

What drives extraordinary good idea work?

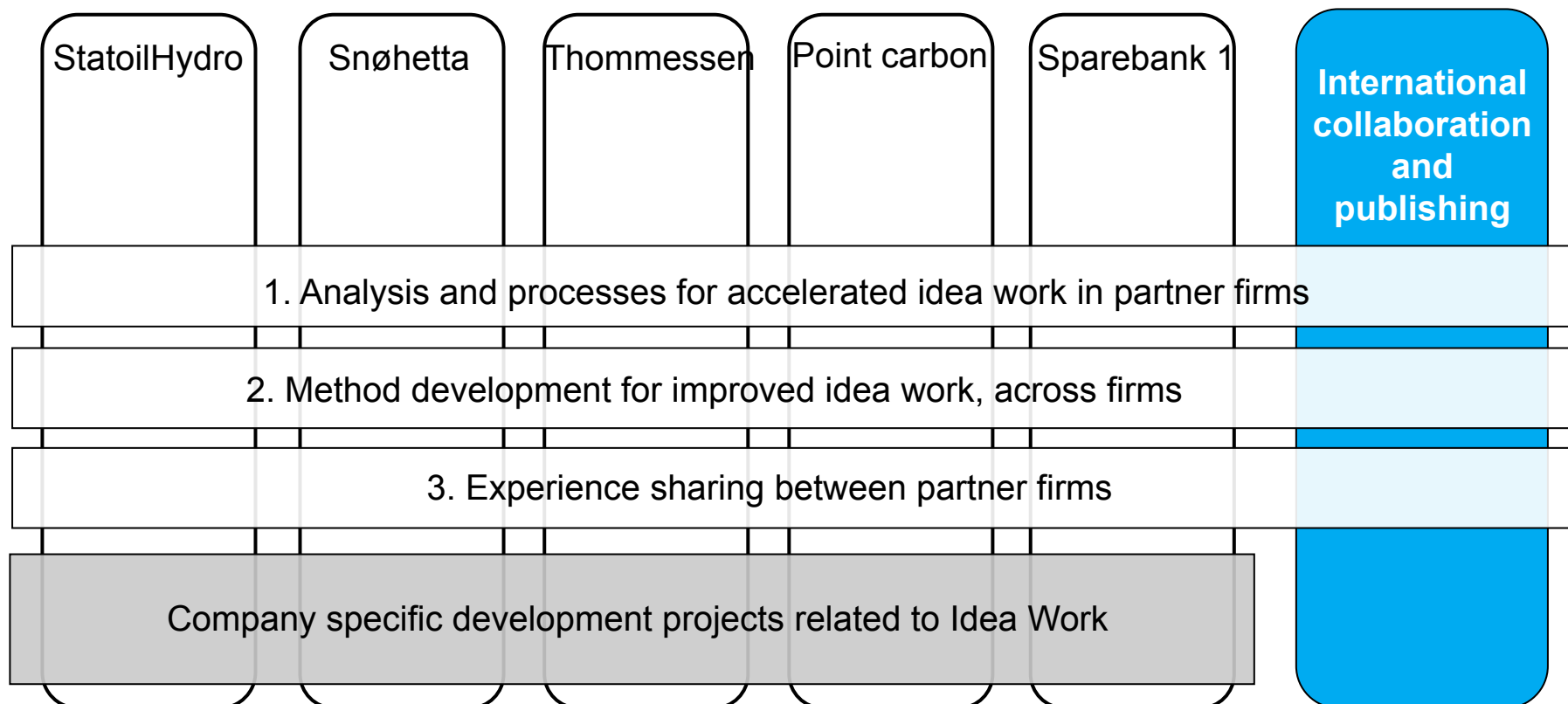
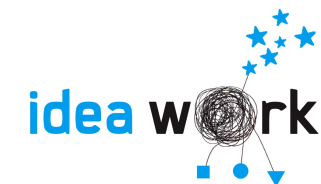
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Idea Work consortium and main activities



