



LEADERSHIP

WITHOUT WOZNIAK, WOULD JOBS HAVE BEEN THE SAME?

IN AN EXCERPT FROM HER NEW BOOK *UPGRADE*, AUTHOR RANA FLORIDA EXPLAINS THE POWER AND NECESSITY OF COLLABORATION IN THE MARKETPLACE. AFTER ALL, EVEN MICHAEL JORDAN HAD A TEAM.

BY: RANA FLORIDA



Jobs had Wozniak.

Gates had Allen. Lennon had McCartney. Successful creative enterprises typically have two leaders: a visionary and a strategist who can execute. Creativity is a team-based process. It requires collaboration.

The collaboration that comes from a great team makes everyone better. Having a set of diverse perspectives to draw on can save you from making costly mistakes. It can also give you an edge in trend spotting.

Grant McCracken, author of the *Harvard Business Review*–recommended book [*Chief Culture Officer*](#), says that the jeans maker

Levi Strauss & Co. missed out on \$1 billion worth of sales when it ignored the hip-hop trend. “Culture matters for reasons good and bad,” he observes. “First, it is the place to discover advantage, opportunity, and innovation. The Four Seasons, Patagonia, Starbucks, Nike, Red Bull, Target, Method Soap--each is a culture play. Each found value in culture. Each extracted value from culture.” He goes on to explain that a smart and culturally heterogeneous team of strategic collaborators is the key.

Don't miss opportunities to upgrade your business or life because of lack of collaboration. Successful collaboration comes in all shapes and forms. A wide range of contributors is readily available and wants to add value.

Who would ever think that a world-renowned architect could design tennis shoes? [Zaha Hadid](#) did just that, by using her genius for design and her mathematical grasp of shapes. Through a unique collaboration, Hadid created a limited-edition collection of Lacoste shoes. Using fluid grips, which wrap around the foot, the shoes are specially designed to move with the body. But she didn't do it alone.

“Teamwork has been very important to me for a long time. I've always believed in it, and that's why things are manageable,” Hadid told me. “It's very difficult to get anywhere in the profession without being meticulous, but it is important to learn how to trust others,” she added. “A brilliant design still benefits from the input of others. . . . You must learn early on that you can't do everything yourself; you can do bits of it yourself, you can ask people to do things the way you want them done, but you also have to rely on their strengths and abilities.”

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Bringing in new and different perspectives can result in hundreds of millions of dollars in new sales. Consider what happened when Procter & Gamble asked Continuum, an innovation and design practice, to think about better ways to clean floors. A team of researchers observed that

most people hated mopping. First they had to sweep before they mopped, and they spent almost as much time wringing out the mops as they did running them across the floor. Few people used branded products; most considered mopping such a dirty chore that they changed their clothes first.

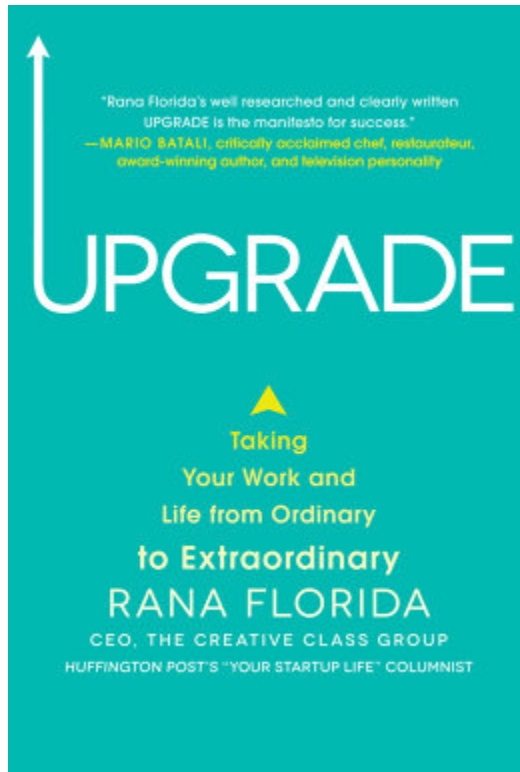
Drawing on this new perspective, an idea for a new product emerged that would make floor cleaning much less onerous: Fast Clean, or as it became better known, the Swiffer. In the first year on the market, 11.1 million units were sold, and it continues to be one of Procter & Gamble's best-selling products, with more than \$500 million in annual sales. As you've read, I'm a dedicated Swiffer user myself. The research teams' collective inputs and observations are what led to this invention.

When I was VP of communications for HMSHost, collaborations were essential to our business. The world's largest provider of food, beverage, and shopping services for travelers, HMSHost operates hundreds of airport concessions around the world, from JFK International, to Reagan National, to Miami International, to London Heathrow.

It is easier for an airport to have a single large company run all its concessions than to bring in hundreds of independent operators. HMSHost collaborates with well-known brands such as Wolfgang Puck, Balducci's, and California Pizza Kitchen by licensing their names and running their operations. From the construction of the spaces to the hiring, training, and firing of the staff, HMSHost does it all in exchange for the brand and a revenue share.

Starbucks is one of HMSHost's leading brands and biggest success stories. When I worked there, there were 17 Starbucks in Chicago's O'Hare airport alone, and they brought in more than \$26 million a year in revenue. HMSHost opened the first Starbucks at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in 1991. It seemed like a big gamble at the time, and a lot of people at HMSHost were reluctant to do it. Who in their right mind, they thought, was going to pay all that money for a cup of coffee? Back then, airport coffee was uniformly terrible tasting and was

served in small white Styrofoam cups. Just a little over two decades later, there are more than 300 airport Starbucks locations, with more than 100 more in development.



I attended a meeting with the Starbucks team members in Seattle at which they were negotiating for more space. They argued that the café environment was an important part of their brand proposition and that the spaces we were putting them in weren't large enough to do them justice. Our contract was coming close to its end, and we knew how important their brand was to our bottom line--and so did they. They said to us, "When we first signed on with you, you were dealing with Michael Jordan in high school. At our second contract negotiation, you were dealing with Michael Jordan in college. Now at our third negotiation, you are dealing with Michael Jordan--PERIOD."

Collaboration is key in everything. We knew we couldn't re-create a brand that delivered the quality, name recognition, and taste that Starbucks had perfected. They knew how vast our footprint was in airports around the world. Although Starbucks had expertise in running stores on streets, the airport environment was a vastly different beast. For one thing, the stores were open 365 days a year. Second, employees had to travel much farther than they did to work at a typical neighborhood Starbucks and had to deal with airport security rules and regulations. Just delivering product and inventory posed special logistic challenges. The landlord relationship was also different. Both businesses recognized their strengths and their weaknesses, which in the end made this collaboration equally successful. In the end, we gave them more space in better locations with more foot traffic. The additional square

footage was used for retail opportunities, such as baskets of food, souvenir mugs, and carry-on items, and so it was a win-win.

--**Rana Florida** is the author of [Upgrade: Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary](#). Florida also serves as CEO of [Creative Class Group](#), a consulting firm serving such clients as BMW, Starwood, IBM, Philips, Zappos, and Johnson & Johnson, and writes the Huffington Post column [Your Startup Life](#).