

Characteristics of Successful Partnerships



Partnerships engage and transform communities. And some partnerships are more successful than others. Here's what we've learned about the characteristics of successful partnerships:

Commitment

The whole organization believes in the partnership; it's widely known and supported from top to bottom. If someone from the outside calls to talk about the partnership, there is more than one person who is knowledgeable about it. Commitment also means it's common knowledge within the organization what commitments have been made to a partner. Partnership agreements can work well to help establish and strengthen commitment.

Relationships

Partnerships are relationships—and therefore they are personal. If people sitting at the table like each other, they are much more likely to keep each other informed, help each other out, and think about each other's organizations.

Trust

Trust is essential to healthy relationships. Everyone needs to know that a commitment will be honored. Each partner should try to do more—and sing each other's praises for doing it.

Willingness to Share

Every partner brings something to the table. The partnership is based on combined tangible and intangible resources.

Needs, Wants & Desires

Partners need shared expectations for the partnership, its outcomes, and its impact. To get there, each partner must voice early on what their organization needs from the partnership; what they really want; and—just as important—what would knock their socks off.

Constant & Clear Communication

Figuring out a clear and effective communication system from the beginning is essential.

Ongoing Assessment

Checking in with each other on both content and the relationship is a partnership must. Never assume that all is going well. A predetermined schedule for revisiting goals and objectives and reviewing the partnership agreements is the best way to go.

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