

# Collaboration Improvement Checklist

*Instructions: Place a checkmark in the box on the right, if the item applies to your organization.*

<b>The Enterprise Collaboration Function needs a new strategy, approach, structure, and metrics.</b>	
Senior management wants to accelerate innovation and change.	
One or several critical collaborations are in trouble.	
One or several collaborations have bogged down because of: <input type="checkbox"/> Trust issues <input type="checkbox"/> Members stuck in their ways <input type="checkbox"/> Silo thinking	
Our own Collaboration “Body of Knowledge” needs to be expanded, refreshed, and made available.	
More “simple tools” are needed, such as: checklists, indicators, rules, & templates.	
<b>Collaboration training content is out-of-date.</b>	
Collaboration members need to learn new skill sets in collaboration practices, relationship management, methods, and effective partnering.	
Collaboration members need guidance in applying knowledge and tools to their specific partnering situation.	
Classroom training needs to be converted to a virtual distance learning format and/or self-paced learning.	
<b>Newly formed teams need more support.</b>	
Processes for forming and starting new teams need improvement.	
Team leaders and sponsors need coaching on their role and skills.	
With widely-dispersed people, “real-time” (synchronous) and “asynchronous” tools are needed and/or they need to be better used.	
<b>Our Collaboration Knowledgebase is not kept up to date.</b>	
We need to ensure that people know it is available and easy to locate.	
<b>Collaboration technology, tools, and processes – we need to optimize what we have and we need to add new ones.</b>	
Training is needed to ensure we optimize technology & tools we already have.	
Collaboration members need guidance in applying knowledge and tools to their specific partnering situation.	
Classroom training needs to be converted to a virtual distance learning format and/or self-paced learning.	
Collaboration processes need to be redesigned and documented.	
Discussions and meetings are ineffectual. > Teams need professional facilitation to get them out of a rut & onto a new path.	
Tools that support collaborative members need to be updated.	
<b>Best Practices - no single problem stands out, yet there is a desire to benchmark against best collaboration practices and set the bar higher.</b>	

## Fun Exercise on Collaboration

I have found that many people have different interpretations of the following three terms. Sometimes this is a problem and sometimes it is not.

Communication	Coordination	Collaboration
---------------	--------------	---------------

Here are several ideas for getting people to share about these terms.

<b>1</b>	<p><b><u>Web Conference</u></b></p> <p><b>Before the virtual meeting</b>                      Participants are asked to email their “definitions” of these terms to the meeting facilitator. The meeting facilitator organizes the information into the three categories.</p> <p><b>During the virtual meeting</b>                      Facilitator shows the information and leads an engaging discussion.                      Optional: Participants agree on common definitions. During this discussion, someone is typing this so that everyone sees it at the same time.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b><u>Traditional Classroom or Offsite – No Prework</u></b></p> <p>Participants work in small groups to write their definitions. (They are not to write one common definition.)                      When each group is finished, each group reports out to the class as a whole.                      Optional: Facilitator leads a process that gets at common definitions.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b><u>Asynchronous Workroom</u></b></p> <p>Similar to the above, but participants exchange their information using an “asynchronous” tool.</p>

The following page contains definitions from our  
 first publication on web conferencing,

***“The Web Conferencing Imperative for Collaboration, Productivity,  
 and Training.”***

If you use the information, please credit the source.

*“Dynamic collaboration gets results”*

## Communicate

*The sharing of information; it can be one-way or two-way. (Hunt)*

*To communicate is to put out a message that is “understood” by its recipient. That recipient can be another person with whom you are having a conversation; someone (or a group of people) reading your message in written form or in some other media form; or someone or a group who observes a person’s behavior which sends a message. A person who “communicates with excellence,” always checks to make sure their message is correctly understood. (Forrester)*

*To exchange thoughts and/or things. (Williams)*

*Communication does not occur if the receiving person (the receiver) does not understand what the sending person (the sender) is saying. (Liebling)*

## Coordinate

*Directing the efforts of multiple parties toward a common objective. (Hunt)*

*To coordinate is to assist all parts of something in running smoothly. (Forrester)*

*To synchronize thoughts and/or feelings. (Williams)*

## Collaborate

*Participative working together toward a common objective. (Hunt)*

*To collaborate is for groups/teams of people (2 or many more) to communicate, share their ideas/thoughts, and work together on a particular subject or project, in order to achieve the best results possible ... by covering every conceivable aspect of the subject or project. (Forrester)*

*To cooperate with other’s thoughts and/or things. (Williams)*

*Collaboration: The act of working together; united labor. (Webster’s Revised Dictionary)*

*Blended Collaboration: A method that assembles people with diverse skills, backgrounds, abilities, and experiences to address an issue by weaving together a new solution using the best parts of everyone’s input. (Austin and Liebling, Co-Facilitators, The Collaboration Forum, 2002-2003)*

Special thanks to: Dan Hunt, JonScott Williams, L. Allan Austin, Ruth Ann Forrester, and Henry E. Liebling.

## The Web Conferencing Imperative

for Collaboration,  
Productivity,  
and Training



Henry E. Liebling

Assisted by  
Ruth Ann Forrester

242 pages  
Available at Amazon