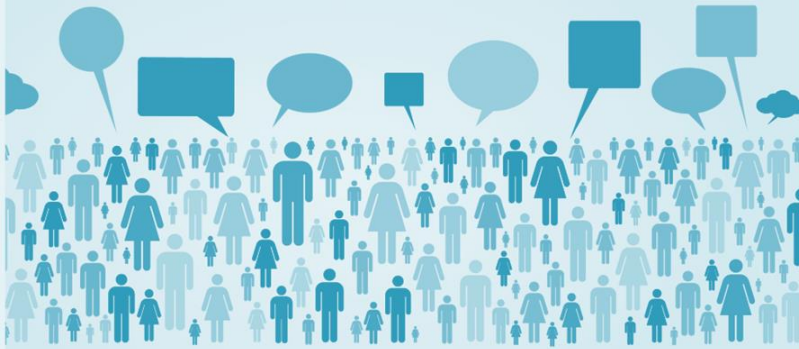


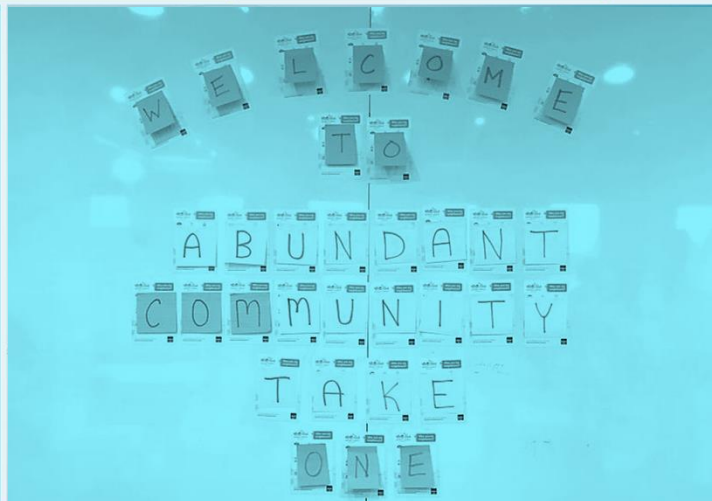
SDX: Systemic Design eXchange



Engaging
Complexity for
Systems Change

WHAT?

An Edmonton based
Community of Practice
looking to convene
individuals interested in
collectively learning
about Systemic Design
as a methodology for
addressing complex
real world issues.



WHY?

SDX5

November 1, 2016 – Action Lab – Edmonton, Alberta
#SDXCoP | #CoLabAB | #actionlabyeg



CoLab.
Complexity navigation | Co-laboration | Co-design | Co-creation

About SDX

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of diverse people who come together to learn, share practices, and co-create knowledge around shared areas of interest. Informal CoPs pop up in organizations around the water cooler, but when purposefully stewarded, CoPs can become powerful, positive forces that help people navigate complex challenges together.

SDX – Systemic Design Exchange – is a collaboration between the Government of Alberta and community-based practitioners. An emerging CoP, SDX will help connect people interested in using systems thinking, design thinking, ethnography, prototyping, and social labs to tackle real-world challenges. With a bias towards learning by doing, SDX aims to be an intersection where multiple sectors can come together, learn together, and act together.

SDX co-conveners – the CoLab and the Action Lab – have committed to an initial run of four gatherings, beginning in December 2015.

“Systemic design helps groups to: visualize complexity from multiple perspectives, create shared frames of reference, surface core assumptions, and find opportunities in complexity by reframing the mess. This enables diverse groups to co-create tangible improvements to the situation. By undertaking this on the front-end of a project, systemic design generates robust options for decision makers.”

– CoLab, Systemic Design Fact Sheet, 2014



[Action Lab](#) is a social enterprise of [Skills Society](#), one of the largest disability service organizations in Edmonton, Alberta. It is designed for hosting inspiring events, group collaboration, strategy sessions, and social innovation. The Action Lab experience promotes creative problem solving, offers tools to help tap into collective wisdom, and helps people prototype solutions to challenges they are working on.

Revenue from the Action Lab supports the employment of people with disabilities, innovative social change initiatives of Skills Society, and subsidizes lab use by community groups.



