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## **Clarity from a Maelstrom of Coincidence**

Appreciative Inquiry affinity sparks inspiration for Stakeholder News program

It was a maelstrom of absolute coincidence, with the only anchor being a history of working with, and an affinity for, Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

People-development team member Shannon McQuillan had already booked her flight to Cincinnati for the Connecting4Community conference at the beginning of May, when she learned Axiom News CEO Peter Pula would be in attendance.

Cincinnati has been a [thriving community of focus](#) for Axiom, because of its commitment to using the strengths-based methodology to perform community capacity, development and engagement, which drew community and organizational leaders inspired by Peter Block and/or John McKnight's [work with community space](#) from around the world.

Through Shannon's work at [Urban Systems Ltd.](#), a client of Axiom, AI influences how she creates curriculum and programming for the People Development Team to promote excitement, creativity and possibilities. Though having worked with Axiom for almost two years, this was the first she'd heard that its journalism was also rooted in AI.

On the final day of the Connecting4Community conference, Shannon had an opportunity to connect with Peter, who elucidated how AI is a fundamental and prominent feature in Axiom's organizational reporting. The meeting and conversation reframed how she understood the news program Axiom provides for Urban Systems.

She says the new information changed her perspective on the news service "dramatically."

“When I looked at it through the lens of Axiom trying to help us build on what’s working, that changed something in my mind,” says Shannon. “I get a better sense of what Axiom’s all about here. We’re on the same page with this methodology, and just hearing Peter talk in more detail about it definitely made me think we have to use this as a tool.”

On her return to Kamloops, B.C., she had a new appreciation and understanding of the impact the *About US* news program could have at her work, and she was eager to share it — the caveat was she lacked the words to specifically reiterate her conversation with Peter.

The conversation had been generative and loaded with possibilities, clearly defining Axiom’s work. It was by another stroke of coincidence that the tool she needed to share her thoughts throughout Urban Systems was delivered to her e-mail inbox.

It was a routine e-mail she received from the Taos Institute, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the development of social constructionist theory and practices for purposes of world benefit. It was another coincidence that she had read the e-mail so closely.

The e-mail was promoting a series of 13 videos called “Innovation & Appreciative Inquiry: Positive Images, Positive Action.” She spotted a section called “[Scaling Up AI With Generative Journalism](#)” featuring the staff at Axiom News.

She shared the video with her colleagues on the company’s internal website, The Pulse, and has challenged them to view the stories as an appreciative tool. During Lessons Learned sessions performed throughout the company, she says she’s hoping to spend more time reviewing all the things that go right with the company’s projects, and not linger on some of the areas that could use improvement.

She says the news isn’t just a nice story — it’s a place to build from, and she has encouraged her colleagues to consider what they can learn or apply from each news story when they read them.

“I think the Axiom stories help us to do that,” she says.

*If you have questions or comments, please leave them below or contact [ryan\(at\)axiomnews.ca](mailto:ryan(at)axiomnews.ca).*

