

## THE THIRD SPACE Talent-21

By Dean Ernest J. Wilson III

Over the past eighteen months, I and select faculty from USC Annenberg have met with dozens of C-level executives and thought-leaders from the media, communication and entertainment (MCE) fields to discuss their strategies for addressing the tectonic technological and competitive challenges wracking their industries.

What emerged was unexpected: top MCE executives consistently articulated that their priority is people—the need for more uniquely talented individuals who possess a rare and specific skill set. In particular, they seek people who are capable of: recognizing new patterns and connecting the dots; aligning creativity, context and strategy; analyzing and communicating

across multiple boundaries; and effectively using various platforms to reach diverse audiences while upholding core organizational values. Moreover, the challenges associated with attracting, growing and retaining these talented individuals are universal, regardless of geography or industry.

Realizing that these needs are unlikely to be fulfilled by individuals coming from existing conventional disciplines, such as the MBA or Engineering spaces, I dubbed this new set of 21st century communications competencies the “Third Space.”

In the Information Age, communication is at the center and our leadership role has never been more pronounced, expected and necessary. USC Annenberg is therefore in the midst of an ambi-

tious project intended to effect a virtuous cycle—we listen and learn; we change what we teach and research; our students gain jobs, and our MCE partners gain best-prepared graduates to become the next generation of leaders. We call this 21st century initiative—and imperative—“Talent-21.”

Joining us in the Talent-21 project are top executives from such leading institutions as Cisco, IBM, Korn/Ferry, Disney, Google and CAA. Over time, the project's scope will expand further, encompassing larger groups of thought-leaders, and ultimately culminating in crowdsourced global discourse and change. Contact us if you and your organization want to participate, and please also share your stories with us of people who personify the Third Space competencies.

*For more information, visit [www.talent-21.org](http://www.talent-21.org) and follow @USCTalent21 on Twitter.*

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