[CoLab](#) is a team, a way of working, and a space. It was founded in 2014 as a cross-ministry hub for systemic design and strategic foresight within the Government of Alberta. It supports work on many of the government’s most complex strategy and policy challenges, providing a new way to have strategic conversations, include citizens in problem framing, and co-design actionable strategies. It runs internal communities of practice on systemic design and foresight, and builds capacity in these areas through training intensives and workshops.

In 2015, CoLab organized and hosted the international [Relating Systems Thinking and Design Symposium](#), bringing the event to North America for the first time.

SDX5

Our morning kicked off with the question ‘what type of innovator are you?’ This question emerged from the book ‘IMPACT’ by Al Etmanski, where he outlines three types of social innovators (see box below). We felt that this was the perfect way to introduce SDXers to our guest hijackers: Anne Harvey and Howard Lawrence with Abundant Community Edmonton (ACE). Anne is the ACE Project Manager with the City of Edmonton and Howard is the ACE consultant.



In 2013, Howard (the disruptive innovator) brought the idea of Abundant Community to the City of Edmonton. Based on the work of John McKnight and Peter Block in their book ‘The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighbourhoods’, Howard prepared documents outlining the purpose and potential of the idea. He then brought the idea to City of Edmonton officials. There, Howard met Harry Oswin (the bridging innovator), Director, Office of the Northeast District of the Edmonton Neighborhoods, Parks and Community Recreation branch of Community Services who was able to secure a \$15,000 grant to get the project underway. A strong partnership developed between the neighborhood leadership and the City. Anne (the receptive innovator) was brought on to work with Howard and steward the initiative on behalf of the City.

The initial plan was to start small and then expand in the second year to seven more neighborhoods. Today, ACE is operating in at least 12 neighbourhoods in Edmonton, with interest from many others.

ACE is a natural fit with SDX for a few reasons. First, ACE is a partnership between government and community – just like SDX! There is an opportunity for SDX to learn from this working relationship. Second, ACE is one of the few local examples of a disruptive innovation taking root in government and scaling up and out – more opportunities for learning and to connect a social innovation framework to a real-world example. Third, SDX can be useful to ACE: as a growing initiative, ACE is learning along the way. With a diverse, cross-section of Edmontonians (who all live in neighbourhoods!), SDX is a great place for ACE to test ideas and get feedback.

Agenda	
9:30 a.m.	Coffee & Networking
9:50 a.m.	Welcome & SDX Overview
10:00 a.m.	Abundant Communities Edmonton Presentation
10:30 a.m.	Prototyping Activity
11:00 a.m.	Activity Debrief
11:50 a.m.	Closing Reflection
12:00 p.m.	SDX5 Close

Three Types of Innovators

- **Disruptive innovators** are inspired by love and motivated by necessity. They challenge the prevailing way of doing things and shake the lethargy off the status quo. They wrestle a big idea to the ground. Even when they prove that the idea works, it does not easily become the new standard. It can be ignored or misunderstood and may even be perceived as a threat to the system.
- **Bridging innovators** spot the big ideas surfaced by disruptive innovators. They leverage their connections, reputations and resources to make sure the potential is realized. They translate and interpret the value of a disruptive innovation to the system. Bridging innovators are the necessary link between disruptive innovators and receptive innovators.
- **Receptive innovators** are key to implementing big ideas and spreading solutions far and wide. They have an insider’s knowledge of the key levers to advance an issue within a system. They know the formal and informal channels inside bureaucracy and who the key players are. They are navigators, steering the innovation so that it may flourish and become the new standard.

Source: Etmanski, Al (2015). *Becoming a Wise Traveller*. Available online at <http://www.sigeneration.ca/becoming-wise-traveller/>.



SDXers were invited to place their name in the bubble corresponding to the type of innovator they most identify with – many placed their names in the in-between spaces

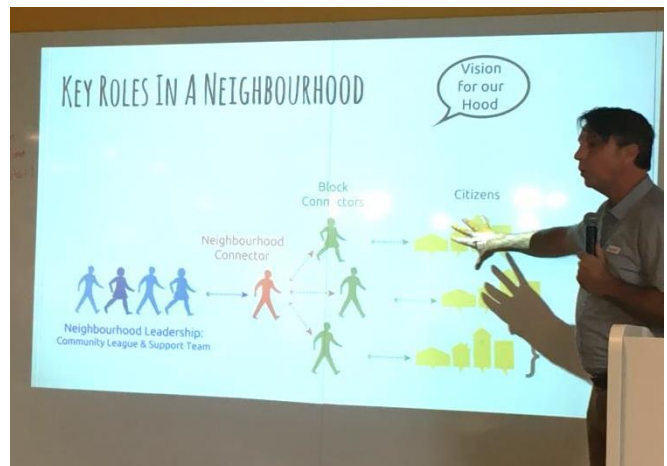
Presentation: Abundant Community Edmonton

