

Excerpts from The Lifecycle of Collaboration
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I. Refining our understanding of collaboration

- A. What are the differences between coordination and collaboration?
1. Coordination involves directing the effort of multiple agents in the most efficient manner to accomplish mutually known ends.
 2. Collaboration is a communicative activity in which stakeholders invent new ways of seeing and responding to social problems.
 3. Coordination is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of collaboration.
- B. Collaboration is at heart a type of communicative activity.
Collaboration occurs when people with different views and perspectives come together, put aside their narrow self interest, and discuss openly and supportively in an attempt to solve a larger problem or achieve a broader goal (LaFasto & Larson, 2001).
- C. The quality of that communicative process is key to producing successful outcomes.
1. Chrislip & Larson (1994) found two common features of highly successful collaboratives:
 - a. An open and credible process
 - b. Strong process leadership
 2. Open and credible processes result in the “fair process effect.” Stakeholders’ commitment to the project and to each other increases; they reconcile their goals with group goals, and sacrifice their parochial interests for the common good. (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bladder, 2000; Lind, 2001).
- D. The five features of a high-quality collaborative process
1. It is inclusive.
 2. It treats all stakeholders equally.
 3. It is authentic.
 4. It focuses on the problem.
 5. It is revisable.
- E. When should you collaborate?
1. When you need joint work to understand the nature of the problem and invent possible solutions.
 2. When you need all stakeholders to consider the proposed solution as the result of a legitimate process.
 3. When you need the sustained commitment of stakeholders to implement the solution.