

Smarter Collaboration Insights

Sharing ideas to accelerate smarter collaboration

January 2025

FEATURED THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Unlocking Client Value: The Power of Peer Roundtables

The Gardner & Co. team was conducting a “voice of the client” interview with a big-shot senior executive – he was a loyal client of an elite firm that hired us to help improve smarter collaboration. At one point, he burst out laughing: “The irony is unbelievable. You’re asking me how [Firm X] could improve their service, and I’m literally in the car on my way to their biggest competitor for a roundtable with a handful of my peers. I’ve never worked with [the competitor] before...but this is a nifty way for them to introduce themselves. Firm X has never done anything like this.”

Like in Firm X, most professional service firm partners fail to fully leverage their networks to benefit clients. Yet, many of their senior executive clients feel isolated within their companies and would highly value opportunities to connect with peers. The best PSFs use their “convening power” to draw together clients for informal roundtable-type events that build communities, boost client loyalty, and give the partners a chance to hear firsthand what’s on executives’ minds.

What draws clients in? Three key factors:

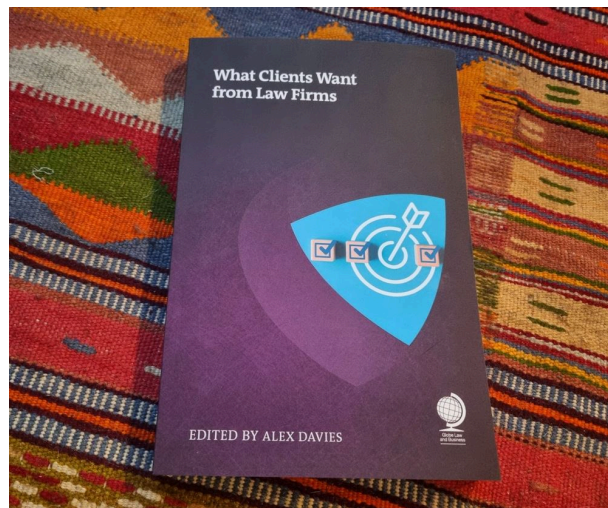
1. **High-quality participants:** a carefully curated group of peers
2. **Relevant hot topics:** issues they are eager to discuss
3. **Safe setting:** an informal, off-the record environment

Roundtable events are low-cost, low-effort (especially when partners trust their associates and professional staff to help implement them), and deliver huge returns. They allow host partners to:

- Show commitment to building client relationships
- Demonstrate their expertise by selecting the right participants and topics
- Gain valuable insights by listening to attendees

Senior leaders often expect and welcome follow-up conversations after these events, making them an excellent way to deepen relationships and add value.

For more tips and research on how outside advisors (and lawyers in particular) can raise the bar through smarter collaboration, check out the new book [What Clients Want from Law Firms](#) – including a chapter from Dr. Heidi K. Gardner and Gardner & Co. Insights Director Csilla Ilkei.



BY THE NUMBERS

An Exciting 2024 for Gardner & Co. – And Our Clients

Our team has crunched our 2024 numbers to reveal the impact of our research and consulting services for our clients. Here are a few highlights:

- **22**: The number of Smarter Collaboration Diagnostics we conducted for different clients to pinpoint their top collaboration bright spots and barriers, quantify the “money left on the table,” and identify priorities
- **2,100**: The number of professional firm partners surveyed to identify their perceptions of collaboration in their firm
- **\$172 million**: The average latent value of smarter collaboration among our clients
- **\$2.6 billion**: The total untapped value of smarter collaboration across clients we served in 2024
- **57**: The number of interviews conducted with clients' clients to uncover top leaders' expectations for external advisors

- **341:** The number of senior leaders interviewed to better understand their strategic goals and how collaboration can fill the gap

For more details on Smarter Collaboration Diagnostics, [check out our website](#). From initial assessments to annual updates, they surface top collaboration bright spots, challenges, and opportunities – *and* progress achieved thus far.

LOOKING AHEAD

Five Ways to Partner with Gardner & Co. in 2025

If collaboration is on your agenda for 2025, consider:

1. Becoming a Smarter Collaboration Certified Practitioner (or certified in one or more smarter collaboration tools, such as the Smarter Collaboration 360 or Smarter Collaboration Profile).
2. Conducting a [Smarter Collaboration Diagnostic](#), either across your organization or within a specific division (e.g., department, practice group, office, cohort).
3. Getting up to speed on the latest smarter collaboration research and ideas (a few options are ["Do you measure up? Equipping leaders to promote smarter collaboration"](#); ["Collaborating with GenAI: Heineken Legal Department's Use of the 'PowerBot'"](#); and [Smarter Collaboration: A New Approach to Breaking Down Barriers and Transforming Work](#)) – and then asking how you can apply the ideas in your organization.
4. Participating in our ongoing research, on topics like how GCs can get a seat at the strategy table and how GenAI can be leveraged as a real-time sparring partner.
5. Meeting with us to brainstorm the highest-value initiatives for your organization. Check out this monthly newsletter for our latest travel plans; we are also always ready to hop on a call.