Anne and Howard kicked-off with a presentation of ACE’s history, development and current context. They shared how they gather information and share it with community leagues and other decision-makers to spark conversation and interaction about a neighbourhood’s assets, wants, and needs.

ACE is a neighbourhood engagement and organization approach – as Howard says, it is “a way to build a culture of connection one neighbourly conversation at a time.” ACE works through neighbourhood stewards, who communicate with their neighbours to discover assets and support opportunities for engagement. For example, Highlands has a lot of golfers! Being able to find each other on the ACE database enables them to connect and coordinate outings. The combination of ‘knowing thy neighbour’ and having a shared database supports integrated and connected neighbours. Rooted in an asset-based approach allows neighbours to add value to each other’s lives and contribute in positive ways.



Anne outlines Al Etmaksi’s three types of innovators



Howard Lawrence shares key roles of the ACE model

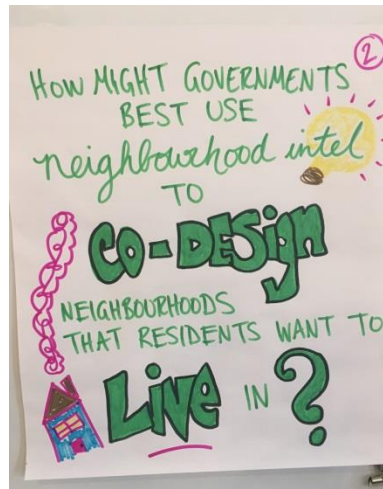
Activity: Prototyping for Abundant Community

Prior to the session, SDX conveners met with Anne and Howard to chat about how SDX could be useful for them: were there any questions we could explore that could help them move ACE forward? Are there any questions ACE is wrestling with? Any ideas we could explore?

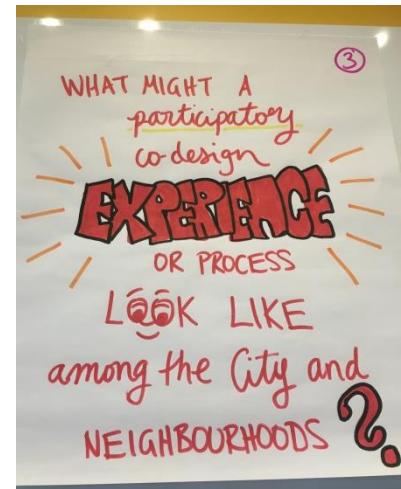
Together, we came up with three questions. SDX Conveners took these questions and thought through how to bring this to SDXers in a way that would let them explore a new systemic design tool or concept, and gain some practical experience. We chose to explore the three questions below using 25/10 Crowdsourcing and prototyping. SDXers self-organized into the three question groups, based on their interest.



1. How might we build governance capacity at the neighbourhood level?



2. How might governments best use neighbourhood intelligence to co-design neighbourhoods residents want to live in?



3. What might a participatory co-design experience or process look like among the City of Edmonton and neighbourhoods?

After presenting the three questions, we began with 25/10 Crowdsourcing, one of the liberating structures created by Keith McCandless and Henri Lipmanowicz. This method is used to generate a high volume of ideas and quickly sort through them to identify the most promising ones. We chose to use this method as a way to quickly generate ideas that groups could prototype in their teams. This helped us get clear, quickly on where people felt it was most useful to spend their energy. In a short session, it also helped us decide on ideas to prototype so that we could spend the bulk of our time actually prototyping (making), rather than talking about what idea to prototype. The top ideas generated by each of the three question groups were used as the foundation for their prototypes.

