

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

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Over two decades ago David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva's *Appreciative Inquiry into Organizational Life*¹ forever changed the way we look at organization development and change—it shifted our attention from the world of organizational life as “a problem-to-be-solved” to the world brimming with innovation and a “universe-of-strengths.” A decade later, Gallup's landmark research study confirmed this basic principle: a person - or organization-- will flourish only by amplifying their strengths, never by fixing weaknesses. Since then, millions of managers and leaders around the world have shifted their attention to strengths. And today, many are now asking, “What's next?” They want to know to take the strengths mindset beyond its common individual-level talent management application and embed strength-based methods into everything they do across the enterprise and beyond.

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit

The AI Summit method² is answering that call. Its application and theory of whole system, strength-based inquiry is transforming every domain of management imaginable: organization strategy formulation; mergers (of strengths) between large companies and multi-sector partnerships; OD and organization culture development work; product design and branding; information systems design; and igniting networks. It is transforming world summits at the UN and other global change bodies; launching the design of green innovation possibilities; making operational improvements and taking costs out of a business; transforming customer partnerships and relationships; and turning global issues into business and society opportunities for doing good and doing well³.

But these applications are only the beginning. We are convinced that the AI Summit will continue to grow in significance and positive possibility as our aching world calls for mindsets, management methods and governance structures that go beyond enterprise resource planning and value chains optimization, and move toward design—to the *joint design* of whole systems and bio-regions, whole organizations, and whole communities by *everyone*.

We have just begun to scratch the surface of what is possible when whole-systems and empowered collectives come together in appreciative, generative ways to leverage their combined strengths and innovate for the future. We need to expand our understanding both conceptually and practically of the AI summit and how it is becoming a grassroots-powered transformational macro-management force in organizational life today. This call for papers aims to push the frontiers and solicit new tools and insights for expanding the state-of-the-art applications of the AI Summit. Submissions may relate to any aspect of the AI Summit, for example, questions may explore:

- How has the AI Summit enable macro-management and crowdsourcing?
- How has the AI Summit catapulted beyond an innovative OD tool to become a new form of management?
- What accounts for the remarkable transformational power of the AI Summit?
- What does the AI Summit teach us about the role of the positive in human system flourishing?
- What does the AI Summit teach us about the stages of large group development?
- Where and how is the AI Summit leading our field away from deficit-based intervention to a focus on innovation and design thinking?
- How the AI Summit can be extended using social networks and online media?
- How can the AI Summit be used as a research methodology?
- What is the potential role of the AI Summit in corporate success and trans-organizational action?

¹ Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In Pasmore, W., Woodman, R. (Eds.), *Research in organization change and development* (Vol. 1). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

² Ludema, J.D., D. Whitney, B.J. Mohr, and T.J. Griffin (2003). *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: A Practitioner's Guide for Leading Large-Group Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

³ Cooperrider, D.L. and Avital, M. series editors, 2001-present. *Advances in Appreciative Inquiry*. Emerald Publishing

- What are the new tools and designs for the pre-summit, summit, and post-summit planning?
- What do people experience in an AI Summit?

For more possible topic ideas please refer to the additional questions at the end of the call.

Venues: Two simultaneous volumes

This call for papers is really two-fold: it is a call for **academic-oriented** and **practitioner-oriented** papers. For each emphasis, we have a different publishing outlet, as follows:

- The academic-oriented papers that emphasize new concepts and models (about 4500-7000 words) will be published in the fifth volume of *Advances in Appreciative Inquiry*, Emerald Publishing. See Further information: <http://bit.ly/advances-in-ai>
- The practice-oriented papers that emphasize hands-on advice (about 800-3500 words) will be published by in the May 2012 issue of the *Appreciative Inquiry Practitioner*. See further information: <http://www.aipractitioner.com/>

Submission

While full papers will be accepted on a rolling basis, we **highly recommend** that prospective authors to submit a brief paper proposal to allow the editorial team to provide feedback and guidance in the early stages of your writing. The proposal should include the following: (1) An abstract (up to 400 words) that describes the core premise of the paper and emphasizes its contribution to our understanding of the AI Summit, either conceptually or practically; (2) Specification of intended publication venue. *If applicable, submission of two different versions to both venues is encouraged*; and (3) A brief list/description of any additional resources that you would foresee sharing online as supportive materials to compliment your paper (i.e. videos, web links, workbooks, educational materials, etc. We are especially looking for photographs of AI Summits in action and other visual media to support your contribution.) Please submit your proposal using the **on-line form** at: <http://bit.ly/ai-summit-submission>

Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Early submissions ahead of the deadline are encouraged.

