



COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

The current Unit will guide you through the concept of Collaborative Leadership

Introduction

You will learn:

- ★ Who is a collaborative leader?
- ★ Differences between a traditional leader and a collaborative leader
- ★ Benefits of collaborative leadership for the company
- ★ How to implement collaborative leadership in your organization

“Collaborative leadership is an increasingly vital source of competitive advantage in today’s highly networked, team-based, and partnership-oriented business environments. Yet few leaders have been trained to lead collaboratively, especially those at more senior levels who climbed the organisational ladder in a different era”, according to the Oxford Initiative’s White Paper.

Collaborative leadership is a management skill that aims to put co-working managers, top-level executives, and general staff. In collaborative structures, knowledge and data are openly shared and the responsibility for the workflow and the outcome are also shared by everybody. Quite different from a conventional top-down organization structure, where a small group of executives control the flow of information, collaborative leadership empowers the dialogue among all organization’s levels. In a collaborative environment the elements of co-design, co-work and co-creation are more organically integrated and put in motion.

When the decision-making is jointly shared, the organization is seen like it is jointly owned. This perception of joint ownership encourages the commitment to a common objective. A Stanford Study of 2014 proved that collaboration leads to the staff engaging in a task 64% longer than those that are doing a task by themselves.





"To be **successful** in business, and in **life**, you need to connect and collaborate."

- Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group -

WHO IS A COLLABORATIVE LEADER?

The answer is given by Hank Rubin, founder of the Institute for Collaborative Leadership: “You are a collaborative leader once you have accepted responsibility for building a heterogeneous team to accomplish a shared purpose. Your tools are (1) the purposeful exercise of your behaviour, communication, and organizational resources in order to affect the perspective, beliefs, and behaviours of another person, to influence that person's relationship with you and your collaborative enterprise and (2) the structure and climate of an environment that supports



the collaborative relationship.”

Collaborative leaders frequently search for a multiplicity of opinions and ideas amid colleagues to fix problems and set up strategies. Due to this co-working leadership, staff becomes more committed, self-confident, and more predisposed to seize ownership of their tasks, according to the Harvard Business Review.

By means of collaborative leadership, managers can construct an inclusive work context that empowers collaborators, unleashes co-creation, and nourishes a work environment that is both enjoyable and productive.



Adapted from: Collaborative lead training co.

01 Benefits Of Collaborative Leadership For The Company

1. People are more willing to take responsibility

The members of a collaborative team are more willing to take the responsibility for implementing the team's action plan because they share the credits for achieving the goals defined in a co-working environment.

2. Profit from the free flow of ideas

An open environment fosters the free discussion of ideas, co-creation, and co-design. When everyone who is involved in a problem is involved in solving the problem as well, it brings with it an abundance of knowledge and a diversity of viewpoints. Hence, the solutions that they develop are better suited to be successful than those taken only by a single mind or by a small group of people.

3. Trust building

Collaborative leadership builds trust among participants in the enterprise by using open channels and fostering dialogue and debate. A large amount of thought and information flow has often produced smarter decision-making solutions.

4. Elimination of internal destructive competitiveness

thereby achieving better teamwork throughout the organization. Teams that work closer understand better how their work converges and their mindset inspires other teams in the company.

5. Common understanding of the organization's purpose

Collaborative leadership encourages shared ownership of the organization. By involving everyone in problem-solving and decision-making, people sense they are doing their own thing, rather than what others impose on them. Ownership creates an engagement to a common goal. The combination of process ownership and its outcomes, the empowerment, the authentic co-working, and the improved planning delivers tangible benefits to the organization.

6. Increase employee loyalty

A more collaborative and engaged workforce is more loyal to the organization. In particular when there is an organic perception that their leaders believe their workers can do a great job. In addition, collaborative leadership can contribute to fixing territorial problems by fostering reciprocal trust, ensuring that every person's concerns are heard, and encouraging teams, groups, or individuals to find common ground and co-work, co-design and co-create for a common goal.

