The Appreciative Inquiry Summit
Explorations into the Magic of Macro-Management and Crowdsourcing

Guest Editors: David Cooperrider, Lindsey Godwin, Brodie Boland and Michel Avital

Inside:

Feature Choice: Jacqueline Wong on Re-Appreciating Inquiry

Creating Change Ahead of the Curve

Big Change Fast

Improving Safety in a Steel Mill

A Participant’s Perspective

Taking Enough Time

Beyond the Room

After the Wedding

The Smallest Summit

Tapping the Soul of Higher Education

Toward the Creation of a Positive Institution

AI Research Notes: Model for Intervention in Mutual Help Promoter

AI Resources: AI Summits

Cover photo courtesy of Nextel del Peru
Inside:

4  The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: Explorations into the Magic of Macro-Management and Crowdsourcing by David Cooperrider, Lindey Godwin, Brodie Boland and Michel Avital
   The power of ‘the whole’ brings out the best in human systems

10  Feature Choice  Each issue, a leading AI practitioner will present a topic of their choice by Jacqueline Wong
    Re-Appreciating Inquiry: The Dragonfly Framework as a Generative Metaphor for Planning and Change
    Jacqueline Wong writes about her own learning journey and experiences in applying AI

AI Summit Theory and Concepts

24  Macro Management of Meaning and Identity: Communication Strategies for Collective Wisdom and Transformational Results by Diana Whitney
    If changes don’t make sense to people, they will not produce positive results

29  The Sustainable Design Factory by David Cooperrider and Chris Laszlo
    Managers are turning to artists as models for collaborative design

35  The Appreciative Governance Summit: Designing the Social Architecture of Engagement, Innovation and Productivity by Bernard Mohr and Neil Samuels
    AG summits engages large numbers of diverse stakeholders to make real-time decisions

42  Tapping the Soul of Higher Education by Joan McArthur-Blair and Jeanie Cockell
    The elements, purposes and examples of AI summits in colleges and universities

Cases and Applications

46  Creating Change Ahead of the Curve: How AI Summits Transformed the Culture of Hewlett Packard by Mary Peery
    The hardest time to lead change is when a business is at the top

51  Improving Safety in a Steel Mill: Words Really Can Create Worlds! by Ronald Fry
    What really causes or creates behavioral change?

55  Taking Enough Time: Back to Basics of the AI Summit by Mauricio Puerta and Isabel Wong
    Co-construction of a new organizational reality requires time
Inside continued:

60  Toward the Creation of a Positive Institution: St. Peter’s College by Lea Waters, Mathew A. White and Simon Murray
St Peter’s College, Adelaide, Australia, held an AI summit to elicit feedback from all 151 staff on the school’s draft strategic plan and mission

66  Big Change Fast: Systemic Change and Sustainability in the US Dairy Industry by John Whalen
What is required to drive innovation can be cost-prohibitive; industry-wide collaboration around a project is possible and works

Post-Summit and Beyond

70  A Participant’s Perspective: The Experience of an External Stakeholder by Lisa Rees
A first-time AI summit participant shares her reflections and perspectives

74  Beyond the Room: Leveraging Collaborative Technology to Engage the Whole System by Lindsey Godwin, Pascal Kaplan and Kristin Bodiford
Integrating technological advances to transform the entire globe into a summit setting

79  After the Wedding: How to Plan For and Maintain a Successful Post-Summit Process by Molly McGuigan
Critical steps for launching a successful post-summit process.

82  Making Change Easy: The Tiniest AI Summit in the World by David Cooperrider
Can the design of the AI Summit be applied to change by (and for) an individual?

87  Appreciative Inquiry Research Notes by Jan Reed and Lena Holmberg
Construction of a Model for Intervention in Mutual Help Promoter of Hope – Miampe

92  Appreciative Inquiry Resources by Jackie Stavros and Dawn Dole
Appreciative Inquiry Summits

95  About the August 2012 Issue
Guest Editors: Joan McArthur-Blair and Jeanie Cockell
Inclusive Spaces: Using Appreciative Processes to Transform Social Structures

96  IAPG Contacts and AI Practitioner Subscription Information
ABSTRACT
Less than a year ago, I participated in my first AI summit at my alma mater. In this article, I reflect on my AI summit experience from the moment I first received notice of the summit to my latest thoughts about using what I have learned in my own workplace. By sharing my reflections, I hope my perspective as a first-time AI summit participant helps AI practitioners in planning future summits.