Rapid prototyping helps make ideas visual by designing potential solutions that answer the 'how might we questions' that are posed. Prototyping helps people co-create together by building models of what is in our heads. Important things to remember about prototypes are that they should be quick, cheap, and generative – they should help us learn! It is also important to remember the notion of 'kill your darlings' – we have to be able to let go of our ideas in case they don't work out the way we thought. SDXers were invited to try paper prototyping using storyboards, physical prototyping using Lego and other crafts supplies, and role playing.

- **Prototype #1: How might we build governance capacity at the neighbourhood level?**
Method: Physical Prototyping

This group focused their prototyping on youth. The group explored how to generate a sense of responsibility, ownership, and pride in youth about their neighbourhoods so that, as they grow into adulthood, they already have an established culture of participation in neighbourhood matters. Using social media, being deliberate about creating spaces for kids to participate in decision-making, and supporting parents to involve their kids were all avenues this group explored in their prototyping.



Talking through ideas while bringing ideas to life through rapid physical prototyping

- **Prototype #2: How might governments best use neighbourhood intelligence to co-design neighbourhoods residents want to live in?**
Method: Storyboarding

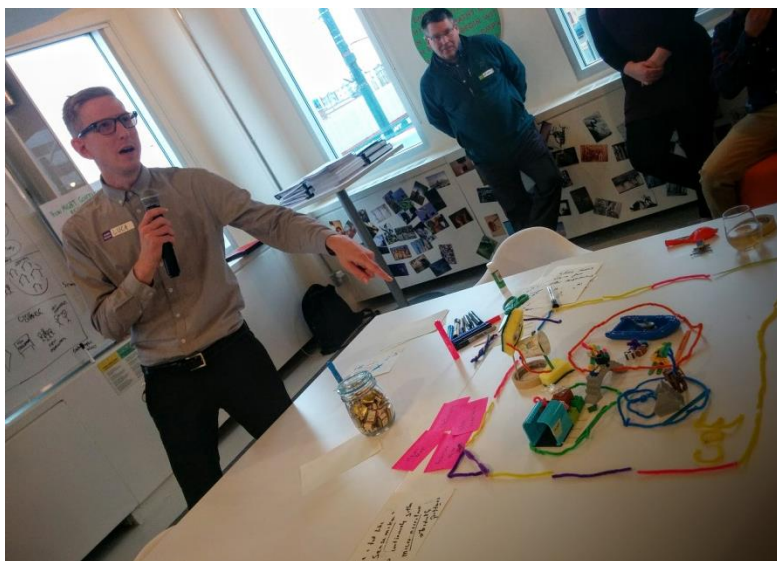
The group exploring the question of how to best use neighbourhood intelligence split into two teams: one that explored the question using storyboarding and one that used physical prototyping. As the group was fairly large and people were interested in different tools, this was a good facilitation choice.

Scene one provides a snapshot of the current context, where there is an apparent gaping chasm (ahem!) between neighbourhoods and the City of Edmonton related to the use of neighbourhood intelligence. As the story progresses, the City begins to consider how to crowdsource narratives from neighbourhoods about what is happening where they live and how they might bring these narratives into qualitative data sets to use in decision-making. Government and community gather narratives and public servants use them. There are feedback loops so that neighbourhoods know how their intelligence is being used, with ongoing cycles of feedback and action. Narratives begin to inform services. By the end, neighbourhoods and the City emerge as partners, leading to greater neighbourhood cohesion and positive outcomes. The bottom two boxes highlight what might happen if this idea failed, and what might happen if it was a catastrophic success.

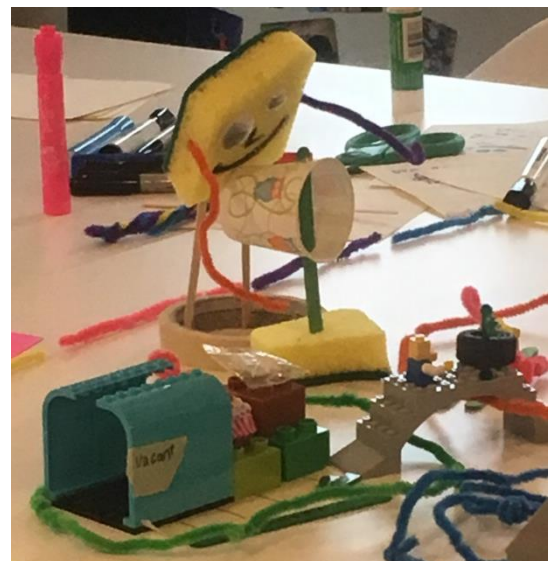


- Prototype #3: How might governments best use neighbourhood intelligence to co-design neighbourhoods residents want to live in?
Method: Physical Prototyping

