

## **Connect . . . Communicate . . . Collaborate**

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Gone are the days when businesses could dominate competition and control markets, technology, or information. The world has changed. As businesses become increasingly global, connection, communication, and collaboration are critical to success in an information-abundant world.

Recently, I presented a partnering seminar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, one of the most rapidly developing nations in the world. I met Michael C. Barnes, CEO of NorhTec, Inc., whose small business manufactures small, inexpensive computers that operate with very low power and require no fan to keep them cool. “They are perfect for operating in warm climates with unreliable energy sources,” he told me. He explained that in equatorial, developing nations, there is a large demand for computers but these nations lack the infrastructure to support northern-hemisphere-style computer systems.

This lack of infrastructure denies them access to a world of information. He told me that more than three-quarters of the world’s population lives in this environment and shared with me how he is using a partnering strategy to bring the world of information to the people of Africa, South Asia, and South America using non-traditional, but legal open sources.

One example he shared was how Microsoft had a virtual monopoly in the software industry for years and is now confronted with an open-source technology that populous and developing nations such as Brazil, Nigeria, and India are increasingly embracing. Worldwide, people are connecting, communicating, and sharing information to improve their lives and satisfy their needs while bypassing one of the world’s most powerful companies.

How?

They have connected, communicated, and collaborated with each other using information and communication, instantly available and abundant on the World Wide Web, to satisfy their needs. What can businesses learn from these emerging marketplaces?

Businesses today are quickly learning they, too, must figure out how to do what people in places with far fewer resources have already learned—how to use information and knowledge from within and outside to understand and solve customers’ needs that greatly vary based on geography, culture, and economic situations. Some businesses, such as Cargill Inc., are extremely effective at this strategy, while others, such as Microsoft, still languish in a post-industrial mind-set, believing they can control and monopolize their business segments.

At Partnership Continuum, Inc, we understand the power of connect . . . communicate . . . collaborate. In fact, our entire partnering model is focused on helping business leaders and their employees benefit using this effective strategy.

### **Connect**

Connecting is all about understanding your needs, determining the most effective strategy to satisfy those needs and then finding the right partner to help you meet those needs. Developing purposeful partnerships and relationships that are based on mutual benefits and trust are the keys, especially in the information and knowledge economy. Trust permits information to flow freely while mutual benefits ensure your partner's commitment. Without these two dynamics, you might as well go it alone, because the relationship will never live up to your expectations.

### **Communicate**

Communication is the vehicle for establishing information flow. Disclosing your needs, providing others with feedback, listening to their needs and feedback not only build trust but also set the stage for having a clear understanding of how you can help each other be successful, which leads to collaboration.

The skill to accomplish this human-intensive communication activity is to create an atmosphere where partners can be open, safe, and comfortable in sharing information with each other. This must not be left to chance. Partners need to be purposeful and deliberately design this atmosphere to ensure that they understand (1) the importance of building trust to allow communication to occur and (2) the very real consequences that destroying trust has on a relationship and ultimately, on the quality of the outcome of whatever task they are working on accomplishing together.

Communication also plays a large role in establishing mutual benefits. People do things for their reasons, not yours. Understanding, acknowledging, and working to help your partners satisfy their needs will build their commitment to the relationship. When people are committed to the relationship, they freely collaborate with you since they see the benefit for themselves. When they see the benefits, their commitment increases and they work even harder to make outcomes happen.

### **Collaborate**

Achieving collaboration is the result of connecting and communicating. After finding the right partner, communicating your needs, establishing the mutual benefits and trust, the stage is set for collaboration. True collaboration happens when people feel safe to share information and ideas, when they are unrestrained by fear. This releases a torrent of synaptic activity that stimulates the creative and innovating portions of the brain. When people feel they will benefit from the outcome, openly communicate and feel trust in the relationship, win-win solutions are easily achieved. People work together with less

conflict and with more energy as they focus on the vision they are working on achieving together.

Partnership Continuum, Inc.'s company mission is to help your business connect . . . communicate . . . collaborate. We do this through the [Partnership Continuum Partnership Model](#) and our Six Partnering Attributes. The [Six Partnering Attributes](#) include Self-Disclosure and Feedback, Win-Win Orientation, Ability to Trust, Future Orientation, Comfort with Change, and Comfort with Interdependence. We provide [consulting](#) on the partnering model. We also provide [online assessments](#) to help people improve their partnering skills.

Prepare your business and its employees for the new world of business now. Contact us today to learn how our partnering model and building partnering capacities can get you connected, communicating, and collaborating.