Pre-summit
I received an email from the Alumni Office in the early summer of 2011 informing me that the College was planning an AI summit called 'Building Partnerships for a Thriving Workforce' and asking me to participate. My initial reaction to the email was, ‘WOW!’ I couldn’t believe that they were choosing me to be part of such an important initiative and wanted my ideas to help build the future of the College. Prior to the email, I had never even heard of an AI summit and honestly knew very little about AI. I immediately went to the internet to read up on AI and the more I read, the more I realized that this summit was going to be productive, engaging and probably a lot of fun.

Two months prior to the summit, I was asked to tape a summit promotional video for the College’s website challenging people to attend. The College’s Career, Giving and Alumni officers knew me well from not only graduating from Champlain twice (’85 and ’02), but also as an active supporter and volunteer who loved to share my love for the school with others. The College created three videos that showcased different stakeholder’s points of view related to Champlain and the summit. In the video, I have a conversation with a future graduate and we talk about what makes Champlain so great and what it would look like in 2020. The video was a lot of fun to make, but what added to the experience was being allowed to dream what Champlain could be and recording it on film.
The pre-summit communications so successfully conveyed the importance of the summit.

Soon after the video, I received a 'save the date' letter from the President of the College with a link to the summit website followed by a formal invitation a few weeks later. I also received several emails from the College leading up the summit, outlining what we would accomplish and what to expect during the summit. The pre-summit communications so successfully conveyed the importance of the summit that when the day finally arrived, I was ready for just about anything.

The summit

I have attended many conferences throughout my career, but I could sense that this one was going to be different. During registration, I could feel electricity in the air. We were welcomed with a beautiful breakfast and the College staff went out of their way to make each of us feel special and important. Everyone seemed to be genuinely happy, somehow knowing that we were about to be part of something really big. During breakfast, people chatted about their affiliation with the College, why they were there and what they hoped to gain from the summit. Even though there were 400 participants, we all shared a bond that continued throughout the two days.

After a hearty breakfast, College President Dave Finney kicked off the summit along with Summit Chair Ben Stiller, the well-respected CEO of Vermont’s own Green Mountain Coffee Roasters. Their active participation in the summit inspired the group as they set the foundation for what they hoped to accomplish during the summit. The AI facilitators took the stage for a brief overview of AI and answered questions from the participants. I was immediately put at ease by their warmth and enthusiasm as they walked us through the AI process.

It was evident that we all were committed to the College, but most of us had never met. We were asked to interview a person at our table and then introduce them to the group. At the end of sharing information about each other, we became closer as a team and established a camaraderie that assisted us with moving into the next phase of the summit.

Flip charts and post-it notes

We were asked to focus on five themes for growing the College. Each table was given a theme and asked to list as many ideas on post-it notes until all ideas were exhausted. The flip charts that were scattered around the perimeter of the room quickly became a sea of aqua, fuchsia, purple, yellow and chartreuse post-it notes. After all of the ideas were posted, a team leader from each theme read the ideas and the other teams were asked to put their ideas on post-it notes if the idea wasn’t already listed.

After all of the ideas were collected for each theme, we were allowed to choose a theme that resonated with us the most. I joined a group that mostly included Champlain faculty. It was exhilarating to be designing something with people that I would normally never have an opportunity to collaborate with outside of the summit. Each team dispersed throughout the building to begin designing the dream. However, this became a challenge because the groups were quite large and we had to move a few times before finding enough space to begin work. The time went by quickly and each group was asked to showcase their final design to the entire group using creative mediums such as skits, songs, news broadcasts or illustrations.
Having lost some time trying to secure enough space for our group, we were a little rushed at the end, but the summit illustrator was able to assist us with a pictorial narrative of our final design. Even with enough time, I still think we would want more because the ideas were flowing and we didn’t want to see it come to an end. After the final presentation was shared, we all left exhausted, but exhilarated that this was not the end, just the beginning of great things ahead for the College.

