



"Alexa, what I can do today?"

Stefan Doblhofer / Article for COS Journal

6 Blended Collaboration Snapshots from 2025



About

A side-product of writing up the “Alexa” article, the following scenes envision a number of everyday work situations as they may play out in a couple of years, discreetly enhanced by some permutations of Alexa, sometimes steered by some ‘Key Players’, and often shaped by recent ideas on self-organization.

We will begin at the employee level and then work our way upwards. You will notice that in the first scenarios, there are very few or no superiors, although meetings are conducted, decisions are taken, projects are going forward, etc.

I was surprised myself by how unspectacular, and how close to today’s working environments, these ‘Blended Cooperation’ snapshots feel. And unsurprisingly, there are some human tensions remaining that Alexa, for all her endowments, is ill equipped to solve.

Teams without a boss at ABC

Max shares a coffee with his mentor Elisa. She asks how satisfied he is with his first three months at ABC. Overall, Max feels well. Still, when he had responded to the ad promising “Work at ABC without a boss”, he hadn’t imagined how much coordination and alignment there would be.

There are the daily stand-up meetings for whom he has to arrive on time every morning. Whenever he finishes a task, Todoxa tells him what to do next. On a big screen, Todoxa shows the team how far everyone is with which task, how well they are doing against the plan, etc. He feels that the program is somehow slightly biased against newcomers.

Maybe he will raise this at a meeting in a couple of months. There are few meetings here, but they are very strictly facilitated, and it seems everyone here is terribly good at facilitating. There is also Meetexa which calls your name when it’s your turn to speak, and it emits a relaxing sound when people get tense.

When two colleagues begin quarrelling at work, the others threaten with calling a team coach. Max has Eliza as his mentor, Martin as a product owner, Maria as a scrum master, he has a dotted line to Sara, and he has Chris as a “buddy” to introduce him to all the systems he uses. Yes, he has seen his official boss, the department head, only two times in all this time. He just never imagined all that teamwork. For an introvert like Max, sometimes it’s hard to push the green daily-feedback-button when leaving the office.





A project meeting at DEF

The team meets before the big screen at one of their walls, which displays a table similar to a Kanban board. Preparing the meeting, Kanbexa has done an extensive review of all the work done so far and got written feedback from the client's representative.

Everybody's detailed work schedule for the next four weeks is available when touching the person's symbol on the screen. During the meeting, everybody can move the cards on the board; after the meeting, only the facilitator will have access.

"I volunteered for the XYZ task force yesterday", Corinna says. Together with her colleagues, she guesses those capacities and types them in. Kanbexa immediately recalculates everyone's schedules, which produces an outcry from Theo: "I was promised ..."

As the team begins to manually correct the schedules, several dialogue windows pop up reminding the team that Theo has actually enjoyed preferential scheduling four times over the last two years. The facilitator shrugs and deactivates the function: everybody knows that you'll get to work with genius Theo only under certain conditions.

Peer recruiting at GHI

A team meets Anna, a job candidate. Candexa, a specific recruiting tool, has selected her and two other candidates; it has determined the match between the required job profile and her actual profile as 89%.

The team has no leader, and the department head doesn't intervene in the hiring. An HR recruitment specialist has set up a combination between interviews and exercises. The team members conduct the meeting, with Candexa and the HR professional taking over for a few questions tapping into the candidate's personality. At the end of the meeting, Anna receives an instant first feedback.

After the candidate leaves, the HR specialist expresses some concerns about her resilience while Candexa reassesses her match to the job at 83%. A team member comments: "Well, that's always like this in the interview, you deflate the shiny CV and that costs some percentage points. I still liked the way she talked about honesty."





Aligning a process at JKL

A new flow management system at JKL, a producer of mechanical parts, has required an overhaul of the core processes. Monitoring the new processes, Floxa has found a variety of uncoordinated requirements is now sent to the JKL's suppliers from various parts of the organization.

Floxa has quickly elaborated three proposals how to redesign the processes, listing their costs and benefits. Today, the cross-links from the affected units meet with the product owner of the process overhaul project and the flow evangelist. Representatives from two key suppliers also take part.

Alex, the purchasing cross-link, isn't happy with Floxa's options. In his view, disruptions in supply processes frequently cause the company financial damage. He argues for a bigger role for Purchasing in the processes.

The supplier representatives roll their eyes.

Leyla, the flow evangelist, gets Floxa to show exactly when those situations arose and which financial consequences they caused (actually, nothing much).

After a bit of bargaining and much appreciation for the purchasing function, consensus is reached that Alex will be involved whenever a supply disruption threatens to cause the damage he has previously described.

Initiacy at MNO

Peter, Michaela and Tom, the only managers at MNO, meet Mona, their Collaboration Tool Master, early in the morning. They review their associates' schedules for today.

Every employee is free to sign up for any project brought forward on MoNOxa. Some of these projects will never find "believers" (= project team members), and, as Peter, Michaela and Tom often say, that's life. You could also say that's "Initiacy", MNO's organizational model: everybody is free to initiate a project, everybody is free to enlist in any project.

There is also Valexa, MNO's tool to evaluate project proposals and actual projects, which helps associates make better choices in which project to enlist. From time to time however, there is a critical project which gets too little support. In that case, Peter, Michaela and Tom propose a general vote on the project. If 33% of all 150 MNOs vote in favor, they can enlist "free resources" (currently unoccupied associates).

The three managers look at the data and give a sigh. Again, the company's biggest client has sent its most brutish procurement manager to commission a major project which the company won't afford to decline.





Investment decisions at PQR

The management board of PQR, a provider of technical solutions with over 5.000 employees in 10 countries, comes together for its two-monthly Strategy Evolution Meeting. Stralex, their strategy support tool, displays an overview and a deeper view into each project on several big screens.

The first project has crossed an important threshold: it has maintained over 75% approval from all employees for three months on Moodexa, and more than 25% of all PQR managers have funded it from their personal Business Angels Budgets. Management takes two hours to meet the project team and discuss next steps – but the project team won't buy most of management's recommendations, and they are free not to do so.

Today's second project would include a shift in PQR's strategy. Management has invited representatives of the project team, some key customers, and a selected group of outsiders.

John the facilitator marvels at the features of Meetexa's Deluxe version. Everyone wears an earplug, enabling Meetexa to monitor the shifts in participants' opinions and to visualize them. Sometimes she alters the lights and even the smell of the room, but John wouldn't notice if he didn't know. She also identifies which arguments are strong enough to change individuals' opinions. Despite John's mixed feelings about these gimmicks, today he gives it a try. The proposal is modified several times until Meetexa confirms that the group is now confident that the project will likely attract high attention and interest in the marketplace.