

## Archive of Partnering Tips

People who use a [win-win orientation](#) tend to solve their own problems. If problems keep getting passed up the chain of command for resolution, then you know your people are not collaborating.

The true measure of a partnership lies not only in what is accomplished but also in [the way things get done](#) (reflecting mutual respect, trust, and accountability).

Partnerships are by nature a source of change. Each partner should [identify what might cause them stress in a partnership](#). Partners should address the stressors with each other when they begin forming the partnership and develop a plan to deal with the stressors so that they will have positive outcomes.

Do not begin the task of mutual strategic planning with your partner until you determine trust exists on both sides and is [moving in the right direction](#). During strategic planning, partners must reveal to each other their plan to achieve their vision. Both parties must trust each other to use this critical information to build a mutually interdependent future and work toward mutually beneficial outcomes.

Look at any organization. If it's attracting talented, ethical, creative people who are then encouraged to do their best, give credit to a good leader. If you see those same types of people lacking motivation, being unproductive or even leaving for better opportunities, be assured that poor leadership is to blame. If these problems go unchecked, an organization can find itself in a downward spiral, as increasingly fearful employees struggle to satisfy even the most basic customer demands. Read how our [Leadership Foundation Program](#) can improve and continually enhance your leaders' attributes and capabilities.

Organizations that cannot partner successfully internally (among employees, teams, departments, leadership, and top management) will have difficulty partnering externally with customers and alliance partners. Read all about partnering internally more effectively in [Powerhouse Partners: A Blueprint for Building Organizational Culture for Breakaway Results](#).

Valuing independence instead of interdependence is a characteristic that will doom a partnership to failure. Use our [Comfort with Interdependence workbook](#) to assess your level of interdependence and learn tips to improve it.

Inspire a duty to [teamwork](#). Encourage people to work well together. Make sure that your compensation and reward structure reflect your desire for teamwork by compensating teamwork and individual contributors fairly.

Although people dislike conflict and it can destroy many efforts, conflict can result in growth in a partnering relationship if the partners understand how to resolve it through [win-win negotiation](#).

Some partners are so eager to “do the deal” that they forget they’re interacting with other people who have their own needs, wants, and expectations. This type of behavior and impatience in the initial “form” stage of a partnering relationship can sabotage the partnership’s future and cause a one-night-stand type of relationship. Learn more about the stages of partnership and relationship development that comprise our [Partnership Continuum Model](#) in our book, “[Powerhouse Partners: A Blueprint for Building Organizational Culture for Breakaway Results.](#)”

To have a successful partnering relationship, you and/or your organization must learn to move away from being independent and learn to think as much about your partner’s success as your own. Assess your level of competency in this area with our workbook on [Comfort with Interdependence.](#)

Partners who are successful together ensure they don’t have a mentality where they want to be right or have the last word. Instead, they want to arrive at the best possible outcome or solution to issues, challenges, and opportunities. They make sure they are open to any and all information that will help them achieve the best outcomes for their mutual benefit. In contrast, partners with a mind-set that causes them to withhold information will doom a partnering relationship to failure. Learn how to improve this area of partnering with our self-paced workbook on achieving comfort with [self-disclosure and feedback.](#)

In the Stages of Relationship Development in the [Partnership Continuum Model](#), each of the [Six Partnering Attributes](#) is aligned with a particular relationship development stage where the attribute will be effective in establishing a successful relationship. For example, the Future Orientation attribute is aligned with the Norm stage of relationship development. During the Norm stage, partners begin to establish their norms of behavior. Learn more about effective use of the Partnership Continuum Model in our book, [Powerhouse Partners.](#)

Do you and/or your organization try to maintain the status quo? Such a mind-set can doom a partnership to failure. At the root of the mind-set is usually a resistance to change. Take our online [change resistance assessment](#) to determine the source of change resistance for yourself, your employees, and your partnering relationships. The Assessment Learning Guide will help you understand how to improve this dangerous mind-set.

