

In our first workshop we explored how to create an environment that encourages deeper collaboration between firms. Attendees were asked to explore their experiences of collaboration, when it worked, when it didn't, and why it matters. This report is a summary of the key themes revealed during the workshop.

Why does collaboration matter?

Because it results in better quality projects, built more quickly for less overall cost while being a more enjoyable experience for all involved. Specifically, collaboration invites more creative ideas, allows issues to be resolved proactively and draws out the best everyone involved has to offer. The projects, the communities they impact and the people involved are more successful as a result.

When are the best times to collaborate?

Right from the start, and when there is more than one party responsible for the success of a decision. Specifically, if effort is spent in the beginning, a team can be built that trusts one another, is clear and focused on a shared vision, and is looking out for each others success and the success of the project. The return on that effort in terms of quality, speed and costs will be exponential

What's stifling collaboration?

When conditions are such that members of the team have a primary focus on protecting their self interest. These conditions include:

- Not enough to go around, so everyone is fighting for their piece
- A vision for the project is either missing or uncommunicated
- Assumptions are made vs. establishing clear understanding about the project and the team
- Being afraid to disappoint, share ideas, put aside ego or internal politics
- No one assigned, or willing to take the lead on making sure collaboration happens

What are the ideal conditions for collaboration?

When members of the team are working toward a shared vision and for the good of the project and the community it impacts. These conditions can be established by:

- Creating a shared vision and defining clear goals with everyone involved (including the client) right from the start
- Making sure that every member of the team has what they need to be successful and satisfied
- Establishing roles, accountabilities and communication protocols among the team members
- Empowering the team to share where they see opportunities and limits to success
- Having the right perspectives in the right conversations at the right time

Besides what's above, as an individual how can I invite collaboration among my team members?

- Have a mindset that collaboration is non-negotiable
- Recruit 10% of your organization to evangelize a culture of collaboration - that's enough to create a tipping point
- Make it about asking the right questions, instead having the right answer
- Stay open to new ways of seeing and doing
- Listen to what others think
- Engage with everyone around you

What are some specific examples of things that can be leveraged or generated to provoke collaboration

- A critical project constraint that forces the team to work closely together
- A vision for the project that is meaningful enough to bring everyone together