This team designed an integrated neighbourhood model for their co-design experience between neighbourhoods and the City. The prototype involved a digital wireframe for an issues heat map where citizen feedback would be recorded and grouped by aggregated, related neighborhood concerns. Heat map users would be able to click on specific visualizations to view recorded interview clips or other research. The heat map incorporated best practices research that offered cases to address top issues.



Luca Petryshyn with the GoA explains his group's prototype to the group



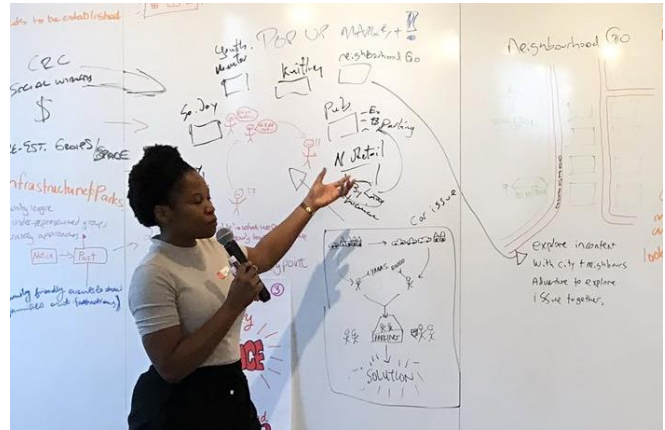
Close-up: Sponge Bob Happy Face!

- Prototype #4: What might a participatory co-design experience or process look like among the City of Edmonton and neighbourhoods?
Method: Sketching

This was a great example of how to help a group that gets stuck when they are trying to prototype. One of the reasons that we prototype is to help us get from a ‘talking about what to do space’ to a ‘let’s figure out how to do this thing’ space, so that we get to action. Ten minutes in, this group was still talking about why and why not an idea might not work. After a couple of failed prompts, we challenged group members to work individually, silently (no talking) at the white board for five minutes. After taking this quiet time to individually sketch out what was in their heads, when quiet time was over the group was able to look at their work collectively, see themes, and surface a great idea. The group came up with the idea of a kind of pop-up space or market where neighbourhood residents could come together with City folks to share ideas, concerns, opportunities, and more.



To help them move into the action space, SDXers were challenged to work independently at the white board in silence for 5 minutes



Rumbi Zinyemba with Homeward Trust shares her team’s sketches with the group

Share Back and Lessons Learned...

Thinking about and designing how we might work with the intel that is coming in from the ACE program and create community-governance feedback loops for the best neighbourhoods was helpful in thinking about how ACE might evolve and grow.

One thread noted throughout the morning was about neighbourhoods being for citizens and how we might activate them in new ways. For example, the prototype around community-based government explored how youth may contribute to neighbourhood programming. The two prototypes on using neighbourhood intelligence revealed that neighbourhood assets are vital and important, and governments should be making better use of these assets in human-centred design approaches to planning and decision-making.

We also spent some time as a group talking about the tools that we used in the session – 25/10 crowdsourcing and prototyping.

Appendix A: SDX5 Participant Survey Results

The SDX5 participant survey garnered nine responses. Survey feedback was positive, and respondents appreciated the opportunity to provide input on a real-world case study. Respondents also appreciated the opportunity to step up as facilitators and leaders in their prototype teams, as groups were largely left to their own devices.

There was a great positive response to the networking portion of SDX5. At the same time, respondents desired more time in the action space.

When asked what they would tell our Abundant Community Edmonton presenters if they could tell them one thing, some survey respondents said the following:

- “Great concept. Great ideas were generated during our working groups. Prototyping is not an easy thing and I hope that they took away some beneficial suggestions.”
- “Keep up the good work. We could use this work in more communities.”
- “I never knew they existed until now; very happy to have learned about them.”

In every SDX survey, we ask people for input on what they would like to explore at future SDX sessions. We have started to track our action on these suggestions as a way to provide a small feedback loop to those who take the time to offer their thoughts. These are outlined on the following pages.



