COLLABORATION READINESS

Does My Organization Have A Collaborative Mindset?

Collaboration has become a go-to approach for working on complicated problems in our field. We openly salute this flag and also recognize it can be hard.

The Giving Practice works with many philanthropy practitioners who are starting, joining or ending collaborations. We've learned that good collaboration, like most activities, starts at home: its best when participating organizations have exercised that muscle inside their own doors. They 'get' what it takes – the need to give up some power and accept tradeoffs, embrace the messiness of group formation, share what they've learned with colleagues, and go beyond self-interest.

Before you go or send someone else to your next collaboration, we suggest you try out this Pretty Good Tool to discuss with colleagues your organization's readiness to participate. Do you have a collaborative mindset? We think the tool will help you take collaboration seriously – and playfully – and figure out your strengths and opportunities to improve your skills.

Check out the tool on the next page. Read the annotations that follow the tool for ideas on how to use it. Adapt the tool to fit your needs. Give it a try.
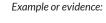
Collaboration Readiness

Does My Organization Have A Collaborative Mindset?

Have team members rate the items on a 1-5 scale. List any example or evidence that comes to mind that supports your rating. Compare your responses and discuss the implications.

Rate the following statements based on this numbered scale:	1 never	2 rarely	3 sometimes	4 often	5 always
1. We have experience creating projects within our organization across silos and/or hierarchies.					
Example or evidence:					
2. We have developed norms on collaboration within our organization.					
Example or evidence:					
3. We invite relevant stakeholders to the table.					
Example or evidence:					
4. We take time to listen and build on each other's ideas.					
Example or evidence:					
5. We openly ask about each other's assumptions and discourage one-on-one, hallway complaints.					
Example or evidence:					

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	1 never	2 rarely	3 sometimes	4 often	5 always
6. We check to make sure results reflect the stakeholders' different voices.					

Example or evidence:

7. Once we implement, we share and learn from mistakes as we go.					

Example or evidence:

8. We understand collaboration takes time and can take things slowly to build relationships, explore and develop ideas before we shift to a faster pace.					

Example or evidence:

9. Within our organization, we make explicit what roles we need in groups to accomplish a task.					

Example or evidence:

10. When working in a group setting within my organization, I feel heard, seen and respected.					

Example or evidence:

Post-Survey Team Discussion Questions:

- What do these survey responses reveal about our organization's ability to collaborate with others?

- How do they impact our experience with collaborative groups outside our organization?

- Is there something we are doing now that might be a "test pilot" for further developing collaborative talents inside our organization?

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1. We have experience creating projects within our organization across silos and/or hierarchies.					

Example or evidence:

Don't have any examples? Invite a colleague to name a time that collaborating on a project would have led to a better outcome.

2. We have developed norms on collaboration within our organization.					

Example or evidence:

How hard/easy would it be to make some of these norms more explicit inside your organization?

3. We invite relevant stakeholders to the table.					

Example or evidence:

Discuss how your organization gathers and processes feedback from stakeholders.

4. We take time to listen and build on each other's ideas.					

Example or evidence:

5. We openly ask about each other's assumptions and discourage one-on-one, hallway complaints.					

Example or evidence:

PRETTY GOOD TOOLS

	1 never	2 rarely	3 sometimes	4 often	5 always
6. We check to make sure results reflect the stakeholders' different voices.					

Example or evidence:

Has your organization ever incorporated feedback into executing a plan after it was developed?

7. Once we implement, we share and learn from mistakes as we go.					

Example or evidence:

It takes patience!

Watch out for external or internal events that can create "the urgency of now" at the expense of building relationships with relevant stakeholders.

8. We understand collaboration takes time and can take things slowly to build relationships, explore and develop ideas before we shift to a faster pace.					

Example or evidence:

Try assigning roles when meeting in groups. For example, have a facilitator; note taker; a timekeeper; and a communicator to let others know what is happening between meetings.

9. Within our organization, we make explicit what roles we need in groups to accomplish a task.					

Example or evidence:

If there are examples of colleagues not feeling heard, explore what facilitation techniques might create opportunities for all voices to be heard, not just the loudest or most aggressive ones.

10. When working in a group setting within my organization, I feel heard, seen and respected.					

Example or evidence:

Post-Survey Team Discussion Questions:

• What do these survey responses reveal about our organization's ability to collaborate with others?

• How do they impact our experience with...

• Is there something we are doing now that...

talents inside our organization?

Do you avoid collaboration because of personal preferences? Ask yourself and your colleagues what is their own tolerance level for taking time to build relationships across silos or hierarchy inside their organization. What do they like about it? What is really difficult?

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