



QUICK PARTNERSHIP CHECK-UP

If you are actively involved in a partnership - representing your own organization and working with other representatives from other organizations - you may be interested in completing this check-up. This tool outlines a number of conditions that partnerships need to establish in order to be powerful – to get the traction to achieve results. *To do a quick check-up on your partnership, review the conditions related to each dimension and then indicate in general, the degree to which your partnership demonstrates that dimension.*

	How reliably does your partnership demonstrate this aspect of collaboration?			
	3 - Fully demonstrate	2 – Mostly demonstrate	1 – Partly demonstrate	0 - Do not demonstrate
A. Compelling Focus				
1. Clarity: <i>We know what we are trying to achieve together – we have a shared vision and clear targets</i>				
2. Real Life: <i>Our vision is grounded in the realities of the people directly affected by our partnership work</i>				
3. Supported: <i>We have built support for our vision and the results we are trying to achieve with key individuals, organizations and the public</i>				
4. Champions: <i>Leaders are championing our vision amongst people who can help us achieve it</i>				
5. Motivation: <i>Each partner at the table is personally motivated by our vision and intended results, and their organization is fully supportive too</i>				
6. Timing: <i>The time is right to act. There is a compelling case for what we are trying to achieve.</i>				
Total Compelling Focus (total each column)				



B. Mutual Accountability	How reliably does your partnership demonstrate this aspect of collaboration?			
	3 - Fully demonstrate	2 – Mostly demonstrate	1 – Partly demonstrate	0 - Do not demonstrate
1. Track Progress: <i>We track our progress toward results periodically and use the information to inform decision-making</i>				
2. Accountable to those Affected: <i>People affected by our partnership work are involved in monitoring progress and have input into decisions</i>				
3. Holding Each Other Accountable: <i>We speak openly to each other when our commitments to each other slip, or when we are bogged down</i>				
4. Public Acknowledgement: <i>We acknowledge our respective contributions toward achieving results publicly</i>				
5. Making Amends: <i>Sometimes we step on each others toes and when that happens we acknowledge and make amends</i>				
6. Engaging Power: <i>People with the authority to make decisions, commit resources and influence policy on our behalf participate actively</i>				
Total Mutual Accountability (total each column)				

C. Clarity of Commitment	3 - Fully demonstrate	2 – Mostly demonstrate	1 – Partly demonstrate	0 - Do not demonstrate
	1. Agreed Simple Guidelines: <i>We follow simple and easy agreements and guidelines for working together</i>			
2. Freedom of Movement and Consideration of Impact on Others: <i>Partner organizations have autonomy to act. They also honour their responsibility to inform partners if their actions will impact what partners are trying to achieve together.</i>				
3. Clarity of Commitment: <i>We make clear commitments on behalf of ourselves and our organizations</i>				
4. Investment: <i>We invest resources into partnership work – both in-kind and financial</i>				
5. Timely Action: <i>We act quickly and decisively when there are opportunities to advance our vision, or barriers to tackle</i>				
6. Right Players: <i>The key people and organizations belong to our partnership</i>				
Total Clarity of Commitment (total each column)				



	How reliably does your partnership demonstrate this aspect of collaboration?			
	3 - Fully demonstrate	2 – Mostly demonstrate	1 – Partly demonstrate	0 - Do not demonstrate
D. Tackling Tension and Uncertainty				
1. Open Communication: <i>We communicate openly – in formal and informal ways – to explore issues and understanding, negotiate, plot and plan</i>				
2. Inquiry and Learning: <i>We acknowledge the complexities of working with system change and regularly take time to inquire and learn</i>				
3. Flexible: <i>We are flexible enough to adapt to new circumstances in order to achieve our vision</i>				
4. Working with Conflict: <i>We work directly with conflict and when needed explore differences knowing that it can lead to better results</i>				
5. Competition: <i>We encourage friendly competition – we trust people are acting in the best interests of people affected</i>				
6. Living our Values: <i>We discuss our values openly and have established a shared understanding of how we want to live our values</i>				
Total Tackling Tension and Uncertainty (total each column)				

