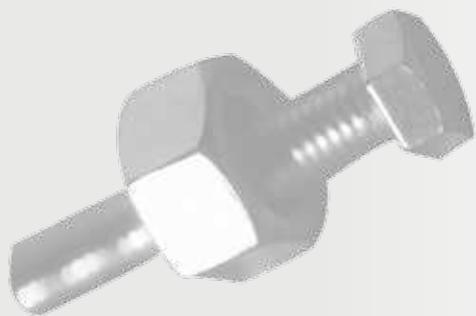
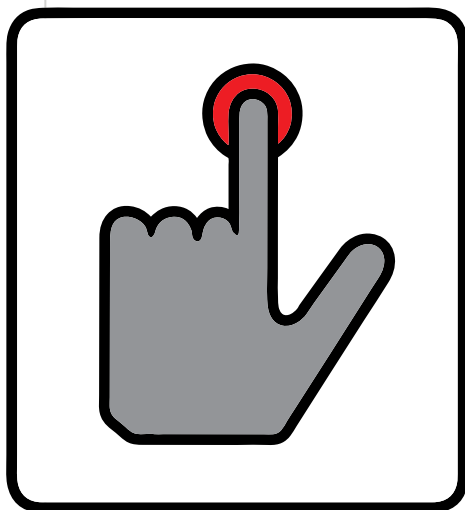


The Collaboration Deception



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DEFINITION: What is the 'Collaboration Deception'?



Two accused street smart school students sit in separate rooms awaiting a visit from the Principal. The Principal knows that both of them committed the crimes of which they are accused but she has no proof, and the students know this. What they don't know is that the tactic the Principal will employ is one of the most powerful methods used to elicit the correct solution in a situation like this. She privately offers each of them a deal. The deal is that if they both confess they will get one detention each, if they both deny the crime they walk free, but if one confesses and the other does not the non-confessor gets expelled while the confessor walks free. This tactic

– commonly known as the 'prisoner's dilemma' – plays with the internal conflict we all have as humans between what we know is right for ourselves and what we know is right for the group.

And this principle is not only be seen in human groups. Even animals like bats can find themselves in a prisoner's dilemma situation: bats who feed each other are better off than bats that do not, however while bats that take food but do not give it are best off, bats that give food but do not receive it are worst off.

Back to the schoolyard. This time we're focusing on an experimental classroom across the playground where an additional 30 students sit, each in a private cubicle with their fingers on buttons. Each student will get \$1,000 after ten minutes, unless someone pushes their button, in which case the person who pushed the button will get \$100 and everybody else will get nothing. What do they do? What happens when the right decision for the individual becomes the wrong one for the group?

Welcome to the collaboration deception, where humans struggle with the ambiguity of collaboration in a culture that breeds self survival and competition. Where organisations use individual bonuses as the ultimate form of recognition, saying they focus on team building while ultimately

reinforcing the office tournament. TV reality shows work on the curious ambiguity that while groups need to form teams to survive, in the end it's each person for themselves.

Even cigarette companies have had to learn how to work this principle. They may eventually have smiled quietly to themselves when governments imposed advertising bans recognising that most of their advertising is about winning users from the competition. Almost the equivalent of the annual spending on the arms race was spent on advertising aimed at trying to beat the competition, if one company pulled out they would significantly lose market share and as a result advertising skyrocketed.

In the end we often have to choose between personal benefit and group gains.

What, then, is true collaboration?



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EXPLORATION: How to win at an impossible game



Win as Much as You Can!

GAME DEBRIEF

1. What happened as the game progressed? (did the results surprise you?)
2. How did DEFECTIONS affect the group, and what happened?
3. Where might the outcomes of this 'WIN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN' game be evident in your workplace? How did you interpret the word "YOU" in Win as much as YOU can?
4. How did you interpret the word "YOU" in Win as much as YOU can?

EXTRA QUESTIONS:

1. How can we ensure each worker's efforts to improve performance outweigh their efforts to drag others down?
2. What is the best way to deal with 'free riders' and 'defectors'?

WORK DEBRIEF

1. There are good reasons to collaborate – and good reasons not to ... So Under what conditions will people collaborate at work?
2. How can we incentivize people to really collaborate at work?
3. "According to research, most of us won't cooperate with actions in the public interest—unless we're convinced everyone else will too". How can we best achieve this at work??? Give some practical examples

EXTRA QUESTION:

1. Collaboration only takes place when "common interests /vision exceed individual differences". How can you ensure that the ratio of costs to benefits at work favour collaboration?