Soni Dasmohapatra with the GoA talks prototypes while Annand Olivierre with Volunteer Alberta strikes an impressive superhero pose

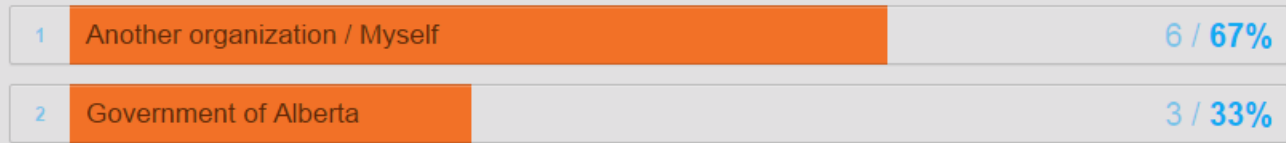
Thanks for suggesting it! We did it!	
Bring in outside speakers (Roger Martin, Tim Brown, Yves Behar)*	We have developed a ‘hijack’ model, where people can lead an SDX session and we convene. So far, we have had two outside sets of speakers: The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) and Abundant Community Edmonton (ACE).
Develop a space to publish ideas, insights, articles*	We have an SDX Medium Account where we publish our narratives for all to see, and welcome guest contributions. Ask us how to write for us!
Prototyping	We explored prototyping at various sessions, most recently with TACSI. We also did some prototyping at our very first SDX session on the CoLab’s draft systemic design field guide
How to understand and map systems*	We did some mapping at our first SDX session (rich pictures) and explored challenge mapping at SDX2.
When to use which tools*	We do this at every SDX: whenever we work with a tool, we talk about when you might use it
How to work better together*	We do this at every SDX: we aim to model a better way of working together in how we create, convene, and lead every session. It’s also built into the tools and concepts we explore 😊
*These are things we will do on an ongoing basis. Note: If an item is checked off, it doesn’t mean that we’ll never discuss it again – this is just a way to get a feel for how we are responding to SDXers 😊	

What topics would you like to explore at future SDX sessions?					
Bridging the Gap	Creating a Platform	Learning	Ideating	Particular Topics	Tackling Specific Issues
Policy & Delivery	Bring in outside speakers (Roger Martin, Tim Brown, Yves Behar)*	Skills & craft of social innovation*	Dragon's Den Format	SD as a Tool for Organizational Development	Apply models to real-life scenarios
Systemic Design & Service Design	Develop a space to publish ideas, insights, articles*	How is social innovation shifting policy development?	Charrettes	Organizational learning	Have participants bring their projects to the group
Designing for 'Extreme Users'	Communicate the value of SD and Systems Thinking	When to use which tools*	Prototyping*	Change management, transformation	Explore sticky social issues
Working with Marginalized Communities		Breaking down barriers and stripping away rules so that folks can just do what they need to do – how to collaborate with uncertainty		Relation between SD and citizen deliberation, engagement	How to convince people in a huge organization to use system design concepts in our work
		How to work better together*		SD & community organizing, networks	
		How to understand and map systems*		Storytelling	
		How to communicate the value of SD and Systems Thinking		Monitoring & Evaluation for SD	
		Assisting folks to determine when innovation is needed and how to get there - innovative learning		Using programs (existing or emerging) that have used SDX practices and theories within their field of study/practice	
		How to evaluate social impact			

Multiple Choice/Scale Answer Questions

I work for:

9 out of 9 people answered this question



What is your experience with the internal Systemic Design Community of Practice run by the CoLab?

9 out of 9 people answered this question



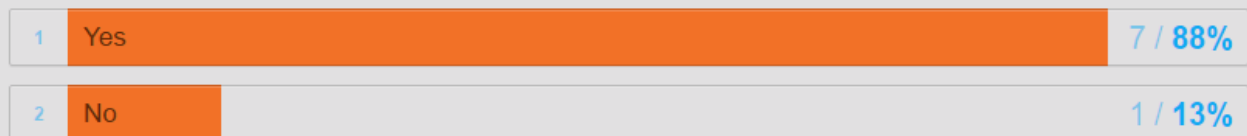
I gained new insight(s) about systemic design at SDX.

