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Benefits of Collaboration in Development Teams

You probably know that collaboration is a good thing. But what exactly does it mean to collaborate? And what can it really do for your team? Here are seven benefits of collaboration

The stereotypical image of a web developer used to be someone sitting alone in a room typing line after line of code on to a computer. While

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individuals might still work like this, those days are long gone in organizational settings. Modern, Agile-based projects are much too complex and move too quickly for any one person to handle. In today's business world, it's all about teamwork.

In an Agile project, developers must not only work together as a development team, but those development teams must then work with teams from other departments within the business and

Functional silos are largely a thing of the past.
Agile methodologies require constant
communication and frequent face-to-face

meetings between team members and cross-
functional teams.

And while collaboration is one of the most
common words in today's workplace, too many
project managers and developers are not
utilizing collaboration to its fullest extent and do
not truly understand the benefits of
collaboration. Read on to discover exactly what
is collaboration and seven quality benefits of
collaboration that can help your web
development team and your projects starting
today.

What is collaboration?

Sometimes, in professional sports, a team may
have a superstar player, but still fail to win
games. This can leave fans confused and upset.
After all, if they have the best player, shouldn't
they win all the games? More often then not,
teams -even those with superstars- lose because
of lack of collaboration. One player, no matter
how good, cannot outperform a team that's
working collaboratively.

developers, but if they can't work together, you'll find yourself constantly behind on projects, solving disputes, and putting out fires. Instead of a team of all-star developers who can't work together, find yourself the best team that can collaborate.

Collaboration is simply the ability to work together to solve a problem or complete a task, rather than individually. The benefits of collaboration have always been sought out in the workplace, but with today's fast-paced, robust, Agile projects, collaboration is more important than ever before. This often requires, not only collaboration between your team members, but collaboration between your team and other teams. Today, even schools and universities, such as the [University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler executive development program](#), offer opportunities for organizations to collaborate in new ways. Collaboration truly can exist anywhere.

How do I know if my team is collaborating?

Collaboration receives a lot of lip-service, but what does it actually look like? Below are five ways to tell if your team is actually collaborating
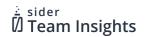
collaboration.

Working together

It may sound simple, but a team that is collaborating actually works together. When a team is collaborating, each team member understands the role and importance of the other team members. And, with a quality project manager, the development team works together, almost as a single entity. This may seem like one of the most obvious benefits of collaboration, but, when teams are collaborating, they become more than a team. They become a tight community.

Diversity

A collaborative team is made up of diverse individuals. A team where everyone is the same may work well together, but it will be hard-pressed to generate new ideas. When teams consist of people from different educational backgrounds, ages, genders, countries, and expertise, you have the opportunity to truly gain unique perspectives and gain creative project options.

Effective leadership

Teams that harness the benefits of collaboration
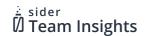
knows what is expected of him or her. They also know what is expected of the project as a whole. They are aware of the stakeholders and any deadlines. Collaborative teams know when meetings take place and attend them on a regular basis. They also keep track of their tasks and their progress. They help keep their other team members up to date. Collaborative teams know who to ask when they have questions.

Positive Attitude

If your development team is collaborating effectively, there's a good chance they have a positive attitude. Sure, there will be some tougher days, but, overall, your team is upbeat and positive about reaching milestones and deadlines. They may have informal meetings to check on each other. Also, they provide useful feedback to each other without harsh criticism. They ask questions and support each other. They may even send thank you messages and will celebrate major accomplishments with pizza, happy hour, or another appropriate event.

Utilizing tools

Collaborative teams, especially those with remote members, take advantage of collaborative software tools. They may use Jira, Confluence, Trello, Slack, Sleeek, or others.

tools to stay organized, stay in contact, and stay on track.

What are the benefits of collaboration?

If you want to create the best products, you'll need great collaboration, especially in software development. Without collaboration, your project is very likely to go over budget, miss deadlines, and disappoint stakeholders. Read below to discover the benefits of collaboration.

Innovative problem solving

When you work alone, what happens when you run out of ideas? You've been working on a project, but now you're stuck. You've done everything you can think of but still can't solve it. What do you do? Do you quit? Of course not. You ask someone for help.

One of the main benefits of collaboration is that you have a team built-in to help you. Some team members may be too embarrassed or shy (or even too proud) to ask individuals for help, but if they're part of a team that is already working together, that collaboration is built-in.

their junior counterparts, while the junior members will have new and creative ideas that senior teammates may have never thought of.

Often, this can lead to a wholly new third option. More eyes on a project mean more possible solutions. Someone with a different background or skillset may look at a problem from an entirely different perspective. This can lead to wildly innovative ideas. Some of the most difficult, seemingly impossible problems, have been solved through collaboration.

Better communication

Another of the benefits of collaboration is greater communication within your team and the organization. When you have greater communication within your development team, problems come to light faster and can be resolved more quickly. In non-collaborative environments, developers may not feel comfortable expressing issues or, even worse, may intentionally try to sabotage other projects.

Collaboration leads to communication which leads to a healthier workplace. When team members communicate with each other, more ideas are shared, which leads to greater solutions. When teams communicate within an

understanding of how each team contributes to the project as a whole. This brings everyone closer together and fine-tunes your project, as

everyone understands exactly how important they are to the success of the project.

This communication does not necessarily have to take place face-to-face. Developers can use the intranet or other collaborative tools to communicate through emails, announcements, updates, and other collaborative methods.

