



MANAGER'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION



Edito

The last thirty years have seen an acceleration of changes in the way people work. The various crises and technological advances now make it possible to collaborate remotely on many issues when before it was necessary to be physically present and focused on a mission.

The need to constantly adapt in our increasingly changing world is shaking up our certainties and the boundaries of our organisations. Working in project mode is not only normal but necessary.

The so-called collaborative work mode brings together the techniques and methods of work

and management that enable actions to be carried out and objectives to be achieved. There is also augmented collaboration, which uses technology to improve collaboration between team members by increasing human capacity.

This collaborative mode is now familiar to us and it impacts all the components of the organisation: its culture, its management style, its processes and the roles and missions of everyone. Its implementation and maintenance require the control of many parameters to ensure that this mode meets the requirements of results and expectations of everyone.



Lionel Pasco
CEO, Perfony



Collaborative working is one of the keys to success in an ever-changing world!

Working better together means being able to achieve more ambitious goals, solve more complex problems and innovate more creatively.

Organisational patterns and models are changing... and this is only the beginning!





SOMMAIRE

What is collaborative working?	4
The benefits of collaborative working	6
The challenges of collaboration	8
Keys and best practices for successful collaboration	10
Tools and technologies for enhanced collaboration	13
Perspectives on collaborative work	16
Recommendations for enhancing collaborative working	17

What is collaborative working?



Collaborative work has become a matter of course in modern companies. It encompasses specific methods, practices and tools that allow several individuals to work together on common issues.

The growth of collaborative working in recent years has been significant

Collaboration at work is not a new concept, the company is a collection of skills and activities with the aim of creating value in its market. Collaborative work is about bringing together the resources and skills of several people to achieve a common goal. Collaboration can take place physically or remotely, and can involve internal collaborators, partners and/or customers.

The current context of collaboration at work is marked by the evolution of information and communication technologies (ICT), which have made it possible to facilitate exchanges at a distance and in particular to make teleworking more effective. This is known as "enhanced collaboration". However, we will see that remote collaboration poses other challenges such as adherence to values and the disruption of the manager's role.

Technology will enhance the benefits of collaborative working

It is important to understand the whole collaborative process, its challenges and the strategy for implementing it, in order to reap the benefits such as

- Increasing creativity and innovation by combining the ideas and perspectives of different people.
- Sharing knowledge and skills to solve problems more effectively.
- Improved communication and coordination between different parts of the same organisation.
- The ability to make the best possible decisions by bringing together the information and different opinions of key players.



Benefits of collaborative working



Collaborative working is a powerful lever for increasing productivity and employee satisfaction, but also for creating opportunities for management and business performance.

The benefits of collaborative working on performance are quantifiable

For each of us, collaborative working has many benefits: it allows us to share our ideas and knowledge around a common theme, thus improving decision-making and problem-solving.

By working in teams, employees can also benefit from the diverse perspectives and experiences of their colleagues, helping them to develop new ideas and improve. In addition, collaborative working makes people feel more involved and valued, leading to greater job satisfaction.

For management, collaborative working is also positive. By benefiting from the innovation generated by teams, an organisation can increase productivity, reduce costs and gain competitive advantages in its market. In addition, by fostering a collaborative work culture, managers can improve employee engagement and combat turnover and "quiet leaving".

To illustrate these benefits, here are some case studies showing how collaboration improves productivity, innovation and team satisfaction:

- A study by the University of Warwick found that employees who work in collaborative environments are 12% more productive than those who work alone,
- A Google study found that the most successful teams were those with the most social psychology, i.e. effective interaction and communication,
- According to a Gallup survey, employees who feel a part of their company's decisions are more satisfied and engaged in their work,
- According to a survey by Buffer, companies that use online collaboration tools are up to 28% more productive than companies that do not,
- A study by Deloitte found that employees who work for companies that foster a collaborative work culture are 5 times more likely to be engaged in their work,
- Finally, a survey by McKinsey shows that teams that collaborate effectively are 47% more likely to perform well.

Working collaboratively and in sync has many benefits for management and teams. Research shows that when people work together effectively, they can generate significantly better results than if they worked alone. Companies that focus on this way of working benefit from improved performance, innovation and engagement. Collaborative working is therefore a key lever for companies seeking to improve their overall performance.



Challenges of collaboration

Collaboration at work - like any organisational system - presents significant challenges for management and teams. Despite the many benefits of collaboration, it is important to recognise the potential barriers that can prevent it from working well.



