

Collaboration: A Management Strategy Moving from Competition to Partnership.

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The director of the Corporate Partnering Institute, states that there are three steps for successful partnerships:

- 1. Determine what it is you need but don't have: customers, capital, special expertise, products, production capacity, or distribution channels,*
- 2. Determine who has what you need,*
- 3. Ask them for it, but, first make sure you have something they want or need. (This last point is the most important.)*

Before you can take these steps there is some work to be done.

First,

Establish A Collaborative Environment:

Collaboration is a focused business strategy that must employ lean thinking principles to build and maintain value-adding partnerships.

Lean thinking looks to add value to process or system.

An organization with a collaborative environment seizes value adding partnership opportunities.

A key secret to productive partnerships is to hire people who have great ability and talent for collaboration.

Building collaborative coalitions requires resources...time, which is most often the scarcest...it is paramount that you understand:

- Your organization's business as well as...
- The organizational culture of those that you may perceive as competition and/or potential partners.

Then, you can begin to answer the questions:

How do I know what I need?

How do I know who has what I need?

What do I have, or am willing to vie to a win-win partnership?

Know your organization:

We must understand our own organization first....what is it that we do, and what do we seek to accomplish.

How do we manage our business and who do we organize our people and resources. Only, then, we can determine what we need.

- Determine your core function for your organization.
What value do you add to the end user?

- What impact to expect to accomplish? What is the desired impact?
 - Understand your core functions objective and be able to communicate it. Establish your goals.
- What are the steps you take to manage your research? Identify and continually improve your value-creating steps: Understand the “Innovation Life Cycle” to analyze placement of resources and types of collaborations to pursue.
Agenda setting,
Conduct research,
Innovation development,
Innovation deployment,
Impact assessment.

Each stage of the innovation life cycle has unique partnership opportunities, as do the elements of each stage.

- How do people add value to accomplishing your objectives?
- Establish performance metrics to measure the value of collaboration building and partnerships. The analysis of this information will help you manage expectations with your partners.

- Identify what incentives you can offer a potential partner and identify what incentives you would need when entering a win-win partnership.

Know the “Collaboration Culture” you are in:

We need to truly understand the culture of each organization.

This includes organizational capabilities, budget cycles, or operational/administrative functions, and bigger picture items such as core values and expected outcomes.

Organizational culture can and does change.

- Collaboration is the act of seeking out potential partners...with mutual goals holding complimentary skills and products.
- Collaboration actions are those you take to understand your perceived competition ...this begins the opportunity for partnership.
- Identify best-in-class organizations to add value to your core function.
- Identify others who specialize in your secondary functions and partner with their expertise.
- Understand the incentives of the potential partner.

Understand the dynamics of the Collaboration Platform:

With the progress of the technology the communications environment ...it is easier to reach out to someone around the world than going to the store for milk.

In this sense the world has become flat as stated in a recent book by Thomas Friedman 2005.

Flat means that now everyone can participate- partner, and find the best resources.

Collaboration Platform

Old approach – Tell us what to do.

Actual vision- how do I get to tomorrow?

Collaboration Platforms:

R&D.

- Naturally a partnering environment-choose to share knowledge.
- This IS Innovation.
- Globally distributed Innovation Networks.
- Global partner ecosystems.

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Research, Development and Innovation Delivery:

Almost 2/3 of the researchers at our research facility are contractors.

We bring Post Doctorates through a program at the National Research Council.

International scans.

World Conference on Transportation Research-Berkeley June 2007.

FHWA's research, development and technology---you will easily find evident of subject matter collaboration to develop products to service the transportation system. Value and quality still matter, even in a flat environment.

Best-in-class Partnerships:

After you have done your homework...understood who you and how you add value...used the available and/or developed collaboration platforms...then, seek the best-in-class partnership.

Finally, we must collaborate and partner in order to take a more holistic approach to developing and delivering a research, technology, and education program that truly solves the critical transportation issue facing this country.

FHWA's Examples of Collaboration and Partnership:

FHWA's objective is to create strong partnerships of trust and cooperation with stakeholders to carrying out a national surface

transportation research agenda. This is a value-adding step of the federal role as Innovators for a Better Future.

The collaboration strategy is to develop a comprehensive National research program, identifying opportunities to build research partnerships, leveraging resources to cooperatively carry out the research initiatives, and disseminate the research results to expand the knowledge and skills of the transportation workforce.

As a creating a value-added action the TRB Conduct of Research committee will be shepherding the development of a collaboration platform where researcher and research managers can identify potential partnerships for all stages of the innovation life cycle.

Agenda Setting:

What is a national research and technology program? I have been asked to address this question often. An example, which is also an excellent example of collaboration, is the Concrete Pavement Roadmap. This effort, led by Iowa State University, outlines a national strategy for concrete pavement research. There was participation by the entire highway community in this initiative—both in developing the roadmap and carrying it out.

Conducting Research and Innovation Development:

The concrete pavement labs at TFHRC are taking a leadership role in carrying out the concrete pavement mixture track of the CP Roadmap, and we are collaborating with university, State DOT and industry partners in the development of needed procedures for the evaluation of materials and designing paving mixtures.

Innovation Deployment:

What has become real?

- NGSIMS project. Region X UTC (University of Idaho has the lead) and FHWA all agreed to continue collaborating on simulation research. Specifically, a project was initiated for the development of driver behavior logic for starting and stopping

behavior at traffic signals. University of Idaho has the lead and it is envisioned that this resulting algorithm would be an official NGSIM algorithm and be put in the NGSIM repository.

References:

Curtis E. Sahakian,

Lean Thinking, 1996 James Womack.

Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration, Warren Bennis.