It’s unrealistic to assume that partners know how to meet each others’ expectations. In a best-practices approach to partnering success, the partners address relationship issues and expectations up front. A detailed map for this activity is [our book, Powerhouse Partners: A Blueprint for Building Organizational Culture Breakaway Results.](#)

Leaders achieve results not only by setting high expectations but also by communicating with each team member in a manner that helps them understand how the expectations are achievable. To find out your level of competency in this and other leadership skills, take our online [Leadership Quadrants Assessment.](#)

The mind-set of wanting to win conflicts is a characteristic that will doom a partnering relationship to failure. Assess your level of orientation toward this deadly approach to business by taking the [online Win/Win Assessment](#) and using the accompanying downloadable Learning Guide for insight and tips into problem-resolution negotiating styles.

Today, in the age of information and connections, companies are rethinking the competencies they seek when recruiting people with the skills to support a strategic partnering organization culture and success. Today, they must hire people with partnering-relationship capabilities. Chapters 5 and 6 of [Powerhouse Partners](#) present interview questions, an evaluation process, and other details on how to find people with the right competencies.

Building employee loyalty throughout your organization requires a holistic approach. It is a responsibility of leadership, not Human Resources. Since people are motivated to be loyal for different reasons, understanding loyalty motivators and incorporating them into your culture is critical. You can learn these skills at our [Leadership Academy executive development program](#) and assess your leadership strengths right now through the [online Leadership Quadrants Assessment](#).

The value of ideas grows exponentially when two or more people get together and creatively turn something ordinary into something extraordinary. The genius of an organization does not reside in any one person; it resides in a culture that enables people to collaborate, innovate, and do what they do best. Smart organizations enable and build this culture by encouraging as many connections as possible. Here are some ways to get started in enabling connections and culture: [culture building program](#), [blueprint for building organizational culture](#), [enhance mutually beneficial skills](#).

If partners cannot provide honest feedback to each other, resentment will fester, leading to passive-aggressive behavior that will damage the relationship. Assess your skills in this area with our self-paced [Self-Disclosure and Feedback Workbook](#).

Leaders who decide to commit to creating a partnering culture within their organizations must also lead by example, demonstrating partnering attributes and interpersonal skills. Assess strengths and weaknesses of your capabilities in this area with our online [PQ Assessment](#).

All organizational change has a personal impact. When leaders push employees, they push back. It's much better to have them pulling with you. The potential for a change event to damage trust and create win-lose outcomes is high. Leaders will benefit from the change-management tips in the downloadable Learning Guide accompanying our [online Change Resistance Assessment](#).

Straightforward, two-way communication is the conduit to openness. Much like the "refresh" button on a Web page, openness in your work environment will lead to exchanging fresh, potentially valuable information. Openness requires trust and a sense of shared responsibility for each other's success. Our self-paced [workbook, Ability to Trust](#), will help you strengthen the trust level in your relationships.

The ability to influence others informally across an organization's structure is increasingly important in today's flatter organizations. Businesses can maximize the human potential of their workforce by placing a high priority on leaders mentoring others. Use our [Mentoring Workbook and Discussion Guide](#) to grow the intellectual assets of your organization.

An organization's purpose is the most important determinant of the organization's structure. Leaders should start the process of designing a structure by listing the initial organizing principles, givens, and constraints that in effect draw the basic operational boundaries. Learn how to complete this process and then create a partnering infrastructure by reading [Powerhouse Partners](#) or by participating in our [Charting the Course](#) executive development program.

Ethereal energies are the unseen forces that drive organizations. These energies reflect the quality of interaction between the people in your organization. Those interactions then impact the material outputs of your organization. Our Holistic Organization Model is a systematic approach for integrating ethereal energies and material outputs across your organization and aligning them with organizational objectives. This model is one of the strategies explained in [Powerhouse Partners: A Blueprint for Building Organizational Culture for Breakaway Results](#).

People do what they are measured to do. If you don't measure trust in your organization and its partnering relationships, you risk sending the message that trust is not important to your organization. You can measure trust the same way you measure customer service satisfaction—just ask. An anonymous survey will reveal whether trust is being built or eroding in your organization. Remember to measure trust regularly. When you see the amount of trust backsliding, determine why. Our [self-paced workbook on Ability to Trust](#) will help you identify and strengthen trust levels.

Even good business decisions that provide good results can eventually lead to stagnation. If leaders have a past orientation, the organization will have difficulty innovating. Pitting the desire for change and innovation against a past orientation creates conflict because people who have a past orientation want to maintain the status quo. Use our [self-paced workbook to assess your future or past orientation](#).

