


Chapter 2

Enhancing Business Communications and Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

A collaborative environment raises the bar for teamwork by allowing colleagues to share their skills, talents, and ideas to achieve a common goal. When practiced correctly, collaboration in the workplace can have a positive impact on your team and organization. Collaboration can increase efficiency and innovation and improve team relationships. In this chapter, the authors cover the benefits and challenges of a collaborative work environment, the skills needed in a collaborative team, and how you can help your team create a positive and innovative work environment.

INTRODUCTION

We can think of collaboration as the fuel that makes teamwork work. It is one of three strategies needed to encourage team synergy, the other two being communication and setting group norms. Collaboration in the workplace is the foundation for great teamwork: by collaborating, teams work together to brainstorm new ideas, complete ambitious projects, and achieve goals. In its simplest form, a collaborative team is one that does more together than team members could do individually (Alvarez & Caregnato, 2021; Aunger et al., 2022).

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Depending on your position, team collaboration in the workplace may look a little different:

- **For Team Leaders**, collaboration helps assign jobs while giving direct subordinates their due, expanding their skill sets, and supporting career advancement (Crain et al., 2021; Lawrence et al., n.d.).
- **For Individual Team Members**, collaboration helps them communicate more effectively with the team and work together to accomplish great initiatives (Aslan et al., 2022; Crain et al., 2021; Lawrence et al., n.d.).
- **For Employees from Other Disciplines**, team collaboration is key to moving work forward without friction. Without a clear way to work together and communicate, your team may end up isolated, and work may end up getting lost along the way.

So, these are some examples of what collaboration can look like in the workplace (Reed & McDermott, 2020; Schmid et al., 2016):

- **Group Brainstorming:** A perfect example of effective collaboration is the good old brainstorming session. This practice allows everyone on the team to contribute their ideas and further the project with innovative solutions to complex problems (Jones, 2021; Yano et al., 2021).
- **Diverse Teams:** Every member of your team is different and contributes in unique ways. Building an inclusive team with a diversity of talents, skill levels, and personal and professional backgrounds strengthens collaboration on your team (Jones, 2021; Yano et al., 2021).
- **Open Communication and Open Discussions:** for teams to work together effectively, they need to show a willingness to ask questions, delve into specific points, and even disagree to move forward. While open and frank communication is not always easy or comfortable, being a collaborative team means creating together to develop better solutions, listening to others' opinions, and working together to achieve goals (Albrecht et al., 2020; Best et al., n.d.).

Successful collaborative teams rely on the following values:

Clarity: clear communication is key. Your team may not agree on everything, but it is essential that you communicate opinions, ideas, and priorities clearly to avoid unnecessary conflict or misunderstanding (Albrecht et al., 2020; Allamsetty et al., n.d.; Best et al., n.d.; Magen-Nagar et al., 2019).

Efficiency: The level of team collaboration doesn't necessarily have to do with the amount of time you spend together. It all depends on how that time is used. Have

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