



Collaborative leadership

Effective collaboration leadership draws on unique elements of the collaborative process. Leaders set an example for new ways of interacting and are able to tap into members' strengths. Leaders also keep a watchful eye on collaborative processes, monitoring progress. This approach differs from 'being in charge' and 'directing', which are the focus of traditional leadership.

Who leads and when?

Leading is challenging. It could be a shared role. This would rely on a careful understanding of contexts and responses, of knowing when to step up and when to step back to allow others to take responsibilities. Leadership can shift according to member expertise or the project phase.

Leading as creating

The leader brings about conditions and processes to enable learning and to foster respect for *all* participants. The leader creates positive collaborative processes and ensures that those processes are adopted and cared about. The leader does not have to find the solution, but creates and facilitates capacity for the group to reframe and develop fresh approaches. Leaders help to maximise combined efforts.

Leading as a catalyst to build trust >>>

Catalyst leadership draws on the ability to connect with participants, letting them know what can be achieved and that joint action benefits their parent organisations. It can also benefit broader sectors such as business, primary industries and the community. If the leader can set the example, then they become a catalyst for new processes. Their strong sense of the purpose and vision helps participants develop trust and respect. The leader influences members to join and shape the vision.

Leaders need to keep participants engaged because new modes of interacting take time. An open and inclusive environment supports sharing of opinions, data, insights and ways to manage different views and emerging conflicts.

Collaborative Trust & Catalyst Leadership



"When we visit a farm and see lovely cattle in great pastures with good fences, does that mean this a good business?"

... Perhaps yes, perhaps no. No one really knows about other peoples' businesses unless both parties share insights and operational data.

*Every farm and every circumstance is different, but we can find common ground. We had to trust that we could learn from each other. To do so, we had to talk about things that work and things that don't. Trust can open conversations and doors for development. **Trust needs the understanding that what I know can help others and what I don't know can help me.***

Ana Pimenta,
King Island Beef Producers.

Skills of collaboration leaders

Leading as being a monitor

Leaders are monitors and reviewers of group and collaborative processes. If commitment wavers or progress stagnates, response and reinvigoration is called for. If the collaborative spirit is affected by non-contributors or fence-sitters, suitable responses are needed to avoid being undermined. The leader monitors or reviews interactions and processes. New ideas and new processes might be needed for particular individuals or stakeholder sub-groups.

☞ Check your skills in the list below

TRAITS AND ABILITIES OF A COLLABORATIVE LEADER

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> initiating and nurturing relationships including with detractors | <input type="checkbox"/> getting members to share ideas, resources and power | <input type="checkbox"/> interpreting and protecting collaborative processes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> promoting advantages in collaborative approach and work style | <input type="checkbox"/> networking in and across sectors and with decision makers across groups | <input type="checkbox"/> supporting or intervening in processes and actions when needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bridging diverse cultures and displaying big picture vision and goals | <input type="checkbox"/> building agreement around the collaborative vision | <input type="checkbox"/> taking risks and encouraging others |



Farming Together collaborators and Co-operatives Management Expert, Professor Tim Mazzarol.

The 'Farming Together' Program aims to:

- generate knowledge and skills about collaborative systems, co-operative structures and collective strategies, to help Australian farmers and their business networks
- demonstrate the economic benefits of collaboration
- provide support to collaborative & co-operative approaches and business structures
- facilitate knowledge sharing & produce resources
- form regional and cross-jurisdictional networks

For more information, visit www.farmingtogether.com.au
E: info@farmingtogether.com.au or call 1800 00 55

Leading as seizing opportunity

There is a balance between the facilitating or nurturing function and the need to drive outcomes. A collaborative environment leads to opportunity which sometimes needs tough decisions and quick actions. Leaders need to promote the benefits of the collaborative approach with decision makers including business, community and government sectors. Success can be influenced by getting buy-in from collaborating participants, their parent organisations and other relevant stakeholders. An understanding of opportunity and constraints, risk and potential reward is needed.

Collaboration content originally developed by Dr Robyn Keast. This fact sheet series was adapted for Farming Together by Dr Cathy Byrne.

Farming together.