How leaders react to resolve or prevent internal strife depends a great deal on their style of conflict-resolution. Each of us tends to fall back on an inherent or default approach that usually produces outcomes that are not beneficial for the people in conflict or for the organization. Often it impacts revenue-enhancing strategies. Effective conflict-resolution is a *learned* skill that will benefit anyone and is crucial to effective leadership. Assess your inherent/default approach and learn how to change it with this [partnering tool](#).

Do you try to put a spin on bad news? The fact is, every time you *don't* do this, you build trust. Candid communication is vital for building trust. People typically see through spin anyway, so it puts a double hit on your credibility. Assess the level of trust between you and others by using our self-paced [Ability to Trust workbook](#).

Creativity occurs from having a [future orientation](#) and [being comfortable with change](#). A key to making the corporate cultural adaptations needed to survive in the twenty-first century is linked to leaders' capacity to think about and live in the future, seeing possibilities in new situations, and implementing change.

There is a difference between the sets of [competencies required to lead people](#) compared to those required for managing production or transactions. Leading people requires relationship skills; management requires analytical and problem-solving skills. When people confuse the two sets of competencies, believing that both objectives can be achieved with the same competencies, disastrous results occur. The competencies necessary for achieving both leadership and management objectives must be coordinated and aligned if an organization is to achieve its full potential.

Successful businesses make sure employees are given opportunities to both grow their talents and cultivate organizational connections. One of the most successful techniques for accomplishing both goals is establishing [mentoring relationships](#). Connecting high-potential employees with executive coaches helps to broaden and hone both the mentor's and mentee's capabilities and maximize the potential of a company's workforce.

Describe in two sentences what it's like to work at your company. If a potential job candidate whose attributes include creativity, collaboration, and partnering for results heard the two-sentence description of your organizational culture, would the candidate still be interested in your company? Interdependent behaviors are vital to collaboration and partnering. [Assess your interdependence skills](#) with our self-paced workbook.

Leaders have blind spots, where others can see something in them that the leaders cannot see. When others provide feedback to leaders, it reduces the blind spot and widens the platform for information-sharing that must occur for effective internal and external partnering. While leaders may not like employees and peers pointing out behaviors that may not be flattering, it is important that leaders see themselves as others see them. Then they can decide if there are behaviors that they need to change. A helpful tool is our [self-paced workbook on Self-Disclosure and Feedback](#).

"I am fine the way I am; it is my partner who needs to change." Does this describe you or your organization? By their very nature, partnering relationships involve change; after all, doing something in a different way is the basis for forming a partnership. We cannot control change but, with the right skills, we can control how we respond to it and how it impacts us. Use our automated [Change Resistance Assessment](#) to help you identify the areas of change that will cause problems for you and read the accompanying downloadable Learning Guide for strategies in dealing with change effectively.

Organizations that successfully move beyond competition into the zone of synergy, creativity, and innovation are ones that successfully create an environment that enables the free exchange of information. It is the cornerstone of creativity. Key to creating such an environment is leaders who value interdependent behaviors instead of independence. Assess your level of interdependence with our [self-paced workbook, Comfort with Interdependence](#).

Building a partnership always takes longer than people anticipate. Therefore, you need to plan enough time for relationship development. Our [Partnership Continuum Model](#) is a detailed roadmap that will yield the desired results in the stages of partnership and relationship development. Our [bestseller book, Partnership Intelligence](#), includes detailed instructions, exercises, and checklists for each stage.

Are you uncomfortable admitting your mistakes to your others? Do you deliberately hide your weaknesses from others? Do you find it hard to express your controversial ideas to others if you think they may disagree with you? These are some of the signs of an individual who is uncomfortable with self-disclosure. Comfort with self-disclosure is one of the [Six Partnering Attributes](#) that are absolutely essential to success in personal and business partnering relationships. Use our [self-paced workbook on self-disclosure](#) to evaluate your skills in this area and learn how to improve this attribute.

For most of us, the first partnerships we encounter in business settings are internal partnerships. The model, process, and skills are the same as those used in external partnering relationships. Partnerships, after all, are alliances between people. How people interact with each other determines the success or failure of a partnering relationship. Interdependent behaviors and skills are essential. Assess your level of interdependence with our [self-paced workbook, Comfort with Interdependence](#).

