



Collaboration: How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Build Common Ground, and Reap Big Results

Morten T. Hansen

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In *Collaboration*, author Morten Hansen takes aim at what many leaders inherently know: in today's competitive environment, companywide collaboration is an imperative for successful strategy execution, yet the sought-after synergies are rarely, if ever, realized. In fact, most cross-unit collaborative efforts end up wasting time, money, and resources. How can managers avoid the costly traps of collaboration and instead start getting the results they need?

In this book, Hansen shows managers how to get collaboration right through "disciplined collaboration"-- a practical framework and set of tools managers can use to:

- Assess when--and when not--to pursue collaboration across units to achieve goals
- Identify and overcome the four barriers to collaboration
- Get people to buy into the larger picture, even when they own only a small piece of it
- Be a "T-Shaped Manager," collaborating across divisions while still working deeply in your own unit
- Create networks across the organization that are not large, but nimble and effective

Based on the author's long-running research, in-depth case studies, and company interviews, *Collaboration* delivers practical advice and tools to help your organization collaborate--for real results.

Collaboration: How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Build Common Ground, and Reap Big Results Details

Date : Published April 14th 2009 by Harvard Business Review Press

ISBN : 9781422115152

Author : Morten T. Hansen

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Leadership, Business, Management, Nonfiction



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Ground, and Reap Big Results Morten T. Hansen

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Terence says

When I first started reading this book, I thought it was going to be a drawn out discussion of good and bad collaboration. A good insight but not worthy of a full book. As I read further, I realized that this book had a lot more to offer.

I would recommend this book. I enjoyed it.

Darren says

Quick Summary

Collaboration is about the successes and pitfalls of organizational collaboration. Hansen emphasizes the transforming ways in which collaboration can be effectively used within an organization. He also warns against the assumption that more collaboration is always better. He guides leaders through effectively evaluating when collaboration might be the best approach, and he offers a matrix for understanding how one develops collaboration both personally and organizationally. Finally, Hansen encourages recruiting and cultivating “T-shaped managers” who have both high individual performance and deliver results by collaborating across the company.

Key Insights

Bad collaboration is worse than no collaboration. (He sites the example of Sony, which had the walkman and should have been able to develop a portable digital music player; instead, Apple did, because they were better able to collaborate). [Figure 1.1 - A Tale of Two Products]. “

To be disciplined about collaboration is to know when not to collaborate.” (p. 16)

The goal of collaboration is not collaboration but better results. Hansen describes disciplined collaboration as “the leadership practice of properly assessing when to collaborate (and when no to) and instilling in people both the willingness and the ability to collaborate when required.” (p. 15)

Barriers to collaboration include the “not-invented-here” barrier, the hoarding barrier, the search barrier, and the transfer barrier. (p.17)

Hansen offers a “collaboration matrix” model where aspects of the company’s many components are aligned and matched according to what they could/would produce if they collaborated with one another. (p. 37)

When considering whether a collaborative project is worth it, managers need to consider two additional costs: opportunity costs and collaboration costs. (Collaboration premium = return on project - opportunity costs - collaboration costs). - p. 41

People may not collaborate because of a perceived “status gap.”[“choosing the right pond” phenomenon - economist Robert Frank”] (p. 52)

Sharing “tacit knowledge” is much more difficult to share and collaborate with. - p. 61

Small teamwork kills collaboration. Leaders need to preach that teamwork means ‘teaming across the company.’ p. 85

It is better to build a diverse network of strong and weak ties within the organization, rather than just having a big network. p. 126 - 127

Transfer is easier when complicated knowledge relies on strong ties (face to face). p. 135

Joshua Seale says

A really great book on the topic of collaboration. Examines what healthy and unhealthy collaboration looks like on a personal and company level. Very well researched and written. I only wish the book was longer.

Paul Miller says

How often do we "collaborate" for CYA? (Hey, it wasn't MY fault that we didn't do anything - that's all the committee could come up with.) This snappy, eminently practical read presents a simple model for companies to determine when/if they should collaborate across BUs, barriers to overcome, and simple solutions to drive disciplined collaboration. Highly recommended.

BTW, I was given this book by our conferencing vendor, PGi. If you're looking for such a service, you should give 'em a look.

Mildred says

Lo que mas vale la pena de este libro es el último capítulo, dejando claro las reglas para conseguir la colaboración, el papel del líder del proyecto o de la empresa, así como sus posibles desventajas. Es un buen libro para aquellos que comienzan a dirigir personal o están en la dirección de proyectos.