	3 - Fully demonstrate	2 – Mostly demonstrate	1 – Partly demonstrate	0 - Do not demonstrate
E. Cultivating Mutual Understanding				
1. Everyone has a Say: <i>We use participatory methods to engage in shared analysis of what is needed to achieve our vision</i>				
2. Informal Relationship: <i>We create opportunities for partners to get to know each other and build the relationships needed for success</i>				
3. Leveraging Strengths: <i>We draw on the different and unique strengths and contributions of all partners</i>				
4. Following Energy: <i>We focus where the energy and passion is</i>				
5. Working with those Who are Ready: <i>We go forward with partners fully invested in advancing the vision while staying open to those who may choose to join later</i>				
6. Enabling Newcomers: <i>We have an approach to orienting newcomers so they can participate actively without slowing us down</i>				
Total Cultivating Mutual Understanding (total each column)				



Summarize Your Partnership Check-Up

Insert your section totals in the spaces below

	Fully demonstrate	Mostly demonstrate	Partly demonstrate	Do not demonstrate	TOTAL for each dimension
A. Compelling Focus					
B. Mutual Accountability					
C. Clarity of Commitment					
D. Tackling Tension and Uncertainty					
E. Cultivating Mutual Understanding					

See the next page to interpret your scores



What is this telling you?

Your scores are give you a relative indicator of how your partnership is doing. If you consider the 2-3 highest ratings they can be seen as stronger aspects of the partnership. Similarly if you look at the 2-3 lowest ratings they can be seen as possible areas for development. You can use this tool as your springboard for exploration with partners about possible changes.

Section A: “Compelling Focus” is an area where it is necessary for any partnership to be strong to be effective. It is necessary but not sufficient for results. If your partnership is strong here, then what you are up to matters, and is recognized to matter, and the conditions are right to move forward. If your partnership is weaker here, it’s time to find a new and compelling focus or to dissolve.

Section B: “Mutual Accountability” is the power that partnership harnesses. If you are strong here, then chances are, you are strong in the other areas (C, D, E). If you are weak here, then you are losing some of the horsepower that is possible through partnership. There may be elements of C, D, and E that need to be strengthened in order for mutual accountability to be built.

Section C: “Clarity of Commitment” is sometimes difficult within a partnership, because those at the partnership table need to negotiate and nail down commitment with each other and also within their home organizations. When each player has clarified the limits and intent of their organization’s commitment and can come to the table ready to make a personal commitment and an organizational one, then the value of a partnership multiplies. Each player’s readiness as a leader to take risks, and to exercise their informal and formal leadership, particularly within their home organization, is required here. Section C also requires effective operational leadership of meetings and communications and follow through.

Section D: “Tackling Tension and Uncertainty” is one of the most important areas to develop in order to fully unleash your partnership’s potential. It is the area that most of us try to avoid **or** pretend isn’t real. If you are strong here, you have done the tough work of a partnership.

Section E: “Cultivating Mutual Understanding” is the human dimension of a partnership that brings partners back to the table when they are in the midst of uncertainty, and helps them appreciate each other’s potential and contributions. Investing in friendly, and good humoured relationship building, formally and even more importantly, informally, is the foundation for each of the other areas.

Interested in more?

Take a look at our Powerful Partnerships Workshop Series. The workshops are designed specifically for people assuming leadership (formal or informal) within partnership ventures in the human services sectors. You will develop an understanding of what is required to build your partnership capacity and enhance your ability to achieve results. The workshops draw on leading-edge change theory and decades of real-world experience in helping partnerships succeed.

Click here for more information on the Powerful Partnerships Workshops.

<http://www.annewright.ca/powerfulpartnershipsintro.htm>

References

Drucker Foundation (2002) *Meeting the Collaborative Challenge – Workbook*, Jossey-Bass

Mattessich, Paul, Marta Murray-Close and Barbara Monsey: Wilder Research Centre (2001) *Collaboration: What Makes it Work* 2nd edition, Fieldstone Alliance

Taylor-Powell, Ellen, Boyd Rossing and Jean Geran (1998) *Evaluating Collaborative – Reaching the Full Potential*, University of Wisconsin-Extension