Partnerships are systems, not a collection of parts. Just as you cannot expect a human body to function properly if you remove a piece of the body's system (such as the heart), you cannot expect a partnership to function if it is deprived of one of its components. In other words, you cannot work solely on task and not on relationship. Our [Partnership Continuum Model](#) guides you through the process. Our [bestselling book, Partnering Intelligence: Creating Value for Your Business by Building Strong Alliances](#), explains the model's strategies and tactics.

It would, of course, be ideal if people in the workplace embraced change with zest and unquestionable commitment. But it rarely occurs. Usually there is resistance even after leadership sets up a plan and creates an environment in which change can take root. Understanding why people resist change is a big step toward helping them overcome their fear and anxiety surrounding change. Our [automated online self assessment for change resistance](#) will help an individual employee adapt to change or a manager help employees adapt.

A vital skill in creating a successful internal or external partnership is the ability to achieve consensus. Consensus drives collaboration between partners. They need to understand and apply an interest-based approach to their problem-solving. Consensus decision-making enables all parties to feel confident about their decisions and helps them justify or defend the value and business sense of those decisions to their end users, constituencies, and stakeholders. Our book, [Partnering Intelligence](#), includes information on steps to take in implementing a consensus decision-making style. The parties will also benefit by learning [how to build a win-win orientation](#).

Airline pilots always complete a preflight checklist before taking off. It's wise to do the same with a partnership—an initiative on which you're spending a great deal of money, time, energy, and reputation and cannot afford to fail. Start by completing the Initial Activity Team Checklist and the Agreement Between Partners Checklist. Sometime during or just after the initial partnering activity, address relationship issues using the Partners' Trust Assessment and the Partnership Stressors Checklist. These and other checklists, and a blueprint plan for developing a partnership at every stage of the process are included in our book, [Partnering Intelligence](#).

Given your experience with your current individual team members, do you think you'll be satisfied with the way this team would interact in a partnering situation? Do you know which attributes in your organizational culture will prevent your team from successful partnering and what roadblocks those attributes will cause? You can learn these and other crucial "partnership readiness" aspects from our [Partnering Intelligence Fieldbook: Tools and Techniques for Building Strong Alliances for Your Business](#).

Ensuring a successful partnering relationship requires candor in communications. Credibility—that is, the intent of the person offering a candid statement—is also important. When your partner makes a candid statement, do you know how to feel confident that the information is intended to contribute to the relationship as opposed to meeting the needs of the person offering it? This is a key functionality in building trust in a relationship. Learn how to increase this capability with our [self-paced workbook on Ability to Trust](#).

The ability to remain competitive in business is critical to a company's success. However, competitiveness can be a liability when forming a partnering relationship. Partnerships must know how to switch from a win/lose dynamic to a collaborative win/win approach. Competitiveness also has a high need for independence; but partnering requires interdependence. You can [assess your win/win orientation](#) and learn how to improve it with our automated online assessment and learning guide. Our [self-paced workbook on Comfort with Interdependence](#) is also an excellent tool to increase to improve your partnering capabilities.

The greater the trust level a partnership creates, the less need there is for maintenance, and the more likelihood there is for a mutually beneficial long-term relationship. Trust is the result of the time spent building it. It can't be wished into a partnership. Conflict resolution is an excellent exercise for building trust. When you work out differences by helping each other [create win-win solutions](#), the relationship grows stronger through recognition of each other's needs and expectations. Use our [self-paced workbook on Ability to Trust](#) to help you and your partner assess and strengthen your current trust levels.

A competitive corporate culture often rewards executives and teams that act in new and unpredictable ways. However, building a successful partnership requires maintaining a climate in which the parties know what they can rely on from each other and know that their agreed-upon limits will be honored. When one partner violates expectations or acts arbitrarily, the other partner becomes confused or upset. Depending on the specific circumstances, such behavior can be experienced as a violation of trust. You can learn some essentials about trust in our book, [Partnering Intelligence](#).

If you have a past orientation, you tend to have a low level of trust and don't trust people to do anything other than what you've known of the past. This mind-set stifles any hope that things might be different and thus reduces the possibility for change. Change is an essential characteristic in successful partnering. Having a future orientation is a step toward building trust between you and your partner and enabling change necessary to accomplish objectives together. You can assess your level of future orientation and also learn about how to increase it in our self-paced workbook, [Future Orientation](#).

