



## COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SIMULATION

The Collaborative Leadership Simulation focuses on building leadership skills needed to be successful working and managing across boundaries to deliver results in a complex corporate structure.

Simulation teams are organized into pairs. One team leads a product business unit and the other team leads the global sales function. Each needs to achieve respective organizational goals as well as common set of corporate goals. This paired structure creates a unique environment for learning about influence, strategic thinking, matrix management, problem solving, conflict, collaboration, goal alignment, networking and building long-term organizational capabilities. Through the experience the teams create an organizational culture in how they operate and can then see the business results of their leadership style, culture and decisions.

### Experience Overview

The Collaborative Leadership Simulation can be designed as a one to 1.5 day experience, depending on its learning objectives. Participants experience a sequence of activities:

1. **Background Briefing:** Each member of a team receives a unique 2-5 page summary of one facet of the business with quantitative financial information and qualitative perspectives from employees and customers about the state of the business.
2. **Setting Direction:** After a group briefing on the process from the facilitator, teams assess the prior year's business performance and establish their strategic approach to the business for the year ahead. Teams are given corporate direction and objectives but need to translate that direction into priorities for their organizations. Teams may or may not choose to collaborate with their peers.
3. **Learning Discussion #1: *How aligned is your strategy?*** In a large group, teams see how aligned (or not) their strategies are across their business, and discuss the initial impact on their organization and capability.
4. **Year One Decision Making:** Teams address 8–10 mini-business cases, each requiring a decision about next steps. The mini-cases are archtypes of business issues back on the job and team decisions are extrapolated to reflect business results for the year. Each business case is crafted to highlight a unique collaboration tension (timing, resource sharing, goal priority, issue resolution). Some decisions should be made independently of the other business unit, but most are interdependent. Facilitators observe the approach to collaboration and provide feedback.
5. **Learning Discussion #2: *Impact of Collaboration.*** Teams see their first year financial performance as a result of their decisions. The facilitator guides a discussion focused on different approaches to collaboration, variations in results and how effective (or ineffective) collaboration triggered the team outcomes.

Learning Discussions are conducted after each round of simulation decision making. The learning discussions are designed to capture insights from the simulation experience and to identify skills, tools and behaviors that can applied at work. Learning discussions are often divided between large group sharing of insights and individual team reflection.

6. **Leadership Conversations:** Members of each paired team are challenged to conduct a role play with a member from their peer simulation team. The pairs receive background about an issue facing their business, including an innovation opportunity, resource sharing, aligning priorities, and being accountable for errors or missed deliverables.

**Note:** Simulation facilitators can also provide behavioral observation and feedback to participants to raise awareness on their interpersonal effectiveness and leadership capabilities.



7. **Year Two Decision Making:** Teams consider a new portfolio of mini-cases, some of which have been triggered by decisions made in Year One, and once again have an opportunity to work independently or interdependently to make their strategic decisions.
8. **Final Learning Discussion:** This learning discussion reveals the “end-to-end story” of how the teams’ approach to collaboration influenced their information flows, decision options and ultimately business results. Teams see how collaboration expanded or narrowed their business options; enabled their teams to execute effectively and influenced the underlying momentum in their business results.

### Learner Insights

Participants in the Collaborative Leadership simulation most frequently highlight three insights from the experience:

1. Their renewed visceral understanding of the importance of effective communication and active listening when working across boundaries
2. The value of framing issues early and engaging stakeholders for resolution before conflict becomes entrenched and positional
3. The need to calibrate when to collaborate and when to operate independently

In general, at the conclusion of the Collaborative Leadership Simulation, participants will be better able to:

- Think big picture even when making focused functional decisions.
- Calibrate which decisions require cross-organizational input and alignment.
- Build alignment across stakeholders to deliver results.
- Identify and manage critical tensions in a strategy and make conscious decisions to balance tradeoffs.
- Form partnerships to work effectively across organizational boundaries.
- Approach conflict as a valuable opportunity to identify and resolve different points of view, reach shared goals, and make better decisions.

### Applicable Content

This simulation experience can be used to reinforce a range of business concepts and academic models about matrix and collaborative leadership, including but not limited to:

- Chris Argyris, Ladder of Inference, Inquiry and Advocacy
- Robert Cialdini, Influence
- Constructive/Productive conflict; Challenging Conversations
- Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
- Amy Kates and Greg Kesler, Matrix Organization Leadership

To learn more about the **Collaborative Leadership Simulation**, contact [info@insight-experience.com](mailto:info@insight-experience.com).