

# The Collaborative Company

## How to establish collaboration as a corporate competence

### The Challenge

- The complexity of business problems is now so great that they can only be addressed effectively by groups of companies with complementary world class offerings working together collaboratively.
- Hence the reason that almost all organisations currently publish pronouncements extolling the virtues of partnering.
- “Partners are critical to our future growth!” or “We are a partner focused organisation!” are common cries.
- In very many cases the senior leadership team recognises this challenge and establishes a central partnering team and staffs it with experienced and committed partnering experts.
- The problem however is that in many cases the organisational culture ‘gets in the way’ of a collaboration approach.
- Which is perfectly understandable since the company concerned has usually had a number of years of success either by selling directly or selling through clearly defined channels.
- The problem then lands at the partnering teams door to fix.

### The Reality

Although the Executive Leadership Team are fully committed to the concept of alliances and partnering the reality is that the culture of the organisation prevents them from establishing collaboration as a corporate competence.

The result is what Peter Drucker meant when he said: “Culture eats Strategy for Breakfast!”.

The result is that companies spend large amounts of money, time and other resources in establishing partnership processes, teams and incentives only to see their efforts thwarted by the organisational culture which simply does not value collaboration in its business dealings.

Recognizing this challenge many organisations look to collaboration champions to lead the way. Often these individuals are head of alliances or partnerships in their respective companies.

But in a sense therein lies the problem because companies see collaboration as a problem for partnership departments rather than a company wide problem.

The simple truth is that until companies adopt collaboration as a key business strategy and systematically develop it as a core competence then they will never be fully successful in the new age of ecosystems.

### The Solution

Alliance Best Practice Ltd (ABP) has worked with a number of global companies that can truly be said to have established collaboration as a corporate competence. Or more accurately perhaps can be said to have established it for a period of time because almost nothing endures endlessly in the business world.

A sample of these companies at different times would be: Siebel, Cisco, IBM, SAP, Accenture, Capgemini, O2 and Apple.

ABP watched (and in some cases helped) as these companies made collaboration a key tenet of their values and culture and we observed the beneficial commercial impact that such an effort delivered.

As a consequence we developed an Alliance Excellence Model based on the successful practices of these companies.

To start the journey towards Alliance Excellence companies should first of all assess the current level of alliance maturity in their organisations to identify the nature of the challenge facing them.

ABP can help by gathering data from key stakeholders at multiple levels in the organisation (typically Strategic, Managerial, and Operational) and producing an Alliance Excellence Score somewhere between 0-100. The score indicates the first steps necessary towards success.

## About ABP

Alliance Best Practice Ltd (ABP) is the world's leading alliance research and benchmarking organisation. We maintain a database of over 200,000 observations of alliance best practices in action.

We have over 75 companies represented in our Alliance Best Practice Community and meet quarterly to exchange ideas and develop new best practice standards in ever more complex collaborative relationships.

ABP's current research looks at the role of alliances in partner ecosystems.

Our findings are encapsulated in our latest publication: The Strategic Alliance Fieldbook – The Art of Agile Alliances available here:

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Strategic-Alliances-Fieldbook-The-Art-of-Agile-Alliances/Booth-Nevin-Whitehurst/p/book/9781032129006>

### Our expertise

Selecting ABP means that you will be working with a company that bases its advice on carefully conducted and rigorous research. In short a data driven alliance consultancy service. It also means that we can provide the tools, experience and the expertise to establish a culture of continuous improvement in Alliance Programmes.

## Endorsements

The following endorsements represent a small sample of recently received client comments:

“Mike, just a quick note to say many thanks for an enjoyable and productive training session. As ever the training was the perfect blend of business and fun. The content was first class and synched really well with your two books. I look forward to reading them both and putting Agile Alliances into practice! Keep up the good work! - Ian Shanahan  
Accenture Technology Fulfilment  
Lead for IBM Technology – Accenture

“Mike is the main man when it comes to alliances! His depth of research and understanding of the alliance sales process shines through in all his work. I will be sharing the ABP materials with my colleagues and expect them to increase alliance sales just like I have done by using the ABP approach“. Rhys Austin, ISV  
Alliance Manager EMEA - Hewlett Packard Enterprise

“I shared the briefing decks you provided on turning partnerships into alliances with my executive leadership team and it was the first time that they really ‘got it’! Your research has been invaluable to framing my engagements at a strategic as opposed to tactical level.“ - Richard Wainwright,  
Strategic Alliances, Dimension Data  
UK Ltd

## ABP Client Companies

The following is a list of ABP research and / or consulting clients:

Accenture, Adobe, ADVA, Alcatel, Alphabet, AMD, AppDynamics, Apttus, Apple, Arkadin, AT&T, Atos, Avaya, Bearing Point, BCX, BMC, Borland, Brocade, BT, Computer Associates, Canopy, Canon, Capgemini, CGI, Cisco, Citrix, Cognizant, Commvault, Computacenter, CSC, Dassault Systemes, Dell, Delaware, Deloitte, Dimension Data, Dun and Bradstreet, EMC, Equifax, Equinix, Experian, EY, Ericsson, F5 Networks, Fujitsu, Genesys, Getronics, Google, HCL, Hitachi, HPE, i2, IBM, Indra, Infor, Informatica, Infosys, Juniper, KANA, Kaspersky, Konica Minolta, KPMG, Lawson, Lenovo, McAfee, Microsoft, Micro Focus, Mitel, Motorola, Mphasis, NEC, NetApp, NextiraOne, Nokia, Northgate, Nortel, NTT, O2, Oracle, Ordina, OpenText, Orange, Qlik, Pegasystems, Pitney Bowes, Polycom, PTC, PwC, Rackspace, Red Hat, Ricoh, RSA, Sage, Salesforce, Samsung, SAP, SAS, Satyam, ServiceNow, Siebel, Siemens, Software AG, Sungard, Symantec, Tata Communications, T-Systems, TCS, Tech Mahindra, Telefonica, Telus, Teradata, Tieto, Unisys, Verint, Verizon, VMware, Vodafone, Wipro and Zebra.

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