

BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS IN COLLABORATIONS: CRITICAL FACTORS

PURPOSE

Collaborations face unique challenges when planning their communications and may need to address issues that are different from those found in traditional organizations. Strategies and approaches for engaging and informing stakeholders are driven by a number of factors and considerations. Take these into account when planning your collaboration's communications. Remember to consider the needs of your various stakeholders, both internal and external to your collaboration.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

- With your partners, review the key factors and communication considerations unique to collaborations.
- Discuss the implications for your particular collaboration.
- Use this information to inform the development of a communications plan, including communication strategies and your use of specific communication tools.

KEY FACTORS

Key Factor	Considerations	Implications for your collaboration
Purpose and stage of collaboration	<p>In what ways does the level of complexity and purpose of your collaboration affect your communication needs?</p> <p>How are your communication needs changing as your collaboration evolves through different stages?</p>	
Specific purpose and function of communication to be addressed	<p>What kinds of communication are required to make your collaboration a success? With whom and for what purpose? (e.g. information sharing, governance planning and decision making, reporting) How often do you need to be in touch with various stakeholders?</p>	

Key Factor	Considerations	Implications for your collaboration
Time considerations	Who are your key partners in your collaboration and what are their current responsibilities within their organization? (e.g. are they an Executive Director, front line worker, or Board member?) How do these responsibilities influence the amount of time they have to work with the collaborative, the resources they can access to participate in a collaboration, and how efficient	
Number of active partners and diversity of members	Does your collaboration involve a few or many partners? Are they all in similar sectors and positions or are they from diverse organizations with differing responsibilities or access to resources? (e.g. are partners equally able to afford travel to meetings?) How do diverse expectations affect communications planning and use of approaches?	
Distance between partner locations	Are your partners dispersed across regions and geographies (rural, northern, urban), which will make face-to-face meetings difficult and costly? Are they in different time zones and how will this impact your communication?	
Language and cultural issues	Are your collaborative partners working across language and culture?	
Financial resources available	Does your collaboration or your collaborative partners have access to resources to develop or purchase communication software and/or expertise and supports?	
Previous experience in using technologies	What experience do your collaborative partners have in using various technologies to communicate and collaborate? What level of training and coaching will be needed to effectively use new technologies?	

Key Factor	Considerations	Implications for your collaboration
Access to existing technologies and infrastructure	Do your partners already have access to existing communication technologies and infrastructure? How can this be used by your collaboration? Are there any restrictions or issues related to sharing these?	
Regulatory requirements	Are there any regulatory issues that may affect how you might use communication technologies; for instance the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), or regulation related to governance and communication technologies?	
Other		



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