Chapter 3

Writing Collaboratively

Overview

Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration

Managing projects

Conducting meetings

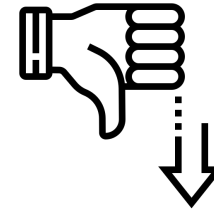Using social media and other electronic tools in collaboration

Gender and collaboration

Culture and collaboration

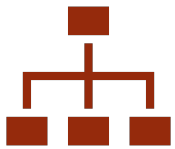# **Advantages** and **Disadvantages** of Collaboration

1. Wider knowledge base
2. Wider skills base
3. Better idea of the audience
4. Improving employee communication
5. Acclimating new employees
6. Motivation for employees to share

1. More time
2. Groupthink
3. Disjointed document
4. Inequitable workloads
5. Reducing a person's motivation
6. Disagreement and interpersonal conflict

Follow these seven suggestions for **managing your projects**:

1. Break down a large project into several smaller tasks.
2. Plan your project.
3. Create and maintain an accurate schedule.
4. Put your decisions in writing.
5. Monitor the project.
6. Distribute and act on information quickly.
7. Be flexible regarding schedule and responsibilities.

Key aspects of **conducting meetings**:

- Listening effectively
- Setting your team's agenda
- Conducting efficient meetings
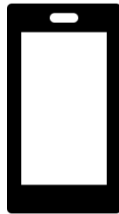- Communicating diplomatically
- Critiquing a team member's work

Share your thoughts:
Critiquing a draft clearly and diplomatically

1. What is the tone of the comments? How can they be improved?

2. How well does the collaborator address the larger issues?

3. How well does the collaborator address the writing, not the writer?

4. How well do the collaborator's comments focus on the goal of the document, rather than judge the quality of the writing?

The first task of the on-site evaluations was to set up and configure each server. We noted the relative complexity of setting up each system to our network.

Comment: Huh? What exactly does this mean?

After we had the system configured, we performed a set of routine maintenance tasks: add a new memory module, swap a hard drive, swap a power supply, and perform system diagnostics.

Comment: Okay, good. Maybe we should explain why we chose these tests.

We recorded the time and relative difficulty of each task. Also, we tried to gather a qualitative feeling for how much effort would be involved in the day-to-day maintenance of the systems.

Comment: What kind of scale are you using? If we don't explain it, it's basically useless.

Comment: Same question as above.

After each system was set up, we completed the maintenance evaluations and began the benchmark testing. We ran the complete WinBench and NetBench test suites on each system. We chose several of the key factors from these tests for comparison.

Comment: Will readers know these are the right tests? Should we explain?

Using **Social Media** and Other **Electronic Tools** in Collaboration

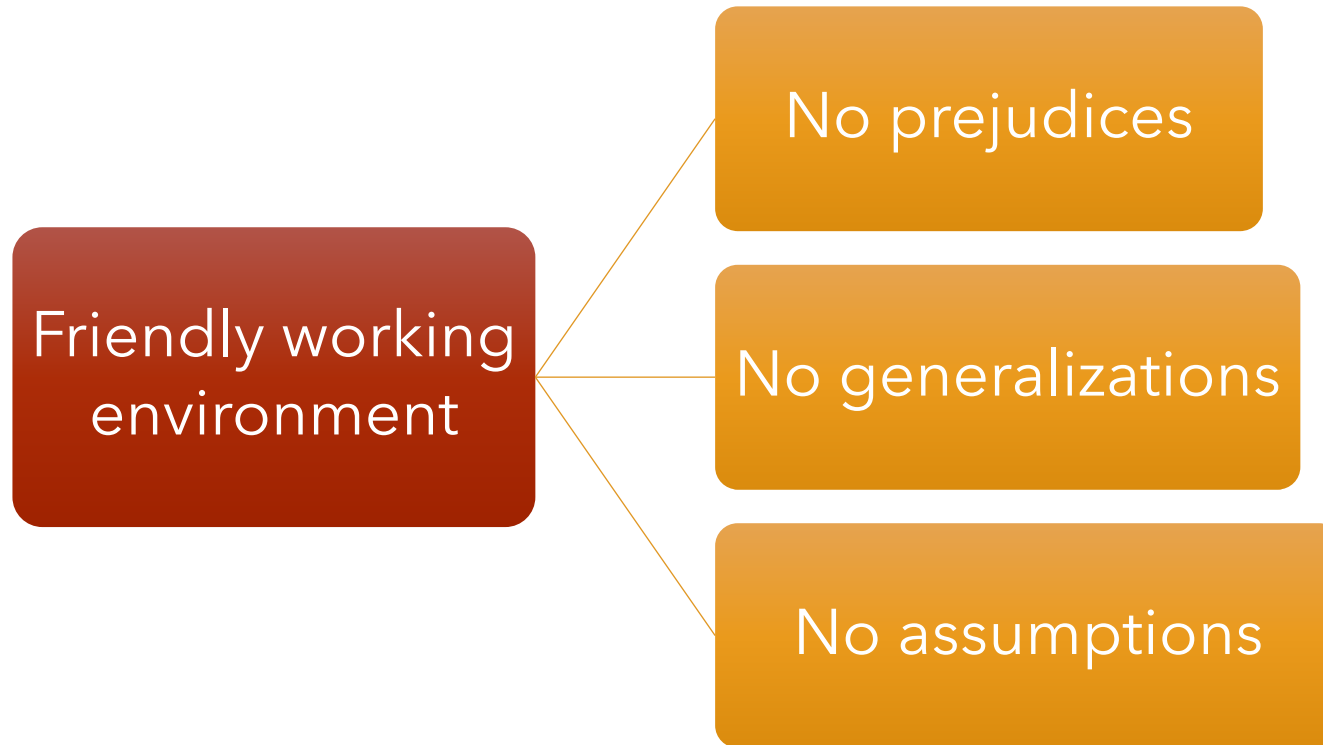Word-processing Tools

Messaging Technologies

Videoconferencing

Wikis and Shared Document Workspaces

Maintain a Professional Presence Online

1. Don't waste company time using social media for nonbusiness purpose.

2. Don't divulge secure information and reveal information

3. Don't divulge private information.

4. Don't make racist or sexist comments or post pictures.

Gender & Collaboration

Friendly working environment

- No prejudices
- No generalizations
- No assumptions

Consider five ways in which cultural differences can affect team behavior:

Difficulties to assert themselves in collaborative teams

Unwilling to respond with a definite "no"

Reluctant to admit when they are confused or to ask for clarification

Avoid criticizing others

Avoid initiating new tasks or performing creatively