

The background of the entire page is a vibrant red color. Scattered across this background are several concentric circles in shades of orange and yellow, creating a 'hot spots' effect. The circles vary in size and opacity, with some being more prominent than others. The overall aesthetic is energetic and modern.

HOT SPOTS

**Creating High Performing and
Innovative Teams and Communities**

Hot Spots Research in Singapore

www.hotspotsmovement.com

Hot Spots Research in Singapore

Connectivity between talent pools, consumers, and sources of production has tremendously increased through globalization, rapid advances in technologies, and changes in demographic patterns. These trends create some important challenges for organizations:

- The need to develop ever more innovative products, services and practices to meet the needs and aspirations of rapidly changing consumer groups
- To bring together teams and communities of talented people with diverse backgrounds to create innovative products and services
- To build workplaces of energy in which people can work at their optimal level of discretionary effort and creativity

In 2008, the Singapore Ministry of Manpower (MOM) began working with Professor Lynda Gratton and Andreas Voigt from the Hot Spots Research Institute to rapidly accelerate the understanding within the country of how future innovation challenges can be met. The aim of the research project was to find out how teams and communities can be supported to learn rapidly, boost their performance and deliver at speed. This research insert summarizes the research questions, the applied methodology, and key findings of the project.

Exploring Hot Spots in Singapore

To explore Hot Spots of high performance and innovation in Singapore 30 teams from ten companies with Singapore offices were selected to explore drivers of innovation and to boost their performance, value creation, and innovative capability over 60 days. Development tools and techniques that the Hot Spots Movement had developed based on work with companies like BP, Nokia, Marriott, Philips, Reuters, Sara Lee, Unilever, Volvo Cars, and others were used to strengthen innovative capabilities. The participating companies in Singapore were: BD Medical, GE, Keppel, Ministry of Manpower (MOM), SATS, Shell, SMRT, Standard Chartered Bank, Turf Club, and Unilever.

The project set out to answer the following three questions:

- What aspects in teams drive their productivity, value creation, and innovative capability?
- Are there potential differences between Singaporean teams and teams that are based in other countries?
- Is it possible to boost the performance and innovative capability of teams in 60 days?

Each team went through a three phase development process:

- **The Hot Spots Teams in Context Profile:** to create baseline data the current productivity and innovation of each participating team was assessed by team members and key stakeholders (the leader, clients, and suppliers). At the same time, characteristics of the team and the organisation were mapped regarding their capability to create Hot Spots of high energy and innovation – their skills to work cooperatively, to span boundaries, and to create ignition.
- **The 60 day Learning Journey:** following the initial profile each team embarked on a learning journey over 60 days to boost their performance and innovative capability. This began with the profile feedback and then contained a number of modules of tailored videos, readings, podcasts and tasks to support the team. To put the learning into their context teams received webinar coaching from Hot Spots Coaches.
- **The Temperature Check:** after 50 days the team members, leaders and stakeholders indicated if the team had made progress on the journey with regard to internal processes and bottom-line deliverables.

“Collaborative work in teams and communities is crucial to innovation in an interconnected business world.”

Lynda Gratton

Founder of the Hot Spots Movement, Professor of Management Practice at London Business School

1. What aspects in teams are related to their value creation, productivity and innovative capability?

- Teams that build the right frame for productive cooperation with cooperative goals, a cooperative culture, and strong trust create more value
- Teams that reach out across their boundaries to access external information, knowledge, or seek outside advice are more productive
- Team energy and innovation flows from a compelling vision and energizing questions
- Teams need productive self-management practices to achieve bottom-line impact

- Companies that support ignition by developing the skills of dialogue and providing the time, space, and resources for inspiring conversations support innovative teams

2. What were differences between Singaporean teams and those located in other countries?

The following differences surfaced in a comparison between the Singaporean teams and teams with comparable data from other countries:

