

## Joint working success factors

*“Collaboration equals innovation.” Michael Dell*

*“Individual craft practitioners are increasingly entrepreneurial, managing a portfolio of short and long-term projects, and working in collaboration to fulfil the needs of the project or commission. This model in itself increases the individual’s capacity for innovation, as new ideas and ways of working are developed through collaboration with other professionals.” Creative & Cultural Skills, 2009, The Craft Blueprint*

### The big idea

There are many different models for joint working: partnership, alliance, collaboration and so on. The group can be formal and governed by a legal contract or informally managed with loose, verbal agreement. However it is constituted, it is likely to have come together because of a belief that the group can achieve more together than it could as independent businesses. Ensuring that the group achieves its goals requires careful planning and a clear understanding amongst everyone involved of what success looks like.

### Purpose

Some of the factors that are important to developing joint working are similar to those of internal project team development: clarifying project scope, keeping on target, managing roles and team building. However, there are some issues and challenges that need particular attention during inter-organisational working, including:

- Determining whether you need a partner
- Identifying and choosing the right partners
- Contractual arrangements
- Project management
- Working relationships and managing the group
- Copyright and ownership
- Quality assurance
- Defining and reaching agreement on benefits and costs

- Choosing product/service development models
- Dealing with conflict and tensions

## **The tool**

The tool gives an overview of the above issues and challenges and describes what success might look like<sup>1</sup>. It can be used with an existing joint working project to check things are on track or to set up a new group.

Depending on the nature of your joint working initiative, you may wish to add other success criteria and strategies. To use the tool take the following steps:

1. Read each issue and success factor statement. Consider how they relate to your group
2. For each area, confirm the strategy you have in place or need to adopt to achieve it

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Australia Flexible Learning Quick Guide Series, 2003, Success Factors for Collaborative Development of Content to Support Online Learning

Issue	Success factor	What strategy will you adopt?
Determining whether you need a partner	You are clear about what you want to achieve. Having assessed your goal, you have a clear view of what you have and what you need	Such as defined objectives, stocktake of internal resources etc
Finding and choosing collaborative partners	You have found the right mix of partners and people with the range and type of skills needed	
	You have the best fit to match the culture of the team and your business	
	You are sure the partner can deliver	
Contractual arrangements	The arrangement is appropriately formalised and all parties understand the basis of the project	
	All arrangements are appropriately documented and have the agreement of all parties	
	You know the people and resources that are available to the project/group	
	Contributions are assigned to specific partners and communication is open	
	You have reached agreement before the project begins	
Project management	You have paid due attention to project definition and have clearly detailed outcomes, tasks and milestones	

Issue	Success factor	What strategy will you adopt?
	You have appointed a project manager who has the right skills and abilities	
	You have established clear structures and roles, and responsibilities are clear	
	You have gained full commitment of all partners	
	You have ensured good control over timelines and tasks	
Maintaining good relationships with stakeholders and among the team	You have built and maintained good relations and trust with all parties	
	You have clear communication lines and strategies	
	You have maintained regular communications with other stakeholders	
Copyright and ownership	You have implemented appropriate processes to ensure compliance and monitoring of copyright and intellectual property rights and ethical and moral requirements	
	You have a clear agreement on copyright and intellectual property rights between the parties	
Quality assurance	You have ensured that the product or service development complies with relevant quality assurance requirements	
Product/service development models	You have explored new methods of development, operation and management	
Dealing with conflict and tensions	You have processes in place to manage tensions and conflicts of interest	
	You have been able to exploit mutual gains whilst respecting the competitive needs of individual entities	

## Take the next step

Which of the above challenges do you think will be the hardest to manage? Have you seen it well managed in other projects? What most inspires you about joint working?

## Top tips

- Use the difference that comes with joint working. Try not to regard different perspectives as resistance or obstacles
- Seek specialist advice if you have to agree complex ownership issues

Encourage members of the group to record their involvement so you have a constant source of feedback and learning

## References

Backroad Connections Pty Ltd 2002, *Success Factors for Collaborative Development of Content to Support Online Learning* (Version 2.01), Australian National Training Authority.