

collaboration

the action of working with someone to produce or create something

One of the biggest factors that contribute to the success of any business is whether or not its employees are able to perform together a team. With increasing competition, it has become extremely important to encourage creativity in the office, in order to improve productivity and promote healthy employee relationships.

Working in teams enables employees to be quicker and more effective in their work, as compared to people who work on projects on their own. Collaborating also makes employees more responsible, which goes a long way in raising their motivation levels, especially when teams work virtually.

Collaboration in the Workplace Collaboration is said to take place when two individuals or a group of people work together towards achieving a common goal by sharing their ideas and skills. It can happen in traditional as well as virtual teams. With advancements in technology, using cloud-based programs to share files and communicate has become commonplace.

A few other important aspects that collaboration brings to the table include:

Brainstorming- Collaboration allows team members to come together on a common platform and work towards the achievement of a common goal by thinking, brainstorming, and offering various perspectives to provide solutions.

Providing Value- Working towards the same goal inspires in the team members with a strong sense of purpose. The team sees value in working together as the common goal gives them a meaningful reason to work together, along with receiving mutual benefits for the company as well as the team.

Equal Partaking- Collaboration provides every team member with equal opportunities to participate and communicate their ideas.

Advantages of Collaboration:

Pooling of Talent and Strengths When members of a team collaborate, they are able to utilize the knowledge, experience and skills of everyone involved. For instance, one member may struggle with presentation skills, but might know all about the technical aspects involved. Effective collaboration will allow all the members to share their talent and find the most optimal solution to every problem. This will augment the chances of the business to achieve more in less time.

Development of Employee Skills Collaboration is mutually beneficial for the employees as well as the organization because when they work together, interact and share ideas, they see and understand how others work, think, negotiate and operate. This gives all the employees a chance to pick up skills from their colleagues or team mates and build upon their strengths. These newly-learned skills can then be practiced in their own field to look at things with a new perspective and make improvements and enhancements.

Speed up Solutions Collaboration speeds things up. It fast-tracks progress. A problem that may take months to get resolved when handled by a single individual, but may take just a few hours to resolve when several other members employ their unique standpoints and expertise to get things done. These viewpoints will open up several doors to multiple ideas and solutions that a single individual may not be able to come up with.

Increased Efficiency Collaborating in the workplace enables businesses to finish important projects and meet crucial deadlines efficiently. With multiple individuals working on a project, the work can be divided up equally and efficiently between those with the time and the expertise to handle specific tasks. This also significantly reduces the project delivery time. Often referred to as the divide and conquer strategy, it entails teaming up of several individuals together, dividing up the tasks among them, and accomplishing the project in relatively less time.

COLLABORATION PRO TIP:

When it comes to being collaborative in the workplace, team members need to be able to come together and treat one another fairly, which is why psychological safety is key. "People can't be afraid, when they speak up and say something, that the reaction from the room is gonna be Oh man, that was a stupid idea or How do you not know that?" says Ariel Hunsberger, the head of learning and development at Slack.

For our team to truly understand one another's individual responsibilities, we'll need to drill down on our active listening: that is, listening to learn and absorb, without the intention of responding. "A lot of times, when we're listening to someone, we're just waiting for our turn to respond, thinking about how we're going to react the entire time," Hunsberger says. "We're not actually listening. We're not retaining what is coming from our potential collaboration partners. We're missing out on emotion, and on figuring out ways our goals might align. It's amazing how much more you can get out of those kinds of conversations."

Focus on alignment and your "collaborative partner brand". Are you actually hearing each other, or are you talking past each other?" says Hunsberger. "Are you learning from your teammates about where they're coming from or just talking to get to your own goal?" She also encourages coworkers to consider their "brand as a collaborative partner." Although that term sounds buzzwordy, it really just means your professional reputation—whether people want to work with you.

Everything you contribute is adding to or subtracting from your own value as a good colleague.