

## Collaboration – A Success Formula

Collaboration is the process which results from people with different points of view coming together with the intention to achieve something, which is superior to that which any person could achieve alone.

It may also be described as:

- A way of being – representing a shift in people's values, beliefs and behaviours in the way they work together.
- A central organising principle – which replaces hierarchy as the primary means of managing a business.
- A people based approach – which embraces the diversity of people and provides a way of including everyone's contributions.
- A framework – for solving problems and achieving extraordinary results.

There are many benefits for the individual and the business from developing and maintaining a collaborative workplace environment. These include greater work satisfaction and improved business productivity and culture.

Collaboration is a value that every business should strive to achieve. In a collaborative organisation everyone is seen as a valued and equal contributor to the business. Business results are *with* others. In a collaborative environment:

- People are partners with a shared mission  
The team understands and works together in harmony to achieve the key business objectives. They understand that working as 'individuals' is detrimental to achieving key objectives. They understand the outcome produced by the group is superior and more rewarding than the outcome produced individually. The culture is characterised by interdependence and shared responsibility.
- People are self-managing  
The team understands their roles and responsibilities and demonstrates many business improvement initiatives. They work hard at becoming more productive.
- Relationships  
Respect is a key value which enables team members with different personality styles to work together in a productive and positive relationship. Positive and productive relationships are the norm.
- Accountability is shared  
Everyone demonstrates accountability and responsibility for ensuring their role is performed to the best of their ability.

- People are involved

The team is encouraged to have input and generate ideas for business improvement. Creative energy is abundant. Every individual is a valued contributor and is genuinely treated as a valuable asset. Work satisfaction improves as a result.

- Information is shared

In some business', withholding information is used as a method of power. In a collaborative business information is shared, which contributes to a feeling of belonging .

- Owner's absence

Business owners can be absent from the business for a longer period of time without productivity decreasing. The team is empowered to generate the same results in the owner's absence. Everyone takes ownership of the business results. Motivation and progress are not affected by the owner's absence.

- Effective communication

The team understands that multiple perspectives are better than one. Open, honest, respectful communication is the norm. Everyone trusts the ability and skills of others' to produce the required results. Differences in skill and style are valued and add to the creativity of the process, and any conflicts are dealt with in an open and respectful manner.

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Use the 'From Independence to Collaboration' form to rate how collaborative you are, in order to identify potential areas for improvement.

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