5 Tips for Creating a Culture of Collaboration

- **1. Make a Commitment to Ensure Every Individual is Represented**

  One challenge in collaborative work environments is the potential for having the brunt of work fall on only a few individuals. One way to circumvent this in your organization is to avoid silencing team members when they speak. Because some individuals are naturally shy or introverted, they may discount their ideas before they share them. If someone repeatedly silences themself, or is repeatedly silenced by others on the team, then there may be a reluctance to participate in collaborative activities.

- **2. Establish Collaboration Protocols**

  There are two cliché phrases often associated with collaborative efforts: "two heads think better than one" is the positive affirmation of the benefits of collaboration. Conversely, the phrase "too many cooks spoil the broth" encapsulates some of the negative aspects of collaboration. Communication protocols will assist you in embracing the benefits and minimising its negative aspects.

- **3. Set Clear Collaboration Goals**

  It's not enough to establish protocols and to make a visible commitment to collaborating with others. It is **absolutely vital** that at the outset of any collaborative undertaking you hold at least one meeting devoted towards setting goals for the project. What is the deliverable that will be created through collaboration? How much collaboration will be necessary, how much work will be delegated amongst the members? What is the desired outcome? These goals must be **S.M.A.R.T.** (specific, measurable, attainable realistic and time- bound) to ensure people are all on the same page.

- **4. Develop a System for Tracking Everyone's Involvement**

  Have a reliable system in place for tracking the involvement of each member involved with the collaboration. There are many software programs that allow users to track tasks and their completion. Nonetheless, it doesn't have to be 'fancy'. You could easily use task boards and frequent, regular meetings to ensure you know where each individual in the collaboration team is with his or her efforts.

- **5. Reward Collaboration Efforts**

  Acknowledge solid collaboration efforts when you see them in action. By acknowledging a job well done, you are helping to encourage future behaviour that mimics what you currently see. Similarly, if a team member refuses to work with the other individuals in a collaborative manner, you will need to use effective conflict resolution techniques and have appropriate consequences for the situation.

"For Unbelievable Breakthroughs That Deliver Outstanding Results"