

The 5 top barriers to effective collaboration at your Construction Company.

Collaboration isn't something new; it's been around for many years.

Simply put it's about two or more people working together to create something or to achieve a shared goal. It's the technology and culture that has changed.

As part of my role here at [clixifix](#), I have met with some fantastic companies in recent months that have recognised that collaboration within their construction business is key to the success and growth of their organisation. Quite a few hadn't a clear understanding of what collaboration means. All agreed that collaboration is not only valuable but also critical to the success, but not many could articulate the value or why they should be doing it.

In a previous article – [Is your Company too busy to improve](#), I explored how many businesses are experiencing that the the upturn in activity has had a negative impact on their continuous improvement policies! Few Industries in the UK are as wedded to out-dated systems and practices as the construction sector. Whether times are good or not, House builders and Principal contractors generally do things the same way that they have been done for years. Just because your business is not in the technology sector doesn't mean that innovation isn't important to facilitate improvements

Effective collaboration requires a major focus on culture, the deployment and uses of technology and the adoption of policy and process for positive results. Few construction companies focus on all three however, which leads us to the next issue.



Bad is worse than none!

[Morten Hansen points out in his book collaboration](#), that bad collaboration is a waste of time and resources and produces little gain. Hansen comments that leaders of organisations often lose sight of the primary objective of what they set out to achieve.

In their eagerness to get people to tear down data silos and work in cross-unit teams, leaders often forget that the goal of collaboration is not collaboration itself, but results. Leaders need to think differently, focusing on what Hansen calls disciplined collaboration.

5 barriers to effective collaboration:

1) **Missing ties to business goals:** When collaboration is considered a luxury instead of an essential part of achieving your business goals, it can get pushed to the side. The collaboration will get overlooked in budgets for other process improvements and in other culture or workforce development.

2) **No Incentives...** Individuals will focus their time in two places; where they are compensated to focus and when they are intrinsically motivated to focus. If collaboration is undervalued, not tied to performance, bonus, promotions or evaluations it will discourage your team from exploring the benefits and embracing the change.

3) **Lack of Education:** Communication is paramount. In addition to letting everyone in the team know that collaboration is valued and will be rewarded, it has to be articulated what is meant by collaboration in your business and what your expectations are moving forward.

4) **Weak internal structure:** Collaboration is an open and creative process but it does require some thought and planning to succeed. In fact collaboration will thrive where a formal structure is on place to create the best conditions possible with company policies and procedures to outline this.

5) **Interpersonal Conflict:** Successful collaboration requires a great deal of trust and contribution on the part of every one involved. If there are personal conflicts they can create difficult environments that discourage the transparency and sharing that is critical to the success of your collaborative approach.

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.