Do you ask people how they feel about what you just said? When a person provides you with feedback, do you try to justify your behavior? Do you provide feedback to others even if it might create conflict? Giving and accepting feedback is an important skill in a partnering relationship. Without this skill, resentment can develop and quickly turn destructive to the relationship and the parties' ability to achieve their objectives. Assess your comfort with feedback in our [self-paced workbook on Self-Disclosure and Feedback](#).

Which forms a partnership's guiding force: its vision statement or its mission statement? Which reflects the strategic focus of a partnership: the vision statement or the mission statement? Many organizations actually confuse these. When should these statements be developed in relationship to the point in time of identifying a partner? The purposes of these statements and the process and timing for creating them along with a strategic framework is an essential starting point in any successful partnering relationship. This is a key element of the Stages of Relationship Development, part of our [Partnership Continuum Model](#). You can learn more about this model and a blueprint for building a successful partnership in our book, [Powerhouse Partners](#).

When are you most likely to move away from a win-win mind-set or orientation in your partnering relationship? When is your partner mostly likely to move away from a win-win orientation? What can you do to ensure such events do not damage your partnership? The answers are in our automated [Win-Win Assessment and downloadable learning guide](#).

Building great internal partnerships—with employees, work groups, departments, etc.—is a critical first step in becoming an organization with the capabilities to create and sustain successful external partnerships. There is terrific potential in this area, but few companies recognize relationships with employees as partnerships. Employees are far more productive, creative and loyal when they get meaning and self-fulfillment from their work; they want to be part of a team, the enterprise, and of value to the company. Companies can have genuine, profitable partnerships internally once they understand the principles of the [partnering process](#) and know how to increase their [Partnering Intelligence](#). A good starting point is taking our [online automated PQ Assessment](#) to understand your current level of partnering skills.

Creating internal partnering relationships has never been more critical than in today's business world, where success is so dependent on collaboration—which, in turn, requires employees sharing knowledge and information. These skills do not come naturally to most people. Ensuring a free flow of information requires first building trust and then developing comfort with change. Our [self-paced workbooks on both of these skills](#) will help you assess your current capabilities and put in place an action plan for improvement.

When management treats employees as trusted partners in an enterprise, employees can pool their collective creative energies for the benefit of the business as a whole. Smart partners enable this creativity by building an organization culture that (a) encourages as many connections as possible and (b) increases the frankness and fruitfulness of those interpersonal connections. Achieving the second part of this enablement requires strengthening the relationship skills of employees. A highly effective tool for assessing individuals' current capabilities in relationship skills is our automated [PQ Assessment](#). The downloadable learning guide accompanying the assessment provides a step-by-step action plan for improving skills from the starting point of the assessment results.

"I always want to try new things." "I function best when things are predictable and I prefer to be cautious about change." "I see no reason to try a new approach when the old one works just fine." It is not uncommon to find yourself in a work group or team with people who have these three very different attitudes toward resisting and adapting to change. How can you manage to bring them together in approaching change so the group can accomplish its objectives? Our downloadable learning guide accompanying our [Change Resistance Assessment](#) will walk you through the steps of getting rid of resistance to change, and the automated assessment will determine the starting point for the change attitude of each person in the group.

Thinking of forming a partnering relationship? If so, do you know the answers to the following questions: (a) What do we need to do before establishing the partnership? (b) What attributes of the other company or work group and my company or work group will prevent successful partnering and what roadblocks will the attributes cause? (c) Is everyone involved totally committed to forming as strong a partnership as possible; if not, what issues prevent commitment and how can we build commitment before establishing the partnership? Partnership Continuum's Partnership Readiness Assessment is a crucial first step toward forming successful partnerships. Our principals will facilitate and analyze the assessment for your organization, or there is information about it in our [best-seller book, Partnering Intelligence: Creating Value for Your Business by Building Strong Alliances](#).

Comfort with self-disclosure is a foundational skill that is crucial to partnering success. You must feel comfortable sharing both good and bad information with your partner. You must also disclose your needs. In addition, you must provide feedback on how your partners' needs affect you. Each of these activities takes place in the beginning/formation stages of the partnership, and there are additional self-disclosure activities at various other stages of a partnering relationship. You can assess your level of comfort with self-disclosure and learn to enhance your skill in this important partnering attribute through our self-paced [Self-Disclosure and Feedback Workbook](#).

