

Best Practices in Collaborative Projects

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1. Communication is hard, but key and therefore must be vigorously implemented. A team member should be assigned to be vigilant about maintaining ongoing meaningful communication. Mutual commitment to the collaboration is also essential.
2. Having a champion (like a project manager or some similar day-to-day role) for the collaboration is a best practice. It is key to have someone who is enthusiastic and can keep the idea alive and the team motivated.
3. Spend time in the identification and definition of the problem from all collaborators. Don't jump to specific solution approaches too early.
4. Identify experts to help with both problem definition and solutions.
5. Document the collaboration. Make it meaningful with a "letter of Advancement" or MOU.
6. Create a safe place to do something risky. Make sure people know it's ok to come up with something that may seem risky. Leave your ego out of the mix. For new ideas to emerge, the "boss" needs to say that all the answers are not already known.

Other ideas

- Ask the question differently -split out different groups and ask the question to each
- Collaborate with groups or individuals that have a different skill set
- Collaborate with your potential customers, SMEs, and with people who know things you don't know
- Know your concept of operations so you can accurately describe to the collaborative team where you want to go
- Hold a workshop to kick off the collaboration
- Generate excitement -talk about problems...identify the real needs of your partners.
- Include an outlier for the problem definition (someone with unrelated skill set)

Other ideas

- Reach out *proactively* to some key people who you want to involve, invite problem solvers
- Bring the right people together
- Maintain Standards of excellence to attract the right solvers
- Remain Flexible to the environment
- Use a different perspective to approach the problem in a different way
- Take into consideration Cultural differences within your collaborative project
- Think of a first search as more about process learning than about actually solving that specific challenge