

COLLABORATION

How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Create Unity, and Reap Big Results

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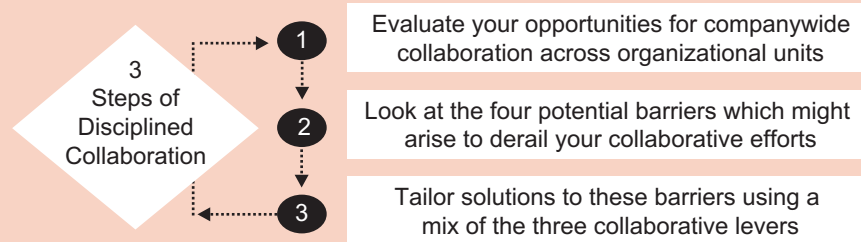
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MAIN IDEA

Everyone loves the idea of collaboration, but the goal sometimes get confused. The whole objective of collaboration is not merely to tear down silos and get people to work together. That’s all well and good, but to be worthwhile, collaboration must generate results. It must be disciplined and effective. Disciplined collaboration will amplify the results each individual would have attained whereas poor collaboration can actually end up being worse than no collaboration at all.

To assess when it makes sense to collaborate and when not to, there are three steps involved:



“What is the difference between good and bad collaboration? The answer I provide is a set of principles I refer to as disciplined collaboration. It is an answer to a simple question that confronts us all, whether we are business executives, nonprofit leaders, government officials, politicians, mayors, school principals, doctors, lawyers, or church leaders: how do we cultivate collaboration in the right way so that we achieve the great things that are not possible when we are divided?”

– Morten Hansen

“The idea of disciplined collaboration can be summed up in one phrase: the leadership practice of properly assessing when to collaborate (and when not to) and instilling in people both the willingness and the ability to collaborate when required.”

– Morten Hansen

Step 1 – Evaluate your opportunities for companywide collaboration across organizational units Page 2

Ask: “What’s the upside potential of collaboration?” Remember the true goal of collaboration is not to get people to work together but to generate better results. Take time to figure out whether or not the potential benefits of collaborating will be worth it or not. Those benefits tend to be along these lines:

- 1 Evaluate your opportunities
 - Corporations – innovate, find new customers and cut costs
 - Governments and non-profits – great projects, better decisions, cut costs
 - Legislators – solve the problems people care about

Step 2 – Look at the four potential barriers which might arise to derail your collaborative efforts Pages 3 - 4

Once you figure out it’s worth collaborating, you then ask: “What are the likely barriers we will strike when we try and get our people to collaborate?” There are four barriers which arise again and again:

- 2 Look at the potential barriers
 - 1. The “not-invented-here” barrier – we don’t reach out to others
 - 2. The “hoarding” barrier – we keep things to ourselves
 - 3. The “search” barrier – we can’t find what we need anywhere
 - 4. The “transfer” barrier – we only work with people we know well

All four barriers need to be addressed before disciplined and effective collaboration can take place.

Step 3 – Tailor solutions to these barriers using a mix of the three collaborative levers Pages 4 - 8

Armed with an understanding of which barriers you face, you can then get to work tailoring solutions. Most solutions will be a mix of three different levers:

- 3 Tailor solutions using levers
 - 1. Unification lever – get everyone aiming at a lofty goal
 - 2. T-shape lever – work within and across units simultaneously
 - 3. Networks lever – get people to use their personal networks

