How to ensure your collaborative culture succeeds in your Construction Company.

In my last post on – The 5 top barriers to effective collaboration at your Construction Company… I expanded on the obstacles that I have experienced over the last number of years whilst deploying new collaborative approaches and software to companies.

As part of my role here at clixifix I meet a lot of construction companies that want to improve their Customer Care approach in particular.

Early in the presentation I expand on the message that the technology isn't always the solution, the improvement starts with the cultural foundations. The team needs to be empowered to collaborate both intellectually and with the appropriate resources. In short dropping a new software application on your team with little planning and guidance will lead to confusion and little gain.

I have learned some extremely valuable lessons (lost a little bit of hair) and wish that I had found this excellent resource on collaboration from Jacob Morgan many years ago!

If I'm honest I have employed many of these principles in the past although not necessarily in this order!

If you follow these basic guidelines you can ensure that you will create a solid foundation for successful collaboration at your Construction company.
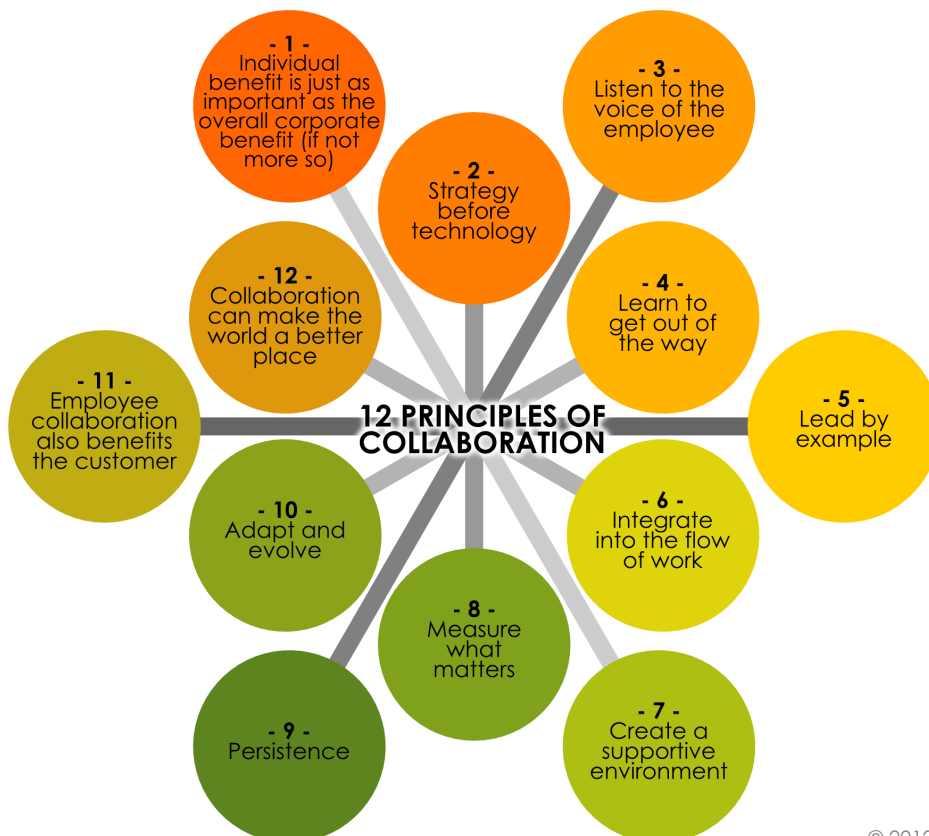
12 PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION

- 1 - Individual benefit is just as important as the overall corporate benefit (if not more so)
- 2 - Strategy before technology
- 3 - Listen to the voice of the employee
- 4 - Learn to get out of the way
- 5 - Lead by example
- 6 - Integrate into the flow of work
- 7 - Create a supportive environment
- 8 - Measure what matters
- 9 - Persistence
- 10 - Adapt and evolve
- 11 - Employee collaboration also benefits the customer
- 12 - Collaboration can make the world a better place

12 Principles of Collaboration

1) Individual benefit is just as important as the overall corporate benefit (if not more so):

"You should use these new tools and strategies that we are implementing because they are going to make and save the company more money **versus** You should use these new tools and strategies that we are implementing because they are going to make your life at work easier and more rewarding!"

Ensure that the collaboration makes the working life of your employees easier and more efficient?

2) Think strategy before technology:

Many companies start with the technology, this can be the quickest route to failure.

Its vitally important to understand why you are doing this before you jump into the software and find that its not what you expected or doesn't quite fit your business requirements!
Ask yourself- what is the business value of this new tool and how will this be used in real cases?

3) Listen to the voice of the employee:

Gather feedback and suggestions. What are the urgent issues? Can those be overcome with the new software/approach?

What do the employees want? What are they passionate about? Listen and take the comments on-board.

4) Learn to get out-of-the-way:

It's not about policing and enforcing. Allow employees/users to make mistakes and support them. Pick a point in the future for a review of how things are doing since the new approach.

Don't dictate during this review meting…You don't want the new approach / software to become an issue with team members that you have a good relationship with.

5) Lead by example:

If the leaders of your business are not on board the employees will struggle to follow suit!

Leaders have real impact and influence on culture and direction.

Don't just say you support collaboration – show it!

6) Integrate into current work-flow:

Your new tools need to be part of how your team works on a daily basis.

Ensure that the tool is not "another" place to go! The tool has to become the go-to application for that particular department or discipline. It has to become the primary tool used to manage a process to ensure that the team is not double handling…

7) Create a supportive environment:

Think long-term. Try to adopt a train the trainer approach so the person who knows most about the product is not the only go-to person.

On boarding of all the team and new employees.

Evaluating skill sets of existing employees.

Beyond the collaboration tool!

Education + training.

Q+A sessions.

8) Measure what matters!

You can measure everything, but should you?

Don't try to measure every single Key Performance indicator (KPI's) available from the get go. Concentrate on the Key Objectives and ensure to link all KPI's back to overarching policy/charter. Build on this data as you and your team start to see the value in measuring performance.

9) Persistence:

It will be difficult!!

There will be obstacles and challenges.

Ensure that it's the course your company wants to take.

Collaborating half way isn't an option.

10) Adapt and evolve:

Be aware that you will have to embrace change. Nothing is set in stone, even when dealing with the Construction Industry.

Technologies change / evolve.

Challenges may emerge.

Processes may change.

11) Collaboration also benefits the customer.

Quicker response times.

More accurate feedback.

Create a knowledge library. This repository can become an invaluable source of information for the team.

Utilise this information and integrate this customer feedback to company product and services reviews.

12) Collaboration makes the world a better place!

Collaboration can reduce stress levels of employees.

Enables flexible work environments.

Allows employees/customers to feel more engaged.

Getting from a traditional culture of "Knowledge is my power'' to one of '' Sharing is our growth'' is not easy, but this transition will ensure the success and growth of your organisation.