TOOLS

SC Networks – Beta Testing Under Way

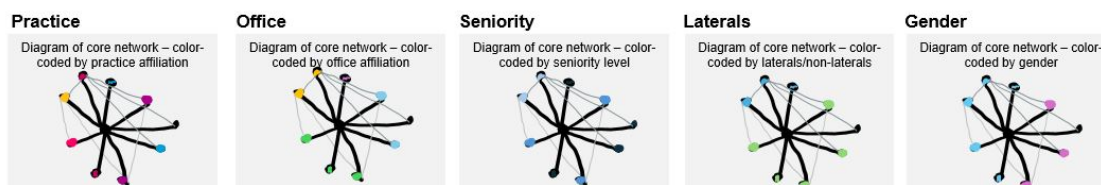
Do you love the “twins”? For the last decade, this analysis has been *the* most memorable graphic in the SC doctrine. So we are thrilled to launch a way for firms to generate their own smarter collaboration network analytics.

Right now we have space for a couple more PSFs to participate in our Smarter Collaboration Networks pilot. To see if your firm qualifies as a beta tester, please email Ivan Matviak at ivan@gardnerandco.co.

"SC360 for PSFs" Coming Soon

We are excited to announce that Smarter Collaboration International (SCI) will soon release the "SC360 for PSFs," a version of the Smarter Collaboration 360 that is tailored to professional services firms, their terminology, and their specific collaboration challenges.

If you are interested in receiving more details about this offering, please email Lee at lee@gardnerandco.co.



EVENTS

Smarter Collaboration Int'l Event in Sydney for Coaches, L&D Leaders

Are you a coach or L&D professional near Sydney, Australia? If so, join Dr. Heidi K. Gardner and Ivan Matviak for a one-of-a-kind event to discover the latest advances in smarter collaboration.

The event on Tuesday, April 1 involves:

- **An optional certification** for our new SC360: 4 to 5 p.m. (for attendees who want to help their clients/colleagues capture insights and uncover blind spots about their collaborative skills)
- **A social hour** and update on our other new SCI offerings: 5 to 6 p.m.

We are grateful to Norton Rose Fulbright for hosting the event at their office, located at Level 5/60 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia.

To RSVP, please email Christine at christine@gardnerandco.co. For more details on the SC360, [visit our website](#).

We hope to see you there!

RESEARCH

Tension in the Workplace Caused by Differing Political Views

Have you felt or observed tension in the workplace caused by people's differing political views? Please select your response in the poll below.

We're conducting research on this topic following heated elections in the US – and similar political scenes around the world. We want to make sure that our data is as representative as possible, so please share the poll with your colleagues, family, and/or friends (here's [a link for them](#)). Thank you!

Have you felt or observed tension in the workplace caused by people's differing political views?

[Strongly agree](#)

[Agree](#)

[Disagree](#)

[Strongly disagree](#)

And if you know a leader who is exceptionally skilled at managing tension caused by differing political perspectives, we'd appreciate hearing from you. Please email heidi@gardnerandco.co.

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: REBECCA NORMAND-HOCHMAN

Meet Our Longstanding Leadership Consultant/Coach Partner

Rebecca Normand-Hochman is an integral contributor to our consulting team, helping leaders and leadership teams address organizational challenges and implement strategic change – including collaboration-focused agendas. As a highly experienced leadership consultant and executive coach, she works with our clients to:

- improve their collective performance,
- design and implement innovative talent strategies,
- collaborate across silos, and
- collectively transform their business.

Having worked as an international finance lawyer in London and Paris, she brings a deep understanding of fast-paced and complex organizational environments.

We are thrilled about our partnership, which includes PSF leadership team coaching that is based on a systemic approach and integrates our new Smarter Collaboration 360 development tool.



OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET

Catch Up with Dr. Heidi K. Gardner and Ivan Matviak

Ready to book a client roundtable, an executive workshop, or a major offsite? Here are three upcoming trips for Dr. Heidi K. Gardner and Ivan Matviak, in case you'd like to schedule time with them.

- Copenhagen: March 10 -14
- Melbourne & Sydney: March 23 - April 10
- Tokyo & Osaka: May 19 - 30

STAY CONNECTED

Keep in Touch

Follow Gardner & Co. on [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#), and visit our [website](#) for extra news and insights on smarter collaboration.

Give Feedback

What else can we do together? Please send your thoughts to Christine at christine@gardnerandco.co.

Gardner & Co.

christine@gardnerandco.co



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