

# Are You Collaborating Enough?

## Self-Assessment

### Self-rate on a scale of 1-5

1 = I/we need to develop this

5 = I/we do this really well

Collaboration is a top-rated skill in today's flat, team-based organizations: The ability to influence without direct authority, manage multiple generations and cultures in the workplace, work effectively across silos, foster coordination within the customer chain, and build a network that goes beyond your immediate work group.

There are specific skills that make it easier for a leader and team to build a collaborative workplace. Unfortunately, these skills are relatively new to the business world, and are not commonly taught or rewarded in our traditional educational and hierarchical systems.

This simple 30-question self-assessment will help you pinpoint where you can improve:

### Communication

- € I create and continuously remind people around me of the vision of "what's possible."
- € I use stories and emotion to draw out excitement, enthusiasm, and commitment.
- € I deeply understand my employee's needs and their "hot buttons."
- € I am good at demonstrating empathy without getting caught in "the story."

### Meetings

- € I only schedule meetings when it's clear they bring value to the situation or issue.
- € I distribute the goal and agenda for all meetings in advance.
- € I plan meetings so at least ½ of the time allows for interaction and dialogue among the team.
- € We have clear ground rules for staying on track and keeping our interaction very relevant to the goal.
- € We start and end on time.

### Relationships

- € I seek interactions at work that are social, and regularly ask people about their personal lives and family.
- € I actively solicit opinions and input from people outside my "responsibility area" on major projects and programs.

## Relationships (continued)

- € I regularly ask about how the other person sees the situation, and listen to their answers.
- € I build on the other person's point of view, using their *specific* language to increase credibility ("As Bob said...").
- € I align with the other person's point of view when we disagree, even if I don't "buy" it. ("Good point, I hadn't thought of it that way.")
- € I cross-train my people so they can work on a variety of projects and programs.

## Problem solving

- € I hold the mindset that we can solve *all* problems, versus "we can't because."
- € I believe there are multiple solutions for any problem, and remain open that "my" favorite solution may not be the best one.
- € I use visual tools besides Powerpoint to work through issues.
- € I ensure multiple functional areas and styles of people are involved in solving big problems, and design meetings that engage all voices.
- € I am good helping people re-direct "interpersonal conflicts" into problem solving – "attack the issue, not the people".
- € I empower people who will implement, to own both the problem and the solution.

## Decision Making

- € I solicit input from people who will implement any important decision, before I make the decision.
- € I reach across boundaries for several points of view before implementing any important decision.
- € I put ideas quickly into action and respond to feedback, rather than "over-planning."
- € I practice strong decisiveness and model it for those around me.

## Handling Resistance or Pushback

- € I am good at drawing on past "lessons" from difficult situations, versus assigning blame or pointing fingers.
- € I listen fully and deeply to what the other person is saying, and typically respond with a clarifying question.
- € I help people empower themselves and overcome "victim" mindsets.
- € I manage my "personal state" well when someone is upset, uncomfortable, or emotional.
- € I am flexible at helping the client discover "new possibilities" for working through challenges and obstacles.

For more information about Jackson & Schmidt's training and coaching programs to build collaborative, change-friendly and adaptable workplaces, visit us at:

<http://jacksonandschmidt.com/docs/ProjectAccelerator.pdf>

<http://jacksonandschmidt.com/collaborativeleadership.html>

*"My time is very precious. This program was an extremely worthwhile investment. I will use the tools as part of my permanent management style, and coach my people to do the same."*

– FC, Director, Pharmaceutical Company