



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### *GOVERNING KNOWLEDGE AND IMAGINATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA*



#### PROGRAM CHAIRS

**Silvia Candiani**  
*CEO, Microsoft Italy*

**Alessandro Minichilli**  
*Bocconi University*

**Riccardo Monti**  
*Senior Partner Emeritus, BCG*

**Carlo Salvato**  
*Bocconi University*

**Mary Tripsas**  
*UC Santa Barbara*

This conference is designed with the goal of stimulating close and fruitful collaboration between an equal number of practitioners (managers, entrepreneurs, and consultants) and academics in understanding and solving burning issues raised by the progress of the Digital Era. Multiple interactive formats will engender innovative insights and solution-oriented proposals on problems and opportunities advanced by participants.

The conference topic is highly conducive of imaginative practice-theory interaction. Today, we experience the dawning of an innovation renaissance determining new relations between humans and machines. Large platforms, 'Big Data,' Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Machine Learning enabled by cloud computing are impacting our society and helping managers, entrepreneurs, and consultants address complex problems and capture new opportunities. Benefits are considerable, as are challenges, ethical responsibilities, and managerial implications. Thus, the emergence of new business models, organizational forms, and competitive landscapes has attracted increasing attention. And yet, the impact of modern information technologies on how managers and entrepreneurs actually assemble, govern, and marshal knowledge to spur imagination is one of the least understood dimensions of these modern technological breakthroughs. Many questions remain and puzzle academics, consultants, entrepreneurs, and managers. The conference aims at developing a deeper understanding, from academics and practitioners alike, of how firm leadership and governance should evolve to keep pace with modern information technologies and shape it to the benefit of society.

The conference is organized around three interactive formats:

- A. *Labs*
- B. *Interactive Research-Practice Multimedia Roundtables*
- C. *Parallel Presentation Sessions (including Practitioner- and Academic-oriented sub-tracks for each theme)*

**The deadline for conference submissions is February 1, 2022.**

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## (A) Labs

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A Lab is a unique opportunity for a company (an established firm, a start-up, or a consultancy) to marshal the brain capacity of a selected group of high-profile strategy experts in framing and solving a burning issue they have been facing, related to the conference theme. The Labs will be full-day interactive sessions in which a group of managers, entrepreneurs, consultants, and academics work together on real-life issues proposed in advance by a company. Structured interaction between Lab participants—facilitated by a core Lab team and expert process facilitators adopting design-thinking techniques—will yield interpretations and actionable solutions to the issue proposed by the company. The final actionable solution of each Lab will be summarized in a video-poster for final plenary presentations, with the support of consultants in visual representations.

Companies interested in *proposing an issue to be addressed in one of the Labs* are invited to contact Program Chairs [Carlo Salvato and Alessandro Minichilli](#).

Interested companies will be guided in preparing a short (two-page) competitive proposal. Upon acceptance of the proposal, companies will collaborate with the Program Chairs in setting up Lab activities.

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## (B) Interactive Research-Practice Multimedia Roundtables (IMR)

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IMRs are two-hour parallel sessions aimed at discussing pre-selected topics with the goal of generating themes, shared understandings, problems to be solved, opportunities to be captured, avenues for future research, and practical solutions. Topics will be proposed in advance by participants or identified by Program Chairs. Discussions will be facilitated by two conductors—academic and practitioner—and will involve comments and reactions to materials and information made available ahead of time on the conference website (e.g., slides, videos, audio files, tables and figures, newspaper clips, quotes etc.) and briefly presented at the beginning of the roundtable. Conductors will be selected on a competitive fashion or by invitation, and they will be responsible for producing the supporting materials. Interactions, discussions, and conclusions will be made more effective through the use of instant polling technologies and multimedia tools.

Academics and practitioners interested in *proposing a topic to be discussed in one of the IMRs* are invited to contact Program Chairs [Carlo Salvato and Alessandro Minichilli](#).

Interested academics/practitioners will be guided in preparing a short (two-page) competitive proposal. Upon acceptance of the proposal, organizers will collaborate with the Program Chairs in setting up IMR activities.

## (C) Parallel Presentation Sessions (w/Practice and Academic Sub-tracks)

Three “traditional” parallel presentation theme tracks, each one further organized in two (practitioner- and academic-oriented) sub-tracks. Practitioners and Academics are welcome to submit to both types of sub-tracks.

- **Practice format:** Track themes and questions addressed by managers, entrepreneurs, consultants, and practice-oriented academics through case examples, professional experiences, best practices, and practice-informed conceptualizations.
- **Academic format:** Track themes and questions addressed through empirical and conceptual scientific papers developed by academics, firms, and consulting companies.

Seven-page proposals relating to the conference theme are through the conference website. Only original, unpublished work is sought. Additional proposal submission guidelines can be found on the conference website.

