

Collaborative Working

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What is Collaborative Working

- Collaborative working, covers a variety of ways of working including:
 - Inter and intra organisational working
 - Informal and formal networks
 - Joint delivery of projects to full merger.
- Collaborative working can last for a fixed length of time or can form a permanent arrangement. What these options have in common is that they involve some sort of:
 - Exchange for mutual advantage
 - That ultimately benefits the organisation and customers

Benefits of Collaborative Working

- In recent years, interest in collaborative working has been growing, driven by a need for effectiveness and efficiency, government policy & public opinion.
- Working with others can offer opportunities to:
 - deliver new, improved or more integrated services
 - make efficiency savings through sharing costs
 - develop a stronger, more united voice
 - share knowledge and information.

What influences Collaborative Working

- Culture: What is the culture of the organisation.
- Leadership: What is the leadership style and intent.
- Change Management: The willingness to embrace change.

Types of Collaborative Working

- Separate organisations maintain their independence, but work jointly on some activities or functions
- Organisations with resources or expertise offer assistance to other organisations, eg a large national organisation working with a small local group
- A new organisation to do joint work on some activities or functions
- A group structure where a 'parent' organisation governs a group of 'subsidiary' organisations
- Merger to form a new organisation working as one body on all activities

Work which can be done collaboratively

- Almost any work activity can be done in collaboration:
 - Can you think of examples?
- What has contributed to the growth of collaborative working?
 - High speed internet access
 - Wireless connectivity
 - Web based collaboration tools (blogs, wikis)
 - Social networks
 - Need to share information
 - Need to transfer and develop knowledge

Benefits of Collaborative Working

1. Money savings can be achieved relatively quickly and the savings can be impressive.
2. Responsiveness can be increased through economies of scale and availability of more resources.
3. Increased capacity and expertise means that more can be achieved for less.
4. Waste can be reduced by better decision making and a broader understanding of the bigger picture of activity.
5. Investments can be made once so that the wheel is not reinvented over and over again.

Challenges of Collaborative Working

1. Sometimes not everyone is starting from the same place; a flexible implementation strategy that is aware of local issues will be needed
2. Decision making can become more complex and sometimes more protracted so clear communication and a coherent decision making process will be essential
3. Savings can take time to materialise and delays can be frustrating
4. Return on investment can be difficult to measure empirically
5. A perception may exist that each partner is unique and certainly different, so helping them collaborate may be challenging