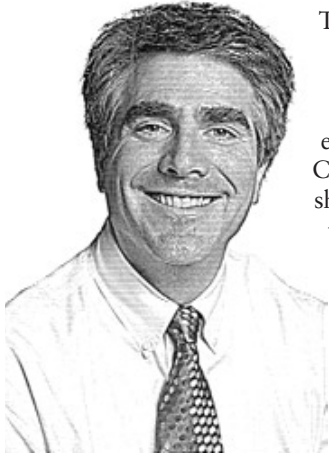# TUCK RESEARCH: *Developing Theory for Practice*

At the Frontiers of the Networked Enterprise

M. Eric Johnson is professor of operations management and director of the Glassmeyer/McNamee Center for Digital Strategies.

Through a series of forward-looking yet practical roundtable discussions, Tuck's Glassmeyer/McNamee Center for Digital Strategies is exploring the frontiers of enterprise management. Co-founded with Cisco Systems, Inc., these Thought Leadership Summits on Digital Strategies focus on the enabling role of information technology in extending sound business practices and creating opportunities for growth.

Since 2002, the summits have allowed chief information officers (CIOs) and other top executives from large corporations to discuss the potential—and challenges—of value-chain collaboration. Topics have included:

- revenue opportunities in customer service and support
- collaborative product generation across organizations
- enterprise-wide customer focus
- real-time profit optimization through supply-chain management
- the elusive link between sales and operations

The latest summit took place this May in Hanover and considered the trade-offs between reliable, high-speed business communication—the lifeblood of growth—and the risk and exposure new information technologies present. Executives from Cargill, Cisco Systems, Citigroup, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Eaton Corp., Fidelity Investments, Hasbro, Owens Corning, and Staples discussed best practices for security, the balance between confidentiality and customer relationship management, the interplay between regulation (such as Sarbanes-Oxley) and security policy, and opportunities created by the need for increased security.

Professor Hans Brechbühl, the center's executive director, explains that participating CIOs are asked to invite a high-level executive whose functional area deals with the topic at hand— peer executives such as a VP of sales or marketing. "The summits allow executives to interact in a different way," says Brechbühl. "They have the opportunity for internal collaboration outside the office." And the diverse mix of participants introduces CIOs and their colleagues to counterparts working in a wide variety of industries and value chains. The moderated roundtable format provides a confidential environment that encourages frank discussion, brainstorming, and problem solving. "Participants invariably leave with some best practices from other sectors and a realization of how much they have in common."

Professor M. Eric Johnson, the center director, explains a second objective: the development of chief information officers. "CIOs are most successful when they are full strategic partners within their firms," he says. "The summits help them sharpen their ability to work as value-chain partners, as cross-functional enablers and integrators instead of technical specialists. This is definitely not the old MIS function."

Participants help form roundtable topics weeks in advance of each summit, but, as Professor Johnson notes, "this is not a conference, and people don't arrive in 'broadcast mode.' There are no presentations, no spectators, and no press." Instead, overviews of each roundtable are published afterward. "Tuck and Cisco want others to use the information developed by our efforts," says Johnson. "The summits are the basis of discussions in our classes, and several participants at these events have visited Tuck for conferences and other student contact. That's the value Tuck adds and the value we receive: we both create knowledge and make use of it for our students and the entire business community."

Information on the summits as well as the published summaries of discussions are available under Corporate Roundtables at www.tuck.dartmouth.edu/digitalstrategies or at www.cisco.com/go/tlsummit.