### Track A: Governance, Leadership and Human Capital in the Digital Era

Theme Track Chairs:

A.1. Practice orientation	Umberto Bussolati Dell’Orto, <i>Consultant, Eric Salmon &amp; Partners</i> Hans Thoenes, <i>Consultant, Eric Salmon &amp; Partners</i>
A.2. Academic orientation	Rocio Bonet, <i>IE Business School</i> Shinjinee Chattopadhyay, <i>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</i>

Strategic human capital and behavior, Strategic leadership and governance, Stakeholder strategy in the Digital Era

Representative guiding questions:

- How will human capital resources, at different levels in the organization, change in this ever-changing work environment? What can companies do to motivate their employees to invest in these new skills? How should companies reskill their workforces?
- How will the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for making strategic human capital decisions change the relationship between managers and employees?
- How will the use of new technologies affect the existence of biases in organizations? Will the use of new technologies reduce or amplify inequality?
- Which managers/workers are more likely to engage with technology, and who will show an aversion to Machine Learning/algorithms?
- How do knowledge and imagination shape strategies in the Digital Era?
- What are the most (and the least) effective forms of leadership, organization, and governance to leverage knowledge and foster imagination in data-driven and technology-intensive businesses?
- What strategic decision-making processes and practices should managers adopt for taking wise and imaginative decisions addressing open, uncertain problems requiring big data and analytics?
- What will be the most sought-after qualities of corporate leaders in businesses where AI is capable of performing some of the value-adding activities of both leaders and followers? How has the role of corporate leaders and of strategic HR evolved in industries where AI and technology may partly substitute leaders' as well as followers' skills and contributions?
- What is unique about the leadership and governance functions of innovative start-ups, fin-techs, and unicorns? How should established firms shape their leadership and governance functions to outcompete innovative start-ups, fin-techs, and unicorns?
- How have ESG (environmental, social, and governance) practices evolved to address the challenges of the increasing role of distributed knowledge, AI, and data analytics? How should corporations address the social and ethical implications of the ever-growing role of AI?

## Track B: Entrepreneurship, Knowledge, and Imagination in the Digital Era

Theme Track Chairs:

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| B.1. Practice orientation | Hans Brechbuhl, <i>Director Digital Strategies Roundtables and Corporate Information Security Roundtable, SDA Bocconi</i> |
| B.2. Academic orientation | Myriam Mariani, <i>Bocconi University</i><br>Elena Vidal, <i>City University of New York</i>                              |

Knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the Digital Era

Representative guiding questions:

- How do entrepreneurship, innovation, and strategic renewal differ in the Digital Era? How are they evolving? How important are knowledge and imagination for entrepreneurship, innovation, and strategic renewal in the Digital Era?
- What are the firms' sources of creativity and imagination in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology driven businesses? Do firms develop these sources internally? To what extent do they acquire them through external collaborations? How do they process them to foster imagination, creativity, and innovation?
- How do entrepreneurial opportunities and business models develop in AI-based businesses and knowledge-intensive applications? Do individual and corporate entrepreneurs need a different type of ecosystem, entrepreneurial orientation, and knowledge corridor to start and scale-up ventures in data- and knowledge-intensive businesses?
- Should large corporations access knowledge and pursue strategic renewal through traditional R&D, corporate entrepreneurship, corporate venturing, acquisitions, and alliances or should they tap other sources of strategic renewal?
- What is the track record of venture capital and corporate venture capital in enhancing knowledge and imagination within innovative, discovery-based, and technology-based start-ups and established firms?

## Track C: Knowledge and Imagination for Strategic Processes and Practices in the Digital Era

Theme Track Chairs:

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|---------------------------|---|
| C.1. Practice orientation | Bram Schot, <i>Senior Advisor, Carlyle Europe Partners; Former Chairman and CEO, Audi Group</i>   |
| C.2. Academic orientation | Koen Heimeriks, <i>Warwick Business School</i><br>Jeanine Porck, <i>Oklahoma State University</i> |

Strategic processes and practices and competitive, cooperative, corporate, and global strategies in the Digital Era

Representative guiding questions:

- In a world of readily available big data, data analytics, and cloud computing, how should managers, entrepreneurs, and consultants adapt strategic processes and practices?
- How should managers, entrepreneurs, and consultants adapt foreign entry, location strategies, and headquarter-subsidiary relationships to address these dynamics?
- How do Artificial Intelligence (AI) - and technology-driven businesses alter corporate development (both organic and inorganic) activities, including acquisitions, alliances, divestitures?
- What new capabilities for knowledge management and imagination have emerged in industries where competitive advantage is increasingly grounded in AI and digital technologies? Has the emergence of these capabilities reshaped the way firms analyze industries and think of diversification?
- How do knowledge and imagination shape competitive landscapes, competitive interactions, and competitive advantages in data-driven and knowledge-intensive industries?
- How has the meaning of competitive advantage changed in these industries? Has the definition of industry itself changed in the Digital Era?