Discovering Innovation

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Abstract

Some have called it the “Big Blue Brain Storm” (Business Week Aug 8, 2006). Led by its CEO Sam Palmisano, IBM is reaching out to its worldwide workforce, calling on family and friends and business associates and inviting them to participate in a world Innovation JAM. IBM has brought together over 104,000 participants in a marathon 76 hour online session in the hopes of linking ideas and technologies that will lead to new business for IBM, help to solve societal problems and maybe revolutionize industry. The technologies that IBM used as its starting set were from its worldwide Research centers. These included Biometric Authentication which uses Secure Identity Cards with your biometric information as a way to protect you against identity theft. There’s Communication Pattern Analysis with Collaborative Organizational Analysis technology that analyzes communications within a company to both uncover internal patterns and identify potential changes that can be made to improve the organization’s efficiency. And the last example is Super Simulations. These are systems like IBM’s Blue Gene that are able to handle very sophisticated mathematical models that use real-time streams of real-world data to simulate everything from the weather to biological processes, and allow us to begin making predictions about real-world behaviors. The JAM is the latest in IBM’s continuing efforts to create a culture of innovative thinking in its company. But that’s only one of the ways IBM thinks about Innovation. There are others.

The Global Innovation Outlook (GIO), has opened up IBM’s technical and business forecasting processes to include external leaders from business, academia, the public sector, NGOs and other influential constituents of the world community. The GIO takes a deep look at some of the most pressing issues facing the world and works toward providing solutions to those needs: the future of the enterprise; energy and the environment; and transportation and mobility.

Biography

Cathy was appointed Vice President, Industry Solutions and Emerging Business for the Research division in September 2004. She is responsible for connecting research with industries to focus innovation on the application of technology to real-world problems. Her mission is to create a tight linkage between the research community and our sales organization and to create and manage new emerging businesses. Prior to this position, Cathy was Vice President of Global Productivity and Employee IT advocate in the CIO organization. Her focus was on improving and expanding the IT services, support and function to our employees. She provided a single point of contact for managing contracts, operations and measurements with service providers such as those with the IBM Global Account, AT&T and others around the world. Cathy holds a BS in Mathematics/Computer Science from SUNY Binghamton and an MBA in Finance from Iona College.