In an information and connected economy, interpersonal relationships are the conduits or connectors that hit upon ideas that people turn into something of value (a new product, service or market entry). Thus, growing employees' loyalty as well as their ability to have more effective interpersonal partnering relationships is no longer an option. Leaders must understand that they either create, manage, and maintain—or detract from—a culture that enables this objective. There are four areas of skills and behaviors that leaders need to learn. You can evaluate your level of performance and knowledge in leadership skills and behaviors with our

[online Leadership Quadrants Assessment](#) and improve your performance with the information in the assessment's downloadable learning guide.

Some companies often treat employees as though they were commodities to be used and even discarded. Companies manage employees like they manage a process and make the mistake of failing to treat them as partners in the enterprise. And yet employees *are* your business personified. Harnessing, focusing, and directing their energy and talent through a sense of partnership is the most effective means of capturing their brains and spirit for meeting your customers' needs and expectations, achieving your business strategies, and ensuring your company's success. This objective requires cross-functional teams; therefore, employers and leaders must learn how to look beyond teamwork and get to partnering. Internal partnering capabilities will mean the difference between thriving and surviving in the marketplace. Use our [online Partnering Quotient Assessment](#) to evaluate your (or your team members' or leaders') current capabilities in partnering. The accompanying downloadable Learning Guide includes an action plan for improving your capabilities.

Approaching a partnership with the hope of simply buying a needed capability is not only shortsighted and naïve, but it can have dire consequences. Partnering relationships, whether internal or external, require interdependence. Each party needs assistance in achieving its goals and contributes to satisfying the needs of the other partner for those goals. The bad news is that interdependent behaviors don't come naturally in the workplace. The good news is that individuals, teams, work groups, business units, and companies can move from independent behaviors to interdependent. The first step is to make a realistic assessment of the behaviors practiced today by the individual or group and then follow an action plan to increase interdependent capabilities. You can do this using our [self-paced Comfort with Interdependence workbook](#).

Organizational culture happens two ways – by evolution or by design. Building a partnering workplace environment by design requires active participation from leadership. To accomplish this, leaders must practice “focused leadership,” which means they must:

1. Role model partnering behaviors through personal mastery
2. Inspire a shared vision
3. Motivate others to action
4. Measure results

We refer to these four behavior-based leadership skills as the Leadership Quadrants. To see how effectively you or your leaders are using these four quadrants of leadership, [take our Leadership Quadrants Assessment](#). This comprehensive assessment measures the effectiveness of your leadership skills and provides you with an immediate results and a 32-page analysis of your leadership skills.

One of the most effective techniques in creating a partnering culture is leading by example. However, in today's fast-paced, next quarter, bottom-line driven world, it is easy to lose sight of this concept. For example, when sales are down, tempers and volume go up; when that happens, fear creeps into the culture. Suddenly, talk of openness and trust vanishes as people hunker down to protect themselves. When people spend energy protecting themselves, there is less energy to spend on thinking creatively to increase sales. It's a lose-lose situation that can result in executive and employee burnout and high turnover rates. People can role model win-win outcomes when they understand how they react in stressful situations. Try our [Win-Win Orientation Assessment](#) to determine your and your team's conflict-resolution style. It's easy to use and available now online.

When designing a partnering culture, use a blueprint and follow a process to ensure success. Three components comprise the Powerhouse Partner Model:

- Practicing focused leadership
- Building a partnering infrastructure
- Developing smart partners

Each component addresses important areas of organizational life that are critical for the partnering system to operate effectively. To learn more about the Powerhouse Partnering Model, [order "Powerhouse Partners"](#) by Stephen M. Dent and James H. Krefft Ph.D.

How can you determine if your organizational culture is a partnering culture? What criteria do you use? A critical criterion is the ability to trust. In a traditional culture, as opposed to a partnering culture, people express and demonstrate low trust towards leaders, managers, supervisors, each other and, amazingly, even customers. They often require proof for the most trivial of issues and put expensive, cumbersome checks and balances into place to "keep people honest." The organizational philosophy: "Trust but verify." In contrast, people in a partnering culture build trust through both their actions and their words. They communicate expectations and negotiate with each other the definition of trust in their organizations. People are expected and want to maintain trust with each other. The organizational philosophy: "I know you'll do the right thing." Our ["Ability to Trust" self-paced workbook](#) is ideal for helping you identify your and your partner's current trust levels and includes an action plan for strengthening the trust between you.