Kip says

Modern management tends to emphasise decentralised management and individual rewards for achievement. This leads to the formation of silos. On the opposite extreme is increased centralised decision making in the name of collaboration. The idea of T shaped leadership is a good one, i.e. being able to think more broadly than one's own agenda. I agree with the idea of establishing where skills can be shared. I need to re-read the bits about bad collaboration. "collaborate for results" rather than just because collaboration is good. There is a section on bringing down barriers to collaboration. There is a section on leadership styles that are poor for collaboration. I think that I am inclusive but not so good on the accountability .

Matt says

How to do good collaboration

This book combines great research with helpful anecdotes and vivid illustrations to teach principles about how to do disciplined collaboration. Because not all collaboration is good!

Beki says

Read this for a class. It's okay for what it is, but it's really a high level discussion of collaboration. A good starting point, but I probably wouldn't recommend it.

Robert Bogue says

I've spent a great deal of my professional career working on helping users collaborate in one form or another. I setup Local Area Networks (LANs) when they were still called that and not networks. I connected folks via email before the Internet was a gleam in Al Gore's eye. I have spent the last 14 years helping organizations collaborate with Microsoft SharePoint. So when some colleagues said that I had to read Collaboration, I didn't hesitate to pick up the book. What I didn't realize when they recommended it was that the author, Morten Hansen, had a specific definition of collaboration in mind, and it didn't necessarily match my point of view.

[Click here to read the full review](#)

Mike Ncube says

Although written mostly for big companies and teams, this book has great ideas for small businesses and teams that want to improve their collaboration

Eric Tran says

Shows with strong evidence from events in politics, history, and business why collaboration, when applied correctly, can breed huge benefits. It outlines the things you really need to keep in mind and the specific behaviors you can employ to enhance your collaborative relationships and skills with others.

If you've ever worked with a group of people, then you are probably familiar with what's already been written as it is fairly obvious and intuitive. But I read books like this because I enjoy seeing how what I find to be obvious as to what works does indeed work and the author does a nice job of outlining in a vivid and straightforward way, what works, what doesn't, and why.

I hope it helps you too!

Jysoo says

The author presents practical and systematic approach to the issue of collaboration in organization. It starts with identifying opportunities of collaboration (improve innovation, sales increase, operation efficiency), spotting barriers (not invented here, monopoly, search, transfer) comes next, and finding solution (unify people, cultivate t-shaped management, build nimble networks) will be the final step. He also discusses personal challenges for leaders (redefine goal, involve people, be responsible). I find the book to be very helpful in understanding and dealing with issues of collaboration. Many real world examples discussed are appropriate.

Robb Lightfoot says

Readable, with practical, actionable tips - and supported by research

I'm an in a graduate-school leadership class. This book was required reading, and I'm finding it the best of the bunch. It has the typical anecdotes that illustrate the point, but the process of choosing them is methodologically sound, and once the results are unpacked, the book does not blather on and on to make the same points, as we saw in "Good to Great."

Ed says

Morten Hansen provides a concise, strategy-level approach to making disciplined collaboration a means to improving business performance:

- * First, identify the potential for collaboration in innovation, sales, or operations
- * Identify the barriers that exist to collaboration (Hansen groups them into four categories)
- * Use the appropriate "lever" (Hansen identifies 3 levers) to tear down the barriers to collaboration.

Take-aways:

- * Don't fall into the "collaboration for collaboration's sake" trap. Identify the strategic potential for collaboration (i.e. innovation, sales, operations).
- * Be careful to avoid using a broad-stroke collaboration strategy. There may be different potential benefits between different organizations.
- * The management consulting-type tools for assessing and capturing collaboration potential and barriers, along with the levers (Unify People, Cultivate T-Shaped Management, Build Nimble Networks) were the most interesting parts of the book for me.

I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to get their head around how to strategically approach

collaboration in their business. It is also a good read for management consultants.

Rick Austin says

Wonderful! Focusing on the people side of collaboration and the "barriers" that exist to keep collaboration from helping. Clear and concise and brings a fresh look at what drives lack of collaboration and how to change your organization's culture. Particularly valuable for large companies that are attempting to create collaborative efforts across a variety of business units. A real game changer for me was the edict that there may be situations where there is little or no value in collaborating and he provides techniques for analyzing those situations.

Highly recommended and I give it a strong 5 stars.
