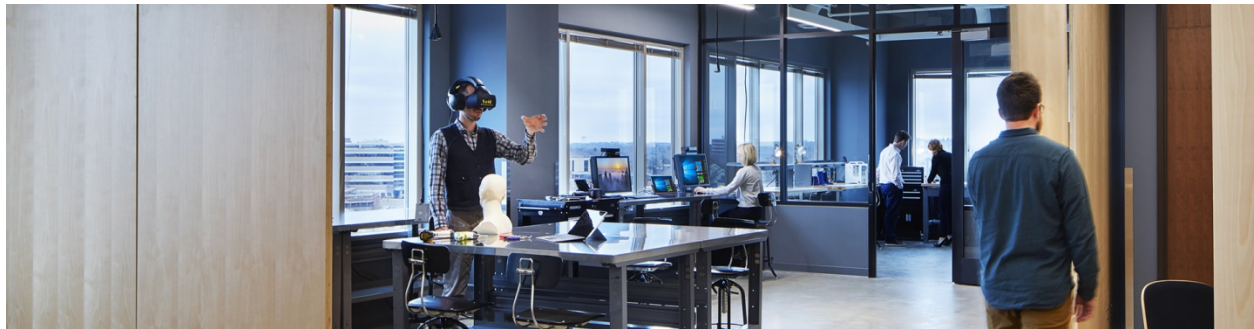


# COMPUTER VILLAGE

INSPIRED BY STL JOBS CLINTON PEABODY

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As I recently surfed the web I came across an interesting article on a major investment in St. Louis by Microsoft. I thought this was great for our region, but my curiosity rose when it mentioned a, “Community of Innovation”. So I pondered what is a Col? So thanks to the convenience of Wikipedia it states, “Coakes and Smith (2007) define Communities of Innovation (Col) as a form of Communities of Practice that are dedicated to the support of innovation. They suggest that Col can be formed from champions of innovation and their social network and that Col are safe places for the creation and support of innovatory ideas.

- [1] COI are groups made up of motivated individuals working together towards a common goal,
- [2] Workers are not motivated because of orders from their superiors, but because they are convinced of their common cause.”



What does this mean? A local company called the Cortex Innovation Community located in the Central West End is the new home for this Microsoft Technology Center.

Check out the benefits of this collaboration.

- Cortex Innovation Community is a 200 acre innovation hub and technology district located in the Central West End.
- Surrounded by nationally ranked universities and medical centers and abundant cultural and recreational assets.
- Microsoft is expected to invest \$50 million into the facility
- Microsoft is bringing 150 new jobs to the area, 60 from Creve Coeur
- This is one of 40 centers world wide
- The facility will emulate other Microsoft Technology Centers giving customers access to Microsoft newest tools
- The company's cloud and artificial intelligence products help start-ups compete with big companies

## **WHY DOES ST. LOUIS NEED AN INNOVATION COMMUNITY?**



In its most basic form, an innovation community involves a group of diverse minds coming together to share ideas, struggles, and resources in the spirit of collaboration. Holding to the belief that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts, members of an innovation community seek to lift each other up, reaching new levels of accomplishment and inspiring new ideas that would not have been achievable by a single entity on its own.

### **1. It provides new perspectives.**

Everybody knows what somebody wants, but nobody knows what everybody wants. The more differences your team brings to the table, the more likely you are to create an idea that meets the needs of a larger group of people.

This is one of the greatest strengths of an innovation community: It brings together a wide variety of people with a range of backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise into a space designed for innovation. This is a combination that's bound to spark fantastic ideas.

### **2. It improves employee engagement.**

The innovation world is moving too fast to make maintaining the status quo an option. To do so risks losing the engagement of employees who are looking for new opportunities and expanded horizons.

Sharing thought leadership and participating in innovation-related programming leads to serendipitous collisions with a new batch of creative thinkers and doers."

Your most creative people need a community of other creative people in order to thrive. An innovation community creates this space.

### **3. It increases your resources.**

Finding quality employees is hard. In fact, a 2015 survey by Manpower Group found that 32 percent of American companies have difficulty filling positions. The shifting landscape of the global employment market has created a higher need for creative, innovative workers with fairly specialized skill sets, and no single company can employ everyone with skills they will need. Engaging in creative collaboration provides a way to fill these gaps and offers your company access to tools you might otherwise lack.

Innovation is more important in business today than it ever has been before, but it just doesn't happen in isolation. Seeking out communities of innovation and joining them -- or sending your most creative employees to engage with them -- will breathe more life into your business and open creative doors you've probably never imagined.

#### *Resources*

*By Rhett PowerHead coach, Power Coaching and Consulting @rhettpower*

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

*Cortex Innovation Community <https://cortexstl.com/>*



**Computer Village  
Executive Director, Don Holt**

Don has been on the battle field for youth development and education for over 30 years. Retirement from Xerox only gave him more time for his passion. Don Holt is an “Unsung Hero” and advocate for youth, education and the black community.

**Congratulations** to 23 years as Executive Director of Computer Village. Thank you for being a visionary and an aspiration in our community.

“Don continues to stress the importance of IoT as a major component for the growth of young people associated with job stability and economic success in our community.”



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