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https://unsplash.com/photos/vdXMSiX-n6M

Collaborative teams feel comfortable asking questions and learning from each other.

Increased efficiency

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits of collaboration is improved efficiency. Today's complex and demanding projects just call for multiple people and, quite often, multiple teams. It has to be a collaboration between everyone.

Collaboration helps to divide and balance the workload. If one developer is under pressure to

If teams are communicating, then every team is aware of what is required and needed. There is no wasted time ramping up the next team.

This increased efficiency is especially important for development teams. Development teams are often under tight deadlines with limited resources. The increased efficiency through communication helps development teams to conquer heavy workloads, find creative solutions, and see the entire project as a whole. This will help you meet deadlines and get your product to market faster, saving you big dollars.

Clear standards and responsibilities

When teams don't collaborate, things get muddy. One team member might not know what the other is working on. If someone has a question, they might not know who to ask. Even if they do know, they may not feel comfortable asking.

This is where collaboration saves the day again. When members of your development team communicate, each team member knows his or her responsibility. This means less double-work and even less politics, as team members won't "step on each other's toes." When team members are clear on what's expected of them, they feel more connected to the outcome and dedicated

expertise in that area.

In a collaborative team environment, developers will also feel comfortable asking questions. If

they're not sure the proper format or where to store their code, they'll not only know who to ask, but they will actually ask the question. Collaborative teams often have a centralized workspace where everyone knows they can consolidate internal information. No longer will your team have to waste time searching through old emails or guidelines. This again leads to more time to actually work on the project and less time spent on the minutia.

Increased skill acquisition

When you have a team of individuals, all of whom vary greatly in their education, expertise, and even life experiences, you have a diverse group that can learn from each other. And when this group collaborates, the learning can grow exponentially.

One of the most often overlooked benefits of collaboration is the ability for team members to learn from each other. Collaboration is an opportunity for each person to learn.

When team members feel comfortable to have

and take the time to learn how other team members approach the project. They'll even feel comfortable enough to share their mistakes,

which can be greatly beneficial to the team. When you have a development team that can grow from each other's mistakes, this helps to ensure the mistake is avoided in the future.

When team members collaborate, they get a chance to see things through a new perspective. They learn how others approach problems, where they see priorities or potential problems. When teams can come together and collaborate, they can even combine their skills to create entirely, unique solutions. This is one of the most valuable benefits of collaboration.

Healthier, more engaged and more skilled employees

One of the biggest problems in today's workplace is low employee engagement, especially in development teams. More and more employees are reporting that they don't feel connected to their work or their teammates or project manager, especially as more workers are working remotely. Collaboration helps to remedy this.

start to trust and like each other more. Team members may even start to become friends. This increased trust and morale leads to increased

engagement. Employees who feel engaged and actually care about their work are more productive employees. This will lead to projects being completed on time.

If your company has high morale as a whole, they will feel more comfortable working with each and even working with third-party teams. This will also make your team and business more attractive to top talent. Workers who are highly-motivated and have the best skills want to work for people whom they trust and feel they can gain even greater skills. Millennials and other recent college graduates, especially, will be eager to learn from senior leaders. And when these new hires are brought on board, the collaborative nature of your team will help them to get up speed that much more quickly. A highly collaborative environment will be extremely attractive to these new candidates.

A highly collaborative environment also helps you to keep the talent that you already have. One of the biggest expenses for businesses is a lack of retention. This leads to loss of

the biggest benefits of collaboration is a connected and engaged workspace. Again, when

workers feel engaged, they want to stay. Collaboration makes this more possible.

The benefits of collaboration aren't only mental. They also extend to the physical. Employees who work in a collaborative environment feel lower levels of stress, which leads to overall physical well-being. This leads to less sick days and higher productivity. This helps you to ensure your projects are completed on time.

Save time and money

Together, all of these benefits of collaboration combine to save your organization time and money. When have you a healthy, engaged team that is working together efficiently and searching for innovative solutions, your projects are going to get done faster and at a higher quality. You won't need to waste time in extra meetings because team members were not clear on exactly what was expected of them. You won't' miss deadlines because developers did not communicate with each other. Your reputation will soar when you become known for your high-quality, forward thinking solutions. This leads to
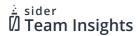
bottom line. And this will make everyone, from your team to your stakeholders, happy.

Collaboration is a hot topic in today's workplace. It will only become more important as even more work becomes project-based. Agile environments are exceptional for their speed and flexibility, but without collaboration, they can quickly become bogged down.

Increased productivity and profitability are important benefits of collaboration, but the benefits go far beyond those. In a collaborative environment, employees feel more secure to ask questions and express ideas. They will seek out mentorship from senior members. And senior team leaders will be open to new ideas from new recruits. They'll share ideas, learn new skills, and may even develop brand new, never before seen solutions.

When you have a reputation for collaboration, you'll have your pick of the top talent in the industry. And the talent you have will be more likely to stay. Overall, though, your team will be healthier and happier. They'll be eager to work on projects and find new ideas. Everyone wants to work in an environment where they feel

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receive all of these positive items.

A lone wolf developer may have a lot of skills, and, at times, there may even be a need for that.

But in today's world, collaboration is king. Development teams that master teamwork and harness the benefits of collaboration will not only find themselves surviving, but rising to the top. Teams that don't utilize collaboration will quickly fall to the wayside. Don't be one of those teams. Start utilizing collaboration in your development team today.

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