7. Creating future collaborative leaders

The next generation of leaders is more easily identified from within the organization, reducing costs in human resources research and safeguarding leadership continuity.

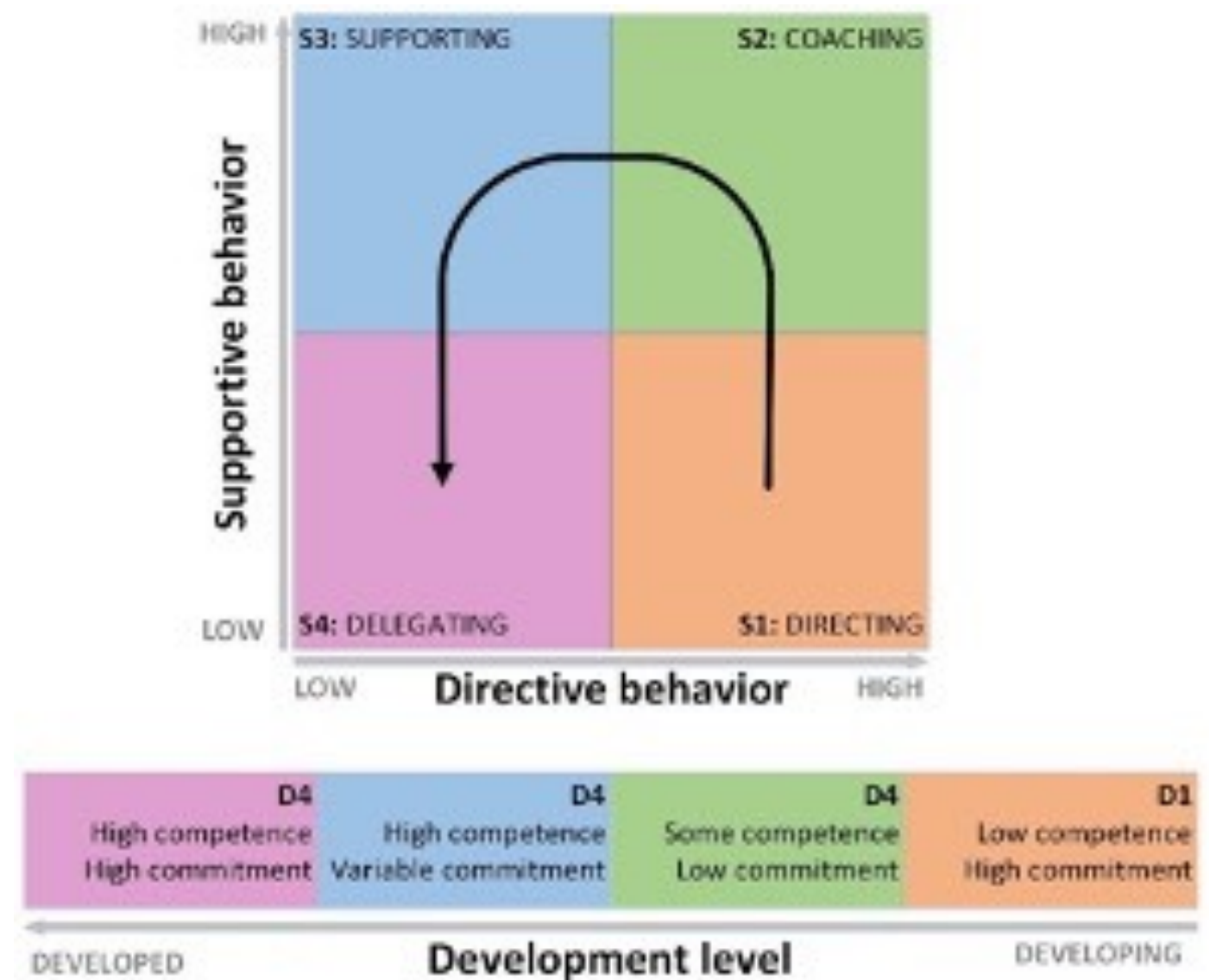


Organizational changes are more susceptible to create a more productive business in an environment of collaborative leadership. But you should bear in mind that it takes time and effort to evolve into a co-working system that profits from all the benefits of a collaborative leadership attitude. You might also find some blockages from persons displeased with sharing responsibilities. To face and surpass such challenges, should they arise, collaborative leaders will need to enhance their conflict-resolution skills in order to reach a solution comfortable to everybody, namely by means of dialogue, motivational speech or leading by example

Find in this [video](#) a comprehensive guide to collaborative leadership

“Companies that promote collaborative working are five times more likely to be high performing than those that don’t.”

- The Institute for Corporate Productivity -



How To Implement Collaborative Leadership At Work

Although deciding to go beyond traditional controlling methods is the best way to start implementing collaborative leadership, it requires time and effort for the planned changes to be effective. For the organization transition to a more collaborative environment, the following strategies are the better suited:

1. **Define common goals.** Recognizing your goals is the main pillar of a collaborative leadership approach. You will not go far without a clear idea why collaboration in the organization should be a priority. Try to understand the reason why you want to invest in a collaborative leadership strategy. Do you want to solve a precise organizational issue? Have you tried other leadership strategies without success? Do you feel you are losing touch with your team? Do you feel you can profit from a workplace more engaged in co-work, co-creation, and co-design? After identifying your reason, you will be more prepared to put in motion a collaborative leadership methodology and reach your goals.
2. **Open communication lines.** It is paramount for collaboration to embrace an open communication trend all over your organization. First, train employees in specific skills vital for collaboration, such as having meaningful conversations and cherish others. After, you can start shaping their attitude towards co-working, co-designing, and co-creating.

