# We've got diversity! Now how do we make it work?

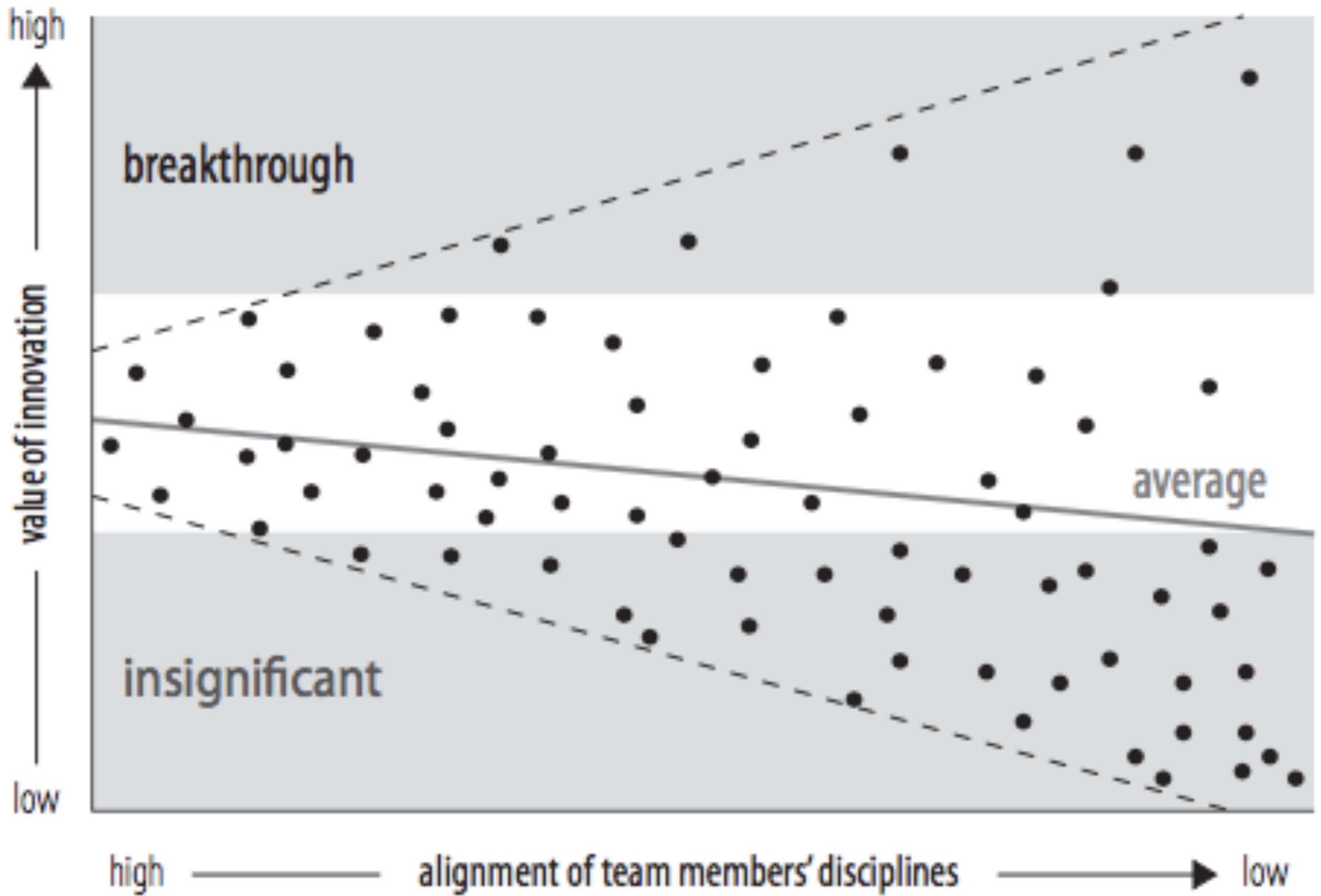John Eatwell

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# Why diversity?

- Like technical diversity, social diversity enhances creativity and the search for novel information and approaches - informational diversity

- Organisations who are more diverse have higher levels of innovation intensity, and financial performance.

- People think more deeply and broadly when presented information by, or to, people who are different.

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breakthrough

average

insignificant

value of innovation

high

low

alignment of team members' disciplines

high — low

# Many hands ...

- Too many cooks spoil the broth

  - There are risks (Group think – Challenger Disaster, Bay of Pigs, Risky shift phenomena, and Ashes conformity experiments)

  - But, more diversity, strangers, higher education less likely to contribute.

  - Higher social diversity linked to perceived discomfort, rougher interactions, increased interpersonal conflict and concern about disrespect, less trust, communication and cohesion.

- 22% of Britons would rather go to the dentist than go to a work meeting!

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How do we create environments where differences of opinion focus us on the opportunities or challenges rather than potential loss of respect/social standing amongst team members? How do we make those that hold diverse viewpoints feel valued - and included?

# Design of work

- Real Team

  ▶ Stable, interdependent, purpose

- Right People

  ▶ Systems thinking, collaboration skills, diversity of perspectives

- Compelling Purpose

  ▶ Shared values, aspirations/vision, beyond individual interests, challenging, consequential

# Leadership

- 60/30/10 rule.

- Focus on relationships, listening and learning more than doing

- Prioritise connections, context and content as essential elements in creating a sense of purpose

- Focus on group dynamics rather than the task

- Create positive work environment

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# Collaboration skills

- Appreciating others strengths/differences and the value of having different perspectives (ie don't take it personally),

- Build relationships/understand each others stories

- Having purposeful conversations, be receptive and explore others perspectives, be present

- Resolving conflicts, lean into discomfort by exploring it

- Project management

# Conclusions

- Diversity can produce good outcomes for organisations

- We need to create an environment for this to work, through

  ▸ Design of work

  ▸ Leadership

  ▸ Building collaboration skills

# Further Reading

- Collaboration rules, HBR, July-August 2005

- Collaborative overload, HBR, Jan-Feb 2016

- Eight ways to build collaborative teams, HBR, Nov 2007

- How diversity makes us smarter, Scientific American. 2014

- The Balancing Act: Creating a Diverse Workforce. Hay NZ 2015

- The neuroscience of trust, HBR, Jan-Feb 2017

- Perfecting cross-pollination, HBR, Sept 2004

- Reinventing Performance Management, HBR April 2015

- What makes teams of leaders leadable? Hackman and Wagerman

- Why organisations don't learn, HBR, Nov 2015

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