

Mastery Council

Purpose and Intended Results

The purpose and intended result of the Mastery Council are to preserve and expand the lineage of this way of working by creating a widely accepted means to identify and celebrate practitioners whose standard of work makes them exemplars to the entire community.

Why Now?

Over a decade ago, Matt, Gail, and Rob saw the need to identify people working at the Mastery level of this work. They played out a thought experiment: “Can we identify a list of accomplished practitioners whose work we have *personally* experienced, any three of whom we would trust to maintain and evolve this work with integrity and skill?” They came up with an initial list and developed a process for validating the attainment of others not on the original list. Since then, they collaborated in adding over fifteen additional names to the list. They decided to use the Collaboration Code website to publicly identify the list of Global Masters:

<https://www.collaborationcode.com/global-masters>

With Gail’s passing and Matt’s withdrawal from the work for health reasons, Rob recognized that he represented a “single point of failure” to this process. He engaged the global community of current Masters and Practice Leaders to help identify a revised process and key colleagues to carry on this work.

What It Is

The Mastery Council is comprised of currently recognized masters who have the confidence of the global practitioner community to recognize mastery in the MG Taylor/Collaboration Code System and Method when they see it.

Their job is to review the work of aspiring masters, provide feedback and supportive counsel, and to certify/recognize practitioners whose work meets the criteria for mastery (see **Mastery Criteria and Responsibilities**, attached). This is work that

- Exemplifies a high level of proficiency in design and delivery, representing the best of the current state of play;
- Innovates and extends that work, making original contributions to the system and method and/or its application to new transformation contexts;
- Demonstrates skill and high ethical standards in working with clients, sponsors, and KnowledgeWorker teams; and
- Includes actively teaching and mentoring other, less experienced practitioners and regularly seeking opportunities to do so.

Membership

The Council is composed of seven senior master practitioners, including Rob Evans. There are also two from North America (Robin Brooking and Tom Kehner), three from Europe and the Middle East (Philippe Coullomb, Charlotte Mercer, and Jesko von den Steinen), and two from Asia-Pac (Justin Homer and Kenneth Roberts).

The list of candidates was derived from a survey of current masters and practice leaders regarding whose judgment they would accept in identifying additional masters.

Each Council member will have a two-year term. At its outset, two of the new members will serve three-year terms so the entire Council exhibits some continuity and does not turn over at the same time. Rob used a random process to come up with the following:

Two-Year Terms	Three-Year Terms
Charlotte Mercer	Jesko von den Steinen
Justin Homer	Kenneth Roberts
Philippe Coullomb	Rob Evans
Tom Kehner	Robin Brooking

At the end of their term, a Council member can re-enlist for another 2- or 3-year term (their call). Open seats will be filled by a vote of the current Council after getting input from the broader community of Masters and Practice Leaders.

Annual Expectations for Council Members

For the first year, Council members will work in pairs with Rob in reviewing candidates' work. These pairs will rotate (i.e., each Council member will have a chance to work with each of the other Council members).

We can assume that there will be four to six candidates to review each year. With perhaps a few more the first year, beginning in Q3 of 2026.

The review process will consist of reviewing materials that a candidate submits and then conducting 3 to 4 60-minute interviews with the candidate themselves.

Candidate Review Process (and open questions)

1. Initiation

- a. For now, Rob will be the entry point for candidates who are interested in certification.
- b. The candidate will send Rob documentation of their "master-piece," i.e., a copy of the Workshop Design Document (or whatever equivalent they use) OR a case write-up using the Casebook case format (attached). In addition, the candidate will

- 1) Identify a current Master who is familiar with their work
 - 2) Identify the PF from this work for us to interview
 - c. Rob will randomly assign two Mastery Council reviewers by lot, the only guideline being that one of the reviewers must be in the same geographic zone as the candidate (Americas; Europe/Middle East; Asia-Pacific) to allow for easier scheduling across time differences. Rob would join in the interviews for the reviewers' first time out
 - d. The reviewers would schedule a cadence of interviews with the candidate.
2. **Interview Format:** The following questions represent the sorts of things that Masters will explore with the candidate:
- a. Tell me about your experience with MG Taylor this work
 - 1) What other books, methods, workshops, etc. have informed how you work with groups?
 - 2) What Masters have you observed? How would you compare your style to theirs? (The current list of Masters resides on the Collaboration Code website <https://www.collaborationcode.com/global-masters>)
 - 3) Please name a person or two who might regard you as their teacher in this work.
 - 4) What are you currently reading or studying?
 - 5) What can you tell us to help understand the range, depth, and consistency of your body of work? How does this "Master-piece" fit into it?
 - 6) What complex challenge or systemic transformation are you curious or energized about applying our skills and methods? Why? How might you begin to do this (if not already contributing to this)?
 - 7) When did you choose to decline work – and why?
 - 8) What was your biggest contribution to the community and to the MGT Body of Knowledge?
 - b. How did you come to do this work?
 - 1) Describe the sales process.
 - 2) What did you do to better understand the client and their needs on the front end of the project?
 - 3) What value did the project create for all sides?

