

Building a Culture of High Engagement

**Foundations Built Today
Enable Leaders and Teams Tomorrow**



Collaboration

business consulting

www.Collaboration-llc.com

THE ESSENCE OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP AND BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Collaborative Leaders™ do not shift or bend to the winds of adversity. Rather, these leaders put in the time and effort to ensure their company is built on solid ground designed to withstand any storm. This includes processes and procedures, expertly crafted internal communication, and an enlightened company culture. While all of these pieces are essential, the company culture will withstand the storms when one of the others is compromised.

Leaders are constantly working to keep the company strong. Adversity — from market shifts to employment issues, pandemics to supply chain concerns and beyond — requires leaders to be nimble yet grounded in the big picture and the company's people. Collaborative Leaders™ have the ability to calmly prepare for the metaphorical fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes — all of which require subtle differences in scope to keep the company standing.

Leaders feel the pressure of their position, and they face the possibility of derailment when they get tired, frustrated, too busy, or are unprepared — they are human, after all. But with the great rewards of leadership comes great responsibility. The leaders who will succeed in creating a strong foundation to weather any storm are those who keep their focus through adversity and who can lead their teams through by keeping the focus on the big picture.

When leaders devote their energy to these three Centerpieces of Leadership, they can become prepared to face any challenge that heads their way.

Collaborative leadership does not shift. Leaders focus on the big picture to ensure success.



**CENTERPIECE #1
CARE FOR
YOUR PEOPLE**



**CENTERPIECE #2
CONSISTENTLY
LOOK AHEAD**



**CENTERPIECE #3
COMMIT TO
ACCOUNTABILITY**



CENTERPIECE #1 CARE FOR YOUR PEOPLE

Always take the time to check in on your people. People will forgive a lot if they know that their leader legitimately cares about them. This concept relates to how the person is doing both professionally and personally. One thing the pandemic of 2020 taught leaders is that people are going through a lot — from sickness to anxiety to caring for family members and children. When people know that their leader is in their corner, they will do their part to work just as hard as ever when facing their own personal adversity.

Teams often tend to keep pushing in order to meet goals and gain favor from leadership; however, this constant push leads to burn out. Burn out, in turn, leads to resignations. Taking care of your team in every facet of their lives will help companies retain their top talent and continue on a thriving trajectory.

Additionally, be sure to care for yourself as well. Not only will this save your own mental and physical health, but it sets a solid example for the team that ensures they realize it's ok to take some time here and there to reboot. If you're not taking care of yourself, how can you care for your employees? Understandably, showing vulnerability is difficult for leaders who rose to their position through working through burn out periods. However, expectations of the workforce have changed drastically, and every Collaborative Leader™ understands that being human — not superhuman — is the preferred norm.

The best relationships are built on open communication, clear expectations, and addressing challenges at the start. Leaders have the freedom to look forward and plan for the future; that same freedom should be given to teams as well.



CENTERPIECE #2

CONSISTENTLY LOOK AHEAD

Consistently looking ahead gives Collaborative Leaders™ the tools to handle any situation, from being present in meetings to maintaining focus when the adversity storm hits. Leaders likely had a hand in crafting the company's mission statement and core values; it's a good practice to start the week with a review of both to keep them at the forefront for the challenges of the week ahead. Showing up and being present gives the team the knowledge that their leader is there for them, for the company, and for the goals everyone is working toward.

Providing consistent, future-focused direction linked to the company's mission and core values gives leaders the opportunity to perform at high levels. Note that being committed to the future means that leaders recognize that it will take time to achieve; be sure to give all plans enough time to unfold before zipping to another direction.

Now, when a crisis occurs, it should be handled immediately — but not at the expense of the outlined goals and staying on track to achieve them. The team will crave clear direction; the leader must consciously determine who should continue working on the projects while others deal with the crisis. The leader must keep their eye on what's ahead and cannot leave to tend to each crisis without the future in their sights. The leader will make the necessary adjustments and ensure the team remains energized to pursue their short-term goals and outputs.

Finally, understand that the team is looking to the leader and will subconsciously mimic their behavior. If the leader panics or gets distracted from the goals, so too will the team. Leaders can keep the chaos in their minds, but don't bring the chaos to the team. Show up strong to allow the team the space to do the same.

Consider this example: Two teams go to Antarctica for an expedition at the same time in the same conditions. One team planned and tested the equipment before heading to Antarctica; the other did not. When they get there and both teams dealt with the same issue, one team made it and the other didn't. The team that didn't make it had a leader so focused on the current crisis that they weren't thinking ahead to the next few weeks; they ended up running out of food and cutting the expedition short.

Be the first expedition team — test your equipment before embarking and keep your eyes on the outcome to plan for a successful outcome.

CENTERPIECE #3 COMMIT TO ACCOUNTABILITY

The best way to get your team to commit to accountability is to do so yourself. Collaborative Leaders™ must always demonstrate that they will do what they say they will each and every time. When you keep your commitments to the team, they will commit to you. Being organized is another way to showcase accountability, as is ensuring having an appropriate level of time for effective follow-up.

Leaders should never fear holding their people accountable. Remember, accountability does not mean reprimanding or micromanaging. Holding teams accountable is more closely linked to providing feedback on performance.

Waiting for results is hard, but results will never be achieved with constant directional shifts. This takes discipline and focus to not become distracted by new opportunities that may not ultimately fit in with the broader vision. Leaders will struggle, but this skill of focus and engagement is essential to keeping the company and team on track.

Stay accountable for the little things, too. If leaders neglect the tasks that may seem inconsequential, it can quickly snowball into a lack of accountability for the big things.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Numerous elements combine to build a successful workplace culture. These three Centerpieces are the key to Collaborative Leadership success.

No matter what is going on in the world around us, strong leaders will thrive if they commit. Leadership is complex; if you focus on these three Centerpieces during challenging periods, the business can and will survive and continue to thrive.