for some underlying shift in perspec-

tive, that’s where I see it. Back in the 80s and 90s, the two big issues in economic development were: can we get 300 acres for an assembly plant, or can we get 1,000,000 square feet for some industry?

But the Navy Yard master plan was no longer concerned with those kinds of big things. Instead, it was designed as an economic growth model – that’s very much a developer’s approach – develop this in bites you’re accustomed to and don’t look for some pie in the sky that requires huge public subsi-

dies and endless negotiations. And the plan seems to be holding up.

When did you start to see that this kind of plan would actually bear fruit?

GATTUSO: The Urban Outfitters project, its overall quality, and the energy created by the 1,200 or so people who work there was a driving force in the transformation. It was a significant affirmation by a major corporate entity. But more than that, Urban Outfitters really turned people on to what the Navy Yard could be. It has given a kind of hip coolness to the Navy Yard in a way that one would not typically associate with Philadelphia.

Liberty has built three office buildings there. All are very success-

ful – 100% occupied and some of the highest rents in the city outside may-

be the Comcast Center. And when people came down and saw our first building (Creventive Drive), they’d say, ‘That’s nice, we like it.’

Then they’d see the Urban Outfit-

ter buildings [in renovated historic spaces], and they’d say, ‘That’s what we really want! We really need to en-

hance our architecture for [our sec-

ond building].’ Three Crevent Drive.

ROSENTHAL: The effort to bring Penn State to Philadelphia had been on the drawing board since the late 70s or early 80s. There was no con-

certed effort until PIDC could offer the proposition of the Navy Yard – the vision, the array of partners, the opportunity. (At that time, Ben Franklin had made a commitment to relocate at the Navy Yard). There was a full court press to bring Gra-

ham Spanier [Penn State’s former President] to see the Navy Yard and meet the partners.

But there’s more down there than Urban Outfitters, right?

GATTUSO: While the whole master plan was still in process, we brought in a deal for a separate 75,000 square foot pharmaceutical company called Applicere Laboratory Services. That was the first ground-up construction: 150 jobs, 70% at the PhD-level. More recently, when the consortium of Penn State and other institutions put its application in for the Greater Philadelphia In-

novation Center and was selected to receive a $129 million federal grant to study energy efficient buildings, that brought significant attention to the Navy Yard as a place of research.

GRADY: There are lots of opportu-

nities around the energy efficiency hub [GPIC]. The Navy has signifi-
cant capacity, and we’ve started to attract some university and private industry partners to feed that econ-

omy. There are lots of opportunities for smart-grid technology. We have just started to scratch the surface.

ROSENTHAL: But for the Navy Yard, there wouldn’t be a GPIC –

I’m convinced of that. It was so clear why we won – there was the convergence of the Navy Yard, a

very unique site, with the variety of buildings here; a dedicated, sepa-

rate grid; a growing concentration of economic development organiza-

tions; angel groups; a venture fund; university presence (Drexel, in addi-

tion to Penn State); and regional partners from both sides of the river, including Wharton SBDC and the NJ Technology Council – everyone was in the mix together. We knew each other, and we had proven ex-

perience in financing, commercial-

ization, and investment. We adapted the inter-institutional agreements of the Nanotechnology Institute as the model for GPIC. No other compet-

ing region had a similar structure. It all added up and was very unique.

GATTUSO: You have this layer-

ing – there’s the hip and cool Urban Outfitters, there’s bustling new con-

struction, there’s high tech research. That brings us to the end of last year, when GlaxoSmithKline’s CEO drives down to the Navy Yard, walks into Urban Outfitters, and asks for a tour. When he comes out he basi-

cally says, “We want to be here. This is exactly the kind of workforce, en-

vironment, and culture I’m looking for.” In about 45 days we went from zero to a signed deal to build them a new facility.

So what does the immediate future look like?

GATTUSO: We’re pushing as fast as we can because success breeds success. Glaxo’s new building is under construction, we’re close to announcing a hotel to go next to it, and we’re also close to a deal with another pharmaceutical company.

GRADY: We’re expanding the connections to the street grid. We’ve opened up a new entrance on the west side at 26th Street so that there’s bet-

ter connection toward the airport and Delaware County. And another en-

trance will be open on Delaware Ave-

ue. We subsidize SEPTA to run a bus from the end of the Broad Street Sub-

way. We’re starting to look at that to see if we need something connecting directly to Center City or the airport.

And we’ve done a lot of studies on extending the Broad Street Subway for one or two stations. It’s prob-

ably a $350-400 million dollar proj-

ect and that takes some longer-term thinking. It has a lot of support, and there are some things that make it at-

tractive – you could develop denser, mixed-use properties around the sta-

tions and infuse the whole Broad Street line with more activity.
ROSENTHAL: The Navy Yard will be a regional hub that contributes to the economy in a way that I don’t think people ever anticipated, especially if we accomplish the goals of GPIC and leverage that investment well.

What made it possible for the Navy Yard to achieve the level of success that it has enjoyed so far?