The race to the bottom

"We are survival machines – robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes."
Richard Dawkins

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it."

In 80% of airplane accidents, pilots made mistakes that could have been prevented if the crew were able to learn to work together.

Does true logic lead to collective disaster? And if so, how did we get this far?



Scientists believe that in many parts of nature the parts work together to make up a whole only because of elaborate mechanisms to suppress mutiny, not because the driving motivation is to support group cohesion. Both the collective harmony of a bee hive and our individual bodily functions working together to create a working whole body clearly demonstrate this principle at work.

It has also been shown that behind many acts of altruism lie basic survival needs, which indicates that while the outcome is collective the motivation may still be individualistic. It seems that the natural bias in many areas of life is towards personal benefit rather than group gain.

All computer models show that as soon as someone in a team defects it becomes a race to the bottom. This is well illustrated by the way the 'commons' (shared park areas) deteriorated in village communities in England in the past when one person failed to

stick to their allocation and overused the resources. As soon as one person defected from the common good, all others tried to ensure they didn't lose out, and all became self- rather than community-focused. The underlying reasoning individuals have when such a defection occurred was that if the commons is eventually going to be used up, whoever makes the greatest use of the space stands to benefit the most. As Hersey and Blanchard have identified, "The productivity [and focus] of a work group seems to depend on how the group members see their own goals in relation to the goals of the organisation."

The process of defection can prove to be infectious. Defecting sets off a chain reaction where trust ends up the victim. In the absence of collaboration a small number of misbehaving entities can have a devastating effect on the whole group. At the root of the tragedy of commons is the unrestrained self-interest of some individuals. A culture of non-collaboration eventually causes those who initially gained to lose.

The Collaboration Deception



ACTION:

Creating a collaborative environment

How to win at an impossible game?

Option 1:

Defect and make the others lose



In a tournament people are paid for relative performance – for how well they do in comparison to others doing the same thing. But there is more than one way to win – such as making the others lose.

In over three-quarters of poorly performing companies, executives set their successors up for failure, or deliberately chose weak successes in order to make themselves look good. (Collins, Good to Great). Leaders that defect in this way and set up a tournament-style approach can impact the organisation as a whole.

One Australian study comparing 23 firms found that those giving big pay rises encouraged workers to put more into the job, (ie take less days off work etc), BUT is also showed that these workers refused to lend equipment and tools to their colleagues.

Before introducing a tournament style motivation and incentive system it's important to identify first whether each worker's efforts to improve performance will outweigh their efforts to drag others down (Hartford).

Option 2:

Play 'Tit for Tat'

'Tit for Tat' players cooperate with co-operators, punish a defector by further defection, and return to cooperating after a mutual defection.

The outcome of this approach would mostly be inconsistency and mistrust.

Option 3:

Create a culture of collaboration

It is only possible to survive long term in an organisation through deliberately creating a culture of collaboration as follows:

1. Recognise and challenge defectors

Collaborators naturally seek out collaborators, so a culture can only be changed by identifying and challenging defectors to establish a positive mutually acceptable approach. To play in a world where many people are untrustworthy and many individuals don't trust others, collaborators need to form new teams and challenge the structures that encourage defecting: "The reward of cooperation, and the temptation of defection are forbidden to those who do not demonstrate trustworthiness and build a reputation for it" (virtue). The first step involves recognising defectors and turning collaborators into champions.

2. Change the game

Refuse to play with defectors or challenge the rules: the more people can be in more non-zero sum relationships the more healthy new networks will grow. Bats tend to roost in the same places up to eighteen years, and since they get to know each other as individuals and they have the opportunity to play the game repeatedly, and as a result start to form teams of collaborators putting pressure on the defectors to leave or conform. More collaborative groups of baboons fail to accept new members into the group that don't display the same collaborative approach – or they ensure the new members change to fit into the predominant approach to maintain the collaborative culture. Compassion normally flows through long non zero sum channels.