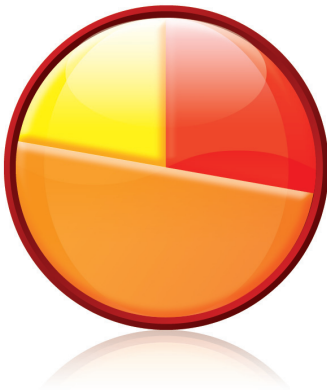
Singaporean Teams

- Create more value for clients
- Make better use of company assets and respond more quickly to changes in the business environment
- Have stronger productive practices in place
- Receive stronger organizational support for Hot Spots to emerge
- Feel that they work on less energizing tasks

Teams from Other Countries

- Are more complex with higher diversity (i.e., gender, age, education, function) and work virtually to a greater extent
- Have stronger networking capabilities and span boundaries more effectively
- Have higher cooperative potential
- Are less active in making and keeping performance commitments

3. Is it possible to boost the performance and innovative capability in 60 days?



28% of the participating teams were able to **strongly boost** their initial performance, value creation, and innovative capability as rated by key stakeholders (clients and suppliers)

50% of teams were able to **moderately boost** their initial performance, value creation, and innovative capability as rated by key stakeholders (clients and suppliers)

22% of teams **failed to boost** their initial performance, value creation, and innovative capability as rated by key stakeholders (clients and suppliers)

Successful teams that significantly boosted their performance, value creation, and innovative capability in the eyes of stakeholders displayed the following practices:

Technique #1: Focus on team health

Successful teams are already in good health. The key is to constantly monitor team health and to deal with challenges as they arise:

- A healthy team has a strong cooperative spirit and trust; so monitor trust and take immediate action when it decreases.
- High levels of conflict create unhealthy teams: so surface and resolve conflict as soon as it emerges.
- Healthy teams are strong on making and keeping commitments: so encourage active making of commitments as basic team training.

Technique #2: Actively involve stakeholders

Successful teams actively engage their stakeholders during the development period:

- Reaching out to stakeholders from the beginning increases stakeholder energy levels
- A strong cooperative mindset within the team makes for better partnerships with stakeholders – but sufficient resources to build external cooperation are needed.
- Teams with a clearer vision of what they want to achieve engage their stakeholders more successfully: so formulate a team vision with a clear stakeholder focus.

Technique #3: Create real development tasks for development

Engaging with real developmental tasks was a key driver of learning:

- Teams develop best when they rapidly translate key lessons from the learning materials into daily actions.
- Teams that spend time on the development tasks learn quicker; so build in 'golden hours' for the team to reflect on their development goals.
- A strong inspirational vision can create a critical boost to the energy and learning performance of the team
- A coach and mentor make a significant difference: we found that telephone coaching and webinars with our Hot Spots Coaches were crucial.

Technique #4: Build a unique 'learning signature'

There is no 'one size fits all' for what works best. For instance, teams with highly complex tasks struggle to learn and project teams fare better in boosting performance. Technological sophistication of the team, learning styles, and the organizational context also play important roles:

- Each team has their own unique 'learning signature'; initially diagnosing the team around these key factors enabled us to tailor the coaching during the 60 days
- Teams learn best when they are linked technologically: so consider using organizational resources (for example a learning platform) to facilitate the learning
- Encourage team members to allocate developmental work between them.
- Experiment with a broad range of learning materials to discover what gets the greatest traction. Keep the learning bit sized for more focus.

A more comprehensive and detailed research report will be made available on the Summit website at www.singaporehcs Summit.com when ready.

Lynda Gratton is Professor of Management Practice at London Business School and Founder of the Hot Spots Movement. Lynda is considered an authority on people in organizations and she was named as one of the top twenty business thinkers in the world. Lynda was also ranked in the top two of *Human Resources Magazine's* top 100 most influential poll. She has written the bestselling books *Hot Spots – Why Some Teams, Workplaces and Organizations Buzz with Energy – and Others Don't* (Berrett-Koehler and Prentice Hall Publishers) and *GLOW – How You can Radiate Energy, Innovation and Success* (Berrett-Koehler). **Andreas Voigt** is Founding Member of the Hot Spots Movement. He directs the Research and New Product Development of the Movement and is a Hot Spots Coach.