GILLEN: The moral of the story is it doesn’t come cheap, but if you invest in infrastructure and there is good planning, it pays off. We now have a facility that can compete on an international basis. Not only will GPIC be able to compete with other facilities on an international basis, but also we have to foster diversity and interplay between sectors.

CLAYPOOL: In a way we’re getting back to what cities have always fundamentally been about, and where they were two or three hundred years ago. We did have this industrial revolution, where these massive industries grew in cities in the 18th and early 19th centuries, but we’re at the tail end of that cycle. Now we’re back talking about the essence of a city that Lewis Mumford described -- the exchange of ideas and energy.

GRADY: The Grisham Institute recently released a clean-tech economy report. And Bruce Katz, in his speech about it, put a lot of emphasis on Mayor Nutter’s sustainability efforts and how Philadelphia and the Navy Yard are building on that. Philadelphia isn’t making hats anymore – it’s a leader in this new economy.

But don’t forget we still have a lot of people down there blowing rivets, and we have people making ships and baking Tastykakes. We’re not going to make mass-produced, low-value stuff. But what’s always distinguished Philadelphia as a manufacturing center is that it’s been diverse, with a lot of high-value, niche manufacturing – unlike Pittsburgh or Detroit that made a lot of a single kind of thing.

GATTUSO: I’ve always seen the Navy Yard not as a place to keep jobs in the city but rather a place to bring people to the city. What we’re trying to do is create a place that’s so compelling that people want to be there. It’s very significant that the Glaxo deal had no public subsidy. They’re not part of the KOIZ. They’re there because they want to be there.

That’s something that people in Philadelphia need to understand. You don’t have to buy businesses. Attracting them is much more sustainable than giving somebody $10 million to stay in the city. What we need to do is create an environment that’s so compelling that businesses and city leaders will cherish it, value it, and seek to expand it, not limit it.

The Greater Toronto Area is similar in size and complexity to Greater Philadelphia and has experienced a remarkable evolution from provincial capital to the world class metropolis. Through presentations, site visits, and discussions, participants will delve into Toronto’s waterfront development, immigration and talent, arts and culture, mobility and infrastructure, and more. Program details, as well as a taste of past learning visits to San Francisco and Atlanta, can be found at www.EconomyLeague.org/gplex.

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It may seem counterintuitive, but economic slow-downs are known to spark entrepreneurial ventures. A recent Kauffman Foundation study showed that more than half the companies on the 2009 Fortune 500 list were launched during a recession or bear market, along with nearly half the firms on the 2008 Inc. list of America’s fastest-growing companies.

Nonprofits manifest similar urges toward reinvention when times are tough, and the tumult of the past decade has accelerated their cooperative and collaborative efforts. Recent trends underlying accelerated collaboration in the nonprofit sector include:

- **Tremendous growth.** Between 2000 and 2008, the total number of nonprofits in the five counties of southeastern Pennsylvania grew by 36% (from 11,000 to 15,000). At the national level, nonprofits also experienced similar growth across every subsector.

- **Squeezed balance sheets.** The Nonprofit Finance Fund’s (NFF) 2010 State of the Sector Survey reported that roughly one-third of nonprofits had a deficit and 10% had “no cash.”; 40% of respondents believed 2011 would be harder than 2010. The Economy League of Greater Philadelphia reported similar findings for southeastern Pennsylvania.

- **Greater demand for services.** With the nation struggling with high unemployment, home foreclosures, and other tough economic conditions, 41% of NFF’s survey respondents said demand for their services increased significantly in 2010, a trend evident since 2008.

- **Contracting budgets.** Most states are dramatically cutting programs in order to cover budget gaps. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reported that despite stronger-than-expected state revenues for 2011, 42 states and the District of Columbia had to plug $103 billion in budget gaps for fiscal year 2012.

- **Sector contraction.** The IRS’s recent decision to revoke the tax exempt status of approximately 275,000 nonprofits for failing to file legally required annual reports will undoubtedly result in many nonprofits merging together or even closing their doors.

Collaboration between nonprofits can take many forms, from coordinated programming to full-fledged mergers. No one model is right for all nonprofits, but experts agree that successful collaborations are driven by the organizations’ missions rather than by defensive reactions to external pressures. Wise organizations choose strategic restructuring to further their missions, concluded La Piana Consulting, a firm specializing in nonprofit mergers. “Saving money can be a result of strategic alliances and corporate integrations, but it is rarely the sole or even the primary reason...most often any ‘savings’ are plowed back into higher impact programs and services.”

And as nonprofit collaborations grow in number, researchers have begun to mine the data and arrive at some interesting observations. These include:

- **Nonprofit collaboration does not necessarily mean mergers.** La Piana conducted an analysis of the applicants to the Lodestar Foundation’s newly-created Collaboration Prize and found that of the 175 highest-ranking applications, 25% were actual mergers; 50% involved joint programming, administrative consolidation, or some combination of both.

- **No one subsector dominates nonprofit collaboration.** La Piana’s analysis also found that applicants represented every subsector of the nonprofit world.