SOME ORDINARY ASSUMPTIONS

- Creativity is **individual**; the lonely genius
- Creativity happens as **controlled processes** in particular arenas
- Creativity is **explosive** – big leaps – and is about creating something totally new
- Generalists are more creative, too much **specialist knowledge is negative**, simple techniques make everyone creative
- Professional creativity is only happening in special disciplines

PROFESSIONAL CREATIVITY

- Creativity is **collective**: "Edison is really the name of a place"
- Creativity is often unpredictable and **interwoven with daily work**
- Creativity is often about **combining known elements** to make new solutions, often **slowly**
- **Solid disciplinary competence** and **hard work** is a prerogative to create something new
- Advanced idea work happens **almost everywhere**

The research questions in Idea Work:

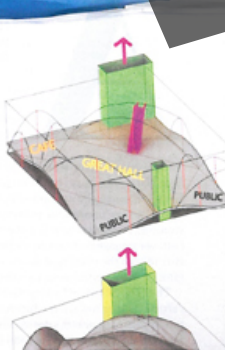
1. How does practices for idea work look at its best?
2. What can we learn if we compare practices for extraordinary idea work in all partner companies?
3. How can we support and/or accelerate processes for idea work in partner companies?



“This is by far the best characteristic of our shared practice that we have ever seen... enormously precise to come from the outside.”
lead architect, Snøhetta

Flash cards and musical games are just two of the ways architecture firm Snøhetta divines from its clients what they really want, beyond the project brief

BY TIM MCKEOUGH PORTRAIT BY MARK MAHANEY



At Snøhetta's New York office, you can't help but feel the pull of the city's history. Located at the southern tip of Manhattan, the firm's second-floor semicircular windows overlook Bowling Green, New York's oldest park and the site where Dutch explorer Peter Minuit reportedly purchased the island from Native American tribes in 1624. A few steps away, interior windows peer into a grand hall that served as the ticketing lobby for Cunard Line passenger ships of the 1920s – a stunning room that now lies shuttered, dark and unused. Leftover signage from a police museum, a more recent tenant, still adorns the oversized doors, offering a non-existent FIREARMS TRAINING SIMULATOR to studio staff.

Then the ribbon of history rushes beyond the present and carries visitors toward the future. Models and pinned-up renderings of Snøhetta's design for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum Pavilion provide a glimpse of the

sparkling glass and stainless steel structure now taking shape on the World Trade Center site, just a few blocks away. A street map painted on the wall hints at another iconic city space the firm has been selected to overhaul: the public streetscape of Times Square.

Yet to focus only on construction activity would be wrong, insists senior partner Craig Dykers, who heads up the 25-person New York office, and oversees the firm with Kjetil T. Thorsen, senior partner at their Oslo headquarters, which has about 90 employees. “We’re not really selling buildings,” says Dykers. “We tell clients that the building is a part of what we do, but it’s not the sole product. The process is a product. How we develop the project together is a product. How those things are represented to the public is a product.”

When you hire Snøhetta, in other words, you don’t purchase a signature building (though you’ll probably get one in the end). You buy into a line of thinking, and a process that aims to place equal emphasis on architecture, landscape and social engagement. Still, there’s no denying that the firm’s buildings have been immensely successful. Snøhetta was founded in 1989 to pursue an international competition for

TEAM WORK
As with their Oslo office, the New York studio is a horizontal organization, where junior and senior designers sit side by side and no one has a closed office.

10 drivers in extraordinary idea work

Driver = a quality of idea work at its best.

