

Building Trust

In the early stages of a partnership, trust is crucial for the relationship to grow.

The willingness to disclose self-interests is key to establishing trust. Listed below are the trust building stages:

PERCEPTION:

Successful communication practices are paramount to understanding perception and the role it plays in working together. This is an on-going effort to clarify the intentions and interests of others by discussing the perceptions of each member in the partnership.

CULTURE:

A successful collaboration must encourage the discussion of individual and organizational cultures and the expectations that come with cultural orientations. Additionally, acknowledging particularly dominant cultural influences in the partnership is necessary.

DIVERSITY:

Members in collaboration must define diversity for themselves and share a common understanding of difference that satisfies each individual's and organization's desire to be recognized and accepted.

POWER:

Dynamic and ever-present, power plays a large part in any partnership. The disclosure of the power members bring and what power members hope to gain from a collaborative effort will set the tone for sharing opportunities and moving forward in the process together.

INTEREST:

This is the answer to the simple question: Why are you here? The self-interest of each member and organization involved in the collaboration should be expressed.

INCLUSION:

Examine who is involved in this partnership currently and who is not. Are there obvious absences? Why? What can be done to grow the table?

Adapted from: [The Collaboration Handbook](#) by Michael Winer and Karen Ray.



Building Consensus

Adapted from Consensus Decision Making Model by Jim Hickman

APPROACH

Consensus is an approach to decision-making through discussion of all viewpoints. The decision reached is agreeable to all members and therefore the group can move forward.

Consensus building is a process with high participation and a high likelihood for buy-in by members. Those who truly agree with the final decision and feel their voices have been heard are likely to support actions taken as a result of the decision. Consensus can take more time to reach than other decision processes, but is also efficient in the long-term due to the level of support and buy-in gained from the process.

A sound consensus building approach should include:

- Each member honestly and completely stating his/her opinion on the issue at hand
- The clear and concise communication of each opinion so that all members understand it
- Focus on a win-win goal to incorporate all opinions in the final decision
- Careful listening and respect for each members opinion
- Allowance for objection
- Importance placed on the inclusion of all opinions in the final decision rather than time constraints or conflicts



PROCESS

1. The consensus building process begins with a presentation by the facilitator of the topic to be discussed or the decision to be made.
2. Each member then states their opinion in a round-robin style or other means to choose speaking order. This can include using a “speaking object” that is passed around.
3. Members ask questions of one another to clarify the opinions and statements made.
4. Discussion of ideas and clarification continues until members feel consensus may be reached.
5. A proposal or draft decision is posed to the team and members are polled for agreement and satisfaction.
6. If any member expresses objection, the process begins again with the clear presentation of the objection to be discussed until an acceptable proposal is reached.

Consensus – different from unanimous consent - is reached when all members support the decision and are willing to move forward.

