

## **What is Collaboration and how does it apply to Sourcing:**

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### **What is Collaboration?**

**Collaboration** is working with others to do a task and to achieve shared goals. It is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together to realize shared goals, (this is more than the intersection of common goals seen in co-operative ventures, but a deep, collective determination to reach an identical objective) — for example, an endeavor that is creative in nature—by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus. Most collaboration requires leadership, although the form of leadership can be social within a decentralized and egalitarian group. In particular, teams that work collaboratively can obtain greater resources, recognition and reward when facing competition for finite resources. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) TM includes the skill “Collaboration” as part of the core competencies around category management and supplier relationship management in its ISM Mastery Model TM.

### **Why Collaborate?**

In your role as a sourcing specialist or as a project task lead to obtain goods and/or services, you will need to work with an internal team comprised of representatives from the various stakeholder groups that may be involved in your project (the function immediately impacted, finance, legal, IT, engineering, marketing, sales, transportation, logistics, etc) and collaborate in order to develop the internal requirements that will form the basis of sourcing exercise. As your team evaluates the provider responses to your Request for X (Proposal, Information or Quote), they will need to collaborate with each internal stakeholder group in order to achieve agreement on which provider to select. As you begin contract negotiations, you will continue to require the use of collaboration, both with the internal stakeholders and the provider in order to ensure you obtain the best value for your company.

### **What happens if collaboration is not practiced by the sourcing team?**

In order to answer this question, we must back track a bit and understand the sourcing specialist role in an organization. The sourcing specialist fulfills a support role. As such, you are only as good as your last event. If you stop collaborating, you will help reinforce the general perception in non procurement organizations that procurement in general and sourcing specifically is nothing more than a roadblock that will not add any value. As stated in earlier blogs, great emphasis has been placed on the use of sound communication skills, including collaborative techniques, as evidence and support for continued trust and an expectation of value delivery every time my team is engaged by our internal stakeholders/corporate functions.

If we fail to use collaborative techniques each and every time, all of the good will from prior project work, the small successes leading to big successes and more complex projects, will disappear overnight and you and your team will be viewed by your internal customers as a roadblock and the corporate functions that previously lauded you will stop asking you to help meet their needs.

Conversely, continued use of collaborative techniques will lead to successful outcomes. Success tends to breed more work and more work leads to job security.

*Have a great summer.*