There are many challenges on the road to collaborative working

One of the main difficulties encountered is coordination between team members. Communication can be difficult when they work in different locations or have different working hours. It can also be difficult to maintain a common vision and clear objectives when team members have different perspectives.

Data management and security is a major issue when teams work remotely in a collaborative mode. It is important to ensure that access to data is possible so that work can be done, while protecting sensitive company data.

Corporate culture and information security are the biggest obstacles to the implementation of collaborative work

Cultural barriers play an important role in the challenges of collaboration. Differences in language, professional norms and communication styles can hamper mutual understanding between team members. Differences in values and priorities also cause tension.

Personality conflicts and conflicts of interest are also barriers to collaboration. Personality differences can cause misunderstandings and friction, while conflicts of interest can distort team decisions.

Finally, skill gaps are a barrier to effective collaboration. If team members do not have the necessary skills to perform their duties, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to work together effectively. It is important to ensure that everyone has the necessary skills to perform their roles fully and effectively.

Recognising these potential barriers is essential in order to take steps to overcome them. Managers and staff can work together to identify them and put in place appropriate strategies to improve collaboration at work.



Keys and good practices for a successful collaborative mode

Successfully setting up and maintaining a collaborative working environment is a mixture of different ingredients, the dosage of which depends on you and your organisation's culture.

Here is a fairly comprehensive overview.



Define common goals

This may seem obvious, but it is worth repeating: if the objectives are not defined and shared, management will find it difficult to steer the discussions and move the group in one direction. Each person will then go and find his or her own objective according to criteria that are not aligned with those of the organisation. It is therefore essential to clearly define common objectives for all those involved in a project or task to ensure that everyone is working in the same direction. When necessary, during rituals or otherwise, these objectives should be recalled and progress reviewed.

Promoting communication

Regular exchanges with follow-up at short intervals (between one day and one week) are essential to foster and maintain good communication and coordination. Regular team meetings, instant messaging and online file-sharing tools are all tools whose added value no longer needs to be proven. When teleworking, particular emphasis should be placed on communication channels and protocols. It is also important to set up regular times for team meetings and to encourage informal exchanges to maintain a good team dynamic.

In collaborative mode: common objectives, communication and access to information are the key words

Sharing and securing information

By definition, in the collaborative mode, shared access to the data needed to carry out activities is essential. Online file sharing tools are useful for documents and information. But it is especially important to protect sensitive company data. It is recommended to use secure online file storage and sharing tools. This use must be accompanied by the implementation of security policies, compliance with which will be regularly verified by audits. These rules and measures are all the more important in the context of teleworking, where the use of unsecured networks offers loopholes for hacking attempts.

Promoting participation and coordination

Of course, encouraging the participation of all employees in a process or project ensures that all ideas and perspectives are taken into account. The combination of the use of exchange platforms and meeting rituals allows managers to ensure this. Online project management tools allow the monitoring of project progress and the synchronisation of agendas. Task management tools can also be used to dispatch and track tasks and the famous "who does what". The advent of these tools has made it possible to save time in planning and synchronising meetings.

Promoting flexibility and respecting privacy

There is a need for flexibility to adapt to daily changes and constraints, and to take into account the personal needs of employees. A certain flexibility in working hours and teleworking policies is an additional motivating factor. But it must be supervised so as not to generate imbalances or inequalities. Above all, particular attention should be paid to respecting private life schedules, especially in the age of telework when the boundary between office and home has become tenuous. It is recommended that teams are made aware of the company's privacy policy and that everyone understands and respects it (not that some managers don't like it).

Establish conflict resolution mechanisms

Inevitably, encouraging exchanges also increases the risk of potential conflicts between staff. Differences of opinion, ego battles, lack of alignment on priorities and milestones are all sources of conflict. It is important to know how to detect and resolve them. The manager's role and credibility are at stake. Ritual meetings can be used as a detection centre, while individual meetings can be used to identify the causes before arbitrating. Conflict can give rise to a dynamic! In teleworking mode, it is all the more important to pay attention to this phenomenon as there is no longer any informal meeting at the coffee machine to talk about it and defuse what could become harmful to the smooth running of the team.

The collaborative mode has many advantages but is also a source of conflicts that must be anticipated

Monitoring performance

If you don't measure performance, you'll never know at what price your objectives have been reached. The famous performance indicators (KPI) do not need to be numerous or boring, but just well targeted so that everyone knows how the result is evaluated. Formal and informal exchanges will enable progress to be made and a culture of results adapted to the company's values and objectives to be established.