- made to create a language and gain consciousness on collective idea work
- will vary between organizations and activities

Zooming Out

Punk Production

Craving Wonder

Trusting Presence

Fueling the Fire:
Courage



Getting Physical

Prep Work

Liberating Laughter

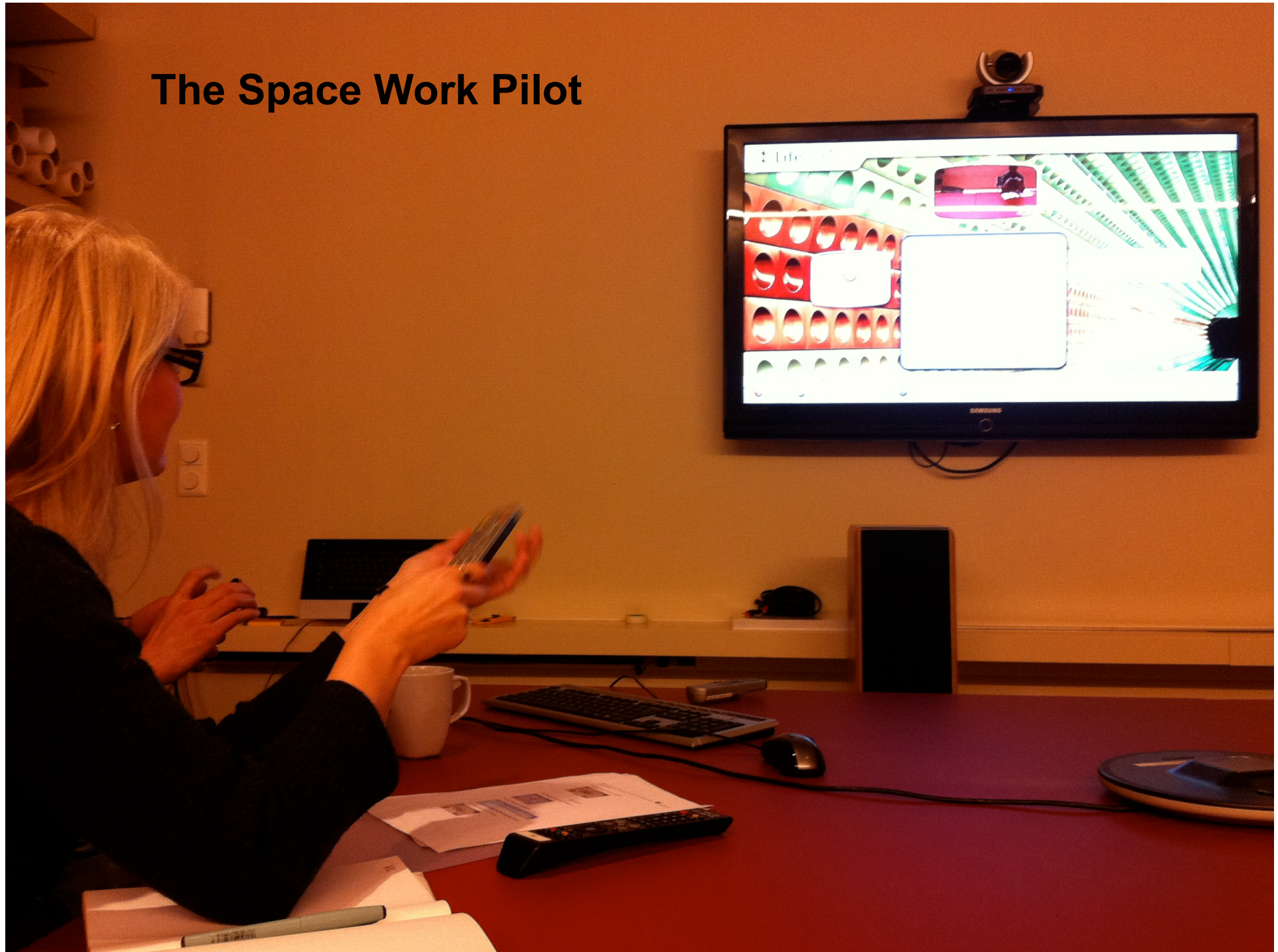
Generative Resistance

Rapid Prototyping



Getting Physical

The Space Work Pilot



“Yes! Like that!”





Punk Production



Iran 1979

Iran 2009



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