

How to Create a Collaborative Work Environment

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“A business has to be involving, it has to be fun and it has to exercise your creative instincts” ~ Richard Branson

Working in a collaborative environment means getting more work done faster. It is a process through which a group of people constructively explore their ideas and power to look for a way out that is far more extended than one's limited vision. With the growing trend of remote working and Millennials and Gen Zs striving for flexibility to work, the teams must be able to communicate, collaborate and share ideas easily.

The importance of Team Collaboration

Collaboration creates a circle of knowledge and helps each team member to understand his/her role. Some smart owners look to encouraging their staff always to work with each other. Here are some reasons teams should collaborate.

1. **Learn from each other** - Team members working in collaboration with each other will always have an opportunity to learn from each other's successes and failures.
2. **Better Problem Solving** - When more competent and experienced people come together, teams will undergo better problem-solving approach.
3. **You will know the bigger picture** - Different people working in collaboration with a team from different backgrounds will give you more chance to grasp the differences that they have.
4. **Break Down Barrier** - Successful companies always put their team members in collaboration. Team members of the single department are not just in collaboration but it extends across all departments in an organisation.
5. **Online Collaboration Tools** - There are many cloud-based collaboration tools such as ProjectManager and Clarizen. This helps to bring teams together. Online tools are making it easier for co-workers to connect, collaborate, and remain in sync with each other.
6. **Better Participation** - Each member of a team should provide better input, brainstorm unique ideas and find solutions to the various project problems from time to time.
7. **Faster Production** - *"Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes teamwork, a company work, a society work, a civilisation work."* – Vince Lombardi

How to build a collaborative working environment

What should be done to empower the collaborative teams? Here are eight steps to build a collaborative working environment following Sandeep Kashyap, the Founder and CEO of ProofHub:

Step 1: Identify Their Individuals' Strengths

In a collaborative environment, it is important to be realistic about each team member's vulnerabilities. On your mission to start the collaboration, start with building teams around individuals who complement each other. One member compensates for the disabilities of others. You will be able to delineate which team member will be contributing to which part, pairing them with the appropriate tasks that suit their strengths.

Step 2: Establish Realistic Expectations & Clarify Goals

With clear realistic expectations in the team, they will be able to focus on the tasks and take part in decision-making. Together, the team gets an opportunity to share their ideas and get support. How to clarify the goals to each team member:

- Review their roles
- Check their responsibilities
- Clarify expectations
- Allow cross-learning

Step 3: Collaboration Tools

Companies like Bosch that employ online collaboration software create a good collaborative environment. Cloud-based collaboration technology allows companies to access data from any location to make sure people collaborate on a common platform. Teams can share files simultaneously, communicate in real-time and have an interactive collaboration, bringing out more creativity.

Step 4: Encourage Open-Mindedness

The modern workplace has people from various backgrounds, and life experiences. Give each of them a chance to be open-minded about their ideas. Approach every situation uniquely with a different perspective. With individuals sharing their experiences, it creates a sense of security in the team. They give a respectful approach to work, thus positively influencing overall performance.

Step 5: Reward Innovation

To create a culture of innovation, the organisation need to make innovation a human capital issue. You can prioritise innovation by linking it to the company's reward system. Innovation is the key to maintaining a competitive edge in the growing industries. Therefore, encouraging teams to challenge the status quo simply means maintaining the right standards.

Step 6: Celebrate team success publicly

Do not forget to celebrate your team's success in improving team spirit and performance. Success primarily does not involve money; it also counts whenever one achieves a goal. Take the team out for lunch or order in pizza. Motivate them to share their success story in ways to make a difference. This is more likely to boost their confidence and make them more inspired to contribute more to the team. Show

them their efforts never go unnoticed.

Step 7: Support a strong sense of community

It is important to share a sense of community where the employees feel secure, nurtured and supported. Nobody wants to feel like an outsider. It destroys the whole meaning of working in a team and makes it impossible to get anything meaningful accomplished. Make them feel a strong sense of community, more comfortable, share the right knowledge appropriately and help to solve deep problems. Teams will be more committed and have a global perspective.

Step 8: Spread the Delegation of Tasks

You cannot do everything alone and of course, you cannot have the same people showing up all the time. When you start delegating the tasks, individuals feel powerful as they will feel their actions will leave an impact on the organization. They will be more motivated to be there in the team and do their efforts. They feel valued, overwhelmed and feel they have an important role to play.

To get your collaborative environment to thrive, do not let anyone be a bottleneck.

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