

How to Encourage Collaboration in the Workplace

Resource Type: Articles

Topic: HR Risk and Employment Practices

Collaboration in the workplace can catalyze more creative ideas, help with employee retention, and make it more fun to go to work every day. But it won't happen without some effort and focus. Here are some ways to foster collaboration in your nonprofit team.

Learn employees' likes and dislikes. Ask your team members what types of projects and work experiences fill them with energy, and which ones drain them. This can help you better identify collaboration opportunities for team members and help them grow their ability to work with each other.

Establish how you will communicate. How often will you meet, and for what purpose? What will be your primary methods of exchanging information between meetings? How quickly do you expect a response to messages?

Establish the team's goals and review progress. Make sure all team members know what their group is responsible for, and give specific responsibilities to team members. If you can, give team members input into their goals. Discuss with your team how you are progressing on the goals at least quarterly.

Create times and spaces where employees can do their best work individually and together. If you have in-office spaces, make sure you create areas that invite collaboration, as well as quieter areas of the office where employees can write or think. Online, communicate norms for how employees can manage their time—can they set a “do not disturb” status for an hour to focus on writing, for example?

Share examples of great collaborative efforts by your team, and reward them. Your performance management system will need to change as you increase your emphasis on collaboration. If all your employees' goals are based on individual achievement, you can't expect them to make collaboration a major focus. Include teamwork goals in your employee performance assessments.

Foster psychological safety. Collaboration can't happen if employees don't feel safe sharing their opinions with their team members. To [create a climate of psychological safety](#), leaders must demonstrate that they trust their team members, become less reactive, and allow for failure and experimentation.

Assign people roles when appropriate. Dictating every step you want team members to take would negate the innovation and experimentation benefits of collaboration. But to get collaboration started, it can help to assign people duties on a team. You might want to assign a team mentor, so employees know who to approach with questions.

Welcome conflict and provide guardrails to navigate it. When you work with team members who are different from you, the group will likely have some differences of opinion. That can help surface potential issues in client service delivery. Set expectations for [how to handle conflict](#) and how long you will take to make a decision about how to move forward.

Resources

- [Collaboration in the Workplace: 11 Ways to Boost Your Team's Performance – Asana](#)
- [5 Tips for Effective Collaboration at Work – Slack](#)
- [12 Crucial Strategies for Promoting Team Collaboration – HubSpot](#)
- [How to Improve Teamwork Collaboration in the Workplace – Gallup](#)
- [How to Increase Collaboration Between Teams in 10 Steps – Indeed](#)