

MIT Industrial Liaison Program Faculty Knowledgebase Report

Operational Agility and Workforce Enablement

December 17, 2020 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

11:00am - 11:05am

Welcome and Introduction
Graham Rong
Director, [MIT Corporate Relations](#)



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Dr. Rong is Director of Corporate Relations at MIT. He currently supervises a group of ILP officers who promote and manage the interactions and relationships between the research at MIT and companies worldwide, particularly in greater China and extended Asian countries, to help them stay abreast of the latest developments in technology and business practices.

Previously, Dr. Rong founded IKA, LLC. He has led corporate development and product innovation, and provided strategic advices to companies in corporate strategy, IT leadership, digital transformation, AI, enterprise content management, and customer relationship. He held senior roles in Harte-Hanks and Vignette Corporation. He held an EU postdoctoral research fellowship in the University of Edinburgh in Scotland where he started global collaborative research.

Dr. Rong is on the board of multiple organizations, including 128CUTE since 2005 and MIT Sloan Alumni Association of Boston from 2009 to 2012. He chaired MIT Sloan CIO Symposium from 2009-2011. He is a senior expert invited by international organizations.

Dr. Rong holds a M.B.A. in global and innovation leadership from the MIT Sloan School of Management and Ph.D in numerical computing from University of Guelph in Canada.

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11:05am - 12:00pm

Building a culture of agility

Donald Sull

Senior Lecturer, Technological Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Strategic Management



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[Dr. Donald Sull](#) is a Senior Lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management, where he directs the [Strategic Agility Project](#) and the [Culture 500](#). He teaches courses on competitive strategy and [strategy execution](#), and was a member of the committee that designed MIT's [Master of Business Analytics](#) program.

Sull was formerly a Professor at Harvard Business School and London Business School, and earned his bachelors, masters, and doctorate at Harvard University. Prior to academia, he worked as a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company, and a management-investor with the leveraged buyout firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice.

The [Economist](#) named him "a rising star in a new generation of management gurus" and identified his theory of active inertia as an idea that shaped business management over the past century. Fortune listed him among the [ten new management gurus](#). He has published five books and over 100 cases and articles, including a dozen best-selling *Harvard Business Review* articles.

Sull is the co-founder and CEO of [CultureX](#), which leverages proprietary AI to measure and improve corporate culture. He is the chairman of [FilmFish](#) and an advisor to several start-ups including [Betterworks](#), [Tomorrow.io](#), and [eToro](#). He has advised top teams of more than fifty Fortune Global 500 companies, as well as non-business organizations ranging from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

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This session will discuss the benefits of a culture of agility, introduce the cultural values associated with agile companies, and discuss practical tips for developing and reinforcing those values in your organization.

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Are your people fit to solve problems, or simply trained to deliver solutions?

Kristine Dery

Research Scientist, MIT Centre for Information Systems Research (CISR)

MIT Sloan School of Management

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Kristine Dery is a Research Scientist at MIT Sloan School of Management in the Center for Information Systems Research (MIT CISR).

Kristine's research in the dynamic between technology and the way people work has been a focus of her publications and teaching for the last fifteen years.

Currently, she is investigating how organizations design their employee experience to enable their people to deliver value in the digital world. Her research questions focus on: (1) how digital capabilities are deployed internally to create more effective ways of working and (2) the impacts of new ways of engaging with talent in the digital era. This work has stemmed from a historical research focus on the relationship between HRM and IT, mobile connectivity, human resource information systems, gamification, and remote working.

Kristine serves as a Senior Editor for MIS Quarterly Executive, and has published in Sloan Management Review and other leading academic and practitioner publications.

Prior to her academic career, Kristine held management roles in the tourism and airline industries in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK.

Kristine is based in Sydney and is responsible for fostering research relationships with companies in AsiaPac and the delivery of workshops for senior executives and nonexecutive Board directors.

At MIT Center for Information Systems Research (CISR) we have been exploring how high performing firms are designing workforces that are future-ready. Employees in these firms solve problems faster, are more agile, and can leverage the opportunities from digital more effectively than their competitors. To pull this off, these companies are focused on two key business dimensions: (1) the digitization of work itself, and (2) the fitness of their people to solve problems in ways that are effective in a digital world. These investments are paying off. Firms with future-ready workforces deliver an average of 19 percentage points higher revenue, and 15 percentage points higher margin. In this session we will delve into the data of over 1300 large organization to explore how these companies are prioritizing their efforts to enable their people to become empowered problem solvers.