

“Two heads are better than one”

Imagine a big white board, markers and ten people standing in front of that board, on it are different colored words and diagrams with no clear order. Collaborators scattered around trying to record all that was discussed, some writing it down, some taking a picture and others do nothing. A mind map is used to clear order to the ideas shared during the meeting, especially with teams where topics are easily broken up into concepts and relationship between concepts easily understood. This is what collaboration is about, but why and how should organizations incorporate collaboration to assimilate their work?

Collaboration in the workplace could be the answer to success, the key to having a homogenous environment that is putting together their ideas and thinking towards a common goal. While relying on a strong sense of shared purpose and recognizing the values of working together, collaboration is about bringing two or more people (groups) together. Teamwork is simply taken to a higher level to accomplish a task, with today's advanced technologies,



collaboration has become a more productive way of doing things. It enables managers and organizations to draw together the diverse skills and strengths of different individuals, to create a team that is far more effective than working alone. An effective team is able to divide and conquer to achieve their goals as quickly and effectively as possible. It also enables problems to be solved faster and more innovatively. Under a “two heads are better than one” motto, collaboration has been found to encourage job satisfaction and employee retention. Working with others in a meaningful way often gives people a stronger sense of purpose and positive reinforcement than working on their own. People are more likely to stay at an organization if they have strong bonds with colleagues and feel they are part of something important. However, collaboration can't be forced. If individuals don't see the value in collaboration, they're unlikely to contribute to the success of the team. Organizations are structured to measure output and success at the level of individual employees. Asking someone to subordinate individual goals in favor of team goals may

be seen as diluting the individual's control over their ability to performance requirements, and thus achieve individual recognition and rewards.

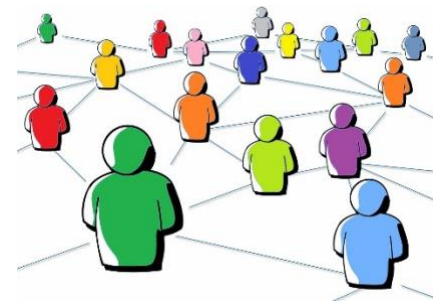
There are three types of collaboration:

1. Team collaboration
2. Community collaboration
3. Network collaboration

In each type, new ideas are generated and explored. However, it is not a single event or something easy to do effectively without practice. Collaboration is a continuous process and gets better over time by creating more significant work relationships.

Three points summarize how you can create a more collaborative workplace:

1. Communicate: share ideas with coworkers, contacts, managers and anyone who will listen.
2. Visualize: use visuals to communicate your ideas and clarify them.
3. Acknowledge: give credit to collaborators, make your colleagues feel appreciated and valued.



In order to foster effective collaboration includes:

- Define the roles and responsibilities in a team, be clear that evaluation is done by teams, not individuals.
- Team members should understand their position, requirements, and responsibilities towards that goal.
- Reward individual and team accomplishments regularly and ensure that members are appreciated and valued.

Benefits to collaborating in the workplace are:

- Access to skills and strengths: it enables you to share the knowledge and work with someone who can present the ideas clearly. Increasing the odds of getting approved proposals.

- Develop employee skills: employees have a better understanding of how the company operates at a higher level and not just their individual department. The skills and knowledge shared can be used or taken back to make improvements or enhancement.
- Solve problems and innovate faster: what may take a long time, might take less to solve in a collaborative space.
- Work efficiency (divide and conquer): collaboration allows businesses to complete important projects in an efficient manner.

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