- c. Describe the initial sponsor meeting.
 - 1) How did the sponsor describe the need?
 - 2) What was your discovery process like to deepen your understanding?
 - 3) How did the client's understanding of this "presenting problem" change?
 - 4) How did you scale and scope the project?
- d. Describe the cadence of sponsor meetings and other client interactions prior to the session.
- e. Walk us through your strawdog.
 - 1) What models / modules / patterns did you consider as you were putting together the initial design of the project?
 - 2) What activities did you consider and reject – and why?
 - 3) What was unique or new that you created for this session? Who else contributed to this and what was the process?
- f. Tell me about the team you assembled.
 - 1) Who was your PF and can we interview them?
 - 2) How was the KreW onboarded to the project?
 - 3) Did you include Explorers? If so, how did you facilitate their learning about the process?
 - 4) How did you give feedback to this team?
 - 5) Tell us about the team Circle-Ups.
- g. How did your initial strawdog change as you were delivering it?
 - 1) What surprises did you face?
 - 2) What mistakes did you make – how and when did you know they were mistakes?
 - 3) What would you have done differently if you knew then what you know now – and why?
 - 4) What was the balance of designed conditions and emergent/responsive conditions in the event?

3. Preliminary Determination of Recognition

- a. Reviewers will determine whether candidate meets the criteria.
- b. If not

- 1) They will prepare a written description of the gaps to be shared with the candidate along with recommended next steps to address the gaps.
 - 2) They will ping the Mastery Council to see if someone would be willing to take this person on and mentor them and help provide a clear pathway for the future
- c. If so, reviewers will notify Rob and proceed to final step; Rob will prepare a Certificate of Recognition and send it to reviewers for their digital signatures so they can share it with the candidate following the interview with Matt.

4. Final 45-minute Interview with Matt Taylor

- a. Reviewers will work with Rob to set a time for the candidate's final ceremonial interview with Matt Taylor.
- b. Reviewer participation is optional (but recommended).
- c. There will be a \$500 fee for this interview, payable by the candidate to Imaginal Labs. The entire fee will be passed on to Matt.
- d. At the end of this interview, reviewers will congratulate the candidate and present them with the certificate.
- e. Rob will add the candidate's name to the list of Masters on the Collaboration Code website and, when it is ready, the Association of Value Webs website.

Mastery Level Criteria and Responsibilities

Mastery of the MG Taylor / Collaboration Code System and Method

Mastery is the demonstrated capacity to do superior, original work and to teach others to do so. The Recognized Masters listed on the Collaboration Code website are known for their ability to design and deliver work that both represents the best of the lineage and extends it further.

<https://www.collaborationcode.com/global-masters>

Mastery Level Criteria

- Has already demonstrated a Journeyperson level of competency
- Demonstrates deep proficiency in the application of the System and Method –philosophy, models, patterns, and tools – to a complex systemic challenge
- Has familiarity with the sources on which Matt and Gail drew in their development of the process – cybernetics, complexity theory, biomimicry, etc.
- Has had a direct experience with at least 2 current Masters to be able to appreciate differences in context, approach, and personal style
- Manifests (and has insight into) his/her unique, authentic, personal style
- Ability to work with a client to expand and deepen the nature of the work at hand
- Ability to teach/coach others in these approaches, beginning with KnowledgeWorker teams as a Steward who facilitates the system as a system
- Demonstrates a commitment to expand and deepen his/her own mastery as the demands on this System and Method change and evolve

Mastery Responsibilities

To be listed as “active” on The Collaboration Code website, we ask that masters do the following:

- Be actively involved in designing and delivering complex collaborative work. (i.e., not retired or fully engaged in another line of work)
- Mentor practitioners to help them grow in proficiency and, when they are ready, actively sponsor them in the Mastery certification/recognition process.
- Be active in building the global practice, both through their own work with their own organization or through active participation in The Happening, 7 Domains, regional gatherings, etc.
- Every three years, share at least one example of their on-going work to be included in the next biennial Collaboration Code Casebook.

True Masters recognize that they must manifest Beginner’s Mind to continue learning and growing.

Case 23/4.xx	Title
Contributed By	[Name / Organization]
What is Interesting, Innovative, or Noteworthy about this Case	[Why should readers read this case among all the others we have collected? What is it that makes this example stand out from more typical or standard DesignShops? What do you want readers to pick up on?]
The Situation	[Background on the client and overview of the client situation that led to the event or project. Feel free to name the client if you and the client are comfortable with you doing so. Otherwise protect confidentiality with a code name for the client – NewCo, or some such.]
	Objectives ▪ xxx Intended Outcomes ▪ xxx In Scope / Out of Scope ▪ xxx Assumptions and Non-Negotiables ▪ xxx
Special Considerations and Tricky Bits	[What were the challenges for the client from a Rational, Emotional, or Political perspective? What special challenges did this engagement pose for you and your team?]
Technology Platforms	[For virtual and hybrid sessions only; if yours was in in-person session, just eliminate this row in the Table drop down menu unless there were special technologies you used in your session or engagement.]

Strawdog

Prep Day:

Star t	Dur' n	Activity	Notes

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Day One:

Star t	Dur' n	Activity	Notes

Day Two:

Sta rt	Dur' n	Activity	Notes

Day Three:

Star t	Dur' n	Activity	Notes

Post Day:

Star t	Dur' n	Activity	Notes

Facilitator Comments

Give us the “backstory” – what went well, what did you learn, what was trickier than you thought, what would you do again or do differently? Our experience over five casebooks – over 80 cases! – has been that readers get the most out of this section of the case.

Feel free to write a though you were speaking directly and candidly to other experienced facilitators candidly and “behind the curtains.”