3. Ride on reciprocity & reputation

As controversial as it may sound, anthropologists believe that humans have traditionally hunted not just for meat but for what it represents. Most humans hope to turn their meat into a durable and valuable commodity – prestige. As resources often need to be shared for survival, from the beginning the hunter learnt fast that it was often a matter of time before they found themselves in the position of recipient rather than donor. Trust, like money, is a crucial lubricant for the economy. When people trust other people, a merchant, or a company, they are more likely to buy, lend, and extend credit. The hunter is reducing his exposure to one currency (meat) by buying another (prestige), in just the same way that a company that can raise a loan cheaply in dollars might swap it for one in Deutschemarks to hedge its exposure to exchange rates (ridley). Covey calls this the 'building of the emotional bank account', others call it good will. The top 250 companies in the UK have claimed that damage to reputation is the biggest business risk they face. Goodwill is believed to account for 70% of total market capital. (Regester & Larkin).

4. Divide the labour, share the rewards



"Collaboration and sharing spread the risk as well as the reward of hunting. If a human were to rely on their own resources they would often go hungry and occasionally have more than they could eat. Food needed to be shared as it takes more calories to hunt than it does to eat. But if they were to share their meat and in return expect others to share with them, they could be fairly sure of getting at least some meat every day. The sharing of meat therefore represents reciprocity in which one person trades in their current good luck for an insurance against their future bad luck." (Wipi)

The Collaboration Deception



5. Focus on a goal bigger than the sum

"Successful collaborative teams emphasise external outreach and a focus beyond themselves". (Ancona & Bresma) A unifying goal has power only if all relevant groups need to pull together to make it a reality. "The greatest benefit of a common-fate goal is that it elevates the aspirations of people to something bigger than parochial group goals." Hansen

6. Discover healthy competition

Sports bike racers race better against a team mate than against the clock, and super market check-out staff work better when they know that someone is watching them –even if it's just a colleague. By setting up healthy internal competition that enhances performance rather than providing discouragement, a high performing collaborative culture can be established.

7. Use positive language

It is important to be aware that culture is shaped informally not formally. The language a leader chooses matters a great deal in shaping behaviour. Leaders must use quality metaphors to connect, as they help to transfer meaning from one domain to another effectively – creating connections between what is familiar and what is not. Poor metaphors can perpetuate associations that are stagnant, superficial or destructive.. "Every time I am talking, I challenge people: 'How can you help your colleagues?' We want people who can deliver their own results and collaborate across the organization when needed; I talk about this all the time." Henrik Madsen CEO DNV.

Rebuilding trust

In an online dating service it was established that women reported a 5% drop in weight and age and men gave themselves a few extra cm and a generous \$30000 pay rise in their profiles. Do honest people who refuse to exaggerate substantially lower their market value? This depends on who their market is. The honest dating pool might be smaller but will have better quality, and without trust most relationships don't last. Instead of exaggerating some companies have chosen to proactively address consumers'.

complaints through listening and even allowing access to honest feedback. Changing the rules to create a reputation of transparency and sacrifice serves to restore public trust and help a firm set itself on the right path in the long run. (Ailey)

Jeff Swartz, the CE of Timberland, has detailed many of the ways that his company is trying to reduce CO2 emissions, recycle, use sustainable materials, and treat its employees fairly. When Jeff gave a presentation on what Timberland is doing in these areas, another CEO asked him, "What are the returns on these investments?" Jeff answered that he has been trying to find an economic return for these actions but that he had not yet found it. He just knows that it is the right thing to do for the good of all.



TO CONSIDER:

What about the free riders?

A lighthouse is the classic example of a public good. It is erected at some expense, but its light can be used freely by anybody to guide his ship to port, even if he refused to subscribe to the building of the lighthouse. Therefore it is in everybody's interests to let everybody else pay for the lighthouse, so lighthouses do not get built – or rather, they do, but it is not immediately clear why.

A curious theory is now emerging among scientists who have studied the behaviour in the wild. Chimps (and possibly humans), are not just hunting for nutritional reasons at all, but for social and reproductive reasons. In a collaborative society freeriders lose social status. Relationships are critical to ensuring all people pull their weight. (Ridley)

Creating collaborative community based organisations and teams



A community based team (with a common goal) has the following key performance strategies:

- Forms independently
- Takes initiative
- Doesn't wait for instructions
- Thinks communally - as a group
- Is aware of what is going on in the greater community
- Creates a strong dynamic
- Collaborates rather than competes
- Wants everyone to equally succeed

Do you believe that communities are amplifiers of human capacity?

How can you redefine the word YOU to a collective YOU?