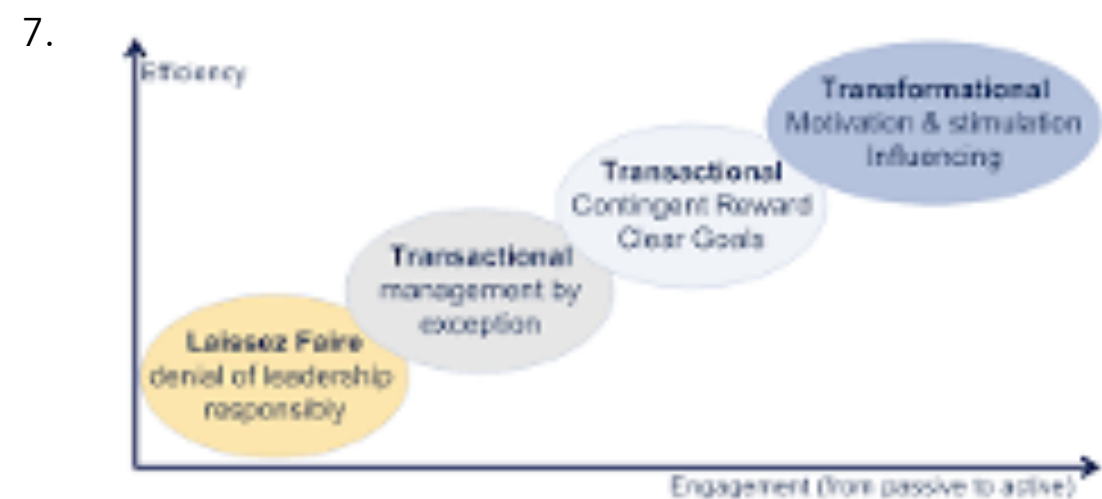


02 How To Implement Collaborative Leadership At Work

3. **Build a resilient network.** A good collaborative leader should be a great networker. The best path for a collaborative workspace starts by building bridges and create purposeful relationships with everyone around. This simple action helps setting up an enhanced team that is proficient in collaboration. A crucial feature of developing partnership experiences within the team includes recognising that everyone's skills might be different and that all ideas should be heard. Although some skills or ideas can be useless for achieving a defined goal, the leader should show that he/she considers everyone a valid element of the team if he/she wants to establish a real co-working partnership.
4. **It's OK to let your guard down.** Another technique to put everyone at the same level and achieve a collaborative environment is to show vulnerability. It's not a big deal if the leader admits before his/her workers that he/she doesn't know all the answers. This way you show to your employees that you need them. When you step out of the pedestal you are allowing your team to collaborate with you. Consequently, they start to take on more work responsibilities, perform tasks more carefully, and contribute to the organization achieving better results on a more regular basis.
5. **Encourage visionary business thinking.** Sometimes companies need to level down the hierarchy, especially at senior management, and embrace a real collaborative leadership attitude. Visionary companies may benefit from

putting aside authoritative leadership techniques, thereby motivating employees to interact with each other in new and different ways, and as a result engage in more collaborative work styles like co-working, co-design, and co-creation.

6. **Try not to sit around.** "Part of the challenge with collaboration is that it's messy, it's complex and therefore can be very time-consuming," according to Michael Lee. The co-instructor of a collaborative leadership program at Harvard advises: "It is useful to think about all of the ways that I, as a manager or leader, can bring this into my team and organization." You don't even need to rebuild the entire organizational organics to put in place collaborative leadership procedures. You just need to insert them in the organization's workflow in a timely and smart way. If employees think that extra tasks and time are added to their already busy schedule, they will be less receptive to accept collaboration proposals.





Find a brief explanation about creative collaboration from the leader of Pixar [HERE](#). And a complete collaborative leadership webinar [HERE](#).



Conclusion

The importance of a leader using collaborative leadership

