



A free service, REACT's *Partnering Minute* is designed for leaders in the non-profit and business communities who are working in partnering efforts. The REACT Services team of specialists paints pictures of what is happening in the world of ministry collaboration through stories, outlining best partnering practices, reviewing key current resources, or highlighting case studies.

Please feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you think might benefit from this information.

Partnership and Collaboration Myths

The words partnership and collaboration have turned into major buzz words these days. Everybody wants to be involved or at least **say** they do. Many businesses and organizations are now turning to collaboration tools to help try and solve the internal challenges of redundancy and the external problems of resource scarcity.

Many recent polls and trends point to the fact that internal and external collaboration top the list of organizational priorities for 2011. No surprise as we all look to decrease duplication of resources and increase profits (yes, even non-profits need to make money; the key is in who owns the profits!).

However, before you jump off the partnering platform, keep in mind the following **four myths of collaboration** in order to make sure you don't end up in waters you don't want.

1) Partnering is New

Collaboration and partnering has existed since cavemen saw that hunting together worked better than it did alone. Collaboration is not new yet we see a lot of buzz and hype around it as if it were something that was just being introduced. The reality is that employees have collaborated daily at the water cooler, when they get lunch together, when they stop by each others' desks, and when they email each other. It just hasn't been called that.

Though partnering is not new, what is new are the means and tools that employees can use to collaborate with one another, that is all. Now, instead of sending an email to a colleague, an employee can pull together a private group or community online where they can work together to complete a project, as opposed to sending countless emails back and forth. That same approach, of course, is working externally as well as web-based document sharing helps in joint planning, the execution of events, and follow up strategies to reduce duplication.

2) Everyone Wants to Partner and Collaborate

Many companies and organizations are deploying collaboration tools and internal social networks. The problem is that not all employees want to participate. Some people choose to remain private and not participate in these new methods of collaboration. There is nothing wrong with this, however and employees shouldn't be penalized (or fired) as a result.

In the external arena (especially in the non-profit arena), many feel that all should be engaged in partnering of some form, just to reduce duplication and increase efficiency. However, situations and opportunities dictate when it is best to do so. In addition, certain leadership styles lend themselves to better partnering than others, as well as to the development of more partnering-friendly organizational cultures. Not all organizations have the right structural or philosophical DNA for partnering -- especially multi-agency and multi-cultural efforts -- or the commitment to change.

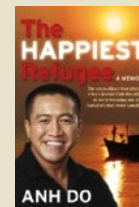
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April Resource Recommendation



The Happiest Refugee, Anh Do

The Happiest Refugee is the amazing tale of Anh Do, the famous Australian comedian who escaped the Vietnamese Communist regime together with his family in the late 1970s. The things they had to endure is quite shocking and rarely spoken about, as past memories of displacement stories are attached with trauma and untold stigma.

In his memoir, Do describes the journey with 40 Vietnamese refugees fleeing across the Indian Ocean to Australia in a small fishing boat. Their dream was to make a better life in a peaceful country, but his initial life in Australia was hard with failures.

The main focus of the book is to show his attitude on life, how grateful he is to have experienced everything, talking about his courageous father (and his downfalls), and his mother's determination to give the best to her children. This book opens your eyes on what it is to be a refugee, and the sacrifices every refugee family have to make in their lives to keep up with the rest of the world in order to merely have a normal life.

Do has written this beautifully;

3) Deploy the Tools and the Rest Will Follow

There's a quote many use which goes something like, "If you believe tools are the answer then you are one (a tool)." A bit harsh, but probably true. Deploying collaboration tools and platforms can certainly be part of a solution but they are by no means THE solution. However, as the costs of innovation are climbing to the point that individual companies feel almost forced to work together to solve common problems, the tools themselves have become paramount.

Tools are just that, tools. In order for an organization to succeed with using collaborative tools there needs to be a supporting organizational culture, a strategic plan for implementation, and a clear understanding of the value and problems that these tools are hopefully going to solve. Do you have those in place in your organization or company? Many do not.

4) Partnering is the Strategic Driver

One of my mentors in partnering work has been Phill Butler. Long ago, he used to tell me that "partnership for partnership sake doesn't work." That came from many years of his experience in developing partnerships internationally. The whole point of collaboration is not collaboration in itself, but as a way to solve larger problems and improve efficiency. As some of you have seen, REACT Services promotes "results-oriented partnering" as what organizations should strive for. Among other things, that means understanding when it makes sense to partner (and when it does not), what the specific added value is to each partner, and what metrics need to be in place to measure success.

Collaboration in 21st century business and in organizational life is indeed valuable, if not essential. However we need to be realistic about what collaboration is, when it is necessary, and what is required to make it succeed.

Please let us know if there are ways REACT Services might be able to assist you in your collaboration strategies. Contact us at:

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he makes you laugh out loud and still move you to tears in the next page. It also shows the reader that refugees are normal people seeking to have a regular life. Most love their adopted country and want to serve it. The book covers the day-to-day issues of refugee families from the language struggles, cultural misunderstandings, racism, and poverty.

As the political and public perception on refugees continues to raise fear and concern in the world, describing them as criminals, intruders and burden on economies – Do challenges the public perception to show living testimonies of refugees who have contributed positively to the nation.

The Happiest Refugee is a story that will capture your heart!

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