Post-summit

The days following the summit were rather anti-climactic – similar to the days after Christmas. I met some really great people, collected business cards and made promises to stay in touch, knowing that in all reality, the connection we had shared would most likely fade away. But, then something else exciting happened. A few days after the summit, I received an email from the College president thanking me for attending the summit that included a link to the post-summit website where I could track the outcomes from the summit.

A month later, I received another email with a link to the post-summit themes that were developed during the conference. What we had designed during the summit was now in black and white, in a document that would become the road map for building the future of Champlain College. The website and documents validated that all of the hard work we had done during the summit was taken seriously and that the College is committed to taking our dreams and making them a reality. Participating in the AI summit made me feel that I was an important member of the Champlain College family. Not only did it deepen my commitment to the College, but I am more willing to be part of future summit initiatives and planning sessions.
My future with AI
Participating in the summit and remembering how engaged I felt gives me resolve that AI has relevance in my workplace. Working in a large government entity, we tend to focus on fixing problems rather than leveraging strengths. We do a wonderful job tracking performance metrics and quality, but don’t leave enough room and time for collaboration. Instead of having all levels of the organization dreaming and designing our future, we rely on leadership, subject matter experts and consultants to do it for us. AI offers a different approach to building a committed workforce and a successful organization. I am hopeful that in time, more government employees will become aware and exposed to AI, much like I was during the AI summit. And with time, AI will become part of our culture as we dream and build what the future can be.

Taking the insights from my experiences as a participant in the summit, I want others in my organization to feel as engaged and as excited as I did. I can make subtle changes in the way we look at challenges, conduct meetings or do strategic planning by:

- Engaging as many stakeholders as possible
- Seeking collaboration
- Modeling behavior that welcomes ideas
- Following through on ideas that support success

Subscribe to AI Practitioner
The International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry

February 2012
Learning is the Spark of Transformation
May 2012
The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: Explorations into the Magic of Macro-Management and Crowdsourcing
August 2012
Inclusive Spaces: Using Appreciative Processes to Transform Social Structures
November 2012
Embracing the Shadow through Appreciative Inquiry

Editor: Anne Radford editor@aipractitioner.com

Subscribe online at www.aipractitioner.com/subscriptions
IAPG Contacts and AI Practitioner
Subscription Information

International Advisory Practitioners Group IAPG
Members of the International Advisory Practitioners Group working with AIP to bring AI stories to a wider audience:

Dhruba Acharya, Nepal
Anastasia Bukashe, South Africa
Gervase Bushe, Canada
Sue Derby, Canada
Sara Inés Gómez, Colombia
Lena Holmberg, Sweden
Joep C. de Jong, Netherlands
Dorothe Liebig, Germany
John Loty, Australia
Sue James, Australia
Maureen McKenna, Canada
Liz Mellish, Australia
Dayle Obrien, Australia
Jan Reed, United Kingdom
Catriona Rogers, Hong Kong
Daniel K. Saint, United States
Marge Schiller, United States
Jackie Stavros, United States
Bridget Woods, South Africa
Jacqueline Wong, Singapore
Margaret Wright, United Kingdom

AIP Subscriptions
Individuals
NGOS, students and community groups
Small organisations
University/Research Institutes
Large organisations
http://www.aipractitioner.com/subscriptions

Back Issues and Articles
http://www.aipractitioner.com/issues
http://www.aipractitioner.com/articles

Change of subscriber details
http://www.aipractitioner.com/customer/account/login

Publication Advertising/Sponsorship
For the advertising rates, contact Anne Radford.

Disclaimer: Views and opinions of the writers do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but all details are subject to alteration. No responsibility can be accepted for any inaccuracies.

Purpose of AI Practitioner
This publication is for people interested in making the world a better place using positive relational approaches to change such as Appreciative Inquiry.

The publication is distributed quarterly: February, May, August and November.

AI Practitioner Editor/Publisher
The editor-in-chief and publisher is Anne Radford. She is based in London and can be reached at editor@aipractitioner.com

The postal address for the publication is:
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7633 9630
Fax: +44 (0)845 051 8639
ISSN 1741 8224

Shelagh Aitken is the issue editor for AI Practitioner.
She can be reached at shelagh@editorproofreader.co.uk

AI Practitioner © 2003-2012 Anne Radford

Back to Table of Contents