Using collaborative leadership you can become a leader that inspires his/her staff to become more committed to the team goals, to eliminate internal competitiveness and to collaborate better between different team members.

Collaborative leaders understand the importance of interpersonal relationships and not being the singular source of authority and decision management body. They invest time in getting to know everyone on their team so that they can build trust and communicate easily with their staff.

By means of collaborative leadership, managers can improve productivity, brainstorm for new ideas and creative solutions and benefit from the crossover of ideas and inclusive work. They empower team collaborations, unleash co-creation, and create a work environment that is both creative, dynamic and productive.



Lead Collaboratively

Becoming a collaborative leader is not an overnight change in leadership style. It requires learning how to share openly tasks and knowledge with your team, how to divide the responsibilities between the team members, how to be a better listener and a leader that inspires trust. Below you will find a few tips on how to lead your team collaboratively:

1. Encourage members of your team to take responsibility for their tasks.
2. Listen to your team members
3. Divide responsibilities
4. Build trust in your team

When you trust that your team members are capable of organizing their workflow by themselves and believe in them, they feel their task is part of the bigger goal and understand the importance of their work. This gives them a feeling of belonging to the organization.

You want to be someone who can be approached by the members of your team when they have an idea about a new product/service. By creating a welcoming environment for the discussion of ideas you allow creativity and problem solving to flourish in your organization and in the same time everyone in your organization will feel heard and valuable. This builds trust in you and your leadership skills as well as it encourages team members to trust in their own skills and themselves. Add to this the division of responsibilities between team members and you will have an organization where every member feels important, seen, contributing to the mission of the business and gives his/her best.



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COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP TIME!

Find some more inspiration on collaborative leadership here:



[How to lead a collaborative team](#)



[Collaborative leadership](#)



[Collaborative leadership characteristics](#)



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

[Leadership: Are You Connecting & Collaborating?](#)

[The 7 Keys to Creative Collaboration](#)

[The Collaborative Leader](#)

[Apple CEO Tim Cook on Collaboration](#)