Smart partners win not only because of what they do, but also because they know how to do it. People who operate in a partnering culture do four things well. How would you rate your company in these four aspects?

- Despite unanticipated business circumstances and change, we don't lose sight of our goal
- We promote openness and embrace diversity of ideas and approaches for processing information
- We approach the marketplace with an abundance mentality and foster the organizational changes needed to keep pace with the marketplace
- We leverage the concept of connectedness and appreciate the value of building relationship skills needed to forge enduring internal and external partnerships

How can you determine if your organizational culture is a partnering culture? A starting point is having the attribute of Future Orientation.

In a traditional culture, people rely mainly on past history and experience to make decisions about future events. This is especially true if demonstrated by the organization's leadership. While we learn from the past, if we are not open to trying new and innovative techniques, we only get what we got before. In the traditional culture, the organizational philosophy is "Let's do it the way we've always done it before, right?"

In a partnering culture with the attribute of [future orientation](#), people embrace the future based on a collective vision on what they are trying to achieve. They take lessons from the past and apply them to new ways of solving problems and working with people in the future. They are not afraid to take risks, as they know that they learn and will be rewarded even if they fail. In a partnering culture, the organizational philosophy is "The future belongs to us."

Leaders have a role in creating and sustaining a partnering culture. One characteristic of a partnering culture is that it builds trust through both words and action. Thus, leaders need to develop and demonstrate their ability to trust (one of the Six Partnering Attributes). In this regard, a leader's role includes:

- Defines and articulates what trust is in the organization
- Defines behaviors associated with building and diminishing trust at both a relationship and task level
- Monitors and is aware of his/her personal trust style
- Establishes trust as an organizational measurement
- Rewards trust-building behaviors

To learn more about the Ability to Trust or the other partnering attributes, order our [self-paced workbooks](#) for you and your team. Each workbook contains personal assessments, partnering models, and practical learning content to help improve your leaders' and team's partnering skills.

Leaders have a significant role and responsibility in building and sustaining a partnering culture. A partnering culture solves problems creatively, resolves conflicts collaboratively, and creates winners, not losers. Can you list at least leadership characteristics that help build the partnering attribute of a win-win orientation? Click here to see a list of these leadership characteristics.

Leader's role in ensuring a win-win orientation:

- Build organization-wide agreements on how conflicts will be resolved; consistently reinforce those agreements
- Be aware of and monitor personal reaction to conflict
- Create awareness of others' conflict styles
- Make a conscious effort to move to a win-win negotiation style whenever possible

Try our automated online [Win-Win Orientation Assessment](#) for an analysis of your personal style of conflict resolution along with a 30-page downloadable Learning Guide to help you move into achieving win-win outcomes.

One characteristic of a partnering culture is that it encourages and welcomes change. Leaders have a significant role in ensuring this attitude that enables change. Doing so necessitates leaders do the following:

- Understand the leader's personal change style
- Recognize benefits and stressors to change
- Acknowledge others' change styles and plan for a range of reactions to change
- Allow others to control the impacts of change that will fall within their scope of responsibility
- Reward change behaviors
- Monitor levels of change to prevent "change overload"

You can learn more about the behaviors in leadership roles by taking our online automated [Leadership Quadrants Assessment with the downloadable learning guide](#) and by using our self-paced [workbook on Comfort with Change](#).

A traditional corporate culture (especially in Western businesses), encourages self-reliance and independent action. But this approach and assumption that the best will rise to the top occurs at great expense to the independent-minded individual's coworkers and the business. In contrast, a [partnering culture](#) balances individual contribution with interdependence, recognizing that usually one person alone cannot solve complex problems. Organizations with a partnering culture champion inter-reliance among employees and leadership to achieve the desired results. To learn more about this critical partnering attribute, order our self-paced [workbook, Comfort with Interdependence](#). It includes a personal assessment, partnering models, and practical learning content to help improve you or your team's interdependent skills.