- **However, certain subsectors are more favorable to merger activity than others.** In a study of nonprofit merger filings made between 1996 and 2006 in four states (MA, FL, AZ, and NC), the Bridgespan Group was able to identify characteristics of subsectors favorable to nonprofit mergers. Merger-friendly subsectors tend to be large areas of concern served by many small organizations in which funding sources are impersonal (i.e., government as opposed to individual donations) and which face major barriers to “organic growth,” such as government regulations. For example, the study cited “child and family services” as an example of a subsector humming with merger activity.

- **Nonprofits as a group are more likely to merge than their for-profit counterparts; the exception is large organizations.** Bridgespan’s study found that the “cumulative merger rate” for nonprofits was essentially the same as that of for-profits: 1.5% versus 1.7%. The vast majority of mergers – nonprofit and for-profit – are by organizations and companies small in size. However, the merger rate of large nonprofits (i.e., budgets of at least $50 million) is one-tenth that of large for-profits. Bridge- span attributes this disparity to the difference in incentives. For-profit mergers are driven by financial incentives, particularly payouts to individual parties and fees paid to third party “match-makers.” Nonprofit mergers, in the best of circumstances, are strategic decisions driven by organizational missions, theoretically, it is the community as a whole, not individual parties, who benefit from nonprofit mergers.

Our understanding of nonprofit collaboration surely will expand in the coming years as organizations continue to explore new ways of operating in persistently difficult economic conditions with increasing demand for their services. The entrance of new intermediaries such as the Lodestar Foundation’s Collaboration Prize and Boston’s Catalyst Fund is likely to help step up the pace of nonprofit collaboration.

Furthermore, research initiatives such as the AIM Alliance, a Lodestar-supported project involving universities in Arizona, Indiana and Michigan, will offer up new insight into nonprofit collaboration and identify effective models and best practices relevant to our own region’s nonprofits.

In the not-too-distant future, we may look back on this period and recognize it as a time of innovation among nonprofits as they collaborate in new and transformative ways.
The first thing Joan Mazzotti wants people to know about mergers is that they take a lot of work. “I have no idea what I meant a year and a half ago, when I said I was ‘busy,’” she said. But the head of Philadelphia Futures has no regrets about the decision to merge her scholarship organization with White-Williams Scholars. “I may be tired,” Mazzotti said, “but I have confidence that we are going to be among the mergers that flourish.”

Likewise, David Foster of the Coopers Ferry Partnership said the early returns on his merger are excellent. It’s been less than a year since his Greater Camden Partnership teamed up with the Cooper’s Ferry Development Association to create the new organization. “Now, when I look back, I’m amazed at how much more we’re able to do,” said Foster.

Both leaders are still in the early stages of transformation. But both are optimistic that they’ve improved their organizations’ long-term prospects. They feel they’ve reduced redundancy in their respective fields and are better positioned to serve their communities and to compete for philanthropic support.

They had words of advice for organizations considering merging:

• Be sure you truly share a mission. Staff, board members, and supporters at every level must trust that their organizations can merge without sacrificing their most important priorities. Inevitably, people will have to be convinced to sacrifice some of the organizational power or influence they’ve accrued, and an appeal to the larger mission is the best way. “If you’re putting mission above individual, that’s when you’re on the path,” said Foster.

• Be prepared for covert action. The merger process requires lots of deep-cover conversations that have to stay under wraps until the time is right. “You have to be careful,” said Mazzotti. “If it doesn’t go through, you don’t want people to know that it had been discussed.” People’s feelings can be hurt when they discover that executives and board members have spent months talking about major changes, so careful communications strategies – both internal and external – are a must at every stage.

• Be ready for hard conversations about leadership. When two organizations join, boards and executive leadership have to be reshaped. Leaders must decide whether and how to share power, and they cannot allow themselves to get bogged down in ego-driven turf battles. Likewise, complex legal issues need to be forthrightly addressed, and both organizations have to be prepared to face scrutiny.

• Be ready to spend. Merging is not free. There are employees to deal with, legal counsel to be hired, and countless technical and transition details to be managed even as the day-to-day work proceeds apace. “What you really want is for foundation and corporate funders to be giving you funding to support the merger process itself – in addition to what they give you for operations,” said Mazzotti.

For both Philadelphia Futures and the Coopers Ferry Partnership, the benefits of their respective mergers are just emerging. Philadelphia Futures’ two formerly independent organizations are still blending their operations, but Mazzotti said the new nonprofit is already able to serve more students more easily. She hasn’t seen any “softening” of big-donor support, but she cautions that it’s not yet clear if the merger will have any impact on individual giving – a critical area of support.

Foster also feels that his new partnership is more efficient and effective and said that corporate and philanthropic donors recognize the “value added” by the merger and have stepped up their giving in response. “We didn’t lose any funders – in fact, we increased in some cases,” he said. But he notes that the two organizations had a long history of professional and social connections that made it relatively easy to establish the trust needed to smooth the transition.

And both leaders say the merger process has been eye-opening for everyone involved. Foster is now carefully watching the progress of a proposed merger of Rowan and Rutgers Universities: “a game-changer for the region, not just Camden.” And Mazzotti said that since her merger, her own board has come to her with “at least three more ideas” for similar partnerships. “I think we’re going to have a new executive director take those on,” she said with a laugh.
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