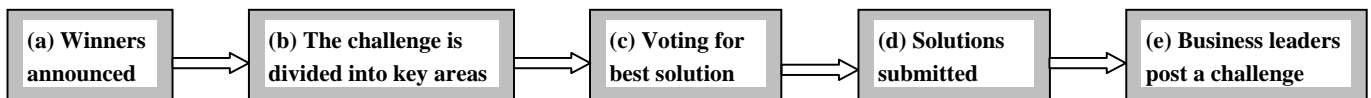


## Business Wisdom

The Times newspaper has joined forces with leading business strategist Don Tapscott and computer company Cisco to create a new initiative, called *Business Wisdom*. It aims to put Tapscott's idea of 'mass collaboration' into practice.

1 Have you heard of the term 'mass collaboration'? Discuss what you think it means with a partner.

2 In the flow chart of an online initiative called 'Business Wisdom', the steps (a–e) are in the wrong order. Put them into the correct order. Scan the transcript of the business programme to check your answer.



● On tonight's programme we are looking at a new idea based on the concept of mass collaboration. Business Wisdom is based on a simple principle: all of us can play a part in helping businesses develop their strategies. Sounds far-fetched? Well, it's the brainchild of one of the world's leading authorities on business strategy, Don Tapscott, who is especially interested in the power of information technology to change business. Our business correspondent Martha Vangelis explains how.

□ Thanks, Peter. OK, this is how Business Wisdom works. The Times has invited leaders from different industry sectors to share a challenge that their company is facing over the next few years. Every month, the Times website hosts a new, short video message with a 'challenge' from each leader. This challenge is broken down into a number of key areas, such as 'marketing' and 'technology'. Visitors to the site submit their solutions. These solutions are then rated by you and I, the voters. Finally, a winner is announced for each category. Oh, all winners get a prize – a flip video camera.

● What are the benefits of this, er, 'mass collaboration'?

□ Simply put, the company receives lots of ideas to real problems, like: how do they recruit new talent? Which technologies should they invest in? What's more, contributors have the opportunity to show their knowledge to corporate CEOs, as well as their peers and, well, a global business audience. Business Wisdom hopes to demonstrate the collective power of smart thinking.

● Thanks Martha. OK, that's the idea. Tapscott is well-known for his best-selling book, Wikinomics. I guess he sees this as a chance to put his theories of mass collaboration into practice. So let's hear from e-business expert, Declan Jones. Declan – you are not convinced.

◇ Not really. Business is simply not a caring and sharing kind of world. Why on earth would anyone share sensitive information and post it up for the world to see? I can only think that it's a good way for companies to get consultancy for free. And how do people have time to submit solutions?

● Thanks, Declan. So, is mass collaboration going to change our business models? Or is it just consultancy on the cheap? Let's meet the man himself, on a live video link from the US..

3 Read the whole transcript. What do you learn about Business Wisdom? Do you think it is a good idea?

4 Identify words in the transcript from their definitions below.

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| (a) difficult to believe because it is very unlikely                                    | (Peter)  |
| (b) a clever system, organization, or plan that someone thinks of and develops          | (Peter)  |
| (c) people who are considered experts in a particular subject                           | (Peter)  |
| (d) people who belong to the same social or professional group as others                | (Martha) |
| (e) a company with expert knowledge about a subject providing advice to other companies | (Declan) |
- (Definitions from or adapted from the Macmillan English Dictionary online [www.macmillandictionary.com](http://www.macmillandictionary.com))

5 Work through the three task stages in small groups. Present your choice of solution to the other groups.

- TASK:**
1. Write down details of a long-term problem your company faces. Pass it to the other groups.
  2. Read through the problems you receive from the other groups and write down your solution.
  3. Choose the best solution to your original problem.