9 out of 9 people answered this question



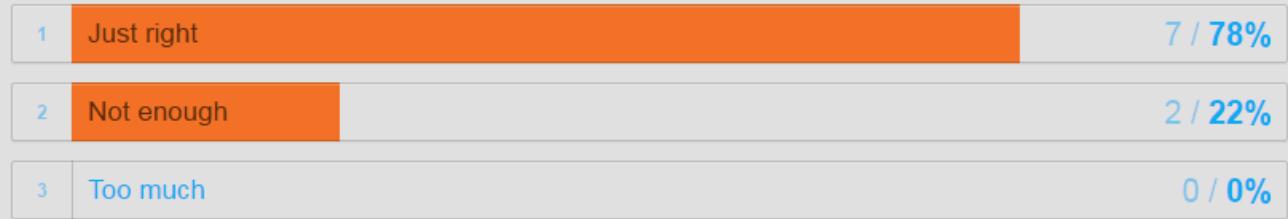
I made new connection(s) at SDX that could benefit my work.

8 out of 9 people answered this question



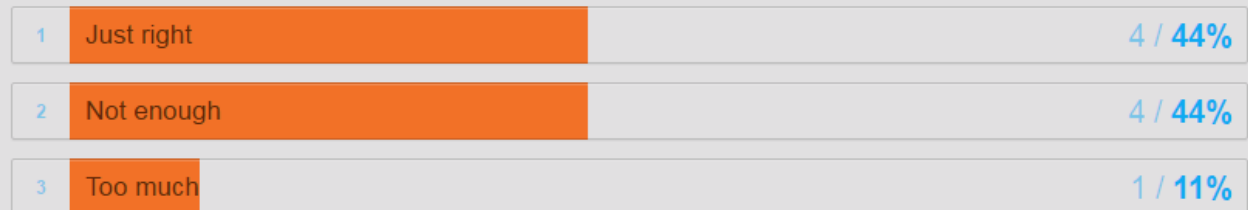
Theory:

9 out of 9 people answered this question



Practice:

9 out of 9 people answered this question



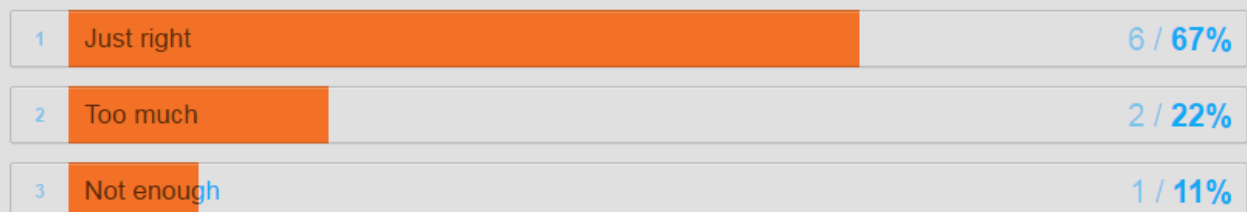
Networking:

9 out of 9 people answered this question



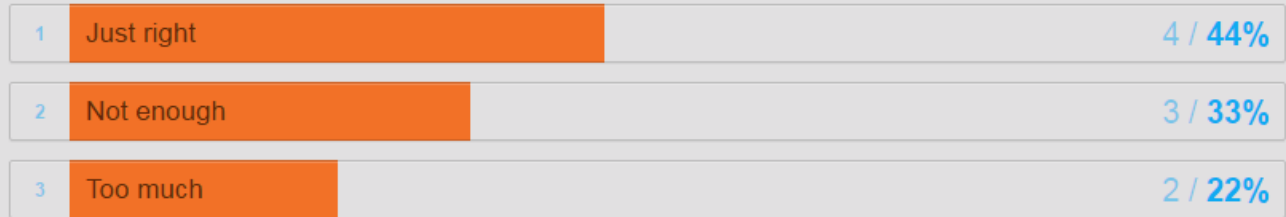
Listening:

9 out of 9 people answered this question



Doing:

9 out of 9 people answered this question



I had fun at SDX.

8 out of 9 people answered this question



The methods and concepts we explored interest me.

8 out of 9 people answered this question



The methods and concepts we explored have a useful application to my work.

8 out of 9 people answered this question



Overall, how satisfied are you with your SDX experience?

More cats = more satisfaction!

9 out of 9 people answered this question