Paying attention to stress and motivation

This part is valid whatever the organisational mode, but it takes on even more meaning in collaborative mode where an employee can convey his stress to others, but also in teleworking where isolation does not allow to find an attentive ear to solve a problem. The link between mental overload and stress is proven. Management should take particular care to ensure that stress levels do not exceed the limits leading to tetany and lack of judgement. Behaviour in meetings and regular individual reviews should identify warning signs such as delays in meeting deadlines, lack of clarity in explanations and analysis, inability to prioritise actions... Task tracking tools with intelligent cognitive ergonomics allow actions to be grouped together without the stress of having to collect them and are a good example of an easy way to reduce stress.

« *A collaborative way of working
requires a management style
that takes care of the teams* »

Implementing these good practices creates an efficient and productive working environment for teams working collaboratively, and especially remotely. Obviously, the intensity of these practices varies according to the company and its specific needs. It is therefore essential to adapt them according to the culture, the context and the challenges.





**Tools and technology for
enhanced collaboration**

There are a wide variety of collaboration tools available, each with unique features and uses, and all along the lines of augmented collaborativity, or how the tool enhances human capabilities (starting with saving time). Here is a non-exhaustive list of tools in six categories.

Collaboration solutions and tools divided into 6 categories

Instant Messaging:

The most commonly used collaboration tools. They allow you to communicate instantly with other team members, no matter where they are. These include Slack and Microsoft Teams, which also allow you to share files and documents, as well as create communication channels for specific projects.

Videoconferencing:

Such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meet that allow people to connect visually, even when working remotely, and participate in real-time meetings, share screens and take notes together.

Project management:

Dedicated to tracking the progress of projects, defining tasks and goals, as well as sharing documents and project information. Solutions such as Asana, Trello and Perfony can be found here.

Document sharing (EDM):

Like Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive that allow teams to store and share documents. These tools are useful for teams working on collaborative projects, as they allow real-time interaction on shared documents.

Task Management:

To define, distribute and track tasks among members of an organization. We find Asana, Trello, Basecamp, Perfony, Jira. They allow you to define tasks, assign them to team members and track their progress.

Decision-making:

In addition to videoconferencing tools, they allow voting and real-time polling to make decisions in a collaborative way, such as Klaxoon or Wisembly.

Not all of these tools are necessary for every company, and it is important to sort out which ones are most appropriate based on specific needs and culture. In addition, many are multi-functional and will offer task management and meeting management for example. But whatever the tool, each implementation must be accompanied by a real digitalization plan including a personalized configuration and a training program for all employees who will use this solution in their work.

In short, there are a wide variety of collaboration tools available that can improve communication and coordination within teams and an organization. Companies need to assess their needs to choose the most appropriate tools and, most importantly, train them to use them. Instant messaging, video conferencing, project management, document sharing are commonly used tools, but there are other solutions such as task management, decision making, content management, knowledge management that can help companies in collaboration.

Each collaborative tool has advantages and disadvantages

Of the many different collaboration tools that exist to facilitate communication and coordination, some deserve a little more attention:

Slack: instant messaging that allows team members to chat in real time. It also allows to create discussion channels for different topics or projects.

- Advantages: ease of use, nice interface, very intuitive.
- Disadvantages: cost to access some advanced features.

Microsoft Teams: collaboration platform that includes instant messaging, online meetings, file sharing and project management.

- Advantages: the platform is very complete, can integrate other tools from the Office 365 suite.
- Disadvantages: set up can sometimes be long and tedious.

Trello: visual project management solution that uses a "Kanban board" method to organize tasks and projects.

- Advantages: very visual, very suitable for visual project management.
- Disadvantages: it is less complete for project management than other tools like Asana or Jira.

Zoom: online meeting tool that allows team members to connect remotely for face-to-face meetings.

- Advantages : audio and video quality is generally very good, The platform is widely used and reliable.
- Disadvantages: security and privacy (possibility of identity theft, unauthorized recording...)

Google Drive: online file storage and sharing service that allows team members to store and share documents, spreadsheets and presentations.

- Advantages: ability to work on documents in real time, Accessibility from any device connected to the internet.
- Disadvantages: security may be insufficient for some types of files.

Perfony: a solution for managing action plans and meetings that allows you to manage projects, improvement actions and produce meeting reports with decisions and actions in RIDA mode.

- Advantages: Allows you to have a single solution for tracking project actions and meetings.
- Disadvantages: less complete than Jira or Asana for project management.

The collaborative mode uses several complementary tools

Collaborative tooling rarely involves a single solution but a combination of several to cover all collaboration needs. For example, it is possible to combine Microsoft Teams for instant communication, Perfony for project management and meeting reports, and Klaxoon for decisions and choices that are made in a participatory manner. It is important to test different tools and see what works best for your team.

