

Collaboration Begins with You: Be a Silo Buster

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Collaboration Begins with You Everyone knows collaboration creates high performing teams and organizations—and with today's diverse, globalized workforce it's absolutely crucial. Yet it often doesn't happen because people and groups typically believe that the problem is always outside: the other team member, the other department, the other company. Bestselling author Ken Blanchard and his coauthors use Blanchard's signature business parable style to show that, in fact, if collaboration is to succeed it must begin with you. This book teaches people at all levels—from new associates to top executives—that it's up to each of us to help promote and preserve a winning culture of collaboration. The authors show that busting silos and bringing people together is an inside-out process that involves the heart (your character and intentions), the head (your beliefs and attitudes), and the hands (your actions and behaviors). Working with this three-part approach, *Collaboration Begins with You* helps readers develop a collaborative culture that uses differences to spur contribution and creativity; provides a safe and trusting environment; involves everyone in creating a clear sense of purpose, values, and goals; encourages people to share information; and turns everyone into an empowered self-leader. None of us is as smart as all of us. When people recognize their own erroneous beliefs regarding collaboration and work to change them, silos are broken down, failures are turned into successes, and breakthrough results are achieved at every level.

Collaboration Begins with You provides a simple, memorable, and—most important of all—actionable model for destroying the barriers that prevent organizations from getting things done.—Patrick Lencioni, President, The Table Group, and author of *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *The Advantage* “Creating a safe and trusting environment as a collaborator is the core of success—removing fear and taking people to a place of freedom. You will find the steps to success in *Collaboration Begins with You*!”—Garry Ridge, President and CEO, WD-40 Company, and coauthor of *Helping People Win at Work* “*Collaboration Begins with You* strips down the fluff and gets to the essence of how any organization can create a collaborative mindset for the greater good.”—Jesse Lyn Stoner, founder, Seapoint Center for Collaborative Leadership, and coauthor of *Full Steam Ahead!* About the Author Ken Blanchard is the founder and chief spiritual officer of the Ken Blanchard Companies. One of the world's most prominent authors, speakers, and consultants, he is the author or coauthor of more than sixty books. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. CHAPTER 1A Troubling Conversation “It was the worst shareholder meeting I've endured in years. The worst! Everybody could see the numbers plain and clear: the Primo project produced no profit. No profit! Zero. Zip. None!”—Jim Camilleri, CEO of Cobalt, Inc., punctuated the point by slamming his fist on his desk. Dave Oakman, the division head in charge of the Primo project, had never seen his boss this angry before. It was making him nervous. He kept his mouth shut to give Jim time to blow off more steam. “The whole point of this project was to put some distance between Cobalt and our competition. The idea, in case you missed it, was to generate some revenue for capital investments and to reward shareholders. The fundamentals were great. There was absolutely no reason we couldn't have made money on this thing—other than lousy project management.” Jim leaned forward and looked Dave in the eye. “Can you give me a better reason? What happened here?” “It's a long story, Jim.” “Let's hear it.” “We had departments operating in silos. A lot of people were trying to protect their own interests rather than make the project a success.” “Why don't you break that down for me, Dave. What are you talking about?” Jim's mouth was a straight, grim line. Dave hesitated. Should he tell the truth, or should he bend it? He knew exactly what the problem was. What he didn't know was whether it was safe to divulge. Considering Jim's current mood, telling the whole truth could get him fired. Dave decided he should fudge it, or at least try to. It was what he usually did—and it usually worked. “Primo had some great moments.” Dave began with an air of confidence—but he knew he was flying by the seat of his pants. “Great moments? Not from where I'm sitting,” Jim said. “As you said, the fundamentals of the Primo project were solid. We just encountered some hiccups.” “Bleeding money is not a case of hiccups. Quit trivializing this! I want some straight answers.” Jim's eyes were steely. Dave recognized that fudging was not going to work this time. He had to come clean. “The truth is, Jim, the group didn't really work as a cohesive unit. Rival departments undermined the project. As long as they got their job done on schedule and their department made a profit, they didn't care what happened to Primo.” A bead of sweat on Dave's forehead betrayed his uneasiness. “Can you be specific?” Jim asked. “For example, I asked for a few of our newer associates to join the project. They had great energy and ideas, but they kept getting sidelined by the department heads who wanted all the glory. Some of our best people were kept off this project by their own leaders.” Dave could hear the desperation in his own voice. “Any leaders in particular?” Jim asked. Dave thought about Wayne Lundgren, the veteran manager of the research and development department. Just last week Dave had witnessed Wayne brushing off a helpful suggestion made by Sarah McKenzie, a young engineer in his department. “I'd rather not name names,” Dave said at

last. "Besides, it's not the people who are the problem. It's the whole culture around here." The words were out of his mouth before he had weighed them. Now he wondered if he'd said too much. "Names don't matter, anyway," said Jim impatiently. "You were in charge of Primo. You should have fixed it!" "It's not that simple, Jim. Certain department heads around here have a lot of power, and they don't hesitate to use it to their advantage. You know Cobalt is riddled with politics." Jim shook his head. "Politics is a way of life. It's part of the environment we live in. I expect my top managers to know how to navigate through the obstacles. And that includes you." He's not getting it, thought Dave. Doing his best to keep the defensiveness out of his voice, he said, "Jim, I'm telling you about a problem that's beyond my scope to manage. This is about Cobalt. The company is made up of all kinds of self-serving silos. We offer no incentives that encourage people to work together toward organizational goals. Managers get promotions and bonuses based on their own individual success and the success of their siloed groups—regardless of the success of the projects they work on or the company as a whole." There, he'd said it. He caught his breath, feeling relief and fear at the same time. Jim got up from his desk and began to pace. "I need time to think about what you're saying here. In the meantime, remember that as the division vice president, you're expected to fix these issues you're complaining about. You should be coming to me with solutions, not problems." He shook his head. "How many times do I have to—" He left the sentence unfinished. Dave held his breath. Is Jim going to fire me? A long silence followed. Finally, Jim walked to the door and opened it, making it clear the meeting was over. As Dave walked out, Jim said quietly, "I want a full report about what went wrong with Primo, along with your recommendations, on my desk in two weeks." He paused. "I'll just leave it at that. I need to do some thinking, too."