All writing or research genres are equally welcome. Acceptance will be based on an evaluation of the potential for the proposed paper to advance the theory and practice of the AI Summit methodology. Prospective authors are encouraged to contact the editors concerning the appropriateness of their submission.

The submission of a manuscript implies that the author certifies that the material is not copyrighted and is not currently under review for any refereed journal or conference proceedings. If the paper (or any version or part thereof) has appeared, or will appear, in another publication of any kind, the details of such publication must be disclosed to the editors at the time of submission.

Important Dates

	Advances in AI	AI Practitioner
Optional (but highly recommended) proposal	August 1, 2011*	August 1, 2011*
Full paper draft	January 15, 2012	November 15, 2011
Final paper revisions	April 30, 2012	February 15, 2012

*Please contact Emily Drew at emdrew@gmail.com regarding late proposal submissions.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about call or the proposal submission process, please contact our project manager, **Emily Drew** at emdrew@gmail.com

If you want to have a quick chat about how to best conceptually or practically situate your paper, please call **David Cooperrider** at **440-364-5077**.

For further information and updates see: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/aai/>

Further Possible Questions to Explore

- Is it possible that the AI Summit, as an instance of the strengths perspective taken to the hilt, is an answer to the question of what is the opposite of micromanagement? How can the AI Summit evolve into the “go to” approach for macro-management, where leaders and managers always think in terms of combinations, configurations, and magnifications of connected strengths?
- How does the AI Summit’s focus on external and external stakeholders and its appreciative inquiry spirit bring out the best in human systems? How do configurations of the whole system make change actually easier? What are the essential success factors for AI summits to create long-lasting positive change in a system?
- What does the AI Summit tell us about positive emotion in large groups? Positive relationships? Positive meaning? And positive accomplishment—what does it teach us about the positive psychology of strengths?
- Like our theories of small group development, are there observable phases of development when we are working with groups at the scale of the whole in AI Summits? If we use a theatrical metaphor, with act I and act II and act III, can we describe general trajectories or broad movements? What is happening affectively, relationally, and cognitively in act I versus act III, for example? Can we begin to speak to the intentional and transformational uses of positivity—what is *transformational positivity* and how does it work?
- What are the most exciting methodological advances in the design phase of AI and how and where are innovation-sparking principles of design thinking helping to enrich the AI Summit? What are the cutting-edge applications for the AI Summit in product designing, branding, and the design of such things as new customer experiences, information systems, learning organizations, and the design of more life-giving social realities?
- How is the AI Summit as a social constructionist approach to knowing-- with multiple voices, which democratizes the process of science, and where social epistemology meets innovative *social process as method*? What does this teach us about enriching the generative potential of theory building? New forms of evaluation research? How do we raise and elevate the inquiry part of appreciative *inquiry*—both the spirit of inquiry in human systems and the methods of inquiry?
- How does the AI Summit help reverse “the tragedy of the commons” into “the gift of the commons”—something which is collectively treasured and collectively protected?” Why is it that the AI Summit seems to be so powerful in the sustainability sphere?
- What are the best examples of AI Summit project proposals that work? What are the emerging best practices for logistics and planning guides? New workbook designs? New designs with steering committees?
- How do we capture and leverage participants’ experiences during a summit? What do CEOs feel from thought to finish? How about external stakeholders, such as customers? Can the impacts be traced and articulated in a strong, evidence-based way? How can we better describe the benefits for decision makers? How can we better bring the tools to everyday management—not simply to the major event?
- What is it about our world—its trends and trajectories both in business and society—that is calling for whole system, positive strengths methods? What’s in store for the future? What might the AI Summit evolve into—what are its potentials and improbable but exciting new application areas?