Perspectives on collaborative work

Here are the perspectives on collaborative work that can help understand the trends and challenges related to collaboration at work.

The collaborative work mode is in full mutation

Remote work

Remote working has become a normality and companies must continue to adapt to this trend by implementing processes to support remote collaboration. Online collaboration tools to maintain communication and coordination are becoming more and more successful and allow to maintain a collective base and to be personally more efficient.

Teamwork

Teamwork is a common practice nowadays, which allows to combine several points of view and to associate resources to reach a goal in a more efficient way. Project management tools for planning, monitoring and managing team projects allow you to automate reporting and monitoring tasks so that you can focus on moments of exchange and reflection.

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is making its appearance and the next few years will see its influence grow to such an extent that we will soon wonder how we did it before. Make no mistake, the future revolution is this one and it's coming now. It is still difficult to imagine all the impacts, but everything that can be automated will be. Companies must now imagine the relationships that will exist tomorrow between humans and AI to improve communication and coordination between teams (meetings, risk analysis of projects, etc.)

Hybrid work

There is a growing trend for hybrid work, where employees can choose to work remotely or in the office. Organizations will need to emphasize policies and means to foster collaboration between remote and office-based teams.

Real-time collaboration

In the age of 5G and AI, real-time collaboration is also becoming an expected norm, where employees can work on projects in real time using online collaboration tools. Any tool that promotes this mode will have an obvious potential gain for companies that equip themselves with it.

In the next five years, AI will have a strong presence in all tools

These underlying trends are evolving rapidly, and companies need to adapt to the changes to ensure that their teams can work efficiently and productively. The technology changes coming in the next five years are going to be richer than those of the last twenty. It is therefore important to stay on top of these changes to identify the tools that will bring a differentiating factor to the market while ensuring a successful transformation within the collaborative process!

Recommendation to strengthen the collaborative mode

The outlook shows that collaborative work has a bright future ahead of it. We can therefore focus on implementing or reinforcing the main principles.

Collaborative mode is powerful but complex to balance

Revisit the modes of communication

Set the tone, rules and channels of communication. There are so many ways of communicating today that it would be illusory to try to control them all. However, it is important to define the essentials so that communication is clear, proactive and avoids misunderstandings.

Promote team participation and commitment

More than ever, especially since the post-pandemic period, employee engagement is undermined by the temptations of another life, other crises that follow one another and telecommuting that isolates. A healthy culture, regardless of the company's activity, with an enlightened, enlightening and attentive human management, is a key starting point to reinforce commitment, limit turnover and avoid "quiet leaving".

Strengthen project management systems

Everything becomes subject to a project, regardless of its mission, an employee will participate in two or three projects in a year. It is therefore essential to equip your organization with tools that promote collaborative work in project mode to plan, track and manage project-related tasks and activities, such as Trello, Asana, Perfony, etc.

Use online collaboration tools

Secure access to data is essential to allow teams to work on shared documents in real time, such as One Drive, Google Drive or Dropbox. It is imperative to accompany this implementation with security policies to protect the data.

Managing conflict effectively

Inevitably, the collaborative mode and the variable of remote work multiply the zones of interaction and therefore of friction and potential conflicts. The absence of a coffee machine makes it impossible to defuse emerging conflicts. It is the duty of management to know how to identify and resolve conflicts before the whole collaborative chain is affected by waves that would alter the atmosphere and the quality of work.

Build a strong team culture

It is the key element that completes the picture. A culture that displays values, which are themselves embodied by a human management, will be the foundation that will allow us to see clearly when the events of the world around us darken the horizon. No need to look far, with sincerity and consistency any project can be accomplished.

WHY SHOULD YOU USE PERFONY?



- Create your action plans simply
- Visualise the progress of your actions and those of your teams
- Reduce the mental burden of following up decisions
- Measure the impact and results of your action plans
- Manage your action plans directly during your meetings
- Identify and share improvement plans with your teams
- Gain flexibility with integrations in Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Outlook and mobile applications
- Simplify your project management with a modern tool.

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Perfony is a French software publisher born from the meeting of the worlds of management consulting and IT. Perfony has set itself the ambitious project of making the principles of operational excellence accessible to everyone.

To achieve this, it offers a simple tool that improves team work efficiency through:

- Action plan tracking
- Decision traceability
- Meeting improvement
- KPI monitoring
- Compliance with quality requirements.

**Perfony is the solution that accompanies you
towards operational excellence.**



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